tive of the new Daoist movement whose primary concern lay in the areas of self-cultivation, meditation, and monastic life. Nevertheless, Eskildsen argues that "the early Quanzhen masters did engage in ritual activities and believed strongly in their efficacy (if properly performed)" (p. 192). Despite his thesis, one cannot find sufficient evidence in this chapter convincingly showing ritual activities performed by the early Quanzhen masters. Aside from evidence that appeared in the early Quanzhen masters' poems, the author provides no further historical material that can help readers know what kinds of ritual these masters actually performed. More importantly, in contrast to the well-developed liturgical tradition of the Zhengyi sect, the author might have examined what is the distinctive feature of the Quanzhen ritual tradition.

The concluding chapter summaries the important points of the entire book. It reiterates that the objective of the work is to explore the "doctrines and practices of the early Quanzhen masters in details" (p. 195).

Eskildsen's attention to the specifics of the early Quanzhen masters marks this book as worthy of being carefully read as an important reference in a Western language in regard to the asceticism and mysticism of Daoist religion in pre-modern China. Early Quanzhen Daoism is certainly one of the most prominent representatives of inner alchemy practice and theory in the history of Chinese religions. This book will stimulate more research in the field of Quanzhen Daoism and inner alchemy, as well as more translations of Quanzhen masters' writings in Western language publications on Daoism.

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A Chinese Ethics for the New Century: The Ch'ien Mu Lectures in History and Culture, and Other Essays on Science and Confucian Ethics. By Donald J. Munro. Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2005. Pp. xlv + 158. $33.00.

Donald J. Munro finds in the *Analects,* the *Mencius,* the *Xunzi,* and in the Neo-Confucians such as Zhu Xi a core set of Confucian themes: that hierarchy in human society is desirable and natural; the importance of the *li,* ritualized rules laying out the forms of interaction between occupants of social roles; that the sages of antiquity articulated and justified the obligation implicit in these rules; and the primacy and universality of family sentiments according priority to the welfare of one's own. Munro is here concerned to defend the continuing relevance of Confucianism and in particular the Mencian variety that explicitly grounds these themes in a theory of human nature and its relation to morality.

Mencius' doctrine of the four minds or beginnings of goodness represents a conception of the natural equality of human beings, which Munro compares with the "evaluative equality" he finds to be prevalent in the modern West. The two conceptions differ, but Munro points out that the difference is complex and more one of emphasis. Natural equality concerns similarities that exist as a matter of fact among human beings, while evaluative equality concerns their equal worth and requires equal treatment of certain kinds. However, Chinese descriptive equality of the

Mencian variety implies the egalitarian belief that anyone can be a sage, and in the context of a Confucian ethic requires not only the provision of food and education for all but also that social hierarchy be in accordance with differences in merit.

Munro finds support for Chinese natural equality in the new evolutionary biology and psychology. In particular, he sees these sciences as converging with Confucianism on the primacy of family ties, the existence of a universal moral sense based on sympathy, and the predisposition to cooperate based on reciprocal altruism (a version of scratching your back provided you scratch mine). Munro has done us all a service in pointing out the enduring importance of Chinese philosophical reflections about human nature as a basis for ethics, and his connecting these reflections to some of the latest work in evolutionary biology and psychology is an excellent way of highlighting their continuing relevance. However, before we conclude that this scientific work supports Confucianism or any other approach in moral philosophy, some cautions are in order. Much of this work consists of hypotheses that are in varying degrees supported by the available evidence, and sometimes the evidence is pretty scarce.

The most solid hypothesis is that of kin selection, according to which evolution favors maximization of reproductive fitness, not of individuals, but of their genes and their copies in kin. From the perspective of maximizing such "inclusive fitness," individuals who sacrifice themselves to save a sufficient number of relatives will be doing better than individuals who are only interested in saving themselves. The existence of a universal moral sense, however, is highly speculative and controversial. For one thing, it is unclear to what extent explicitly moral *concepts* have an innate basis. Mencius' four beginnings of goodness include, as Munro observes, compassion, shame, respect, and right versus wrong. The last three beginnings, at the very least, seem to involve normative notions, e.g., that one has done something unworthy, that others are owed certain kinds of treatment, and that certain things are required or prohibited. There is no scientific consensus on whether and how such notions could have acquired an innate basis and what that basis looks like.

Even the innate basis of something like sympathy, in the sense of feeling the pain of others, continues to be vigorously debated. C. Daniel Batson has obtained interesting experimental results based on a sophisticated conceptual analysis of ways in which psychological egoism seeks to explain away apparently altruistic acts motivated by an empathetic focusing on the plight of a person in need. For example, psychological egoists often explain away apparently altruistic acts by referring to egoistic need to eliminate the unpleasant feelings caused by empathy, or to avoid the unpleasant feelings of shame and guilt should one fail to help, or to avoid social punishments administered by others, or to reap pleasant feelings of self-esteem enhancement or social rewards of praise and prestige. Batson designed experiments in which his subjects were offered opportunities to satisfy the postulated egoistic needs without having to help the person they perceive to be in distress. The results suggest the reality of altruistic motivations.[1] Elliot Sober and David Sloan

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[1] C. Daniel Batson, *The Altruism Question: Toward a Social-Psychological Answer* (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1991). Also see the exchange between Sober and Wilson and Batson in *Evolutionary Origins of Morality: Cross Disciplinary Perspectives*, ed. Leonard D. Katz (Bowling Green, OH: Imprint Academic, 2000), pp. 207–10, 266–67.

Wilson, on the other hand, criticize Batson's experiments as inconclusive refutations of psychological egoism. They rather defend another way of supporting the reality of altruism: by arguing for the hypothesis of group selection as an explanation of social cooperation between nonkin. This hypothesis, they argue, is best construed as implying the existence of genuine altruism. The idea of group selection is that natural selection can operate not only on genes and individual organisms, but also on hives, herds, and other aggregations of organisms, including groups and tribes of human beings. The rough idea is that groups with altruistic members will do better in competition with groups lacking such members. A problem for this idea is that even in the group of altruists, there will almost certainly be a dissenting minority who refuse to make any sacrifice. If there is just one purely self-interested individual, prepared to exploit the altruism of the rest, then that individual seems more likely than they are to survive and have children. Each of these children will tend to inherit that person's selfish traits. After several generations of this natural selection, the "altruistic group" will be over-run by selfish individuals, and will be indistinguishable from the selfish group. In response to this problem, Sober and Wilson argue that altruism can evolve as long as an individual's cost is *offset* by benefits to its group, but their argument has been criticized as requiring too many special conditions for this offsetting effect to occur.[2] So far, controversies of this nature surround attempts to explain how altruism towards nonkin could have been selected during the evolution of the human species.

"Reciprocal altruism" is another hypothesis purporting to identify an innate basis for social cooperation. The initial problem in deploying the idea of cooperation as mutually beneficial had to do with uncertainty in whether one could trust a potential partner. If one does one's part and invests some of one's resources in a cooperative project, how can one know whether the other will reciprocate rather than running off with the benefits? The so-called Prisoner's Dilemma game yielded the apparently undesirable result that it is rational for each potential cooperative partner to do it to the other person (i.e., to free-ride on the other person's cooperation) before it is done to him or her. Axelrod and Hamilton proposed a solution to this problem: recognize that cooperation takes place over extended periods of time in which one repeatedly chooses to cooperate or not with a limited number of potential partners. They found that what works best is a strategy called "tit for tat," in which one cooperates on the first opportunity with any given partner, and then does whatever that partner does on subsequent occasions.[3] Refusing to cooperate with a free-rider exacts a kind of penalty upon the one who free-rides. Such a result prompted the sociobiologist Robert Trivers to propose that human beings evolved with genetic dispositions to engage in reciprocal exchange arrangements with others. The feature of the iterated game by which the least successful strategies are eliminated after a few rounds corresponds to those who lacked the genetic dispositions to reciprocate and who were thereby less reproductively fit. The

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2 Elliott Sober and David Sloan Wilson, *Unto Others: The Evolution and Psychology of Unselfish Behavior* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998).

3 Robert Axelrod and William D. Hamilton, "The Evolution of Cooperation," *Science* 211 (1981), pp. 1390–96.

eventual superiority of the "tit for tat" strategy supposedly corresponds to the spread of individuals with reciprocating genes throughout a population.[4]

Calling "altruistic" the disposition to engage in reciprocal, mutually beneficial arrangements can be misleading, since the ordinary meaning of the term suggests that the altruist pays a personal cost in helping others. "Reciprocal altruism" as Trivers defines it is supposed to be beneficial in the long run for those who engage in it.[5] Munro sometimes appears to present reciprocal altruism as an alternative to self-interested behaviour (p. 77). He also seems to slide from reciprocal altruism as defined by evolutionary biology to equating it with Confucian *shu*—using one's feelings and desires as a guide to how one treats others (p. 51). At another point, he goes as far as translating *ren* as reciprocal altruism (p. 92). Further research, moreover, has undermined the idea that a relatively specific form of reciprocal cooperation such as tit for tat is built into the human genetic programme. For one thing, other strategies do better than tit for tat when the conditions of playing cooperative games are varied so as to make them closer to real-life situations.[6] These results in game theory fit with anthropological observations: while a norm of reciprocity in a very broad sense can be found in virtually all human cultures, the specific form it takes varies a great deal across cultures.

It is quite possible that a better explanation of the evolution of morality will have to introduce the crucial role of culture, rather than simply innate traits in which moral norms are embedded. It is by now largely accepted that the human capacity to cooperate on the basis of culturally evolved norms developed in the same period that our biological constitution emerged. Such co-evolution may have resulted in such innate predispositions as following the majority or emulating the most successful individuals within a group.[7] In this respect, there might be interesting overlap between this kind of theoretical explanation of morality and the Xunzian, rather than Mencian, variety of Confucianism. Though Xunzi and Mencius are usually contrasted by attributing to the former the view that human nature is bad and to the latter the view that human nature is good, their most substantial disagreement may lie in the former's assertion that morality is invented rather than discovered (as the latter would have it) through a moral sense that is endowed in human nature by *tian* or Heaven. Indeed, drawing from both Xunzi and Mencius might fit more fully with Munro's

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4 See Robert Trivers, "The Evolution of Reciprocal Altruism," *Quarterly Review of Biology* 46 (1971), p. 35–56.

5 However, there is an issue as to whether reciprocal altruism can really work as Trivers conceives it. See n. 8 below.

6 See, for example, M. A. Nowak and K. Sigmund, "Tit for Tat in Heterogeneous Populations," *Nature* 355 (1992), pp. 250–52; and R. Sugden, *The Economics of Rights, Co-operation and Welfare* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986).

7 See Robert Boyd and Peter J. Richerson, *Culture and the Evolutionary Process* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1985); and *Not by Genes Alone: How Culture Transformed Human Evolution* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005).

recommendation that contemporary Confucians are more persuasive when appealing to a scientific conception of human nature rather than to the idea that our moral sense taps into some universal and natural normative order as given by *tian*. It may be that human beings acquired innate predispositions to sacrifice for their own kin, for sympathizing even with nonkin, and to cooperate and to continue doing so if reciprocated (here Mencius may have had a good part of the truth), but it is a plausible hypothesis that the human tendency to develop and abide by cultural norms supported and was mutually supported by any such innate predispositions (the tendency to abide by cultural norms might have aided the evolution of the other pro-social traits), and that the content of specific moral norms is not innately programmed but came about through cultural evolution (here Xunzi may have had another good part of the truth). Thus the tendency of purely self-interested individuals to "free-ride" on the benefits provided by altruists in their group could be curbed by cultural norms that motivate members of the group to punish free-riders. Indeed, one of the more significant forms of altruism might be of the negative sort: being willing to punish others for their violation of social norms even when it is personally costly to do so.[8] Impermissible forms of free-riding in fact get defined by these cultural norms, resulting in culturally specific forms of the norm of reciprocity. Anyone going from traditional Chinese society to the U.S., for example, or vice versa, can be struck by the difference in what counts as required reciprocity for benefits received from another.

The upshot is that Confucianism has even more resources than the ones from which Munro most heavily draws in defending its continuing relevance to moral philosophy. Perhaps another conclusion to draw from these reflections is that many of the parts of evolutionary biology and psychology that Munro wishes to marshal in support of Confucianism are still too speculative and controversial to yield definite support. For example, it is not that the group selection hypothesis, as defended by Sober and Wilson, is so solidly supported that it independently bolsters our confidence in Mencius' claim for the innateness of compassion. Rather, the situation is one in which informal reflection on common human experience (of the sort that Mencius engaged in when he noted the spontaneous response of adults to the prospect of a child's about to fall into a well) can to some degree support and be supported by scientific hypotheses that are being put forward on the frontiers of evolutionary biology and psychology.

Another important issue Munro raises is whether any significant normative conclusions follow from the purported existence of a psychological tendency to sacrifice for kin and moreover to be more concerned for their welfare than that of nonkin. Munro does draw normative conclusions from the existence of such a tendency, but I do not find him very

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8 Herbert Gintis, *Game Theory Evolving* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000). Robert Trivers, in "The Evolution of Reciprocal Altruism," identified a crucial role for "moralistic aggression" (negative reactions to perceived violations of reciprocity) in helping to reduce the incidence of free-riding. However, it is Gintis who correctly points out that in many instances there is an altruistic element to the willingness to retaliate against free-riders.

clear on how he does this. On the one hand, he is careful to distance himself from any kind of biological determinism. It is not that we are fated (*ming*) to favour our own over others. On the other hand, he criticizes classical utilitarians for failing to recognize that "[p]referential treatment for kin is justified on the basis of our natural emotional bonds to them" (p. 9). There is not much on how Munro thinks the justification proceeds. At one point, he declares that an ethic inconsistent with human nature will not work in the long run (p. 78). At other points, he expresses agreement with the Confucians that concern for nonkin is nurtured by first starting with concern for kin and somehow expanding this outward.

One possibility for fleshing out Munro's argument is that while we may choose to override the tendency to favour our own, an ethic that consistently requires us to do so will fail to motivate its adherents or lose them altogether. But it is not clear to me how this argument avoids biological determinism (we may choose to override our preference to kin, but in the long run, such choices will run up against our own nature?). Another possible (and more promising) argument is that concern for nonkin must come about or most effectively comes about as a psychological development and extension of concern for kin. Munro sometimes writes as if evolutionary biology supports this (p. 50), but I know of no widely accepted evolutionary argument for this conclusion. Nevertheless, it is possible to give some intuitively plausible arguments to the effect that concern for nonkin is built upon psychological capacities that first develop within the context of affectionate family relations. For one thing, learning about others' needs and feelings, and learning to act considerately in light of this learning, might typically begin in the family. For another, the nurturing and teaching that people get in a good family might be a necessary condition (at least for most people) for their developing the skills and confidence they need as agents to promote the welfare of nonkin.[9] It might be that getting these necessary conditions for effectively acting on behalf of nonkin will require that one form bonds of love and loyalty to family members that lead to giving their welfare priority over that of others; at the same time, it is consistent with giving such priority that one go on to promote the welfare of those outside the family.

Having noted this way of filling in Munro's plea on behalf of family priority, I should nevertheless note that plenty of room for disagreement still remains on how *much* priority to give to the family, and when rightful priority becomes unjustifiable nepotism. Utilitarians who concede the instrumental importance of family bonds for the cultivation of impersonal concern for others might take significantly different positions on particular moral problems

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9 I develop these arguments in "On Flourishing and Finding One's Identity in Community," in *Midwest Studies in Philosophy,* v. 13, *Ethical Theory: Character and Virtue,* ed. Peter A. French, Theodore E. Uehling, Jr., and Howard K. Wettstein (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), pp. 324–41; "Universalism versus Love with Distinctions: An Ancient Debate Revived," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 16 (1989), pp. 252–72; and *Natural Moralities: A Defense of Pluralistic Relativism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), chap. 4.

than Confucians who clearly attach an independent and fundamental value to family relations as such and to the idea of acting on behalf of those to whom one bears a special relationship. In Lecture 2, Munro asserts that the Neo-Confucian Zhu Xi harmonized the competing claims of family and other living beings by assigning these different values to different stages of the individual's growth (p. 25), yet Munro also asserts that for Zhu Xi the individual always continues to function within the context of his or her social roles. How Zhu Xi's theory really resolves the question of whether to protect a family member who has committed a crime (as addressed in the *Analects* 13.18 and *Mencius* 7A35) is not explained, and it is not clear to me whether Munro thinks that Zhu's theory succeeds in resolving these problems. Elsewhere in the volume, Munro points out one of the weaknesses in Mencian theory as failure to deal with the way that in/out group distinctions limit the application of altruistic concern (p. 69). At times, Munro writes as if the solution is to assign family affection the private realm and impartial concern to the public realm, yet as he also observes: "There is no alternative to a life of constantly balancing these often conflicting claims" (p. 17). In his introduction to the volume, Liu Xiaogan asserts that Munro has used the findings of experimental science to "resolve an internal contradiction in Confucian thought" (p. xl), but I do not see how Munro has done this, and I doubt that the contradiction is confined to Confucianism. I suspect that the contradiction arises from plural and irreducible values that place conflicting demands on the individual at times. There are better and worse ways for the individual to deal with such demands, but the possibility for tragic, irreconcilable conflict always remains.

Munro finds further convergence between Confucianism and evolutionary psychology on the idea that emotions are deeply and necessarily involved in human reasoning. The Confucian notion of shame, for example, involves both cognition—e.g., of rules of conduct and the fact that someone has violated them—and feeling. And it is certainly true that scientists such as Antonio Damasio have introduced some intriguing (and to my mind compelling) arguments that reason is rudderless and ineffective without our emotional reactions to features and events in the world, which serve as navigational markers for practical deliberation.[10] To be fair to the Western tradition, however, Damasio's themes about the intertwining of reason and feeling find their precedents in thinkers such as Hume and Spinoza, as well as Confucian thinkers such as Mencius. Western moral philosophy is not always behind Chinese moral philosophy (though it must be noted that the Western thinkers came much later than Mencius!).

Munro finds in the new evolutionary biology and psychology an affirmation of the Confucian belief in a human nature, a belief that has received much criticism as essentialist from some quarters and as legitimating objectionable features of the status quo as inevitable expressions of a supposed human nature. Here again, though, the lessons of the new science might be more complex. Polymorphism is not at all an uncommon phenomenon applying to inherited traits among members of a species. Group selection scenarios in which altruism becomes an inherited trait allow for the continued existence of some purely self-interested

[10] References to Damasio.

individuals, for example. Such scenarios do not require the "winning" groups to have nothing but altruists, but only a relatively high concentration of altruists compared to their competitors. Furthermore, members of a species can change their own environments to such an extent that they can influence their own evolution. This might be particularly true of the human species, capable of transforming their environments in radical ways, both physically and in terms of cultural, social, and political arrangements. Talk of a common human nature might be better construed as talk of widely possessed though not necessarily universal inherited traits, and perhaps impermanent, but present in human beings for the foreseeable future.

For a slim volume, the book does not shortchange the reader in terms of important issues raised. Munro discusses the viability of the Confucian conception of moral teaching as emulation of models, including the emulation of historical figures from China's remembered golden ages. About the strengths and weaknesses of this conception, Munro is concise and to my mind accurate: it is strong as a conception of character development but weaker in preparing people to adjust to the unique features of the current situation. This may be a feature of emulation as it was applied in the Chinese tradition (Munro thinks that there was "often no attempt to select a model that matches in specific details the person or situation with the current problem" [p. 36]), or it may be, as I rather suspect, that the present is never quite like the past in important respects, and that learning from history is not only learning what we should have done back then, but trying to apply that lesson to the present when there is no assurance that the present will repeat the past in the relevant ways (a point made in chapter 18 of the *Zhuangzi*). The interesting example Munro gives is the Chinese Communist's party's emulation until 1979 of the Soviet model in deciding not to implement controls on population growth. Such examples abound in the history of any country. Those who fail can be accused of failing to learn from history, and there will be examples to back that up. Those who succeed will be praised as having heeded the lessons of history, and there will be examples to back that up. As alternatives to but not replacements for model emulation, Munro advocates scientific inquiry and the protection of the autonomy of those concerned to find solutions to social problems. Such measures will not foreclose the possibility of mistaken judgment, but Munro is surely right in that they will decrease the chances for such judgment. He also is surely right that the Confucian tradition as instituted did not adequately encourage and protect individual autonomy in this sense, especially those outside the circles of power.

This book is a welcome addition to Munro's distinguished body of work. It displays a thinker who successfully continues to mine the Chinese tradition for provocative insights and to bring it into fruitful dialogue with some of the best contemporary thought.

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