http://www.jstor.org

Christian Jochim   **Naturalistic ethics in a Chinese context: Chang Tsai's Contribution**

Aiming to breathe new life into naturalistic ethics, this essay considers what is, for the West, a new way of grasping the moral significance of "following nature." In doing so, it explores certain unique features in the development of Chinese naturalistic ethics and avoids interpreting this as corresponding to an early stage in the evolution of Western philosophy. The two most important features of Chinese naturalistic ethics that it explores are: (1) the idea that the naturalness of some form of human behavior is a valid criterion of its moral goodness, and (2) the view that harmony with the natural order is charac-teristic of a high degree of moral cultivation. Each of these corresponds to a trend in Chinese thought lasting from its "formative period" (circa 500–200 B.C.E.) up to Sung times (960–1279 C.E.). Their synthesis in the thought of Sung philosopher Chang Tsai[a] (1020–1077) is below shown to mark a watershed in the course of Chinese moral philosophy.

The article is divided into three sections: the first deals with general problems in the area of comparative East-West studies; the second treats the two previously mentioned trends which emerged during the formative period of Chinese philosophy; and the third deals, specifically, with Chang Tsai.

ON THE PRIMITIVITY OF NATURALISTIC ETHICS

One form of reductionism that can plague comparative studies occurs when some foreign way of thinking is taken to correspond to an early stage in the development of one's own intellectual tradition. A case of this is evident in Donald Munro's otherwise excellent work *The Concept of Man in Early China*.[1] Commenting on the "natural basis of the social" in the thought of late Chou Confucians, he makes the remark: "When philosophical thought is just about to emerge in a society there is a tendency to read the human social order into the structure of the universe."[2] In the West, Munro indicates, this occurred when the pre-Socratics assigned each of their four basic elements (earth, air, fire, and water) a sphere of natural influence analogous to one of the inviolate social divisions specified by Greek tribal customs.[3] The Chinese, he argues, had an even stronger penchant for reading human social and moral values into nature. Not only was the social idea of proper spheres of influence read into the universe (also as part of a theory of the elements), but so were such important moral concepts as sincerity (*ch'eng*[b]), humanity (*jen*[c]), and propriety (*li*[d]). In essence, the idea of cosmic order was itself abstracted from human social experience.[4]

Munro's assessment of the role given nature in the socioethical views of late Chou philosophers has been challenged, but not due to any heightened sensitivity toward the idea that moral knowledge can be derived from, not

Christian Jochim is an Interim Instructor and Ph.D. candidate in the School of Religion at the University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

read into, the natural world. It has been criticized, for example, by Henry Rosemont for emphasizing passages that suggest a natural basis for ethics in the otherwise thoroughly rational and humanistic writings of the early Confucians.[5] The revealing thing is Rosemont's feeling that the issue is not of any philosophical significance, "except that it attributes a fairly naive monism to the Confucians."[6] Perhaps he feels this way because, like Munro, he takes for granted that there must be something primitive about any ethics which looks to nature for principles to guide human behavior. However, an ethics of this type is only primitive from a particularly modern point of view which assumes a priori that nature is devoid of ethical qualities. The sources of this perspective must be examined before one can render any judgments concerning naturalistic ethics in a Chinese context.

Increased urbanization, greater control over the natural world, the emergence of the Darwinian model of nature, and related developments within philosophy and theology have contributed to the view that the natural realm is an amoral one. Characteristic of these developments, and a locus classicus on the subject of nature's irrelevance for the moral life, is John Stuart Mill's essay on "Nature." The following quote is from the conclusion to that essay.

> The scheme of nature regarded in its whole extent, cannot have had, for its sole or even principal object, the good of human or other sentient beings. What good it brings to them, is mostly the result of their own exertions. Whatsoever, in nature, gives indication of beneficent design, proves this beneficence to be armed with only limited power; and the duty of man is to cooperate with the beneficent powers, not by imitating but by perpetually striving to amend the course of nature—bringing that part of it over which we can exert control more nearly into conformity with a high standard of justice and goodness.[7]

Within this type of perspective, as Mill argues, the only positive value the term "natural" can denote is the absence of affectation.[8] It is foolish from this point of view to consider what is natural to be a criterion for what is moral.

Another perhaps even more significant trend that underlies the West's drift away from naturalistic ethics was initiated early in the twentieth century by G. E. Moore, himself a critic of John Stuart Mill. In his *Principia Ethica*,[9] Moore drew attention to an error in logic that he felt was inherent in any attempt to derive an ethical norm (an "ought" statement) from a belief about the nature of things (an "is" statement). The peculiar designation that he used for this error, the "naturalistic fallacy," has become standard in recent moral discourse; and its avoidance has become a commandment of contemporary ethics. "Naturalistic fallacy" is a peculiar term, in the first place, because it can be applied to an ethics in which nature is denied any substantive role, such as that of Mill, who was criticized by Moore for reducing a value term ("goodness") to an empirically determinable property ("desirability").[10] It is peculiar, second, because it has led to the perhaps false yet widely held

assumption that its discovery was the death knell of ethical naturalism, and also ethical supernaturalism, in any form.[11]

However, not all recent Western moral philosophers have shared this assumption. The American pragmatist John Dewey, for example, was a proponent of ethical naturalism who gained a large following in the West and (interesting to note in this regard) in China. In *Human Nature and Conduct*, he sought to bridge the gap between the natural and the moral by giving a role within ethics to "natural impulses" and the empirical observation of human behavior. Indicative of this aspect of his approach in that work is the statement: "Morality is an endeavor to find for the manifestation of impulse in specific situations an office of refreshment and renewal."[12] Yet, on the whole, his approach was too qualified to be called an ethics of "following nature."

A position that is more appealing for present purposes, a variation upon what has been called "ethical supernaturalism," is outlined in a recent article by John Crossley.[13] Following Richard Brandt, he takes "ethical supernaturalism" to mean a particular way of justifying ethical statements in which they are derived from theological premises in a fashion that *appears* to commit the naturalistic fallacy. He gives the example[14]:

Premise: God is the Creator and loving Father of all men.
Conclusion: You should love Him and all men.

Due to an implied second premise ("Anyone whom God has created should love Him and His creation"), Crossley points out, the syllogism is formally correct. When we realize that the second premise is an ethical as well as a theological one, we see that the real problem lies beyond any formal distinction between a theological (descriptive) statement and an ethical (normative) one. As Crossley puts it: "There is no logical fallacy in the justifying procedure; the 'problem' lies rather in how one knows in the first place that either of the premises is true."[15]

When Crossley addresses this problem, the results are noteworthy for any effort to relate the moral to the ontological (whether one's metaphysics is naturalistic or supernaturalistic). He considers the experience of a "claim" on oneself the starting point for both theology and ethics, explaining his view as follows:

The religious experience of gratitude and the moral experience of obligation have the same root, viz., the experience of being claimed. The experience of God is already partially a moral experience, and the experience of obligation is already· partially a religious experience. This "double" yet finally single starting point for both theology and ethics overcomes, on the one hand, the problem of deriving an ought from an is, and on the other hand, the problem of theological ethics remaining aloof from ordinary moral experience.[16]

While not immediately relevant, one may wonder whether this theological language has any bearing upon an investigation into the viability of Chinese

naturalistic ethics. Following Crossley a little further, it seems that there is indeed a connection. His final appeal is to process theology, "because such theology tends by its nature to stick close to human experience in its development."[17] This connection is worth mentioning here not only because process thought itself drives theology away from supernaturalism, but also because it has affinities with the Chinese views to be discussed later. This will become clear even as the first part of this essay is concluded, but it will especially strike us when we later see how Chang Tsai's thought itself is dually grounded in the moral and the ontological.

The preceding examples reveal, in different ways, the verdict of modern Western ethics on the subject of the moral viability of the imperative "follow nature"; and, in so doing, they raise further questions. Against what did modern thinkers such as Mill, Dewey, and others react? What was meant by "following nature" in the premodern philosophies against which they reacted? The answer to such questions lies largely in considering two essential elements of the moral understanding of nature in the premodern West: providence and natural law (each of which takes for granted the idea of supernatural influence upon nature).

Both Mill and Dewey oppose any demand to follow nature when defined as a demand to act in compliance with purposes or laws of divine origin,[18] and Crossley leans away from traditional supernaturalism toward process theology. It is far from self-evident that this kind of opposition is directly applicable to Chinese usages of nature as an ethical category. Consider, in relation to this, the implications of a statement made by Joseph Needham in concluding his well-known essay "Human Law and the Laws of Nature in China and the West." In contradistinction to the Western view of nature, dependent upon the idea of an external lawgiver, Needham explains:

The Chinese world-view depended on a totally different line of thought. The harmonious cooperation of all beings arose, not from the orders of a superior authority external to themselves, but from the fact that they were all parts in a hierarchy of wholes forming a cosmic pattern, and what they obeyed were the internal dictates of their own natures.[19]

In conclusion, the *reasons* for the rejection, by most contemporary ethicists, of the command to follow nature may not be at all relevant to Chinese ethics with its processual underpinnings. It is careless to assume, without considering these reasons, that naturalistic ethics in any form belongs among the errors of our bygone past. Below, certain Chinese efforts to employ nature as an ethical category will be treated with the aim in mind of rendering a fresh judgment upon their viability.

NATURALISTIC ETHICS IN THE FORMATIVE PERIOD OF CHINESE PHILOSOPHY

Discussion focuses here on just two ways in which early Chinese thinkers used the "natural" as a moral category, without insisting that these were the only

important ones ever to emerge in China. The first concerns the idea that the naturalness of some form of human behavior is a valid criterion of its moral goodness; and the second concerns the view that harmony with the natural order is characteristic of a high degree of moral cultivation.

Each of the suggested uses of the concept "natural" conveys a different shade of meaning. The idea of the naturalness of a certain form of behavior refers specifically to what is "natural" for a human being, that is, to innate human tendencies. The idea of the moral worth of harmony with nature is more closely connected with the "natural" as it pertains to the course of things apart from humanity. Two important schools of early Chinese thought each respectively emphasized one of these two senses of "natural." The Confucians were interested in what kind of behavior was natural *for the human*. The Taoists paid attention to what was natural apart from *homo sapiens*, not praising this species for any unique qualities.

Within early Confucianism, Mencius provides the classical interpretation of morality as being distinctively human but, at the same time, naturally grounded. Interestingly, the most famous passage expressing this interpretation begins with a story that demonstrates the naturalness of human response in the face of a moral "claim." Mencius therein states:

My reason for saying that no man is devoid of a heart sensitive to the suffering of others is this. Suppose a man were, all of a sudden, to see a young child on the verge of falling into a well. He would certainly be moved to compassion, not because he wanted to get in the good graces of the parents, nor because he wished to win the praise of his fellow villagers or friends, nor yet because he disliked the cry of the child. From this it can be seen that whoever is devoid of the heart of compassion is not human, whoever is devoid of the heart of shame is not human, whoever is devoid of the heart of courtesy and modesty is not human, and whoever is devoid of the heart of right and wrong is not human. The heart of compassion is the germ of benevolence; the heart of shame, of dutifulness; the heart of courtesy and modesty, of observance of the rites; the heart of right and wrong, of wisdom. Man has these four germs just as he has four limbs (2A:6).[20]

Three things of significance mark this passage: (1) Mencius argues for the *original goodness of human nature*, (2) he does so by reference to an *experience of moral obligation*, and (3) he presents this experience as a *natural basis for morality*. All three observations make sense in light of the idea of the naturalness of an act as a criterion of its goodness. D. C. Lau, translator of the preceding passage, has stressed how Mencius specifically intended to convey his hypothetical man's altruistic disinterestedness ("not because he wanted to get in the good graces of the parents," and so on) and, also, the spontaneousness of the man's experience of his heart of compassion.[21] Similarly, Mencius insists that each of the four germs, or four beginnings,[22] is the natural and experiential root of one of the four Confucian cardinal virtues: benevolence (*jen*), dutifulness (*i*[e]), observance of the rites (*li*), and wisdom (*chih*[f]).

Donald Munro develops this further by pointing out two criteria used by

early Confucians to recognize what was *natural for humans*, and therefore good: (1) the ease or joy with which it occurs in practice and (2) its automatic appeal to the babelike mind or heart (*ch'ih-tzu-chih-hsin*[g]).[23] In addition to the passage already quoted, these are suggested elsewhere in *Mencius*:

Mencius said "... reason and rightness (*i*) please my mind in the same way as meat pleases my palate" (6A:7). And, "A great man is one who retains the heart of a new-born babe" (4B:12).[24]

Munro and other scholars have even found hints in *Mencius* of a fundamental, perhaps "religious," experience with both moral and ontological dimensions. The key reference in *Mencius* (2A:2) describes a relationship between *i* (dutifulness or rightness) and a certain floodlike *ch'i*[h] (ether or matter-energy). This relationship is such that cultivation of *i* is closely tied to one's ontological grounding in the universe. This is, in particular, the interpretation of Cheng Chung-ying in his article "On *yi* as a universal principle of specific Application in Confucian morality."[25]

   Looking at another side of the issue, Mencius considered some tendencies of humans utterly devoid of moral significance. The mouth's taste for meat may be analogous to the mind's inclination toward reason and rightness, but Mencius considered the latter absolutely different from the former (7B:24). Just how this view could be reconciled with that of the goodness of human nature remained problematic up to Chang Tsai's time (see following).

   In contrast to Mencius' qualified use of naturalness as a moral criterion, the author of the *Tao-te-ching*[i] set forth a concept of the natural, uncolored by any bias toward the particular qualities or needs of the human species. The resulting view of behavior might, from a thoroughly homocentric point of view, be branded "amoral." Interpreted differently, however, this text may be said to advocate the complete merging of the natural and moral spheres. When refusing to distinguish between good and evil, the *Tao-te-ching* intends only to reject that kind of moral consciousness which thinks solely in terms of what is good or bad for humanity.[26] It likewise aims to shun all homocentric values with its assertion: "Heaven and Earth are not humane (*jen*). They regard all things as straw dogs."[27] But it does so only in order to set up an alternative set of moral values, exhibited by nature for human emulation. These include simplicity, spontaneity, tolerance, adaptability, impartiality, and the talent of yielding in appropriate circumstances.

   There is difficulty in interpreting Lao-tzu this way not only because of this earlier mentioned rejection of conventional morality, but also because his work lacks the "prescriptive" tone of normative ethics. Evidence of this lies in the use of simple declarative English, for most passages, by translators of the *Tao-te-ching* (who intentionally choose this over imperative usages, there being no distinction apart from context in classical Chinese between the two forms of usage). Yet some of these same translators insist upon viewing Lao-tzu as a

moral, political philosopher.[28] In light of his professed antimoralistic stance and his apparently nonnormative style, how can he be so viewed?

Anyone seriously interested in answering this question should consult Sung-peng Hsu's insightful article "Lao Tzu's Conception of Evil," which helps us to see that Lao-tzu's implicit morality has both a consistent unifying theme and a definite content.[29] The theme is that of condemning the assertive use of the will as the cause of all unnecessary suffering in the world. The content consists, first, in avoiding such products of "willful action" (wei^j) as war, competition, exploitation of the common people, and alteration of the natural world, and, second, in cultivating such values that coincide with the ability "to act with no willful actions" ($wei\ wu\text{-}wei^k$) as the aforementioned values of simplicity, spontaneity, and so on. This is not especially new to students of the Tao-te-ching, but Hsu's effort to treat this work as a moral treatise, making specific reference to the descriptive/normative problem, is both new and extremely pertinent to the concerns of this article.

Hsu refers to the products of the assertive use of the will as "causal evils" and distinguishes these from "consequential evils," which are the unnecessary sufferings which result secondarily from "causal evils."[30] Strictly speaking, then, only the first are a proper target for moral condemnation, while the second simply give us a reason to have compassion for the suffering of others. At this point, a problem arises: among the condemnable products of the assertive use of the will, Lao-tzu identifies prescriptive morality itself. However, the problem is not that Lao-tzu objects to the moral life as such; he condemns only its degeneration into a form characterized by willfulness and affectation. Therefore, Lao-tzu's idea of the decline of Tao may afford a solution to this apparent problem, and to the related problem of the existence of evil in a world spontaneously produced from Tao. The relevant passages from the Tao-te-ching are cited by Hsu, as follows[31]:

Therefore, when Tao is lost, there arises te.[1]
 When te is lost, jen appears.
 When jen is lost, there comes i.
 When i is lost, there appears li.
What then is li?
 It is the weakness of loyalty and trust.
 It is the beginning of chaos in the world (ch. 38).
When the great Tao declines, there appear jen and i (ch. 18).
Abandon jen and discard i.
Then the people will return to filial piety and compassion (ch. 19).

Thus, mainstays of Confucian morality like jen, i, and li are naught but symptoms of the Tao's decline. We must give up our reliance upon them if we are ever to manifest our true and natural moral qualities (for example, filial piety and compassion). Otherwise, we will manage only to make matters worse; for the operations of Tao can never be disturbed with impunity.

But how can one speak of interfering with its operations at all? Hsu gives us

two reasons to believe that Lao-tzu can sensibly do so: (1) the human will is put in a position of potential interference by Tao's decline, and (2) the will is, in principle, free to interfere at all times. More striking is Hsu's view that the idea of free will, far from being out of place in Lao-tzu's world-view, makes more sense there than it does in the Western context in which a more explicit free will theodicy was produced. He states:

It is important to note that Lao Tzu has no doubt that the will is free to interfere with Tao. He is afraid that the use of the will, however, will cause sufferings in the world and turn the spontaneous universe into a mechanistic one bound by laws and virtues. How different is it from the dominant Western philosophy, which tries to find in the supposedly mechanistic universe a room for the freedom of the will so that it can build an ideal human society apart from nature.[32]

Whether cultivating a moral lifestyle thoroughly in harmony with nonhuman nature, such as Lao-tzu advocated, would be any more feasible than constructing an ideal human society apart from nature is hard to say. But one thing is clear: his view of moral cultivation refused to tread just where the early Confucians found their starting point—in the realm of values that are uniquely human. Yet it was this antithetical difference which made the two views susceptible to synthesis. Even before the close of the so-called formative period of Chinese philosophy, the work of synthesis had begun in both the Confucian and Taoists camps. Two brief examples must here suffice.

In the Confucian text *Chung-yung*[m] (*The Mean in Action*), the concept *ch'eng* (sincerity), normally denoting the virtue of being completely true of one's innately good human nature, was given an expanded cosmological significance in at least one passage. It there states: "Sincerity is not only the completion of one's own self, it is that by which all things are completed" (ch. 25).[33] As will become clear in looking at Chang Tsai's case, this was of no small significance.

On the Taoist's side, such texts as the *Chuang-tzu*[n] and the *Huai-nan-tzu*[o] led toward synthesis by unfolding the idea, hinted at in the *Tao-te-ching*, that the Tao particularizes itself in each individual thing. Chuang-tzu especially thrived on this notion. For him, understanding nature meant grasping the unique function and idiosyncratic worth of each part. Expressing the heart of his perspective, he queried:

[Heaven] Blowing on the ten thousand things in a different way, so that each can be itself—all take what they want for themselves, but who does the sounding? (ch. 2).[34]

This is precisely the perspective which led Joseph Needham to his previously quoted conclusion, and also to his use of the designation "philosophy of organism" to describe the traditional Chinese organismic thinking for the particular view of human nature that the early Confucians had devised.[35]

173

The synthetic nature of Chang Tsai's work is expressed through his ability to see all values as being represented on two levels: the cosmological level of the physical universe and the ethical level of human existence. This is evidenced in the amalgam of "Taoistic" universal harmony and Confucian filial piety found in the opeing lines of his famous *Hsi-ming*[p] (*Western Inscription*):

Heaven is my father and Earth is my mother, and even such a small creature as I find an intimate place in their midst.
   Therefore that which fills the universe I regard as my body and that which directs the universe I consider as my nature.
All people are my brothers and sisters, and all things are my companions.[36]

Furthermore, this describes an experience, which was for Chang a deeply religious one, that provided a double (moral and ontological) ground for all of his other endeavors, For Chang, the difference between the two dimensions was at most one of degree, which accounts for his facility in moving from one to the other. There are no distinctions in Chang's universe that are not distinctions merely of degree; the universe is composed entirely of *ch'i* (matter-energy) in its alternating aspects of dispersion and condensation.

   According to Chang, the source of all things and of all goodness in the universe is *ch'i* in its purest aspect—as the 'Great Vacuity' (*t'ai-hsü*[q]). Nothing in the universe is without some element of goodness, although the potential for evil increases where *ch'i* is condensed and turbid. Consider the view expressed in the following passage.

Master Heng-ch'ü [Chang Tsai] said: As the Great Vacuity, material force (*ch'i*) is extensive and vague. Yet it ascends and descends in all ways without ever ceasing. Here lies the subtle, incipient activation of reality and unreality, of motion and rest, and the beginning of yin and yang, as well as the elements of strength and weakness.... Whether it be the countless variety of things in their changing configurations or the mountains and rivers in their fixed forms, the dregs of wine or the ashes of fire, there is nothing from which something cannot be learned.[37]

As in the Taoist views that had earlier suggested a philosophy of organism, all parts of nature have their unique worth. However, for Chang, this same principle is also expressed on a specifically human level. He states: "Heaven forms the substance of all things and nothing can be without it. It is like humanity (*jen*), which forms the substance of all human affairs and is present everywhere."[38]

   Looking at the other side of the omnipresence of *ch'i*, the potential for evil which arises wherever it is heavily condensed, we also find important ethical implications. Just as *ch'i* in its fully dispersed aspect as the great vacuity (and interchangeably "heaven" and "tao") corresponds to goodness in humanity, so also does *ch'i* in its condensed aspect as concrete things correspond to the

human's evil-tending "physical nature." In the following passage from his *Cheng-meng*ʳ (*Correction of Youthful Folly*), Chang speaks of this latter aspect of *ch'i* as its "aspect of desire."

> Tranquility and oneness characterize the Ether (*ch'i*) in its original aspect; aggressiveness and acquisitiveness characterize it in its aspect of desire. The concentration of the mouth and the belly upon drinking and eating, and of those of the nose and tongue upon smelling and tasting: such is the aggressive and acquisitive kind of nature. He who understands virtue allows (his body) to have a sufficiency of these and no more. He neither enchains his mind with sensual desire, injures the great with what is small, nor destroys the root with what is peripheral (ch. 6).³⁹

One may note the similarity between this and Mencius' view concerning sense inclinations as they exist within the individual along with the innately good human nature. Chang, however, goes beyond Mencius in offering a justification for viewing human behavior in this light. Doing so with his so-called doctrine of the physical nature, Chang gained the praise of later Sung philosophers, especially Chu Hsiˢ.⁴⁰

Referring to the activity of *ch'i*, Chang at once solved the problem of making a distinction between the two natures and also that of defining their relation to one another. The originally good human nature, akin to Heaven, was tied to *ch'i* as the Great Vacuity; the physical nature was, on the other hand, connected with *ch'i* in its condensed aspect. The difference between the two was ultimately one only of degree, so Chang could therefore speak of their relationship in terms of the transformation of the physical nature, as in his statement: "The great benefit of learning is to enable one to transform the physical nature himself."⁴¹

With the idea of the transformation of the physical nature, we arrive at the true merit of Chang's moral philosophy. This transformation may be affected through learning, but not of the ordinary sense-oriented kind. It is best effected through enlarging the mind, which is tantamount to bringing oneself into harmony with the universe. The *Cheng-meng* explains:

> By expanding one's mind one is able to embody the things of the whole world. If things are not thus all embodied, there will be something that remains external to the mind. The minds of ordinary men are confined within the limits of hearing and seeing, whereas the sage, by completely developing his nature, prevents his mind from being restricted to hearing and seeing (ch. 7).⁴²

In other words, if one relates to the universe only with one's physical nature, with one's senses, it will reveal itself only partially and only as turbid matter. But if one relates to it with one's higher nature, it will reveal itself as a moral universe and a harmonious whole. In this ethical perspective, the category "natural" must be grasped both in its particularly human sense as well as in its reference to nonhuman nature. One can discover human moral nature only through an expansion of one's mind which encompasses all of non-human

nature. This dual realization of the moral value of the natural as it exists both in and outside oneself is referred to by Chang as *ch'eng* ("sincerity"), the concept that was so central in the *Chung-yung*, his favorite among the early Confucian classics.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this article has been to explicate a Chinese form of naturalistic ethics which, due to its underlying view of nature, is not tied to the ideas of providence and natural law. Its underlying view of nature, in fact, may be quite modern by Western standards. Joseph Needham has argued that it borders on being post-Newtonian.[43] However, this seems initially to detract from rather than add to its moral relevance, for, in the modern view, nature is wholly amoral. Contemporary moral philosophy, therefore, would appear to have only two alternatives with regard to nature: either to argue for its moral relevance by maintaining a premodern view of nature, along with its feature of an external lawgiver; or to admit its moral irrelevance on the grounds that it is guided by forces indifferent to any divine plan. This is, for example, just the kind of choice we are given in the article on "Philosophical Ideas of Nature" in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, which states:

If, on the one hand, nature is seen as irreducibly complex, the theater not of a simple cosmic process but of countless and diverse processes, and if these processes have produced mind but are not themselves guided by intelligence, then there will be little plausibility in arguing directly from "natural" to "good" or "obligatory."
  On the other hand, where nature is taken as created by a wholly good, wise, and omnipotent deity, to be natural is prima facie, to be *worthy* of being created by such a being. But the existence of evil, however accounted for, makes the inference (from natural to good or obligatory), even in this context, unreliable.[44]

The implication here is clearly that both alternatives are dead ends. Moreover, while the second of these may still have its supporters,[45] it was until recently hard to imagine a defense for the first emerging within contemporary Western thought. Taking recent theological and ethical discussion informed by process philosophy into account, this is easier to imagine. In much of Chinese thought, however, it was taken for granted that nature, seen as a complex process in which all the parts participate according to their internal dictates rather than according to external intelligence, is a moral as well as a physical universe.

An understanding of the way in which the Chinese were able to find moral relevance in nature conceived in nearly post-Newtonian fashion might inspire contemporary ethics in a number of "process-oriented" ways. For example, this understanding could suggest a "natural" ground for the type of situational ethics currently in vogue. For it is quite probable that the most important moral values that the Chinese discovered in nature, such as spontaneity, harmoniousness, and adaptability to changing influences, provided the basis

for their own preference for situational over legalistic ethics. A further innovation may come from Chang Tsai's proposal that one's inner moral nature is revealed to oneself only concurrently with the act of grasping the entire scheme of nature as a moral environment. Ironically, then, with his concept of "sincerity," Chang took something akin to that "absence of affectation" which J. S. Mill had found to be the only positive value one could assign to the term "natural," and he raised it to the level of a necessary and sufficient basis for the moral life.

<div align="center">NOTES</div>

1. (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1969).

2. Ibid., p. 29.

3. Ibid., p. 30.

4. Ibid., pp. 31–34 and 39.

5. Henry Rosemont, Jr., "On Reappraising Chinese Philosophy," *Philosophy East and West* 21, no. 2 (April, 1971): 203–217.

6. Ibid., p. 211.

7. John Stuart Mill, *Collected Works*, Volume 10 (Toronto, 1963), p. 402.

8. Ibid., p. 400.

9. George Edward Moore, *Principia Ethica* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966; first published 1903).

10. Ibid., pp. 67–68.

11. See for example the relevant passages in such standard texts on ethics as: William K. Frankena, *Ethics*, 2d ed. (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1973), pp. 97–102; A. C. Ewing, *Ethics* (New York: The Free Press, 1965), pp. 78–101; and Paul W. Taylor, ed., *Problems of Moral Philosophy: An Introduction to Ethics* (Belmont, California: Dickenson Publishing Co., Inc., 1967), pp. 355–366.

12. John Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct* (New York, 1922), p. 169.

13. John P. Crossley, Jr., "Theological Ethics and the Naturalistic Fallacy," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 6, no. 1; (Spring, 1978): 121–234.

14. Ibid., p. 126.

15. Ibid.

16. Ibid., p. 132.

17. Ibid.

18. See Mill, *Collected Works*, pp. 380–383; and Dewey, *Human Nature*, p. 297.

19. Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilization in China*, Volume 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956), p. 582.

20. D. C. Lau, trans., *Mencius* (Baltimore, Maryland: Penguin Books, 1970), pp. 82–83.

21. Ibid., p. 18.

22. This is the alternative translation of W. T. Chan, *A Source Book of Chinese Philosophy* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1963), p. 65.

23. Munro, The *Concept of Man*, pp. 67–68.

24. Lau, trans., *Mencius*, pp. 164 and 139, respectively.

25. *Philosophy East and West* 22, no. 3 (July 1972): 269–280. Compare Lau, *Mencius*, pp. 24–26; and Munro, *The Concept of Man*, p. 153.

26. See ch. 20, Chan *Source Book*, p. 149.

27. Ibid, ch. 5. p. 141.

28. See Chan, *Source Book*, pp. 136–137; and D. C. Lau, trans., *Lao Tzu: Tao Te Ching* (Baltimore, Maryland: Penguin Books Inc., 1963), pp. 32–35.

177

29. *Philosophy East and West* 26, no. 3 (July, 1976): 301–316.

30. Ibid., p. 302.

31. Ibid., pp. 312–314.

32. Ibid., pp. 314.

33. Chan, *Source Book*, p. 108. Compare p. 107 (ch. 20) and *Mencius* 4A:12.

34. Burton Watson, trans., *The Complete Works of Chuang-tzu* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), p. 37.

35. That a thousand years of Chinese philosophy is here skipped must at least be acknowledged. During this period, the synthetic work mentioned was carried on, in particular, by the so-called Neo-Taoist school of the Period of Disunity (circa 200–500) and by the T'ang dynasty forerunners of the Sung "Neo-Confucians."

36. Chan, *Source Book*, p. 497. It should be noted that one could just as easily infer "buddhistic" influence. See arguments pro and con in Carson Chung, *The Development of Neo-Confucian Thought* (New York: Bookman Associates, 1957) and Siu-chi Huang, "The Moral Point of view of Chang Tsai," *Philosophy East and West* 21, no. 2 (April, 1971): 141–156.

37. Chu Hsi and Lu Tsü-ch'ien, comps., *Reflections on Things at Hand*, trans. Wing-tist Chan (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967), pp. 30–31.

38. Ibid., p. 31.

39. Cited by Fung Yu-lan, *A History of Chinese Philosophy*, Volume 2, trans. Derk Bodde (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1953), p. 490.

40. See Chan, *Source Book*, p. 511.

41. *Cheng-meng*, chapter 17, in Chan, *Source Book*, p. 516.

42. Cited in Fung Yu-lan, p. 491.

43. Needham, *Science and Civilization*, 2:543.

44. Paul Edwards, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Volume 5 (New York: Macmillan, 1967), p. 456.

45. See, for example, John Compton, "Science and God's Action in Nature," *Earth Might Be Fair*, ed. Ian Barbour (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1972), pp. 33–47.

a 張載	h 氣	o 淮南子
b 誠	i 道德經	p 西銘
c 仁	j 爲	q 太虛
d 禮	k 爲無爲	r 正蒙
e 義	l 德	s 朱熹
f 智	m 中庸	
g 赤子之心	n 莊子	