Dao (2022) 21:369–388
https://doi.org/10.1007/s11712-022-09838-8

Moral Extension and Emotional Cultivation in Mèngzǐ

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Accepted: 1 June 2022 / Published online: 16 July 2022
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Abstract
Mèngzǐ's 孟子 advice to King Xuān 宣 to take up his feeling of compassion for an ox and apply it to his people (*Mèngzǐ* 1A7) is equivocal, and can be understood in two markedly different ways: on one hand, to take immediate care of the people's needs by performing a kind of (mental) act of applying compassion; on the other hand, to engage in a long-term project of cultivating compassion for them. These views, moreover, when combined with the assumption that emotion is the sole motivator of moral action, give us a perplexing picture of Mèngzǐ as urging the king to do exactly what he cannot—namely, acting out of compassion for his people that he falls short of feeling enough of. This essay explicates the Mengzian model of moral extension (*tuī* 推) through a solution to this puzzle, specifically by explaining how one's immediate performance of moral actions are conducive to cultivating related moral emotions.

Keywords Mèngzǐ 孟子 · Moral extension · Compassion · Analogical reasoning · Internalism

1 Introduction

The purpose of this essay is to explicate the concept of *tuī* 推 (moral extension) in Mèngzǐ's 孟子 thought. In a well-known passage where Mèngzǐ advises a king to cultivate compassion toward his people, he uses the phrase "take this feeling and apply it to other cases" (*jǔ sī xīn jiā zhū bǐ* 舉斯心加諸彼; *Mèngzǐ* 1A7). "This feeling" (*sī xīn* 斯心) here mainly refers to the feeling of compassion, and the term "apply" (*jiā* 加) is conceptually equivalent to *tuī* 推 ("to extend"), and thus the whole phrase means "take

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up the feeling of compassion [from where you naturally feel it] and extend it to other cases [where you have difficulty in feeling it naturally].”

As discussed below, though, this phrase is equivocal and open to two different interpretations, namely taking immediate care of the people’s needs by performing some sort of (mental) act of applying compassion on one hand,[1] and engaging in a long-term project of cultivating compassion for them on the other. Furthermore, these seemingly equally plausible interpretations, when combined with the widespread assumption among many Mèngzǐ scholars that emotion is the sole motivator of moral action in Mèngzǐ (most clearly seen in Nivison 1996 and Shun 1997), provide us with a perplexing picture of Mèngzǐ here as urging the king to do exactly what he cannot—namely, acting out of compassion for his people that he falls short of feeling enough of.

This puzzle consists of three components: (P1) the urgency of some acts that will alleviate the suffering of others, (P2) the requirement that these acts be motivated by compassion, and (P3) the fact that it takes time and effort to cultivate compassion and act on it. My solution, to be presented in detail below, is to reject the second part of the puzzle (or accept it in a qualified sense) and keep the others. That is, I deny that emotion is the sole motivator of moral action in Mèngzǐ, and argue that moral actions can be performed without proper emotional back-up. However, I also accept that the ideal Mengzian agent is still the one who acts out of proper ethical emotions.

In order to substantiate this claim, I also explore what can be viewed as Mòzǐ’s 墨子 version of moral extension (*tuī*). According to Mòzǐ, one’s negative moral responses to certain actions are caused by one’s beliefs about the nature of those actions, and such responses are transferred from the paradigmatic cases to extended ones, so to speak, through a kind of analogical reasoning. One’s condemnation or punishment of theft, for instance, is maintained throughout similar cases of theft and actually gets stronger in accordance with the seriousness of the crime, and this implies that moral beliefs or knowledge in Mòzǐ have some motivating power for the agent.[2]

We find an illustrative parallel to this Mozian idea of internalism and the force of analogical reasoning in Mèngzǐ. As I argue below, Mèngzǐ also thinks that moral beliefs are internally motivating, and the conclusion of a sound analogical reasoning inherits its motivating power from the premises due to the similarities between them. For example, Mèngzǐ urges the king to take immediate care of his people’s needs because he thinks the king’s judgment that he should help his people instantly will actually move him to do so, and he also thinks that such a judgment is reached by the analogical reasoning based on the similarities between the ox and the king’s people.

Despite this parallel, though, the ideal agent in Mèngzǐ is still the one who acts out of proper ethical emotions spontaneously in relevant situations, and this requires Mèngzǐ or his interpreters to explain how such a goal could be achieved. Specifically, we need to know how one’s immediate performance of moral actions are conducive to cultivating related moral emotions rather than ruining them, and I try to come up with an answer to this question in the final sections of this essay. I do so by drawing on the so-

[1] What this (mental) act of applying compassion means is the central question of this essay, and will be explained in detail below.

[2] This idea, namely that one’s moral belief or judgment, or even knowledge of what the right thing to do is in a certain situation, has the power to motivate the agent to act accordingly, is often called “internalism” in metaethics.

called "concern-based construal view of emotions" and some research findings in social psychology on the relation between associative and propositional evaluations.

In short, I propose here a new interpretation of the concept of *tuī* 推 (moral extension) in Mèngzǐ, which incorporates the two interpretations of *Mèngzǐ* 1A7 described above in such a way that both the need of immediate action in certain situations and the picture of the ideal Mengzian agent are explained adequately and consistently.

2 The Problem

As is well known, the term *tuī* 推 was originally a technical term in the Later Mohist logic referring to an effort to get someone to grant what that person has not originally accepted by pointing out that it is the same as something that that person does accept (Nivison 1996: 96–97; Kim 2018: 53). However, according to David Nivison, Mèngzǐ appropriates this term in *Mèngzǐ* 1A7 to introduce his notion of emotional extension. To quote the relevant portion of the passage, it goes as follows:

> Treat your elders as befitting their age, and then reach out to other people's elders; treat your youngsters as befitting their age, and then reach out to other people's youngsters. [If you could do so, then] you would be able to [govern] the world [as if] moving it on your palm.… That is, all you have to do is merely to *take this feeling and apply it to other cases*. So, [if you] extend your benevolence, it will be sufficient for protecting [all the people within] the Four Seas; but [if you] don't extend your benevolence, you won't have enough even for protecting your wife and children. That by which the ancients greatly surpassed others is nothing else: they were good at extending what they did, and that was all. Now, your benevolence is sufficient to reach animals, but your benefits do not reach your people; why is it so? (*Mèngzǐ* 1A7; my italics)

In the omitted part of the passage, Mèngzǐ discusses with King Xuān 宣 a past incident in which the king spared an ox being led to slaughter for a sacrificial ritual. He commanded that the ox be replaced with a sheep, but the real motive for his saving the ox, as Mèngzǐ helps him realize, was his compassion for the poor creature that was terrified with the fear of death and resembled so much an innocent man going to execution. Once the king understood his compassion to be the real motive behind his action, Mèngzǐ goes on to tell him that he can actually become a true king protecting the whole world by "taking this feeling" of compassion for the ox and "applying it" to the case of his people. According to Mèngzǐ, this (mental) act of applying compassion is a matter of doing or not doing, rather than being able or unable to do. As Mèngzǐ declares in the same passage, the king already has enough power to apply his compassion to his people, and it does not make sense for him to say that he cannot do so, just as it does not make sense for a person capable of lifting a hundred *jūn* 鈞 to say that he cannot lift a feather (*Mèngzǐ* 1A7).

However, there is an alternative way to interpret the phrase "take this feeling and apply it to other cases" (*jǔ sī xīn jiā zhū bǐ* 舉斯心加諸彼). There seems to be a general consensus among the scholars that what matters in Mèngzǐ is not merely the king's

benefiting his people by taking care of their difficulties but also eventually his actually *feeling* compassion for their suffering and acting out of this feeling, because the ideal agent in Mèngzǐ is the one who acts virtuously from the correct motives with the right feelings. Moreover, it is supposed to take a long time and tremendous effort to become such a person; it cannot be such a simple matter as massaging an elder's stiff arms (or cutting a branch off a tree and making a cane for an elder) which, as Mèngzǐ himself says (*Mèngzǐ* 1A7), is certainly within one's power.

In this light, "taking one's feeling and applying it to other cases" does not seem to refer to a simple (mental) act that one can do at will but to a special process of moral training aiming at the transformation of one's character traits including emotional responses. Interpreted this way, an important question concerning Mèngzǐ's theory of emotional cultivation is what kind of process of moral cultivation is required for one to cultivate proper moral emotions successfully so that one can act out of them reliably—that is, from the right motives in all relevant cases.[3] In the following, I try to clarify Mèngzǐ's concept of moral extension by exploring philosophical implications of the two interpretive possibilities described above.

A word on some jargon that will be used in this article: given that King Xuān could naturally feel compassion for the ox but found it difficult to feel the same way for his people, we could label the former type of cases "paradigmatic cases," following Nivison (e.g., see Nivison 1996: 100), and the latter type "extended cases." In other words, according to this distinction, whereas paradigmatic cases of a moral emotion refer to those where one naturally feels a certain emotion (e.g., compassion) when encountering a certain kind of objects (e.g., an ox in danger) and also finds it appropriate to feel so, extended cases of the same emotion refer to the situations where one may not spontaneously feel the same emotion in question about certain objects (e.g., the suffering people) while finding it appropriate to do so.[4]

3 Moral Extension in Mòzǐ

As I see it, a close, interesting parallel to Mèngzǐ's notion of emotional extension can be found in the Upper Chapter of "Condemnation of Aggressive War" in the *Mòzǐ*:

> [A] Now [suppose that] there is a person [who] entered other people's orchards and stole their peaches and plums. [If] people heard about it, [they] would condemn it; and if those above in charge of the government arrested him, they would punish him. Why is this? Because [he] damaged others in order to benefit himself.
>
> [B] When it comes to [the case of] someone who stole others' dogs, pigs, and chickens, its wrongness is more serious than [the case of] entering others' orchards and stealing peaches and plums. What reason is there for this? Because [his] damage to others is greater. [If the damage to others is greater,] its inhumanity is more serious, and the crime is more serious.

[3] I thank Hagop Sarkissian for helping me describe what I think is the ideal Mengzian agent more accurately.

[4] This section partly draws on some materials from the beginning part of the section "How to Cultivate Moral Emotions: Competing Interpretations" in Kim forthcoming.

> [C] When it comes to [the case of] someone who entered others' barns and took their horses and cows, its wrongness is even more serious than [the case of] stealing others' dogs, pigs, and chickens. What reason is there for this? Because his damage to others is greater. If the damage to others is greater, its inhumanity is more serious, and the crime is more serious.
>
> [D] When it comes to [the case of] someone who killed an innocent person and took his clothes, leather jacket, spear and sword, its wrongness is more serious than [the case of] entering others' barns and taking their horses and cows. What reason is there for this? Because his damage to others is greater. If the damage to others is greater, its inhumanity is more serious, and the crime is more serious.
>
> [E] Now, the noblemen of the world all understand [this point] and condemn these, calling them wrong. [But] now when it comes to [the case of] doing a great wrong [such as] attacking [another] state, [they] do not know to condemn [it; on the contrary, they] follow and praise it, calling it right. Can this be called knowing the distinction between right and wrong? (*Mòzǐ*, "Fēigōng Shàng 非攻上 [Condemnation of Aggressive War, the Upper Chapter]"; Sūn 2001: 128–129)[5]

First of all, what is noteworthy in this rather long passage is Mòzǐ's rationalistic tone.[6] According to Mòzǐ, the reason why people condemn and punish theft is because theft is an act causing damage to others for the purpose of benefiting oneself (A). Mòzǐ then introduces another case of theft where the crime is more serious, and he declares that its wrongness (*búyì* 不義) is more serious than in the first case because it causes greater damage to others (B). A natural interpretation of these remarks of Mòzǐ's is that people criticize and punish acts of theft in differing degrees proportionate to their seriousness because they believe that (1) theft is wrong and (2) theft of a more serious kind deserves more severe treatment. Furthermore, when required to provide justification for their beliefs, people will point out that (1) theft is an act causing damage to others for selfish purposes, and that (2) the wrongness of theft is proportionate to the amount of damage it causes to others. In general, Mòzǐ seems to think that people's negative moral responses to certain actions are caused by their beliefs about the nature of those actions. In other words, we might be able to say that in Mòzǐ people's moral beliefs about the nature of certain actions *motivate* their responses to those actions, which are often expressed themselves as a certain type of actions (such as criticism or punishment).

Now, Case A and Case B can be compared respectively to the "paradigmatic case" and an "extended case" in the Mengzian extension presented above. That is, we can consider people's moral beliefs about theft and their reactions to it in Passage A to be a paradigmatic response to a wrong act, and people's likely beliefs and reactions to the theft in Passage B to be an extension of their paradigmatic response in Passage A. The only difference between Cases A and B is that the crime in B is more serious, and we can imagine that Mòzǐ's agents in Case A, now facing Case B, might go through the following conscious or unconscious process of reasoning: "Theft is wrong. The theft in

[5] Knoblock and Riegel 2013 has been consulted when translating this passage. This translation initially appeared in Kim 2021, and my discussion of its meaning there partly overlaps with the contents of the next paragraph.

[6] In this essay, by the term "Mòzǐ" I refer not to the historical founder of the Mohist movement but the putative author of the *Mòzǐ*, which has multiple layers probably created by many hands over centuries.

Case B is more serious than in the previous case. A crime of a more serious kind deserves more severe treatment. Therefore, the theft in Case B deserves more severe criticism and punishment." At the same time, the agents would find themselves criticizing and punishing, or inclined to criticize and punish, the theft due to the motivating power of their moral beliefs or judgments. (An alternative scenario is that people will instantly show negative responses to Case B but the reasoning process just mentioned is, or some of the beliefs constituting it are, in the back of their minds.) Now, the agents can take their beliefs and reactions to the theft in Case B to be a new paradigmatic response to a wrong act (which is of a more serious kind than the one in Case A), and make their further moves in Cases C and D: they will judge that the theft in Case C deserves more severe treatment than in the previous cases, and will show corresponding reactions. Likewise facing Case D, judging that killing an innocent person and taking his belongings are a crime of an even more serious kind, they will show even more serious reactions to the crime than in Case C.

So far, so good. However, the problem is with the move from Case D to E: Mòzǐ's agents, especially his contemporary noblemen in charge of establishing and implementing important government policies, show responses to aggressive warfare that are inconsistent with their previous responses to such acts as theft, homicide, and robbery—that is, instead of condemning aggressive warfare, they follow and praise it, calling it right, and even make eulogies about it. Why would this be so? In Mòzǐ's view, it is because they are ignorant of the fact that aggressive warfare is wrong. As Mòzǐ says, the noblemen of his time "truly do not know that it is wrong" (*qíng bùzhī qí búyì yě* 情不知其不義也), and they will stop praising it by writing eulogies about it and passing them down to later generations once they know that it is wrong (*Mòzǐ*, "Fēigōng Shàng"; Sūn 2001: 129). In other words, here we find again the aforementioned idea of "internalism," namely that once people know that aggressive warfare is wrong, their knowledge will *motivate* them to stop praising (or themselves engaging in) aggressive warfare and respond to it in proper ways, which are consistent with their responses to the other crimes in the previous cases that belong to the same category as aggressive warfare but are of less serious kinds. As I see it, this is a key to understanding Mòzǐ's view of analogical moral reasoning or his version of moral extension (*tuī* 推), which is to make sure that one acts in the right way in extended cases that is consistent with the way one has acted in paradigmatic cases.

The second feature of Mòzǐ's version of moral extension, compared to that of Mèngzǐ, is the apparent lack of the idea that emotions can play a significant role in the process of moral extension. One might suspect, though, that the real operator of the Mozian extension must be emotions in the guise of judgments, thinking that emotions, not beliefs, are the sole motivator of actions. On this view, emotions are understood as favorable or unfavorable attitudes toward their objects, and moral judgments are considered as expressions of such attitudes (Blackburn 1998). For example, one might think that the Mozian agents' criticism and punishment of theft in Case A must be accompanied by some degree of indignation at the crime, and the beliefs that I have ascribed to them—such as that (1) theft is wrong or (2) theft of a more serious kind deserves more severe treatment—are not to be understood to describe ethical facts but express their negative attitudes toward the crime or their will that the crime be criticized and punished. A similar view to this, albeit not exactly the same one, has been ascribed to Mòzǐ by Chris Fraser. According to him, moral judgments in Mòzǐ are not purely

cognitive, conative, or affective, but most likely incorporate all three aspects in the ethical context where they can express approval or disapproval (Fraser 2011: 90–91).

However, as I have argued elsewhere (Kim 2021), this interpretation does not seem tenable for several reasons. First, in Passages A through E quoted above, Mòzǐ never mentions any particular emotional states people are in when they criticize and punish (or are inclined to criticize and punish) crimes. Therefore, even if one may feel certain emotions like indignation at the crimes or compassion or sorrow for the victims in Passages A through E, this fact is not taken into Mòzǐ's theoretical account of moral extension and agency. Furthermore, in another passage from the *Mòzǐ* we find Mòzǐ recommending the removal of joy, anger, pleasure, sorrow, love, and hatred, which he calls "six biases." According to Mòzǐ, there is no place for emotions in his picture of the ideal agent: one is supposed to think when remaining silent, teach when speaking, and work when moving; and by making these three types of activities take turns, one can definitely become a sage (*Mòzǐ*, "Guìyì 貴義 [Valuing Righteousness]"; Sūn 2001: 442–443). This lack of interest in emotions concerning their roles in moral action and Mòzǐ's negative stance toward emotions in general make it difficult for us to attribute to him the expressivist view of moral judgment delineated above. Finally, when commenting on the attitudes of the contemporary noblemen toward aggressive warfare, Mòzǐ says that they "truly do not know that it is wrong" (*qíng bùzhī qí búyì yě* 情不知其不義也). According to Angus Graham, the term *qíng* 情 in pre-Han 漢 Chinese texts often means "facts" as a noun, "genuine" as an adjective, and "genuinely" as an adverb (Graham 2002: 49). In the present sentence *qíng* is used as a modifier of the verb *bùzhī* 不知 ("not to know"), and this makes Mòzǐ able to claim that the proposition that his contemporary noblemen do not know that aggressive warfare is wrong is true. Now, with Mòzǐ clearly thinking that a proposition can be true or false and believing that aggressive warfare is actually wrong, it seems that moral judgment in Mòzǐ (such as "aggressive warfare is wrong") must be understood not as an expression of an emotional attitude but as a belief in the truthfulness of its propositional contents.

4 The Puzzle in *Mèngzǐ* 1A7

Now, let us consider the first interpretation of the Mengzian extension of compassion in comparison to the Mozian model of moral extension discussed above. Unlike in the Mozian model, emotions seem to play a crucial role in Mèngzǐ's theory of moral extension. Despite this marked difference, though, Mèngzǐ in *Mèngzǐ* 1A7 seems to make the same point as Mòzǐ in Passages A through E above that the king should act immediately to alleviate the suffering of his people, and that he can. The reason why he can, as Mèngzǐ sees it, is that he can take up his compassion for the ox and "apply" (*jiā* 加) it to the case of his people based on the similarity between the situation of the ox and that of his people. Now the issue is what exactly is meant by the act of "applying," and one conjecture is that it means *acting* compassionately—in other words, taking care of people's suffering by giving them what they need, such as food, shelter, clothes, and the like.

Note, though, that compassion (*cèyǐn zhī xīn* 惻隱之心) is in the foreground of the conversation between King Xuān and Mèngzǐ, and therefore it might seem that (1) what motivates the king to act that way must be his *feeling* of compassion and nothing

else, and simply acting compassionately without the right motive falls short of what Mèngzǐ recommends the king to do.[7] Moreover, (2) Mèngzǐ declares that the king has enough power to show benevolence to his people and urges him to do so immediately, and from (1) and (2) it might seem to follow that Mèngzǐ takes the king to be ready to act out of his compassion for his people.[8] However, the king actually falls short of feeling enough compassion about his people in the face of his other concerns and desires, and given this Mèngzǐ seems to end up urging the king to do exactly what he cannot—namely acting out of his compassion for his people.

Presumably, this might be one of the reasons why many scholars prefer the second interpretation of the Mengzian extension. As I have briefly mentioned above, this view interprets the term "apply" not as a (mental) act of applying compassion—whatever that means—to an extended case but a gradual process of moral cultivation aiming at the transformation of one's whole character, and Mèngzǐ is considered to be urging the king to embark on this project so that someday he will be able to feel strong enough compassion for the suffering of his people and act out of that motive. However, a great difficulty for this interpretation is that Mèngzǐ urges the king to act *instantly*: "Your benevolence is sufficient to reach animals, but your benefits do not reach your people; why is it so? … Your people's not being protected is because of [your] not using benevolence. Therefore, your Majesty's not becoming a [true] King is not [because you are] unable to act but [because you] do not act" (*Mèngzǐ* 1A7).

It might be for this reason that Manyul Im, along the lines of the first interpretation, has proposed that King Xuān, as a normal human adult, possesses a natural and fully developed faculty of compassion, and his compassion only needs to be sufficiently stimulated by vivid images of his people's suffering for it to motivate him to help them out (Im 1999). The charm of this interpretation is that it satisfies both the need for immediate action on the part of the king and the theoretical requirement in Mèngzǐ that his helping behavior must be motivated by his feeling of compassion. However, as David Wong has pointed out, this interpretation seems to conflict with a number of passages in the *Mèngzǐ* that tell us that moral development is not merely a matter of a simple recovery or reinforcement of what is innately in the human mind as in

[7] Mèngzǐ's description of Shùn 舜 in *Mèngzǐ* 4B19 as an ideal agent who acts out of humaneness and righteousness (*yóu rényì xíng* 由仁義行) instead of acting out humaneness and righteousness (*xíng rényì* 行仁義) can also be considered in this context. I thank Hagop Sarkissian for suggesting my citation of this passage here.

[8] This reading of *Mèngzǐ* 1A7 is also facilitated by a particular way of interpreting Mèngzǐ's remark in the same passage that "your benevolence is sufficient to reach animals, but your benefits do not reach your people; why is it so?" That is, this remark can be taken to imply that since the king is capable of feeling compassion for an animal, which is obviously a more difficult object than humans for the king to sympathize with, it must be easier for him to feel compassion for his people; and given this, if the king fails to feel compassion for them, it is probably not due to his inability but his unwillingness to use his emotional capacity. However, there is an alternative way to interpret this remark: it can be taken as an urge to *show* benevolence—that is, to *act benevolently* by taking care of their practical needs (the position of the first interpretation of the Mengzian extension of compassion). Moreover, later in the passage the king confesses that his great political ambitions (*dàyù* 大欲) prevent him from applying his compassion to his people. Given these, it seems to be the case that the king has a hard time extending his compassion for the ox to his people, while seeing that the latter are a more natural object of his compassion in normal conditions. This is exactly the reason why he is required to go through the process of self-cultivation. Additionally, we must also note that although it may be in his power to embark on and continue with this process, it is only partially in his power, if at all, for his actions to be sufficiently motivated by compassion until he completes the process of emotional extension. I thank an anonymous reviewer of this essay for giving me an opportunity to think about this issue more deeply.

WÁNG Yángmíng 王陽明, but rather a long process of arduous training that aims at substantial change in one's emotional make-up (Wong 2002: 191; Kim forthcoming).

5 Breaking the Puzzle

So, the question is how to put together the three pieces of the puzzle: (P1) the urgency of some acts that will remove or alleviate the suffering of others, (P2) the requirement that these acts be motivated by compassion, and (P3) the fact that it takes time and effort to cultivate compassion. The apparent dilemma in this puzzle has been dubbed "the problem of immediate action" by Nivison (Nivison 1996: 108–110): (1) there are some acts whose performance cannot be postponed, but (2) the agent is not emotionally ready to perform those acts. Moreover, (3) the only source of moral action in Mèngzǐ is ethical emotions like compassion and respect, or shame and dislike, and one can screw up the whole process of moral cultivation by forcing oneself to perform acts that one is not emotionally ready to perform, just like the foolish farmer in Mèngzǐ's anecdote who tried to help his paddy plants grow faster by pulling on them, leading them all to wither away (*Mèngzǐ* 2A2).

Among these three pieces of the puzzle, the first one is hard to ignore. Look at the following passage:

> DÀI Yíngzhī 戴盈之 said: "A tax of one in ten and abolishing the duties at passes and markets, we are not capable of doing it this year. What do you think if we were to make some reductions [this year] and wait until next year, when we will put an end to [these taxes?]" Mèngzǐ said: "Suppose there is a person who steals his neighbor's chicken every day. Someone tells him, 'This is not the way of the nobleman.' [He] responds, 'Let me reduce it to stealing one chicken per month [for now]; I would like to wait until next year before quitting it.' If you know that something is not a right thing [to do], then [you should] quit it as quickly as possible; why wait until next year?" (*Mèngzǐ* 3B8)

Here we find another instance of a close parallel to the Mozian extension that we witnessed above. The paradigmatic case of moral action in this passage is presented by the story where one is advised to refrain from stealing a neighbor's property, and the reason why it is wrong (*búyì* 不義) is that it goes against the way of the nobleman (*júnzǐ* 君子), one of the ethical ideals in Confucianism. From the fact that Mèngzǐ himself tells this story, we can also see that Mèngzǐ believes that one's knowledge of the wrongness of a certain action will lead one to refrain from that action in normal circumstances (internalism). In Mèngzǐ's view, there can be no question about the correctness of this position in the case of theft, and therefore this can be considered a paradigmatic case of moral action in the Mengzian extension. In addition, this case is intended by Mèngzǐ as an analogy to the case where DÀI Yíngzhī, a high official in the state of Sòng 宋 having the power to reduce or even abolish some taxes, judges that his state cannot currently afford to reduce taxes to the rate of one-tenth and abolish the customs and market taxes and proposes instead that he will make some reductions and wait until the next year to change completely to the suggested tax system. Insofar as Mèngzǐ intends this case to be analogous to the former one, this can be considered as an extension of the former.

Now, let us compare this Mengzian extension to the Mozian one in Passages A through E above more closely. In both instances of moral extension, the paradigmatic cases equally concern theft, and the acts of criticism and punishment (in Mòzǐ) and the act of quitting theft (in Mèngzǐ) likewise originate from or are motivated by the agents' beliefs or knowledge that (1) theft is wrong and (2) this is because it causes damage to others for the purpose of benefiting oneself (in Mòzǐ) and that (1) theft is wrong and (2) this is because it goes against the way of the nobleman (in Mèngzǐ) respectively. In the Mozian extension, the agents would move from Case A to the extended cases B through E by recourse to such beliefs as that (1) the crimes in Cases A through E are of the same category in that they all harm others for selfish purposes, (2) those crimes get increasingly serious as one moves from Case A toward E, and (3) a crime of a more serious kind deserves more severe treatment. Likewise, in the Mengzian extension, the (imaginative or figurative) movement from quitting the act of stealing a neighbor's chicken to quitting the practice of heavily taxing the commoners is made possible by Mèngzǐ's belief that imposing heavy taxes on the commoners is no different from, or falls within the same category as, harming them by stealing their property.

Concerning our discussion of the three pieces of Mèngzǐ's puzzle, this passage again reveals Mèngzǐ's thinking that a certain type of acts, such as alleviating people's suffering by reducing taxes for them, cannot be postponed or compromised. Moreover, unlike *Mèngzǐ* 1A7, this passage never mentions any emotional motivator of reducing the taxes, and this reveals that moral actions are not always motivated by emotions in Mèngzi's thought. Admittedly, the virtue of righteousness (*yì* 義) is deeply related with the feeling of shame and dislike (*xiūwù zhī xīn* 羞惡之心), and such things as serving a corrupt ruler (*Mèngzǐ* 2A9), breaking the proper rules of driving a chariot in a ritual hunt (3B1), getting a government job by improper means (3B3), and one's failure to act in accordance with righteousness in general (6A10) are mentioned as intentional objects of shame and/or dislike by Mèngzǐ. However, as we have just seen in my discussion of *Mèngzǐ* 3B8 above, this does not mean that ethical emotions are the only source of moral motivation in Mèngzǐ as Nivison claims (cf. Kim 2018), and consequently the second piece of the puzzle, namely the requirement that moral actions be (always or only) motivated by ethical emotions, does not have to be retained.

Despite this, however, cardinal virtues in Mèngzǐ like humaneness (*rén* 仁), righteousness (*yì* 義), and propriety (*lǐ* 禮) are to be achieved through cultivating the corresponding affective sprouts of compassion, shame and dislike, and respect, and the ideal Mengzian agent is still understood to be the one who acts out of these emotional responses spontaneously in relevant situations (cf. *Mèngzǐ* 4B19). Given this, moral actions' being motivated by appropriate emotions is best understood not as a requirement to be applied at a micro-level for every occasion of action, but as an ethical ideal that is generally recommended from the beginning but is only obtainable at the highest level of moral cultivation. Then, the possibility of immediate action without any adequate emotional back-up (the first piece of the puzzle) and the need to engage in a long process of emotional cultivation (the third piece) being granted, what does he mean by "taking up" the feeling of compassion and "applying" it to the case of his people's suffering in *Mèngzǐ* 1A7? And how is this (mental) act of "applying" compassion to relevant cases supposed to contribute to cultivating one's compassion (and for that matter, other emotions as well through the act of "applying")?

6 The Nature of Emotions in Mèngzǐ

In order to answer these questions properly, we first need to get clear about what Mèngzǐ thinks emotions (especially ethical emotions) are. Concerning this issue, I have argued elsewhere that we can ascribe to Mèngzǐ the view that emotions are a kind of concern-based construals, originally proposed by Robert Roberts as a general theory of emotions (Roberts 1988). According to this view, an emotion is a particular way in which things present themselves to the person who feels that emotion, and one's construal of things in a certain situation—that is, the particular way in which one interprets the situation one is in—is largely determined by one's primary long-term or short-term concerns in the situation in question (Kim 2010: 408; Kim forthcoming). For example, if one felt compassion for a child about to fall into a well (*Mèngzǐ* 2A6), that feeling contains the idea that an innocent being is endangered, and is based upon one's sympathetic concern for the welfare of that being; and if one was given food in an insulting manner and got mad (6A10), one's anger is mainly the thought that he did not get due respect and is based on one's serious belief that being in such a situation really matters (Kim forthcoming).

It is important not to misunderstand this view as a thesis that emotions are a type of judgments. For instance, a critic, reviewing my work on compassion (*cèyǐn zhī xīn* 惻隱之心) in Mèngzǐ, argues that my interpretation of *cèyǐn zhī xīn* as a concern-based construal reduces it to a form of moral judgment, consequently failing to do justice to the motivational and affective components of *cèyǐn zhī xīn* (Hu 2019: Section 4.2). Unfortunately, however, this criticism fails to make the crucial conceptual distinction between construal and judgment. As I have made clear in my work on *cèyǐn zhī xīn*, the concern-based construal view of emotions distinguishes itself from the view of emotions as judgments in that the former can explain the existence of "recalcitrant emotions" fairly well whereas the latter has difficulty explaining this phenomenon. For example, according to the concern-based construal view, I can fear air travel while sincerely believing that this fear of mine is unwarranted, because in fearing air travel I *construe* this type of travel to be unsafe, and this construal seems so compelling to me that it may not be trumped by my best *judgment* that the airplane is one of the safest means of travel. On the other hand, if my fear of air travel were actually a judgment or belief that it is unsafe, it is hard to explain why this unjustified fear does not disappear when I make the better judgment that air travel is safe (Kim 2010: 408–409).[9]

[9] Another mistaken claim about my view is that I try to find the motivating power of *cèyǐn zhī xīn* in *chùtì* 怵惕 (shock and alarm), which is no more than a contingent addition to the element of *cèyǐn* 惻隱 in *Mèngzǐ* 2A6 (Hu 2019: Section 4.2). However, this criticism fails to see that I do not look for the motivational power of *cèyǐn zhī xīn* in the element of *chùtì*, which seems to approximate what Paul Ekman calls the "affect programs" of fear and surprise. As a set of complex, coordinated, and automated responses including certain types of physiological changes and behavioral tendencies, the element of *chùtì* may facilitate one's helping behavior for endangered beings (Griffiths 1997: 77–78, 89–90; Kim 2010: 414). However, *chùtì* seems to be at best a mere occasional addition to *cèyǐn zhī xīn* in the *Mèngzǐ*, and this is the reason why the core of the motivational power of *cèyǐn zhī xīn* must be found in the element of *cèyǐn*. As I have made clear in my previous work, I interpret *cèyǐn* as a painful feeling a sympathetic agent feels at her *construal* or thought that another sentient being is in danger and the imminent harm must be prevented, and I believe that this is the main source of motivation for moral action in the case of *cèyǐn zhī xīn* (Kim 2010: 415–419).

7 Cultivating Compassion: A Social Psychological Approach

With this brief understanding of Mengzian emotions as concern-based construals, let us now think about how one's compassion could be cultivated in such a way that one feels compassion not only in paradigmatic cases but eventually also in extended ones in Mèngzǐ's thought. In addition to answering the questions raised at the end of Section 5 above, it must also be explained at this point from the view of Mengzian emotions as concern-based construals how one's immediate action without sufficient emotional back-up (such as King Xuān's helping behaviors for his people) may contribute to cultivating one's compassion rather than ruining it. Let us consider first, then, what the best understanding of "taking up" the feeling of compassion and "applying" it to the case of the people's suffering would be in *Mèngzǐ* 1A7. According to the concern-based construal view of Mengzian emotions, the king's *cèyǐn zhī xīn* or compassion toward an ox about to be slaughtered can be considered a painful construal that the ox is facing undeserved death, based on the king's sympathetic concern for the well-being of this poor creature. Granting this, Mèngzǐ's recommendation to "take up" this feeling of compassion and "apply" it to the case of the king's people can be understood as an urge to *take up* the king's sympathetic construal of the ox to be anticipating undeserved death and *apply* it to the case of his people—in other words, to construe the people to be suffering undeserved hardship and in dire need of help from a sympathetic concern as well.

As in both *Mèngzǐ* 3B8 and the Mozian version of moral extension discussed above, the process of extending the king's sympathetic construal from the case of the ox to that of the people is guided by the similarities between these two cases, namely that, abstractly speaking, both the ox and the king's people face undeserved harm, they are both in highly vulnerable circumstances, and something must be done to change their situations. In addition, the application of the original construal of the ox to be facing undeserved harm (and so forth) to the extended case of the king's people seems likely to be mediated by a process of propositional reasoning, roughly as follows: (1) The king construes that the ox is facing undeserved death and something must be done to save it. (2) It is pointed out to the king that his subjects are also in a similar situation, suffering from natural disasters, high taxes, frequent conscriptions to the army, and the like. (3) The king agrees to this view; that is, he recognizes that there are indeed important similarities just mentioned between the ox and his people. (4) This series of thoughts and observations leads the king to think that he has to take measures to save his people from misfortune, and he endorses this thought. Now, by endorsing this, he is making a moral judgment that he should do something to remove or alleviate their suffering, and as we have seen in *Mèngzǐ* 3B8 above, this judgment by itself carries sufficient motivation for him to reduce taxes, open his granaries for his people, and so forth unless he is under the pathological influences of the weakness of will (*akrasia*) or accidie (*acedia*).

However, the crucial point to note here is that this judgment, although it can motivate the king to act for the sake of his people, is not backed up by a sufficient degree of compassion. This is the point where Nivison might jump in and warn that this type of immediate action, since done when the agent is not yet emotionally ready, may screw up the long-term process of cultivating his compassion. Would there be any way for the king's construal of his people to be in dire need of help and his subsequent

actions based on that construal to contribute to cultivating his compassion rather than ruining it? Or, would the king only cause the whole process of compassion-cultivation to fail by conscious and effortful attempts to construe his people to be suffering undeserved hardship and to help them? It does not seem clear to me in what sense such sincere efforts to understand the situation of those in dire need and to help them can bring about detrimental effects on the project of cultivating compassion for them. And even if there were such risks, they hardly seem inevitable. On the other hand, I believe that there are at least equally strong possibilities that King Xuān's construal of his people to be suffering undeserved difficulties and his subsequent helping behaviors have positive influences on the cultivation of his compassion. In the following, I explore these latter possibilities by drawing on a specific model of human evaluations and some related research findings in social psychology.

7.1 The Associative-Propositional Evaluation (APE) Model

According to the associative-propositional evaluation (APE) model, human beings' evaluations of things can be classified into implicit and explicit ones. Two distinct mental processes—associative and propositional—are supposed to underlie implicit and explicit evaluations respectively. Associative processes are defined as the "activation of mental associations in memory," and are assumed to be "driven by the principles of feature matching and spatio-temporal contiguity." On the other hand, propositional processes are defined as "the validation of the information implied by activated associations," which are supposedly "guided by the principles of cognitive consistency" (Gawronski and Bodenhausen 2014: 449).

For instance, when one encounters a stimulus, say, certain features of a human face, the concept of *African American* and the representations of the stimulus (e.g. "hostile," "lazy," or "musical") that are associated with the concept of *African American* and stored in one's memory may be automatically activated. At the same time, a spontaneous affective response of either positive or negative valence arises in response to the representations, depending on whether they have positive or negative connotations in sum (ibid.).

A crucial point about implicit evaluations is that they are independent of the assignment of truth values. In other words, even if a certain stimulus automatically activates the concept of *African American* and the related representations of "hostile" or "lazy" and consequently elicits negative affective reactions like fear or contempt toward that object, one need not personally endorse this response. One may instead reject the propositional implication of this implicit evaluation, and consciously hold that African Americans are not hostile or lazy (Gawronski and Bodenhausen 2006: 693).[10]

[10] When viewed from the perspective of emotions as concern-based construals, one's affective reactions toward an object and their propositional implications can be understood respectively as emotions and construals. For example, one's affective reaction of fear toward certain features of someone's face embodies one's construal, based on one's concern for safety, that someone with those facial features tends to be hostile or violent, and this construal is in turn based on one's disposition to associate those features with the idea of "hostile" or "violent," which is activated when one encounters those features in certain contexts.

According to Bertram Gawronski and Galen V. Bodenhausen, the proposers of the APE model, what makes such a rejection possible is the inconsistency between the propositional implications of one's negative affective responses toward the object and other "momentarily considered propositions." In other words, the affective reactions resulting from the activation of certain associated concepts or ideas in one's memory are translated into propositional statements such as "African Americans are hostile," "African Americans are lazy," or "African Americans deserve negative treatment," and these propositions tend to be affirmed by a default mental process unless they conflict with a set of other propositions one believes to be true, such as (i) "negative evaluations of disadvantaged groups are wrong" and (ii) "African Americans are a disadvantaged group."

According to Gawronski and Bodenhausen, this conflict at the level of propositional reasoning can be resolved in several different ways, including either the negation of (i) or (ii) so that one may keep one's negative affective reactions toward the object in question and their propositional implications either by rejecting one's evaluative proposition and thinking that negative evaluations of disadvantaged groups are alright, or by rejecting the nonevaluative proposition and adopting the belief that African Americans are not a disadvantaged group. This is a case of "bottom-up" effects of associative on propositional processes (Gawronski and Bodenhausen 2014: 450–451).

However, the inconsistency can also be resolved by rejecting one's negative affective reactions as a proper basis for one's evaluative judgments about the object in question. In such a case, one's implicit and explicit evaluations of the object are disconnected, and this may backfire—one explicitly believes that African Americans are not hostile, for example, but this belief ironically enhances the original association between the object and its representation as hostile. In this case, on the other hand, one's explicit positive evaluations of the object tend to lead him to search for other information in one's associative memory that will support one's positive beliefs about the object; and if the search is successful, it would lead one to have positive affective reactions toward the object, thus promoting the associative link between the object and good attributes—for instance, African Americans and such ideas as "friendly," "diligent," or "musical." This is a case where correspondence between one's implicit and explicit evaluations is produced in a "top-down" fashion (Gawronski and Bodenhausen 2014: 451; Galdi, Gawronski, Arcuri, and Friese 2012: 559–561).[11]

7.2 How to Extend Compassion (I): by Focusing on the Similarities

In my view, this last kind of "top-down" influences of propositional reasoning on one's affective responses—both the rejection of negative affective responses and the promotion of positive responses to their object—seems to shed some light on our discussion

[11] Galdi et al. do not discuss the example of African Americans; only the general point that one's conviction about a proposition facilitates searching for corroborating information in one's associative memory is taken from the article. In addition, my presentation of Gawronski and Bodenhausen's example of African Americans is slightly different from the original, presumably without distorting any important points intended to be made by the authors. They talk about the case of positive emotions acquired through directed memory search mainly in terms of the example of old people and their attributes as "good drivers," rather than the example of African Americans as I presented above.

of how King Xuān's construal of his people to be suffering undeserved hardship and his thought that some measures must be taken to help them out can have positive effects on cultivating his compassion for his people.

First of all, as mentioned above, one of the principles guiding associative processes is feature-matching, and a crucial characteristic of feature-matching is that two distinct stimuli need not be perceptually identical across time and context for them to elicit the same evaluative response. In other words, their passing a critical threshold of similarity is sufficient for them to activate the same mental representation (Smith 1996, cited in Gawronski and Bodenhausen 2014: 449).

To apply this idea to the case of King Xuān in *Mèngzǐ* 1A7, King Xuān says that the trembling ox being led to slaughter reminded him of an innocent man going to the execution ground, and that was part of the reason why he felt compassion for the ox. Now, the same imagined man apparently shares more commonalities with King Xuān's people than he does with the ox, and considering this we could plausibly conjecture that the king would not have much difficulty in extending his compassion for the ox to his people if he tries to focus his attention on these commonalities and as a result comes to admit *sincerely* that his people, going through various difficulties under his government, deserve compassionate treatment.

Admittedly, as Nivison and other scholars in his wake have correctly pointed out, a mere recognition of the similarity between these cases and the related desire to maintain logical consistency between one's responses to them are not sufficient for the king to extend his compassion to his people (Nivison 1996: 99; Wong 2002: 190). For the king can maintain the consistency between his responses equally well by choosing not to feel compassion for the ox and working out his emotions accordingly (Van Norden 1991: 355).

However, Mèngzǐ does not recommend this option, presumably because the imminent suffering of the ox he perceived through its cowering behavior provides an ethical reason to save it, and King Xuān's compassion for the ox is what enables him to detect such a reason. Although saving the ox at the expense of the ritual of consecrating a bell with its blood turns out to be not the best decision to make all-things-considered in the situation in question, Mèngzǐ nevertheless exalts the king's compassion for the ox as an important emotion to be cultivated that will someday make King Xuān a true king over all of China.[12]

[12] One might think that insofar as the right thing to do in the situation in question was to kill the ox and consecrate a bell with its blood, the king's construal of the situation as one where an innocent being was facing undeserved death must be a misconstrual, and consequently this makes it wrong for Mèngzǐ to recommend the king to extend his compassion for the ox to his people (because it would be wrong to extend misconstruals). However, we do not have to think that the king's construal of the ox as facing undeserved death is a misconstrual, because what makes the king's saving the ox a wrong action all-things-considered is not that the ox was not innocent or that the ox's death was not miserable, but that the ritual of consecrating a bell with its blood was more important, *all-things-considered*, than the ox's undeserved, pitiful death. In other words, what makes the king's action of saving the ox after all a wrong one is not his misconstrual of the situation the ox was in, but the fact that there was a more important consideration, all-things-considered, that overrides the ethical reason to save the ox, which was correctly perceived by the king through his sympathetic construal of the ox's situation. Moreover, in the context of his benevolent governance of the country, there seems to be hardly any consideration that renders the king's extending his compassion to his people and acting on it a wrong action. For this reason, I concur with Wong against Emily McRae, who argues that King Xuān's compassion for the ox is not a correct response and therefore Mèngzǐ does not recommend cultivating it (McRae 2011: 593; Wong 2015: 41).

Given this, recognizing the similarities between the situations of the ox and the people can motivate the king to maintain consistency only in one direction, namely by growing his compassion for his people. Moreover, I think that the consistency that matters here is more than a logical one. As we have seen in the Mozian extension and our discussion of *Mèngzǐ* 3B8 above, recognizing the relevant similarities between the paradigmatic and extended cases carries an important sense of *ethical* normativity; and in tandem with the picture of the ideal Mengzian agent, awareness of this ethical normativity will require the agent to act and feel in all relevant cases in line with the way he acted and felt in the paradigmatic cases. If King Xuān takes this requirement seriously (Mèngzǐ urges him to do so and King Xuān at least seems to admit that he should), this will lead him to construe his people to be *genuinely* going through undeserved suffering, thus preparing him to view them with a sympathetic eye and be capable of feeling compassion for them to a significant extent.[13]

7.3 How to Extend Compassion (II): by Looking at Things Differently

However, one might still wonder: how could the king's *construing* his people to be in a miserable situation and his belief that such a construal is warranted and ethically required lead him actually to *feel* miserable about their situation? In other words, even if we grant that the ethical normativity described above can lead the king to accept sincerely that his people are in a miserable situation and thus deserve compassion, how could this belief about the situation of his people make him feel compassion for them as well? Is this not the flip side of cases such as an alcoholic craving alcohol while sincerely disvaluing it or a former racist still feeling a little hostile and contemptuous toward minorities while sincerely disavowing his racist beliefs? There are such cases

[13] What I mean by King Xuān's *genuine* construal of his people's situation, or his construal of his people to be *genuinely* suffering undeserved misfortunes, is well illustrated by the following example discussed by Robert Roberts and W. Jay Wood: Two equally intelligent observers are watching a real estate agent, who tries with adroit maneuvers to persuade a member of a racial minority not to buy a house in a majority-race neighborhood. Both observers rightly recognize that the agent's action is unjust, but one observer feels angry at the agent and sad for the home buyer whereas the other one feels mild amusement about and even a bit of admiration for the agent's skill in handling such "problems." According to Roberts and Wood, the person who really knows the injustice of the agent's action is the former, and the latter is missing something epistemically; the marker of knowledge here is the former observer's emotions (Roberts and Wood 2007: 52–53).

In the case of King Xuān, prior to the conversation with Mèngzǐ, he might have been like the second observer in the example above, recognizing the sufferings of his people indifferently at most and feeling hardly anything about them. However, with Mèngzǐ's help he begins to appreciate his own feeling of compassion for the ox and also comes to see the miseries of his people from a new perspective, and this experience—and the accumulation of similar experiences over time—will gradually turn his formerly indifferent acknowledgment of their suffering into a sincere, genuine construal that they are going through great hardship and that he needs to take care of them. In my view, this moment of perspective-change is the point when sympathetic concern for the people begins to arise in the king's heart. I thank Jacklyn Cleofas for informing me of this example of Roberts and Wood's and inviting me to think more thoroughly on this point.

indeed, but I think that for this reason the Mengzian extension of ethical emotions is all the more required. Then, how can the gap between thinking that something is a proper object of compassion and really feeling compassion for that object be closed?[14]

According to Gawronski and Bodenhausen, in addition to the principles of feature matching and spatio-temporal contiguity mentioned above, another principle guiding the associative processes is "pattern activation." "Pattern activation refers to the idea that the activation of particular associations in memory is determined by the relative fit between (a) the pre-existing structure of associations in memory and (b) the particular set of external input stimuli." For example, the set of stimuli *basketball* and *gym* may activate the idea of "bouncing" among others as part of its associative pattern, but not the idea of "floating." On the other hand, the associative pattern activated by the set of stimuli *basketball* and *water* includes the concept of "floating" but excludes that of "bouncing." In short, although the concept of "basketball" is associated in memory with both "bouncing" and "floating," which of these two becomes activated depends on which context the stimulus *basketball* is encountered in (Gawronski and Bodenhausen 2006: 693).

Applying this idea to the case of King Xuān and his people, we might suppose that the reason why King Xuān had difficulty feeling compassion for the suffering of his people was probably that he was viewing them in a wrong frame of the mind—perhaps merely as a means to realize his political goals by collecting high taxes from them and sending them to dangerous battlegrounds in aggressive warfare against other states. However, the same people can be viewed in a very different light—they are sentient beings capable of feeling pain just as much as the king is; they are someone else's parents or children who are likely to have been respected or loved as much as the king has; and they are often helpless and forlorn, and for this reason they are to be cared for

[14] At this point, one might also think that the case of an alcoholic or a former racist is about counteracting negative feelings effectively or even eradicating them, whereas the case of King Xuān is about growing or strengthening positive feelings, and consequently that the APE model, if it is mainly about the former case, does not fit in with the Mengzian extension of moral emotions, whose main concern is the latter. However, this is actually far from the case, because the APE model described above does talk about both cases of positive and negative emotions, and these two types of emotional control can also be understood consistently in terms of willful efforts to distribute attention, aiming at weakening or strengthening the links between the intentional objects of one's emotions and the related ideas or concepts in one's associative memory.

As we have seen at the end of Section 7.1 above, after discussing the rejection of negative affective reactions toward an object, Gawronski and Bodenhausen introduce a complementary process of searching for other information that supports positive beliefs about the object. For example, rejecting one's implicit evaluation of old people as bad drivers by explicitly denying the proposition that "old people are bad drivers" can be supplemented by a subsequent directed search for positive information supporting the proposition that "old people are good drivers." If this search is successful, it helps to dissociate the link between the concepts of "old people" and "bad drivers," while enhancing the associative link between "old people" and "good drivers" (Gawronski and Bodenhausen 2014: 451).

In light of this, my explanation of the case of King Xuān and his people in Section 7.2 above can be redescribed in terms of willful efforts to focus one's attention on the commonalities among the ox, the imagined innocent, and the people, so that one's recognition of the commonalities and the subsequent conviction that the people's difficulties must be treated benevolently tend to strengthen the associative link between the people and such ideas as "innocent," "sentient," or "fellow beings" in one's memory. (And this strengthened link will in turn facilitate the king's having sympathetic concern for his people.) Then, what about the aspect of controlling negative emotions? Admittedly this aspect is not so much emphasized as the cultivation of compassion in *Mèngzǐ* 1A7, but my explanation below of the shift of attention or changing the frame of mind can easily make sense of this aspect as well (see below). I thank Hagop Sarkissian for raising this important issue.

by their ruler as if they were the ruler's own children, as suggested in the *Shūjīng* 書經 (*The Book of Documents*). Of course, the king may not be able to switch the context or his frame of mind as freely as he wishes, but the situation can be improved. Wong says:

> [A] recent psychological study indicating causal influence of the slow and reflective over the automatic and non-conscious discrimination of patterns suggests that we should re-examine the very distinction between automatic and controlled processing…. [M]uch of the earlier work operationalized automaticity by reference to the subjective feeling of the agent that he lacked control over his emotional response to a stimulus. The subjective feeling of lacking control, however, can co-exist with the internally represented goal states of the agent influencing which aspects of a situation are attended to and processed. The goals of an agent may also motivate not only reappraisal of an emotional object but an initial fast and non-conscious appraisal. (Wong 2015: 32)

This remark of Wong's is supported by a series of research suggesting that cognitive or propositional processes are capable of affecting "automatic" processes of emotional response by redistributing one's attention. According to Lisa F. Barrett and her colleagues, one's internally represented goal states can affect the processing of information by drawing one's attention to or causing the withdrawal of attention unconsciously from certain aspects of an object. This kind of goal-based, controlled attention can "tune" more automatic, stimulus-driven forms of attention including the ability of a stimulus to capture one's attention, and this in turn comes to affect one's emotional responses to the object in question. For example, one who has the goal of cooperating with a colleague is less likely to get angry at the colleague's offensive joke than someone else who lacks the same goal (Barrett, Ochsner, and Gross 2007: 188–189).

Similarly, Christine Wilson-Mendenhall and Lawrence Barsalou propose that conceptual processing plays a key role in the generation of emotional responses, and attention is important for acquiring and using concepts because the attention systems of the brain select specific aspects of the current experience. In addition, they refer to representing a set of concepts in a particular situation through the aid of language as "situated conceptualization," and propose that a situated conceptualization enables one to interpret and respond to what is (interpreted to be) occurring in a certain way. Furthermore, a situated conceptualization can underlie an emotion as well in the following manner: imagine someone watching her grandchildren smiling after tasting her apple pies that she baked for a family reunion; she conceptualizes this situation under the rubric of "family reunion," and this leads her to perceive their smiles as broader than usual, thereby making her feel happy (Wilson-Mendenhall and Barsalou 2016: 547–556).

Likewise, King Xuān could have construed his people's suffering either as a necessary cost to be born for accomplishing his political goals or a misery justifiably inflicted on his people. (This being the case, although not specified in *Mèngzǐ* 1A7, King Xuān might have felt indifferent, or even contemptuous, toward his people.) However, as a result of being *persuaded* by Mèngzǐ that his people do share meaningful commonalities with the ox or an innocent man facing undeserved death—this means that King Xuān has now begun to *conceptualize* the situation of his people to be similar to that of the ox and the imagined innocent man that he had responded to

sympathetically, King Xuān may now be more attentive to the aspects of his people's situation among others that will likely facilitate his feeling compassion for them. And a crucial point to keep in mind here is that the similarity between his people on the one hand and the ox and the innocent man on the other that King Xuān came to be newly aware of is not of the kind that he admits reluctantly or half-mindedly but of the kind that he is beginning to be drawn to *affectively*.

8 Concluding Remarks

How to cultivate oneself into a virtuous agent who feels emotions at the right times, to the right objects, and to the right degree so that such emotions can make proper motives for moral action is one of the questions that have preoccupied the greatest minds from the East and the West. However, one's answer to this question can vary considerably depending on what one's conception of emotions is, and in this essay I have sketched my own answer based on the concern-based construal view of emotions. According to this view, emotions are particular ways in which one construes things based on one's long-term or short-term concerns, and this entails that we might be able to have some control over our emotions through their interactions with our propositional thoughts. The APE model and the related research findings reviewed above seem to support this picture, and Mèngzǐ's proposal to King Xuān to "take up" his feeling of compassion for the ox and "apply" it to the case of his people can be interpreted in this light as a proposal to focus attention on the ethically important similarities between them and thereby to re-adjust his frame of mind through which he construes his people's suffering. As I have argued elsewhere, the concern-based construal view of emotions can be also applied to respect (*gōngjìng zhī xīn* 恭敬之心; Kim 2014) and by extension to shame and dislike (*xiūwù zhī xīn* 羞惡之心), and consequently the same model of emotional cultivation and moral extension (*tuī* 推) in general presented above could be applied to these Mengzian sprouts as well.

Acknowledgments I am deeply grateful to Philip J. Ivanhoe, Winnie Sung, Hagop Sarkissian, Jacklyn Cleofas, Jihyun Hwang, and the anonymous reviewers of this essay for their inspiring comments, suggestions, and references.

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