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Book Review:

Origins of Moral-Political Philosophy in Early China: Contestation of Humaneness, Justice, and Personal Freedom

Origins of Moral-Political Philosophy in Early China. Contestation of Humaneness, Justice, and Personal Freedom by Tao Jiang. NY: Oxford University Press, 2021, 514 Pages. US$35.00. Paperback. ISBN-13: 9780197603475.

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What kinds of social environments and political institutions will enhance our lives and foster human flourishing? And how do we interpret early Chinese insights on these topics? *Origins of Moral-Political Philosophy in Early China* addresses both questions, in the process offering an important account of the rich and complex early Chinese intellectual exchanges on the nature of government and political institutions, and of human relationships, moral life, and freedom. Tao Jiang's analysis covers a predictable set of inherited pre-Qin texts associated with key figures, traditionally called the "Masters" (*zi* 子) texts (34; 3n2).[1]

These texts are typically the ones that come under the purview of Anglophone scholarship in Chinese philosophy.[2] In *Origins*, however,

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1 The texts are: the *Analects* of Confucius, the excavated Guodian texts (chap. 1); the *Mozi*, the *Mencius* (chap. 2); the *Daodejing* (or *Laozi*), the Shanghai Museum manuscripts (chap. 3); the *fajia* texts associated with Shen Buhai, Shang Yang and Shen Dao (chap. 4); the *Zhuangzi* (chap. 5); the *Xunzi* (chap. 6); and the *Hanfeizi* (chap. 7).

2 Given *Origins*' methodological considerations (see discussion below), readers might have expected consideration of other texts examined in scholarship in cognate areas and not usually included in this "canon." Take, for example (and this is just *one* example), the illuminating analysis of the *Shuihudi* (睡虎地) Daybooks (日書) by Lisa Raphals, which reveal the preoccupations of ordinary folk on life, health and death (Raphals 2013; See also Harper and Kalinowski 2017). These angles on matters of agency and human existence provide interesting counterpoints to the "Masters" texts that are almost entirely from the perspectives of those involved in official life.

Jiang places their themes within an original conceptual landscape consisting of three primary focal points: humaneness-partialist, justice-impartialist, and personal freedom. For Jiang, some of these texts are more closely aligned with the humaneness orientation (*Analects*; *Mencius*), and some with the justice orientation (*Mozi*, *Daodejing*, *fajia* texts, *Xunzi* and *Hanfeizi*), while the *Zhuangzi* is an outlier, devoting itself to questions of personal freedom. Within this framework, Jiang systematically traces an intricate web of key philosophical terms to highlight intellectual debts and cross influences among the texts.

The unique arguments offered in *Origins* are grounded in Jiang's methodological considerations (*apropos* of the second question posed above). Concerning this question of how we interpret these texts, Jiang notes that scholarship in Chinese philosophy often sits uncomfortably between two closely-intertwined disciplinary fields—Sinology and Philosophy. Their analytical tools and aims of scholarship are often divergent: being more historically-oriented, Sinology tends to be more interested in the details of a text's production and transmission, of the lives involved in and around the text, and of the contexts and period within which it was produced. By contrast, Philosophy has a more presentist orientation and takes a more imaginative approach. Thus, philosophers concerned with articulating a text's conceptual world might overlook or ignore potentially relevant considerations such as multiple authorship. Carefully noting that these distinctions are not as sharp in scholarship, Jiang captures what is at stake for Chinese philosophy, that sits between the two disciplines: both sinologists and philosophers study the very same texts; yet, their "scholarly objects" are distinct. He makes the insightful point that "scholars actively construct the very objects they study, instead of simply investigating some given objects" (21). Thus, *Origins* aims to engage insights from both Sinology and Philosophy to present new angles on moral-political philosophy in pre-Qin Chinese texts.

Engaging with a number of *Origin*'s key themes and analyses in my discussion below, I first explore the humaneness-partialist and justice-impartialist framework that Jiang weaves across its chapters, generally in keeping with the order of the book's chapters. Second, I discuss questions relating to personal freedom and agency, a topic covered

primarily in relation to the *Zhuangzi*, and in the Conclusion chapter.[3] Finally, I return to some methodological matters in Chinese philosophy research.

I. Humaneness and Justice

The idea of humaneness in *Origins* is coupled with partiality, thus emphasizing not only a moral norm but also an aspect of the human condition, that is, "our natural inclination to be partial toward those who are close to us" (35). By these lights, humaneness is framed in such a way that recognizes particular moral agents, and particular moral recipients, by virtue of their unique relationships with us. In contrast, "justice" is characterised by impartiality, which signifies agent- and recipient-neutrality or intersubstitutability.

At first glance, the humaneness framing may sound uniquely Confucian, in that key Confucian terms, benevolence (*ren* 仁) and ritual propriety (*li* 禮), often refer specifically to close personal relationships. Yet, what Jiang's analysis brings out is that it is by no means clear those considerations of humaneness are entirely absent from texts associated with other traditions, nor that the justice framing is absent from the early Confucian texts (more on this below). Moreover, though not expressed in these terms in *Origins*, the pre-Qin thinkers unanimously subscribed to the idea that individuals are naturally motivated to care for their own. From this basic observation about human nature, some advocated that our natural inclination to care for our own *should* be the basis of sociopolitical institutions (*Analects*, *Mencius*), whereas most others sought, to greater or lesser extents, to sidestep or even extirpate such care from the political-collective (*Mozi*, *Laoists*, *fajia* thinkers and *Xunzi*).

Beginning with the *Analects*, Jiang resists a common interpretation of *ren*, that its multiple meanings in the text might be explained with reference to *ren qua* "meta-virtue" (75). Rather, he maintains that the

[3] There is another prominent theme in *Origins*, concerning the nature and role of Heaven (*tian*) in the hands of the different thinkers. Jiang has interspersed insightful comments on this matter across the chapters, but I lack space to discuss it fully in this review.

two meanings of *ren*—with a humaneness orientation grounded in filial piety (*xiao* 孝) and a justice orientation aligned with the golden (or silver) rule (*shu* 恕)—should not be synthesized into a single unified picture (95). Maintaining these divergent conceptions of *ren* sits well with the methodology in *Origins*, that heeds the multivocity of the *Analects*. On this view, the variety of *ren*'s meanings in the *Analects* in fact provide a window on how the early Confucians were debating the term, as they sought to infuse ritual with a human, ethical rationale.

Reading the *Analects* in this way is philosophically significant: it facilitates our understanding that some uncertainty was expressed through some voices in the text, concerning whether our natural sentiments for particular others can be harnessed and refined to provide a sufficient basis for political order (77). In other words, there was hesitation concerning whether those feelings we first develop within the family context would be generalizable, and ultimately inclusive, so as to guide our interactions with *all* others. There is a similar hesitancy in the *Mencius*. Among the Confucian texts and, indeed, among the texts covered in *Origins*, the *Mencius* maintains most staunchly the humaneness orientation, with the domain of familial relationships being second to no other (165). Yet, even in its idealism about family relationships, it articulates potential tensions between obligations that arise within the family and political domains. Jiang presents a novel view, that the *Mencius* straddles the tension between these *two roots*,[4] the first being care for those within the family, and the second a general sympathy for anyone (156; 160ff). In Jiang's view, these two sources of morality are "within ourselves"; the *Mencius* is more subtle than the *Analects* in both allocating primacy to family relationships, and yet in limiting their role within the political domain (156).

[4] Jiang claims that his account of Mencius' "two roots" offers a "different interpretation and [reaches] a different conclusion" from that offered by Nivison (1980), who provided an influential discussion of the Mohist two roots issue (156). In *Mencius* 3A.5, Mencius criticizes Yi Zhi, identified as a Mohist, as having two roots rather than one. However, Jiang's claim about the Mencian two roots does not relate to this particular passage. Thus, I have difficulty seeing why Jiang represents his account as contesting Nivison's. That Mencius calls out Yi Zhi as espousing "two roots," *and* that the Mencius itself also holds a "two roots" view of morality, are not mutually exclusive ideas.

I suggest another set of important distinctions articulated in the *Mencius*, concerning relationships with particular others, and with generalized others, that would have enriched *Origin*'s considerations. This is set out in the famous debate between Mencius and Gaozi (*Mencius* 6A.1-8), centering on the scope of *ren* and *yi* (righteousness, rightness; 義). Here, Gaozi drew clear lines between close personal relationships, guided by *ren*, and relationships with (intersubstitutable) others, guided by *yi*.[5] While the *Mencius*' position is that both *ren* and *yi* inhere in human nature, Gaozi concedes that that is the case for *ren*, but not for *yi*. He maintains that the moral grounds of *yi* arise not from natural inclinations but from circumstances, *external* to the self. The example used to represent Gaozi's view on *yi* is that of serving wine first to an elder, *any* elder. It seems that Gaozi aims to distinguish between different *reasons* (perhaps also sources, and/or motivations) for moral action while Mencius claims they arise from the one source, humanity's natural feelings for both particular and generalized others.

There is more to help illuminate Gaozi's position. That *ren* and *yi* apply across different domains of interaction, or different types of relationships, is illuminated by some discussions in the Guodian texts. In the *Liu De*, for example, *ren* presides over those relationships considered "internal" (*nei* 內), that is, father, son and husband, while *yi* presides over those "external" (*wai* 外), that is, ruler, minister, wife (strips 26-33).[6] There are also assertions in *Yucong* 1 that delineate *ren*'s being inherent in humanity, in contrast to *yi*'s being grounded in *dao* (strips 22-23; *ibid.*). These positions align with Gaozi's view and hence provide deeper insights into the Mencius-Gaozi debate. They would also have extended Jiang's investigations of Mencius' moral vision about humanity's natural sentiments as a basis for socio-political order.[7]

The idea of allocating greater moral weight to familial relationships troubles the Mohists, Laoists, and the *fajia* thinkers. The Mohists were concerned that Confucian norms such as filial piety (*xiao* 孝)

5 Jiang discusses this, but only very briefly, at 110n52.

6 *Liu De* 六德 in Cook (2012).

7 I have presented more detailed analyses and arguments of the Mencius-Gaozi debate in light of the Guodian texts. Refer to Lai (2019).

and parent-child closeness or affect (*qin* 親) were potentially divisive (even though, Jiang notes, some parts of the *Mozi* acknowledge the importance of specific relationships (136-37)). In general, from a Mohist perspective, the act of prioritizing particular relationships also had the effect of (one's) being partial (*bie* 別). By contrast, the *Mozi*'s impartialist commitment is one that Jiang characterizes as "Universal State Consequentialism." According to Jiang, this position values not only the collective goods of the state (wealth, order, population), but also the practices that would benefit the collective, beyond state or territorial boundaries—much like the idea of a "global community" (132-33). Indeed, insofar as the *Mencius* may be described has having a humaneness-partialist orientation, the *Mozi* is much more closely aligned with the justice-impartialist orientation.[8]

The *Daodejing*'s project is also characterized as "impartialist," with a distinctly *naturalist* leaning. Here, in Chapter Three, Jiang draws on the cosmogonic perspectives in the *Tai Yi Sheng Shui* (from the Guodian corpus) and the *Heng Xian* (from the Shanghai Museum texts) to support his naturalist, impartialist, and anti-anthropocentric account of the *Daodejing* (though one might perceive these connections as rather too tenuous). Jiang suggests that the *Tai Yi Sheng Shui*'s "Great One," the source of all things, and the Heng Xian's "primordial orderliness," together with the *Daodejing*'s dao, articulate a Laoist cosmogonic account of life that contests the anthropocentric character

8 Jiang's scrutiny of the question of Heaven in the *Analects* and *Mozi* reveals important contrasts in the two texts; for one, Confucius' claim in *Analects* 2.4 to know the mandate of Heaven was a presumptuous and potentially subversive move (62; 123). The Mohists, by contrast, asserted the ultimate authority of *tian*. Although I agree with Jiang that "both the Confucians and the Mohists claimed Heaven as the supreme moral authority for their causes" (140), I believe that they did so in very different ways and for very different reasons. It would have been particularly important for the *Mozi* to establish an independent, non-human source of standards, hence taking discretion out of the hands of even the Son of Heaven (even if, ultimately, the standard is beneficence and benefits humanity). I believe this is an under-recognized innovation of the Mohists in their contention with the Confucians. The Mohists were keen to disestablish the Confucians as the arbiter of standards and thus also re-defined and located *yi* (which, for them, also took precedence over *ren*), in a source beyond human control. I discuss these issues in greater detail in Lai (2017, 84-91).

of Heaven (*tian* 天) in the Mohist project (196-98). Moreover, where Mohists seek to *instill* practices of impartialist concern (*jianai* 兼愛), the Laoist decentring of humanity involves non-action (*wuwei* 無為), or non-interference with the natural operations of the world (226). Although I find these differences illuminating, I believe Jiang's claim about the Laoist view on government is overstretched, as he claims that, in the Laoist perspective, "*any* human effort at governing the world is doomed to failure" (226; emphasis mine).

Origins next proposes that the impartialist-justice framework is also apt for characterizing the *fajia* views on institutional power. For the *fajia* (including the *Hanfeizi* discussed in chpt. 7), the Confucian proposal to develop a person's moral sensibilities based on close personal relationships, and to grow that for participation within the political domain, was anathema. Jiang suggests, thus, that the *fajia*'s commitments may be seen more in terms of impartialist commitments, for example, that "Clearly, Shen Dao's overarching concern was impartiality in governing the state through laws and regulations" (281). Personally, I find this suggestion difficult to accept as it seems that neither term, "impartialist" or "justice," appropriately describes the *fajia* proposals. Both in *Origins* so far, and in Anglophone philosophical discourse more generally, these phrases refer to projects that incorporate some level of concern for morality.[9] And it seems odd to characterize the *fajia*'s primary concern as the maintenance of positional power (274-75), on the one hand, and to assert that it adheres to a "principle of impartiality" (268), on the other.

Fascinatingly, the *Zhuangzi* is the only text that is not placed within the humaneness-justice framework. According to *Origins*, the *Zhuangzi* advocates personal freedom and hence stands as a lone voice, outside of both humaneness and justice orientations. Although the text holds deeply social, political, and moral concerns, Jiang states, its views were markedly different from the Confucian, Mohist, and *fajia* commitments as it did not aim to establish institutional leadership or power (338). Jiang's analysis, rightly, dwells at length on elements of the *Zhuangzi*

[9] Jiang also claims that the "virtue of humility" in *fajia* thought is underrated; I believe this, too, is contestable (282).

that articulate a sense of personal freedom. Yet, I find it difficult to agree that the text is an "outlier" (34) insofar as personal freedom is concerned, that no other projects sought some element of personal freedom. I return to this point later.

The discussion in *Origins* follows next with the *Xunzi*, a Confucian text that takes the justice orientation, with a model of leadership centred on the Sage Kings' development of ritual as channels of humane justice. On this view, the *Xunzi* offered a moral program that would *justly* implement distributive justice across the many dimensions of the human condition (380; 391). Jiang's discussion is illuminating: the *Xunzi*'s emphasis on the *deliberate* effort required to intervene in and control natural human responses (357) stands in stark contrast to the Mencian account of the moral inclinations natural to humanity as the bedrock of good government.

In *Origin*'s final chapter on the pre-Qin inherited texts, the *Hanfeizi*, which challenges many fundamental commitments of the Confucians, falls within the "justice" arm of Jiang's scheme. (Here, again, I am uncomfortable about the characterisation of this text as having a commitment to "justice"). The *Hanfeizi*, a text belonging to the *fajia* tradition, insisted on the irreconcilability of the basic commitments of the humaneness and justice orientations (as articulated in *Origins*). Having little faith in sagely leadership, the *Hanfeizi* established political power on the basis of the instruments of government such as *fa* (penal law 法), and left little to officials' discretion (426-29; 432). Here was a proposal for a political system that trusted no one: not its people, not its officials, and not even the rulers themselves, who were thought to be mediocre (455).

I am fascinated by Jiang's characterization of the pre-Qin inherited texts according to the humaneness-justice framework. Importantly, as discussed above, it helps bring out connections and tensions between, as well as within, the texts under consideration. For example, it highlights how the different thinkers thought about human inclinations, relationships, and interactions with others at the personal and sociopolitical level. Across the texts considered, the different thinkers lean more heavily toward the view that our relationships with significant others, and those with generalized others, are not merely different

in degree but different in kind. This helps explain why most of the views considered in *Origins* align more closely with the impartialist orientation. Through careful analysis of the inherited texts, commentaries, and scholarly literature, *Origins* illuminates the texts' different conceptions of selfhood, of our interdependencies as human beings, and whether and how to harness some basic aspects of the human condition to make for a better life together.

However, I am concerned about how, at times, *Origins* gives the impression that, based on the texts, beginning with the *Analects* and culminating in the *Hanfeizi*, we are able to track a progressive trajectory of socio-political thought in pre-Qin China. The language sometimes implies that thinkers actively and knowingly engaged with the ideas of those before them, addressing specifically those matters according to the humaneness, justice, and personal freedom frameworks outlined in *Origins*. At points, Jiang's discussion seemed to suggest that the thinkers themselves were working comfortably within this scheme, as for instance:

> [Han Feizi] challenged the Confucian paradigm by poking holes in every aspect of the latter's raison d'etre, especially the tensions between the personal and the political and between the familial and the political. In so doing, Han Feizi pushed the divergence between humaneness and justice we have first seen in the philosophical projects by Mozi and Mencius and continued by Laozi and the early *fajia* thinkers to its logical conclusion, a conclusion that would completely reject the Mencian project of humaneness while bringing the Mohist cause of universal justice to its statist and impartialist finish. (401; see also 154, 201, 223, 268).

The tightly-knit sense of progression at some points in *Origins* may give the impression that the authors of these inherited texts were conversant with each other's views. There is, of course, good evidence in the texts that cognizance of other texts or thinkers was present, to a degree. However, precisely *given the multivocity* of many of these inherited texts, we should perhaps be less certain that these voices are specifically responding to specific views articulated in some other texts. In addition, awareness of the texts' compositional details behooves us

to be more tentative about whether the thinkers knew the texts that preceded them and, if so, in what form(s). Needless to say, this has important philosophical implications for how we understand early Chinese political philosophy. In Jiang's own words, because "scholars actively construct the very objects they study" (21), we need to be particularly careful about how the voices in the texts are represented within our constructed frameworks.

II. Personal Freedom and Agency

Conceptions of freedom are of course closely intertwined with questions about agency. In *Origins*, these matters are discussed primarily in relation to the *Zhuangzi*, and in the Conclusion. In my view, Jiang captures some distinctive and salient aspects of the *Zhuangzi* on these matters. Not least among these are his perceptive comments on how the *Zhuangzi* sees "constant change and pervasive relationality" as the "basic characteristics of the world" (298). In my view of the *Zhuangzi*, it is in light of these *givens* of the human condition, that the text considers the question, how do we live fulfilling lives? In working through this question, the *Zhuangzi* seeks ways for individuals to hone their capabilities to better navigate the world. These considerations also frame the *Zhuangzi*'s dim view of those proposals that sought to establish political institutions, in order to regulate relationships and to set up buffers against change. For example, while ritually appropriate behaviours in Confucian philosophy can help structure human interactions, the *Zhuangzi* is wary that attempts to entrench the familiar can create complacency such that we do not see what is beyond the familiar.

There are other compelling points on freedom in the *Zhuangzi* made in the Conclusion. Jiang is insightfully cautious about what he calls the "regime of self-cultivation" (461), shared by most if not all thinkers in early China. In these traditions, self-cultivation is often closely aligned with "the cult of exemplary persons" (461) or the "epistemic superiority of a cultivated sage" (471), in such way that the ordinary aspects of human experience, and what is in the interests of ordinary people, are

overlooked.[10] I find Jiang's analysis of these matters, in engagement with Isaiah Berlin's (1969) conceptions of positive and negative freedom, most stimulating and inspiring, and return to it towards the end of this review.

On the topic of freedom, there are a couple of views I would hold more tentatively than Jiang does, that the *Zhuangzi*'s is a "lone project" (title, chap. 5) not only in its unique conception of positive freedom, but also in the way its views resonate with important aspects of negative freedom. Briefly, I believe there are important terms or debates available in the other inherited texts not explored in *Origins*, that could add more shades to these two claims. I suggest three points below.

First, the issue of moral agency is reasonably developed in the Confucian tradition, though largely a prerogative of those involved in political life, as Jiang rightly notes (467-68). However, there are also opportunities for individuals—ordinary folk—to exercise initiative in a range of ways. Take filial piety, for example. If a text presents opportunities for people to develop an understanding of the scope and rationale of filial piety, and for them to exercise that sensitively, with discretion (e.g. *Analects* 4.18), would this not indicate some concern for positive freedom, for the people? Admittedly, these are limited gestures to take into account the lives of ordinary people. More thorough investigation is necessary, I believe, on how the texts think through matters concerning blameworthiness, right action, duty, having virtuous dispositions, securing certain outcomes, having (the right moral) reasons for action, being appropriately motivated, and so on, insofar as ordinary life is concerned. It seems to me that the broad and general use of the term "virtue" in *Origins* might obscure finer-grained assessments of concepts relevant to moral agency. In *Origins*, "virtue" may be dispositional (virtue of *ren*; 53), it may refer to more conceptually-oriented moral commitment (virtue of justice; 85), it seems akin to epistemic virtue (virtue of sagacity; 155), and it sometimes refers to right action (virtue of a minister being fiercely

[10] Refer to footnote 2 of this article.

loyal to his lord; 173).[11] A more focused analysis of what these "virtues" entail, may allow more complexity on the notion of positive freedom to emerge from other texts.

Second, questions about negative freedom in early China may be illuminated by consideration of the term *ming* (names, titles, 名) in the pre-Qin texts. This term, appearing in various word-compounds, was applied especially in political discourse. The *Xunzi* famously advocated *zhengming* (正名), setting standards for the correct use of words or names, as an instrument of sagely leadership. The *Hanfeizi*'s *xingming* (刑名), according to which officials, as bearers of their titles, would be punished for not accomplishing their tasks, sought to ensure the ruler's hold over his officials. Texts associated with the Daoist tradition were critical of *ming* as it was, in their eyes, bound up with the denial of the peoples' initiative and discretion. Debates on *ming* also involved questions about how language was used, and thus closely associated with discourses on words (*yan* 言) and debating (*bian* 辯). The latter were most prominent in the Mohist writings. Examination of these debates is likely to provide more support for Jiang's argument about the paucity of views on negative freedom in early China. It would also have helped bring out more divergences and complexity in the concepts of political power and authority proposed by the politically privileged to control the people, and illuminated questions concerning the pressures of the collective over the individual.

Third, although Jiang believes that the *Zhuangzi*, and even more so the other inherited texts, do not investigate questions of negative liberty, I believe otherwise, that there are glimpses of views that align with the spirit of negative liberty. Let me mention one example. Jiang emphasizes how the Confucian tradition has a "general orientation

[11] There are other uses of the term "virtue" in *Origins*: virtue of filial piety (83), virtue of *yi* (righteousness; 110, 382), virtue of propriety (153), virtue of wisdom (218), virtue of humility (257), virtue of loyalty (277), professional virtue of faithfully carrying out the duties prescribed for one's particular role in the political system, ideally not simply following personal orders of one's superior (279), virtue of genuineness (326), virtue of abiding by what is right (363), virtue of frugality (396), virtue of impartiality (415), virtue of self-constraint (448), and virtue of *wuwei* (450).

We should ask whether "virtue" in the above uses properly represents the views articulated in the texts concerning matters of morality and agency.

toward positive freedom" in its emphasis on moral agency (467-68).[12] However, we should not overlook the specificity of the comments in the *Mencius* 1A.2, for example, that suggest that visions of positive freedom are closely intertwined with the wellbeing of the ordinary people. Setting up environments to grow humanity's basic shared inclinations is a key ingredient for human flourishing and is the responsibility of Sages, but the people's desires *cannot* be ignored. Perhaps the *Zhuangzi* is not the only text that contains nascent ideas which align well with negative liberty.

III. Methodological Matters

The discussion of the methodological concerns in Chinese Philosophy research are enlightening, though I am intrigued by the reference to "Sinology." The term is not immediately familiar to academicians in the Anglophone world[13] and therefore it is quite important for *Origins* to be more explicit about how it uses Sinology's analytical tools to interact fruitfully with those of Philosophy. In brief, I would have appreciated the inclusion of more discursive comments on how particular sinological angles or methods of analysis were applied to yield the stimulating interpretations across the chapters of *Origins*.

In fact, the Conclusion chapter (in Sections 1 and 2) sets out its methodology discursively, and that facilitates a systematic and illuminating discussion of personal freedom; this approach could also have been taken in the substantive chapters of *Origins*. In the conclusion, Jiang adeptly carves a conception of freedom (based partly

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12 I agree this is particularly pronounced in the *Xunzi*, where it is not only the Sage Kings, but officials, who have significant discretionary insight and power, exercised in: weighing and perhaps prioritizing (*quan* 權); making (ethical) distinctions (*bian* 辨); (understanding) measure and significance (*shu* 數); and (understanding) the degree or depth of a matter (*du* 度). Examining these terms would have enriched Jiang's analysis.

13 To my knowledge, there are no "Sinology" departments in academic institutions in the English-speaking world (Australia, UK, US), although there are, of course, in Europe. The issue is further complicated by the translation of the Chinese phrase *hanxue* (漢學) as "sinology," which is cognate with but different from "Sinology" as an academic discipline in Europe.

on the *Zhuangzi*'s ideas) that, *contra* Berlin (1969), emphasizes the importance of both positive and negative freedom. In doing so, he elucidates how Berlin's ideas are relevant, and why they are relevant, for understanding questions of personal freedom in the Chinese texts. He also points out and explains tensions, such as how the context of Berlin's negative freedom applies to ordinary persons, and the gaps in that discourse across early Chinese texts (471). This leads Jiang to pose a critical question concerning whether and how these texts address or can accommodate institutional protections, that allow ordinary people to live fulfilled lives (472). In this way, Jiang powerfully and eloquently exposes a significant lacuna in these early Chinese texts. However, as he optimistically suggests, various of the *Zhuangzi*'s commitments, including to pluralist values, may be harnessed to construct a socio-political framework that takes into consideration the personal freedoms —particularly the negative freedoms—of the ordinary person (473).

I would be more emphatic than Jiang, proposing that the story of the naked Scribe in *Zhuangzi* 21 *does* broach the possibility of challenging the prevailing system, in this instance actually going beyond the ruler's cage, so to speak (see 469-70). Moreover, the *Zhuangzi*'s stories about ordinary men with extraordinary skills are replete with comments about the necessary conditions for these men to develop mastery. Many of them are *free from* encumbrances that dictate how they should approach a task, or that prescribe ideal outcomes. I believe that the *Zhuangzi*'s deliberate use of ordinary men as inspirational models is intended to show how ordinary lives can *also* be fulfilling and, simultaneously, to prompt readers to consider how socio-political institutions can be developed in such a way as to *enable* (not only to protect) individuals to attain these outcomes. These reflections on how philosophical explorations can enrich ordinary lives, inspired by *Origins*, are among the most valuable in a thought-provoking book that opens up multiple new lines of inquiry.

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