Xunzi's Ethical Thought and Moral Psychology

by

Doil Kim

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Philosophy Department
University of Toronto

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University of Toronto

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Abstract

In this dissertation, I lay the foundations for the development of a unique ethical theory, titled "Ethical Harmonism," on the basis of the early Confucian Xunzi's thought. First, I attempt to understand Xunzi's fundamental ethical position centered on his thought of the ideal state for humans. Second, I explore the nature of two attitudes that one should develop in order to create and maintain the ideal state for humans.

Xunzi's ethical position is characterized primarily in terms of "the final good" that it requires one to seek to attain. For Xunzi, the final good is a certain holistic state that every human has reason to create and maintain cooperatively, namely what I call "harmony." Harmony is the ideal state in which all humans form a well-unified whole in such a way that they interact with one another by properly recognizing various kinds of persons and by appropriately responding to each kind. I also provide a preliminary reconstruction of Xunzi's view by raising questions concerning whether his holistic view can reasonably accommodate part of contemporary individualistic ethical sentiments, especially, that associated with such a notion as human rights. This reconstruction is intended to serve to develop "Ethical Harmonism," which is a working-label for the most defensible Xunzian position that is currently in the development stage.

For Xunzi, the creation and maintenance of harmony depend on all humans' proper development of two attitudes, *qin* (love) and *zun* (respect). For Xunzi, all humans should control their naturally unlimited desire by cultivating love and respect; and, by adopting these two attitudes in interaction with one another, they can jointly bring about harmony in society. I develop theories of these two attitudes especially by clarifying how each of the two attitudes is understood as a distinctive way of responding to certain kinds of person. I further explain how these two attitudes work cooperatively in ways that promote harmony. My study will provide a new systematic interpretation of two central concepts in Confucian ethics that are grounded in love and respect, namely *ren* (widely translated as humanness) and *yi* (widely translated as righteousness).

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Chapter 1 Introduction

1. Two main aims to achieve and interpretative tools to utilize

The two aims of this dissertation are, first, an approximation of the early Confucian thinker Xunzi (荀子)'s ethical position, and, second, a systematic interpretation of two ethical attributes central to early Confucian thought, *ren* (仁) and *yi* (義).

The first main aim is considered an approximation because its achievement is based on a particular way of reading early Chinese texts. The core part of Xunzi's ethical position is concerned with the ideal state for humans, which Xunzi thinks is realizable only through particular ways of interactions among all humans. This central thought can be captured only through a particular way of reading the *Xunzi*, namely, through a way that derives the connotations of several terms used by Xunzi here and there throughout the text and figures out how those connotations can be integrated into a unified idea about the ideal state for humans. This way of reading is one of the principal interpretative methods utilized in my project.[1] Xunzi himself did not explicitly demonstrate how the connotations of those terms may systematically

[1] In coming up with this interpretive method, I was inspired by Kwong-loi Shun's approach to the study of *cheng*, *zhong*, *xin*, and *jing* in the following article: Kwong-loi Shun, "Wholeness in Confucian Thought: Zhu Xi on *Cheng*, *Zhong*, *Xin*, and *Jing*" in On-cho Ng, ed., *The Imperative of Understanding: Chinese Philosophy, Comparative Philosophy, and Onto-Hermeneutics* (New York: Global Scholarly Publications, 2008). In this article, Shun attempts to conceptualize what he calls "wholeness" by figuring out the commonality among the four terms, that is, a mental phenomenon commonly involved in what are referred to by the four terms.

converge into a single notion. The terms to be scrutinized are *zhi* (治), *yi***(一), *he* (和), *li* (理), *yi** (宜), *da li* (大理), and *zhi ping* (至平). In my interpretation, these terms are used by Xunzi equally in his conceiving what can eventually be considered one single notion, that is, the notion of the ideal state for humans. I will suggest naming that notion "harmony." Each connotation of those terms will be understood as describing a certain aspect or feature of harmony. Stated in a summarizing way, my approximation of Xunzi's ethical thought will be accomplished through the process of conceptualizing harmony in a way that explains the different aspects of harmony in connection with several terms used by Xunzi in his describing the distinctive features of the ideal state for humans, and through the process of figuring out how the connotations of those terms can converge into a unified concept, that is, harmony.

The above approximation of ancient ethical thought also involves an analytic tool that can be adopted only by taking a particular interpretive stance. As mentioned above, in my interpretation, Xunzi centers his ethical thought on harmony. Harmony is "the final good" to be achieved in the sense that it is the ideal state that all humans have reason to eventually create and maintain. Interpreted this way, Xunzi's ethical thought has affinities with modern consequentialist theories. A question may then arise about whether this interpretation involves an analytic tool that is in fact alien to Xunzi's original thought. Xunzi admittedly did not understand his own thought through the framework of consequentialism, nor did he have such an ethical language as goodness.[2] So, the question becomes related to whether my interpretation involves an anachronistic imposition of alien frameworks and terms. It may be objected that the

[2] The issue of how to do ethics has been vigorously discussed in the field of contemporary Western ethics, and sophisticated views have been developed in relation to its own basic ethical terms, such as good, right, or virtue.

reconstructed concept of harmony is seen as central precisely because my interpretation adopts the consequentialist structure as the interpretive framework.[3] I acknowledge that we will possibly find out a distinctive way to do ethics on the basis of early Chinese thought, after our understanding of the thought has been further deepened, and, consequently, my interpretation will probably turn out to be simply involving an imposition that causes distortions to some degree. Nevertheless, I still believe that my interpretation will offer an illuminating way to approximate to the ancient thinker's view in a systematic manner, at least, in the process of deepening our understanding of early Chinese thought.

Moreover, in defense of my use of the analytic tool, another point should be made clearly: I argue that Xunzi's ethical thought is arguably consequentialist in character; yet, this argument does not imply that, in my interpretation, any Western consequentialist theories will be imposed on Xunzi's ethical thought.[4] I will understand the gist of Xunzi's ethical thought as what may be called "holistic consequentialism." Xunzi's version of holistic consequentialism diverges from Western consequentialist theories mainly in relation to its theory of goodness, according to which harmony is regarded as the kind of goodness that every human should finally pursue. The uniqueness of Xunzi's thought will be clarified chiefly through the articulation of the concept of

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[3] In fact, in one of the recent trends in the field of Chinese Philosophy, huge efforts have been made to interpret early Confucian thought as a version of virtue ethics. Then, it may be pointed out that early Confucian thought should not be understood as either a version of virtue ethics or a version of consequentialism, since it can be interpreted in either of the ways, precisely depending on which interpretative framework is being utilized; and, an implication is that there existed neither of the frameworks in the original context of early Confucian thought and, therefore, the use of the frameworks should equally be considered anachronistic because both frameworks make interpreters cherry-pickingly selective and thereby highlight only particular aspects of early Confucian thought.

[4] In other words, I would not interpret Xunzi's ethical thought as a version of utilitarianism, contemporary perfectionism, or any other Western consequentialist position equipped with its own theory of goodness.

harmony and the exact sense in which this concept is a holistic one. In order to highlight the centrality of harmony in Xunzi's ethical thought, I suggest calling the most defensible ethical theory that can be developed on the basis of Xunzi's version of holistic consequentialism "Ethical Harmonism."

The discussions in the following chapters will proceed in a developmental manner as follows: In Chapter 2, I will attempt to conceptualize harmony by deriving the connotations of five terms relevant to Xunzi's understanding of the ideal state for humans. Throughout Chapter 3, Chapter 4, and Chapter 5, where I am mainly discussing two modes of responsiveness that humans should adopt in their interactions in order to bring about harmony, I will examine two more explanatory terms for harmony in relation to these two modes. In Chapter 6, I will finally present a complete explanation of harmony by combining all the seven explanatory terms for harmony and by revealing the internal connections among them. In the previous chapters, my main focus will be on textual analyses, while, in Chapter 6, I will experimentally attempt to lay the basic foundation for the consequentialist theorization of Xunzi's thought. This experiment will be further developed under the title of "Ethical Harmonism," which is a working-label for the most defensible ethical position based on Xunzi's thought *under development*. More particularly, in Chapter 6, I will demonstrate how Ethical Harmonism as a holistic position can be developed in a way that accommodates some modern ethical sentiments mainly based on individualism, such as the sentiments associated with human rights. This demonstration is intended not only to highlight the characteristics of the holistic consequentialist position in a more engaging way, but also to show the potential for the development of the gist of Xunzi's thought as an ethical position that is more meaningful to us living in this 21st century, not merely to those in early China.

The second main aim of this dissertation is the provision of a new interpretation of two central ethical attributes in early Confucian thought, *ren* (仁) and *yi* (義). The two attributes are often used in relation to certain features of ideal personalities. On the basis of this observation, one may be tempted to claim that the centrality of the two attributes shows that early Confucian thought is an ethical position centered on some ideas comparable to character traits or virtues. My contention is that *ren* and *yi* are two ethical terms that are used primarily in relation to certain aspects of harmony; the ethical attributes that are referred to by the terms can be ascribed not only to certain kinds of personalities, but also to certain kinds of individual actions and political activities that actualize certain aspects of harmony;[5] thus, even if *ren* and *yi* are often used undeniably in relation to Confucian ideal personalities, the usage does not imply that early Confucians put the notion of ideal personalities at the center in their ethical thought. As mentioned before, Xunzi's ethical thought is centered on the ideal state for humans; hence, *ren* and *yi* should be understood primarily in relation to considerations about how to bring about the ideal state.

Even so, *ren* and *yi* are still closely related to the Confucian ideal personality. For instance, *ren* is often used as an attribute that is ascribable only to someone who loves all human in the Confucian ideal way; *yi* can be used in relation to the personality of someone who respects other people properly in accordance with various social statuses or who acts on the basis of such respect. For this reason, the study of *ren* and *yi* involves an examination that delves into Xunzi's moral psychology, especially, that concerning two modes of responsiveness to other people that

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[5] Thus, *ren* and *yi* should not be understood primarily as a sort of virtue terms that are related mainly to motives, dispositions, or character traits. Note that, in the secondary literature, the two terms have been widely translated as "cardinal virtues."

one should develop in order to create and maintain harmony: love (*qin* 親) and respect (*zun* 尊). For Xunzi, all humans can jointly bring about harmony in society only by loving and respecting one another in their interactions; each of the two attitudes is understood as an attitude that enables humans to create and maintain harmony in its own distinctive way. In Chapter 3 and Chapter 4, I will explain the nature of love and respect, especially, their psychological mechanisms. In Chapter 5, I will address the issue of how the two attitudes work cooperatively in ways that promote harmony. These discussions will show a way to derive unique conceptions of love and respect from early Confucian thought, given that *qin* and *zun* are comparable to love and respect in contemporary Western ethics. Moreover, my discussions are basically intended to provide a new interpretation of the two attributes central to early Confucian thought, which are grounded in love and respect, that is, *ren* and *yi*, especially, by demonstrating how *ren* and *yi* may systematically be understood in a consequentialist view centered on harmony as the final good.

2. Summaries of the chapters

In Chapter 2, I develop the notion of harmony by explicating the connotations of different terms that are most basic to Xunzi's conception of the ideal state for humans, such as *zhi* (治 orderliness), *he* (和 cooperation among the diverse parts of a whole), and *yi*** (一 oneness). I also derive an important connotation of another term, *li* (理), and understand it as revealing another aspect of the ideal state for humans, namely, the coherent connections established among various parts of a whole in ways that structure the whole. I suggest using "harmony" to refer

conveniently to the ideal state for humans in Xunzi's thought, which can be explained basically through the combination of the connotations of the above terms. In addition, *lun* (倫 grades among social distinctions) and *fen* (分 social statuses) are discussed as terms that add more substantive contents to the notion of harmony.

I also further explore the nature of harmony in the following two ways. First, I derive from the concept of *da li* (大理, the greatest *li*) a requirement that harmony should be conceived at the level of the entire human community. This requirement implies that any localized achievement of a similar state among a limited range of people does not measure up to harmony. Second, I explain why harmony should be understood as the kind of good that everyone has reason to pursue finally. In this process, I cast doubt on a widely accepted interpretation of Xunzi, which portrays Xunzi's ethical position as one that is concerned mainly about the optimization of the satisfaction of individuals' desires.

In Chapter 3, I discuss *ren* (仁), which is one of the fundamental attributes in early Confucian ethics, and its associated attitude, a kind of love with discrimination, namely, gradational love. I examine the nature of *ren* by asking about the ways early Confucian ethics depicts love with discrimination as an attitude that is supposed to promote concern for everyone. I explore the exact sense in which gradational love, which manifests discrimination, is understood as the most feasible way to form a well-unified community among all humans.

In this chapter, I also express my concern about a prevalent misunderstanding of early Confucian thought as a code of strongly family-centered ethics. This misunderstanding seems to be influenced by a comparative approach that has been widely appreciated as a way to extract philosophical insights from the debate between early Confucian love with discrimination and Mohist indiscriminate concern for everyone. According to this comparative approach, the early

Chinese debate bears a close resemblance to discussions about one of the most thought-provoking issues in contemporary Western ethics, that is, the tension between universalist moralities and particularist views. Particularism differs from universalism because it assigns moral priority to personal relationships. According to this comparative approach, early Confucian thought is understood as a strongly particularist view that regards the value of the family as the highest value. I show why this prevailing perception is false, first, by discerning the exact sense in which discrimination and indiscrimination are conceived in the context of early Chinese thought and, second, by clarifying the implications of the point that gradational love is approved only because of a practical concern about *how* it is possible to form a unity among all humans.

In Chapter 4, I discuss *yi* (義), another ethical attribute that is central to early Confucian ethics, and its associated attitude, respect. *Yi* is the ethical attribute that humans should adhere to, follow, act upon, or cultivate within themselves in order to create and maintain harmony. It is related especially to the realization of an aspect of harmony that is expressed in the connotations of *he* (和) and *li* (理), namely, the realization of a state in which every member of the entire human community occupies his or her proper position, plays his or her roles, and thereby is guaranteed attainment of his or her due in terms of various social shares, such as social recognition, wealth, governmental positions, tributes, and other material resources. The first part of this chapter focuses on how *yi* is understood in terms of *he* and *li*.

The second part of Chapter 4 is devoted to discussing the attitudes, such as *gui* (貴) and *zun* (尊), that enable humans to realize the aspect of the ideal state for humans that is explained above, namely, the state where each person is in his or her proper position. I suggest the use of the word "respect" to refer to those attitudes conveniently. Respect is the attitude that leads one

to control one's own desires in deference to another person's desire because of recognition of the other person's particular social status. I develop a fuller understanding of the psychological mechanisms of respect by explaining why respect should be understood as an attitude that offers second-order motives in relation to various desires. In this regard, I pay attention to two types of deferential behavior, *rang* (讓 deferential offers) and *ci* (辭 deferential declinations). The Confucian deferential offer, *rang*, is the action of offering some good or honor to others according to recognition of various social statuses of others, and the Confucian deferential declination, *ci*, is the act of declining any offer or treatment that is inappropriate to one's own social status. These two types of deferential behavior are usually understood in connection with *li** (禮, the Confucian formal rules of conduct) rather than *yi*. But my study provides a new approach to them in a way that reveals their connection with *yi*. In my approach, the two types of deferential behavior are understood as based eventually on respect for other people in the sense that those are the kind of behavior that can be performed on the basis of an attitude that serves to offer second-order motives for deferring to other people's desires in relation to the same desires of one's own, that is, respect.

In addition, I examine another attitude closely related to *yi*, that is, the attitude that involves making a demand to others for one's own due in the face of any infringement on it. Even if Xunzi does not explicitly deal with this attitude, another major early Confucian, Mencius (孟子), understands *yi* primarily in relation to this attitude. I call this attitude "self-respect" in early Confucian ethics in order to emphasize that it shares the same basis with respect for others. Self-respect still differs from respect for other people in the sense that it is generated particularly on the basis of appropriateness in relation to *one's own* social statuses, whereas respect is related

to a more general idea of appropriateness in relation to various social distinctions and social statuses.

In Chapter 5, I explore the correlation between love and respect. This topic is related to the connection between the two central ethical attributes in early Confucian thought, *ren* and *yi*. According to Xunzi, one should respond to various social statuses of other people appropriately by adopting an attitude of either love or respect; this way of interacting with others is regarded as the way to bring about harmony. Since love and respect are viewed as contributing to the creation and maintenance of harmony in their own distinctive ways, the exercise of each of the two attitudes is governed by different principles and requirements. The first part of this chapter is devoted to an attempt to establish the principles and requirements that govern love and respect.

Since love and respect are expected to contribute to the creation of harmony in different ways, issues related to conflicts between love and respect can arise because the two attitudes may guide a person in opposing ways in a given situation. These clashes are to be interpreted as nothing other than possible conflicts between *ren* and *yi*. In the second part of Chapter 5, I deal with this issue by examining some passages from the *Mencius* as well as from the *Xunzi*; these passages, which have traditionally been controversial, have often been considered as evidence for the identification of early Confucian ethics as a strongly particularist position and especially as a position that regards the value of the family as the highest value. I demonstrate that the passages may be understood in connection with the issue of the conflict between *ren* and *yi* and provide new interpretations of the passages in a way that relates them to the idea that *ren* is to be regulated by *yi* to a considerable degree (處仁以義). I also explain why this shared idea indicates that early Confucian ethics is not at all an extremely family-centered code.

As mentioned, love and respect are the two modes of responsiveness to various kinds of social statuses. The main difficulty in the process of loving or respecting others properly stems from an inability to discern various social statuses and to respond to each of them properly. Xunzi understands such an inability as one that is caused mainly by the problem of obsession of the mind (*bi* 蔽). For instance, one's inability to respect another person properly because of preoccupation with love for some other person is understood as one type of the problem. In fact, Xunzi has a concept for the aspect of the ideal state in which everyone does not suffer from the problem of obsession of the mind, namely, the concept of *zhi ping* (至平 perfect equilibrium). *Zhi ping* is eventually understood as another term that adds more substantive content to the concept of harmony in the sense that it particularly describes an aspect of harmony in which all social distinctions and social statuses are fairly measured against one another, so that humans can respond to various kinds of social statuses by adopting either love or respect without any confusion or conflict. In Chapter 5, I explain in detail that the principles and requirements that govern love and respect enable humans to avoid the problem of obsession of the mind and to bring about the state of perfect equilibrium.

In Chapter 6, first of all, I further explore the concept of harmony on the basis of the discussions in the previous chapters. On the basis of this more substantive understanding of harmony, I then engage in discussions that are in nature dissimilar to those in the previous chapters. The discussions in Chapter 6 go well beyond what can be extracted from the *Xunzi*, and this departure from the text is clearly intended in order to suggest a reasonable way to develop the most defensible ethical position that draws upon Xunzi's ethical thought.

First, I discuss the issue of how to measure the value of harmony. For instance, I address questions such as why a well-unified society that includes more diverse social statuses is better

than another equally well-unified society that includes less diverse social statuses. I also address the issue of in what sense Xunzi's ethical position can be understood as a version of holistic consequentialism by explaining the exact sense in which harmony is interpreted as the holistic final good. Finally, I present a reconstructed version of Xunzi's ethical thought under the title of "Ethical Harmonism." This reconstruction is an attempt to develop an ethical theory on the basis of the gist of Xunzi's thought in ways that make the theory better accommodate important contemporary ethical sentiments. My special efforts is made on the provision of the explanation about how Ethical Harmonism may be developed in a way that makes it more compatible with the notion of human rights, which makes perfect sense in the context of individualism. In addition, I suggest a way to develop Ethical Harmonism in a direction that makes room for a larger number of contemporary ethical sentiments, such as those associated with the individual person's freedom from the subordination to community. My basic strategy is to show that the gist of Xunzi's thought is flexible enough to accommodate such individualist sentiments to a considerable degree without losing its basic nature as a holistic ethical view.

Chapter 2 The Ideal State for Humans in Xunzi's Thought

1 Introduction

In this chapter, I derive a number of insights from the major early Chinese Confucian Xunzi's thought in order to begin developing a unique ethical theory. I reject an interpretation of Xunzi that has been widely accepted in recent scholarship on Chinese philosophy. According to this interpretation, Xunzi's explanation of morality is comparable to the views of Thomas Hobbes because, for Xunzi, morality arises from the need to optimize the long-term self-interest of individuals. This interpretation is based on an individualist idea that the fundamental locus of value lies in something that pertains to each individual, such as the satisfaction of an individual's desires. I argue, however, that this idea is not compatible with a holistic world view shared by many early Chinese thinkers.[1]

Xunzi conceives of a certain holistic state as the final good that every human has reason to pursue, not as the best means of optimizing satisfactions, but as what is assumed as the ideal state for humans. What makes Xunzi's holistic view distinctive is his understanding of the relation between the human community as a whole and individual humans as the parts of that whole. For Xunzi, an ideally integrated whole is understood in terms of maintaining the state of what I call "harmony." This state is the kind of state in which all humans relate to one another *in*

[1] Note that more complete discussions about the contrast between holism and individualism and about the exact sense in which Xunzi's ethical position should be understood as holistic will be offered in Chapter 6.

such a way that they interact by properly recognizing various kinds of persons and by appropriately responding to each of them.

I first examine the nature of the holistic state that Xunzi proposes as the final good by drawing upon careful textual and conceptual analyses. I develop the notion of harmony by grasping what Xunzi means by *zhi* (治), *he* (和), and *yi*** (一) in Section 2. I elaborate on the substantive content of harmony by explaining *lun* (倫) and *fen* (分) in Section 5. I also reveal the nature of the holistic world-view involved in harmony by giving a new interpretation to *li* (理) in Section 3. In addition, I extract another theoretical component from Xunzi's work that is needed in the establishment of an independent ethical theory, especially, through the examination of the concept of *da li* (大理) in Section 4. In Section 6, I turn to the issue of in what sense harmony is the final good that everyone has reason to pursue in a cooperative way and reconsider David S. Nivison's interpretation.

2 The Ideal State for Humans: Harmony

I suggest "harmony" as a convenient label to refer to the ideal state for humans in Xunzi's thought; this ideal state can be explained only by bringing together a few different terms, such as *zhi* (治), *he* (和), and *yi*** (一).

To begin with, the term *zhi* (治) in its use as a verb means governing or having control of something.[2] What Xunzi mainly has in mind in terms of *zhi* is the ideal ruler's activity of government. *Zhi* is also used as a noun that refers to the right kind of state that results from proper government.[3] *Zhi* as a noun is often contrasted to *luan* (亂), which refers to a chaotic state.

Xunzi significantly departs from the intellectual climate in his days by drawing the distinction between the realm of *tian* (天, Heaven/ Nature) and that of humans. By making this distinction, Xunzi rejects the idea of *tian* as the foundation of the ideal state for humans and attempts to create an independent realm for humans, which is grounded in human efforts.[4] *Zhi* is the term that Xunzi importantly uses in explaining such human independence and human efforts. For Xunzi, humans can win their independence through maintenance of the state of *zhi*.[5]

Zhi may be understood from a broader perspective than the perspective that brings in only the ideal ruler's political activities. It can be considered not merely as the kind of state that the

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[2] The term can have various things as its object, such as *qi*-energy (氣), people, a nation, or the world. See Li Disheng, *Xunzi jishi* (Taipei: Xuesheng shuju, 1979), p. 24, p. 50, p. 379, and p. 490.

[3] For instance, "治生乎君子, 亂生乎小人 (Order is born of the gentleman; chaos is produced by the small man)." *Xunzi jishi*, p. 163. The translation is John Knoblock's. See his *Xunzi: A Translation and Study of the Complete Works* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), vol. 2, p. 96. In the following footnotes, translations of phrases or passages from the *Xunzi* will be Knoblock's, unless otherwise indicated.

[4] Xunzi proposes to think that the body of humans is an equal member of the triad, *tian*, Earth, and humans. "天行有常, 不為堯存, 不為桀亡. **應之以治**則吉, 應之以亂則凶. …明於天人之分. … 不與天爭職. 天有其時, 地有其財, **人有其治**, 夫是之謂能參." *Xunzi jishi*, pp. 362-4. The highlighted parts are translated as follow: "If you respond to the constancy of Nature's course with good government [*zhi*], there will be good fortune; if you respond to it with disorder, there will be misfortune. ... Man his government [*zhi*]. ..." See Knoblock, *Xunzi*, vol. 3, 15.

[5] See footnote 4.

ruler attempts to bring about, but also as the kind of state in which every human interact in ideal manners. Thus understood, *zhi*, used as a noun in Xunzi's work, can refer to what I call "the ideal state for humans." Then, the act of *zhi*, namely the ideal ruler's political activity, can also be understood as the kind of activity that aims to bring about the ideal state of *zhi*. On the basis of this understanding of *zhi*, many occurrences of it throughout the *Xunzi* can better be understood. For instance, *zhi* is on one occasion said to refer to *li*-yi* (禮義).[6] It is plausible to understand *zhi* in this context as referring to the ideal state that *li*-yi* is expected to bring about in human society.[7] *Li*-yi* is usually translated as "ritual propriety and righteousness," and since both *li** and *yi* are central to early Confucian thought, this compound noun is often used to refer symbolically to Confucian ethics and politics.

A question remains about what Xunzi has in mind in more concrete terms regarding the state of *zhi*. Xunzi on one occasion suggests that, since it is impossible for the ruler to govern or control every single thing or being in the world directly or by himself, the ruler should supervise the overall management of the world, mainly by assigning different social statuses and roles to the appropriate individuals and by making certain that each role is completed correctly.[8] Then,

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[6] "禮義之謂治, 非禮義之謂亂. ("well-ordered [*zhi*]" refers to [*li*-yi*] and that "chaotic" refers to what is contrary to them.)" *Xunzi jishi*, p. 45; Knoblock, *Xunzi*, vol. 1, p. 179.

[7] Also see the following: "故必將有師法之化, 禮義之道, 然後出於辭讓, 合於文理, 而歸於治. (Therefore it is necessary that there be a transformation through a teacher and the law as well as the Way of ritual propriety and rectitude, before they can take as their starting point deferential politeness, then combines with decorousness and principle, and before things end in good order [*zhi*].)" *Xunzi jishi*, pp. 538-9; Knoblock, *Xunzi*, vol. 3, p.150.

[8] This point is clearly made in the following passage: "相高下, 視墝肥, 序五種, 君子不如農人. 通財貨, 相美惡, 辨貴賤, 君子不如賈人. 設規矩, 陳繩墨, 便備用, 君子不如工人. …若夫譹德而定次, 量能而授官, 使賢不肖皆得其位, 能不能皆得其官, 萬物得其宜, 事變得其應, … 言必當理, 事必當務, 是然後君子之所長也. (The gentleman is inferior to the farmer in appraising high and low-lying land, in

the state of *zhi* can be understood substantively as the kind of state in which all members of society treat one another appropriately according to their various social statuses and complete their social roles properly.

Xunzi once uses another expression, "*qun ju* ***he*** *yi** zhi da*o" (群居和一之道), in relation to a similar state in which all humans have different social statuses and roles. The expression refers to the way to enable humans to live together in cooperation with one another (*he*) and in unity (*yi***).[9] It can be inferred then that the ideal state for humans in Xunzi's thought can be understood in terms of *he* and *yi***, as well as in terms of *zhi*.

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assaying the fertility or barrenness of fields, and in determining the distribution of the Five Foods. He is inferior to the trader in being thoroughly knowledgeable about goods and products, in appraising their fineness or baseness, and in differentiating their value or worthlessness. He is inferior to the artisan in placing the compass and square, in applying the blackened marking-line, and in ease of handling the various tools of the trades. He is inferior to the likes of Hui Shi and Deng Xi in being indifferent to the real nature of truth and falsity and the true nature of what is the case and what is not, so that the one blurs and confuses the other and ridicule is heaped on them both. But when it is the question of assessing in discourse relative inner power and fixing the order of precedence in accord with it, or of measuring ability and assigning office accordingly, to causing both the worthy and unworthy to obtain suitable places, the capable and incapable to get their proper positions, or of causing the myriad of things to get their due, or of causing each affair and changed circumstances to obtain its proper response, or of causing Shen Dao and Mo Di to make no progress in disseminating their doctrines, or of causing Hui Shi and Deng Xi not to insinuate artfully their investigations, or of causing speech to be certain to accord with natural principles of order and undertakings to be certain to be properly attended to- then in these, and only in these, is the superiority of the gentleman to be found.)" *Xunzi jishi*, p.131; Knoblock, *Xunzi*, vol. 2, pp. 71-2.

[9] "故先王案為之制禮義以分之, 使有貴賤之等, 長幼之差, 知愚能不能之分, 皆使人載其事, 而各得其宜. 然後使穀祿多少厚薄之稱, 是夫**群居和一之道**也 (Accordingly, the Ancient Kings acted to control them with regulations, ritual, and moral principles, in order thereby to divide society into classes, creating therewith differences in status between the noble and base, disparities between the privileges of age and youth, and the division of the wise from the stupid, the able from the incapable. All of this caused men to perform the duties of their station in life and each to receive his due; only after this had been done was the amount and substance of the emolument paid by grain made to fit their respective stations. This indeed is **the Way to make the whole populace live together in harmony and unity**)." *Xunzi jishi*, p. 69; Knoblock, *Xunzi*, vol.1, p. 195.

An important connotation of *he* is one that the term has especially when it is used in contrast with *tong* (同). *Tong* basically means "the same" or "equal," but, when *tong* and *he* are contrasted, *tong* means "homogenizing" or "homogenization," while *he* refers to cooperation among differing parts of a whole *without their becoming similar or the same*, or to a state resulting from such cooperation.[10] In the *Xunzi*, there is such an expression as "the human *he*" (人和), which describes a feature of human society.[11]

*Yi*** refers to oneness or unification. In the *Xunzi*, it is often used in relation to one of the central concepts in early Confucian thought, *ren* (仁). *Ren* is widely translated as benevolence or compassion when it is used in its narrower sense *or* as humaneness in its broader sense. The idea underlying *yi*** is the development of one united whole among all humans; this development is figuratively understood as the formation of one body. For instance, Xunzi thinks that, under the rule of a *ren* leader a hundred of generals on a battlefield would form one mind (*yi*** *xin* 一心), and all subordinates would be like arms and hands that protect the face and eyes, and guard the

[10] Important textual evidences for this connotation of *he* are the followings: "子曰 君子和而不同, 小人同而不和" in *Lunyu* (13:23) in *Shisanjing zhushu* (Taipei: Yi wen yin shu guan, 1965), p. 15. For reference, Christoph Harbsmeier's translation of the passage is the following: "The Master said, "the superior man is in harmony but is not conformist; the petty man is conformist but is not in harmony." See the web-based *Thesaurus Linguae Sericae* (TLS). In interpreting this passage, Yang Bojun (楊伯峻) attends to the following passage in the *Zuozhuan*: "公曰 和與同異乎 對曰異. 和如羹焉. 水火醯醢鹽梅. 以烹魚肉. 燀之以薪. 宰夫和之. 齊之以味. 濟其不及. 以洩其過. 君子食之. 以平其心. 君臣亦然. 君所謂可. 而有否焉. 臣獻其否. 以成其可. 君所謂否. 而有可焉. 臣獻其可. 以去其否. 是以政平而不干民無爭心. (*Shisanjing zhushu*, pp. 211-2). Yang also attends to a passage of *Guoyu* (*Shisanjing zhushu*, pp. 515-6). See Yang Bojun, *Lunyu yizhu*, (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 2002), p. 142

[11] This feature is contrasted with the features of Heaven and Earth, namely Heaven's timely patterns, such as the seasons (天時), and the Earth's processes of supplying fruitful resources to humans (地利). See *Xunzi jishi*, p. 210 and p. 406.

chest and stomach.[12] Xunzi also once describes the ideal ruler as someone who can govern (*zhi*) a multitude of people within the seas as though managing a single person (*yi*** *ren** 一人).[13]

I suggest "harmony" as a convenient label for the ideal state for humans, which can be understood most basically in terms of the combination of the three terms just explained.[14] For Xunzi, the ideal state is the kind of state in which all humans treat one another according to their various social statuses and perform their social roles properly, so that they become harmonized with one another as if they formed one body. Briefly saying, the ideal state for humans is a state in which all humans live together in harmony.[15]

3 The Holistic Concept *Li* (理)

My contention is that harmony reflects Xunzi's holistic world-view. To show the nature of this world view, I examine a concept that has not been fully understood in the secondary

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[12] ibid., p. 312.

[13] "千人萬人之情, 一人之情也 (Accordingly, the essential nature of 1,000 or 10,000 men is in that of a single man). ... 治海內之眾, 若使一人 (makes well ordered the multitude within the seas, as though in the service or a single man)." Ibid., p. 50; Knoblock, *Xunzi*, vol. 1, pp.179-80.

[14] In Chapter 6, Harmony will eventually be explained in relation to the connotations of seven terms, including the above three terms, on the basis of discussions in the following chapters. Nevertheless, the above three terms will remain as the central terms that explain harmony. The reason is that, as I will explain eventually in Chapter 6, harmony can be understood at a more general level as referring to the nature of a certain unity formed by diverse parts in certain orderly ways; this understanding is derivable basically from the connotations of the above three terms.

[15] This usage should not be confused with the English word "harmony," even if the English word in fact has a comparable meaning, or with any occurrences of the usage in the secondary literature on early Chinese thought.

literature on early Chinese thought, *li* (理).[16] In the process of this interpretation, what I mean by holism and the holistic nature of harmony will accordingly be elaborated.[17]

Li is closely related to a few other important concepts that appear throughout the *Xunzi*. Among them is *dao* (道). This term often refers to *either* the only acceptable way to govern in the political sense *or* to the right way to lead one's life in its broader ethical sense. When the term is applied in the political sense, Xunzi uses various expressions, such as "the way of a true lord,"[18] "the way of the ruler of humans,"[19] "the way of the ancient kings,"[20] "the way of a hundred kings,"[21] or "the way of the later kings."[22] These expressions all refer to the way a ruler ought to govern the world, and, therefore, they may be labeled as *zhi dao* (治道),[23] namely the

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[16] I show that this concept had already been a foundational concept in Xunzi's thought long before neo-Confucians, including Zhu Xi, laid the foundation of their views, as well known, in connection with their understandings of this concept. In relation to neo-Confucian thought, the term is standardly translated as principle. But, my study shows how much such a simple rendition would be misleading in the context of early Chinese thought.

[17] However, note that I do not mean that *li* is the only holistic concept among those related to harmony, but that *li* is the concept that shows the characteristics of Xunzi's holistic thought most clearly. The characteristics will further be elaborated in Chapter 6, in which I will deal with how a holistic ethical position based on Xunzi's thought may possibly accommodate considerable part of modern ethical sentiments based on individualism; in doing it, I will explain the characteristic of Xunzi's holistic view chiefly by highlighting this holistic concept, *li*, which is unquie to early Confucian thought.

[18] "君道." *Xunzi jishi*, p. 281.

[19] "人主之道." Ibid.

[20] "先王之道." Ibid., p. 65, p. 68, p. 344, p. 345, and p. 432.

[21] "百王之道." Ibid., p. 50 and p. 143.

[22] "後王之道." Ibid., p. 50.

[23] Ibid., p. 405.

proper way to govern or the proper way to bring about the ideal state for humans, that is, harmony. Xunzi once declares that two different *dao*'s cannot exist, and he understands the only acceptable *dao* in terms of the greatest *li* (大理),[24] which will be explicated in the following section.

In the *Xunzi*, *li* is also closely related to *li** (禮), that is, the Confucian formal rules of conduct. *Li** is even once characterized in terms of *li* through the statement that *li** is the kind of formal rule that reflects the unchangeable *li*.[25] In addition, throughout the *Xunzi*, *li* is often associated with *wen* (文); the pair *wen-li* (文理) is often used in parallel with another pair *li*-yi* (禮義). As briefly explained above, *li*-yi* refers representatively to Confucian morality.[26] *Wen* refers collectively to cultural attributes that have been cumulatively created by human effort. Xunzi uses this term to emphasize that Confucian morality is created through human endeavor.

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[24] "凡人之患, 蔽於一曲, 而闇於大理. 治則復經, 兩疑則惑矣. 天下無二道 (it is the common flaw of men to be blinded by some small point of the truth and to shut their minds to the Great ordering Principle [*da li*]. If cured of this flaw, they can return to the classical standard, but if they remain with double principles, they will stay suspicious and deluded. The world does not have two Ways, and the sage is not of two minds.)." Ibid., p. 472; Knoblock, *Xunzi*, vol. 3, p. 100. Note that, throughout this dissertation, Knoblock's translations are offered for readers who are not familiar with classical Chinese. His translation is the most complete one among existing English translations. However, I would not entirely accept Knoblock's translations of some important terms. For instance, in the above passage, *da li* is translated as "the Great ordering Principle," but I would not translate it in that way. I would leave the term mostly untranslated and translate it as "the greatest *li*." This concept will be explained in detail in the below.

[25] "*Li** (禮) is the *li* (理) that does not admit of any alternation (禮也者, 理之不可易者也)." *Xunzi jishi*, p. 463. The same passage also occurred in the *Liji*. See *Liji*, *Yue Ji*, *Shisanjing zhushu*, p. 684. There is also a more direct definition of *li** in terms of *li* in the *Liji*: "禮也者, 理也" (*Shisanjing zhushu*, p. 854).

[26] See *Xunzi jishi*, p. 419, p. 430, p. 538, p. 542, and p. 545.

The parallel use of *wen-li* and *li*-yi* seems to show that, for Xunzi, *li* is indeed one of the central concepts.[27]

In its earliest use in the *Shijing*, *li* means making divisions or establishing boundaries between fields.[28] But the term does not simply have to do with the act of dividing, since it importantly suggests an underlying intention of government; that is, the boundaries between fields in a country are established for the purpose of governing the country properly.[29] *Li* has to do with the kind of divisions that is made in order to create a state where the whole, such as an entire country, is well governed and well structured.[30] The same connotation can be derived from a use of the term in the *Hanfeizi*, in which *li* applies to the act of giving a certain pattern to materials, such as a piece of jade, in order to polish them.[31] Imagine that a raw piece of jade is cut and divided so that it may serve as a ritual ornament. Through this treatment, the jade comes

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[27] It was suggested by the influential commentator Wang Xianqian that the two compound nouns are in fact interchangeable or can even be equated. The discussion here will make it clear how bold and hasty that conclusion is. See Wang Xianqian, *Xunzi jijie* (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1988), p.36.

[28] "迺疆迺理." *Shijing zhushu* in *Shisanjing zhushu*, p. 548; "先王疆理天下." *Zuozhuan* in *Shisanjing zhushu*, p. 425.

[29] Tang Junyi also argues that the initial use of *li* in early China should be understood primarily in this sense. Tang especially emphasizes that *li* as an activity should involve a certain human intention, such as the aesthetic intention underlying jewellery work. See his seminal study of *li* in his *Zhongguo zhe xue yuan lun: dao lun pian* (Taipei: Taiwan xue sheng shu ju yin xing, 1980), pp. 5-26.

[30] For this reason, it is often translated simply as "governing" or "controlling" in some context. For instance, Knoblock translates "理萬變" (*Xunzi jishi*, p. 268) as "controls the myriad transformations," (Knoblock, *Xunzi,* vol. 2, p.179) and translates "理物" as "administering [external things]" (ibid., vol. 3, p. 20).

[31] "王乃使玉人理其璞." Chen Qiyou, *Hanfeizi jishi* (Taipei: Hua zheng, 1977), p. 238.

to have many different parts and certain beautiful patterns that confer an aesthetically pleasing structure on the piece as a whole.[32]

In relation to this meaning and its connotation, *li* as a noun refers to the differences or distinguishing characteristics of things or beings in a well-ordered whole. *Li* can be conceived not only in relation to the differences among the parts of a small object, such as the texture of a piece of jade, but also in relation to the patterned characteristics of all things in the universe. It is important to note that the kind of difference that *li* connotes is that which is conceivable only in relation to a particular well-structured whole. This implies that the differing parts of a whole are coherently connected with one another in a way that provides a structure for the whole.[33]

So, *li* must be understood in relation to *both* a particular thing that can be thought of as a whole *and* its parts. The placement of emphasis, however, may vary from case to case. *Li* may be understood with an emphasis *either* on a certain whole *or* on the parts of a certain whole. For instance, in the aforementioned case related to jade, *li* has to do mainly with a piece of well-treated jade as a whole. The emphasis is on the totality of the whole thing rather than *either* on the differentiated parts of the whole *or* on certain patterns that emerge from the differences

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[32] *Shuowen jiezi*, China's first character dictionary from the early Han dynasty, explains *li* in this sense, namely in relation to working on jade (治玉).

[33] *Li* is also used in relation to words or doctrines; in this sense, its meaning relates to the disclosure of the internal structure of something, which is not immediately understandable, in order to make it more accessible. For instance, see "理恍惚之言"(*Hanfeizi jishi*, p. 1109) This usage is based on the assumption that a group of words as a whole are understandable when they are well organized and work together to make sense in a certain way. Many occurrences of *li* in the *Mozi* can be understood in this sense. For instance, see the following sentence: "[夫辭]以故生, 以**理**長, 以類行者也." (*Mozi xiangu*, p. 413). A. C. Graham's translation is the following: "The proposition is something which is engendered in accordance with the thing as it inherently is, becomes full-grown according to a pattern, and 'proceeds' according to the kind." See his *Later Mohist logic, ethics and science*, (Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, 1978), Section 3·10. Graham basically translates *li* as "patterns," and he means the recurring patterns that organize a certain thing.

among the parts. Another example of the same kind of emphasis is *tian li* (天理), namely the Heavenly *li*.[34] In this case, *li* is conceived in relation to the entire universe, which includes all things and beings. All things and beings in the universe, various phenomena caused by the interactions of all things and beings, and recurring patterns that emerge from those phenomena are understood as the different parts of the universe as a whole.[35]

In contrast, *li* can be used through an emphasis on the distinct parts of a whole or on the characteristics of the parts. For instance, the expression "things have *li*" from the *Hanfeizi* is to be translated as "things have their own distinguishing features."[36] A similar use can be found in the following passage from the *Xunzi*: "In general, the faculty of knowing belongs to the inborn nature of humans. That which is knowable is the *li* of a thing or being."[37] In this use of *li*, the emphasis is on the parts of a whole, so that the term can plausibly be translated as "the

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[34] For instance, there are a few occurrences of "天理" in the *Zhuangzi* and the *Hanfeizi*. See Wang Xianqian, *Zhungzi jijie* (Beijing: Zhuanghua, 1897), p.29 and p. 123; *Hanfeizi jishi*, p.512.

[35] Note that, more accurately saying, *tian li* has to do with what belong to the realm of Heaven, given that early Chinese thinkers usually draw the distinction between Heaven and Earth. Moreover, if Xunzi had used this expression, he would have certainly used it in a way that excludes what is captured by *li* within the realm of humans.

[36] The entire sentence goes as follows: "If things have their own distinguishing features [, namely, *li*, in relation to which each of them is differentiated in the overall context of the whole universe], they cannot interfere with one another (物有理, 不可以相薄)" See *Hanfeizi jishi*, p. 365. Also see the followings: "Each of the myriad things has its own distinguishing features, and the *dao* thoroughly takes into account all of the features of the myriad things (萬物各異理, 而道盡稽萬物之理)." Ibid.; "The long and the short, the large and the small, roundness and squareness, the hard and the fragile, the heavy and the light, and the bright and the dark are called distinguishing features. When distinguishing features are measured, things are easily differentiated (短長大小方圓堅脆輕重白黑之謂理, 理定而物易割也)." Ibid., p. 377.

[37] "凡以知, 人之性也; 可以知, 物之理也." *Xunzi jishi*, p. 498.

distinguishing features of things." In these instances, *li* is understood primarily through an emphasis on the parts of a whole, rather than on a whole.

The important point is this: *li* does not refer to a feature that an individual thing or being essentially possesses independently of its relation to a larger entity to which it belongs; instead, it refers to the kind of feature that is conceivable only against the background of a larger entity as a whole, to which the thing or being belongs, and only in relation to every other part of the whole. This whole-part relation reflects a unique way of thought, namely a tendency to first capture the overall background or a larger entity as a whole, against which each individual thing or being is then understood as a part.[38] This is the basic idea that I suggest to call "a holistic whole-part relation." Harmony reflects such a holistic whole-part relation.

In the holistic whole-part relation, parts of a particular whole are based upon divisions that are made to bring about a state in which the whole is well structured, that is, in a way that coherently connects the differing parts of the whole with one another in a unified totality. The feature can in fact be restated in terms of *zhi*, *he*, and *yi***. In fact, *li* is an explanatory term for harmony. As mentioned at the beginning of this section, Xunzi understands *dao* in terms of *li*. For Xunzi, the proper way to bring about harmony is explained in terms of *li*. Harmony embodies the holistic view outlined above.

4 The Requirement of the Greatest *Li* (大理)

[38] Graham also observes a similar feature. "[...] the Chinese tendency, ... to treat things as divisions of the universe rather than the universe as the aggregate of things ... Things are not conceived as isolated each with its own essential and accidental properties; on the contrary, distinguishing characteristics are seen as mostly relative." See A.C. Graham, *Disputers of the Tao* (La Salle, Illinois: Open Court, 1989), p. 286.

Li can be conceived at various levels. It can be thought of not merely at the level of a small object, such as a piece of jade, but also at the level of an entity that encompasses the myriad things and beings over the world. That is, the largeness or smallness of an entity and the broadness of the range of things or beings an entity in question includes do not matter, *provided that* each of them can constitute an entity as a whole. For this reason, once many different parts of a particular whole have been conceived, each of the parts can be considered as an entity that is constituted by its own different parts that can get harmonized in a way that promotes unification at its own level. This means, again, that each subdivision can have its own subdivisions. This importantly implies that almost infinite numbers of *li*'s are conceivable. In fact, this implication is captured by some expressions in some early Chinese texts: *wan li* (萬理), namely myriads of *li*'s,[39] and *wan wu zhi li* (萬物之理), namely, the *li*'s of the myriad things or beings.[40] These are expressions for a very large number of *li*'s conceivable at various levels. In relation to the notion of a myriad of *li*'s, we may conceive of the kind of *li* at the highest level, which encompasses all myriads of *li*'s. Xunzi in fact has such a notion, and it is to be highlighted as one of the most important notions in his thought. The term for the notion is *da li* (大理), namely, the greatest *li*.

To grasp the greatest *li*, we need to understand the connotation of the term "*da* (大)." *Da* is basically used to describe something that is huge in its amount, size, degree, or the like. Its meaning is "big," "huge," or "great." The term is also often used to describe something that is important or fundamental. So, one might be tempted to translate *da li* as the great *li* or the

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[39] *Hanfeizi jishi*, p. 365.

[40] See *Zhuangzi jijie*, p. 585, p. 735, and p. 1069; *Hanfeizi jishi*, p. 365 and p. 379.

fundamental *li*.[41] However, these translations simply miss a crucial idea underlying the conception of *da li*, namely, the idea of the highest degree in inclusion or coverage. To capture this idea, the term is to be translated in a superlative form, that is, the *greatest li*. A clear example of the use of *da* with this meaning can be found in the following sentence from the *Zhuangzi*: "So extremely big that nothing is not included in it, it is called *da yi*** (大一), namely, the greatest unity."[42] In addition, in a passage in the *Xunzi*, the term "*da*" is used very clearly in the same sense.[43] In there, the use of the term "*wu* (物)" is explained as an all-encompassing name for things or beings in general; for this reason, it is called the "*da* general name." It is explained in the passage that the *da* general name, *wu*, can be conceived by maximizing the range of the application of the term *wu* as much as possible till up to the extent that the range comes to encompass all things or beings. As such, *da* in this case involves the idea of the highest degree in a particular quality. In this respect, the *da* general name is to be translated as the *greatest* general name.

In the same vein, I propose that *da li* be translated as the *greatest li*, not just as the great *li*. The greatest *li* can be conceived by attempting to increase the range of its application as much as

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[41] For instance, Knoblock translates *da li* as "the Great ordering Principle." Knoblock, *Xunzi*, vol. 3, p. 100.

[42] *Zhuangzi jijie*, p. 1102.

[43] "Thus, although the myriad things are of multifarious types, there are occasions when we want to refer to them collectively by name. One thus calls them "things" (*wu* 物). "Thing" is ***da*** *gong ming* (the name of greatest generality). By extending the process, one makes terms more general names, and from these generalized names one further generalizes until one reaches the point where there are no further generalizations to be drawn, and only then does one stop. (故萬物雖眾, 有時而欲遍舉之, 故謂之物. 物也者, 大共名也. 推而共之, 共則有共, 至於無共然後止.)" *Xunzi jishi*, p.515; Knoblock, *Xunzi*, vol. 3, p.130.

possible till up to the extent that the range comes to encompass all relevant things or beings. Then, the greatest *li* can be conceived only in relation to the biggest entity, such as the entire human society. And, it is to be understood as the kind of *li* that includes all other conceivable *li*'s as its subdivisions. In other words, the greatest *li* should be able to cover all of the myriad *li*'s as its subdivisions.[44]

Harmony can be conceived in terms of the relation between the myriad *li*'s and the greatest *li* that encompasses them. Harmony at the level of the entire human society can be understood in terms of the harmonization among the myriad *li*'s, which results in the realization of the greatest *li* at the level of the entire human society. As mentioned above, Xunzi understands the *da*o, namely the right way of government or the right way of leading one's life, in connection with the greatest *li*.[45] This shows that, for instance, the right way to lead one's life should be considered at the level of such largest entity as the entire human society and in relation to all the kinds of *li*'s involved in the society. From this idea, we can derive a requirement involved in conceiving harmony: to realize the harmony at the level of the entire human society, one should

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[44] For Xunzi, the greatest *li* is considered mainly in relation to the entire human society that holistically encompasses all conceivable human groups as well as individual humans, rather than any other even larger entity, such as the universe. This can be explained in relation to his clear distinction between the realm of Heaven and that of humans, which I shortly explained in the above. Xunzi thinks that humans can become one equal member of the triad, along with Heaven and Earth, through realizing their own independent harmony. For this reason, he conceives of the greatest *li* only in relation to humans. This might be considered a limitation of his thought. For his focus on the realm of humans might possibly lead to excessive anthropocentrism. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the limitation would not imply that the essence of his ethical position is anthropocentric in nature. His focus on the realm of humans might be explained as a result of a sort of agnostic attitude that he took toward the realm of Heaven. He wanted to remain noncommittal about the unknowable principles of Heaven. It seems that, under the influence of such an attitude, he did not know how to envision ideal interactions between the realm of humans and other realms in the universe, such as the realms of other animals.

[45] "凡人之患, 蔽於一曲, 而闇於大理. 治則復經, 兩疑則惑矣. 天下無二道." *Xunzi jishi*, p. 472.

take into account all conceivable *li*'s and deliberate whether those *li*'s get harmonized and well structured to be unified. In other words, harmony is the kind of concept that is conceivable by considering all possible differences that have emerge and will potentially emerge from human social interactions. This implies that the maintenance of a certain state, which would be similar to harmony, within a limited range of humans is not the kind of ideal state that Xunzi has in mind in terms of harmony. I call the requirement "the requirement of the greatest *li*."

The above rather abstract notions associated with *li* can be illustrated as follows: The entire human society is constitutive of various kinds of units, such as the state, families, many different social groups, and various human relationships, including relationships that involve only two persons. The relation between the entire human society and the other units or relationships can be understood in terms of the holistic whole-part relation, and, therefore, in terms of *li*. At the same time, each unit or relationship can also be regarded as a whole, for instance, a familial unit, which has its own parts, such as its family members. Then, the relation between a family and its members can again be understood in terms of the holistic whole-part relation, and, thereby, in terms of *li*. The expression, myriads of *li*'s, is used to refer collectively to the holistic relations among various social units or relationships and their own parts. The greatest *li* in turn refers to the relation between all conceivable social units or relationships, each of which is a holistic whole, and the entire human society understood as a whole that encompasses those social units or relationships. In the following section, this illustration will be understood more concretely in terms of social distinctions and social status.

5 The Substantive Content of Harmony: *Lun* (倫) and *Fen* (分)

Xunzi conceives of *li* in relation to a more basic kind of social unit, and he thinks of the entire human society in terms of the totality of that kind of social unit: social statuses, broadly construed, that are based on various social distinctions. Two relevant terms are *lun* (倫) and *fen* (分).

One of the central issues for Xunzi is what is called the problem of obsession of the mind. Briefly explained, the problem is that one cannot properly discriminate among different kinds of persons, due to the fact that one is obsessed by a particular kind. An individual may be so drawn by a particular kind that he or she is incapable of treating any other kind of person properly.[46] Xunzi on one occasion mentions that what is clouded by obsession of the mind is *lun* (倫).[47]

Xunzi once understands *lun*, along with another term, *lei* (類), as what define *li* (理).[48] In many annotations to the *Xunzi*, *lun* is often equated with *li*.[49] This equation is not an accurate

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[46] See Chapter 21 of the *Xunzi.* This problem of obsession of the mind will be explicated in Chapter 5.

[47] 兼陳萬物而中縣衡焉. 是故眾異不得相蔽以亂其倫也. 何謂衡? 曰 道."*Xunzi jishi*, p. 482. This passage can be translated as follows: "[The sage] lays out all the myriad things and matches how each of them settles on the suspended balance (*heng* 衡). For this reason, the multitude of differences among the myriad things are not mutually beclouded (*bi* 蔽), and, thereby, proper orders (*lun* 倫) among them are not disturbed. What is the balance (*heng*)? It is the *dao*." As translated here, *lun* in this context refers to proper orders of external things over the world. Such orders are to be understood as based on the *lun* of humans, which I will later interpret as the Confucian set of social distinctions. The idea underlying the above passage is that external things over the world should be distributed to individual humans according to social distinctions, and, in this sense, Xunzi expresses improper distribution as the disturbance of *lun* among external things over the world.

[48] "倫類以為理." Ibid., p. 298.

[49] Yang Jing (楊倞) in the oldest annotation of the *Xunzi* interpreted *lun* in terms of *li*. See Wang Xianqian, *Xunzi jijie*, p. 394.

interpretation.[50] Both *lun* and *lei* are related to particular kinds of difference and, therefore, they are related to *li*, given that *li* has to do with the differences among the parts of a whole. *Lun* is often equated with one of usages of *lei*, but *lei* refers to "categories" in general, whereas *lun* has to do with subdivisions of *lei*. *Lun* refers to differences among members of the same *lei*, such as grades or hierarchical orders among the members.[51]

To elaborate the relation between *lun* and *lei*, it is worth examining Xunzi's distinction between humans and other animals. Xunzi draws the distinction by pointing to a particular kind of *bian* (辨) that pertains only to humans.[52] *Bian* refers to the capacity for discrimination in general, and Xunzi understands the characteristic of humans in terms of their having an advanced

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[50] My diagnosis for this widely accepted inaccuracy is that the concept of *li* has never been clearly understood in any annotations and translations; accordingly, *lun* has never been accurately interpreted. For instance, the *lun* in the quoted passage of footnote 47 has been understood as follows: *Li Disheng* first equates the *lun* in the passage with *li* and interprets it as the realities of the myriad things. See his *Xunzi jishi*, p. 484. Xiong Gongze also first equates the *lun* in the passage with *li* and understands it as what is right and what is wrong about the myriad things. See his *Xunzi xinzhu xinyi* (Taipei: Commercial Press, 1975), p. 428. Knoblock translates the *lun* in the passage as "their proper positions" (Knoblock, *Xunzi*, vol.3, p.103). Homer H. Dubs translates the same term as "the organizing principles of life." See his *The Works of Hsüntze* (Taipei: Confucius Publishing Co., 1972). These examples show the confusion involved in the interpretation of this term. Moreover, my previous study of *li* shows to what extent these interpretations and translations of *li* are loose and misleading in understanding *lun* accurately.

[51] Many dictionaries often equate *lun* with *lei*. For instance, see the entry for *lei* in the *Hanyu Da Cidian* (Xianggang :Shang wu yin shu guan, 1998). On the other hand, the *Shuowen jiezi zhu* offers an illuminating interpretation of *lun* in terms of *bei* (輩), which means a hundred of military wagons; yet, more importantly, it explains that *lun* can be extended to mean the orderly *sequence* within the group of wagons. This extended meaning of *lun* is compatible with my interpretation of it above.

[52] "故**人之所以為人者**, 非特以其二足而無毛也, **以其有辨也. 夫禽獸有父子, 而無父子之親**, 有牝牡而無男女之別 (Hence, what makes a man human lies not in his being a featherless biped but in his ability to draw boundaries. Even though wild animals have parents and offspring, there is no natural affection between them as between father and son, and though there are male and female of the species, there is no proper separation of sexes. Hence, the proper way of Man lies in nothing other than his ability to draw boundaries). 故人道莫不有辨. 辨莫大於分, 分莫大於禮, 禮莫大於聖王." *Xunzi jishi*, p.79-80; Knoblock, *Xunzi*, vol. 1, p. 206.

capacity for discrimination, which enables humans to perceive more subtle differences, such as differences among members of the same category. For Xunzi, only humans are capable of discerning various complex relations, such as the relation between father and son and the differences between the sexes; thereby, humans, unlike other animals, can treat members of their own species in various ways. In more specific terms, Xunzi's idea is that even though some other animals that have the basic capacity for perception (*zhi**, 知) can have indiscriminate affection (*ai* 愛) for the members of their own kind (*lei*), only humans can have a more developed capacity to discriminate among more subtle differences, so that they can have more sophisticated modes of responsiveness, such as *qin* (親, love) and *zun* (尊, respect).[53] Such more subtle differences among members of the same kind are the main referents of *lun*. In other words, for Xunzi, only humans can discern the *lun* of the same human *lei*.

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[53] Xunzi explains this point in the following passage: "凡生天地之間者, 有血氣之屬必有知, **有知之屬莫不愛其類**. 今夫大鳥獸則失亡其**群匹**, 越月踰時, 則必反鉛, 過故鄉, 則必徘徊焉, 鳴號焉, 躑躅焉, 踟躕焉, 然後能去之也. 小者是燕爵, 猶有啁啾之頃焉, 然後能去之. **故有血氣之屬莫知於人, 故人之於其親也, 至死無窮** (As a general principle, all creatures that live between Heaven and Earth and have blood and breath are certain to possess awareness. Having awareness, each of them loves its own kind. Consider the case of large birds and animals: if one loses its mate or is separated from its group, then even after a month or season has passed, it is sure to circle when it passes its old home. It looks about, round and round, crying and calling, sometimes moving, sometimes stopping, gazing about uncertainly and hesitantly, before it can leave the place. Even the small birds like swallows and sparrows chatter and cry for a few moments before they can leave. Hence, since no creature with blood and breath has more awareness than man, the feeling of a man for his parents is not exhausted even till death)." *Xunzi jishi*, p. 445; Knoblock, *Xunzi*, vol. 3, p. 69.

In this passage, Xunzi explains *qin*, but not *zun*. My contention is that *qin* and *zun* are two representative modes of responsiveness that humans can develop on the basis of their capacity for discrimination. This needs more detailed explanation, and I will deal with this issue throughout Section 2 of Chapter 4.

Xunzi's main concern is with what he calls "the *lun* of humans" (*ren* lun*, 人倫).[54] This is standardly rendered as human relationships in many translations of the *Mencius* and the *Xunzi*.[55] To approximate the connotation of *lun* explained above, however, I suggest translating it as "social distinctions," which place various hierarchical grades or social ranks on different individuals. On the basis of this basic meaning of the *lun* of humans, what Xunzi actually has in mind in terms of it is the proper ways to interact with other people in accordance with the Confucian set of social distinctions. This idea is shared by Mencius: Mecius explains the *lun* of humans in terms of the five standard ways of social interaction as follows: "love (*qin*) between father and son, appropriateness according to social distinctions (義 *yi*) between ruler and subject, distinction between husband and wife, precedence of the old over the young, and trustworthiness between friends."[56]

An elaboration on the *lun* of humans involves an explanation of another term closely associated with *lun*: *fen* (分). Its verb form *fen* (分) basically means dividing a thing or things into different parts or groups. When *fen* is used in relation to social distinctions, it refers to the activity of distributing various social shares according to social distinctions. The noun *fen*

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[54] See Ibid., p. 69 and p. 157.

[55] For instance, D. C. Lau, *Mencius* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, 2003), p. 115. James Legge's translation is "human relations". Knoblock uses a similar translation for the use of the expression in the *Xunzi*, the relationships of mankind." But he also uses another translation, "the grades of men."

[56] "教以人倫: 父子有親, 君臣有義, 夫婦有別, 長幼有序, 朋友有信," in the *Mencius* 3A4.

basically means the allotment that results from such a distribution.[57] When this noun is used in connection with social distinctions, it can plausibly be understood as the allotment of shares in society, such as shares of social recognition, wealth, governmental positions, tributes, and other material resources. Thus, *fen* can be rendered as "social status," broadly understood.

Different kinds of *fen* are different kinds of *worth* that humans mutually ascribe to one another in a society. The recognition of a person in relation to a particular kind of *fen* means that a certain kind of worth is ascribed and, accordingly, other people in the society treat the person in a way appropriate to that worth. The underlying idea is related to the pre-modern idea of honor, that is, the idea that individuals in society deserve different mutual recognition according to various social distinctions. Social interactions among people that involve ascribing and recognizing various kinds of *fen* are dynamic interpersonal engagements, which is what Xunzi has in mind in terms of the *lun* of humans.

Rendered as "social status" broadly construed, *fen* is not a kind of fixed worth in a person; rather, it is the kind of allotment that is ascribed to a particular person relative to other people in interactions. Moreover, different kinds of *fen* can also be simultaneously ascribed to a single

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[57] "夫貴為天子, 富有天下, 是人情之所同欲也. 然則從人之欲, 則埶不能容, 物不能贍也. 故先王案為之制禮義以**分**之, 使有貴賤之等, 長幼之差, 知愚能不能之**分**, 皆使人載其事, 而各得其宜. 然後使穀祿多少厚薄之稱, 是夫群居和一之道也 (To be as horored as the Son of Heaven, and to be as wealthy by possessing the whole world; this natural human desire is shared by all men alike. But if all men gave free rein to their desires, the result would be impossible to endure, and the material goods of the whole world would be inadequate to satisfy them. Accordingly, the Ancient Kings acted to control them with regulations, ritual, and moral principles, in order thereby to divide society into classes, creating therewith differences in status between the noble and base, disparities between the privileges of age and youth, and the division of the wise from the stupid, the able from the incapable. All of this caused men to perform the duties of their station in life and each to receive his due; only after this had been done was the amount and substance of the emolument paid by grain made to fit their respective stations. This indeed is the Way to make the whole populace live together in harmony and unity)." *Xunzi jishi*, p. 69; Knoblock, vol. 1, pp. 194-5. The first highlighted character is an example of its use as a verb, whereas the latter one is an example of the nominal use.

person. A person can be treated differently in relation to various kinds of *fen* attributed socially or institutionally to him or her. There can be situations where a person is to be honored more highly than another in terms of a particular kind of *fen*, but the other is to be honored more highly than the first in terms of another kind.[58]

In addition, *fen*, along with *lun*, is a term that provides substantive content to *li*. This in turn means that a particular kind of *fen* should be construed, not as an individualistic worth that each individual is supposed to possess independently of its role in the pursuit of a communal good, but as the kind of worth that can be conceived of only in terms of its contribution to the communal good, such as the overall harmony in society.

For Xunzi, the proper allocation of various social statuses appropriately to different individuals is the best way to the achievement of *zhi* as an aspect of harmony. And it is the kind of task that only the ideal ruler can complete. In relation to this allocation, every member of society should develop the advanced capacity for discrimination, *bian*, which is the characteristic of humans, in such a way that he or she becomes capable of discriminating various social statuses properly.[59] These ideas suggest that, for Xunzi, humans can achieve harmony by

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[58] An important clarification to note is this: When I construe "social status" in its broadest sense and use it for the translation of *fen*, I understand social status in such a neutral sense that does not necessary involve the notion of hierarchy. As I will explain later, love and respect are two modes of responsiveness to various kinds of social status, which do not necessarily involve any implications associated with hierarchical social orders.

[59] These explanations are based on my interpretation of the following passages: "天地合而萬物生, 陰陽接而變化起, 性偽合而**天下治**. 天能生物, 不能**辨**物也, 地能載人, 不能治人也; 宇中萬物生人之屬, 待聖人然後**分**也. (It has been said that when Heaven and Earth conjoin, the myriad things are begot; when the Yin and Yang principles combine, transformations and transmutations are produced; when inborn nature and conscious activity are joined, the world is made orderly. Heaven is able to beget the myriad things, but it cannot differentiate them. Earth can support man, but it cannot govern him. The myriad things under the canopy of heaven and all those who belong among living people depend

interacting with one another in such a way that they recognize various social statuses assigned differently to each of them and treat one another accordingly.

As an important indication of the maintenance of harmony, Xunzi considers proper distribution of material resources. He regards the scarcity of material resources as the main source of social disorder.[60] Thus, he thinks, material resources should be distributed to members of society differently according to various social statuses.[61] The underlying thought has to do with a sort of distributive justice. For Xunzi, all humans treat one another appropriately in such a way that each individual can receive his or her due in terms of various social shares, even though what is considered "due" may not be the same for all in a society such as that of early China, where equality had not been accepted as a fundamental human value.[62]

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upon the appearance of the sage, for only then is each assigned its proper station)." *Xunzi jishi*, pp. 439-440; Knoblock, *Xunzi*, vol. 3, p. 66. "辨莫大於分, 分莫大於禮, 禮莫大於聖王." *Xunzi jishi*, p. 40.

[60] This line of thought can be found in the passage quoted in footnote 57 and the following passage: "夫貴為天子, 富有天下, 名為聖王, 兼制人, 人莫得而制也, 是人情之所同欲也, 而王者兼而有是者也. 重色而衣之, 重味而食之, 重財物而制之, 合天下而君之, 飲食甚厚, 聲樂甚大, 臺謝甚高, 園囿甚廣, 臣使諸侯, 一天下, 是又人情之所同欲也, 而天子之禮制如是者也. (It is the natural desire common to the essential nature of mankind to want the eminence of the Son of Heaven, the wealth of one who possesses the world, and the fame of the sage kings, and to regulate all mankind but to be regulated by no man. Yet it is only the True King who combines these and realizes them. It is also the natural desire common to the essential nature of all men to want to wear whatever colors he values, tasty foods with whatever flavors he prefers, and regulate whatever commodities and goods he attaches importance to, to join the world together, and have dominion over it, to want food and drink that are rich and plentiful, music and dance performances that are very grand, pavilions and archery courts that soar to great heights, and gardens that are very spacious. To make the feudal lords serve him, and to unify the world. But it is only the ritual principles of the Son of Heaven that can regulate in this fashion.)" *Xunzi jishi*, p. 246; Knoblock, *Xunzi*, vol. 2, p. 160.

[61] See Footnote 57.

[62] In relation to this, my interpretation of Xunzi offers a basis for a challenge to a seemingly widely accepted perception that there is a dearth of philosophical discourse on justice in East Asian thought, and

Xunzi thinks of various kinds of *fen*. Yet, they can be classified mainly into two kinds. I explain these two kinds in a summary style.[63] The first kind is the kind of social statuses that is determined on the basis of gradational distance between an agent of love (*qin* 親 as a verb or *ai* 愛) and other people as recipients of her love. "The closer" (*qin* as a noun) and "the more distant" (*shu* 疏) are such social statuses.[64] The former refers to someone who stands in a relatively close relation, whereas the latter refers to someone who stands in a relatively distant relation. The distinction between these two social statuses can be determined relative to each individual. Each individual can be susceptible or passible to other people differently according to differing histories of her experience in actual interactions with others. In other words, each individual has different degrees of love for different people depending on different accumulations of interactions with each of them. For this reason, love as the attitude relevant to this first kind of social statuses is by its nature gradational. But it is important to note that a crucial idea involved in gradational love is, as often figuratively expressed, the idea of forming one body with all other humans. For the early Confucians, Mencius as well as Xunzi, love is to be developed in such a way that one can be susceptible or passible to *all* humans in the community, though in a

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that this lack is a result of its traditional tendency to put *ren* (仁 widely translated as benevolence) at the center of its moral discourse. Thus, my study demonstrates that something like distributive justice was also one of the central issues in early China. In addition, I will discuss how Xunzi's ethical position can be developed in a way that accommodates some part of the modern ethical sentiment associated with equality in Chapter 6.

[63] In Chapter 3 and Chapter 4, I will discuss each of them, respectively, in detail.

[64] "親疏有分." *Xunzi jishi*, p. 565.

gradational way. This is the spirit of the central Confucian ethical attribute *ren* (仁).[65] *Ren* is mainly concerned with the enhancement of coherence among all members of society. It contributes to harmony, especially in relation to one of its connotations, *yi*** (unification/ oneness).

Such social coherence merely offers the very basic foundation of society. To function properly, a society should assign a variety of different roles and corresponding duties to different individuals. In this respect, the second kind of social statuses in Xunzi's thought can be understood. Xunzi understands occupations and governmental ranks, such as farmer, merchant, artisan, officer, and the son-of-heaven, namely the king, in terms of *fen*.[66] Xunzi also draws the

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[65] In using the term "spirit," I mainly think of one of the connotations of this English term: "the essential character, nature, or qualities of something; that which constitutes the pervading or tempering principle of anything" (see *Oxford English Dictionary*). I also have in mind another connotation of it: "the disposition, feeling, or frame of mind with which something is done, considered, or viewed." Thus, in terms of "the spirit of *ren*," I mainly refers to the underlying principle of *ren*, that is, the formation of a unity among all humans, but I also have in mind its associated mode of responsiveness, that is, love.

[66] "**君臣上下, 貴賤長幼, 至於庶人**, 莫不以是為隆正. 然後皆內自省, **以謹於分**. 是百王之所以同也, 而禮法之樞要也. 然後**農**分田而耕, **賈**分貨而販, **百工**分事而勸, **士大夫**分職而聽, 建國**諸侯之君**分土而守, **三公**總方而議, 則**天子**共己而止矣. 出若入若, 天下莫不均平, 莫不治辨. 是百王之所同, 而禮法之**大分**也. (Lord minister, superior and inferior, noble and base, old and young, down to commoners - all should exalt this as the standard of rectitude. Only in this way will all examine themselves to ensure that they devote their attention to the tasks of their social class. In this all the Hundred Kings have been identical, and this principle forms the pivot and axis of all ritual principles and of the model for laws. Subsequently when farmers divide up the land and plow it, when merchants divide up commodities and trade them, when the Hundred Craftsmen divide up tasks and encourage and assist each other, when knights and grand officers divide up official positions and responsibilities, hear problems, and make decisions, when the lords of all the various feudal states divide up the territory and take charge of maintaining it, and when the Three Dukes are consigned comprehensive authority over whole regions and plan and deliberate, then the Son of Heaven may stop at merely assuming a gravely reverent attitude in his person. With everything within and without the court like this, nothing in the world is left unbalanced and unadjusted and nothing is left without order and management. All these matters have been the same for all the Hundred Kings and they are the primary social divisions of ritual principles and the model for law.)" *Xunzi jishi*, p. 251; Knoblock, *Xunzi*, vol. 2, p.163.

distinction between the honored (貴 *gui*) and the humble (賤 *jian**).[67] In relation to these social statuses, he seems to have in mind primarily the kind of hierarchical social rank that each individual is differently born into. But Xunzi thinks of moral excellence as one of the criteria for the distinction between the honored and the humble.[68] Moreover, Xunzi holds a meritocratic view. He thinks of such *fen*'s as "the wise (知) and the stupid," "the able (*neng* 能) and the incapable,"[69] and "the wise (*xian* 賢) and the incompetent" (*bu xiao* 不肖).[70] These distinctions reflect the idea that someone who has shown to be fit to hold a government post should be allowed to gradually ascend to attain a higher post.

The second kind of social statuses, contrasted with the first kind, is determined non-relatively to each individual, in the sense that the determination of those social statuses does not depend on each individual's actual experience of interactions with other people. A typical attitude involved in those social statuses is *zun* (尊, respect). This is the attitude of treating another person in a way that involves suppression of one's own desire in deference to the other

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[67] "先王惡其亂也, 故制禮義以**分之, 使有貧富貴賤之等**, 足以相兼臨者, 是養天下之本也. (The Ancient Kings abhorred such disorder. Thus, they instituted regulations, ritual practices, and moral principles in order to create proper social class divisions. They ordered that there be sufficient gradations of wealth and eminence of station to bring everyone under supervision. This is the fundamental principle by which to nurture the empire.)" *Xunzi jishi*, p. 166; Knoblock, *Xunzi*, vol. 2, p. 96.

[68] For instance, "故君子無爵而貴." *Xunzi jishi*, p. 136. Mencius should have a similar idea in mind when he says, "天下有達尊三. 爵一, 齒一, 德一. 朝廷莫如爵, 鄉黨莫如齒, 輔世長民莫如德" in *Mencius* 2B2. See D. C. Lau (trans.), *Mencius* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, 2003), p. 80. *De* (德) in this passage can be translated roughly as moral excellence.

[69] "知愚能不能之分." *Xunzi jishi*, p. 69.

[70] "聽政之大分. 以善至者待之以禮, 以不善至者待之以刑. 兩者分別, 則**賢不肖不雜**, 是非不亂 (the worthy and unworthy will not be mixed up, and right and wrong are not confused.)" *Xunzi jishi*, p. 163; Knoblock, *Xunzi*, vol. 2, p. 95.

person's social statuses. The underlying spirit is to ensure that everyone occupies an appropriate place in society and has corresponding roles and duties.[71] The relevant Confucian ethical attribute is *yi* (義), which can be interpreted as "appropriateness in accordance with social status."

To conclude, harmony is to be understood as the kind of state in which all humans relate to one another in such a way that they interact by properly recognizing various kinds of social statuses and by appropriately treating each of them. Stated more specifically, Xunzi's idea is that all humans should cultivate two different modes of responsiveness to other people, viz., *qin* (love) and *zun* (respect); by interacting with each other through those two modes of responsiveness, all humans can jointly bring about the harmony that is assumed to be fundamentally ideal. Thus understood, this ideal holistic state can also be regarded as a common good that can be achieved only through cooperation among every member of the community.

The requirement of the greatest *li* can also be reinterpreted in relation to social statuses. The requirement is concerned with the breadth of different kinds of *fen*. For Xunzi, in the process of conceiving overall harmony at the level of the entire human society, one is required to take into consideration all conceivable kinds of social statuses in relation to all conceivable kinds of human groups and human interactions to the extent that one can develop a well-structured network among those social statuses. This in turn implies that each social status should be justified as a part of the network of all other social statuses by checking whether it, along with other statuses, contributes to the creation or maintenance of harmony at the level of the entire human society.

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[71] *Xunzi jishi*, p. 69.

6 Harmony as the Final Good

David S. Nivison observes two seemingly conflicting features in Xunzi's thought.[72] The first feature is that the reason an individual has for accepting the morality that Xunzi advocates is based on the individual's self-interest, in that the morality strikes the individual as the best means of optimizing the long-term satisfaction of his or her desires. This observation seems to be related to some aspect of Xunzi's thought. For instance, Xunzi mentions that "the rise" (*so qi* 所起) of *li** (禮), thit is, the rise of the Confucian formal rules of conduct, has to do with the need of nurturing desires of all humans; if these desires are not properly restrained, they become the main cause of disorder in society.[73][74]

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[72] See David S. Nivison, "Xunzi on 'Human Nature'" in David Nivison, *The Ways of Confucianism: Investigations in Chinese Philosophy*, Bryan W. Van Norden, ed. (Open Court, 1996); "Xunzi and Zhuangzi," in *Virtue, Nature, and Moral Agency in the Xunzi*, T.C. Kline III and Philip J. Ivanhoe, eds. (Hackett Pub., 2000).

[73] "禮起於何也. 曰 人生而有欲, 欲而不得, 則不能無求. 求而無度量分界, 則不能不爭, 爭則亂, 亂則窮. **先王惡其亂也, 故制禮義以分之, 以養人之欲**, 給人之求. 使欲必不窮於物, 物必不屈於欲. 兩者相持而長, 是**禮之所起也.** (How did ritual principles arise? I say that men are born with desires, which, if not satisfied, cannot but lead men to seek to satisfy them. If in seeking to satisfy their desires men observe no measure and apportion things without limits, then it would be impossible for them not to contend over the means to satisfy their desires. Such contention leads to disorder. Disorder leads to poverty. The Ancient Kings abhorred such disorder; so they established the regulations contained within ritual and moral principles in order to apportion things, to nurture the desires of men, and to supply the means for their satisfaction. They so fashioned their regulations that the desires should not want for the things which satisfy them and goods would not be exhausted by the desires. In this way the two of them, desires and goods, sustained each other over the course of time. This is the origin of ritual principles.)" *Xunzi jishi*, p. 417; Knoblock, *Xunzi*, vol. 3, p. 55. Also see *Xunzi jishi*, p. 69.

[74] In relation to this feature, David B. Wong develops Nivison's thought by comparing Xunzi's understanding of the foundation of morality to a Hobbesian view. See his "Xunzi on Moral Motivation" in Kline III and Ivanhoe, eds., *Virtue, Nature, and Moral Agency in the Xunzi*.

The other feature is the notion that one should cultivate oneself so as to make oneself love morality in itself, to the extent that one is willing to give up one's life for it. This idea is found more clearly in the *Mencius*. Mencius says that even if life is something he desires, he will forsake life and choose *yi* (義), namely, appropriateness in accordance with the *lun* of humans, in case he cannot have both.[75] In fact, Xunzi never expresses this idea that much explicitly. However, a few of his remarks considered together seem to point eventually to the same idea: Xunzi thinks that the human mind has the capacity to approve of something over what one desires most, such as life, and enables one to act upon it at the risk of life; the maintenance of *zhi* (治) can be guaranteed if the values human minds approve of coincide with *li* (理). This remark means that one's desire for life may be overweighed by what one's mind approves of, and this implicitly implies that one may forsake life in order to maintain *zhi* that should be understood as an aspect of harmony.[76] In addition, Xunzi once mentions that, under the regime of a *ren* ruler, the common people would love (*qin*) the ruler to the extent that they would be willing to sacrifice their lives for him. This remark can be interpreted as meaning that one can give up one's life for the sake of harmony, given that *ren* is an ethical attribute that fundamentally contributes to harmony by enhancing the coherence among all members of society. Moreover,

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[75] "生, 亦我所欲也; 義, 亦我所欲也, 二者不可得兼, 舍生而取義者也." *Mencius* 6A10; Lau, *Mencius*, p. 252.

[76] "人之所欲生甚矣, 人之惡死甚矣; 然而人有從生成死者, 非不欲生而欲死也, 不可以生而可以死也. 故欲過之而動不及, 心止之也. 心之所可中理, 則欲雖多, 奚傷於治. (What men desire most is life, and what they hate most is death. Be that as it may, men sometimes follow the pursuit of life and rather desire death; it is proved impossible to continue living and it was possible to die. Thus, when desires run to excess, actions do not reach that point because that mind stops them. If what the mind permits coincides with reason, then although the desires be numerous, how could there be harm to order!" *Xunzi jishi*, p. 527; Knoblock, *Xunzi*, vol. 3, p. 135.

Xunzi's once describes the well-cultivated gentleman (*junzi* 君子) as someone who enjoys himself for the reason that he embodies something morally good (*shan* 善), and who loves something morally good tirelessly.[77] This description seems to imply that such love is not different from love of morality for its own sake.

The problem is that the two features might well be contradictory. Thus, Nivison relates the two features by seeing the second feature as the best solution for difficulty in the maintenance of morality amongst self-interested individuals in society. In other words, even if morality, for Xunzi, arises from an individual's need to optimize his or her long-term satisfaction of desires, each individual also has reason, in his or her self-interest, to love morality in itself. It is precisely because, if all members of the society love morality in itself, they can be confident that all other members will also adhere to morality, and, thereby, morality as the means of the optimization of desire-satisfaction can be most effectively operative.[78]

I reject Nivison's solution for the tension between the two features. First, loving morality in itself cannot be fully explained, unless morality itself is understood as having to with something intrinsically valuable. But, Nivison's line of thought is concerned merely with the development of the attitude of loving morality in itself without an explanation of an object to which such an attitude is supposed to be directed. Second, the solution that leads to the effective maintenance of morality in society is self-betrayal because a person who aims to pursue a certain

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[77] "善在身, 介然必以自好也 ...故君子...好善無厭 (He never tires of cherishing what is good)." *Xunzi jishi*, p. 23; Knoblock, *Xunzi*, vol. 1, p.151.

[78] Understood this way, Xunzi differs from Hobbes in terms of his solution for difficulty in maintaining morality amongst self-interested individuals in society. Hobbes puts an emphasis on the role of the state as the enforcer of morality, whereas Xunzi suggests that each individual should go through a radical moral transformation so as to love morality in itself. See Wong's discussion (*op. cit.*).

goal is expected to die for what has been adopted merely as the best way to reach the goal. Third and most importantly, I reject the above interpretation of Xunzi because it is based on an individualist idea that the fundamental locus of value lies in something that belongs to each individual, such as the satisfaction of an individual's desires. This idea is not compatible with the holistic world-view that I explained in terms of harmony, especially, in connection with *li* in the previous sections.

My contention is that Xunzi conceives of harmony as the final good that every human has reason to pursue, not as the best means of optimizing desire-satisfaction, but as what is assumed as the ideal state for humans regardless of his or her desires. If we use a Western label, Xunzi's position may be classified as consequentialist in character, and it might well be called "holistic consequentialism." Holistic consequentialism can be characterized primarily in terms of its final good, which is not the kind of good that a person can pursue individually, *e.g.* happiness understood as an enjoyable sensation or the satisfaction of desire; instead, which is the kind of good that every member of the community attempts to maintain cooperatively. The aforementioned second feature of Xunzi is to be understood in relation to harmony as the final good in Xunzi's thought. For Xunzi, harmony is intrinsically good, so that everyone has reason to pursue it for its own sake, if necessary, to the extent that he or she ought to abandon his or her life.[79]

Xunzi obviously thinks that the Confucian morality enables one to be better off in relation to one's desire-satisfaction. Xunzi once mentions that the necessity of instituting of *li**, the Confucian formal rules of conduct, comes from the necessity of avoiding hardship caused by

[79] I will deal with this issue of how to understand the willingness to forsake one's own life for the sake of harmony later again in Chapter 5, Section 4 in a much more detailed manner.

conflicts among humans, each of whom ceaselessly pursues greater satisfaction of his or her desires.[80] The term he uses for hardship in this context is "*qiong* (窮)." This term is usually used to describe a situation in which all resources are *exhausted*. Xunzi intends to mean that all humans unexceptionally suffer from the hardship, unless their desires are appropriately restrained. In addition to this, Xunzi understands the scarcity of material resources as the feature of the objective circumstance in which humans may have difficulty in satisfying all desires.[81] Then, the claim can reasonably be made that all humans equally have reason to control their own desires in order to avoid the worst situation in which any desires cannot at all be satisfied due to the exhaustion of resources. Nevertheless, such hardship caused by humans' excessive desires and the scarcity of resources *merely* explains the necessity that everyone should control his or her desires *in some way* so as to avoid the worst situation. Never does it give any *further* reason to proceed the whole way to acceptance of Confucian morality, especially, to the extent that a person would forsake his or her own life for the morality.

Xunzi once argues that even if complete satisfaction of desires is impossible even for the son of Heaven, the *dao*, namely, the Confucian way of government, provides the best way to achieve *almost* complete satisfaction of desires.[82] This argument may give the impression that,

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[80] *Xunzi jishi*, p. 417.

[81] See footnote 73. Also see "欲惡同物, 欲多而物寡, 寡則必爭矣." Ibid., p. 195.

[82] "雖為天子, 欲不可盡. 欲雖不可盡, 可以近盡也. (Even though one were the Son of Heaven, one could not satisfy them all. Although one's desires cannot be completely fulfilled, one can approach complete satisfaction.) ... 道者, 進則近盡, 退則節求, 天下莫之若也. 凡人莫不從其所可, 而去其所不可. 知道之莫之若也, 而不從道者, 無之有也. (The true Way is such that when advance is possible, complete satisfaction of the desires is attainable, and when reteat is necessary, it is possible to moderate their pursuit. I all the world, there is nothing to compare with it! As a general rule, all men

Xunzi claims, it is in everyone's interest to follow the Confucian way because it's the best way to optimize his or her own desires over the long term.[83] But, in presenting this argument, Xunzi actually aims at very limited audience, the ruler.[84] He has in mind only the ruler when he advances such an argument that appeals to the optimization of the satisfaction of desires. The argument is made precisely because, in a hierarchical society such as that of early China, only the ruler can actually best satisfy his desires by accepting the Confucian way. For this reason, Xunzi cannot appeal to most people by referring to the optimization of the satisfaction of desires. He actually does not make such a reference. When Xunzi says that the rise of the Confucian formal rules of conduct has to do with the need of nurturing desires of all humans, he just means

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follow what they regard as allowable and reject what they regard as not allowable. There is no instance of someone understanding that there is nothing to compare with the Way and yet not following the Way.)" Ibid., pp. 529-530; Knoblock, *Xunzi*, vol. 3, p. 136. Nivison takes this sentence very seriously in saying for his capturing Xunzi's consequentialist position.

[83] See Nivison, "Xunzi on 'Human Nature'".

[84] Xunzi also has in mind the ruler in offering similar arguments that appeal to the optimization of desire-satisfaction in the following passages: "今**君人**者, 急逐樂而緩治國, 豈不過甚矣哉! 譬之是由好聲色, 而恬無耳目也, 豈不哀哉! 夫人之情, 目欲**綦**色, 耳欲綦聲, 口欲綦味, 鼻欲綦臭, 心欲綦佚. 此五綦者, 人情之所必不免也. 養五綦者有具. 無其具, 則五綦者不可得而致也. 萬乘之國, 可謂廣大富厚矣, 加有治辨彊固之道焉, 若是則恬愉無患難矣, **然後養五綦之具具**也…. **君人**者, 亦可以察若言矣." *Xunzi jishi*, p. 240. In here, the term, *qi* (綦), is used along with various sensible desires to refer to the most intensive desires. Thus, it is implausible to think that Xunzi here means that by following *li**, everyone can satisfy the most intensive desires to the fullest extent. Moreover, the intended audience is the ruler. Also see the following, in which the same points can be seen more clearly:
"**是又人情之所同欲也, 而王者兼而有是者也**. 故人之情, 口好味, 而臭味莫美焉. 耳好聲, 而聲樂莫大焉. 目好色, 而文章致繁, 婦女莫眾焉. 形體好佚, 而安重閒靜莫愉焉. 心好利, 而穀祿莫厚焉. 合天下之所同願兼而有之, 睪牢天下而制之若制子孫, 人苟不狂惑戇陋者, 其誰能睹是而不樂也哉." Ibid., p.247.

that the Confucian way of government provides each human with desire-satisfaction *appropriate to his or her social statuses*.

The reason to restrain one's own desire in some way is, in fact, derived from what Xunzi regards as the human characteristic, namely, the advanced capacity to discriminate among different kinds of persons (*bian*) and treat each kind differently. In contrasting humans to other animals, Xunzi gives the example of *qin* as a mode of responsiveness to other people that can be developed on the basis of the human characteristic capacity. For Xunzi, even if some other animals can feel indiscriminate affection (*ai*) to their own species, only humans can love (*qin*) their own kin in a special way different from the way they treat other people. *Qin* is cited as only one example of human modes of responsiveness to other people; in other words, modes of responsiveness other than *qin* can be developed on the basis of this characteristically human capacity. *Zun* is another representative mode of responsiveness. The main concern for Xunzi in relation to these modes of responsiveness is that humans who lack proper self-cultivation are prone to be obsessed by a particular kind of person and, thereby, become incapable of recognizing other kinds of persons and treating them appropriately. For instance, a ruler, who is obsessed by his consort, becomes unable to recognize a wiser person and treat him appropriately by listening to his faithful counsel.[85] Put differently, such a ruler loves (*qin*) his own family in an obsessive way, so that he is incapable of respecting (*zun*) the wise appropriately. This is one of the main causes of social disorder for Xunzi. Then, the claim can be made that humans have

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[85] This is the main concern for Xunzi in his discussing the problem of the obsession of the mind in Chapter 21 in the *Xunzi*. For instance, "昔人君之蔽者, 夏桀殷紂是也. 桀蔽於末喜斯觀, 而不知關龍逢, 以惑其心, 而亂其行.(In the past, Jie of the Xia dynasty and Zhou Xin of the Yin dynasty were lords of men who were blinded Jie was beclouded by Mo Xi and Si Guan and so was insensible to the merits of Guan Longfeng. Thereby his mind became deluded and his conduct disorderly)" *Xunzi jishi*, p. 475. As to the translation, see Knoblock, *Xunzi*, vol. 3, p.100.

reason to impart certain order to their advanced form of *bian* in order to avoid disorder (*luan*). This reason fundamentally has to do with the natural fact that humans cannot avoid discriminating among different kinds of person in interactions with other people.

At this point, it is important to note that the relation between such modes of responsiveness as *qin* and *zun* and desires. *Qin* is the attitude of making oneself susceptible and passible to other people, especially, their sufferings, in a gradation that accords with the different histories of one's actual experiences with other people. *Zun* is the attitude of treating other people by suppressing one's desires according to their different social statuses. These two modes equally have to do with one's controlling of one's own desires appropriately to relevant social statuses. This means that the reason to control and suppress one's desires in some way is explained in terms of the reason to develop *qin* and *zun*.

Harmony figures in relation to a more fundamental reason for one to cultivate *qin* and *zun*. Since harmony is assumed to be the good that everyone ought to pursue eventually, regardless of his or her initial desires, everyone has reason to cultivate *qin* and *zun*, in accordance with the Confucian set of social distinctions, in order to achieve harmony at the level of the entire human society. Thus, at the most basic level, the reason for control of one's desires stems from the reason for the pursuit of harmony.

Even if a person does not see harmony as the final good and does not have any motivation to pursue it at the outset of his or her experience, the person will find that the initial motivating reason for controlling personal desires in some way is provided by the person's self-interest, namely, to avoid the worst situation, in which everyone's drive to satisfy desires is doomed to total frustration. On the basis of this initial motivation, one can take steps to educate oneself in ways that develop *qin* and *zun* and accordingly lead to the control of one's desires. In

this process of self-cultivation, one gradually becomes the kind of person who is motivated to pursue harmony for its own sake and who sees harmony as the final good.[86]

[86] In other words, humans' initial understanding of the reason to follow the Confucian rules of conduct should be weakened gradually in the process of their self-cultivation, which leads them eventually to see the reason from a completely different perspective. This insight is Nivison's. See Nivision, *op. cit.*

Chapter 3 *Ren* (仁) in Confucian Ethics – Why is *ren* based on gradational love?

1 Introduction

Ren (仁) is one of the most fundamental attributes in early Confucian ethics. It simultaneously involves love with discrimination and concern for all humans.[1] This chapter examines the nature of *ren* by asking in what sense love with discrimination is supposed to promote concern for everyone in early Confucian ethics. I explore the exact sense in which gradational love, which manifests discrimination, is understood as the most feasible way to forming a well-unified community among all humans.

In Section 2, I first explain two essential features of *ren*, love with discrimination and the formation of one body among all humans. I then suggest the idea of gradation as the bridging concept between the two features. Throughout the following sections, I elaborate on the two features and on the idea of gradation. In Section 3, in order to explicate the nature of discrimination involved in *ren*, I examine exactly in what sense love with discrimination in early Confucian thought differs from indiscriminate concern for everyone advocated by Mozi and his immediate followers. I show that discrimination and indiscrimination were considered as conflicting in a very particular sense in the context of early Chinese thought, and I argue that the

[1] Note that my use of the word discrimination does not include its negative connotations, namely the making of prejudicial distinctions and lacking good judgment.

Mohist doctrine of indiscriminate concern for everyone should not be equated with equal concern for everyone, as widely understood in the secondary literature. In Section 4, to investigate further into the sense in which Confucian discrimination and Mohist indiscrimination conflict, I carefully consider the points that are at issue between the major Confucian Mencius (孟子) and the later Mohist Yi Zhi (夷之) in the *Mencius* 3A5. I juxtapose an interpretation of the debate between them, which is widely recognized in the contemporary secondary literature, with an alternative interpretation. This new interpretation is offered in order to present a clarifying viewpoint that enables us to see that the debate actually revolves about the conflicting ideas, that is, discrimination and indiscrimination.

In Section 5, I examine why early Confucians think that the formation of one unity among all humans can best be achieved through love with discrimination, which may be termed "gradational love." To make this process engaging, I first cast doubt on a comparative approach that has been widely appreciated as a way to extract philosophical insights from the debate between early Confucian love with discrimination and Mohist indiscriminate concern for everyone. According to this comparative approach, the early Chinese debate bears a close resemblance to one of the most thought-provoking issues in contemporary Western ethics, which is about the tension between universalist moralities and particularist views that assign moral priority to personal relationships. I show, however, that this comparative approach may well prevent us from grasping the relation between the two essential features of *ren*. My eventual interest lies in the development of a theory of *ren* and love with discrimination on the basis of the thought of Xunzi. In Section 6, I attempt to construct Xunzi's version of the theory in a way that is consistent with the discussions in the preceding sections. Finally, from the viewpoint of Xunzi, I address why an ethical attribute such as *ren* can be fundamental to an ethical position.

2 Two Essential Features of *Ren* (仁)

Ren in the *Analects* (the *Lunyu*) may be understood in two senses, as observed in many annotations.[2] In its narrower sense, *ren* has to do with love for other people.[3] Used in this sense, *ren* in the *Mencius* is often listed as one of the four cardinal moral attributes, together with *yi* (義), *li** (禮), and *zhi*** (智). On the other hand, in the *Analects*, *ren* also often has a broader sense that refers to a moral attribute attainable by someone who embodies much wider scope of moral traits than a single trait related only to love.[4] In relation to this broader sense, *ren* has been understood as an all-encompassing moral attribute that is ascribed to someone who fully realizes the Confucian spirit.[5] In line with this understanding, the claim may be made that *ren* in its broader sense refers to an attribute that includes both other Confucian traits and *ren* understood in its narrower sense.

The same claim applies to the use of *ren* in the *Xunzi*. In it, *ren* is often understood in relation to love for other people. Thus understood, *ren* is associated with *qin* (親) and *ai* (愛).[6]

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[2] See Tang Junyi, *Zhongguo zhexue yuan lun*, p. 71; Kwong-loi Shun, "*Jen* and *Li* in the *Analects*," *Philosophy East and West* 43.3 (1993).

[3] For instance, see *Analects* 12.22. See Yang Bojun, *Lunyu yizhu* (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 2002), p. 131.

[4] For instance, see ibid., 14.4; Yang, *Lunyu yizhu*, p. 146.

[5] Shun, op. cit..

[6] *Xunzi jishi*, p. 328, p. 656, and p. 605.

These two are different forms of affection, as I explain later. *Ren* in this sense is often parallel with *yi*, which is usually associated with other attitudes, such as *gui* (貴) and *zun* (尊).[7] These two can be translated roughly as "respect." The compound noun *ren-yi* (仁義) is frequently used throughout the *Xunzi* to refer roughly to what represents Confucian morality. This oft-used noun indicates the importance of *ren* in Xunzi's thought.[8] Moreover, there is a remark that the true king will put *ren* first and *li** (禮), namely the Confucian formal rules of conduct, later.[9] This comment clearly suggests the centrality of *ren*, understood as love, in Xunzi's thought.

Ren in the *Xunzi* also refers to some attribute other than an attribute related only to love. For instance, *ren* is used in one passage to describe the overall characteristics of the ideal ruler; yet, in the same passage, it is listed as one of his characteristics, along with some other traits like *zhi* ** (wisdom 智).[10] In other words, in this passage, *ren* is used in two different senses, namely in both the broader and narrower senses. There is also an instance where *ren* is understood in relation to *gui*, which, as mentioned above, is usually connected with *yi* rather than *ren*.[11] This instance shows that *ren* can include an attribute other than *ren* understood in its narrower sense, for example, *yi*. In fact, in yet another instance, a *ren*-person is regarded as someone who would

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[7] Ibid., p. 172 and p. 605.

[8] Another compound noun *li*-yi* (禮義), which also refers roughly to Confucian morality, is used much more often in the text.

[9] *Xunzi jishi*, p. 602

[10] Ibid., p. 204.

[11] Ibid., p. 102.

not do something not-*yi*.[12] *Ren* in this broader sense is sometimes connected with other moral attributes such as *zhi***, *zhong* (忠, loyalty), *xin** (信, trustworthiness), and so forth, as well as *yi*.[13] Thus, in the *Xunzi*, *ren* can refer to an all-encompassing attribute, namely the Confucian ideal moral attribute, which includes every other Confucian moral attribute.

A further claim that can reasonably be made is this: Though *ren* in its broader sense refers to the ideal moral attribute, it still essentially retains its narrower sense. In other words, the ideal moral attribute *ren* is based on love for fellow humans. On the basis of this claim, in this chapter, I treat *ren* as an attribute that is basically associated with love, whether it is used broadly or narrowly in a particular context.

Throughout the *Mencius* and the *Xunzi*, *ren* is understood in terms of either *qin* or *ai*. Each of them is a form of affection.[14] But *qin* has a connotation that *ai* does not have. *Qin* can refer to love with discrimination, namely the attitude of regarding a particular person as relatively closer to oneself than some other people and, thereby, treating the person more intimately. *Qin* as a noun usually refers to kin, and, in its use as a verb, refers to love of kin. However, *qin*, either as a noun or as a verb, should not be thought of as referring only to kin or love of kin because it can also refer to love for friends, for the common people in one's own political territory, for the wise, or, for anyone to whom one can form an attachment for plausible

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[12] Ibid., p. 230.

[13] Ibid., p. 204, p. 278, and p. 298.

[14] *Ren* is sometimes understood in terms of both *qin* and *ai* at the same time. See *Mencius* 4A3 and 5A3. Also see *Xunzi jishi*, p. 605.

reasons.[15] One's kin should be understood merely as a particular group of recipients to whom the attitude of *qin* can be directed.

Unlike *qin*, *ai* may refer particularly to love *without* discrimination. More specifically, *ai* is the kind of affection that is directed indiscriminately to all members of the same species. Used in this sense, *ai* is contrasted with *qin*. With *ai* in this sense in mind, Xunzi mentions that some animals such as birds can have the attitude of *ai*, namely indiscriminate affection for all members of the same species.[16] Moreover, on the basis of the difference between *qin* and *ai*, Xunzi distinguishes humans from other animals by reference to the capacity for having the attitude of *qin*, namely love with discrimination.[17]

The use of *ai* may then appear inconsistent. This term is often used throughout the texts to characterize *ren*, but is also sometimes used with an emphasis on the connotation of indiscrimination, which actually conflicts with the nature of *ren* that essentially involves love with discrimination. In view of this tension, the suggestion may be made that the idea of *ren* incompletely incorporates indiscriminate concern for every human.[18] However, this suggestion

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[15] "親民" See *Liji*, "*Da Xue*," in *Shisanjing zhushu*, p. 983; "親友" *Xunzi jishi*, p. 23; "親賢" ibid., p. 681.

[16] Ibid., p. 445.

[17] A similar use of *ai* is found in the *Mencius*. In it, *ai* is in one case regarded as the kind of affection that is directed only to animals, not to humans such as kin and the common people. See *Mencius* 7A45 and 7A46

[18] David B. Wong, "Universalism versus love with distinctions," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* vol. 16 (1989).

inevitably leads to the conclusion that the Confucians inconsistently mould two conflicting ideas, indiscrimination and discrimination, into one single concept.[19]

Ai is used in two different ways. It can be used without an emphasis on the connotation of indiscrimination. In this case, *ai* is used particularly in reference to the nature of *ren* based on love. In this sense, it can define *ren* in relation to its particular aspect, as it often does throughout the Confucian texts. On the other hand, when *ai* is contrasted with *qin*, *ai* is used in a way that particularly focuses on the connotation of indiscrimination. Used in this sense, *ai* is not the kind of affection that defines *ren*. So the seemingly inconsistent use is to be understood as an example of cases that are often observed in relation to a number of early Chinese terms, namely that a term may or may not retain one of its different connotations in a particular context.

In Confucian ethics, *ren* is consistently based on love with discrimination without bringing any conflicting idea, namely indiscrimination, into its idea. In what sense *ren* is thus is in fact the main theme of this paper. To avoid any confusion in what follows, I shall use "love" strictly to mean Confucian love with discrimination, which is usually referred to by *qin* in Confucian texts.

Though *ren* essentially has to do with love with a certain kind of discrimination, it does not simply refer to an affectionate attitude toward a particular person or a particular group of people. Rather, it is an attribute that is ascribed only to someone who can love every single object within the scope that is considered ideal by the early Confucians. The early Confucians believe that all humans naturally have some form of love for a limited range of other people, but humans ought to extend the range as fully as is required by the Confucian ideal. This idea of

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[19] This is in fact Wong's conclusion.

extension is one of the important themes in the *Mencius*. Mencius suggests that one should cultivate the affectionate capacity that one already has in such a way that it can be directed appropriately toward a broader range of persons. In this sense, Mencius on one occasion defines *ren* in terms of a development that goes beyond what one loves (*ai*) to what one does not love.[20]

It is important to note that the main concern underlying the idea of extension is the protection of the common people (保民 *bao min*).[21] In the *Mencius*, the extension is suggested primarily to a ruler who is unable to be susceptible to the sufferings of the common people, even though he has occasionally displayed his passibility in relation to the suffering of some other object, such as an animal offered in sacrifice.[22] Even if Xunzi does not explicitly discuss the idea of extension, he clearly shares the same spirit that values the protection of the common people. For Xunzi, the ideal government always starts with the stabilization of the basic livelihood of the common people.[23]

In fact, the Confucians develop a notion that is more comprehensive than the idea of extension. In the *Xunzi*, the notion is figuratively understood in terms of "forming one body with

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[20] See *Mencius* 7B1. This idea of extension must have been recognized as a key feature of the Confucian *ren*, for it was clearly observed in such a Daoist text as the *Zhuangzi*, in which *ren* is explained as what is to be *broadened* (*guang* 廣) on the basis of *qin*: "親而不可不廣者, 仁也." Chen guying, *Zhuangzi jinzhu jinyi* (Taipei: Taipei Sangwuyin, 1999), p. 307.

[21] *Mencius* 1A7.

[22] Ibid.

The English word "passible" does not seem to be often used these days. So I need to clarify the meaning of this word that I have in mind in the above context. It means "capable of suffering or feeling; susceptible to sensation or emotion." See *Oxford English Dictionary* (online, http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/138493?redirectedFrom=passible#eid).

[23] *Xunzi jishi*, p. 168 and pp. 198-9.

all humans" (*yi** ti* 一體). This figurative notion is understood as one of the features of what he calls "the grand embodiment" (*da xing** 大形), which, if realized, would involve the whole world's adherence to the ideal ruler as though the world formed a single body with him, just as the four limbs follow the dictates of the mind.[24] A similar idea can be found in the *Mencius*. Mencius describes the ideal type of relation between a ruler and his ministers as one that makes the ideal ruler regard his ministers as his hands and feet, while his ministers in turn regard him as their mind.[25] In the *Xunzi*, this figurative notion often appears especially in descriptions of *ren*. For instance, under the regime of a *ren* ruler, the common people would love (*qin*) him as if they do their parents and thereby sacrifice their lives for his sake;[26] under the rule of a *ren* leader at a battlefield, a hundred of generals would form one mind (*yi** xin* 一心), and every subordinate would become like the arms and hands that protect the face and eyes and guard the chest and stomach.[27] These descriptions show that the notion of forming one body or unity with all humans is closely related to *ren*.[28]

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[24] Ibid., p. 276.

[25] *Mencius* 4B3. This figurative understanding can be found in some other early Chinese texts such as the *Guanzi*. It in one case describes the ideal ruler as someone who forms one body with the common people. See *Guanzi* (*Sibubeiyao* edition), 10/18a.

[26] *Xunzi jishi*, p. 204.

[27] Ibid., p. 312.

[28] The notion of forming one unity with all other humans should be distinguished from a similar idea regarding the formation of one unity that includes all things or beings around the world. For instance, in the *Zhuangzi*, Heaven and Earth are on one occasion understood as forming one body through the process of allowing affection (*ai*) to embrace the myriad things over the world: "氾愛萬物, 天地一體也" (Chen, *Zhungzi jinzhu jinyi*, p. 906). This description well reflects the idea of forming a unity with all things or beings. But most of the discussions about *ren* in the *Mencius* and the *Xunzi* are concerned primarily with

Now, *ren* is to be understood in relation to both forming one unity with all humans and love with discrimination. The question is, then, how the two features of *ren* are related. The key idea that connects the two is "gradation." In the *Xunzi*, *ren* is understood as involving a certain gradation (*shai* 殺).[29] In the *Mencius*, Confucian love is contrasted with Mohist indiscriminate affection for others because of its gradational application (等差).[30] This idea of gradation, *shai*, is explained, in some other early Confucian texts, such as the *Zhong Yong* (中庸) chapter of the *Liji*, in relation to the attitude of treating someone in a close relationship intimately (*qin qin* 親親), which is a sort of love with discrimination. In addition, in another early Chinese text, the *Mozi*, this Confucian gradational love is explained in terms of a concrete example; that is, according to the Confucian principle, mourning for the closer relative should be longer and, for the more distant relative, shorter.[31] And the primary distinction involved in such gradational treatment is that between the closer (*qin* as a noun) and the more distant (*shu* 疏). The former is applied to someone who stands in a closer relation, while the latter refers to someone who stands in a relatively more distant relationship. It is important to note that this distinction applies not

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the kind of unity within the human community. Xunzi draws an especially clear line between the realm of Heaven/Nature (天 *tian*) and that of humans in order to focus on the human community. Xunzi proposes the thought that the body of humans is an equal member of the triad, *tian*, Earth, and humans (See *Xunzi jishi*, pp. 362-4.) Thus, the primary concern underlying *ren* is the formation of one unity within the range that includes all humans, not in any broader range that goes beyond the human sphere.

[29] "仁之殺." *Xunzi jishi*, p. 605.

[30] See *Mencius* 3A5.

[31] See Sun Yirang, *Mozi xiangu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shu ju, 2001), p. 287. Also see, *Liji* in *Shisanjing zhushu*, p. 1245. See the following sentence from the *Xunzi*: "親疏月數之等" (*Xunzi jishi*, p. 432).

only to familial relationships, but also to human relationships in general. For instance, in the *Xunzi*, the petty person (小人) is regarded as the kind of person who characteristically treats as closer persons (*qin*) those who flatter, and treats as persons in more distant persons (*shu*) those who remonstrate and make objections.[32] Moreover, in the *Xunzi*, the distinction between the closer and the more distant is regarded as crucial and is listed among the most important distinctions in the Way of the former true kings and in *li** (禮, the Confucian formal rules of conduct).[33]

With the idea of gradation in mind, then, love with discrimination can be understood as the attitude of regarding a particular person as *relatively closer* to oneself than some other people and, thereby, treating the person *more* intimately. This understanding enables us to build up the link between the two essential aspects of *ren* in the following sense: Love in itself embodies discrimination because it is to be applied differently to different people in ways that accord with a certain gradational scale that takes all other humans into consideration. So love should be generated not only in relation to one's kin, but also in relation to strangers. The proper development of one's gradational love should be aimed at the formation of a unified whole among all humans.

When *ren* is discussed particularly in relation to other people in general, it is characterized primarily in terms of concern about harm (*hai* 害) to them. In the *Mencius*, *ren* is

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[32] "諂諛者親, 諫爭者疏." Ibid., p. 23.

[33] Ibid., p. 565, p. 437, and p. 445.

understood in terms of a reluctance to cause harm to others.[34] In the *Xunzi*, *ren* is understood in relation to a hatred for those who harm one's beloved persons (*qin* as a noun).[35] However, it is in another occasion regarded as motivating one to eliminate harm to the world, namely harm to all humans over the world.[36] In the both texts, *ren* is sometimes characterized in terms of not putting the innocent to death.[37] Furthermore, Mencius relates *ren* to one's inability to bear the pain or suffering of others, even the pain or suffering of animals (*bu ren**** 不忍).[38] He also understands *ren* in relation to compassion, namely the capacity to be moved by the imminent or actual suffering of others (*ce yi*n 惻隱).[39]

On the basis of the above discussions, love may be defined tentatively as follows: Love is the attitude of making oneself susceptible to others on the basis of a view of others as parts of the same unity to which one also belongs. Love manifests itself in ways that accord with a gradational scale that depends upon the degree of closeness in the relationship; on the most basic level, love leads one to be concerned about harm to those who belong to the same unity. Figuratively defined, love is the attitude of caring for others as if they belonged to one's own body, so that love leads one to care at least, about any harm to the parts that are constituents of

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[34] *Mencius* 7B31.

[35] *Xunzi jishi*, p. 328.

[36] Ibid., p. 101.

[37] "殺一無罪" in *Mencius* 7A33 and also in *Xunzi jishi*, p. 230.

[38] *Mencius* 1A7 and 7B31.

[39] *Mencius* 2A6 and 6A6.

the same body. In relation to this definition of love, *ren* can be defined as the ethical attribute that is ascribable only to someone who loves all humans appropriately.

3 Discrimination *versus* Indiscrimination

To capture the exact sense in which discrimination is contrasted with indiscrimination *in the context of* early China, I shall examine Mozi's (墨子) criticism of Confucius's and his immediate followers' thought on *ren*. In the three "*Jian Ai*" (兼愛) chapters of the *Mozi*, Mozi objects that (1) it should not be justifiable for one to do more for a person who stands in a special relationship, such as one's own kin or someone in one's own village or state, than one does for a similarly situated person who is more distant, such as someone else's kin or someone in another village or state; (2) since one is likely to pay exclusive attention to special persons even in ways that harm other people who are relatively more distant; (3) for this reason, the doctrine of indiscriminate concern for everyone, namely, *jian ai* (兼愛), should be adopted in order to overcome the tendency to pay exclusive attention to special people.

What Mozi exactly tries to object in (1) is that one should not interact with other people according to a distinction between those who are closer and those who are more distant, that is, a distinction that is made relative to each individual. According to the view that Mozi rejects in (1), for instance, I have reason to be more concerned about my father than about your father, in that my father is closer *to me* than your father is. The underlying logic is well expressed in the "*Geng*

Zhu" (耕柱) chapter of the *Mozi* by the phrase, "[someone's] closeness to oneself (近我)."[40] For convenience, the kind of distinction made on the basis of the degree of closeness to oneself may be called "the agent-relative distinction." Mozi is rejecting the legitimacy of the agent-relative distinction in social interactions.[41]

Mozi's notion of indiscrimination (*jian*) then has to be understood in a limited sense. The Mohist doctrine of indiscriminate concern for everyone does not at all mean equal concern for everyone, an idea that is based upon the assumption that, in moral evaluations, each individual must count for one and nobody for more than one. Confucians and Mohists equally shared their premodern and obsolete hierarchical social order. Mozi's position is simply that one should treat other people differently in accordance with hierarchical social ranks without being distracted by any additional factor that depends on the closeness to each individual, such as the agent-relative

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[40] "巫馬子謂子墨子曰 我與子異, 我不能兼愛. 我愛鄒人於越人, 愛魯人於鄒人, 愛我鄉人於魯人, 愛我家人於鄉人, 愛我親於我家人, 愛我身於吾親, 以為近我也." *Mozi xiangu*, p.435.

[41] In fact, Mozi's objection is also aimed at the view that may arise from taking the final step of preferring oneself to one's own kin. The same logic, namely, the logic that leads to the idea that one has reason to do more or less to someone according to his or her distance from oneself can serve as the basis for the idea that I have reason to be concerned more about myself than about my family members, in the sense that I am closer to myself than to anyone else. If this view is combined with the second point above, the view becomes a kind of egoism.

Bryan W. Van Norden claims that the *Jian Ai* chapters of the Mozi might to a great extent be aimed as an argument against Yang Zhu (楊朱), who was famous for his arguably egoist position in early China, rather than Confucians. However, Yang Zhu and Confucians can be considered as sharing the same logic just mentioned. Hence, Mozi's objection in the chapters can plausibly be regarded as directed to Confucians as well. Confucians and Yang Zhu diverge because Yang Zhu takes the final step of preferring oneself to one's own family members and seems to incorporate (2) into his eventual position. A similar point is also made by A. C. Graham.

See Van Norden, "A Response to the Mohist Arguments in 'Impartial Caring'" in *The Moral Circle and the Self: Chinese and Western Approaches*, eds. Kim-chong Chong, Sor-Hoon Tan and C. L. Ten (Chicago: Open Court, 2003). Also See Graham, *Disputers of the Tao* (La Salle, Illinois: Open Court, 1989), p. 62.

distinction. According to this position, for instance, I am required to treat my father and your father indiscriminately precisely because I should treat my father *not* as *my* father *but* as the head of a household, and, therefore, I should treat my father and your father equally as heads of families. Still, according to the hierarchical social order, I should treat the ruler of a state as more important than a father.

The Mozi's criticism in the *Jian ai* chapters would not be a decisive blow, if Confucians can show that the move from (1) to (2) is not immediately obvious. That is, even if one does care more for the welfare of one's relatives than the welfare of strangers, one is not necessarily so preoccupied by the welfare of one's relatives that one does not at all care for the welfare of strangers. One can still care for strangers in danger or in starvation. Confucians should make the objection that, by simply pointing to the danger of the tendency to pay exclusive attention, Mozi cannot plausibly jump into the conclusion (3), namely that indiscriminate concern for everyone is the only remedy for the tendency to harm other people in order to do more for those who stand in closer relationships to oneself.

For Confucians, *ren* does not involve any such extreme tendency to pay exclusive attention to those who stand in special relationships, for it is an attribute that is ascribed only to someone who can love *every* other human. Confucians can defend themselves by appealing to their adoption of an appropriate gradational scale in love for others; the scale guarantees that one can love all fellow humans, even though one gives more or less love to other people according to their closeness to oneself. To sum up, Confucians diverge from Mohists because Confucians think the agent-relative distinction ethically matters in human interactions. In Section 5, I further examine the exact ways in which the agent-relative distinction and an appropriate gradational scale in loving others matter in social interactions.

4 The Debate between Mencius (孟子) and the later Mohist Yi Zhi (夷之) in the *Mencius* 3A5

In order to see how Confucian gradational love was misunderstood even by contemporaries, I will now examine a more sophisticated debate in the *Mencius* 3A5. In it, Mencius, one of the major early Confucians, faced a serious challenge from his contemporary Mohist, Yi Zhi (夷之). Yi Zhi should be considered as a later Mohist who diverges from the initial Mohist position, but still retains the gist of Mohist doctrine in some sense. I will juxtapose a widely-accepted interpretation with my own interpretation as an alternative. For convenience, I will name these two interpretations as "Interpretation (A)" and "Interpretation (B)" respectively.

In the *Mencius* 3A5, Yi Zhi claims that (1) there is no discrimination or gradation in having affection for others; yet, (2) the practice of giving affection begins with one's own parents. Mencius understands that (1) and (2) conflict with each other. So he criticizes Yi Zhi's position for having "two roots (二本)" and contrasts the position with his own view that can obtain only with "one root (一本)."

Interpretation (A): In this interpretation, "root" is understood as referring to "a basis for cultivating the proper form of affection for people."[42] According to this interpretation, Yi Zhi's position is that one should first adopt the doctrine of indiscrimination-as expressed in (1)-; yet,

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[42] Kwong-loi Shun, *Mencius and Early Chinese Thought* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), pp. 127-135. David S. Nivison, "Two Roots or One?" and "Motivation and Moral Action in Mencius" in *The Ways of Confucianism*, Bryan W. Van Norden, ed. (Open Court, 1996).

one does not have the motivational capacity to put that doctrine immediately into practice; thus, one has to cultivate the right motivation by gradually changing what one already has, namely particularist affection for those who stand in special relationships, such as kin, -as expressed in (2). In contrast, Mencius's position is that one should and can cultivate the proper form of affection for others only through internal sources, namely one's innate affectionate tendencies, without resort to any external doctrine, such as the Mohist doctrine of indiscrimination.[43]

According to Interpretation (A), the debate deals with the same issue of the famous debate between Mencius and Gaozi (告子), which focuses on whether the fundamental source of morality consists in "our innate and spontaneous inclinations" or in "external doctrines adopted to instruct ourselves."[44] In contrast with Mencius, Gaozi accepts only the legitimacy of some external source. In this line of interpretation, Yi Zhi is regarded as simultaneously accepting some internal and external sources, so that he contrasts with Mencius in a different way.

I present another interpretation that sheds an alternative light on the debate. In fact, in the middle of the debate, Yi Zhi claims that his position is at least not incompatible with the Mohist doctrine of indiscriminate concern for everyone, and that this doctrine is also supported by the Confucian teaching expressed in the phrase, "[the ancients acted toward others], as if caring for a baby (*ruo bao chi zi*, 若保赤子)" in the *Shangshu* (尚書). Yi Zhi understands this phrase as meaning that "we are to have affection (*ai*) for all people without discrimination." It is important

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[43] The underlying idea is that every human naturally has innate and spontaneous inclinations that are believed to be growing into full-blown moral attributes, such as *ren*, if properly nourished and not injured. This understanding is Graham's. See A.C. Graham, "The Background of the Mencian Theory of Human Nature," in *Essays on the Moral Philosophy of Mengzi*, eds. Xiusheng Liu and Philip J. Ivanhoe, (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 2002)

[44] *Mencius* 6A:1, 6A2, 6A3, and 6A4. As for the quoted expressions, see Shun, op. cit.

to note that Mencius treats Yi Zhi's attack as related to "*ce yin zhi xin* (惻隱之心)," which Mencius suggests as a starting point for the extension of *ren*. *Ce yin zhi xin* can be understood as compassion for other people in danger. The trouble is that this concept may easily be misunderstood as conveying the implication of indiscriminate concern for everyone. Since it may arise because of the suffering of *any* person in danger, it appears to offer a basis for the development of indiscriminate concern for all humans.

A part of Mencius's response to Yi Zhi is as follows: "Does Yi Zhi truly believe that a man loves his brother's son no more than his neighbor's new born baby? What is to be approved in the Confucian teaching is simply this: When a baby crawling about is on the verge of falling into a well, this is not its fault." This response clearly shows that the issue at hand is concerned with the conflict between discrimination and indiscrimination. Yi Zhi's challenge is based upon a misleading understanding of *ce yin zhi xin*, according to which *ce yin zhi xin* offers a basis for the idea of indiscrimination. Even if *ce yin zhi xin* is one of the internal sources of morality in Mencius's thought, the debate between Mencius and Yi Zhi is not concerned with the issue of whether the source of morality is internal or external. Interpretation (A) does not really answer the question of how Mencius defends himself against this Yi Zhi's charge in relation to the seemingly misleading nature of *ce yin zhi xin*. For this reason, I reject Interpretation (A).

Interpretation (B): With the above reading of the *Mencius* 3A5 in mind, this alternative interpretation understands Yi Zhi's position as such that, even if one already has the capacity for indiscriminate affection to other people--as well exemplified by a compassionate reaction to a crawling baby in fatal danger--, one should first apply the capacity to a limited range of people, such as one's kin and should gradually broaden the scope of the application as much as possible. In this line of interpretation, the reason why Yi Zhi's position has two components, that is, two

roots, is that the position includes both ideas about indiscrimination and discrimination, namely the capacity to feel affection for other people without any discrimination *and* a rule of thumb concerning the *discriminating* application of indiscriminate affection.[45]

In line with Interpretation (B), Yi Zhi needs to explain why one should start by giving affection to one's own parents. In defense of him, the claim can be made that humans have only enough energy to give affection to limited numbers of people, even if the kind of affection that they naturally possess does not have any characteristic of discrimination in itself. In other words, if someone tries to give affection to every single human being in the world, the person will quickly exhaust his affective energy. Thus, there is a practical reason for a person to offer indiscriminate affection, first, to a limited scope of people *around* her; and, if possible, she can gradually extend the scope of people who are offered indiscriminate affection. But, for Yi Zhi, this partial adoption of discrimination, namely discriminating application of indiscriminate affection, is aimed at the eventual realization of indiscrimination. For instance, I first need to give affection to my father, not because he is *my* father, but because he is the head of a family and someone who is nearby so that I can give affection most effectively; and, then, I need to extend the scope of people with whom I can effectively interact, such as the fathers in the neighborhood. If everyone interacts this way, all fathers around the world can eventually be treated indiscriminately, namely in an equal way as heads of families.[46]

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[45] In this interpretation, the idea of indiscrimination figures as a form of affection. For this reason, it contrasts with Interpretation (A), in which indiscrimination figures as a form of external doctrine that one adheres to in the process of transforming one's natural tendency to feel particularistic affection for kin.

[46] In making this point, I was indebted to Byeong-Uk Yi's comment in my talk on an earlier version of this chapter in Philosophy Department at University of Toronto, 2010 Fall.

To sum up: According to Interpretation (A), Yi Zhi's position is that, on the basis of the doctrine of indiscriminate concern for everyone, the particularistic affection that one naturally has is to be developed and extended into indiscriminate affection for everyone. On the other hand, according to Interpretation (B), his position is that, indiscriminate affection for others, which one naturally has, should be applied first to a limited range of people who stand in closer relationships according to a certain rule of thumb concerning the effectiveness of the application of affection; everyone's observance of this rule guarantees that indiscrimination in affection for all humans is eventually realized.[47]

Mencius's position, which is described as having only one root by Mencius himself, can be explained on the basis of the concept of love explained in the previous section. For Mencius, love *in itself* embodies discrimination in the sense that it should manifest itself in accordance with a certain gradational scale. Still, love should be generated not only in relation to one's kin, but also in relation to strangers. Mencius does not need to bring into his thought the conflicting

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There is another alternative interpretation of the debate between Mencius and Yi Zhi. This interpretation understands the two roots in line with Interpretation (A), but it partly captures the point that the issue between Mencius and Yi Zhi relates to the seemingly misleading nature of *ce yin zhi xin*. According to this interpretation, Yi Zhi regards *ce yin zhi xin* as evidence that humans naturally have indiscriminate affection for all humans; at the same time, he admits that it is also natural for humans to have particularistic affection for kin. Mencius criticizes Yi Zhi for having two roots because Yi Zhi endorses two incompatible kinds of affection without explaining why the two would not simply conflict and why particularistic affection for kin is not simply the kind that needs to be uprooted for the sake of the other kind. In this interpretation, Yi Zhi's position is simply inconsistent. I presented this interpretation in my paper: "A New Interpretation of the Model of Emotion in Mengzi's Ethical Theory," *Dong-A Mun-Hwa* (Journal of Institute for Asian Studies at Seoul National University) No.41, (2003), in Korean.

[47] It is interesting that these two possible positions of Yi Zhi have often been ascribed to Mencius in the secondary literature.

ideas of discrimination and indiscrimination, so he understands his position as having only one root.

For Mencius, *ce yin zhi xin* should not be identified with love, since it is merely a concomitant that love releases characteristically in cases of imminent or actual harm to others, especially in situations where a vulnerable being such as a crawling baby on the verge of falling into a well is about to lose its own life by misfortune. If one loves a particular person and is therefore passible to his or her feelings, emotions, sufferings, and so forth, one can consequently have various other responses to him or her, such as benevolence, pity, sympathy, compassion, and the like. *Ce yin zhi xin* is one such response. In Confucian ethics, one should become susceptible to every fellow human facing danger vulnerably. This requirement is merely concerned with everyone's safety or basic living conditions. It does not prevent one from loving more someone who stands in a special relation. For this reason, one's having *ce yin zhi xin* for someone vulnerable who is in danger is not at all incompatible with the gradational nature of *ren*. For Mencius, Yi Zhi mistakenly attempts to extract too much meaning from *ce yin zhi xin*.[48]

5 The Nature of Gradational Love

[48] In the *Mencius* 3A5, Mencius provides another example to clarify how love can be directed to one's own kin along with another concomitant. In the example, Mencius describes that, when a person sees foxes and wild-cats devouring the dead bodies of her parents, she would not bear the sight and thereby have a particular physical response, namely perspiration on her forehead. By pointing to a different kind of response, that is, perspiration, that accompanies love of kin, Mencius wants to indicate that *ce yin zhi xin* should not be identified with love.

To further elaborate on the relation between gradational love and the formation of one unity among all humans, I first cast doubt on a comparative approach that has been widely appreciated as a way to extract philosophical insights from the debate between Confucians and Mohists.[49] According to this comparative approach, the early Chinese debate bears a close resemblance to contemporary Western debates between universalist moralities, such as Kantianism and utilitarianism, which count every individual as having an equal moral pull, *and* particularistic views that make special room for the priority of personal relationships, *e.g.*, intimate familial relationships, friendships, or similar bonds. In this comparative approach, early Confucian thought is regarded as embodying a particularistic view because it is understood as encouraging one to favor another person who stands in a special relationship, whereas the Mohist position is taken to be closer to universalism.

This widely-accepted framework, particularism *versus* universalism, does not perfectly map onto the early Chinese context. First of all, the notion of indiscrimination in early China does not convey equality entailed in universalism. As explained in Section 3, the tension between discrimination and indiscrimination in early China relates only to the question about whether a person is ethically justified in interacting with other people according to the degree of closeness to him or her.[50] For this reason, the Mohist position is not a version of universalism; moreover, the Confucian spirit of forming one unity among all humans cannot be captured by universalism.

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[49] David B. Wong should be the earliest scholar who systematically employs this comparative approach in understanding Confucian ethics. See Wong, op. cit..

[50] In this regard, the claim that early Confucian thought fails to measure up to a universalistic moral position, due to its retention of a particularistic position, should be reconsidered (See Wong, ibid.). This claim leads to a cynical view of Confucian morality, in that it implies that such an ethical attribute as *ren* cannot be fundamental to an ideal type of morality. However, it is not fair to discuss whether Confucian Ethics would live up to a universalist view, such as Kantian or various forms of consequantialist views, *in*

Still, it cannot be denied that Confucian *ren* entails a particularistic aspect. In Confucian thought, however, any particularistic motivation or action is to be understood against the background of the manifestation of love that is applied in a gradational way to all other people. This importantly implies that greater caring for a closer person is justified precisely because the caring is one type of manifestation of gradational love, which is believed to *contribute* directly or eventually to the formation of a unified whole among all humans. The relation between gradation and the development of a unity with all humans does not posit any tension at the outset. For this reason, the Confucian context in which such an issue as why one should assign priority to one's own parents is raised would not be nicely analyzed by the Western framework that posits a tension between particularism and universalism.

The question then is why the formation of a unified whole among all humans should be developed on the basis of gradational love. A satisfactory answer cannot be produced, unless one first determines the configuration of the gradational scale involved in Confucian love. As far as I can tell, the *Xunzi* and the *Mencius* do not contain the details that would enable a reconstruction of the response of the early Confucians to this question. All I can do here is to suggest a reasonable answer that is consistent with early Confucian thought. My suggestion is that one's history of interactions with various individuals is the factor that *most fundamentally* determines the psychological distance that one feels between each individual and oneself and, therefore, establishes the gradational scale involved in love. We usually develop a feeling of strong connection to another person through interactions with him or her; the accumulation of actual

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connection with the issue of discrimination *versus* indiscrimination, given that this issue is not comparable to the issue of particularism and universalism.

experiences of interaction enhances the strength of such a feeling. The reason why one's own parents and close relatives usually become the recipients of one's strongest love can also be understood on the basis of the histories of one's experience in interaction with them.[51] If the above suggestion is plausible, the reason why the formation of one unity among all humans is to be developed through gradational love can be explained by an appeal to the *inevitable* characteristic of humans, namely that humans become susceptible to others unavoidably according to their own differing histories of actual experiences in interactions with others. On the basis of this inevitability, the Confucians would attempt to draw a further conclusion that a unified whole among all humans is to be developed *through* this inevitable characteristic of humans because it is *the most feasible* way to achieve it. To draw this conclusion, however, they need to provide more explanations.

The Confucians would first offer an explanation such as the following: Since humans naturally have limited powers of attention that enable them to give affection to a limited range of people, they will quickly exhaust their powers of attention if they attempt to give affection indiscriminately to all other humans. For this reason, they need to use their powers of attention wisely for the eventual purpose of becoming susceptible to every other fellow human. In this

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[51] Two additional points need to be made: First, the early Confucians seem to think that there are patterns in the ways humans build intimate relations with one another. For instance, they believe that the relationships that are universally developed through intimate human interactions can be perceived in standardized ways. Among them are various typical familial relationships, such as those between fathers and sons, husbands and wives, and other close relations.

Second, *ce yin zhi xin* in Mencius's thought can be explained on the basis of the above suggestion. Everyone is supposed to be moved by the suffering of a crawling baby in fatal danger because the harm to the baby is what would imminently happen or actually happens *in front of* him-or herself.

respect, a gradational allocation of one's power of attention can be accepted as an effective step in the process of giving love to all other humans.

Loving a broader range of people might be relatively more feasible, if one loves others by wisely distributing one's powers of attention according to a gradational scale. Moreover, one is thereby able to give greater concern for those who are closer, such as one's own kin. This kind of behavior seems consistent with human nature. However, there is a difficult problem for the Confucians: A gradational scale involved in love may be supposed to determine how much one should love *every single person* over the world according to the degree of each person's closeness to oneself, since the scale has to be established by taking every single person into consideration. It is then doubtful if such a gradational scale can be established or become practicable once it is established. Moreover, even if it can be established, the priority that one can give to those who are closest, according to such a gradational scale, would not be significant enough, given that the scope of love has to spread out as widely as possible to cover every single person around the world. Then, it is also doubtful if one can give sufficient love to one's own kin, while one loves all others appropriately in accordance with a gradational scale.

In confronting this difficulty, the Confucians would defend themselves by establishing a gradational scale for love in the following manner. First, we need to be reminded that one actually interacts on a daily basis throughout one's life with a limited range of people. For this reason, even if one continuously becomes acquainted with new people, one can still manage to offer love to everyone one knows in a gradational way. Moreover, one can give considerably more concern to one's beloved persons, while one still has concern for everyone one interacts with in one's daily life. On the other hand, most other people in the world are outside of the limited range of people that one actually encounters in everyday life; these other people can be

classified simply as the most distant people or the strangers. One needs to have only minimal concern for these people, for example, concern about whether they have a very basic living standard, whether they are starving, whether they are in fatal danger through no fault of their own, and other similar matters. The establishment of a gradational scale for loving all human beings in this way is not at all impossible. And, it would not be impracticable for one to love others according to such a gradational scale.

Then, in Confucian Ethics, the minimal concern for the stranger becomes critically important. In relation to this, the Confucians' special emphasis on the protection of the common people is understandable.[52] Mencius suggests that the ruler should make certain that the common people are guaranteed the attainment of basic living conditions, such as the basic maintenance of the family and access to food. Only when these requirements are met can the ruler give extra attention to his own well-being through activities such as the enjoyment of music or the expansion of his own private park.[53] Mencius also mentions that the *first and foremost* (必先) task of the ideal government based on *ren* is to ensure that the ruler's gradational love affects "old men without wives, old women without husbands, old people without children, young children without fathers."[54] These four types of people are mentioned as the most vulnerable people. The ruler's care of such vulnerable people can serve as an indication that he actually cares for everyone. The necessary process of protecting the common people illustrates how any

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[52] See Section 2.

[53] *Mencius* 1B1 and 1B2.

[54] *Mencius* 1B5.

priority given to those closer, including oneself, needs to be adjusted on occasions when the priority leads one to not show minimal concern for the welfare of the stranger.

On the basis of these considerations, an important rule can be stated in the context of Confucian ethics: One should not show any extra concern for one's beloved persons in a way that keeps one from showing minimal concern for the stranger. This further requires adjustment of one's gradational scale in loving others, in case one's extra concern for those closer, including oneself, is preventing one from offering the minimal concern that is due to the stranger.[55] These requirements are based on a more general principle that underlies Confucian gradational love: Any priority given to those closer is justified *on the condition that* it can be applied in a way that promotes the formation of a whole among all humans. This condition sets limits on the priority given to those closer in the sense that it requires one to show extra concern for someone in a closer relationship only to the extent that the extra concern does not prevent one from loving those who are more distant appropriately.

The requirement for the demonstration of minimal concern for strangers around the world should not be overly burdensome, at least in an ideal situation. As explained in Section 2, the Confucians understand the formation of one unity among all humans figuratively through a comparison with the maintenance of one's own body. In the maintenance of one's own body, one is not consciously concerned about each part of the body all the time. Instead, one is concerned about a certain part, such as a finger, particularly when it has been hurt or harmed.[56] Likewise, once humans have successfully formed a solidly unified community, they will not need to show

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[55] See footnote 41 for references regarding the inclusion of oneself in those closer.

[56] In this respect, it is understandable why Mencius considers *ren* basically in relation to one's being moved by harm to others. See Section 2.

conscious concern about every single people in the community all the time. They will be required to show only minimal concern, particularly for someone who cannot maintain basic living conditions.

Will the requirement be burdensome in a world such as the current world, where many people are starving and unable to maintain even a very basic living standard? It may be burdensome, but not in an unreasonable sense. From the Confucian perspective, current problems should be considered mainly as arising due to the allocation of too much extra concern to closer people in ways that prevent the expression of even minimal concern for people in predicaments. Thus, such a requirement that asks one to adjust one's own gradational scale in a way that enables one to give minimal concern to other people in predicaments is what one should be willing to accept.

Now, if a gradational scale for Confucian love can be established in a way that satisfies the above considerations, the claim can plausibly be made that the most feasible way to form a unified whole among all humans is through the expression of everyone's gradational love, given that humans are inevitably discriminating in their interaction with one another.

6 *Ren* in the *Xunzi*

Throughout the previous sections, I have attempted to develop a theory of gradational love and *ren* in a way that makes the theory compatible with the thought of both Mencius and Xunzi. In this final section, I further demonstrate how the above understanding of gradational love and *ren* can be explained in Xunzi's own terms and address in what sense Xunzi considers *ren* as fundamental to his ethical view.

Xunzi on one occasion distinguishes humans from other animals by reference to *bian* (辨). The term usually covers the capacity for discrimination in general, including the sensory capacities for discrimination.[57] However, in that particular context, it refers to the advanced capacity to discriminate among different kinds of persons.[58] Xunzi's idea is that only humans are capable of discerning various complex relations, such as, first, the relation between father and son (父子) and, second, the differences between the sexes (男女); thus, unlike other animals, humans can respond to each member of their own species in a distinctive way.[59] In explaining this idea, especially, in connection with the relation between father and son, Xunzi draws the distinction between *qin* and *ai*, claiming that, even though some other animals that have the basic capacity for perception (*zhi** 知) can have indiscriminate affection (*ai*) for the members of their own kind, only humans have a more advanced capacity for perception that enables them to discriminate among more subtle differences, and, thereby, have more advanced attitudes towards the members of their own kind, such as *qin*, namely love with discrimination.

Throughout the *Xunzi*, a few different terms are used to refer to the kinds of differences that may be discerned through the advanced capacity for discrimination.[60] Among these terms, *fen* (分) may be considered as the most basic one. This term refers to the allotment that results from the distribution of various social shares according to social distinctions. It can be translated

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[57] *Xunzi jishi*, p. 64

[58] Ibid., pp. 79-80.

[59] Ibid., p. 445.

[60] For instance, *fen* (分), *bie* (别), *jie* (節), *cha* (差), and *deng* (等). See ibid. p. 69, p. 79, p. 374, p. 419, and p. 445.

as "social status" construed in its broadest sense. The recognition of a person in relation to a particular kind of *fen* means that a certain kind of worth is ascribed and, accordingly, other people in the society treat the person in a way appropriate to that worth. The underlying idea is that individuals in society deserve different mutual recognition according to various social distinctions. Love with discrimination (*qin*) is to be understood as the kind of attitude that is directed toward a certain kind of social status (*fen*), namely the closer (*qin* as a noun) and the more distant (*shu*).[61] This kind of social status is based upon what I called "the agent-relative distinction" in Section 3. For convenience, let us call this kind "the agent-relative social status."

This characterization of humans explains why the most feasible way to form a unity among all humans is through each individual's love with discrimination, as discussed in the previous section. Human good cannot be envisioned as something that is beyond what humans can achieve within the constraints of their nature. Given that, for Xunzi, humans by nature have no choice but to discriminate among different kinds within their own species, the realization of the ideal state for themselves, such as one unity among all, should also be pursued within the scope of the constraint of the human characteristic.

At this point, it is important to note that, for Xunzi, the mere fact that humans have the more advanced capacity for discrimination and, thereby, have such an attitude as love with discrimination does not at all guarantee that they can form one unity among themselves. For Xunzi, humans should develop love in such a way that it comes to manifest itself *according to* a certain gradational scale that appropriately takes all humans into account. In this respect, Xunzi

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[61] Ibid., p. 565.

says that the proper love between father and son must be day by day be 'cut' and 'polished.'[62] In other words, for Xunzi, even though humans naturally have special affection for their own kin, they still need to cultivate themselves to love their own kin *properly*. Such proper love in Xunzi's thought is the kind of love that contributes to forming one unity with all humans. So his idea here should be that one needs to cultivate one's love in accordance with an appropriate gradational scale that enables one to love all other humans appropriately.

Finally, to explain exactly in what sense *ren* can be fundamental to an ethical position, I need to explain another fundamental ethical attribute in Xunzi's thought in a summary style. In distinguishing humans from other animals, Xunzi also speaks of the difference between the sexes (男女), along with the relation between father and son. His idea seems to be that, even if there exists the biological difference between male and female for all animals, humans are the only creatures that are capable of taking the difference to be a sort of social distinction, and, on that basis, giving each of the group different social recognition. It is important to note that this kind of social status is critically different from the agent-relative social status. The difference between man and woman is not determined relative to each individual, in the sense that it does not depend on the degree of closeness to each individual. In this respect, this kind of social statuses may be categorized as "the agent-neutral social status." In fact, Xunzi recognizes various kinds of social status according to this category, such as various occupations, governmental ranks, meritocratic social positions, and so forth.[63]

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[62] Ibid., p. 374.

[63] See ibid., p. 251, p. 166, p. 136, p. 69, p. 163

Zun (尊, respect) is one of the attitudes directed toward agent-neutral social statuses. It is the attitude that leads the treatment of another person in a way that involves suppression of one's own desire in deference to a certain social status that is ascribed to the other person. The relevant ethical attribute is *yi* (義).[64] *Yi* is mainly involved in proper treatment of other people in relation to their agent-neutral social statuses. It promotes the ideal state for humans by ensuring that every human occupies appropriate positions in society and has corresponding roles.[65] In other words, it contributes to the realization of the ideal state for humans in a way that is different from *ren*'s contribution.

In a nutshell, Xunzi's idea is that all humans should develop not only love but also respect on the basis of the advanced capacity for discrimination among various kinds of social statuses, including agent-relative kinds and agent-neutral kinds; by adopting these two attitudes in interaction with one another, they can jointly bring about the ideal state for humans. *Ren* is mainly concerned with the feasibility of the formation of a unified whole among all humans. Because discrimination among members of their own species and treatment of each member differently is a characteristic of humans, the best way for each individual to form a community with a broader range of other people is through a gradual process based on gradational love; in this way, a very basic companionship or fellowship can be created among all humans. The

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[64] In the *Xunzi*, *zun* is listed as one of the attitudes involved in *yi* (義). In the *Zhong Yong* (中庸) chapter of the *Liji*, *zun* is representatively related to *yi*, while *qin* is representatively related to *ren*. Also see the following passage from the *Liji*: "厚於仁者薄於義, 親而不尊; 厚於義者薄於仁, 尊而不親." (*Shisanjing zhushu*, p. 1302)

[65] In the *Xunzi*, *yi* is often used in an expression like "*ge de qi yi**" (各得其宜). This expression is used in contexts where Xunzi explains that each of the myriad things acquires its proper position as the result of an appropriate distribution based on social distinctions. See *Xunzi jishi* p. 69, p. 131, p. 210 and pp. 273-4.

reason why such an ethical attribute as *ren* is fundamental to an ethical view is then that it enables humans to create a very basic companionship that provides the foundation for the formation of a community among all of them. But, Xunzi does not think that humans can maintain their community merely on the basis of *ren*. An ethical attribute such as *yi* is also fundamental to his ethical view. In other words, his endorsement of gradational love is limited. Once human beings have shared a very basic feeling of belonging that grounds a community, they then need to cooperate in accordance with *yi* in order to ensure that all members of the community are treated fairly according to their various social positions.

Chapter 4 *Yi* (義), Respect, and Self-Respect in Early Confucian Ethics

1 The Underlying Spirit of *Yi* (義)

In the *Xunzi*, *yi* is used in relation to both personality and action.[1] For instance, on one occasion, the *junzi* (君子), namely, the ethically well-cultivated person, is said to have no concern except to act upon *yi*.[2] In another instance, a man who accumulates *li-yi* (禮義) is said to become a *junzi*.[3] In the former case, *yi* is understood as something that one acts upon, while, in the latter, it is understood as a feature that explains an aspect of the personality of an ethically well-cultivated person. So *yi* may be considered an ethical term that not only evaluates actions, but also describes personality.

However, throughout the *Xunzi*, there are many occurrences of *yi* that do not relate directly to either evaluation of action or description of personality: For example, in one instance,

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[1] For a discussion about whether *yi*, especially in the *Lunyu* and in the *Mencius*, refers more basically to a certain feature of action *or* more basically to a certain kind of personality, see Kwong-loi Shun, *Mencius and Early Chinese Thought* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), pp. 25-6 and pp. 62-3.

[2] *Xunzi jishi*, p. 47. Also see Ibid., p. 129.

[3] Ibid., p. 155. Also see Ibid., p. 161. In addition, there is such an expression as "cultivation of *ren* (仁) and *yi*" (Ibid., p. 188). Here, *yi* may be derivatively understood as a quality that a person with a certain kind of personality characteristically has in the sense that *yi* is considered to be cultivated in order to be a certain kind of person.

yi is considered an object of one's awe.[4] In another place, it is regarded as an attribute that is to be realized not merely at the level of individuals' actions or personalities, but at the level of an entire state (*guo* 國). In other words, it is understood as an attribute that is to be realized through human governance or political activity (*zheng* 政).[5] Moreover, *yi* is sometimes used to refer to an attribute that is related to human interactions and, more particularly, an attribute that is to be realized differently in terms of various social relations.[6]

My suggestion is that, in order to develop an interpretation of *yi* that is consistent throughout the broad range of its uses, the term needs to be understood more fundamentally in relation to a certain feature of the ideal state for humans that is depicted in Confucian thought. *Yi* should be defined as an ethical attribute that humans should adhere to, follow, act upon, or cultivate within themselves *in order to* realize the ideal state for themselves in an essential way.[7] In this line of interpretation, a prerequisite is to grasp the kind of ideal state that is expected to be realized on the basis of *yi*. In this regard, *li* (理) and *yi** (宜) need to be examined because these are two terms that explain the ideal state for humans envisioned in *yi*.

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[4] *Xunzi jishi*, p. 44.

[5] Ibid., p. 304 and p. 330. Also see Ibid., p. 358.

[6] Ibid., p. 104 and p. 295.

[7] In other words, the primary concern underlying this ethical term is neither the evaluation of action nor the description of the features of a personality, such as character traits, dispositions, or virtues. For this reason, following Kwong-loi Shun, I use "attribute" as the basic term in the explanation of *yi*. This use enables us to avoid any misleading imposition that may be caused by the misuse of any concept that is specific to Western ethical traditions. See Shun, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

The reason why I qualify *yi* with the phrase "in *an* essential way" is that the ideal state for humans in Confucian Ethics can be realized only on the basis of the combination between *ren* (仁) and *yi*.

In Section 3 of Chapter 2, I suggested interpreting *li* as the differences or distinguishing characteristics of things or beings in a well-ordered whole; and, its underlying idea is such that differing parts of a whole are coherently connected with one another so as to form the structure of the whole. I also understood *li* as a holistic concept in the sense that it does not concern a feature that an individual thing or being possesses essentially, independent of its relation to a larger entity to which it belongs; rather, it relates to the kind of feature that is conceivable only against the background of a larger entity as a whole, to which the thing or being belongs, and only in relation to every other part of the whole.

In the *Xunzi*, *li* is closely connected with *yi* in a sentence such as, "[*Junzi*] makes his mind sincere and acts upon *yi*, then *li* [, *i.e.* he lives up to the realization of *li*]."[8] Moreover, *yi* is on one occasion defined in terms of *li*: "*Yi* is being in accord with *li* (循理)."[9]

Another term closely related to *yi* is *yi** (宜). Throughout early Confucian texts, *yi* is often explained in terms of *yi**, and it is in one instance defined by *yi** in the *Liji*.[10] *Yi** refers to appropriateness or suitability, and any judgment about appropriateness can be made only according to a certain standard. In the *Xunzi*, *yi** is often used in an expression like "*ge de qi yi**"

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[8] "誠心行義則理." *Xunzi jishi*, p. 47.

[9] Ibid., p. 328. In some other early Confucian texts, *yi* is understood closely in relation to *li*. For instance, "心之所同然者何也. 謂理也. 義也." in the *Mencius* 6A7 and "義理, 禮之文也" in the *Liji* (in *Shisanjing zhushu*, p. 449). In contrast, in the *Liji*, *yi* and *li* are once equated with each other: "理者, 義也." (*Shisanjing zhushu*, p.1032).

[10] See the followings: "父母既沒慎行其身. 不遺父母惡名. 可謂能終矣. ... 義者宜此者也 (*Liji* in *Shisanjing zhushu*, p. 821)." "義者, 君臣上下之事, 父子貴賤之差也, 知交朋友之接也, 親真內外之分也. 臣事君宜, 下懷上宜, 子事父宜, 賤敬貴宜, 知交友朋之相助也宜, 親者內而真者外宜. **義者, 謂其宜也**, 宜而為之 (*Hanfeizi jishi*, p. 330)." "**義者宜也**, 尊賢爲大 (*Liji*, *Zhong Yong*, *Shisanjing zhushu*, p. 887).

(各得其宜). Such an expression is used in contexts where Xunzi explains that each of the myriad things or beings acquires its proper position as the result of appropriate distribution based on social distinctions.[11] This consideration of the meaning of the expression, *ge de qi yi**, makes more understandable the way Mencius relates *yi* to not taking what belongs to others or, in figurative terms, not "boring holes and climbing over walls [to take what belongs to others]."[12] *Yi* is concerned with the realization of an ideal state in which each individual can occupy his or her own appropriate social position and receive his or her own due. *Yi* is aimed to realize a sort of distributive justice.[13]

On the basis of the above interpretations of *li* and *yi**, the claim can reasonably be made that *yi* is an ethical attribute that is related to the realization of the kind of ideal state in which various parts of a certain whole are coherently connected with one another in order to structure the whole in an orderly way; each part thereby occupies its own appropriate position within the well-structured whole and receives its due in terms of whatever is to be distributed at the level of the whole. In this line of thought, *li* and *yi** are considered explanatory terms for the kind of ideal state for humans that is supposed to be realized in connection with *yi*. *Yi* is accordingly understood as the kind of ethical attribute that one should observe, act upon, and cultivate in order to achieve the aspects of the ideal state for humans that are explained in terms of the

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[11] *Xunzi jishi*, p. 69 and p. 131. Also see Ibid., p. 210 and pp. 273-4.

[12] *Mencius* 7A33 and 7B31.

[13] There has recently been an interesting attempt to understand *yi* in the context of the core chapters of the *Mozi* as a much broader concept that refers to "norms of conduct that individuals and communities ought to live by (and thus are enforced by the weight of social sanctions and the public powers) so that they can peacefully coexist in mutual benefit." See Hui-chieh Loy, *The Moral Philosophy of the Mozi "Core Chapters,"* PhD dissertation (University of California, Berkeley, 2006), Ch. 2.

connotations of *li* and *yi**. For convenience, I call the outlook for the realization of such an ideal state "the underlying spirit of *yi*."[14]

2 The Psychological Assumptions involved in *Yi*: Human Characteristics in Xunzi's Thought.

Examination of the sorts of psychological assumptions that Xunzi thinks are necessary for a person to follow *yi* and thereby realize the underlying spirit of *yi* may make it possible to grasp the underlying spirit of *yi* in a more substantive way. This is so because the realization of human good cannot be something beyond what humans can achieve within the constraints of their nature. To understand Xunzi's characterization of humans, one needs to examine his conception of basic human cognitive capacities and their accompanying modes of responsiveness to external things or beings.[15]

According to Xunzi, humans share with other animals the basic capacity for perception. Xunzi seems to think that the capacity is associated with the faculty in charge of the complex corpus of cognitive and responsive dimensions, namely, the mind (*xin* 心).[16] The term for this

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[14] As to what I mean by "spirit," see footnote 65 of Chapter 3.

[15] Some portions of the following discussion were already presented in Section 5 of Chapter 2 and Section 6 of Chapter 3. But note that what follows in this chapter is intended to be a more complete discussion about Xunzi's characterization of humans.

[16] It is not clear within the *Xunzi* whether Xunzi ascribes this capacity only to the mind. I suspect that the term is used in early Chinese texts to refer to both sense-based capacities for perception and the capacity of the mind for perception. For Xunzi, the mind functions in such a way that it synthesizes sensory evidences provided by each sensory faculty and thereby discriminates what is what. This faculty can be

basic capacity is *zhi** (知 perception). Xunzi regards the basic function of *zhi** as the perception of differences among external things and beings.[17]

Xunzi also seems to share with many early Chinese thinkers the idea that *hao* (好 liking) and *wu* (惡 disliking) arise on the basis of *zhi**.[18] These two may be understood as the most basic modes of responsiveness that arise on the basis of the perception of differences. Xunzi thinks that not only each sensory faculty has its *hao* and *wu* toward distinctive kinds of things or beings, but also that the mind has its *hao* and *wu* for particular items, such as profit (利) and honor (*rong* 榮).[19] Xunzi considers these two modes as belonging to *xing* (性), namely, features that humans have by birth.[20] Along with liking and disliking, there is another basic mode of responsiveness that seems to arise on the basis of the capacity for the perception of differences among things or beings, namely, *yu* (欲). This mode typically leads one to *get* a thing, and it can also lead one to

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regarded as the synthesizing function of the mind. He has a term that refers specifically to it: *zheng zhi** (徵知). See *Xunzi jishi*, p. 513.

[17] "心生而有知, 知而有異." Ibid., p. 484.

[18] For instance, see the followings: "人生而靜. 天之性也. 感於物而動. 性之欲也. **物至知知. 然後好惡形焉**. 好惡無節於內. 知誘於外. 不能反躬. 天理滅." *Liji*, *Yue ji* in *Shisanjing zhushu*, p. 666; "人生而靜, 天之性也. 感而後動, 性之害也. 物至而神應, 知之動也. **知與物接, 而好憎生焉**. 好憎成形, 而知誘於外, 不能反己, 而天理滅." *Huainanzi* (Taipei: Zhonghua, 1965), p. 10. Note that, in the latter passage, *zeng* (憎) is used instead of *wu*.

[19] *Xunzi jishi*, p. 60 and p. 544.

[20] Ibid., p. 506.

seek to get a thing in case the thing is not immediately obtainable.[21] It seems that an object of *yu* is something toward which *hao* or *wu* is first directed. *Yu* can be rendered as "desire," understood as one's *pre*existing urge, the satisfaction of which becomes a goal for one to achieve.

There is another term that refers more specifically to the capacity for the perception of differences: *bian* (辨). This term actually covers a broad range of capacities for discrimination, including natural sensory capacities for discrimination. For instance, it is used in a context where Xunzi explains that a person is capable of discriminating among different colors by virtue of the faculty of vision.[22] Xunzi on one occasion distinguishes humans from other animals by referring to *bian*.[23] It would not make sense for him to draw the line between humans and other living things simply in relation to basic sensory capacities. Xunzi in another instance characterizes humans by pointing to the fact that other animals' capacities for perception (*zhi**) cannot measure up to humans' capabilities.[24] So, in drawing the distinction between humans and animals, Xunzi's use of *bian* should not be read as referring to the basic sensory capacity for discrimination, but instead exclusively to an advanced capacity for discrimination that pertains only to humans. In the relevant context, Xunzi in fact has in mind the capacity to discriminate among different kinds of persons.

On the basis of humans' advanced capacity for discrimination, Xunzi thinks that they can develop what may be called "advanced modes of human responsiveness." For Xunzi, only

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[21] Ibid., p.417.

[22] ibid., p. 64.

[23] Ibid., pp. 79-80.

[24] "故有血氣之屬莫知於人." Ibid., p. 445.

humans are capable of discerning various complex relations, such as, first, the relation between father and son (父子) and, second, the differences between the sexes (男女); thus, unlike other animals, humans can respond to each member of their own species in a distinctive way.[25] When he explains this idea, especially in connection with the relation between father and son, he draws the distinction between *qin* (親, love with discrimination) and *ai* (愛, indiscriminate affection) and claims that, even though some other animals that have the basic capacity for perception (*zhi**) can have indiscriminate affection (*ai*) for members of their own kind, only humans have a more advanced capacity for perception that enables them to discriminate among more subtle differences. For this reason, humans are capable of more advanced modes of responsiveness to the members of their own kind, such as *qin*, namely, love with discrimination. Briefly stated, Xunzi's idea is that humans, unlike animals, can love one another with more subtle distinctions because of their advanced capacity for discrimination.

It is important to capture Xunzi's point regarding the characterization of humans; namely, that humans can be distinguished from other animals, not simply because they can treat their own family members more intimately, but because they have the advanced capacity that enables them to do so. This capacity is the ability to make subtle distinctions among kinds within their own species and to treat each kind in a different way. The human capability to discern the relation between father and son is to be regarded as *one example* of what humans can do on the basis of their advanced capacity.

For Xunzi, the advanced mode of responsiveness is triggered in relation to differences among community members that matter in social interactions. Such differences are described

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[25] Ibid., p. 445.

through the use of a few different terms throughout the *Xunzi*, such as *fen* (分), *bie* (別), *jie* (節), *cha* (差), and *deng* (等).[26] *Fen* is the most basic of these terms. *Fen* refers to the allotment that results from the distribution of various social shares according to social distinctions. It can be translated as "social status" *broadly construed*. The recognition of a person in relation to a particular kind of social status (*fen*) means that a certain kind of worth is ascribed and, accordingly, other people in the society treat the person in a way appropriate to that worth. The underlying idea is that individuals in society deserve different mutual recognition according to various social distinctions. So what Xunzi actually has in mind in characterizing humans is their ability to discern various kinds of social statuses in their interactions.

Now, love (*qin*) is to be understood as a mode of responsiveness that is generated on the basis of the human capacity for discrimination among various kinds of social statuses. Love embodies discrimination in the sense that one offers love to various people differently according to the degree of their closeness to oneself. It is the kind of responsiveness toward a certain kind of social status (*fen*), such as "the closer" (*qin* as a noun, 親) or "the more distant" (*shu* 疏).[27] The former word is applied to someone who stands in a relatively close relation, whereas the latter is applicable to someone who stands in a relatively more distant relation. In other words, according to Xunzi, one loves other people by ascribing the closer or the more distant to them according to their nearness from oneself. The ascription of closeness and more distance in loving others is determined relative to each individual. For instance, I recognize my father as a closer person than your father and thereby treat my father more intimately, but you recognize your

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[26] Ibid. p. 69, p. 79, p. 374, p. 419, and p. 445.

[27] Ibid., p. 565.

father as a closer person and treat him more intimately than my father. In this respect, I suggest calling the kind of social status involved in love "the agent-relative social status."[28] Accordingly, love can be regarded as a kind of responsiveness *towards* the agent-relative social status.

It is important to note that, for Xunzi, love is to be given to another person in accordance with *an appropriate gradational scale* that takes all other humans into consideration. In loving others, one is to give more concern to those who are closer to one; still, one should make sure that the expression of more concern for the closer does not prevent a show of appropriate concern for those who are in relatively more distant relationships. One should make especially sure that special love for one's beloved persons does not distract one from showing at least minimal concern about total strangers' maintenance of their basic living conditions. This consideration of all humans is important because, for Xunzi, the proper development of gradational love leads eventually to the formation of a well-unified community among all humans (*yi*** 一). This is the spirit of *ren* (仁), one of the central Confucian ethical attributes. *Ren* is concerned with the realization of a well-unified community through the creation and maintenance of the most basic companionship among all members of the community on the basis of all members' love, which they give gradationally to one another.

As mentioned above, when Xunzi distinguishes humans from other animals, he has in mind the difference between the sexes (男女) and the relation between father and son. Xunzi's idea seems to be that, even if, among all animals, there is a biological difference between male and female, humans are the only creatures who are capable of making that difference an

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[28] I suggest defining love as the attitude of making oneself susceptible or passible in a gradational way to other people, especially in terms of harm to them, according to the differing histories of one's experience in interactions with each of them. See Chapter 2.

important social distinction in their interactions.[29] In this respect, Xunzi regards the distinction between the male and the female as another kind of social status (*fen*). It is important to note that this kind of social status is different in its nature from the kind of social status involved in love. Unlike the distinction between the closer and the more distant, the social distinction between man and woman is not determined relative to each individual, namely, according to one's emotional distance from each individual in one's interactions. In this respect, the social distinction between man and woman may be characterized as "agent-neural."

In fact, various other social statuses that Xunzi discusses can be classified as agent-neutral. Xunzi understands occupations and governmental ranks, such as farmer, merchant,

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[29] Various objections should arise in relation to Xunzi's distinction between humans and other animals. For example, it may be pointed out that it is not true that only humans can draw the distinctions between father and son and between the sexes and interact in accordance with such distinctions. Xunzi might have had only limited zoological knowledge, so he failed to present a more reasonable argument for his distinction. Even so, his main point remains intact. As clearly mentioned in the above, his focal point is that, at any rate, the human cognitive capacity is more advanced than any other animals' and, therefore, only humans have the potential for the establishment of a complex social system, in which they draw more diverse kinds of social distinctions than any other animals would possibly do.

In addition, it is important to note that Xunzi does not derive normativity wholly from the very fact that only humans have such an advanced capacity. More specifically, his ethical position is not such that humans should interact in a way that fully realizes the human characteristic capacity. If Xunzi's view were similar to such a position just mentioned, his view would be comparable to an argument that has recently been presented by some contemporary Aristotelians, such as Martha Nussbaum and Philippa Foot. Very briefly put, they attempt to explain why humans should live in accordance with the guidance of "practical reason" by saying that it is the human characteristic way of living. In contrast, Xunzi's position is that harmony is the final good that every human should pursue finally; in order to realize harmony fully, humans have no choice but to develop or transform the human characteristic capacity in a way that is conducive to harmony. Thus, Xunzi's discussion of human characteristics or human nature is involved in his ethical thought in a way that is distinctive from the Aristotelian's way.

As to the Aristotelian argument, see Martha Nussbaum, "Aristotelian Social Democracy," in *Liberalism and the Good*, eds. R. Bruce Douglass, Gerald M. Mara, and Henry S. Richardson (New York: Routledge, 1990) and Philippa Foot, *Natural Goodness* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

artisan, officer, and the son-of-heaven, namely, the king, in terms of social status (*fen*).[30] Xunzi also draws the distinction between the honored (貴 *gui*) and the humble (賤 *jian**).[31] In relation to this social distinction, he seems to think primarily of the kind of hierarchical social rank that is different for each individual according to birth. However, Xunzi also thinks of moral excellence as one of the criteria for the distinction between the honored and the humble.[32] In addition to the above social statuses, Xunzi shows a meritocratic view in his mention of the following social statuses: "the wise (知 as a noun) and the stupid," "the able (*neng* 能) and the incapable,"[33] and "the wise (*xian* 賢) and the incompetent" (*bu xiao* 不肖).[34] These distinctions reflect the idea that someone who has shown fitness for a government post should be allowed to gradually ascend to attain a higher post. All of the social statuses mentioned in this paragraph can be considered as agent-neutral, in the sense that they are determined regardless of each individual's distinctive viewpoint.

One can then think of the mode of responsiveness typically directed to the agent-neutral social status, just as love is typically directed to the agent-relative social status. Such a mode

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[30] *Xunzi jishi*, p. 251.

[31] "先王惡其亂也, 故制禮義以**分之, 使有貧富貴賤之等**, 足以相兼臨者, 是養天下之本也." Ibid., p. 166.

[32] For instance, "故君子無爵而貴." Ibid., p. 136. Mencius seems to have a similar idea in mind when he says, "天下有達尊三. 爵一, 齒一, 德一. 朝廷莫如爵, 鄉黨莫如齒, 輔世長民莫如德." *Mencius* 2B2. *De* (德) in this passage can be translated roughly as moral excellence.

[33] "知愚能不能之分." *Xunzi jishi*, p. 69.

[34] "聽政之大分. 以善至者待之以禮, 以不善至者待之以刑. 兩者分別, 則**賢不肖不雜**, 是非不亂." Ibid., p. 163.

should be considered to be one's response to another person that arises from recognition of a certain social status of the agent-neutral kind that is ascribable to the other person, and that leads one to treat the person appropriately according to his or her social status. *Zun* (尊 respect) may plausibly be considered a representative mode of that kind. In the *Xunzi*, *zun* is listed as one of the attitudes, along with *gui* (貴), involved in *yi*.[35] In another early Confucian text such as the *Liji*, *zun* is mentioned as the responsiveness typically related to *yi*, while love (*qin*) is mentioned as the typical responsiveness associated with *ren*.[36] Now the claim can reasonably be made that *yi* is the ethical attribute that is mainly connected to human interactions through exchanges of the modes of responsiveness to one another, such as *zun*, *gui*, and the like. These modes are typically directed to the agent-neutral social status. For convenience, I use "respect" to refer to these kinds of modes of responsiveness, especially, *zun*.[37]

In a nutshell, Xunzi's idea is that all humans should develop two modes, that is, love (*qin*) and respect (*zun*), on the basis of the advanced capacity for discrimination (*bian*) among various

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[35] Ibid., p. 605.

[36] In *Liji*, *Zhong Yong* in *Shisanjing zhushu*, p. 1296. Also see the following: 厚於仁者薄於義, 親而不尊; 厚於義者薄於仁, 尊而不親" (ibid., p. 1302).

[37] Xunzi on one occasion explains *yi* as the ethical attribute that enables humans to put the system of various social allotments, including social statuses, into practice. See the following: "人何以能群? 曰分. 分何以能行? 曰義. 故義以分則和, 和則一, 一則多力, 多力則彊, 彊則勝物 (Why can man form a society? I say it is due to the division of society into classes. How can social divisions be translated into behavior? I say it is because of humans' sense of morality and justice. Thus, 'if their sense of morality and justice is used to divide society into classes, the concord will result.' If there is concord between the classes, unity will result; it there is unity, great physical power will result; if there is great physical power, real strength will result; is there is great is real strength, all objects can be overcome. For this reason, ' humans can acquire palaces and houses where they can dwell in safety.)" *Xunzi jishi*, p. 180; Knoblock, *Xunzi*, vol. 2, p.104.

kinds of social statuses (*fen*). By loving or respecting other people properly in their interactions, all people can jointly bring about the ideal state for humans that is envisioned in *ren* or *yi*.[38]

It is crucial to note that, for Xunzi, the mere fact that humans naturally have an advanced capacity for discrimination among various kinds of social statuses is not ethically important. What is important for Xunzi is whether humans can develop love and respect on the basis of the capacity in ways that enable them to interact with one another in accordance with the spirit of *ren* and *yi*. More particularly stated in relation to *yi*, humans should develop respect on the basis of the natural capacity for discrimination in such a way that they become capable of responding to various social statuses of the agent-neutral kind in their interactions and, thereby, bring about the ideal state in which persons of various statuses can be treated in ways that are appropriate for their social positions.

Finally, a statement is needed about how the above understanding of Xunzi's psychological assumptions offers a substantive explanation of the underlying spirit of *yi*. In the previous section, I explained the underlying spirit of *yi* in terms of *li* (理) and *yi** (宜), namely, the realization of the kind of ideal state in which various parts of a certain whole are coherently connected with one another so that the whole can be structured in an orderly way. Each part then occupies its own appropriate position within the well-structured whole. According to Xunzi, humans can form a coherently connected whole among themselves by allocating various kinds of

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[38] The parallel between *ren* and *qin* is sometimes juxtaposed with the parallel between *yi* and *zun,* which is drawn most clearly in the *Liji*. For instance, "仁者人也, 親親為大. 義者宜也, 尊賢為大" (*Liji*, *Zhong Yong* in *Shisanjing zhushu*, p. 1296); "厚於仁者薄於義, 親而不尊; 厚於義者薄於仁, 尊而不親" (*Liji* in *Shisanjing zhushu*, p. 1302). The same juxtaposition is also found in the *Xunzi*: "親親故故庸庸勞勞, 仁之殺也; 貴貴尊尊賢賢老老長長, 義之倫也. ... . 仁, 愛也, 故親; 義, 理也, 故行" (*Xunzi jishi*, p. 605). Also see the following: "仁眇天下, 故天下莫不親也; 義眇天下, 故天下莫不貴也" (ibid., p. 172). However, there are some exceptions. See "貴賢, 仁也; 賤不肖, 亦仁也" (Ibid., p. 102).

social statuses to one another and by responding to those social statuses with two moral attitudes, namely, love and respect. In this interpretation, the idea of social status (*fen*) is understood as the most basic concept that explains *li* and *yi**.

3 Respect as the Attitude that Underlies the Confucian Deferential Offer, *Rang* (讓)

In the last section, I drew the distinction between the basic modes of responsiveness, such as liking (*hao*), disliking (*wu*), and desire (*yu*), and the advanced modes of responsiveness, such as love (*qin*) and respect (*zun*). Love and respect were discussed as examples of the kind of mode that arises on the basis of the advanced capacity for discrimination (*bian*), which pertains only to humans. The nature of these advanced modes can be elaborated through an examination of how these modes function in relation to the basic modes, such as liking, disliking, and desire. An advanced mode of responsiveness is generated in a way that controls the basic modes of responsiveness. One can respect another person by recognizing that the person has a certain social status and therefore suppressing one's own desire for a certain item in deference to the person's desire for the same item. Understood in this way, the advanced mode of responsiveness can be regarded as a higher-order motive in relation to liking or desire, that is, first-order motives. To grasp the connection between the basic modes of responsiveness and the advanced modes of responsiveness, we need to examine the nature of *rang* (讓, deferential offers) and how *rang* can be considered to be based on the advanced mode of responsiveness and especially on respect.

Rang refers to the action of offering honor or something desirable to other people. In the *Mencius*, the combination of *rang* and *ci* (辭讓) is primarily related to *li** (禮).[39] According to Mencius, the mind has an innate feature associated with *rang* and *ci*, and this feature is seen as offering the starting point for the observance of *li**. However, I will contend and demonstrate in this section that *ci* and *rang* can be understood as the behavior that results from respect's functioning as a second-order motive, and, therefore, *ci* and *rang* are aimed at the underlying spirit of *yi*.

To begin with, it should be examined how *yi* is related to *li** in early Confucian thought. *Li** normally refers to the general formalities that govern human interactions in social and political contexts. It often refers more particularly to certain formal sets of actions, procedures, or rules of conduct in the familial relations between father and son, husband and wife, and elder and younger brothers. It can also refer to formal sets of behavior that are applicable to the relation between a host and a guest. Moreover, the term is sometimes used in relation to the proper formal ways of treating others in various political relationships, such as those between an emperor and a feudal lord, two feudal lords, or a feudal lord and government officers. In addition, *li** also refers to more specific formalities to follow in religious rites and various social ceremonies. For instance, it can involve formalities established for sacrificial rites toward nature spirits or for the rituals associated with ancestor worship, mourning, wedding ceremonies, and comparable occasions.[40]

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[39] *Mencius* 2A6.

[40] See Shun, *Mencius and Early Chinese Thought*, p.52.

The kind of formality associated with *li** does not apply merely to the level of overt action; the scope of its application is much broader than that. It covers not just actions in accordance with a moral principle, but also practices that these days are often grouped under the heading of "good manners."[41] It should be noted that *li** involves what might be understood as appropriate behavior that governs proper bodily poses, looks, and facial expressions in one's interaction with others.[42] Thus, the application of *li** is broad enough to include various bodily stances in one's interaction with others, from minute facial expressions to overt actions. Thus, *li** refers to formal rules of conduct that may apply both to minute aspects of demeanor and overt behavior in various human interactions.

It is important to differentiate *li** from formal standards of behavior that are conventionally accepted and therefore customarily followed within a certain cultural boundary. In fact, another term in early Chinese texts applies to conventional ways of behaving, that is, *yi**** (儀, good form).[43] There are two main bases for the differentiation of *li** from *yi****. First, for early Confucian thinkers, *li** is a set of formalities that are *ethically* well justified. Second, the observance of *li** involves a much more serious task than the mere effort to perform an action that accords with a certain rule, because the fundamental aim of the observance is the

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[41] See Graham, *Disputers of Tao*, p. 11 and Benjamin I. Schwartz, *The World of Thought in Ancient China* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1985), p. 67. Note that I do not mean here that early Chinese thinkers would draw the distinction between moral actions and good manners, which are understood as something less binding than moral actions.

[42] For instance, see how *li** is understood in the following: "禮也者 動於外者也 樂極和 禮極順 內和而外順 則民瞻其顏色而弗與爭也. 望其容貌而民不生易慢焉. 故德煇動於內而民莫不承聽. 理發諸外而民莫不承順." See *Liji*, *Yue Ji*, in *Shisanjing zhushu*, p. 699.

[43] For instance, "簡子問揖讓周旋之禮焉. 對曰. 是儀也. 非禮也." *Zuozhuan*, *Shisanjing zhushu*, p. 888.

transformation of one's personality into an ethically ideal one. All of the above points should be made in the provision of a complete explanation of *li**, but, for the sake of convenience, *li** may be rendered as "the Confucian formal rules of conduct."

The close connection between *li** and *yi* in the *Xunzi* can be clarified by the observation that *li** is explained in terms of *li* (理) and *fen*, just as *yi* is. Xunzi explains the relation between *li** and *fen* by saying, "of *bian*, none is more important than *fen*; of *fen*, none is more important than *li** (禮)." This means that, among what can be differentiated by virtue of the capacity for discrimination (*bian*), none is more important than a set of social statuses (*fen*). Among various possible sets of social statuses, none is more important than the kind of set that is based on the Confucian formal rules of conduct (*li**). In another instance, Xunzi explains the relation between *li** (禮) and *li* (理) by saying that *li** is the kind of *li* that cannot be altered.[44] This means that the Confucian formal rules of conduct are the kinds of rules that capture the *li* that will never change.

The close connection between *li** and *yi* can be understood in the following sense: The observance of the Confucian formal rules of conduct (*li**) enables humans to realize the underlying spirit of *yi*. Moreover, the Confucian formal rules of conduct guide humans through the process of cultivating the right kind of modes of responsiveness, namely, respect. Then, it can reasonably be said that the observation of *li** is aimed eventually to the realization of the spirit of *yi*. [45]

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[44] "禮也者, 理之不可易者也." *Xunzi jishi*, p. 463.

[45] It is important to note that the above understanding of *li** as the formal rules of conduct that mainly aim to realize the underlying spirit of *yi* is not offered as an exhaustive explanation of the nature of *li**. In other words, *li** involves distinctive concerns and unique notions, such as *jing* (敬), which cannot be captured by the spirit of *yi*. But the provision of a complete explanation of *li** goes beyond the purpose of the current discussion.

Thus far, I have explained how *li** is related to *yi* in order to offer the basis for a construction of the close relation between *rang* and respect (*zun*). This explanation is necessary to avoid possible confusion, because the close relation between *rang* and respect has not been clearly understood in the secondary literature. This lack of understanding has occurred mainly because *rang*, along with *ci*, has been discussed in the *Mencius* primarily in relation to *li**, not in relation to *yi*. However, the emphasis in the discussion does not imply that *rang* is to be understood only in relation to *li**. As a matter of fact, in the *Xunzi*, *rang*, along with *ci*, is often discussed in parallel with the combination of *li** and *yi* (禮義).[46] Moreover, *rang* is understood as an action that results from one's accordance with *li**-*yi* (禮義).[47]

My suggestion again is that *rang* is to be understood in terms of respect and *yi*. More specifically stated, *rang* is the kind of behavior that humans can engage in at first by following the Confucian formal rules of conduct (*li**); yet, throughout the process of observing the rules, one can gradually develop the right kinds of modes of responsiveness, such as respect (*zun*). Thus, *rang* should eventually manifest itself in human interactions on the basis of well-developed respect. *Rang* also pertains to the realization of the underlying spirit of *yi*. This association seems clear, given the relation between *li** and *yi*, as explained above. With the above discussion in mind, I will further examine the nature of *rang*. This examination will show

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[46] *Xunzi jishi*, p.65, p. 104, and p. 347.

[47] "禮義之道, 然後出於辭讓, 合於文理, 而歸於治(Therefore it is necessary that there be a transformation through a teacher and the law as well as the Way of ritual propriety and rectitude, before they can take as their starting point deferential politeness, then combines with decorousness and principle, and before things end in good order)." *Xunzi jishi*, p. 538; Knoblock, *Xunzi,* vol. 3, p. 150. "化禮義則讓乎國人矣 (If one is transformed by ritual and rectitude, then one will yield politely even to any compatriot)." *Xunzi jishi*, p. 545; Knoblock *Xunzi,* vol. 3, p. 153.

more clearly why *rang* may be understood as carried out on the basis of respect, especially on the basis of the nature of respect as an attitude that functions as a second-order motive.

In the *Xunzi*, *rang* is considered necessary in situations where conflicts among people are likely to happen due to their desires for the same things.[48] This requirement implies that *rang* does not refer to any kind of offering but to a particular kind of offering to another person, that is, an offer of something that one also desires to attain. It is not hard to understand why, in some other early Chinese texts, a *rang*-action is said to be easy to carry out in a world where there is a surplus of material resources.[49] In such a world, there would at the outset not be any conflict among human desires.

This question then arises: Exactly what kinds of desires are involved in cases in which one is supposed to defer to the desires of other people? First, one should defer to other people with respect to the inclinations to be drawn towards *rong* (榮) and to ceaselessly pursue a higher and greater level of *rong*. For Xunzi, all humans are considered to be having this inclination in mind, as was mentioned briefly in the previous section.

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[48] "今人之性, 生而有好利焉, 順是, 故爭奪生而辭讓亡焉.(Now human nature is such that from birth there is in him a proneness to seek his own advantage in things. He acts in accordance with such tendencies and therefore competitive struggle for things will arise, and deferential politeness will disappear for this reason.)" *Xunzi jishi*, p. 538; Knoblock, *Xunzi*, vol. 3, p. 150. "夫好利而欲得者, 此人之情性也. 假之人有弟兄資財而分者, 且順情性, 好利而欲得, 若是, 則兄弟相拂奪矣; 且化禮義之文理, 若是, 則讓乎國人矣. 故順情性則弟兄爭矣." *Xunzi jishi*, p. 545.

For the sake of convenience, I will at this point start to use the term "desire" to refer to *hao*, *wu*, and *yu* without too much reference to the fundamental differences among the three.

[49] "古者人寡而相親, **物多而輕利易讓**, 故有揖讓而傳天下者. 然則行揖讓, 高慈惠, 而道仁厚, 皆推政也." *Hanfeizi jishi*, p. 974.

The term *rong* can refer to human prosperity as well as to the flourishing of plant growth.[50] It also very often refers to the state of being highly evaluated or regarded.[51] It is occasionally used with this connotation as a verb that means highly evaluating something or regarding something as great.[52] In addition, the term also has the connotation of high reputation.[53] Despite of these various meanings, *rong* fundamentally relates to mutual recognition, especially, when it is used in relation to human interactions. Used in this sense, it reflects the ways early Chinese thinkers look at themselves, namely, their fundamental understanding of humans.

In a hierarchically ordered society such as that of early China, the character of an individual person is established essentially on the basis of various social or institutional positions that may be appropriately ascribed to the person. Accordingly, the worth of an individual is determined in terms of various kinds of worth associated with what is socially ascribed or institutionally assigned to the individual. Moreover, different social statuses (*fen*) can be ascribed to a single person in various situations, depending on the identities of those involved in an interaction. For instance, a person can be treated as the head of a family by his family members, as a minister by other governmental officers, or as a wise person (*xian* 賢) by a ruler who seeks good political advice. This variation implies that the identity of an individual person is

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[50] For instance, see "草木**榮**華滋碩之時, 則斧斤不入山林, 不夭其生, 不絕其長也." *Xunzi jishi*, p. 181; "宮室榮與" Ibid., p. 621.

[51] For instance, "得百姓之**譽**者**榮**." *Xunzi jishi*, p. 256.

[52] For instance, "吾入見先王之義則**榮之**, 出見富貴之樂又**榮之**." *Hanfeizi jishi*, p. 416.

[53] For instance, "以為**名**則**榮**." *Xunzi jishi*, p. 69.

determined in a number of ways by other people within a thickly woven fabric of mutual recognition. The complexity of such mutual recognition in turn implies that, if an individual does not participate in interpersonal relations through the process of honoring others and being honored by the others in everyday life, he or she will be unable to develop a personal identity. This development contrasts with the system that seems to prevail in contemporary society. At present, an individual's identity is often conceived of as completely independent of the way he or she is socially recognized or the role that is institutionally assigned; each individual has to find a true self by, for instance, looking into the characteristics that are deep inside or by aiming to complete distinctive life-time projects. In addition, every individual is usually conceived of as the bearer of a value, namely, human dignity, which is considered equal for all and *fixed* in his or her being as a human.[54]

In early Chinese thought, humans are seen as flourishing in a network of mutual recognition, in the sense that all humans develop and maintain their identities only within such a network. Thus, Xunzi's assumption that everyone naturally has the drive for *rong* is understandable, since such a drive is in fact essential to one's attainment of one's own personal identity. In this respect, *rong* should be considered to be based on the idea of mutual recognition in social interactions that is fundamental to the development of personal identity.

Rang is to be understood in relation to one's desire for *rong* in the following sense: When one recognizes another person as deserving a social status (*fen*) and treats the person in ways that

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[54] In fact, the concept of dignity might be a contrasting notion that leads analysts to consider the concept of honor in early China as seriously flawed and obsolete. For further discussion of the contrast between honor and dignity, see Peter Berger, "On the Obsolescence of the Concept of Honour," in *Liberalism and its Critics*, Michael J. Sandel, ed. (New York: New York University Press, 1984). Also see Charles Taylor, "The Politics of Recognition," in *Multiculturalism*, Amy Gutmann, ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press: 1994).

are appropriate to the status, one at the same time needs to control one's own inclination to be ceaselessly drawn toward higher and greater social recognition. In other words, one's treatment of another person according to a certain social status necessarily involves suppression of one's own desire for *rong,* in deference to the other person's same desire. Thus, *rang* is most basically carried out as one's deference to other people's desires for *rong*, more exactly, higher or greater social recognition appropriately according to various social statuses.

Deference to other people's desires for higher or greater social recognition leads one to defer to other kinds of other people's desires. First, it may lead one to defer to other people's sensory desires. In other words, *rang* (the Confucian deferential offer) may be carried out in relation to various sensory desires of others. This deference can be illustrated by the following obsolete kind of deference: For instance, Xunzi who belongs to an ancient society seemed to think that the common people should suppress their desires for more delicious foods in deference to the ruler's similar desire. For him, the common people should suppress their desires for the highest social and political position in deference to the ruler's same desire, and, consequently, they should also suppress their desires for better and greater material resources to be distributed in deference to the ruler's same desire on the assumption that material resources should be distributed discriminately according to the social and political hierarchy. On the other hand, the ruler should also control his ceaseless pursuit of desire-satisfaction in order not to cause any serious frustration of his people's desires to meet their basic needs; that is, the ruler should defer to the common people's desires to meet their basic needs.

Second, deference to other people's desires for higher or greater social recognition may also lead to the kind of deference to the authority of another person that motivates one to decline an opportunity to make a certain decision and to turn the decision over to the other person. This

interpretation leads to the proper understanding of the psychological mechanism underlying *rang xian* (讓賢), namely, deference to a wiser person, and *rang neng* (讓能), namely, deference to a more competent person.[55] One of Xunzi's primary concerns was about how to resolve the problem caused by one's inability to both identify a wiser person who is better able to promote sociopolitical order and to treat that person appropriately. More simply expressed, the concern is about one's inability to respect the wise (*zun xian* 尊賢) appropriately.

Respect for a wiser person is manifested through three sequential stages as follows: One should first be capable of highly evaluating a person with respect to certain features of the person, which merit *xian*. For instance, such features include superior political skills or wisdom and ethical excellence that enables a person to lead other people with great rectitude and charisma. Second, one should be capable of giving proper weight to the fact that he merits *xian*, that is, the fact that he is a wise person, in one's deliberation as to how to interact with the person. Third, one should finally be capable of yielding to the authority of the wise person and thereby declining one's own position to make a decision as to the area in terms of which the wise person is acknowledged to be better, such as how to promote sociopolitical order, and turning the position over to the wise person. This analysis shows how respect for a wiser person involves deference to another person's desire for higher or greater social recognition (in relation to the second stage) and deference to the authority of another person in a certain field in terms of which

[55] For instance, see *Xunzi jishi*, p. 247 and p. 119.

the person is acknowledged to be better (in relation to the third stage). In other words, the above analysis illustrates how deferential offers are carried out on the basis of respect.[56]

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[56] In this analysis of the relation between *rang* (deferential behavior) and *zun* (respect), I am indebted to Stephen L. Darwall's discussion on the distinction between appraisal respect and recognition respect and Howard Richards's discussion on deference. See Stephen L. Darwall, "Two Kinds of Respect," *Ethics* 88, 1977; and, his "Respect and the Second Person Standpoint," Presidential Address, Central Division of the American Philosophical Association, in *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association* 78, no. 2, 2004, pp. 49-51. Also see Howard Richards, "Deference," *Ethics*, Vol. 74, 1964.

Darwall's distinction is widely accepted, and what he calls recognition respect is widely thought of as the kind of respect that is to be directed towards human dignity. According to his distinction, appraisal respect has to do with a mere favorable appraisal of a person or her merits, whereas recognition respect is the attitude of giving appropriate consideration in one's own practical deliberation to a certain fact about an object and imposing constraints derived from the fact upon one's own conducts affecting the object. The most crucial point in the distinction is this: Human dignity is not the kind of object that one is to evaluate high or low at the outset; rather, the fact that A is a person itself gives one certain constraints in deliberating what to do in relation to A; for this reason, the kind of attitude towards a person as a person as such is to be differentiated from another kind directed towards whatever can be evaluated high or low in terms of various standards, such as moral character traits; thus, recognition respect and appraisal respect differ in kind. My understanding of *zun* may be comparable to appraisal respect.

On the other hand, there is an idea that is to be understood in relation to deference, namely the idea that the sages abdicated their thrones to wiser persons (堯舜擅讓). This idea seems to be in wide currency among early Chinese thinkers. It should have been considered to be radical in the early Chinese society where the system of the hereditary succession of the throne was firmly established. In the expression of the abdication of the throne (擅讓), the term *rang* is used. *Rang* here means the abdication of the throne in deference to a wiser person. Even if Xunzi put great importance to the establishment of meritocratic social system, he did not accept such a radical idea. So he denied the plausibility of the idea on the grounds that there was no need to accept such a radical meritocratic system, if the *dao* can continue to prevail while keeping the current system of the hereditary transmission of the throne.

See the following passage: "世俗之為說者曰: 堯舜擅讓. 是不然. 天子者, 埶位至尊, 無敵於天下, 夫有誰與讓矣. 道德純備, 智惠甚明, 南面而聽天下, 生民之屬莫不震動從服以化順之. 天下無隱士, 無遺善, 同焉者是也, 異焉者非也. 夫有惡擅天下矣." *Xunzi jishi*, p. 398. Knoblock's translation for the passage is the following: "In accord with popular opinion, persuaders offer the thesis: "Yao and Shun abdicated and yielded their thrones." This is not so. Consider the Son of Heaven: 'his position of power and authority is the most honorable in the empire, having no match whatever.' Further, to whom should they yield? Since their Way and its Power are pure and complete, since their wisdom and intelligence are exceedingly perspicacious, they had only "to face south and adjudicate the affairs of the empire." 'Every class of living people, each and all, would be stirred up and moved to follow after them and submit in order to be transformed and made obedient to them.'" See Knoblock, *Xunzi*, vol. 3, p. 39.

4 The Confucian Deferential Declination, *Ci* (辭), and Self-Respect in Early Chinese Thought

There is another term that refers to a certain type of behavior that is closely related to the Confucian deferential offer (*rang*): *ci* (辭). The term *ci* (辭) refers to the act of declining or refusing to take an offer or a treatment, but it can also refer to words. Thus, it would not be wrong to say that *ci* usually involves the expression of a refusal in words. As mentioned above, Mencius understands *ci* mainly in relation to the Confucian formal rules of conduct (*li**). However, *ci* is not always used throughout other early Confucian texts in relation to the Confucian formal rules of conduct, for it also sometimes refers to a simple refusal to take an offer in various situations.[57]

There is an example in the *Zuozhuan* that clearly shows the meaning of *ci* in relation to the observance of the Confucian formal rules of conduct.[58] In there, *ci* is used to refer to one's act of declining an offer or a treatment that would be suitable only for a person of a *higher* social status. In other words, *ci* refers to a refusal of any offer or treatment that is inappropriate to one's social status, specifically, when the offer of treatment is suitable for someone in a higher standing. Thus understood, *ci* can reasonably be considered to be the kind of deferential declination based on a proper self-recognition of one's own social status. Then, the claim can be

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[57] For instance, *Lunyu* 6:5.

[58] "王以上卿之禮饗管仲. 管仲**辭**曰. 臣. 賤有司也. 有天子之二守國高在. 若節春秋. 來承王命. 何以禮焉. 陪臣敢**辭**. 王曰. 舅氏, 余嘉乃勳. 應乃懿德. 謂督不忘. 往踐乃職. 無逆朕命. 管仲受下卿之禮而還. 君子曰. 管氏之世祀也**宜**哉. 讓不忘其上. 詩曰. 愷悌君子. 神所勞矣." *Zuozhuan*, *Shisanjing zhushu*, p. 223.

made that *ci* is carried out basically on the basis of a judgment about appropriateness to various social statuses, that is, *yi** (宜). More exactly stated, it is based on a judgment about appropriateness in relation to one's own social status. As discussed above, *yi** is fundamentally related to *yi* (義), hence, *ci* can also be understood as the deferential declination based on *yi*.

Then, how are the Confucian deferential offer (*rang*) and the Confucian deferential declination (*ci*) exactly related to each other? Suppose that a son of a feudal lord is having a son of the king as his guest in his father's jurisdiction. In his treatment of the prince as a guest, the son of the feudal lord should engage in behavior that is appropriate to respect the social status ascribed to the son of the king, even if he has a natural inclination to pursue for himself the higher recognition that he ought to offer to the prince. This deference to the prince becomes possible on the basis of the recognition of the higher social status ascribed to the prince. But, the deference is also on the basis of the son of a feudal lord's proper self-recognition of his own social status in relation to the social status of the prince. Such a proper self-recognition is in fact necessary for any transaction of mutual recognition, in that one can properly respect another person *relative to* one's own social status. For instance, the son of a feudal lord is capable of respecting the prince on the basis of his positioning himself as a person at a lower social rank. Moreover, the prince ought to be respected only to the extent the gap between a son of a feudal lord and a son of the king, in that an appropriate expression of respect for the prince should be determined differently according to different social ranks of people in interactions. Thus, a proper self-recognition is to be considered necessary for proper respect of other people. Then, the claim can reasonably be made that the Confucian deferential offer and the Confucian deferential declination are two types of deferential behavior that are carried out on the basis of respect.

Another claim can also be made that the Confucian deferential offer (*rang*) and the Confucian deferential declination (*ci*) function cooperatively in one's proper treatment of other people, in the sense that one can treat other people properly, only if one positions oneself properly and declines any offer or treatment that is not appropriate.

At this point, it should be noted that a proper self-recognition of one's own social status in relation to social statuses of other people in interactions lead one not merely to carry out a deferential declination, but also to adopt another kind of attitude: One may regard an offer or a treatment as inappropriate because, one thinks, the offer or treatment is suitable for a person of a *lower* social status, and, therefore, one is not fully respected. In such a case, one should adopt *the attitude of making a demand to others for one's due*. This kind of attitude shares the same basis with the Confucian deferential declination, namely, a proper self-recognition of one's own social status that is to be highlighted by another person in interaction in a given situation. I suggest calling such an attitude "self-respect" in early Confucian thought.

Xunzi does not discuss self-respect explicitly, whereas Mencius is explicit about self-respect. In fact, Mencius's understanding of *yi* (義) relates mainly to that attitude. This means that Mencius understands *yi* primarily by highlighting appropriateness in relation to *one's own* social status. For this reason, he explains *yi* by connecting it closely with a cluster of terms, such as *xiu* (羞) and *chi* (恥). Each of these terms similarly applies to one's dislike of being not fully respected by others, which is an emotional response based on one's reflection about oneself in relation to something unfavorable to oneself.[59] Mencius once illustrates this kind of response

[59] Kwong-loi Shun understands *yi* in the *Mencius* in connection with the above terms. He argues that *yi* is associated with one's desire not to be tainted by something below one's standing. See Shun, *Mencius and Early Chinese Thought*, pp. 58-63. Building on this understanding, Shun takes a further step in order to

with the example of a beggar who does not accept any food that is given in an abusive manner, even at the risk of starving to death.[60]

Mencius also discusses another situation in which self-respect may understandably be expressed. The situation can be reconstructed as follows: Suppose that person A and person B initially met each other as business partners. They have invited each other for dinner several times, and they have gradually developed a friendship. Suppose again that A is now more inclined than B is to see their association as a friendship rather than as a business relationship. A starts to feel uncomfortable about the treatment by B as a formal dinner guest; B continues to maintain dinner etiquette that is suitable for formal relations rather than relations with friends. B's persistence in formal dinner etiquette is not wrong from a certain perspective, but it makes A uncomfortable because A has a different perspective on B's behavior, since A has re-identified himself with a new title, namely, a friend of B, not a guest of B. A is developing a new context that offers him a plausible reason to consider the B's treatment of him as a source of discomfort.

The situation that Mencius actually presents is this: Mencius is once asked by his student why he refuses to have an audience with a feudal lord who calls him with the formality suitable to the relation between a feudal lord and a lowly person.[61] The student accuses Mencius of violating the Confucian formal rules of conduct. In response to this accusation, Mencius re-

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depict the difference between this particular aspect of *yi* and the Western concept of shame, which appears to be quite similar to *yi* understood in the above sense. See his "Self and self-cultivation in Early Confucian Thought," in *Two Roads to Wisdom? Chinese and Analytic Philosophical Traditions*, ed. Bo Mou, (La Salle, Ill.: Open Court., 2001), pp.234-236.

[60] *Mencius* 6A10.

[61] *Mencius* 5B7.

identifies himself as a wise person (*xian*) and accuses the feudal lord of not treating him as a wiser man. Mencius confronts the accusation by developing a new context that offers him a plausible reason not to follow the formal rules applied by the feudal lord in that situation. In this way, Mencius can justify himself without denying the rationale that underlies the feudal lord's treatment of him as a lowly person. The choice of Mencius is to discover a new context here and to thereby accuse the feudal lord of failing to respect a wise person appropriately. He regards this sort of discovery as one related to *yi*, namely, appropriateness in relation to his social standing as a wise person.

Mencius's understanding of *yi* should be considered in connection with an important characteristic of social status (*fen*). Status can be ascribed to a particular person specifically and comparatively with other people. For this reason, different kinds of social statuses can simultaneously be ascribed to one single person. This complexity involved in the ascription of social statuses implies that a person can be treated differently in relation to various kinds of social statuses. For instance, there can be a situation where one is to be respected more highly than another in terms of a particular kind of social status; yet, the latter person may be respected more highly than the former in terms of another kind of status. This complex reality is the conceptual background that is the basis of Mencius's accusation of the feudal lord.

It may be said in summary that Mencius understands *yi* mainly in terms of self-respect, namely, the attitude of making a demand to others for one's own due against any infringement on it. This attitude shares the same basis with the Confucian deferential declination, *ci*, in the sense that it is also based on a proper self-recognition of one's own social status. Then, the claim can finally be made that *yi* (義) is the kind of ethical attribute that is typically associated with the Confucian deferential offer (*rang*), the Confucian deferential declination (*ci*), and self-respect.

The two types of deferential behavior can be carried out on the basis of proper respect of other people, and self-respect shares the same basis with respect of other people.

5 Respect without Self-Respect

One may ask why Xunzi does not focus on self-respect as much as Mencius does. The difference between the two thinkers can be partly explained by a further examination of how the two types of deferential behavior, *ci* and *rang*, work together. A passage at the end of the *Yue lun* chapter of the *Xunzi* provides a strong hint about this matter.[62] The village wine ceremony is briefly described in the passage. This ceremony is conducted by a grand official in a village (鄉大夫) once every three years in order to entertain a wise person (*xian*) and his attendants in the village. This ceremony offers the grand official in a village a good chance to discover a wise person who has secluded himself from the world and to recommend him as a high-ranking government officer or political adviser to the feudal lord.[63] The brief description in the passage deals mainly with the code of conduct for interaction between the host, a grand official, and the chief guest, a wise person, in the ceremony. Part of the passage reads:

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[62] See *Xunzi jishi*, p. 466. This passage is widely seen as a summary-style description of what is described in detail in the *Xiang yinjiu li* (鄉飲酒禮) chapter of *Yili* (儀禮).

[63] Regarding this historical background, see Xiong Gongzhe's explanation in his *Xunzi jinzhu jinyi* (Taiwan: Taiwan Shangwu, 1984), p.420.

"With the exchange of three bows between host and guest, they reach the steps, and after the guest has thrice deferred, the host takes the guest up to his place. Bowing deeply, he presents the wine cup in pledge. There follow many episodes of polite refusals and deferring between host and chief guest… ."[64]

A brief account of this code of conduct is that the host and the chief guest are expected (a) to offer to give way to the other (*rang*) three times, so that the other will go ahead and step up to the main hall first; at the same time, they are also expected (b) to show their reluctance or hesitation to immediately accept the other's offer by making polite verbal refusals (*ci*) and giving way to the other (*rang*) three times.

It is important to grasp the notions that underlie such a code of conduct. First, each of the host and the chief guest is expected to focus on a certain social status ascribed to the other, which is the source of the acknowledgement that the other is better or higher. In terms of current governmental positions, the host is the person of higher social standing, whereas, in terms of the capacity to develop sociopolitical order in the world, the chief guest, namely, the wise person (*xian*), is the person of higher social status. The conduct described in (a) should be understood as occurring on the basis of attending *only* to the social status of the other participant in relation to which the other participant is thought to be higher or better and, therefore, not being distracted by the thought that one is possibly better or higher than the other in terms of another social status. In contrast, the conduct described in (b) can be understood as occurring partially in consideration of the fact that one participant's offer or treatment might be inappropriate for the

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[64] "三揖至於階, 三讓以賓升. 拜至獻酬, 辭讓之節繁." *Xunzi jishi*, p. 466; Knoblock, *Xunzi*, vol. 3, p. 85.

other; that is, it might be based on an overestimation of the other's social status. This careful consideration should be regarded as a way of treating the other person properly. If one is respected too highly, the mistake inevitably results in an inappropriate offer of respect to the other because of the nature of the interaction involved in mutual recognition.

Xunzi's suggestion of this code of conduct presents the vision of an ideal society in which every person tries to deal with the other person in a transaction by habitually focusing on a higher or better social status that may be ascribed to the person; and, every person is always careful about a possible overestimation of his or her own social status. In these ways, everyone can be treated properly, and there is no need to make a demand to others for one's own due. This vision perhaps explains why Xunzi, unlike Mencius, does not explicitly discuss the attitude of making a demand to other people for one's own due against any infringement on it.

Chapter 5 The Correlation between *Ren* (仁) and *Yi* (義) – Principles and requirements that govern love and respect

1 Love and Respect

This chapter is aimed to explore the correlation between love and respect that have been scrutinized in the previous two chapters, respectively. This scrutiny is nothing other than an examination of the relation between the two central ethical attributes in early Confucian thought, *ren* and *yi*. Before getting into the main discussion, I will in this section present a brief summary of the previous two chapters about love and respect.

Xunzi conceives of a certain holistic state as the ideal state for humans; this condition is considered the kind of state in which each individual is conceived holistically against the background of the *entire* human community. This ideal state can be explained most basically by a combination of different terms, such as *zhi* (治), *he* (和), *yi***(一), and *li* (理).[1]

Zhi (治), which refers basically to orderliness, can also refer to the state that results from an ideal government. Hence, *zhi* can be understood as sociopolitical orderliness or as activity that facilitates sociopolitical orderliness. *He* (和) refers to cooperation among the various parts of a whole that occurs without the homogenization of the parts. *Yi***(一) refers to oneness or unity. *Li*

[1] See Chapter 2.

(理) refers to the differences or distinguishing characteristics of things or beings in a well-ordered whole. Its underlying idea is that differing parts of a whole are coherently connected with one another in ways that structure the whole. I suggest the use of "harmony" as a convenient label for the ideal state that can be described most basically in terms of the combination of the four concepts.[2] This convenient label should not be confused with the ordinary English usage of the term or the analogous usage in many secondary discussions of Chinese thought. Harmony in the sense used here is based on philological works about the connotations of the relevant terms. Briefly stated, harmony is the kind of state in which all humans are unified into a coherently ordered community in ways that enable them to occupy diverse social positions, to play various social roles, and to gain appropriate dues.[3]

Xunzi on one occasion distinguishes humans from other animals by reference to *bian* (辨). *Bian* refers to the capacity to discriminate among different kinds of persons. For Xunzi, the key characteristic of humans lies in the fact that humans can recognize more detailed differences among members of their own group and respond to each of those differences in a distinctive way. The kind of difference involved in this advanced capacity for discrimination is referred to by *fen* (分), which can be understood roughly as the allotment that results from the distribution of

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[2] See Chapter 2

[3] The combination of the four concepts facilitates a description of the basic structure of the ideal state for humans in Xunzi's thought. However, some other supplementary concepts, such as *da li* (大理), *yi** (宜), and *ping* (平), are needed for a full explanation of the nature of the ideal state. I explained *da li* in Chapter 2 and *yi** in relation to *yi* (義) in Chapter 4. I will explicate *ping* below.

various social shares according to social distinctions.[4] To refer conveniently to *fen* understood in this sense, I suggest translating *fen* as "social status" in its broadest sense.[5]

According to Xunzi, all humans should develop two attitudes, namely, *qin* (love) and *zun* (respect), on the basis of the advanced capacity for discrimination among various kinds of social statuses; by adopting these two attitudes, human beings can jointly bring about harmony in society. Thus, harmony can also be described as the kind of state in which all humans treat one another according to their various social statuses by adopting the right kind of attitude, namely, either love or respect, so that they become harmonized through dynamic exchanges of love and respect in their social interactions.

Love and respect share an important characteristic for the reason that these attitudes are equally based on the same capacity. They function equally as second-order motives in relation to desires, which are relatively considered first-order motives. Love and respect are generated on the basis of recognition of another person's particular kind of social status (*fen*) and work in a way that leads one to suppress or control one's desires according to the other person's social status, for example, in deference to the other person's desires. On the other hand, love and respect differ mainly in three respects, first, their intentionality, second, their underlying spirits, and, finally, their psychological nature.[6]

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[4] *Xunzi jishi*, p. 69.

[5] See Chapter 3 and Chapter 4.

[6] "Intentionality" is used in Western Philosophy to mean "the mind's capacity to direct itself on things" (See *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 1998). As I will explain below, love is "directed" toward the agent-relative *fen*, whereas respect is "directed" toward the agent-neutral *fen*. My use of intentionality has to do with this difference in terms of love's and respect's "being directed" toward different kinds of *fen*.

Love is directed to a particular kind of social status (*fen*), namely, what may be called "the agent-relative social status," such as "the closer" (*qin* 親 as a noun) or "the more distant" (*shu* 疏). The former is applied to someone who stands in a relatively close relation, while the latter applies to someone who stands in a relatively more distant relation. The distinction between *qin* and *shu* is determined *relative to* each individual in the sense that the ascription of *qin* and *shu* is determined according to other people's differing closeness to each individual. This intentionality of love also explains why love manifests itself according to a certain gradational scale that can be established according to other individuals' nearness from the agent.

The spirit underlying gradational love is the formation of one unity among all humans. More exactly stated, the outcome of love is the creation and maintenance of the most basic companionship or a feeling of belonging among all members of community. In other words, the development of gradational love is expected to contribute to the creation and maintenance of harmony, especially in terms of oneness (*yi***), one of the explanatory terms for harmony. And, the relevant ethical attribute is *ren* (仁 humaneness).

It is important to note that the underlying spirit of *ren*, namely, the formation of a unified whole among all humans, implies that a gradational scale for love must be established in a way that takes *all* humans into consideration. Even though a person should give more or less love to others according to their degree of closeness to him or her, and, therefore, should assign priority to those in closer relationships, such as his or her own kin, he or she should still love all humans. This importantly implies that at least minimal love should be offered to total strangers, especially to those who have difficulty maintaining their basic living conditions, to those who are starving, and to those experiencing any comparable problems. For Confucians, the most urgent concern is

the basic living conditions of the common people, especially of the people in the lowest social strata, who are the most vulnerable. This concern is based on the sprit underlying *ren*.

The psychological nature of love is to be understood as closely related to the underlying spirit of *ren*. The spirit of *ren* is often figuratively understood through a comparison with a kind of belonging, together with all other humans, to the same physical body. This comparison helps to describe the sense in which love is regarded as the attitude that leads one to be concerned about the welfare of other people and, at the most basic level, to become susceptible to the suffering of others or to harm that happens to them. Such concern and susceptibility are comparable to caring about one's own body and being ready to pay attention to a certain part, such as one's own finger, especially when it has been hurt or harmed.

Respect can be differentiated from love in terms of the previously mentioned three aspects. First, respect is generated in relation to various kinds of social statuses, which, unlike the agent-relative social status, are determined in ways that are not relative to each individual. Xunzi has in mind various kinds of social statuses, such as those related to various occupations, governmental positions, meritocratic social statuses, and so forth. These social statuses can equally be classified under the heading of "agent-neutral social status" in the sense that they are established in a way that is not relative to each individual. For instance, the social distinction between the honored (貴 *gui*) and the humble (賤 *jian**) is based on the existing hierarchical social order in early China. In such a situation, different individuals are born into different social ranks. The establishment of these social statuses based on the social distinctions is not influenced by any factor that is determined relative to each agent. In addition, the same feature can be found in the social distinction between the wise (*xian* 賢) and the incompetent (*bu xiao* 不肖). A social status such as the status of a wise person is determined on the basis of objective factors such as

the person's superior political skill in bringing about social harmony, ethical excellence, and so forth.

The ethical attribute relevant to respect is *yi* (義). *Yi* constitutes or contributes to harmony in ways that ensure that all humans occupy appropriate positions in society. In other words, *yi* relates to an aspect of harmony in which each individual is respected by others appropriately in relation to his or her social position. Moreover, since each individual has various social positions, he or she is supposed to play different social roles and to exercise corresponding responsibilities. So a *yi*-community is the kind of community where all members interact and cooperate with one another on the basis of systematic distribution of various kinds of social positions, roles, and corresponding responsibilities. In this respect, *yi* is often understood in relation to the realization of *li* (理), which refers to the state in which differing parts of a whole are coherently connected with one another so as to be able to structure the whole. Furthermore, *yi* relates to another important aspect of the ideal state for humans, namely, the state in which everyone is guaranteed to attain his or her due, not only in terms of social position or social recognition, but also in terms of various other things that are to be distributed at the level of society, including, material resources. For this reason, *yi* is often understood in terms of the expression "*ge de qi yi**" (各得其宜), which means that each gets his or her due. For this reason, respect is often understood as an attitude of reluctance to take what is not one's due.

Respect is the attitude that leads to control of one's own desire for a certain social item in deference to another person's desire for the same item; the control arises from the recognition of a certain social status that may be ascribed to the other person. For instance, the mutual recognition of hierarchical social ranks becomes possible on the basis of each individual's

control of his or her own desire for more social recognition or greater social honor in deference to the same desire of another person who actually deserves the recognition or social honor.

According to Xunzi, harmony can be created and maintained when all humans treat people of various social statuses appropriately by adopting either love or respect in their interactions. Love and respect contribute to the creation and maintenance of harmony in different ways: Humans first need to share a basic companionship by seeing themselves as belonging to a unity (through the function of love); on that basis, they treat one another in ways that guarantee that each of them can occupy his or her proper position and receive his or her due (through the function of respect).

2 Principles and Associated Requirements in Love and Respect for Others

It is now necessary to examine the exact senses of the statement that one should respond to various social statuses of other people appropriately by adopting either love or respect in interactions with them. I first deal with the senses in which one can love others properly or respect others properly. Then I examine the question about the ways one can treat others properly by appropriately adopting one of the two attitudes.

According to the spirit of *ren*, one's gradational love should have a scope that extends to *all* other fellow humans. The fundamental principle in loving other people is that one should offer more or less love to different people according to an appropriate gradational scale that allocates agent-relative social statuses appropriately to all other fellow humans. A requirement derived from this principle is this: One is required to love all fellow humans. A person fails to

meet this requirement if he or she allocates agent-relative social statuses, namely, the closer and the more distant, only in relation to a limited range of people and in disregard of other people outside of the range.

Another requirement may be derived from the same principle: One should give more love to those in closer relationships only in ways that do not distract one from loving appropriately others who are more distant. A person is acting contrary to this requirement if he or she offers too much extra concern to closer persons, such as his or her own kin or friends, and thereby cannot offer more distant persons the concern that may be regarded as necessary for them. The requirement can also be understood in the following sense: Any priority given to those in special relationships should be adjusted if it prevents one from showing minimal concern for total strangers around the world, especially those who are starving or who are in serious danger.[7]

To sum up, the principle of *ren* may be defined as follows:

(Ren): One should love all fellow humans according to an appropriate gradational scale.

From the principle (Ren), the following requirements are derived:

(R-1): The range of one's love should extend to all fellow humans.

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[7] An attempt to offer concern to all other humans may seem extremely demanding at first glance, but the attempt may turn out to be not very strenuous or at least not unreasonably strenuous if a gradational scale involved in love is established in a reasonable way. I discuss this issue in Chapter 3.

(R-2): One should love another person in a way that does not prevent one from loving some other people in proportion to an appropriate gradational scale.

In contrast, one is governed by the following principle in the exercise of respect for others: One should treat another person appropriately, first, according to a certain agent-neutral social status that is ascribable to the person for a legitimate reason, and, second, according to a correct judgment about the main concern involved, namely, the concern underlying the social distinction that relates to the social status at hand. This principle can be explicated a bit more concretely in connection with two kinds of social statuses that Xunzi considered important in early Chinese society, as follows:

First, one of the important issues that is dealt with throughout the *Xunzi* is the way to engage men of ability and thereby to raise them to higher governmental positions (讓賢 or 尊賢). In this case, the relevant social distinction is the one between "the wise" and "the incompetent." This social distinction is made *in order to* distribute governmental positions and roles in ways that effectively create harmony in society. This distribution is *the main concern involved* in the social distinction between the wise and the incompetent. Yet the criterion for the distribution of positions should include not only superior political skills or wisdom, but also ethical excellence that enables a person to lead other people with great rectitude and charisma. So the social status, "a wiser person," should be ascribed to a person on the condition that the person has superior political abilities along with ethical excellence and charisma. Accordingly, one should respect a wiser person in a way that controls one's own desire for a higher governmental position in deference to the wiser person's political superiority and ethical excellence.

Second, in early China, one of the criteria for the distribution of material resources was the social distinction between "the honored (貴)" and "the humble (賤)." This distinction is often regarded as based on the existing received hierarchical social class system in early China. According to the social class system, an individual was born into a higher social class, and, on that basis, he or she was considered as deserving wealth (富).[8] Then the main concern involved in this social distinction is related to the hierarchical distributions of wealth, and the criterion for the distribution could be explained on the basis of the existing hierarchical social class system.[9] According to the system, one was expected to respect and defer to a person of a higher social class in a way that suppressed one's own desire for a greater amount of wealth.

Since human interactions inevitably involve various kinds of social statuses at the same time in a given situation, one should respect others in accordance with a requirement such as the following: One should respond to a certain social status in a way that does not distract one from responding to another social status properly. This requirement is derived from the principle mentioned above. In order not to be thus distracted, one should consider whether a certain social status is legitimately ascribable to another person and whether the main concern underlying the social status at hand actually matters in a given situation.

For instance, a social interaction between two persons may simultaneously involve various social statuses ascribed to each of them, so a certain complexity may arise in the

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[8] For instance, see *Xunzi jishi*, p. 69.

[9] Whether this is a legitimate reason for the ascription of the social statuses from the viewpoint of people living in the 21st century is another issue that I am not dealing with in this section. I do deal in the next chapter with the question about whether Xunzi's thought may be developed into a position that is meaningful in contemporary society.

following manner: One should be respected more highly than the other in relation to a certain social distinction, while the other should be more respected in relation to another social distinction. For this reason, a danger always seems to arise that a person may be treated inappropriately in relation to a certain social status that is not actually relevant to the current situation. Moreover, there may also be a danger that a person may be tempted to focus only on a certain social status that can make himself or herself a person who is better or higher than the other in their interactions, even if that social status is not the most relevant social status in the given situation. Then, in order to respect others appropriately, one should always be careful about whether there are multiple social statuses that may legitimately be involved in interactions between persons and make sure that appropriate respect is shown to a person in relation to the social status that is most relevant to a given situation.[10]

The requirement just explained can be illustrated through a situation where the two kinds of social distinctions explained above are simultaneously involved in an interaction. Suppose that a person in a higher social class and a wiser person interact. If the person who belongs to a higher social class is reluctant to yield to the wiser in terms of a higher government officer position by appealing to his higher social class, that person is being distracted by a social distinction that is irrelevant to what currently matters, namely, the proper allocation of a governmental position. This distraction can also be explained in the following terms: A certain social status should not be a *dominant* one in the distribution of various social shares, such as social recognition, wealth, governmental positions, tributes, and other material resources, *in disregard of* various main concerns underlying different social distinctions.

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[10] I discussed these issues with more concrete examples in Chapter 4.

The requirement just mentioned may be restated as follows: No social share should be distributed to a person merely because the person possesses a certain social status that is irrelevant to the main concern involved in the social status. With this requirement in mind, the problematic distraction of the person in the above situation can be understood in the following manner: The person from a higher social class mistakenly tries to attain a high governmental position, which the wiser person deserves to attain, on the basis of his social status that is irrelevant to the current concern regarding the distribution of governmental positions. This false trial is an attempt to monopolize the distribution of social shares by illegitimately regarding a particular social status as the dominant one, even outside the field where the social status is relevant.[11]

A summarizing statement is that there is a principle that governs one's respect for others:

> ***(Yi): One should respect another person, first, according to a certain agent-neutral social status that is ascribable to the person for a legitimate reason, and, second, by correctly taking into consideration the main concern underlying the social status involved.***

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[11] In constructing this requirement governing respect, I was hinted by and indebted to Michael Walzer's conception of complex equality. His idea is well summarized in the following passage: "The regime of complex equality … establishes a set of relationships such that domination is impossible. In formal terms, complex equality means that no citizen's standing in one sphere or with regard to one social good can be undercut by his standing in some other sphere, with regard to some other good. Thus, citizen X may be chosen over citizen Y for political office, and then the two of them will be unequal in the sphere of politics. But they will not be unequal generally so long as X's office gives him no advantages over Y in any other sphere-superior medical care, access to better schools for his children, entrepreneurial opportunities, and so on. So long as office is not a dominant good, is not generally convertible, office holders will stand, or at least can stand, in a relation of equality to the men and women they govern." See his *Spheres of Justice: A Defense of Pluralism and Equality* (Oxford: Martin Robertson, 1983), pp.19-20.

From this Principle (Yi), the following requirement may be derived:

(Y-1): (non-dominance requirement) Any social status should not be a dominant one if it is irrelevant to the main concern at hand.

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3 The Problem of Obsession of the Mind (蔽) and the Ideal State of Equilibrium (平)

In the previous section, I tried to discern the principles and the requirements that govern one's love or respect for other people without particular references to the text. In this section, I explain how these fundamentals are demonstrated in the original context of the *Xunzi*.

As explained in Chapter 4, Xunzi understands human cognition (知) mainly in terms of the perception of the distinguishing features of things or beings, and, for him, the most important human characteristic is an advanced capacity for discrimination, namely, the capacity for discrimination among different kinds of humans. Moreover, for Xunzi, the realization of the final human good, namely, harmony at the level of the entire human community, depends on whether all humans can use the capacity properly in their interactions. Love and respect are understood as the two different attitudes that are to be developed on the basis of the characteristic capacity.

But, Xunzi does not think that all humans can exercise love and respect appropriately without any difficulty. In the "*Jie Bi*" (解蔽) chapter of the *Xunzi*, Xunzi deals intensively with the issue of the particular difficulties typically associated with the human characteristic capacity. Even if the chapter title was assigned not by Xunzi himself but by a book compiler in a later

historical period, the title indeed captures Xunzi's main concern in the chapter. *Jie bi* means "dispelling obsession of the mind or blindness." For Xunzi, the problem of obsession of the mind is the most fundamental cause of chaos (*luan*, 亂) in the world, namely, the state opposite to harmony. His idea is that one's mind can be obsessed or distracted by various desires, preconceptions, or biased viewpoints so that it cannot properly recognize various genuine features of and differences among things or beings.[12] Xunzi succinctly explains in what sense the sage does not suffer from obsession of the mind in the following passage:

"[The sage] lays out all the myriad things and matches how each of them settles on the suspended balance (*heng* 衡). For this reason, the multitude of differences among the myriad things or beings (萬物) are not mutually beclouded (*bi* 蔽), and, thereby, proper orders (*lun* 倫) among them are not disturbed."[13]

The reason for the sage not to suffer from the problem is that the sage is able to attain balance among all the differences that exist among all things in the world. *Heng* refers basically to the measurement of weight and figuratively means the measurement that determines what is

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[12] "聖人知心術之患, 見蔽塞之禍, 故無欲, 無惡, 無始, 無終, 無近, 無遠, 無博, 無淺, 無古, 無今, 兼陳萬物而中縣衡焉. 是故眾異不得相蔽以亂其倫也. 何謂衡? 曰 道. (The sage knows the flaws of the mind's operation and perceives the misfortunes of blindness and being closed to the truth. This is why he is without desires and aversions, without beginnings and ends of things, without the remote or near, without broadness or shallowness, without antiquity or modernity. He lays out all the myriad things and causes himself to exactly match how each settles on the suspended balance. This is why for the sage, the multitude of different reactions to things cannot produce obsession by one thing's beclouding another and so disturbing their proper position.)" *Xunzi jishi*, p. 482; Knoblock, *Xunzi*, vol. 3, p. 103.

[13] *Xunzi jishi*, p. 482.

more important and what is less important (輕重).[14] Xunzi here uses the metaphor of measuring things by means of a steelyard. A steelyard should be well calibrated; otherwise, it will not measure any weight correctly. For instance, a heavy object may rise, so it will be considered light, while a light object may sink down and so be considered heavy. In such cases, the steelyard measures weights incorrectly. The sage is described as the kind of person who measures all things and beings and discerns what is more or less important among them without being obsessed by any one of those. Thus, the reason why the sage does not suffer from obsession of the mind can be restated as follows: He can *fairly* measure everything, just as a well-calibrated yardstick does.

The above passage indicates that *lun* is what mainly concerns Xunzi in relation to the problem of obsession of the mind. Here, *Lun* means, first, grades or hierarchical orders among various things. Such grades and orders are needed in order to distribute various things or beings to men and women differently, according to the grades or hierarchical orders among men and women. Some of the items to be distributed are various social shares, including not only material resources or wealth, but also social recognition or honor, positions, roles, and comparable benefits. In this respect, the fundamental meaning of *lun* in the passage is "the *lun* of humans (人倫)," namely, the grades or hierarchical orders among men and women.[15] More exactly stated, the *lun* of humans in fact means the proper order among all social distinctions and corresponding

[14] "譬之猶衡之於輕重也, 猶繩墨之於曲直也." Ibid., p.239.

[15] See Ibid., p. 69, p. 157, and p. 195.

social statuses (*fen*).[16] Xunzi's idea is that proper order among humans can be established when all social distinctions and social statuses are measured or weighed appropriately against one another. In the passage, the sage is in fact understood as the kind of person who can establish the proper social order and system because he can weigh social statuses appropriately by taking all social statuses into consideration and at the same time not be obsessed by any one of them. In this respect, in the "*Jie Bi*" chapter, the sage is once described as someone who has a comprehensive grasp of *lun* (盡倫).[17]

The relation between the two senses of *lun* just explained can be explained more in the following way: Various social shares are eventually graded through the proper distribution of them to men and women according to the proper social system of social statuses. Then, obsession of the mind is eventually regarded as the problem that arises from one's inability to respond to social statuses properly due to one's state of being beclouded by certain social statuses. Now a further claim can be made that the problem of obsession of the mind is nothing other than the inability to deal with other people by adopting either love or respect according to their social statuses. Since love and respect are two different modes of responding to social statuses, the statement that one is so obsessed by a particular social status that one cannot respond to other social statuses is nothing other than an admission that one is so obsessed by a certain aspect of someone else that one cannot love or respect the person in relation to other aspects *or* cannot love some other people properly. For this reason, the principles and the

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[16] I explained *lun* and its relations with some other relevant terms, such as *fen*, in detail in Chapter 3. In addition, it is important to note that *ping* is understood clearly in relation to *fen* in the *Xunzi*. See Ibid., p. 139. I will explain *ping* in the below.

[17] "聖也者, 盡倫者也." Ibid., p. 498.

requirements discussed in the previous section should be understood as the ones to follow in order to avoid the problem of obsession of the mind.

There is a term that describes the ideal state in which all things and beings are measured and weighed appropriately against one another and, therefore, the balances among them are perfectly maintained: *zhi ping* (至平). The term *ping* (平) refers to a state in which a measure such as a yardstick is properly calibrated, and it can maintain balance in weighing things, that is, a state of equilibrium. In this sense, Xunzi on one occasion describes a well-calibrated measure (*heng*) as the perfection of equilibrium (*ping*).[18] *Zhi ping* can be translated as "the perfect equilibrium." In relation to the above discussion, the perfect equilibrium, *zhi ping*, can be understood as referring figuratively to the ideal state in which the proper social system is being maintained in the sense that every member of society has been assigned his or her due social statuses and is treated appropriately to those statuses. In this state, distributive justice is consequently achieved in the sense that everyone can receive his or her due according to his or her social statuses.[19] This ideal state can be achieved if all humans love or respect one another properly and do not suffer the problem of obsession of the mind.

A question that has to be dealt with at this point is how a person manages to avoid obsession of the mind in a way that enables him or her to contribute to bringing about perfect equilibrium in society. In his discussion of the problem, Xunzi suggests three ways of using the mind: the emptying of the mind (*xu* 虛), the unifying of the mind (*yi*** 壹), and the tranquilizing

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[18] "衡者, 平之至." Ibid., p.428. See also "衡石稱縣者, 所以為平也; 上好覆傾, 則臣下百吏乘是而後險." Ibid., p. 265.

[19] Ibid., pp. 265-6. See also p. 69.

of the mind (*jing* 靜). The meaning of these three ways is an interesting topic, but, in order to focus on the current issue, I do not discuss them in any detail.[20] The point of using the mind in those ways is that, through those ways, one can avoid becoming obsessed by a particular difference among things or beings and thereby both perceive every single difference properly and weigh it against every other difference properly. More particularly stated, those ways of using the mind enable one to recognize every single social status properly in any given social interaction and to weigh the status appropriately against the background of the entire set of social statuses.

A problem arises in the following line of thought: In Xunzi's thought, all humans are seen as equally possessing the bare capacity for discrimination among various social statuses and, on that basis, they should be able to develop love and respect, but only the sage is able to use the mind in ways that are free from obsession of the mind. This line of thought seems to imply that ordinary people cannot love and respect one another properly after all. Xunzi's answer is, however, that normal individuals should follow *li** (禮), namely, the Confucian formal rules of conduct, and cultivate themselves accordingly in order to love and respect others properly. According to Xunzi, *li** is the set of rules that are codified on the basis of what the sage can see through the proper uses of his mind.[21]

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[20] See Kwong-loi Shun's discussion of the concepts of *xu*, *yi***, and *jing* in his "Purity in Confucian Thought: Zhu Xi on *Xu, Jing* and *Wu*," in *Conceptions of Virtue: East and West,* eds. Kim Chong Chong and Yuli Liu (Singapore: Marshall Cavendish, 2006).

[21] In this respect, Xunzi once describes *li** as the markers that help ordinary people to follow the *dao* (道), namely, the Confucian Way. See the following: "水行者表深, 表不明則陷. 治民者表道, 表不明則亂. 禮者, 表也.(Those who ford a river will mark out the deep places in order to ensure that others to not fall into the deep spots. Those who govern others will mark out the sources of disorder in order to ensure that

The difference between the sage and ordinary people is explained well in terms of another cognitive and intellectual capacity associated with the mind: *lü* (慮). *Lü* is particularly used for more serious types of thought, for example, one's thought in relation to both choosing a right response to the world in a certain situation[22] and weighing things by taking into account possible consequences.[23] The term is also used to refer to mature, long-term consideration.[24] Thus, *lü* can be understood as meaning basically "careful deliberation." Careful deliberation (*lü*) is considered in the *Xunzi* as functioning differently for the sage and for ordinary persons. As mentioned briefly above, Xunzi understands the Confucian formal rules of conduct (*li**) as the

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others do not get lost. Ritual propriety is such marking out.)" *Xunzi jishi*, p. 379; Knoblock, *Xunzi*, vol. 3, p. 209.

[22] "性之好惡喜怒哀樂謂之情. 情然而心為之擇謂之慮. 心慮而能為之動謂之偽, 慮積焉, 能習焉, 而後成謂之偽. (The feelings of liking and disliking, of delight and anger, and of sorrow and joy that are inborn in our nature are called "emotions." The emotions being so paired, the minds choosing between them is called "thinking." The mind's thinking something and the natural abilities' acting on it is called "conscious exertion." When deliberatins are accumulated and one's natural abilities practices so that something is completed, it is called "conscious exertion.)" *Xunzi jishi*, p. 506; Knoblock, *Xunzi,* vol. 3, p. 127.

[23] "欲惡取舍之權. 見其可欲也, 則必前後慮其可惡也者; 見其可利也, 則必前後慮其可害也者, 而兼權之, 孰計之, 然後定其欲惡取舍. 如是則常不失陷矣.(Weighing the Relative Merits of Choosing or Refusing Desires and Aversions. When a man sees something desirable, he must reflect on the fact that with the time it could come to involve what is detestable. When he sees something that is beneficial, he should reflect that sooner or later it, too, could come to involve harm. Only after weighing the total of the one against that of the other and maturalely calculating should determine the relative merits of choosing or refusing his desires and aversions. In this fashion, he will regulary avoid failure and being ensnared by what he has chosen.)" *Xunzi jishi*, p. 53; Knoblock, *Xunzi*, vol. 1, p. 180.

[24] "約者有筐篋之藏, 然而行不敢有輿馬. 是何也. 非不欲也, 幾不**長慮顧**後, 而恐無以繼之故也 (Not that men do not desire to do this, but because, considering the long view of things and thinking of the consequences of their actions, they are apprehensive that they may lack means adequate to perpetuate their wealth.)" *Xunzi jishi*, p. 68; Knoblock, *Xunzi*, vol. 1, p. 193. See also "**況夫先王之道, 仁義之統, 詩書禮樂之分乎**. 彼固為天下之**大慮**也, 將為天下生民之屬, 長慮顧後而保萬世也. 其奘長矣, 其溫厚矣, 其功盛姚遠矣, **非順孰修為之君子, 莫之能知也**." *Xunzi jishi*, pp. 68-9.

system the sages have tried to codify and establish through the accumulation of their careful deliberation.[25] In contrast, ordinary people are seen as engaging in careful deliberation mainly *in order to* reflect and think in accordance with the Confucian formal rules of conduct.[26] Hence, the difference between the sage and the normal person can be restated in the following sense: The sage is the kind of person who can recognize various social statuses without being obsessed by any particular one and can thereby treat other people appropriately by adopting love or respect, whereas normal people can avoid obsession of their minds only through careful deliberation about how to interact with one another in accordance with the Confucian formal rules of conduct.

Then, the observation may be made that, from Xunzi's perspective, my attempt in the previous section comes within the purview of the sage's activity, which is to codify the Confucian formal rules of conduct. But, this would not be an impossible task for me to carry out, even though I would not at this point live up to the work of the sage. Xunzi in fact believes that everyone has the potential to be a sage.[27] This belief clearly implies that what one is required to learn in the on-going process of observance of the Confucian formal rules of conduct is nothing other than the ways the sage codifies and establishes the formal rules of conduct. In the light of this belief, I may say that Xunzi would not mind even if I continue in the following sections to advance attempts that are similar the one in the previous section.

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[25] "聖人積思慮, 習偽故, 以生禮義而起法度(The sage keeps reflecting and thinking, rehearses artifices and reasonings, and thus he brings forth rituals and rectitude, gives rise to the systems of law.)" *Xunzi jishi*, p. 544. In this context, he uses the compound noun, *si lü* (思慮). *Si* (思) is used throughout the *Xunzi*.as a term referring to the general activity of thinking or reflecting.

[26] "禮之中焉能思索, 謂之能慮." Ibid., p. 429. See also "凡用血氣志意**知慮**, **由禮則治通**, 不由禮則勃亂提慢." Ibid., p. 24.

[27] See Ibid., p. 10, pp. 64-5, p. 552, and Ibid., p. 554.

4 A Comprehensive Principle that Governs Human Interactions

In the *Jie Bi* chapter, Xunzi discusses various kinds of the problem of obsession of the mind. Among them, Xunzi gives a concrete example of one kind of the problem: "In the past, Jie (桀) of the Xia dynasty and Zhou (紂) of the Yin dynasty, were lords of men who were blinded. Jie was beclouded by Mo Xi and Si Guan, and so was insensible to the merits of Guan Longfeng. Zhou was beclouded by Daji and Feilian, and so was insensible to the merits of Viscount Qi of Wei."[28] In this example, the two historically notorious tyrants in early China, Jie and Zhou, are described as blinded by the attractive consorts to the merits of the wise men, Guan Longfeng and Viscount Qi. Their blindness is regarded as the main cause of the disorder during their eras. Their blindness may be analyzed according to three types of obsession of the mind. In other words, their blindness may be considered as simultaneously involving three different types of obsession of the mind.

The first type relates to the gradational scale involved in one's love, which, in Confucian ethics, operates according to the degree of other people's nearness from oneself. According to

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[28] Ibid., p. 475. This is John Knoblock's translation. See Knoblock, *Xunzi*, vol. 3, p. 100.

As mentioned before, the problem of obsession of the mind covers a broad range of problems that are caused by various kinds of obsession. For instance, Xunzi criticizes other philosophical positions in his era by saying that those are based on biased viewpoints that are equally caused by obsession. See *Xunzi jishi*, p. 478. But, I here pay special attention to a particular kind of obsession, that is, one's being obsessed by a particular aspect of another person and, consequently, being unable to respond properly to different aspects of the person or to different kinds of other persons. This particular kind of obsession has not been fully understood in the secondary literature. But if the whole *Jie Bi* chapter is read holistically, it becomes obvious that Xunzi takes most seriously this kind of obsession that I am attending to. Note that the above example associated with the particular kind of obsession is the most concrete one in the chapter.

this determinant, one can always be tempted to take the final step of preferring oneself to one's closest persons, such as one's immediate family members. This may be a legitimate step to take in Confucian ethics, insofar as the preference accords with a gradational scale, according to which one is able to love all fellow humans appropriately. However, at the same time, there always exists the danger that one may become selfish and fail to accord with an appropriate scale.[29] In this respect, the two tyrants' blindness can be considered first as a failure to give more or less love in accordance with an appropriate gradational scale. The tyrants showed too much concern for themselves with respect to the satisfaction of sexual desires. Hence, they were unable to show proper concern for other people, namely, the wise men, to the extent that those people deserved. In other words, the tyrants' selfish pursuit of the satisfaction of their own desires blinded them to the wise men.

Second, the blindness can be understood as a failure of gradational love in another sense. The tyrants showed too much extra concern for their closest persons, namely, their consorts, in ways that stopped them from showing proper concern for some other people. This failure is also a failure to accord with an appropriate scale involved in gradational love. Finally, the tyrants' blindness may well be considered as involving a conflict between love and respect, in the sense that they loved their closer persons in ways that prevented them from respecting the wiser persons.

In fact, all of the above three types of obsession of the mind should be mentioned in a full explanation of the case of the tyrants' obsession of the mind. Their failure to accord with an appropriate gradational scale in loving others eventually led to their failure to respect others

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[29] I also discussed this danger in relation to Confucian love in Chapter 3.

properly. The solution to the problem is quite clear; to avoid their blindness, the tyrants are required simply to follow the principles of *ren* and *yi* and the associated requirements discussed in Section 2.

A lesson from the above analysis is that one's love for others may well affect one's respect for others, and vice versa. In fact, because human interactions are very complex, love and respect may be correlated in a way that causes those attitudes to conflict in a given situation. For instance, in a hypothetical case, a person may be faced with a situation where he or she loves another person properly, but, in doing so, unavoidably fails to respect the person properly, or vice versa. This failure is clearly different from the failure involved in the tyrants' case because that this failure occurs in the context of a dilemma that prevents a person from properly loving and properly respecting another person at the same time.

In a second case, a person may unavoidably fail to respect another person properly in order to love some other person properly, or vice versa. One cannot deal with these problems by simply appealing to the principles and the requirements discussed in Section 2, namely (Ren), (R-1), (R-2), (Yi), and (Y-1), since those principles and requirements relate only to *either* how to love properly *or* how to respect properly, not to the proper treatment of others in dilemmas that prevent the proper exercise of simultaneous love and respect for others. The above examples indicate why it is necessary to develop a more comprehensive principle that governs human interactions.

A comprehensive principle may be roughly established in the following manner:

> ***(CP): One should treat another person appropriately (1) by considering which social status ascribable to the person matters most in a given situation, (2) by considering which underlying spirit – the spirit of ren or***

that of yi - is more important in a given situation, and (3) by deliberating which attitude is the one, in the given situation, that is more conducive to the creation or maintenance of harmony at the level of the entire society.

At this point, an examination of an interaction that involves only two persons will help to demonstrate how this principle works in its simplest way: Suppose that a person may treat another person in one of two ways, namely, *either* as a friend of his *or* as the wiser. Then he or she needs to adopt one of the two possible attitudes as the better one by considering whether the maintenance of strong companionship or the proper allocation of a competitive social position is more important in a given situation. He or she might also think about which attitude will eventually contribute to the development of a more harmonious relationship with the other.

The comprehensive principle (CP) above is one that has been roughly established only for the purpose of showing how a comprehensive principle would operate in Xunzi's thought. Yet the principle (CP) is substantial enough to serve as a guide through an attempt to deal with the current issue, that is, how such a comprehensive principle would guide humans in dilemmas that prevent them from simultaneously loving and respecting others properly. As I address this issue in the following paragraphs, I will use a few controversial passages from the *Mencius* and the *Xunzi* that can arguably be considered to be dealing with conflicts between *ren* and *yi*.

In the *Mencius* 4A17, Mencius is asked what a person should do when his sister-in-law is drowning. This question is intended to create a difficult situation for Mencius, in that, if the person tries to rescue his sister-in-law using his hands, he would violate the Confucian formal rules of conduct (*li**), which specify that males and females will not allow their hands to touch when they give or receive anything. Mencius's response is that anyone who would not rescue the drowning woman is not a human but a wolf; the rescue is the right way to proceed, based on a

process of weighing what is more important (權 *quan*) in that situation, even though the avoidance of touch in giving and receiving generally accords with the Confucian formal rules of conduct.

The hypothetical case can be interpreted as a situation where a simple observance of a formal rule of conduct would result in a failure to honor an important underlying spirit. Given that rules in general need to be flexible to a certain degree in order to apply to a variety of actual and imaginable circumstances, the Confucian formal rules of conduct would not have been regarded as absolutely inviolable. Careful deliberation about the formal rules of conduct (the *lü* for ordinary people) should not involve just how to observe the rules. Such deliberation should eventually include the process of thinking *through* the rules in order to understand what a certain formal rule is intended to achieve. In this regard, the meaning Mencius assigns to "weighing" (*quan*) in the passage can be considered a process of thought about which spirit, among that of *ren* or that of *yi*, is more urgently needed in the given circumstance. This activity is in some ways comparable to the sage's activity of weighing (*heng*) all social statuses against one another in order to achieve the ideal state of equilibrium (*ping*) (See Section 3).

The underlying spirit of *yi* is the realization of the kind of ideal state in which everyone occupies his or her appropriate position and is treated accordingly. The particular rule concerning the prohibition of physical contact between men and women should be understood in relation to the spirit of *yi* in the following way: The spirit of *yi* requires one not to take what belongs to others.[30] In early Chinese culture, women were regarded as belonging to their husbands, and chastity was regarded as a sign of virtue. To avoid any possible violation of chastity, men and

[30] See Chapter 4.

women were discouraged from engaging in physical contact as they gave and received things. Such contact might well cause men and women who were not husbands and wives to be sexually tempted.[31] Understood in this way, the prohibition of physical contact between males and females pertains to the general requirement that one should not take anything that belongs to others, that is, a requirement that may be derived from the spirit of *yi*.

On the other hand, the act of using one's hands to rescue someone who is drowning is motivated by one's inability to bear the imminent or actual pain or suffering of another person. This inability is an essential part of Confucian love. In this respect, Mencius regards one's inability to bear a total stranger's imminent or actual pain as the starting point for the development of *ren*. Such an inability is essentially related to one's susceptibility to all other fellow humans. This susceptibility is figuratively comparable to one's recognition that every part of one's own body belongs to the same body; at the most basic level, such recognition leads one to be susceptible to any pain or suffering in any part of the body. The goal of *ren* is the formation of a unity among all humans on the basis of everyone's susceptibility to one another.

The claim can be made then that the spirit of *ren* involves mainly the basic process of forming a unity among all humans on the basis of their shared companionship, while the spirit of *yi* is associated mainly with the enhancement of the connection among humans on the basis of appropriate allocations of various social positions and social shares. Thus understood, *ren* and *yi* contribute to the creation and maintenance of harmony in different ways. A brief statement of their roles is that *ren* lays the foundation of the community, and, on that basis, *yi* enhances the community's internal structure.

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[31] Note that this is my own reconstruction of what might have been the reasonable intention of such a prohibition of physical contact between males and females.

In another look at the imagined situation in question, one may perceive that the man interprets the situation in a different way by ascribing various kinds of social statuses to his sister-in-law who is drowning. He may see her as a woman who thereby becomes subject to a requirement derived from the spirit of *yi*. He may instead more importantly recognize her as a fellow human and thereby become susceptible to her possibly fatal suffering. The supposed problem is then that he may act upon his love for his sister-in-law, but, in that way, he would inevitably violate the spirit of *yi* in some sense; he may also act upon his respect for her and in this way violate part of the spirit of *ren*. With this conflict between *ren* and *yi* in mind, Mencius asks which one, that is, *ren* or *yi*, is more important to realize in the situation.

The answer to Mencius's question can be provided quite intuitively. The requirement to not take anything that belongs to others should be intuitively judged as relatively peripheral in an exigent situation where the requirement can be adhered to only at the risk of someone's life. Still, in Confucian thought, this judgment should eventually be justified through a deliberation about which spirit, that of *ren* or that of *yi*, should prevail in the given situation. If no other factor is involved in the situation, the maintenance of the community's basic foundation is more vital than the enhancement of the community's internal structure. A loss of a life would have an impact on the maintenance of harmony in a negative way more than the violation of a rule about physical contact would affect that harmony.

The case in the *Mencius* 4A17 indicates that a consideration based on *ren* may outweigh another consideration based on *yi* on occasions when the two considerations guide one to act in conflicting ways.[32] However, this does not imply that considerations based on *ren* are always

[32] It is important to note that my interpretation of the *Mencius* 4A17 may be controversial for three reasons: First, it might be pointed out that my discussion does not capture the main point of the passage,

weightier than considerations based on *yi*. There are occasions when an opposite judgment may be appropriate. In consideration of this matter, the Confucian thought that one should be willing to forsake life and choose *yi* should be examined. This idea is explicitly advocated by Mencius.[33] Xunzi also expresses a similar idea in a few different passages in the *Xunzi*. However, it is not immediately clear whether, according to Xunzi, the willingness to forsake one's own life arises from adherence to *yi*.

Xunzi on one occasion says that one has the capacity to approve of something in a way that places it above what one desires most, for example, one's own life; therefore, one may act upon what one approves, even, at the risk of what one desires most. Xunzi adds that what one

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which is that even if a breach of *li** in such an exigent situation in which a person is drowning may be acceptable, it cannot be inferred from this that a breach of the Confucian *dao* should be allowed if the drowning world can be saved in that way (see Zhu Xi, *Mengzi jizhu*). Even so, it cannot be denied that, in the passage, Mencius expresses his opinion about the acceptability of a breach of *li** in some situations.

Second, it may be objected that there is no occurrence of *ren* in the passage, so there is no textual evidence that shows Mencius understands the exigent situation as involving any consideration based on *ren*. However, the exigent situation in which a person is drowning is comparable to the case of *ce yin zhi xin* understood as a starting point of the development of *ren,* which is illustrated by a crawling baby on the verge of falling into a well (*Mencius* 2A6). This similarity enables us to infer that a consideration based on *ren* is involved in *Mencius* 4A17.

Third, it may be objected further that even if the passage may plausibly be interpreted as involving a consideration based on *ren*, it is still controversial and not textually supported that the observance of *li** in the passage can be understood in terms of a consideration based on *yi*, and, therefore, the conclusion cannot reasonably be drawn that the exigent situation has to do with the conflict between a consideration based on *ren* and a consideration based on *yi*. In response of this objection, I would admit that my interpretation of *Mencius* 4A17 may go beyond the text. Nevertheless, I would content that the interpretation should be accepted as a possible one that shows the most fundamental concern underlying the passage. More importantly, my main concern is not with how *Mencius* 4A17 can best be understood in a way that does not go beyond the text, but with how the current topic concerning the conflict between *ren* and *yi* can be illustrated in an engaging way. For this reason, even if my interpretation of *Mencius* 4A17 would not be accepted as the best one, it should still serve to illustrate the current topic in an interesting way.

[33] *Mencius* 6A10.

approves of should accord with *li* (理). As explained in the above, *li* is to be understood in Xunzi's thought primarily in relation to *yi* (義).[34] I thus suspect that what Xunzi actually has in mind is a thought that is the same as Mencius's, namely, the thought that one should forsake one's own life in order to protect what accords with *yi*.[35] Xunzi in another passage says that, under the regime of a *ren* ruler, the common people respect (*gui* 貴) him as though he were the emperor (帝) and love (*qin*) him as much as they do their parents. They are therefore glad to fight to the death for him and jeopardize their lives for him.[36] In this case, it is not entirely clear whether Xunzi thinks that the common people would be willing to give up their lives on the basis of their respect for the ruler, that is, *yi*, or on the basis of their love for the ruler, that is, *ren*. In addition, there is another passage that is ambiguous in the same way. When Xunzi describes what the ideal state of perfect equilibrium (至平) is like, he says that the common people do not care about a threat of death (忘死) that may arise from difficulties caused by bandits.[37] The suggestion is that, in an ideal state where every social status is weighed fairly, and every member of community is properly treated in terms of his or her social statuses, community members would not be reluctant to give up their lives for the sake of the entire community. Here again, it is not entirely clear whether Xunzi thinks such a willingness to forsake one's own life is based on the spirit of *ren* or on the spirit of *yi*.

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[34] See also Chapter 4.

[35] *Xunzi jishi*, p. 527. See Section 6 in Chapter 2.

[36] Ibid., p. 204.

[37] Ibid., p. 266.

It at least seems clear, that, for Xunzi, once all people are harmonized into a well-structured whole, they will be willing to abandon their own lives for the sake of the whole when the whole is critically at stake. My contention is that such a willingness is generated on the basis of the spirit of *yi*; the spirit of *ren* cannot offer the basis for such a willingness. An explanation of this contention will provide illuminating guidance in the process of addressing a more pressing issue in my current discussion, that is, the issue about the relation between *ren* and *yi*.

The spirit of *ren* can be realized through everyone's gradational love for all other fellow humans. The underlying idea is that, even if each individual gives more love to his or her closer people and offers only minimal concern to total strangers, everyone's love for others in this way creates a thickly woven network of mutual love and concern for one another; within such a network of mutual love, a guarantee can be offered that each individual will receive at least minimal concern from all other fellow humans.[38] An essential characteristic of Confucian love is that a gradational scale involved in the application of love is determined *relative to* each person, since the strength of one's love is decided according to the degree of other people's nearness to or distance from oneself. According to this kind of determinant, one has reason to give one's strongest love to people who stand in the closest relationship, such as one's immediate family members. Moreover, in this line of thought, the claim may plausibly be made that one has reason to care most about oneself because one oneself is the closest person. This agent-centered logic implies that one should form a unity with other people by putting oneself at the center of the process. This way of proceeding then leads to the idea that each individual should regard himself or herself as the starting point or the foundation of the process of building a unity among all

[38] See Chapter 3.

humans. In the light of this view, it would be unlikely that *ren* could offer the basis for one's willingness to terminate one's own life, because the termination would involve putting an end to one's own foundation for the realization of the ideal state for humans.

In contrast, the notion of *yi* does not contain the kind of agent-relative or agent-centered logic involved in *ren*. The underlying attitude, respect, is not the kind of attitude that is applied to other people according to their degree of closeness to oneself. The notion of *yi* may give the impression that it is compatible with an extreme, absolute judgment, such as the judgment that the sacrifice of a certain part of the whole may be acceptable for the sake of the maintenance of the whole, if such a sacrifice is inevitable in the process of protecting the whole. This idea may appear to be compatible with the notion of *yi* because the notion is related to the establishment of hierarchical ranks among different parts of a whole; according to such a hierarchy, the importance of the entire whole may outweigh the importance attached to a certain part, at least, in an extreme situation when the sacrifice of the part may become inevitable for the sake of the maintenance of the whole.

Yet such an extreme, absolute view is *not* be the best way to explain the kind of willingness to forsake one's own life for the entire community that is expressed in Xunzi's thought. In Xunzi's thought, harmony is to be understood as the final good that all individuals in the community should cooperatively pursue regardless of their desires. Xunzi thinks that, even if a human is self-interested at the outset, he or she should and can gradually transform himself or herself into the kind of creature who pursues harmony for its own sake, not as the best way to optimize self-interest.[39] In relation to this theory of good in Xunzi's thought, *yi* should be

[39] I discussed this issue in Chapter 2.

considered to be related to the allocation of various social positions and roles precisely *in order to* bring about the final good. The reason why one is assigned a certain position in society and plays a corresponding role is basically that, through the position and the role, one can contribute to the creation and maintenance of the final good. The claim can then be made that the willingness to forsake one's own life for the sake of the whole is fundamentally rooted in the willingness to play a certain role in the pursuit of the final good. In other words, one can endow the termination of one's own life with a critically important meaning in the sense that the termination may turn out to be the only way to pursue the final good, in an extreme circumstance, which should be pursued for its own sake.

The endowment of the termination of one's own life with a critically important meaning can also be explained in the following sense: The world view shared by early Chinese thinkers may be classified as holistic, in the sense that, for them, the identity of each individual can only be understood against the background of the community to which he or she belongs, because mutual recognition is the fundamental factor that constitutes the idea of self-identity in early Chinese thought.[40] The identity of an individual person is understood fundamentally in terms of a particular set of social statuses that are ascribed to the person. The idea of social status is conceivable only on the basis of mutual recognition in the community. In early Chinese thought, there is no idea such as an atomic self that does not depend on mutual recognition. Harmony is viewed as nothing other than the ideal state in which the proper sets of social statuses are established in the human community. In this state, all humans interact with one another by appropriately allocating social statuses to one another and by treating one another accordingly.

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[40] I discussed this in Chapter 4 in relation to the term *rong* (榮 social honor or social recognition).

An individual person's pursuit of harmony is viewed, not simply as a service for a totality that is constituted by the person along with many other atomic persons, but as a pursuit of the maintenance of the foundation of himself or herself. In early Chinese thought, forsaking one's own life for the sake of harmony does not amount to a sacrifice of an atomic person for the sake of a society that is a whole made up of many atomic parts. Forsaking one's own life may amount to a way to maintain the foundation of one's own identity.

Whether or not the above explanations are the best ones to clarify the willingness to forsake one's own life to protect harmony, the explanations should suffice to show that the willingness is based on *yi* rather than on *ren*. However, at this point, the objection may be made that, even if the willingness to forsake one's own life may be generated on the basis of the spirit of *yi*, the forsaking may not be actually carried out because it seems to go against the spirit of *ren*. However, when one examines the reason why the formation of a unity among all humans should be achieved through gradational love, the apparently conflicting directions indicated by *ren* and *yi* should converge in the direction indicated by *yi*, at least in the extreme case at hand, namely, the case in which one is guided to terminate one's own life in order to protect harmony, for the following reason:

Gradational love is considered the most feasible way to form a unity among all humans in the sense that the formation of a community among all humans is most likely to be achieved when each individual puts himself or herself at the center and builds up varying relationships with different people according to a gradational scale. This is true because, first, in this kind of arrangement, one's powers of concern are not exhausted in the provision of attention to others, and, second, one is able to show more concern for those who are closer to one; at the same time, one can still use one's remaining powers of attention to show a minimal kind of concern for total

strangers.[41] The important point is that the adoption of a gradational scale in loving others is justified basically by a *practical* consideration that it is the most feasible way to form a unity among all humans. This practical concern cannot outweigh the very fundamental concern about the maintenance of a unity among all humans, especially when such a unity has already been created and maintained; at some point, this unity may have to face a fatal danger. At such a critical moment when there is a question about maintaining or abolishing the unity, if *yi* offers a guidance about how to save it, the practical approach, which suggests that one builds relationships by putting oneself at the center, should give way to the guidance based on *yi*. This compromise can be explained as a way for one to pursue the final good, harmony, in an extreme case.

The most important point to be finally clarified in this section is this: The above analyses offer a rough guide to how a comprehensive principle like (CP) should be applied when *ren* and *yi* conflict. First, the underlying spirits of *ren* and *yi* should be considered in relation to each other in order to figure out which spirit should be regarded more important in a given situation, as set out in the second kind of consideration (2) in (CP). This process of consideration is to be carried out eventually against the background of the fundamental ideal in Confucian ethics, namely, through a judgment about which spirit would contribute more to the maintenance of harmony, as set out in the third kind of deliberation (3) in (CP).

5 Residing in *Ren* in Accordance with *Yi* (處仁以義)

[41] See Chapter 3.

In the process of developing a full understanding of how *ren* and *yi* work either in cooperation or in situations where the two conflict, an explanation about why a prevailing understanding of *ren* is misleading will be helpful. According to this understanding, Confucian ethics is a kind of particularistic view in the sense that it justifies the moral priority assigned to those who stand in close relationship. Such a moral priority is often illustrated by an example of a situation when one is justified in the act of saving the life of one's own father, instead of saving the lives of five strangers, when there is no option except to act only in a single way.[42] According to Confucian gradational love, one is justified in showing more concern for those who stand in closer relationship. However, this greater concern, which is explained on the basis of *ren,* would not justify the saving of one's father's life in this imagined dilemma. For the statement that, under the spirit of *ren*, one is justified in the provision of more love for one's special persons does not mean that one is justified in the attachment of more importance to the life of one's special person than to the life of a stranger. The statement only means that one is justified in the provision of extra love to them or in the commitment of more time or energy to care for them. *Ren* relates to the formation of a basic companionship with all other fellow humans; the reason why one is justified in giving more or less love to other people according to their closeness to one is that, in this way of loving, one is most likely to cover a broad range of people and, ideally, all other people. The notion of *ren* undeniably involves a particularistic tendency. Nevertheless, the notion never offers any basis for a moral priority that may be assigned to a parent's life over the lives of five other people when the troubling dilemma arises.

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[42] I already dealt with this issue in Chapter 3 in my explanation about why the Western framework of *particularism versus universalism* cannot fully capture the issues in early Chinese thought.

Instead, *yi* is likely to offer a guidance when such a dilemma arises. In a decision about who should be saved, a person in that situation should think about who is more important or most important in terms of various social statuses ascribable to the six people who are in fatal danger. The person eventually has think about who would contribute most to a state of harmony. This deliberation should not be affected by any factor that relates to the degree of nearness to or distance from one. In this dilemma, considerations based on *yi* are likely to outweigh any considerations based on *ren*.[43]

In fact, according to Xunzi's thought, considerations based on *ren* should be regulated by considerations based on *yi*. This seems to be what Xunzi means by the phrase, "residing in *ren* in accordance with *yi* (處仁以義)."[44] The meaning of this phrase is a matter of interpretation, for, first, the phrase appears without any further context or concrete examples, and, second, this phrase seems to be the only one in the *Xunzi* that explicitly deals with the relation between *ren* and *yi*. A further complication is that the chapter where the phrase appears may not contain what was said by Xunzi himself; rather, it may well be an extrapolation. Nevertheless, I believe that this phrase correctly represents Xunzi's thought, and I will reconstruct the thought that underlies the phrase in the following paragraphs.

To begin, I look at two troublesome examples from the *Mencius*, which have often been used to make the case for the opposite point, namely, the aforementioned misleading point that Confucian ethics is a particularistic view to the extent that it may require one to assign priority to

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[43] Understood in this way, Confucian ethics does not turn out to be an extremely particularistic position or an extremely family-centered ethic, as is often understood in the recent secondary literature. For instance, see Liu Qingping, "Confucianism and Corruption: An Analysis of Shun's Two Actions Described by Mencius," *Dao* (Springer 2007), vol. 6.

[44] *Xunzi jishi*, p. 605.

the life of one's own father over the lives of five others in fatal danger because one's father is the closest person. It is important to note that these two cases from the *Mencius* deal with difficult situations where *ren* and *yi* seem to guide humans in conflicting directions; yet, the situations are not dilemmas that require a choice between two conflicting options. As I will explain below, Mencius's solution is to provide a third option and not become trapped on the horns of a dilemma. My contention will be that Mencius's solution in fact accords with "residing in *ren* in accordance with *yi*."

In the *Mencius* 7A35, Mencius is challenged by the following question: If the father of the sage king Shun had murdered a man, what would Shun have done in this case? Mencius's answer is that Shun would not have used his sovereign power to shield his guilty father from arrest; instead, he would have fled secretly with his father on his back, abdicated the throne, lived somewhere along the seacoast, and forgotten about the kingdom. This answer has often been understood as reflecting an extremely particularistic view and showing that the priority assigned to one's own family is the highest value in Confucian ethics. Accordingly, one is required to choose this highest value over any other value, just as Shun would have thrown away the whole world to shield his father from prosecution.

However, Mencius's answer should be interpreted differently: For Mencius, the imagined situation is the kind of situation where Shun has no choice except to sacrifice himself in order to pursue the final good, namely, overall harmony in the whole society. The decision attributed to Shun, that is, to hide himself from the world with his father can be considered as a self-made determination to end his social life in a way that does not hinder the maintenance of harmony in the world. Such a termination of social life would be considered not very far from the termination of one's own life in the early Chinese society, in which mutual social recognition

was the fundamental factor that determined self-identity. Moreover, Shun should have made such a decision to sacrifice himself *on the condition* that someone else could succeed to the throne, and therefore harmony could be continuously maintained under the guidance of the other person. In that case, instead of using his power to shield his father from arrest and thereby ruining harmony, he would have given a meaning to the termination of his social life in the sense that his self-sacrifice should have been regarded as the best way to pursue the final good in the situation. In these circumstances, the decision is comparable to the aforementioned willingness to forsake one's own life for the sake of the community on the basis of the spirit of *yi*.

At the same time, Shun would not have simply given up acting on the spirit of *ren* while he was fleeing with his father on his back. Through this course of action, he could privately have continued to love his closest person, but this way of loving one's special person is already confined to a very private space so that it will not affect any broader range of social interactions. In this sense, *ren* is regulated in accordance with *yi* in this situation. Understood in this way, the hypothetical example in the *Mencius* 7A35 does not make the case for an attempt to understand Confucian ethics as an extremely particularistic position that assigns the greatest importance to the value of the family.

In the *Mencius* 5A3, Mencius is asked about another story about Shun, according to which, even though his brother had always tried to kill him, Shun granted his not-*ren* (*bu-ren* 不仁) brother, namely, his ethically bad brother, a fief and enriched him only because the person was his own brother and therefore the kind of person whom he should love (親愛). This story is supposed to be challenging for Mencius, who regards Shun as the exemplary person who embodies the Confucian ideal, because, in the story, Shun's care for his brother may be evidence of unfair treatments between his brother and some other ethically depraved individuals who were

not rewarded but instead punished by Shun on account of their lack of *ren*. However, Mencius approves of Shun's special care for his brother. This approval has often been regarded as more evidence of the tendency to assign the greatest importance to familial affection or values in Confucian ethics.

However, it is important to note that Mencius qualifies his approval in the following two ways: First, Mencius says that if one loves another, one should wish that the other person be honorable (*gui* 貴) and rich (*bu* 富); by granting his brother a fief and enriching him, Shun simply gives his brother treatment that befits a brother of the emperor. Second, Mencius explains that the grant to his brother of a fief actually amounts to an act of banishing him because Shun appoints another officer to administer the government of the state, and its revenues are paid to the officer. In other words, Shun's brother is not allowed to enjoy any political power, and his position in his fief is merely honorary.

These qualifications in fact show how *yi* regulates *ren*. It seems that, for Mencius, the incomplete attempts to kill Shun are not a matter serious enough to disqualify Shun's brother from being his brother; moreover, Shun is a *ren*-person who tends not to cherish resentment against his brother who has acted wrongfully. Shun would not think the unsuccessful attempts are serious enough to nullify his filial obligation to make sure that his brother is still treated properly in accordance with his social statuses. For this reason, Mencius approves of Shun's ennoblement and enrichment of his brother, since the treatment befits a brother of the emperor. In this respect, it seems to Mencius that Shun's special care for this brother still accords with *yi*. In addition, it seems that Mencius does not consider the depraved brother qualified to be a ruler

of a state due to his depravity; Shun granted him only a fief and disqualified him from becoming the sovereign. From Mencius's perspective, this disqualification also accords with *yi*.[45]

Mencius's solutions for difficult cases may or may not be the best ones. What is clear is that, in both passages, Mencius is deliberating about ways to regulate considerations based on *ren* in accordance with considerations based on *yi*. The above cases thus well reflect Xunzi's meaning when he refers to "residing *ren* in accordance with *yi*." More importantly, the above discussions about these cases show how a comprehensive principle like (CP) is to be applied when *ren* and *yi* guide humans in conflicting directions.

[45] It may be objected that there is no textual evidence for the above interpretation of *Mencius* 5A3 in relation to the conflict between *ren* and *yi* because there is no occurrence of *yi* in the passage. I treated a similar concern in relation to my interpretation of 4A17 (See footnote 32). In addition, there has been a traditional exegesis that also interprets *Mencius* 5A3 in relation to the correlation between *ren* and *yi*. See Zhu Xi, *Mengzi jizhu*.

Chapter 6 Ethical Harmonism – In what sense is the gist of Xunzi's ethical view holistic, and how can Xunzi's holistic view accommodate part of modern ethical sentiments based on individualism?

1 Introduction

First of all, I need to clarify the nature of the discussions in what follows, which will be quite dissimilar to that of the discussions in the previous chapters. The discussions in this chapter will go well beyond what can be extracted from the text, and this departure from the text is intended to show how an ethical thought that draws upon the thought of an early Confucian would possibly be developed into a more defensible ethical position that makes sense to an interpreter living in this 21st century. For this reason, the following discussions will unavoidably be tentative, first, in the sense that they are intended to suggest merely a possible way to develop the ideas that are extracted from the thought of Xunzi, and, second, in the sense that the development is suggested not as a finished product.

In this chapter, I will first offer a more complete explanation of harmony in relation to seven terms on the basis of the discussions of the previous chapters, and I further explore the nature of harmony by dealing with the questions of how the value of harmony may be measured and how the different aspects of harmony, which are depicted in terms of the seven explanatory terms for harmony, are related to one another.

On the basis of more complete understanding of harmony, I will explore the exact sense in which Xunzi's thought centered on harmony can be understood as holistic. "Holism" is a position that understands the parts of a whole only in relation to the background of the whole, and it is normally contrasted with "individualism" in the literature. The distinction between holism and individualism may no longer be considered thought-provoking, since it has been used very often, for example, in contrasting Eastern thought and Western thought. However, I will specify the points of the contrast as clearly as possible in order to use the contrast effectively as a way of capturing the characteristics of Xunzi's thought. More particularly, in order to demonstrate possible variations in the scope of holistic views, I will introduce the contrast between "globalism" and "localism" and argue that what may be called "moderate globalism" can capture the gist of Xunzi's holistic thought in a way that accommodates part of modern ethical sentiments based on individualism.

I will move on to examine further if more considerable part of individualist sentiments may be accommodated within the scope of Xunzi's holistic way of thinking. To do this in an engaging way, I will address the issue of how Xunzi's thought can be developed in a way that makes room for the modern ethical sentiments associated with the notion of human rights. This development will proceed under the name of "Ethical Harmonism," which is a working-label for the most defensible ethical position based on the gist of Xunzi's thought under development. This discussion should be engaging because it aims to articulate an ethical view that still gains currency among the people in certain cultural boundaries, especially-not necessarily, though-, East Asian culture, and to demonstrate the extent to which this ethical view may accommodate the concerns and ethical phenomena associated with human rights, which has been vigorously developed in the individualist Western context. More specifically, I will show that even though

Xunzi's holistic view does not entail the exact conception of human rights, which makes perfect sense only in an individualist context, Ethical Harmonism based on his thought can be developed in a way that accommodates on its own term some significant ethical sentiments underlying the conception of rights, such as those concerning equality and an individual person's freedom from subordination to the community.

2 The Seven Explanatory Terms for Harmony

Xunzi conceives of a certain holistic state as the ideal state for humans; he considers this state achievable through the cooperation of all humans. This ideal state can be explained only through a combination of the various connotations of different terms, such as *zhi* (治), *yi* **(一), *he* (和), *li* (理), *yi** (宜), *da li* (大理), and *zhi ping* (至平). Xunzi does not explicitly present any ideas about how the connotations of those terms systematically converge into a single idea. For this reason, the method of bringing the several terms together in order to figure out what Xunzi implicitly has in mind in conceiving of the ideal state for humans is a way to provide a systematic interpretation of his fundamental thought. There may be some other terms in the *Xunzi* that provide additional help in figuring out the more substantive content of the ideal state for humans. Nevertheless, the above seven terms suffice for a reconstruction of the basic theory about the ideal state for humans in Xunzi's thought.[1]

[1] Here I will explain each of the terms in a summarizing style on the basis of the textual works throughout the previous chapters.

Zhi (治) refers basically to orderliness. Since it can also refer to the state that is expected to result from an ideal government, it refers more specifically to the state of sociopolitical orderliness or the activity of facilitating sociopolitical orderliness. *Yi*** (一) refers to oneness or unity. For Xunzi, the ideal state for humans is the kind of state in which all humans are unified in a particular way. To be unified, Xunzi thinks, humans need to share a basic companionship or a feeling of belonging to the extent that they at least become susceptible to the pain or suffering of one another, and, further, become concerned about one another's welfare. This idea is demonstrated in early Confucian thought mainly in connection with *ren* (仁).[2] *Ren* is normally ascribed to the kind of person who loves all humans appropriately on the assumption that all humans belong to the same unity, or to the kind of government that enables all humans to be thoroughly unified into a whole. For this reason, I suggested understanding *ren* as the ethical attribute that is mainly related to a particular aspect of the ideal state for humans, that is, oneness. However, it is important to note that the connotation of oneness involved in the concept of the ideal state for humans is fully explained not only in relation to *ren*. Even if *ren* relates to the establishment of a foundation for a unity among all humans, mainly through the facilitation of a shared basic companionship among them, a human community cannot be perfectly unified only on the basis of such a rudimentary foundation.

He (和) refers to cooperation among the differing parts of a whole that occurs without the parts becoming homogenized. In such cooperation, each part should not lose its distinguishing features, and it, along with the other parts, is brought together into a unity. This non-homogenization may be understood figuratively as the creation of a distinctive taste through the

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[2] See Chapter 3.

combination of various ingredients that still retain their own characteristic flavors. Thus, in relation to the connotation of *he*, the ideal unity for Xunzi should be understood as more than a simple gathering of differing things or beings.

Li (理) also refers to the relation between a whole and the various parts of the whole. In contrast with *he*, *li* is related more to the internal structures of the differing parts of a whole rather than to the cooperation of the parts. In other words, the term *li* has to do more with an aspect of the orderliness established among the differences or distinguishing characteristics of things or beings. Its underlying idea is that the differing parts of a whole are *coherently* connected with one another so as to be able to *structure* the whole.

Xunzi mainly conceives of *yi* (義) in relation to these ideas of cooperation among the different parts of a whole and a coherent connection among them.[3] This attribute, along with *ren*, is one of the central concepts in early Confucian thought and is often used in relation the evaluation of a person's actions or personality. For instance, *yi* can be used to evaluate an action that contributes to a particular aspect of harmony that can be explained in terms of *he* and *li*. More specifically stated, *yi* relates to the idea that each part of a whole occupies its proper place within the whole and thereby contributes, in cooperation with the other parts, to the maintenance of the whole in a distinctive way. This idea can be understood in relation to the connotations of *he* and *li* in the following sense: the degree of cooperation among the parts of a whole and coherence in the internal structure of a whole depends on the success of each part, first, in playing its own role by occupying its proper place within the whole, second, in enabling the

[3] See Chapter 4.

other parts to play their own roles by occupying their proper places within the whole, and, finally, in cooperating with the other parts to maintain the whole.

An additional term, *yi** (宜), is closely related to *yi* (義). This term basically means appropriateness. In relation to *yi*, *yi** can be understood as suggesting the very sense of each part's occupation of its own proper place within the whole to which it belongs. More importantly, *yi** refers to the ideal state resulting from the realization of *he* and *li*, namely, a state in which each part is treated appropriately according to its proper position and consequently receives its due in relation to whatever can be collectively distributed.

Da li (大理), which may be translated as "the greatest *li*," is concerned basically with the coherent connection among the various parts of a whole. More specifically, it refers to the *li* that can be conceived by attempting to increase the range of things or beings that can be covered by the idea of a whole as much as possible to the extent that the range comes to encompass all relevant things or beings. *Li* can be thought of at a number of different levels. For instance, the entire human society is constituted by various kinds of units, such as the state, families, many different social groups, and so forth. Within each of the units, coherent connection among the unit's members can be conceived, since each unit can be regarded as a whole at its own level. However, Xunzi conceives the ideal state for humans in relation to the greatest *li* at the level of the entire human society that encompasses all humans. For this reason, there is a requirement derived from *da li*, namely, that the ideal state for humans must be conceived at the level of the entire human society. An implication of this requirement is that any localized realization of *li* does not reach the expected standard of the ideal state for humans that Xunzi has in mind.[4]

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[4] See Chapter 2.

Finally, *zhi ping* (至平) relates to another aspect of the relationships among the differing parts of a whole. *Ping* refers to a state in which a measure such as a scale is well calibrated and therefore can maintain balance in weighing things. Briefly stated, *ping* refers to a state of equilibrium. *Zhi ping* can be translated as the state of perfect equilibrium, that is, the ideal state in which the dimensions of the differing parts of a whole are accurately measured in relation to one another, so that a perfect balance among them can be maintained. For instance, on the basis of such thorough cross-measurements among all parts of a whole, various kinds of orderliness, such as the privileges, priorities, or hierarchical ranks of the parts can be maintained.

In Chapter 2, I suggested using "harmony" as a convenient label for the ideal state that can be described basically in terms of the combination of *zhi* (治), *yi* **(一), and *he* (和). On the basis of the discussions in chapters 2 through 5, I may reasonably add the other four terms, namely, *li* (理), *yi** (宜), *da li* (大理), and *zhi ping* (至平), as supplementary terms that provide more substantive content to the concept of harmony. Thus, harmony can be explained fully through the various connotations that can be derived from the above seven terms.

3 The Value of Harmony

The reason I initially attempted in Chapter 2 to conceptualize harmony only in relation to the connotations of *zhi* (治), *he* (和), and *yi* ** (一) is that the value of harmony can be conceived basically in terms of those connotations. The connotations of *zhi*, *he*, and *yi*** can be summarized in terms of the following notions: orderliness, diversity, and oneness. In relation to these notions, harmony can most basically be understood as the nature of a certain unity formed

by diverse parts in certain orderly ways. Then the value of harmony can be conceived mainly in terms of the degree of orderliness realized in a unity and the degree of diversity realized in a unity.

There is a question about how the degree of diversity may determine the value of harmony. For instance, if a unity has more diverse parts and maintains orderliness among those parts in such a way that the parts are coherently unified into a whole, the unity has harmony that has a higher value. Suppose that there is Unity A, which has only a few different kinds of constituents and Unity B, which has a variety of kinds of constituents. Since Unity B maintains its unity while having more parts than Unity A has, the value of harmony realized by Unity B is greater than the value realized by Unity A. Unity B maintains a relatively higher degree of diversity in the process of its unification.[5]

The above comparison can be understood in a more substantive manner if it is related to the following details of Xunzi's thought: Xunzi thinks of human nature in relation to the advanced capacity for discrimination among different kinds of persons (*bian* 辨). This characteristically human capacity is the capacity to discern different kinds of social statuses (*fen* 分) broadly construed. For Xunzi, humans characteristically interact with one another by ascribing various kinds of statuses to one another and by treating one another accordingly. Love and respect are two different attitudes that are triggered on the basis of the recognition of various social statuses. Harmony is a convenient label for the kind of ideal state in which humans love

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[5] In making this point, I was helped by Robert Nozick's discussion of the value of organic unity. See his *Philosophical Explanations* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), p. 416 and p. 421. As Nozick mentions in footnote 22 (p. 724), the notion of organic unity has often been discussed traditionally in aesthetics. For instance, the value of a unity can be illustrated well in terms of the value of a painting, which can be measured in terms of the degree of organic unity formed through the combinations of various colors and different shapes.

and respect one another appropriately. So, the creation and maintenance of harmony depend in an important way on the establishment of a complete set of social statuses that cover all possible human interactions; humans can create and maintain harmony by interacting with one another through exchanges of love and respect on the basis of such a complete set of social statuses. Then the claim can be made that, for Xunzi, the most basic constituents of a human community are social statuses in the sense that social statuses are the most basic determinants of human interactions, and, therefore, degrees of diversity should be conceived most basically in terms of these very fundamental constituents. Accordingly, the above comparison between Unity A and Unity B should be made by asking which unity contains a set that includes more diverse kinds of social statuses. The harmony of Unity B has higher value because it is a unified whole with more diverse kinds of social statuses.

The way orderliness determines the value of harmony can be conceived in the following way: If all the social statuses that are adopted in a community are related to one another more coherently, then it is possible to say that the degree of orderliness among the social statuses is higher. Hence, the level of harmony in the community is also higher. This idea of coherence stems from a connotation that can be derived from *li* (理). The idea is that the legitimacy of a social status must be perceived against the background of the entire set of other social statuses that are adopted in community. This requirement implies that any social status must be the kind of social status that is discernable by all members of community and that the status is coherently connected with the other social statuses in a way that enables them all to form a complete set of social statuses. On the basis of such a set, all humans can interact with one another without any conflict on the basis of these statuses.

The meaning of coherence is explained more substantively on the basis of connotations that can be derived from *zhi ping* (至平) and *yi** (宜). The weight of each social status must be measurable against every other social status in a complete set of social statuses adopted by community, so that, when more than one social status is involved in an interaction, the people involved in the interaction should be able to judge which social status involved in the interaction is a more important one.[6] This suggests that the main concern underlying each social distinction, namely the main reason why humans should recognize a certain kind of social status and interact with one another accordingly, must be understood by all members of community.

The idea of coherence also implies that the outcomes of human interactions that occur within the context of a complete set of social statuses must be such that each member of community receives his or her due according to his or her social statuses. For instance, material resources must be effectively and fairly distributed to each member through the interactions of community members that occur according to a complete set of social statuses.

Thus, the degree of orderliness is determined by the level of coherence among all social statuses adopted by human community. This coherence can be evaluated by examining whether the underlying concerns of all social statuses are fully understood by all community members and whether the values of the various social statuses have been thoroughly measured against one another. The coherence can also be checked by assessing the condition of the community, that is, determining whether distributive justice is being achieved. In other words, the degree of orderliness can be ascertained in terms of a criterion that can be derived from the connotation of

[6] I discussed this issue in detail in Chapter 5.

li; this can in turn be understood in terms of criteria that can be derived from the connotations of *zhi ping* and *yi**.

Suppose, again, that there are two unities that are identical in terms of the degree of diversity, but different in terms of the degree of orderliness: Unity C and Unity D. Even if these unities have the same number of social statuses, Unity D can be regarded as maintaining a higher value of harmony for the reason that Unity D realizes a higher level of coherence among its social statuses. In addition, a more complex comparison can be conceived in a way such as the following: Unity G has slightly fewer kinds of social statuses than Unity F. Nevertheless, Unity G may be considered a better unity, for it realizes a considerably higher degree of orderliness than Unity F in the sense that it maintains distributive justice to a much greater extent. For this reason, the harmony realized in Unity G should be considered higher, even if it realizes a slightly lower degree of diversity. Similar sorts of comparisons between different unities should be conceivable in various ways with respect to considerations about how to weigh the degree of diversity and the degree of orderliness against each other. Complications might arise from such considerations. However, an important point for now is that the overall value of harmony can be measured, at any rate, in terms of the degree of diversity and the degree of orderliness, as explained above.[7]

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[7] Then, what is the point of this discussion about the value of harmony? This discussion is important, especially, in relation to an attempt to develop a more defensible ethical position based on the gist of Xunzi's thought, because, without such a discussion, Xunzi would not be able to treat properly a question such as the following: Suppose there are two societies A and B. In both of the societies, every member gets harmonized through the exchanges of love and respect, so that both societies may be considered to be achieving harmony. But they differ in the following sense: A is a tightly organized centrally controlled hierarchical society of fixed hereditary status, whereas B encompasses diverse statuses and is a free and open society. Which society is better? Without a reasonable discussion of the value of harmony such as the above, Xunzi would have no choice but to answer that A and B are equally ideal societies, or he would have to remain silent. Such an answer or silence is not satisfactory not only from the viewpoint of

There is another important factor that determines the value of harmony: the requirement that is implied by the concept of *da li* (大理). According to this concept, harmony must be conceived only at the level of the entire human community. Harmony is the kind of state that can be achieved by a community that includes all humans. According to this requirement, any localized human group that is unified on the basis of its own set of various social statuses can never fully achieve harmony.

Now, an important issue arises in connection with the above understanding of the value of harmony: How exactly do love and respect contribute to the value of harmony understood in the above way? Love and respect are the two modes of responsiveness that are to be adopted by humans in their mutual interactions in order to create, maintain, and promote harmony. In the previous chapters, especially in Chapter 5, the correlation between love and respect was understood most basically in the following sense: Humans first need to share a basic companionship by seeing themselves as belonging to a unity (through the function of love); on that basis, they treat one another in ways that guarantee that each of them can occupy his or her proper positions, play his or her roles, and receive his or her due in terms of various social shares (through the function of respect). According to this understanding, the exchanges of love among all humans serve to lay the very foundation of oneness, that is, the formation of one unified whole among them; on the basis of this foundation, humans can enhance the degree of diversity and the degree of orderliness through appropriate exchanges of respect. In other words, love

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us who are inclined to prefer B to A, but also from the internal perspective of Xunzi's position. For Xunzi would now be unable to determine what the most ideal society is like.

facilitates basic unification among all humans, and respect improves the strength of the internal structure of the unified whole.

At this point, it may be pointed out that the above explanation of the different ways in which love and respect promote harmony does not seem to be complete; in a fuller explanation, love would also be regarded as contributing to the enhancement of the degrees of diversity and orderliness in harmony. For example, it can be claimed that exchanges of gradational love enhance the degree of diversity in harmony in the sense that each human is suggested to love other people differently according to diverse degrees of their nearness from him or her.[8] This claim, however, does not sound reasonable, at least as it stands. Even though discrimination involved in gradational love might be thought of as enhancing the degree of diversity in harmony to a certain extent, this enhancement does not adequately explain why the exchange of gradational love is the best way to realize harmony, especially, the basic formation of one unity among all humans. For instance, the exchange of equal love would possibly be considered a better way to unify all humans into one whole.

In Chapter 3, I presented a feasibility thesis that aims to explain the necessity involved in gradational love. That is to say, the reason for the adoption of gradational love is that the adoption is the most feasible way to form one unity among all humans, *given* an unavoidable constraint rooted in human nature. The constraint is that humans only have limited power of attention in loving other people, and, therefore, they can offer, at least, minimal concern to strangers all over the world only by adopting an appropriate gradational scale applied to their

[8] See Chapter 3.

love for others.[9] For the current discussion, it is important to note that this feasibility thesis brings in a factor that is *neutral* about the measurement of the value of harmony understood mainly in terms of the degrees of diversity and orderliness. The reason why humans should form a unity through exchanges of gradational love rather than, for instance, concern without discrimination or universal affection, is not explainable in relation to the improvement of the degrees of diversity or orderliness in harmony. The reason is, instead, that gradational love is the most feasible way to form one unity among all humans, *given* the human constraint.[10]

4 In What Sense is the Gist of Xunzi's Thought Holistic?

Harmony is a holistic concept, hence the gist of Xunzi's ethical thought is holistic. This statement will carefully be examined in this section. I will explicate the exact sense in which "holism" can be considered a reasonable label for Xunzi's thought especially in relation to its central concept, harmony. Holism, broadly construed, is a view in which an individual thing or being is understood primarily in the context or field where the thing or being is related to other things or beings. In other words, on a holistic view, an individual thing or being is explained chiefly on the basis of such relationships.[11] In line with this basic view, a further claim may be

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[9] See Chapter 3 for a more complete explanation for this feasibility thesis.

[10] For this clarification of the necessity of the adoption of gradational love as a neutral factor, I was indebted to conversations with Thomas Hurka.

[11] This broad understanding of holism is also used in the contemporary field of cross-cultural psychology in which East and West is often contrasted in terms of a holistic orientation and an individualist-or, analytic- orientation. For instance, see Nisbett, R. E., Peng, K., Choi, I., & Norenzayan, A. "Culture and

made that a whole should be understood as something more than a simple aggregation of its parts. In relation to this claim, a holistic whole is often considered an organism.[12] In contrast, individualism, broadly construed, is the kind of view in which an individual thing or being is explained without reference to any larger context or field to which it is considered belonging. For example, an account of the individual human can be provided primarily in terms of various kinds of attributes that are ascribed to him or her, such as interests, capacities, desires, and so forth, and without any descriptions of his or her relations with a larger social unit or other individuals.[13] In this line of thought, a whole regarded simply as an aggregation of individual beings or things.

In applying holism to Xunzi's thought, I understand it in a more specific sense that involves a certain view of goodness.[14] In this sense, the distinction between holism and

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systems of thought: Holistic versus analytic cognition," *Psychological Review* (2010) vol. 108, pp. 291–310.

[12] However, it is important to note that this further "organistic" claim is not entailed by the basic holistic way of thought, which is a sort of relational way to conceive of individual things or beings in connection with various relationships or interactions among them within a larger unity to which they belong. For this basic holistic way of thought is not incompatible with another claim that a whole is simply an aggregation of individual beings or things, on the condition that those individual beings or things are necessarily understood in terms of various relationships among them and in the context of a larger whole to which they belong. In other words, even if the holistic way of thought is often combined with such an organistic claim as the above, it is separable from the other. Still, the term holism is usually used in a way that combines its basic idea with the organistic claim.

[13] This very basic classification of holism and individualism is used by Donald J. Munro in his attempt to characterize East and West. See his "Introduction," in Donald J. Munro, ed., *Individualism and Holism: Studies in Confucian and Taoist Values* (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, 1985), pp. 16-17.

[14] What I mean by the good is something that humans have reason to pursue. In understanding an early Chinese thinker's thought, I need to be careful about adopting this concept of goodness, which has been very sophisticatedly developed by contemporary Western consequentialists. In fact, my interpretation is that the most basic structure underlying Xunzi's thought can be understood as what may be called

individualism can be made in relation to considerations about what should be considered more

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"holistic consequentialism." Then, it may be questioned whether this adoption of the concept of goodness and the consequentialist structure as analytic tools is an anachronistic imposition that is alien to the original context of early Chinese thought, given that Xunzi himself never recognized his own thought as consequentialist. I acknowledge that, after our understanding of early Chinese thought has been further deepened, my use of these analytic tools will possibly turn out to be an imposition that leads to the distortion of the fundamental layer of Xunzi's ethical thought. Having acknowledged this possibility, I want to make two points in defense of the legitimacy-, which may be temporary,- of my use of the analytic tools.

First, Aristotle's political position may also be read through the lens of consequentialism, even if there was no consciousness of any consequentialist structure in ancient Greek thought. When the position is understood as a holistic and community-centered one, it may usefully be construed as having affinities with the modern consequential theories. Such usefulness makes sense only from the perspective of interpreters who wish to understand the material as systematically as possible. Such an intention to do a systematic reading of ancient philosophical texts has its own assumption, namely that the widely accepted contemporary taxonomy, such as deontology, consequentialism, and virtue ethics, is capable of revealing more fundamental layers underlying the ancient thought, which have come to need to be discerned more sophisticatedly with the progress of human ethical understanding. Then, the statement that there was no consequentialism in the context of ancient thought does not necessarily mean that there was another fundamental layer that might be distorted by the lens of the consequentialist analytic tools. For it may be simply that there was no such sophisticated view in ancient thought. Then, we have to think about whether the adoption of conseqentialism in reading ancient thought is necessarily an imposition that causes distortions. Still, again, I would not exclude the possibility that a new ethical position may emerge on the basis of early Chinese thought, as contemporary virtue ethics has been vigorously developed on the basis of ancient Greek thought.

Second, even if I postpone a final judgment about the legitimacy of the analytical tools in reading Xunzi, that is, about whether the use of the tools would simply distort the original thought, I will maintain the sensitivity required in characterizing the uniqueness of Xunzi's thought by adopting caution about any further impositions. My use of holism will be developed carefully in ways that characterize the uniqueness of Xunzi's thought that fundamentally differentiates itself from Western consequentialist views.

For an example of an understanding of the Aristotelian political position as consequentialist, see Fred D. Miller, Jr, *Nature, Justice, and Rights in Aristotle's Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 195. In relation to this, it should be interesting to note that there has been a temptation to understand early Confucian thought as having affinities with modern consequential positions. David B. Wong once understands that Confucian community-centered morality should become consequentialist in character in its grounding such a modern concept as human rights. See his "Rights and Community in Confucianism" in David B. Wong and Kwong-loi Shun eds., *Confucian Ethics*: *Comparative Study of Self, Autonomy, and Community* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 39. As to the conceptions of consequentialism and goodness utilized in this chapter, see Thomas Hurka's summarizing discussion in his *Virtue, Vice, and Value* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 4-5.

important-- the good of a whole *or* the good of an individual thing or being in the whole.[15] According to holism in this sense, the most important value is considered to be lying in a certain whole that is constituted chiefly by relations among the parts of the whole. For example, imagine that Unity K has two parts, k and k'. In this case, the most important value is ascribed not to k, k', or anything else that is realizable at the level of each of the parts, but to Unity K, which is constituted on the basis of the relation between k and k'.

Harmony in Xunzi's thought is a sort of communal good in such a holistic position. And I suggest understanding it as the final good in Xunzi's thought, which every human in the entire human community should eventually pursue. What I mean by "final good" can be illustrated by the following example: For instance, communal justice is a sort of communal good, in whatever way it is exactly understood; on the other hand, the satisfaction of an individual's desire is a good of the individual. The relation between these two goods may be understood in different ways. First, the relation can be understood in an individualist manner, namely in such a way that the desire-satisfaction of individuals must not be compromised whatsoever, unless communal justice is justified eventually as the best way to promote individuals' desire-satisfaction.

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[15] The holistic way of thinking may lead to different views in various areas, *e.g.* epistemology, ontology, and axiology. It is important to note that Xunzi's value-holism, which I am discussing here, does not necessarily involve a commitment to any robust ontological holism that is unlikely to be accepted by many people who share common sense. I discussed the holistic conception of self and its implications, in Section 4 of Chapter 5, in dealing with the issue of how willingness to forsake one's own life for the sake of the whole community should be explained in the context of Xunzi's thought. I argued that there is no conception of the atomic self in Xunzi's thought; in his thought, a person can form the conception of a self only against the background of a larger entity to which he or she belongs. This holistic conception of self does not involve a commitment to any robust ontological holism, such as a view that treats only an organic relation between different people as real. It might be more accurate to say that Xunzi's own thought included a certain ontological holism that was peculiar to the early Chinese intellectual climate; even so, the gist of Xunzi's ethical thought can be developed in a way that does not involve robust ontological holism. A conversation with Tomas Hurka helped me discern different holistic views, especially, the difference between ontological holism and value holism.

Harmony is different from communal justice understood this way, for it is not the kind of good that is pursued for the sake of some other good.[16]

Second, communal justice may instead be understood in such a holistic way that its achievement is considered superior to any other goods, so that the desire-satisfaction of each individual may, if necessary, be sacrificed for the sake of communal justice.[17] Communal justice thus understood is comparable to harmony. Now, it is important to note that, within this holistic view, there are two options for further understanding of the relation between the communal good and other goods.

The first option is that any goods other than communal justice are considered to be necessarily subserving the achievement of communal justice; the second is that any goods other than communal justice, such as the satisfaction of individuals' desires, can be pursued for their own sake, even if communal justice is the kind of good that everyone should eventually pursue. In these options, communal justice is equally understood as the kind of good that is pursued finally by everyone. Harmony can be understood as the final good in either of the senses of the two options.[18]

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[16] In other words, harmony is an intrinsic good.

[17] Again, more exactly stated, this thought goes beyond the basic holistic way of thought and is the outcome of its combination with organistic thought.

[18] In other words, Xunzi's ethical view regards harmony as the only intrinsic good that is pursued finally. However, its view of the good can be either monistic or pluralist. If Xunzi's ethical view adopts a pluralist understanding of the good, it would claim that some sort of good of the individual may be understood as intrinsically good; still, harmony is the kind of intrinsic good that should be pursued finally in the sense that the pursuits of any other goods should not prevent one from pursuing harmony, and those pursuits may, if necessary, be frustrated for the sake of harmony.

The difference between the two options can be explained in relation to two ways of interpreting what may be called an "organistic" thesis as the following: the good of the whole is distinctive from, and more important than, a simple aggregation of the good of the parts of the whole.[19] First, the thesis may be interpreted as based on the view that the parts of a certain whole should serve as means for the good of the whole. Thus, any conceivable goods that pertain to the parts may be pursued only in ways that subserve the pursuit of the good that pertains to the whole. Combined with the organistic thesis interpreted this way, for instance, a holistic position may claim that the good of the community should always be protected at the risk of sacrificing the good of its individual members because individuals are considered merely subserving the community.[20]

On the other hand, the above organistic thesis can be interpreted differently. In this interpretation, the organistic thesis is based on a different view about the relation between a certain whole and its parts, namely, a view that understands the parts of a certain whole as necessary conditions for the existence of the good that pertains to the whole.[21] In other words, the good of a whole can exist on the basis of the existence of its parts; and, parts are regarded not merely as means for an end, but as constituents of the good that pertains to the whole, more

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[19] See Footnote 12. Organic thought matters in Xunzi's view especially in terms of the connotation of *he* (和). See Section 2.

[20] In response of such a holistic position, proponents of individualist views should claim that the good of individual humans cannot be sacrificed for the sake of the community's good, for the promotion of the communal good can be justified only as a way to advance the good of its individual humans. See Miller, Jr, *op. cit.*, Ch 6.

[21] In the process of conceiving the two different ways of interpreting the organistic thesis, I was helped by G.E. Moore's discussion of "the principle of organic unities." See his *Principia Ethica* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1903), especially Section 19.

precisely stated, as constituents of the relations that they form with the other parts of the whole. In this line of thought, for instance, the good of Unity K is distinctive from, and more important than, a simple sum of the goods of its parts, k and k', precisely because an additional value is to be attributed to Unity K in terms of the relation between k and k' that chiefly constitutes the good of the whole Unity K. Such an additional value is regarded as more important than any goods that possibly pertain to k or k'. For this reason, the good of Unity K is understood as the kind of good that is to be finally pursued, even if some kind of good that is pursued for its own sake, not for the sake of the good of Unity K, may possibly pertain to k or k'.[22]

With the above two different ways of understanding holism, a more substantive question concerning harmony needs to be asked: How are the relation between the individual and the entire human community and the relation between any conceivable goods of the individual and harmony as the final communal good explicated on Xunzi's holistic view? The development of a complete answer requires a further examination of the idea underlying harmony.

Even if harmony can be realized only at the level of the entire human community, the realization of a similar state is conceivable in relation to all kinds of human interactions, relationships, or social units. Such a similar state can be understood in terms of the six explanatory terms for harmony other than *da li*, that is, *zhi*, *he*, *yi*, *li*, *yi**, and *zhi ping*, explained in a summarizing way in Section 2. In other words, the nature of that sort of state actualizes the connotations of these six terms, but it does not meet the requirement derived from the concept of *da li*, namely, that harmony should be conceived by taking all humans into consideration. For the

[22] The implications of the distinction between the above two interpretations of the organistic thesis will be explicated below in relation to harmony.

sake of discussion, let's call such a state resembling harmony "a coherent state."[23] The point can now be restated as follows: A coherent state can be realized "locally" at various levels of social units and in relation to varied kinds of human interactions and relationships; yet, such a state does not measure up to harmony because harmony is the kind of coherent state that is realized most "globally" at the level of the entire human community.

The relation between locally realized coherent states and harmony can be envisioned in different ways. First of all, different views about the relation can be formulated quite in parallel with the contrast between holism and individualism explained above. What may be called "localism" can be conceived in the following sense. A localist position would claim that harmony is nothing other than a simple aggregation of locally realized coherent states in social units at a certain level, such as families. In this line of thought, a further requirement can be made that the realization of a coherent state within each family should not be sacrificed for the sake of a more globally realized coherent state, such as that at the level of a nation-state or harmony at the level of the entire human community. Equipped with this requirement, the particular kind of localism seems to demonstrate the possibility of interpreting Xunzi's ethical thought as an extreme version of family-centered ethics. This localist position is quite comparable to a position based on individualism that requires that the good of the individual, rather than the good of the family, should be considered most fundamental. However, the localist

[23] In using this expression, I mainly have in mind the connotation of *li* (理). I discussed the relation between *li* and *da li* in Ch 2, Section 4. See also Section 2 of this chapter.

position is still holistic and different from individualism, in that, according to it, an individual human is understood only in terms of his or her relationships within a family.[24]

However, any such localist position does not fully capture the holistic characteristics of Xunzi's thought. For harmony is not reducible simply to some sort of aggregation of the realization of coherent states of social units at a particular level. More exactly stated, a coherent state that is realized more globally in a social unit at a higher level, *e.g.* a coherent state of a city, is distinctive from a simple collective good that is reduced to an aggregation of coherent states that are realized less globally, that is, more locally, within smaller social units that are parts of the higher social unit, *e.g.* families in the city. In a holistic view of the relation between a whole and its parts, a city is not just a simple collection of different families in it, just as a family is not just a simple aggregation of its members. Accordingly, the good of a city is distinct from the sum of the goods of the families in the city. Thus, in order to bring about a coherent state within the city, all families in the city should interact with one another in appropriate ways, rather than in a way that encourages each family to focus only on the realization of its own coherent state and to regard the city simply as the arena of the realization. Briefly stated, the reason why the above localist position does not fully capture Xunzi's thought is that it does not include the organistic thesis involved importantly in his thought.

Two versions of what may be called "globalism" can be conceived in relation to the two different interpretations of the organistic thesis that were discussed above. First, the extreme globalism claims that any coherent states that are realized at any subdivisions of a social unit

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[24] Different versions of localism can be conceived in relation to various levels of social units or in relation to different kinds of human interactions or relationships. For instance, a version of nationalism can also be envisioned in accordance with the basic line of the localist thought outlined above.

should subserve the creation and maintenance of the coherent state of the larger social unit. In this line of thought, for example, the coherent states of families in a city should be sacrificed, if necessary, for the sake of the coherent state of the city, because the former is considered merely a means to the latter.

Second, a moderate version of globalism instead claims that, even though the realization of a coherent state in a social unit at a higher level is the kind of good that is to be finally pursued by its subdivisions, the realization of the coherent states of its subdivisions should also be protected to a reasonably considerable degree, rather than seen simply as means. Its underlying idea is that the realization of a coherent state at any level of social unit depends importantly on the relations that are constituted by the coherent states of its subdivisions. In other words, even if the realization of a coherent state in a social unit at any level is distinctive from a simple sum of the coherent states of its subdivisions, the former is achievable on the condition that the realization of the latter has been achieved to a reasonably considerable degree. For this reason, this moderate globalism claims that the social unit at a higher level should try to facilitate to a reasonably considerable degree the achievement of coherent states within its subdivisions. Moreover, the position can make a further claim that harmony can be achieved through reasonable support for the promotion of coherent states at all levels of social units and in relation to all kinds of human interactions or relationships.

However, this version of moderate globalism does not presuppose that it is always possible for a social unit to achieve its coherent state without impeding all of its subdivisions from pursuing the realization of their own coherent states. In other words, the position accepts that a certain subdivision's pursuit of its own coherent state may sometimes be frustrated for the sake of the achievement of a coherent state at a higher level of their social unit, especially, in

situations where such a frustration is considered the only way to achieve a coherent state among all the other subdivisions.[25]

In this line of the moderate globalism, Xunzi's thought can reasonably make room for the protection of some sort of goods that pertain to the individual. There seem to be at least two different kinds of good pertaining to the individual, which are compatible with Xunzi's holistic thought. One of them is self-cultivation: An individual human should have an interest in perfecting the two different modes of responsiveness to different kinds of social statuses, namely love and respect, on the basis of the characteristically human capacity to discriminate among different kinds of humans. An individual should have this interest because such self-development enables him or her to pursue the final good, that is, harmony.[26]

The other kind of good that pertains to the individual is the satisfaction of desires in accordance with his or her social statuses. Love and respect are generated on the basis of recognition of another person's particular kind of social status (*fen*) and work in a way that leads one to suppress or control one's desires according to the other person's social status, for example, in deference to the other person's desires. So, the development of love and respect mainly involves proper control of one's own desires in interactions with other people. However, from a

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[25] In this light, my discussion in Section 4 of Chapter 5 about the willingness to forsake one's own life for the sake of the whole community makes sense in relation to this moderate globalism.

[26] As I discussed Chapter 3, 4, and 5, harmony is conceived most basically in relation to human interactions. It refers to the very state where all humans interact with one another by appropriately adopting either love or respect; love and respect are the two modes of responsiveness to various kinds of social statuses, broadly construed, that are ascribed to other people in interactions. Accordingly, harmony can be understood in terms of social statuses. The nature of this ideal state for human interaction depends on how a complete set of social statuses is constituted. More exactly stated, the achievement of harmony depends on whether a complete set of total social statuses that covers all possible kinds of human interactions is established in a way that satisfies the criteria derived from the connotations of the seven explanatory terms discussed in Section 2.

different angle, it can also be said that an individual can legitimately have an interest in satisfying his or her desires in ways that accord with his or her social statuses.

Within the stance of moderate globalism explained above, these goods of the individual can be protected to a considerable degree. According to the line of thought, harmony can be achieved by facilitating, to a reasonably considerable degree, the realization of coherent states within all of subdivisions of the entire human community and in relation to all kinds of human interactions or relationships. Such facilitation should include the promotion of each individual's self-cultivation and desire-satisfaction in accordance with social statuses.[27]

5. How Can a Holistic View Accommodate Part of Modern Ethical Sentiments?

The moderate globalism presented in the previous section is a version of Xunzi's thought that accommodates individualist ethical sentiments as much as possible in a way that is consistent with his holistic way of thought. However, a question about whether an ethical

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[27] In relation to the moderate globalism, an important concern should be how human society can get balanced between what is considered important from a more local perspective and what is considered important from a more global perspective, especially, when the two perspectives provide humans with conflicting kinds of guidance concerning how humans interact in particular situations. This concern seems to be comparable to the concern associated with what Vincent Shen tries to capture in terms of the coinage "glocalism." This coinage is used in his description of contemporary cultural, economic, and political situations around the world, in which globalization is proceeding simultaneously with the "self-awakening" development of various local cultures, that is, localization. In relation to glocalism, Shen expresses his deep concern about how human beings can achieve balance as they deal with these two simultaneous phenomena. See his "Globalization, Christianity and Confucianism: On Strangification and Generosity to the Other," *Dialogues of Philosophies, Religions and Civilizations in the Era of Globalization; Chinese Philosophical Studies, XXV*, Zhao Dunhua, ed. (Washington, D.C.: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2007).

position that accommodates more considerable part of individualist ethical sentiments can be developed on the basis of Xunzi's thought, especially, in a way that is consistent with its holistic understanding of the relation between the individual and the entire human community.[28]

There seems to be an obstacle to such a development, for instance, that some notions, such as fundamental human rights, do not appear to be compatible with the holistic ethical position. In response to this problem, I will attempt to present a possible way to reconstruct Xunzi's thought in a way that partially makes room for notions such as fundamental human rights. This attempt is the first step in my developing a unique ethical theory based on the gist of Xunzi's ethical thought under the title of "Ethical Harmonism."[29]

Xunzi thinks that there is only one single right way to bring about harmony, which would be acceptable equally from ancient society to contemporary society. This thesis may be called "the constancy of the *da*o"(常道).[30] *Dao* refers roughly to the proper way to bring about harmony.[31] The question is to what degree Xunzi thinks the *da*o is constant. The constancy of the *da*o may be understood in two different senses. In a strong sense, it may mean that the entire

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[28] At this point, it should be interesting to note that Karl R. Popper's criticism of Plato's holism as a position that envisions the morality of a closed society is made mainly from an individualistic perspective that treats individualistic values, such as the freedom of citizens, as most fundamental. See his *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul LTD, 1952), p. 94 and Ch 6.

[29] The term, harmonism, is coined primarily in terms of the conception of harmony. Ethical Harmonism is a version of holistic consequentialism. Holistic consequentialism is characterized in terms of its theory of holistic goods. Ethical Harmonism is intended to refer to one possible sort of holistic consequetialism, in which harmony as a holistic concept is considered the most fundamental good to be realized.

[30] See the followings: ″百王之無變, 足以為道貫." *Xunzi jishi*, p. 379; ″道者, 古今之正權也.″ Ibid., p. 531; ″天有常道矣, 地有常數矣, 君子有常體矣. 君子道其常, 而小人計其功.″ Ibid., p.371. Note that the accurate translation for the phrase is "the constant *dao*."

[31] See Section 3 of Chapter 2.

content of what has been traditionally thought of as the *dao* can apply to any human society at any historical period. Thus understood, the constancy of the *dao* implies that there is an unchangeable set of social distinctions and social statuses that is acceptable in any human society at any historical period. This unchangeableness in turn implies that the hierarchical social ranks and the paternalistic social distinctions that were accepted by the ancient thinker Xunzi should be considered one of the necessary constituents of harmony.

However, the constancy of the *dao* can be understood in a weaker sense. To explain this weaker sense, I draw the distinction between the basic structure of Ethical Harmonism and the substantive contents of *lun* (倫) and *fen* (分), namely, certain substantial social distinctions and social statuses.[32] In drawing this distinction, I do not consider any substantive contents of *lun* and *fen* as essential constituent parts of the gist of Xunzi's ethical thought. In other words, the basic structure of Ethical Harmonism that can be developed on the basis of the essential parts of Xunzi's ethical thought may be compatible with social distinctions and social statuses other than those accepted by Xunzi.

Now, the claim can be made that early Confucian thought has usually been regarded as obsolete, outdated, and extremely conservative primarily because of the social distinctions and the social statuses that have been recognized as essential accompaniments of Confucian ethics, such as the pre-modern hierarchical social distinctions between ruler and subject, father and son, husband and wife, and male and female. The accusation of obsolescence stems from the substantive contents of *lun* and *fen*, which may be understood as happening to be associated with the basic structure of Ethical Harmonism in a particular historical period. That is to say, the

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[32] See Section 5 of Chapter 2.

adaptability pertaining to the basic structure can be explained by saying that the concept of harmony does not set any limits to the substantive contents of social distinctions and social statuses. To take an extreme example, it is imaginable in line with the basic structure of Ethical Harmonism that there is only one acceptable distinction, *e.g.* the distinction between humans and other living things; thereby, every human should enjoy the same social status, provided that this system is accepted as the right way to maintain harmony. To take a less extreme example, it is also imaginable that two different societies can be seen as successfully maintaining harmony. Each of the societies would be in an ideal state where all humans are unified into a whole in such a way that they cooperate by assigning different social ranks, roles, and duties to each of them and interact by adopting love and respect appropriately in accordance with various social distinctions. But the two societies would not have an identical set of social distinctions and social statuses.

The point of citing the above two examples is merely that the concept of harmony is formal enough to be incorporated with different sets of social distinctions and social statuses. The first extreme example is in fact unlikely to be a version of Ethical Harmonism for the following reason. Ethical Harmonism begins with the assumption that the essential nature of human interaction arises from a certain genuine human feature, which is that humans cannot help discriminating among different kinds of persons and treating one kind differently from another kind. Unless this feature is delicately handled, disorder cannot be prevented. Given this reality, Ethical Harmonism is aimed to recognize all conceivable kinds of persons. In case there is any missing category that may also reasonably divide humans into different groups in the establishment of a set of social distinctions and social statuses, that missing item would cause confusion and disorder in human interactions, since some humans would possibly adopt it in

their interactions with others without considering whether it is compatible with other existing categories or whether it can cooperatively contribute to the maintenance of harmony at the level of the entire human society. For this reason, it is required in any versions of Ethical Harmonism to attempt to take into consideration all conceivable differences that can reasonably be used to categorize humans and to establish a *complete* set of social distinctions and corresponding social statuses.

It may be objected that, in any case, Ethical Harmonism is likely to turn out to be a conservative ethical position that focuses on differences and thereby on inequality, rather than on equality. However, in contemporary society, we actually interact with other people by determining various social distances on the basis of various social distinctions. Moreover, we still find it legitimate to distribute different weights of social power or honor according to differing abilities that people show in the pursuit of common projects or according to their contributions to common projects. Furthermore, social theories that espouse equality and human rights are of very recent origin. A system of pre-modern thought should not be dismissed simply because it lacks certain contemporary conceptions. In fact, I do not yet have a complete answer for the charge that equality and human rights are lacking in Xunzi's Ethical Harmonism or a convincing way to show any possible compatibility between the kind of ethical theory that I am attempting to extract from East Asian traditional thought and contemporary conceptions that have been developed in the context of Western thought. Even so, I try to find in the *Xunzi* a clue about how to locate a starting point for dealing with the charge or how to discover some areas of compatibility between the two systems of thought. The clue can be derived from a spirit shared

by the early Confucians, which may well be encapsulated in the phrase "the protection of the common people (保民 *bao min*)."[33]

Xunzi is primarily concerned about the fair distribution of material resources to the governed or the ordinary people. For Xunzi, the pressing need is to stabilize the livelihood of the ordinary people; even their very basic living conditions were not guaranteed in the historical time called "the Warring State period." Xunzi describes the terrible unfairness of a situation in which distributive justice is not realized through the figurative expression "overflowing at the top and drying up at the bottom."[34] This spirit is shared with another major Confucian Mencius.[35] For Xunzi, the starting point of proper government is to ensure first of all that ordinary people are able to satisfy their basic needs and thereby enjoy the prospect of an adequate living standard. The underlying idea is that, in a hierarchical society such as early Chinese society, if ordinary people can satisfy their basic needs, that satisfaction is an indication that distributive justice has been achieved in the society, and, eventually, a strong indication of a successful maintenance of harmony.

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[33] Note that this phrase does not occur in the *Xunzi*. It appears in the *Mencius* 1A7.

[34] "故王者富民, 霸者富士, 僅存之國富大夫, 亡國富筐篋, 實府庫. 筐篋已富, 府庫已實, 而百姓貧: 夫是之謂上溢而下漏. (Accordingly, the True King enriches the people; the lord-protector enriches scholar-knights; a state that barely manages to survive enriches its grand officers; and a state that is doomed enriches only the ruler's coffers and fills up his storehouses. When the coffers are filled with riches and the storehouses stocked with goods, but the Hundred Clans are reduced to poverty, it is said to be a case of "overflowing at the top and drying up at the bottom."" *Xunzi jishi*, p. 168; Knoblock, *Xunzi*, vol. 2, p. 98.

See also *Xunzi jishi*, pp. 198-9.

[35] *Mencius* 1A7.

The spirit of the protection of the people can be restated in terms of the terminology of Xunzi's Ethical Harmonism. In such a restatement, *fen* (分) is the central term. Even if Xunzi never uses the term exactly in the sense that I am now proposing, we can conceive of a particular kind of *fen* that reflects Xunzi's idea that every member of human society should be equally considered as possessing a very basic social status as a member of human society. This social status is based on the distinction between humans and other animals. Any creature that has the capacity to distinguish various differences within the group of its own kind and to interact with other members of the group by employing that full-fledged capacity should be recognized as having a basic status as a member. This status might be called "the human membership *fen*." The spirit of the protection of the people can be explained by saying that every human deserves to have the same human membership *fen* and to be ensured that no one can interfere with his or her retaining basic living conditions.

Moreover, in relation to the establishment of a complete set of social distinctions and statuses, Ethical Harmonism can require that human membership *fen* should be placed at the center, and a systematic set of various social distinctions and social statuses can be developed by checking whether other distinctions and statuses are compatible with the human membership *fen*. In addition, we can even take a further step to state that human membership *fen* is a formal concept, and, therefore, its content can be reconsidered; the concept can be filled with content that differs from the substantive content conceived by the early Confucians.

The above discussion may give the impression that Ethical Harmonism is potentially compatible with the Western individualistic idea that each individual equally has a certain moral worth that does not need to be justified in relation to his or her contribution to any communal or common good; the moral worth is the basis of what each individual is entitled to claim from

others, such as a claim to be treated by others in a certain way. This individualistic idea does not put any common good at its center. However, a key characteristic of Ethical Harmonism is its underlying holistic idea that a common good is the final good that should be eventually pursued by all humans. In Ethical Harmonism, such a common and final good is an ideal state where all humans interact with one another by recognizing various social distinctions and social statuses, and by treating one another accordingly, and, thereby, they become unified into a whole. In Ethical Harmonism, any social status is to be justified according to whether it contributes to the creation and maintenance of such a common and final good, that is, harmony. The human membership *fen* is also justified in this way; this way of thinking differs from one that envisions any individualistic moral worth that each individual possesses independently of any role in the pursuit of a common good.

It may be objected that the status that one can claim from others on the basis of the membership *fen* may always latently be ignored when the status does not promote the common and communal good; in that case, the establishment of the membership *fen* in Ethical Harmonism does not really work in a way that protects each individual as much sufficiently as in the way that individualism protects each individual. Anticipating such an objection, I already sketched a possible answer in the above. Harmony is the kind of concept that does not set any limits on the substantive contents of social distinctions and social statuses. It is therefore possible to establish a systematic set of social distinctions and social statuses by placing a status such as the membership *fen* at the bottom.

Another objection can be made that the above reconstruction of early Confucian thought seems to go awry in the sense that it does not capture what is widely understood as the gist of early Confucianism, namely a family-centered view, in which family is regarded as the

foundation of society. This prevailing understanding is misleading. Love of kin is in fact importantly regarded by the early Confucians, but it is only one type of the manifestation of gradational love (*qin*). What most concerns the early Confucian is the question about whether gradational love can apply to all members of society, so that the spirit of the protection of the people can be realized. Mencius once mentions that the starting point for the ideal government is to make certain, *first and foremost*, that the ruler's gradational love affects "old men without wives, old women without husbands, old people without children, young children without fathers."[36] These four types of people are considered the most vulnerable people in society. A very similar idea can be found in Xunzi's thought: Any governmental regulations that are not in accord with *li* (理) should not at all be applied even to such four types of people.[37] The spirit of the protection of the people is clearly reflected in these remarks. Xunzi implicitly has in mind what I call the human membership *fen* as the foundation of society.

To sum up, my strategy is to show how the basic structure of an ethical position based on Xunzi's thought, that is, Ethical Harmonism, can be developed independently of the substantive contents of the social statuses that Xunzi actually had in mind in the context of his historical era. The concept of harmony is formal enough to be incorporated into sets of social statuses that are different from the set of social statuses accepted by Xunzi in early China. I propose conceiving a

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[36] "老而無妻曰鰥, 老而無夫曰寡, 老而無子曰獨, 幼而無父曰孤. 此四者, 天下之窮民而無告者. 文王發政施仁, 必先斯四者." *Mencius* 1B5.

[37] "上莫不致愛其下, 而制之以禮. 上之於下, 如保赤子, 政令制度, 所以接下之人百姓, 有不理者如豪末, 則雖孤獨鰥寡必不加焉. (No superior fails to love perfectly his subordinates who governs them according to ritual principles. The elation of the superior to his subordinates is analogous to that of "tending and caring for a small infant." Governmental ordinances, edicts, regulations, and standards that are not in accord with reason by so much as the tip of a hair should not be applied to the Hundred Clans, much less to the utterly helpless - orphans, childless old people, widows, and widowers.)" *Xunzi jishi*, p. 251; Knoblock, *Xunzi*, vol. 2, p. 162. See also *Xunzi jishi*, p. 256.

certain kind of social status that is *equally* shared by every member of human society and calling it "the human membership *fen* (social status)." This kind of social status is to be granted to any creature that has the capacity for discriminating among various social statuses and is thereby able to develop the two basic human attitudes, love and respect. A person who holds this social status should be guaranteed the maintenance of basic living conditions. In other words, all members of human society should respect one another in relation to this social status in a way that ensures that no one will be prevented from maintaining basic living conditions. In addition, Ethical Harmonism can further require that the human membership *fen* should be considered basic and primary, and a systematic set of other social statuses should be established by checking whether other social statuses are compatible with the human membership *fen*. This further development is possible because harmony is considered formal enough to be incorporated into different set of social statuses.

In Section 2 and Section 3 of this chapter, I have provided a more complete explanation of harmony; moreover, in Chapter 5, I have deliberated about the nature of the principles and the requirements that govern love and respect. Equipped with this explanation and deliberation, Ethical Harmonism can be established with a more fully developed shape. For instance, the resources that are due to an individual person simply because the person holds a human membership *fen* can be guaranteed more securely on the basis of one of the requirements discussed in Chapter 5, namely, what I called the "non-dominance requirement" based on *yi* (義): Any social status should not be a dominant one without regard for the main concern underlying the adoption of the status. Suppose now that a society adopts both the human membership *fen* and the social distinction based on a hierarchical social class system, that is, social statuses such as the honored and the humble. According to the latter distinction, a person who is born into a

higher social class deserves to have greater wealth, but this social status should not be dominant in a way that prevents members of the society from respecting one another according to the human membership *fen*. In other words, social statuses based on the social class system should not monopolize the distribution of material resources in a way that prevents any members of the society, especially the people of the lowest class, from maintaining their basic living conditions. This concern for everyone's maintenance of basic living conditions is the concern underlying "the protection of the common people," explained in the above.

In addition, Ethical Harmonism can require one to develop the two types of attitudes based on *yi*, that is, respect and self-respect, in relation to the establishment of the human membership *fen*. One should respect other people in relation to their human membership *fen* in ways that control one's own desire so as not to interfere with their attainment of basic living conditions. One should also offer self-respect to oneself on the basis of one's own human membership *fen* by making a demand to other people for one's own due, namely, the attainment of basic living conditions, in situations when others are infringing on one's due.[38]

It is now clear how Ethical Harmonism may accommodate some of the modern ethical sentiments associated with the notion of fundamental human rights. It may do so precisely because it can make room for some crucial phenomena typically associated with the notions of human rights, such as granting equal status to every member of society, protecting the status and the resources that should be distributed on the basis of that status from domination by other social statuses, and empowering anyone holding the status to make a demand to others for his or her due in the face of any infringement on the status or on the resources that will be distributed

[38] I discussed respect and self-respect in Chapter 4.

on that basis.[39] Ethical Harmonism can include these phenomena, which are typically associated with the notion of fundamental human rights, while its basic structure remains intact. This is the reason why it can accommodate some of the modern ethical sentiments associated with contemporary notions about rights.

However, the point may be made that what are supposed to be protected on the basis of contemporary notions of rights are each individual's interests and his or her own ends that are freely set up by himself or herself. In contrast, the protection of anything on the basis of any social status within the framework of Ethical Harmonism can be justified only if it contributes directly or eventually to the cooperative pursuit of harmony. More precisely stated, in Ethical Harmonism, the fundamental reason each individual interacts with other people according to their various social statuses, including the human membership *fen*, is not that individuals' interests or their own ends can best be protected through such interaction, but instead that the interaction is considered the way to create and maintain a holistic state in which everyone becomes harmonized. In other words, the very holistic state in which everyone becomes harmonized by interacting according to various social statuses is considered the final good that all people should eventually pursue. This conception of the final good surely gives the impression that the individual is subordinate in important ways to a certain communal good, and this impression might create an intuitive antipathy toward Ethical Harmonism. The subordination of the individual person to the entire human community may be recognized as a serious obstacle to the development of Ethical Harmonism in a way that would enable it to accommodate more

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[39] I learned this way of taking a comparative approach to early Chinese thought from the following article: Kwong-loi Shun, "Conception of the Person in Early Confucian Thought," in eds. Kwong-loi Shun and David Wong, *Confucian Ethics: A Comparative Study of Self, Autonomy, and Community* (West Nyack, NY, USA: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

components of modern ethical sentiments, especially the components associated with the individual's freedom to pursue his or her interests or goals that are set by himself or herself.

Discernment of two types of the subordination of individual persons to a unit, from a small unit such as a family to the entire human community, may help to resolve the issue just mentioned more effectively. The first type of subordination is the centralization and control of social statuses by authoritarian rulers. The second type of subordination is the subjection of the process of establishing the individual's self-identity to what is institutionally or socially assigned to each individual; consequently, almost all aspects of the individual's life are coercively controlled by authoritarian rulers.

Xunzi once says, "the myriad things over the universe and all living humans can be assigned to proper positions only after the emergence of the sage."[40] This statement implies that the establishment of a set of social statuses is limited to the authority of the sage king. Xunzi understands that this authoritarian limitation is justified by the sage's ethical excellence, which depends mainly on the sage's ability to use his mind in ways that avoid the problem of obsession.[41] However, it is true that he does not completely deny everyone's potentiality to be a sage. Nevertheless, Xunzi simply accepted the existing social class system, in which each individual's social position is largely determined institutionally. He did not envision a free and open society as an ideal society, and he even thought that hierarchical social ranks accord with "the norms of Heaven" (天數).[42] For this reason, despite people's potential to become sages,

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[40] "宇中萬物生人之屬, 待聖人然後分也." *Xunzi jishi*, p. 440.

[41] As to a detailed discussion about the problem of obsession, see Ch 5.

[42] Ibid., p. 165.

almost all people were simply blocked from reaching the level of an authoritarian ruler who could control the establishment of social statuses.

This authoritarian subordination of the individual should turn out to be a more serious limitation to the individual, if we reflect about what the process of the establishment of a set of social statuses involves. The process involves deliberation about the justification for the main concerns underlying the adoptions of social distinctions. For instance, one of the important social distinctions for early Chinese thinkers, including Xunzi, is that between the honored and the humble. This distinction was based on the received social hierarchical class system in early China, and each individual was identifiable simply by being born into a certain social class. The main concern underlying the adoption of this social distinction was an effective distribution of social wealth, and this concern was justified simply by the shared myth that the existing social class system offered an effective way to distribute wealth. The problem is that this process of justifying deliberation was not at all open to most of the members of early Chinese society. In other words, the reasons why wealth was supposed to be distributed according to the existing hierarchical system of social class could not openly be questioned. The lack of such openness is the problem that makes the authoritarian subordination of the individual a much more serious limitation to the individual than it might initially appear to be.

The introduction of a new criterion for determining the value of harmony, namely, the degree of openness, may develop Ethical Harmonism in a way that avoids the problem of authoritarian subordination. This criterion can be combined with the criteria discussed in Section 3, that is, the degree of diversity and the degree of orderliness. The degree of openness can be measured by determining the extent of the individual's ability to participate in the process of justifying deliberation about the main concerns underlying the adoption of each social status. If

the individual may participate in the process more fully, the degree of openness will be measured as higher, and, accordingly, the society may be deemed a society that achieves harmony to greater degree.

The second type of subordination of the individual mentioned above, namely, regarding the identity of the individual, can be considered another obstacle to an increased degree of openness. In Ethical Harmonism, the individual person's self-identity is determined on the basis of the composition of social statuses that are ascribed to the person. But, in Xunzi's original thought, the constitution of the individual person's self-identity could almost never be established on the basis of his or her own decision or intention, because the individual person, for Xunzi, is institutionally assigned to particular social statuses; moreover, the assignment is fundamentally under the centralized control of authoritarian rulers. People in the 21st century may instead envision a society in which most of the social statuses adopted are considered ascribable to each individual on the basis of his or her own decision or intention about how to lead his or her own life. In such a society, each individual may enjoy the freedom to compose his or her own self-identity largely by choosing various social statuses on his or her own. At this point, it should be noted that Xunzi thinks of various occupations and political positions as sorts of social statuses. These sorts of social statuses seem to have been relatively freely available to individual persons in early China. Thus, the idea that the composition of one's own self-identity may depend on one's own choices to some degree was not totally alien to Xunzi. Ethical Harmonism can be further developed by incorporating this factor into the measurement of its degree of openness. If more social statuses are open to each individual, who may then exercise freedom of choice in composing his or her own self-identity, the system's degree of openness

can be measured as higher, and, accordingly, the society can be deemed as realizing harmony to greater degree.

I have discussed how Ethical Harmonism can be developed in ways that raise the system's level of openness and lower its level of subordination of the individual person to the entire human community. Thus developed, Ethical Harmonism can accommodate a larger portion of modern ethical sentiments associated with the idea of the freedom to develop the shape of one's own life and self-identity, even if the system retains a holistic interpretation of self-identity as the total set of one's social statuses.

6. The Basic Structure of Ethical Harmonism

The basic structure of Ethical Harmonism is constituted by (1) the theory of the value of harmony and (2) the principles and requirements governing love and respect, as discussed in Chapter 5. These two constituents form the gist of Xunzi's ethical thought. In order to develop Ethical Harmonism as an ethical position that is more appealing to people living in 21st century, as experimentally demonstrated to this point, I have adopted a three-part strategy: First, I attempted to show possible variations within the scope of Xunzi's holistic position by drawing a new contrast between globalism and localism. I argued that a moderate version of globalism should be considered the version that interprets Xunzi's holistic way of thought concerning the relation between the entire human community and the individual human in a way that most consistently enables his position to accommodate a way of thinking that does not treat the individual human as simply subservient to the entire human community. Second, I attempted to interpret the concept of harmony as one that is formal enough to be incorporated with sets of

social statuses other than the set accepted by Xunzi in his era and also to establish a set of social statuses that may to a large extent be compatible with more considerable part of individualist ethical sentiments, especially, those associated with notions about rights. Third, I proposed the adoption of a new factor in the measurement of the value of harmony, that is, the degree of openness. This factor, together with the degree of diversity and the degree of orderliness, can be developed in a way that enables Xunzi's ethical thought to accommodate a larger portion of the modern ethical sentiments associated with the individual's freedom to set personal goals without the loss of the system's holistic nature.

Chapter 7 Conclusion

In the Introduction, I emphasized that, in my interpretation, the core of Xunzi's ethical thought concerns the ideal state for humans that should be created and maintained through cooperation among all humans, that is, harmony; thus interpreted, Xunzi's ethical thought is understood as consequentialist in character. An important implication is that the central concepts in early Confucian thought, *ren* and *yi*, are to be understood basically in connection with considerations about how *ren* and *yi* contribute to harmony; accordingly, love and respect should also be understood fundamentally in relation to considerations of the same sort because those are the two modes of responsiveness that are adopted in human interactions so that humans may act or live in accordance with *ren* and *yi*. Having made this emphasis on the centrality of harmony again, I will end by summarizing my discussions throughout the above chapters from a different angle, namely, by highlighting love and respect in Xunzi's thought.

Xunzi understands the basic human characteristic as an advanced capacity to discriminate among various social distinctions and social statuses. He also thinks that humans should develop the capacity properly in order to bring about a state that will be ideal for them. In my study, harmony is used to refer in a convenient way to the ideal state for humans in Xunzi's ethical thought. Harmony is understood most basically as a term that applies to the nature of a unity formed by diverse parts in certain orderly ways. In relation to Xunzi's characterization of humans, the term "harmony" refers to the nature of the ideal holistic state in which all humans cooperatively form a unified community by holding a variety of social positions according to various social distinctions and corresponding roles so that they interact with one another in

orderly ways. Stated in another way, the meaning of harmony is a kind of ideal state in which all humans interact according to a complete set of social distinctions and statuses that are thoroughly measured against one another; consequently, all humans are treated appropriately to their social statuses and guaranteed attainment of their due in terms of whatever resources are distributed at the level of the community, such as social recognition, wealth, merit-based positions, material goods, and so on.

Love and respect are the two moral attitudes that are developed on the basis of the characteristically human capacity to discriminate among various kinds of social distinctions and social statuses. Xunzi's idea is that humans can create and maintain harmony by adopting love or respect appropriately in their interactions. Love and respect are considered as contributing to the creation and maintenance of harmony in their own distinctive ways. Humans can share the most basic companionship by seeing themselves as belonging to a unity (through the function of love); on that basis, they treat one another in ways that guarantee that each of them can occupy his or her proper position and receive his or her due (through the function of respect).

For Xunzi, the most basic foundation of a unity among all humans can be laid through everyone's gradational love for all other fellow humans. His idea is that even if each individual offers more love to people who are closer and shows only minimal concern for total strangers, everyone's love for others in this way creates a thickly woven network of mutual love and concern among all humans; within such a network of mutual love, a guarantee can be offered that each individual will receive at least minimal concern from all other fellow humans. An essential characteristic of Confucian gradational love is that a gradational scale involved in the application of love is determined relative to each person, since the strength of one's love is decided according to the degree of other people's nearness to or distance from oneself. In

Xunzi's thought, love can be considered to be directed to a particular kind of social status, namely, what may be called "the agent-relative social status," such as "the closer" (*qin* as a noun) or "the more distant" (*shu*). In other words, love is an attitude toward a special kind of social status, broadly construed.

According to Xunzi, on the basis of the foundation laid through all humans' mutual love, humans need to treat one another appropriately through exchanges of respect in accordance with a variety of social distinctions and statuses. Respect is the attitude that leads one to control one's own desires in deference to the desires of other people, according to one's recognition of their social statuses. Respect typically leads one to engage in two types of deferential behavior. One is the action of offering something good or higher social recognition to someone who deserves it more. The other is the action of declining any offer or treatment that is inappropriate to one's own social statuses. In addition, self-respect works in cooperation with respect for others in ways that enable humans to occupy their own appropriate places within the community. Self-respect in Confucian ethics is the attitude that leads one to make a demand to others for one's own due in terms of various social shares, such as social recognition, wealth, governmental positions, tributes, and other material resources, in the face of any infringement on one's own due. Self-respect can be distinguished from respect for others in the sense that self-respect is generated particularly in relation to the idea of appropriateness in terms of one's own social statuses, whereas respect is related to a more general idea of appropriateness in interactions with others in terms of various social distinctions and social statuses.

Since love and respect contribute to the creation and maintenance of harmony in different ways, the two attitudes may possibly provide conflicting kinds of guidance to a person in a given situation. In relation to this possible conflict, a misunderstanding of Confucian ethics seems to be

widespread. The misunderstanding may be formulated in the following manner: In Confucian ethics, one is required to give priority to one's immediate family members and love them most; one may be justified in not respecting others properly in a dilemma that prevents one from loving one's family and respecting others simultaneously. This interpretation is false for two reasons: First, in Confucian ethics, one is not justified in giving more love to one's closer persons in ways that distract one from loving others. In fact, gradational love is aimed most basically at the formation of a unity among all humans. Second, in Xunzi's thought, considerations based on one's love are to be regulated by considerations based on one's respect for others.

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Glossary

ai 愛
bao min 保民
bian 辨
bie 別
*bu ren**** 不忍
bu xiao 不肖
ce yin 惻隱
cha 差
chi 恥
ci 辭
dao 道
deng 等
fen 分
gui 貴
hao 好
hai 害
he 和
Jian 兼
*Jian** 賤
jie 節
li 理
*li** 禮
luan 亂
lü 慮
neng 能
qin 親
qing 情
quan 權
rang 讓
ren 仁
*ren** 人
rong 榮
qi 氣
qiong 窮
shai 殺
shan 善
shi 實
shu 疏
si 思
ti 體
tian 天
tong 同
xian 賢
xin 心
*xin** 信
xing 性
*xing** 形
xiu 羞.
wu 惡
yi 義
*yi** 宜
*yi*** 一
*yi**** 儀
yu 欲
zhi 治
*zhi** 知
*zhi ** 智
zun 尊
zeng 憎