SOCIALIZATION TO CIVIL SOCIETY
A Life History Study of Community Leaders
Peter Robert Sawyer

Using a life history approach, looks at what influences citizens to participate in the voluntary associations that comprise and promote civil society.

While many political theorists argue that the problems and failures of American democracy are rooted in the decline of civil society, few examine how American institutions socialize citizens to participate in the voluntary associations that comprise civil society. Peter Robert Sawyer offers a life history approach to explore citizen involvement within one community in upstate New York. Sawyer’s informants model enlightened self-interest and participate actively in their community’s voluntary associations. Their life histories, revealed in rich narrative, tell us how they think about political life and how various agents of socialization—family, peers, school, church, community, media, workplace, and voluntary associations themselves—influence their commitment.

The results of this study provide some interesting revelations about how to construct government, corporate, education, and family institutions to encourage civic participation and to maintain the overall health of civil society.

“Socialization to Civil Society is timely and addresses an important line of inquiry in the social sciences. The author is precisely correct in his assessment of the linkages between the problem-solving capacity of communities and civil society.” — Thomas A. Lyson, coeditor of Under the Blade: The Conversion of Agricultural Landscapes

Peter Robert Sawyer is Department Chair of History, Philosophy, and Social Sciences at Hudson Valley Community College.

August ■ 224 pp.
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MENCIUS ON BECOMING HUMAN
James Behuniak Jr.

A new interpretation of the Confucian classic, the Mencius, based on both traditional sources and newly discovered documents.

Using current research from traditional sources and newly unearthed documents dating from the Warring States period (403–221 B.C.E.), Mencius on Becoming Human offers a timely interpretation of a central text in the Confucian canon. The author carefully reconstructs the philosophical assumptions that underwrite the teachings of the Mencius, returning the text to its native intellectual world. The result is a compelling new reading of an ancient classic, one that is both sensitive to the details of historical context and contemporary in its philosophical implications.

James Behuniak Jr. argues that the notion of an essential, ahistorical “human nature” is not part of the process of “becoming human” outlined in the Mencius. Rather, becoming human is described as a process of developing a qualitatively “human” disposition within specific cultural and historical conditions as these are understood within a Warring States cosmology. The central themes of the Mencius—the importance of family, moral development, and human advancement—are each discussed within this reconstructed framework.

“This work is neatly balanced between commentary and independent philosophic study. It exemplifies what modern comparative philosophy ought to be. The author is faithful to the original materials and seeks to link the Mencius to current philosophic debates by presenting the Mencius text in light of the theme of becoming human.” — John H. Berthrong, author of Concerning Creativity: A Comparison of Chu Hsi, Whitehead, and Neville

James Behuniak Jr. is Assistant Professor of Philosophy at Sonoma State University. He is coeditor (with Roger T. Ames) of The Mencian Conception of Human Nature.

A volume in the SUNY series in Chinese Philosophy and Culture
Roger T. Ames, editor

October ■ 224 pp.
$40.00 hc only ISBN 0-7914-6229-3
Xunzi, one of the founders of Confucianism, is often compared to Aristotle in the sense that Xunzi is a great synthesizer as well as an original thinker in his own right. This book situates Xunzi's philosophy in the context of early Chinese philosophy, particularly with what the author identifies as Chinese “naturalism.”

Early Chinese naturalism refers to a unique Chinese philosophical orientation that seeks normativity in the realm of nature. In early China, where the notion of transcendence never occupied a central position in philosophical discourse, it was perfectly reasonable for philosophers to turn to the “naturalness” or “spontaneity” of nature as a source of value or guidance for a way of life. Janghee Lee argues that the most prominent features of Xunzi’s philosophy—his famous doctrine that human nature is bad and his strong emphasis on ritual—can be understood as Xunzi’s critical response to the naturalistic trend of his time, which can be found not only in Daoist philosophers like Zhuangzi, but also in other Confucian philosophers such as Mencius. According to the author, Xunzi’s concept of xin (mind-heart) provides a crucial hint for understanding his ritual-oriented philosophy, clearly contrasted with the naturalistic tendencies of early Chinese philosophy.

“The book makes the important claim that Xunzi was opposed to a kind of ‘naturalism’ he saw in his predecessors, especially Mencius and Zhuangzi, believing morality to be based, instead, on human agency; and the author seeks to analyze the concept of xin as used by Xunzi to make his case. His contrast of Kant and Xunzi on the notion of autonomy and nature is very good and deserves a wide audience.” — Henry Rosemont Jr., cotranslator of The Analects of Confucius: A Philosophical Translation

Janghee Lee is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Ethics Education at Gyeongin National University of Education.

A volume in the SUNY series in Chinese Philosophy and Culture

August ■ 160 pp.
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This book charts new directions in Egyptian social history, providing the first systematic account of adaptation and protest among crafts and service workers in Egypt in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Using a wealth of new sources, John T. Chalcraft challenges conventional notions of craft stagnation and decline by recovering the largely unknown histories of crafts workers’ restructuring in the face of world economic integration, and their petitions, demonstrations, and strike-action at a time of state-building and colonial rule. Chalcraft demonstrates the economic importance of petty producers and service providers, and tells the story of widespread collective assertion couched in new discourses of citizenship and nationalism. He also gives a new interpretation of the end of the guilds in Egypt and addresses larger debates about unevenness under capitalism.

“The book makes the important claim that Xunzi was opposed to a kind of ‘naturalism’ he saw in his predecessors, especially Mencius and Zhuangzi, believing morality to be based, instead, on human agency; and the author seeks to analyze the concept of xin as used by Xunzi to make his case. His contrast of Kant and Xunzi on the notion of autonomy and nature is very good and deserves a wide audience.” — Ellis Jay Goldberg, editor of The Social History of Labor in the Middle East

“Chalcraft corrects a good number of errors and misunderstandings by previous scholars by concentrating on social strata that have hitherto largely been excluded from the history of nineteenth-century Egypt.” — Joel Beinin, author of Workers and Peasants in the Modern Middle East

John T. Chalcraft is Lecturer in Modern Middle Eastern History at the University of Edinburgh.

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