The Therapy of Desire in Early Confucianism: Xunzi

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I. Introduction

Several years ago in an essay on the *Lu's Spring and Autumn* 呂氏春秋, D.C. Lau remarked that "It is not an exaggeration to say that ancient Chinese thought was man-centered, while the study of man was desire-centered. Thus the notion of desires is at the heart of most of Chinese thought" (Lau: 56). Surveying both extant and unearthed Chinese texts from the early period, we find that the vast majority, though not all, deal with questions of moral and religious cultivation and transformation. As Lau claims, at the heart of these discussions we find significant attention paid to desire. In one way or another, thinkers from all of the various schools of thought in the early period of Chinese philosophy argue that desires are problematic. In general, desires are the root cause of the chaotic situation of the world, and their transformation or cultivation or re-formation is necessary to return individuals and society to a more harmonious, peaceful, and prosperous existence. If we heed D. C. Lau's call to focus on the role of desire in Chinese thought, how should we proceed? I suggest that we take our cue from a similar study of the discourse of desire in ancient thought by Martha Nussbaum.

Martha Nussbaum begins her book on Hellenistic ethics, *The Therapy of Desire*, by describing the philosophical traditions of that period—epicureans, stoics, and skeptics—as engaged in "a philosophy that exists for the sake of human beings, in order to address their deepest needs, confront their most urgent perplexities, and bring them from misery to some greater measure of flourishing" (Nussbaum: 3). As her title suggests, much of the book describes the ways in which Hellenistic philosophers explain the proper role of emotion and desire in human life, and prescribe therapeutic practices that enable humans to maintain a particular relation to their desires, often advocating the need to be de-

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tached from our immediate desires and emotions. Nussbaum argues that these philosophers agree that the most direct means to address human needs and facilitate flourishing lives is a therapeutic approach to desire. Without a therapy of desire humans fall prey to their own impulses and fail to live more flourishing lives.

Although Nussbaum develops the framework of a therapy of desire for the purpose of understanding Hellenistic discussions of reason and the passions, I believe that we can take inspiration from Nussbaum's work on Hellenistic philosophers in studying early Confucian philosophers. Utilizing Nussbaum's framework to look at the early Confucian tradition helps to focus our attention on the tradition's own discourse about desire and its proper cultivation. Unlike the Hellenistic philosophers, the early Confucians do not advocate a need to detach ourselves from or eliminate our desires and emotions. Yet, like these European philosophers, they do believe that desires play an important role in determining whether a life is flourishing, and they prescribe forms of therapeutic practice to address human desires and emotions. In general, the flourishing Confucian life requires that our original desires be reshaped or cultivated. Left to follow the desires of our original nature, we usually fail to fulfill the Confucian vision of the humane life.

While in a larger study I plan to examine Kongzi, Mengzi, and Xunzi's conceptions of a therapy of desire, for the purposes of this essay I focus only on Xunzi's conception of the role of desire in human life and moral cultivation. I argue that when we examine the process of ritual cultivation and its connection to moral psychology, we find that a form of therapy of desire is central to Xunzi's understanding of moral cultivation. For Xunzi, ritual participation is a therapeutic practice that aims at shaping our desires and dispositions such that we are able to live in accordance with the Dao. My examination of Xunzi's therapy of desire will consist of two parts. The first of these addresses the origin and status of desire before being shaped through ritual participation. The second then turns to Xunzi's moral psychology and the specifics of his therapy of desire.

II. Desire

To begin our examination, we first need to be clear about the scope and content of the term "desire."[1] Desires are psychological states. In contemporary

[1] Two significant problems present themselves when discussing the therapy of desire in Xunzi's writings. First, the scope of the term "desire" in English, although very close, does not match exactly the scope of the character *yu* 欲 in Chinese. Second, the Western philosophical use of the term "desire" as an all-encompassing label for any form of motive force in the psyche also presents a problem. Annette Baier has done a very good job of revealing the deficiencies of an over-simplified conception of motivation in which desires are the only motive force (Baier 1986). Unfortunately, I do not have room here to address these con-

analytic philosophy, at the very least, desires are thought to motivate action, to have a direction of fit, and to have objects toward which they aim. They motivate action in that, when we say we desire something we are claiming that we are to some degree motivated to take action, though the desire need not result in action. Desires have a direction of fit in that, when we have a desire, we try to make the world, including ourselves, fit our image of what we want it to be. Desires also require an object, be it a thing in the world or a state of affairs, toward which they aim. For example, when we desire a beer, we are to some degree motivated to act to get a beer, we want the world to become such that we have a beer to drink, and the beer, or my sitting here with a beer in hand, is the object of my desire. For Xunzi, and the rest of the early Chinese tradition, there is one term that very closely matches this conception of desire, namely *yu* 欲. Moreover, we find that Xunzi himself recognizes that he is part of a continuing discourse about *yu* and their place in the proper human life.[2] Consider the following passage from the chapter of "Rectification of Names":

> Those who say that we must eliminate desires to achieve order lack the means to guide desire and are disturbed merely by the presence of desires. Those who say that we must lessen desires to achieve order lack the means to regulate desires and are disturbed by how numerous they are. Having desires or being without desires are different categories, the living and the dead, not the ordered and the chaotic. Having few or many desires distinguishes different types and depends on a person's dispositions. It does not distinguish the ordered from the chaotic. (*Xunzi* 22/111/4-6)[3]

Among the targets of criticism in this passage are Daoists who argued for the elimination of desire and Song Xing, and possibly Mengzi, who argued for the need to lessen desires. The passage illustrates Xunzi's awareness that other philosophers were indeed concerned with desire and how it should be properly integrated into a well ordered life. He believes that these others have incorrectly understood the problem and its solution. However, Xunzi does share an important assumption with those he criticizes, namely that desires are problematic and do not necessarily aim to bring the world into accord with the Dao, nor do they always motivate action in accord with the Dao. For example, desires can lead one away from effective action in the world. In discussing military affairs, Xunzi says: "If plans overcome desires, then all will follow [according to plan].

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cems. For the purposes of this essay, the match between desire and *yu* is close enough to be useful for explicating Xunzi's theory.

[2] Within contemporary American scholarship on Xunzi, there is also a discourse on desire and the role it plays in his conception of moral psychology. See Van Norden, Wong, and Kline III 2000.

[3] In Chinese: "凡語治而待去欲者，無以道欲而困於有欲者也。凡語治而待寡欲者，無以節欲而困於欲多者也。有欲無欲，異類也，生死也，非治亂也；欲之多寡，異類也，情之數也，非治亂也." For each quotation from the text of the *Xunzi*, I have used reference numbers to the concordance by D.C. Lau and F.C. Chen (Lau and Chen). All translations are my own unless otherwise noted.

If desires overcome plans, then there is misfortune" (*Xunzi* 15/71/6).[4]

His most famous formulation of the claim that desires are problematic comes at the beginning of the *Lilun* 禮論 ("Discourse on Propriety") chapter. There he argues that unconstrained pursuit to satisfy the numerous human desires leads to chaos and the need for sages to create the ritual order.[5] Since humans are bound to try to satisfy their desires, this chaotic situation was inevitable and required some remedy to produce order. It is due to the desires arising from the innate dispositions of our nature that the ritual order must be brought into being. Yet, despite his recognition that desires can lead away from the Dao, Xunzi does not argue that we should either eliminate or lessen our desires. Instead, they should be properly cultivated through his own therapeutic approach. Why then, if desires can lead away from the Dao, does he believe that we should not attempt to either eliminate or lessen them but instead exert the effort to properly shape them toward proper objects and means of satisfaction?

Desires cannot be eliminated or lessened because they are an essential part of our nature. "Desires cannot be eliminated. They are the implements of our nature" (*Xunzi* 22/111/4).[6] To try to eliminate desires is to try to eliminate part of what Heaven has given us from birth. Desires arise as we naturally respond to our environment. Xunzi explicitly describes the relationship of desires to our nature. "Our nature is endowed in us by Heaven. Our dispositions are the raw material of our nature. Our desires are the responses of our dispositions" (*Xunzi* 22/111/14).[7] Heaven endows us with the particular nature of a human being, as opposed to any other creature or thing. Given this nature, we respond to the environment in certain characteristic ways. When we have not eaten for a while, we get hungry. When we are out in freezing weather for too long, we get cold. These responses to our environment are the dispositions that constitute our nature. Creatures like us innately respond in these ways. Our desires, then, are the responses of our dispositions. Once we become hungry, we desire food, and, when cold, we desire warmth. Our desires arise from our dispositions. However, every disposition need not give rise to a desire. In turn, these desires need not necessarily motivate action.

In fact, this is an important point for understanding his therapy of desire: Xunzi does not identify desires as the primary motive force in the self. Instead, he argues that we are usually motivated to act through approval 可 *ke* and dis-

[4] In Chinese: "計勝欲則從，欲勝計則凶." This passage also reveals some of the difficulties in understanding *yu* as equivalent to desires. Plans are usually thought to be associated with desires. Xunzi's understanding of *yu* separates these two in a manner different from the way in which desires and plans are associated in common philosophical usage. I am grateful to Eric Hutton for pointing out this difference.

[5] For further explanation of the creation of the ritual order and its relation to moral cultivation and psychology, see Kline III 2000 and 2001.

[6] In Chinese: "欲不可去，性之具也."

[7] In Chinese: "性者、天之就也，情者、性之質也，欲者、情之應也."

approval (*buke* 不可).[8] According to Xunzi, even when we do not desire to do something, if we approve of the action, we will do it. If we desire to do something, but disapprove of it, we will not do it. Our actions, then, are usually independent of our immediate desires. Our actions gain this independence from our immediate desires because, as a motive force in the self, approval and disapproval arise from a different source than desire. Approvals and disapprovals arise from judgments of our *xin* 心.[9] Our *xin* has the capacity to understand. Understanding then leads to our approving and disapproving of certain courses of action. Approval is a judgment based on our understanding. In addition, approvals only come after we understand and are tied to our awareness of situations. As Xunzi explains in the *Jiebi* 解蔽 ("Dispelling Blindness") chapter: "We understand the Dao and afterward approve of it. We approve of the Dao, and afterward are able to protect the Dao in order to prohibit what is contrary to the Dao" (*Xunzi* 21/103/21).[10]

To reiterate, this picture of motivation reveals that Xunzi believes we have two primary sources of motive force in the self. One source is the disposition of our nature that, in responding to our environment, produces desires. The second source springs from the capacity of our *xin* to both understand and judge possible courses of action, to approve and disapprove. Because we are usually motivated by approvals and disapprovals and not desires, Xunzi recognizes the fact that individuals may find themselves approving courses of action that they do not necessarily want to approve.[11] This conflict between desire and approval reveals a second reason that desires are problematic. They potentially create conflict within the self. Harmony within the self is achieved only when we approve of and desire the same course of action. Desire, then, creates disharmony in the self as well as creating social disharmony by causing us to deviate from the Dao and come into conflict with others, as in the actions of the *xiaoren* 小人 (inferior persons). With his therapy of desire, Xunzi aims to cultivate individuals who achieve an inner harmony and who also participate in and

[8] His most famous formulation of this point can be found in the *Zhengming* 正名 (rectification of name) chapter in a passage that has been exhaustively discussed by Van Norden and Wong, namely 22/111/4–12 (see Van Norden and Wong). If we examine this passage, it also exemplifies a difference between desire as understood in contemporary philosophical literature and *yu* as understood by Xunzi. For Xunzi, *yu* are not the primary motive forces in the self. Xunzi here agrees more closely with Annette Baier's critique of contemporary conceptions of desire as the overarching label for all motive force in the self (Baier). For a further statement of Xunzi's position, see also *Xunzi* 21/103/18-9.

[9] The *xin* refers to the heart and was thought to be the organ of both cognitive and affective capacities. Since it is confusing to translate this term as either "heart" or "mind" or by the awkward combination "heart/mind," I have left it untranslated.

[10] In Chinese: "心知道，然後可道；可道，然後能守道以禁非道."

[11] The situation I am describing is quite similar to Aristotle's description of the continent person who knows what it is good to do but has no desire to do it or in fact has a desire to do something else.

promote social harmony through acting in accord with the Dao.[12] In fact, Xunzi, echoing Kongzi in *Lunyu* 1.12, regards harmonious ease in one's self and social interactions as the mark of the cultivated individual. In order to understand more fully how conflict between desire and approval arises and how harmony can be achieved, let us turn to Xunzi's therapy of desire.

III. The Therapy of Desire

If it were the case that our innate desires reliably aimed at the Dao and always tracked the same objects as our approvals, we would have no need for a therapy of desire. The desired harmony between approvals and desire would already be present and we would have no need to alter our desires. Unfortunately, Xunzi believes that the human condition is quite different. We are born with a basic harmony between our desires and our approvals. Yet, neither desires nor approvals are aimed at according with the Dao, but instead aimed only at a crude conception of benefit and harm. As Xunzi describes the situation: "At birth, we are *xiaoren.* Without a teacher and model, we will see only benefit.... If we are without a teacher and model, then our *xin* will be just as our mouth and belly" (*Xunzi* 4/15/14-7).[13]

Being *xiaoren* at birth, we evaluate the world in terms of benefit and harm. We approve of the same things as the innate desires of our body—Xunzi often thinks of these desires as arising from our five senses. Without teachers or models of action embodied in the ritual order, we will remain this way—approving of what we desire and attempting to satisfy those desires as best we can. In this condition, Xunzi argues, we will remain dissatisfied regardless of how hard we try to satisfy our desires. As he explains: "This is why if a person concentrates on ritual and social roles then he can both satisfy his desires and the demands of ritual. If he concentrates on the dispositions of his nature, then he will fail to satisfy his desires or meet the demands of ritual" (*Xunzi* 9/90/17-8).[14]

Following our original approvals and desires leads to chaos. Recognition that the world is chaotic outside of the ritual order then spurs us to commit ourselves to ritual cultivation under the guidance of a Confucian teacher. The teacher exposes us to new models of action and new ways of evaluating the world. We no longer perceive and evaluate the world only in terms of benefit and harm or, as Xunzi often refers to them, "the impulses of our digestive tract." Instead, we begin to evaluate and approve of actions in terms of the

[12] For more discussion of the social and cosmic levels of harmony envisioned by Xunzi, see Ivanhoe 1991.

[13] In Chinese: 人之生固小人，無師無法則唯利之見爾……人無師無法，則其心正其口腹也。

[14] In Chinese: 故人一之於禮義，則兩得之矣；一之於情性，則兩喪之矣。See also 19/90/14–6, in which Xunzi claims that the person who regards the satisfaction of his original dispositions (*qing*) as pleasure is bound to be destroyed.

conceptual categories of virtue and vice embodied in the ritual order. Being guided by a teacher in the study of the Confucian ritual order results, first and foremost, in the gradual transformation of our understanding and thus what we approve and disapprove. This change in our approvals results in the beginning of conflict between our approvals and what we desire. We no longer approve of the satisfaction of our basic desires arising from our nature. Yet, while teachers begin to transform our approvals, our desires are not automatically altered simply by the change of approvals. Remember, desires arise from our dispositions and are not in any way directly connected to our understanding or the approvals generated by our understanding. What then must occur for our desires to be brought into harmony with what we approve of doing? How can we regain the inner psychological harmony we enjoyed at birth and at the same time fully participate in the external harmonious interactions of the ritual order? As Xunzi would put the question, how do we satisfy our desires and the demands of the ritual order at the same time?

The answer, obvious as it may seem, is that we must in some way change our desires. Yet, since our desires are the responses of our dispositions to our environment, Xunzi's solution is to re-shape our dispositions.[15] To understand this process of re-shaping our dispositions, consider a portion of the opening passage from the *Zhengming* chapter.

> When there is a disposition and the *xin* chooses on its behalf, this is called "deliberation." When the *xin* deliberates and our abilities act on it, we call this "deliberative activity." That which comes about through the accumulated deliberation and training of our abilities is also called "deliberative activity." (*Xunzi* 22/107/23-4; translation adapted from Hutton: 278)[16]

In this passage, Xunzi defines two terms, *lü* 慮 (deliberation) and *wei* 僞 (deliberated action), in relation to our *qing* 情 and *xin* 心. Deliberation occurs when the *qing*, our dispositions, respond to the environment and the *xin* chooses a course of action to respond to the *qing*. When we then carry out the course of action chosen by our *xin*, the one we approve of doing, we are performing a deliberative action. This much is easy to understand. However, Xunzi goes one step further. He claims that when we repeatedly perform actions chosen by our *xin*, this too is a form of deliberative activity. Why is there a need for this additional step in defining deliberative activity?

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[15] Ivanhoe describes this process as one of shaping a second nature. While I agree with his basic picture of moral cultivation, I think that it may be confusing to describe the process in terms of a second *nature*. Our nature, *xing*, does not change. We remain human. Our dispositions, the reactions of our nature to the environment, our *qing*, which Xunzi recognizes as a functional aspect of our nature, can be altered. See Ivanhoe, 2000. While not disagreeing with Ivanhoe's understanding of moral cultivation, I am suggesting that, for the goal of clarity, we change vocabulary and refer to it not as the habituation of a "second nature" but the cultivation of new dispositions.

[16] In Chinese: 情然而心爲之擇謂之慮。心慮而能爲之動謂之僞。慮積焉、能習焉而後成謂之僞。

This second step in the definition of deliberative activity allows Xunzi to identify both the synchronic and diachronic aspects of deliberative activity. To explain this point more plainly, let me translate this point into a more common philosophical vocabulary. Xunzi argues that when we deliberate and then act on that choice, we perform an intentional action. Single intentional actions then constitute the synchronic aspect of *wei*. When we repeatedly perform intentional actions, presumably aiming at the same goal, the Dao, that also is *wei*. However, what does this second diachronic aspect of deliberative activity produce? We know that the synchronic form produces an intentional action. We perform an action that we approve of doing. I believe that the diachronic aspect of deliberative activity points to the creation of new dispositions. These dispositions will be dispositions producing desires reliably in accordance with our approvals, since these dispositions develop from the repeated performance of actions chosen through deliberation of our *xin* or understanding.

As now can be more fully explained, the habituation of new dispositions becomes the primary mechanism of transformation in Xunzi's therapy of desire. Desires are the responses of dispositions to our environment. For example, going without liquids for many hours causes thirst, and we desire something to drink. If we are able to form new dispositions, then we will in effect also be forming the sources of new desires, desires that aim toward the objects of our approvals, in the ideal situation the Dao, and not simply toward benefit and harm. According to Xunzi, through re-forming our dispositions we will be, among other things, elevated above the crude preferences of our digestive tract. Consider again the disposition of thirst. We are born with a rather crude disposition aimed at finding any drink that can satisfy our thirst. As we become educated in the ritual order and participate in ritual activities, we perform repeated intentional acts of drinking particular drinks, in particular situations, in certain ways. These actions eventually develop dispositions that lead to the performance of elaborate drinking ceremonies as described by Xunzi in the *Yuelun* 樂論 ("Discourse on Music") chapter. What was a crude disposition becomes a disposition to drink certain drinks in ritually prescribed situations and manners. These dispositions in turn produce desires to drink in such a manner when the situation presents itself, desires that are in accord with ritual practice. No longer do our desires simply track the reactions of our mouth and belly. They now accord with the understanding and approvals developed through ritual activity. In addition, once desires aim at the same objects as our approvals, we experience the inner harmony of acting without inner conflict; we take joy in ritual participation and find it fulfilling.

Now that we have explained the basic mechanisms behind Xunzi's therapy of desire, two further aspects must be added to complete the explanation. First, Xunzi recognizes that the process by which we re-form our desires can be used for both good and bad. In other words, the process of coming to understand and approve of new ideals and then developing dispositions that reliably aim at these ideals need not always aim at the Dao. Any ideal that can be well-

articulated and understood can be the aim of our approvals and resulting dispositions. For example, in his discussion of the influence of rulers on social harmony, Xunzi claims that:

> If Tang and Wu preserve this [cultivating others], then all under Heaven will follow them and be ordered. If Jie and Zhou preserve this, then all under Heaven will follow them and be chaotic. Is this not because people's dispositions can surely become like either the former or the latter! (*Xunzi* 4/16/3; translation from Hutton).[17]

Thus, it is not due to any fixed character of our dispositions that harmony or chaos prevails. Our dispositions can be directed toward various ideals depending on how we are instructed by others. Xunzi hopes that we will come to understand and approve of the Dao. For him the ritual order that embodies the Dao is our only path to achieving both internal and external harmony. Yet, he realizes that many people follow other ideals, develop dispositions aimed toward them, and re-form their desires in accord with these ideals. Precisely because the therapy of desire remains ideal-neutral, Xunzi believes that other philosophers and their articulation of false ideals represent the greatest threat to successful cultivation. He devotes the entire *Jiebi* ("Dispelling Blindness") chapter to explaining this point. Consider one passage in particular:

> If in choosing people [to associate with] you use a *xin* that does not approve of the Dao, then you are bound to join with people who do not follow the Dao, and you will not know to join with those who follow the Dao. Using a *xin* that does not approve of the Dao and joining with those who do not follow the Dao in judging those who do follow the Dao constitutes the root of disorder. (*Xunzi* 21/103/19-20)[18]

If we approve of the wrong ideal, we will invariably be drawn to others who share our ideal and begin to form a supportive community in which to pursue and reinforce that ideal, whether the ideal be honor among thieves or the Confucian Dao. If we do not approve of the Confucian ideal, then we will be bound to join with others of a like mind and together reject the Dao.

The mention of community in this passage also brings us to the second aspect of Xunzi's therapy of desire to be added to our explanation: the reformation of desires requires a community of practitioners who share a given ideal. The therapy of desire, except perhaps in extraordinary circumstances, cannot be accomplished alone but only in concert with others. Xunzi identifies the ideal community as composed of those committed to the Confucian ideal and participating in the Confucian ritual order. Without the ritual order, which consists of nothing more than repeated human interactions aimed at the Dao in accordance with ritual prescriptions, we cannot successfully re-form our desires such that they come into harmony with our approvals and lead to harmonious

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[17] In Chinese: 湯、武存，則天下從而治；桀、紂存，則天下從而亂。如是者，豈非人之情固可與如此可與如彼也哉！

[18] In Chinese: 以其不可道之心取人，則必合於不道人，而不知合於道人，以其不可道之心，與不可道之人論道人，亂之本也。

interactions with others. The therapy of desire should be understood more along the model of a form of group therapy than the model of individual therapy. The community participates in the ritual order and in the process participates in the therapeutic activity of ritual practice with others. Much like the leader in group therapy, Xunzi believes there must be a teacher to guide the therapeutic practice. As mentioned above, the therapy does not automatically aim at the proper ideal. The Confucian teacher keeps the community aimed at the proper ideal by helping them to understand the Dao and guiding them in therapeutic ritual practice. By understanding the Dao, they come to approve of the Dao, the Confucian ideal. By participating in the ritual order they repeatedly perform actions aimed at the Dao and develop dispositions that accord with that ideal. With enough practice, as we have explained, the fully developed dispositions produce new desires aimed in accord with ritual practice. We once again return to the inner accord of desire and approval while practicing cooperative, communal interaction.

This picture of the gradual cultivation of new dispositions is a beautiful and highly plausible solution to the problem of how to bring desires and approval back into harmony with one another. In addition, I believe it is an interpretation supported by what Xunzi has to say about the differences between the uncultivated *xiaoren* and the *junzi* (superior persons). Let us consider one significant passage in which Xunzi explicitly supports what I believe to be his understanding of the therapy of desire. The passage is from the *Yuelun* chapter.

> The *junzi* takes pleasure in achieving the Dao. The *xiaoren* takes pleasure in fulfilling his desires. If we regulate our desires with the Dao, then we can enjoy ourselves without causing chaos. If we forget the Dao because of our desires, then we will be deluded and unable to enjoy ourselves. (*Xunzi* 20/100/9-10)[19]

Of the various comments to be made concerning this passage, two are of particular importance for understanding Xunzi's therapy of desire. First, Xunzi claims that we can indeed use the Dao as a means to regulate our desires. If we do so, it is possible to truly enjoy ourselves. The *xiaoren*, whose approvals track his basic desires arising from the senses, seeks to satisfy these desires and forgets about the Dao. By doing so, the *xiaoren* engages in a self-defeating activity. Although he seeks to satisfy his desires in order to enjoy their fulfillment, he is unable to truly enjoy himself. Second, both the *junzi* and the *xiaoren* take pleasure in achieving something. In both cases, I would argue that they take pleasure in fulfilling their desires. Yet, in the case of the *junzi*, whose desires have been shaped by deliberative activity to reliably aim at the Dao, fulfillment of his or her desires is equivalent to achievement of the Dao. He or she has understood the Dao and approved of it, shaped his or her desires to aim reliably at the Dao, and then by shaping the world to fit to his or her desire—the Dao—he or she enjoys the achievement. By forming new dispositions that produce different desires with new objects, the cultivated person creates new forms of satis-

[19] In Chinese: 君子樂得其道，小人樂得其欲。以道制欲，則樂而不亂；以欲忘道，則惑而不樂。

faction and enjoyment inaccessible to the rustic *xiaoren*.[20] Among these new forms of satisfactions is the harmony within one's own psyche, between approvals and desires, as well as the recognition of one's own participations in the harmonious interactions of the ritual order. The *xiaoren* aims also to satisfy his or her desires, but those desires are aimed only at crass objects related to his or her own benefit and harm. As mentioned in the first point, though approvals and desires are in harmony, as with the *junzi*, he or she is ultimately unable to enjoy himself or herself because following those desires will lead to a chaotic existence. Though he or she retains the harmonious relation of approval and desire, the *xiaoren* does not participate in the harmonious interactions of the ritual order and, according to Xunzi, will inevitably end up in conflict with others, conflict that will either prevent him or her from enjoying the satisfaction of his or her desires or will directly thwart their satisfaction. Either way the person ends up without the harmonious ease indicative of enjoyment. As Xunzi explains: "If a person takes pleasure only in delighting his inborn dispositions, such a one is sure to be destroyed" (*Xunzi* 19/90/16; translation from Hutton).[21] Xunzi also collected a passage from Kongzi that mirrors this sentiment in which Kongzi explains that the *junzi* are able to achieve a lifetime of joy because they take joy in their intent to cultivate themselves and then in the achievement of an orderly self. In contrast, the *xiaoren* suffer a lifetime of anxiety because until they have achieved their goals, they worry that they have not yet achieved them, and then once they succeed, they worry about losing them (*Xunzi* 29/143/14-6).

In conclusion, what I hope to have revealed are the core elements of Xunzi's therapy of desire. Desires are problematic, because the desires arising from our original dispositions will aim toward behaviors that are not conducive to harmonious interaction with others or to the rest of the cosmos. In addition, once we recognize this fact and begin to cultivate ourselves through ritual participation, our approvals and desires begin to conflict. We find ourselves torn between our desires and our judgments of what should be done, our approvals. The solution of this problem is not to eliminate or lessen our desires, but in some sense to create new forms of desire, desires with new objects and forms of satisfaction. We are able to do so through the reshaping of our dispositions, a process that Xunzi describes in terms of deliberative activity and the functions of our *xin*. By participating in ritual under the guidance of a teacher, we repeatedly perform intentional actions in accord with the Dao, thus habituating new dispositions that will give rise to new forms of desire, that is, desires aimed at the fulfillment of the Dao. As I mentioned above, I believe Xunzi's picture is not only beautifully crafted, but is a plausible and compelling vision of the way

[20] The Daoists reverse this evaluation and blame these new forms of satisfaction for the chaos in the world and the falling away from the life lived in accord with the Dao. See especially Chapters Three and Thirty-eight of the *Daodejing*.

[21] In Chinese: 苟情說之爲樂，若者必滅。

in which we come to have new desires that could accord with our judgments about flourishing human lives. [22]

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