

OF MOTION AND METAPHOR: THE THEME OF KINESIS IN CHUANG TZU

by
Susan D. Blum

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Thesis Committee:

Associate Professor Kenneth J. DeWoskin
Professor Shuen-fu Lin

In the far away Ku-yi mountains there is a holy man.
His flesh is like ice and he is gentle like a young maiden.
He does not eat the five grains; he inhales the wind and drinks
the dew, rides the cloudy vapors and drives the flying dragon.
Thus he wanders outside the four seas.
When his spirit concentrates he causes creatures to be free
from sickness and grain to ripen.

--Chuang Tzu

"Style" is not something extra, added on
like frosting on a cake. It is the
stuff of which the linguistic cake is
made.

--Deborah Tannen

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Introduction

This paper is an exploration of some of the factors determinant of Chuang Tzu's¹ 莊子 particular linguistic choices, especially the frequent appearance of terms and images concerned with the property of kinesis, which I define here as 'the fact of movement or its characteristics'; I included as well sources of motion such as animals or organs of motion, as they are also used dynamically in the text. I regard such choices, and their frequent appearances, as significant reflections of authors' worldviews, whether personal or cultural (or, more likely, both),² rather than as arbitrary terms chosen for no reason other

¹ I use 'Chuang Tzu' to refer to the text with that title, and 'Chuang Tzu' when I need to talk about the author(s) of Chuang Tzu. 'Chuang Tzu' is not, however, to be taken simply as the name of a person who wrote Chuang Tzu, as it is not clear how many authors the text had, nor who they were. But it is too unwieldy to use the phrase "the author(s) of Chuang Tzu," and so I will use 'Chuang Tzu' as shorthand for it.

² In terms of the relationship between language and worldview, much has been done on a language ("Navaho") and a people ("the Navaho") in the framework of the Whorf-Sapir hypothesis. Friedrich (1986, 1979) has recently attempted a reformulation of this hypothesis, and succeeds, I think, in rescuing it from the overstatements attributed to it by careless readers. Still, we know little about the continuum of whole language/society-individual, and the linguistic changes motivated by individual variation. Sociolinguists (Labov 1972, Hymes 1974) have suggested a framework within which to view variation, that is, socioeconomic class, including such classes as gender. Munro (1986) has explored the dominant metaphors in the writing of the Sung Confucian Chu Hsi, showing how they fit in with elements of his philosophy. Kenneth Burke 1961 shows how particular usage of Augustine, such as the frequent employ of prefixes such as "im-" or "in-" reflects the latter's preoccupation with "innerness." Cavell 1981 demonstrates that Thoreau's major concerns are

than decoration. Thus, our examination will focus on clusters of terms, connected through their mutual resonance, and some of the cultural factors which may account for their inclusion in the text. Some of these are historical; others are geographical or philosophical. All of them presuppose, however, a close reading of the text.

Chuang Tzu has been explored by other writers for its literary qualities, and for its philosophical content; those whose predilection inclines them toward one or the other pole have generally acknowledged as well that the text was multidimensional. But I have started with the assumptions (1) that we do not really know what the text was meant to "do", (2) that the linguistic surface is the only reliable fixture from which we may start, and (3) that the historical context, as much as this may be known, must be considered in any "thick description" (Geertz 1973, p. 6)³ of the text. Any investigation that begs the question of the text's function seems to me to be invalid; any that wishes to remove it from its place in a historical world is problematized from the beginning. In this study, I began with a close reading of the text, and endeavored to account for certain salient characteristics: I tried to explain the reasons for the

discernible through the linguistic surface of Walden. Becker 1979 associates the epistemology of Java with the language event of shadow theater. Hansen, in Language and Logic in Ancient China attempts to map the pattern of correspondences between language and ways of thought in early China.

³ Geertz borrows this notion from Gilbert Ryle, Collected Papers, Vol I.

particularly prevalent presence of kinetic terminology, assuming that we must take very seriously the text's own words--even if we do not always have the precise form of the original, material text.

It will be the object of this paper to demonstrate that Chuang Tzu uses words and images which exemplify acceptance of chaos and rejection of rigidity, in clusters of images concerned with motion, and that there is resonance between the very words chosen and Chuang Tzu's philosophical and historical situation. In particular I will show that in its advocacy of recognizing a continuum between the spiritual and material worlds--an ever-fluid boundary across which humans can freely move--that Chuang Tzu may be viewed largely as a conservative, regionally specific, response to the increasingly secular world of the late Warring States period.⁴

Chuang Tzu,⁵ the text at the center of this paper, is a

⁴ See Weber 1951, pp. 30-32, 169; and Maspero 1981, pp. 17-25, for the evolution of religion in Warring States China.

⁵ In this paper I will treat primarily the first seven chapters, the so-called "Inner Chapters," which are believed to contain the oldest, most homogeneous sections of the book. While no style is ever entirely homogeneous (Bakhtin 1981), the Inner Chapters are more appropriate for a study of this length than would be the entire text. Although the textual history of Chuang Tzu is complex and important, it is not really germane to my purpose. In brief, the text was first edited by Liu Hsiang (77-6 B.C.). Altogether there are now 33 chapters, and have been since Kuo Hsiang (d. A.D. 312) edited it. In the Han there is a record of Chuang Tzu in 52 chapters, mentioned in the Yi-wen chih ("Treatise on Literature and Art") in the Han Shu (Han History). Kuo separated out three different strata, which we know as the Inner Chapters (1-7), the Outer Chapters (8-22), and the Miscellaneous Chapters (23-33) which is the most heterogenous and

fantastic work of classical Chinese, most commonly considered to belong to the school of philosophical Taoism.⁶ Since the fifth century B.C., it has been mentioned along with Lao Tzu 老子 in the combination Lao-Chuang as the Chinese term for that school.⁷ It has been admired at least since the Han dynasty (208 B.C.-221 A.D) for its unusual prose, its brilliant story-telling, and its philosophical content, which was antidotal in a society which emphasized harmony through order and education, civilization, training, and ritual. The greater part of the text of Chuang Tzu was most likely written during the fourth century B.C., during the Warring States period (403-221 B.C.), a time of social disintegration. The social fabric had begun to unravel as traditional rulers shed their claims to be vassals of the central Chou king, who was supposed to have a Heaven-granted right to rule the entire world. Instead, after the smaller states (originally 170, according to tradition) were conquered and absorbed by the larger states, until by the Warring States period

fragmentary section. See Fung 1936 for a cautious discussion of the text's division into Inner and Outer Chapters, based on whether or not the chapters are known by titles different from the first words of the chapter. A.C. Graham has done an impressive job in reconstructing some of the original organization, based on Japanese and Chinese textual scholarship and his own principles. It is easy to disagree with some of the particulars of his presentation, but it is not possible to dispense with it entirely. He also gives a clear introduction to the textual aspects of the book (Graham 1981, pp. 27-33).

⁶ But see Creel 1970, pp. 1-24, where in the essay "What is Taoism?", he raises this question and discusses it sensibly.

⁷ See Chan 1963, p. 177, where he cites Hou-Han shu [History of the Later Han Dynasty, 25-220], by Fan Yeh (398-445), ch. 90, pt. 1, PNP 90A: 1a.

only seven states remained, all of which were overt in their military ambitions and in their heedlessness of the Chou ruler.⁸ Those philosophers later known as Confucians aimed to contribute to the creation of a safe, orderly world through promulgating ritual rules and self-transformation.

The so-called Taoists, of whom we have only the works of Chuang Tzu and Lao Tzu from the Chou period,⁹ rejected the artificiality of socially-imposed rules and said rather that one need only follow nature, tzu-jan 自然, 'the self-so', in order to retain the freedom of spontaneity. As this idea is seen in Chuang Tzu, within the framework established by the innate nature of each thing, it has the possibility of acting freely and spontaneously. What need, then, is there for propriety, and filiality and rites?¹⁰ Where the Confucians recoiled from chaos and strove for order--though in an ideal state there may be

⁸ See Hsu 1965, pp. - , for the continuousness of war during this period. He has tabulated a "war score" which gives a sense of the relative severity and regularity of civil conflict from 770 to 220 B.C. See also Walker 1961.

⁹ The dating of Lao Tzu has been the focus of debate during most of this century. Traditionally believed to be dated from the sixth century B.C., the text was scrutinized philologically and many scholars pushed the date forward to as late as the third century B.C. D.C. Lau 1963, in Appendix I (pp. 147-162) gives a detailed account of the controversies surrounding the text, and comes to what looks to me like a well-reasoned conclusion. Chan 1963 disagrees (p. 138), and Welch 1965 (pp. 179-182) abstains.

¹⁰ See Maspero 1978 pp. 314-16, in his short but incisive article "The Taoist School," for a brief introduction to the issues addressed by the "Taoist School." Welch 1966 also discusses some issues of the school and its internal divisions.

spontaneity within order¹¹--the Taoists embraced the natural, which in many cases is chaotic.

At the time there was also a school which A.C. Graham refers to as "the cult of immortality" with the beginnings of a devotion to gymnastic, dietary, breathing regimens designed to overcome death. We will want to bear in mind that this is not the magic or religion to which Chuang Tzu bears resemblance. Death for Chuang Tzu is as natural, and inexplicable, as life. Chuang Tzu is all for sustaining life, but in order to live out one's natural years, not to increase them by artificial means.

Chuang Tzu the man, who was probably not the actual author of the book known by his name,¹² was from the state of Sung 宋, the land given to the descendants of the Shang in order that their sacrifices might be continued after they were conquered by the Chou. Sung was adjacent to Ch'u 楚 in the South, the "barbarian" region civilized only relatively late. The non-Han South provided some relief from the struggles occupying the North. It also was, and in fact still is, one of the most fertile regions of China; this allowed the people of Ch'u the leisure to transcend complete concern with the mundane reality of struggling for survival. The literature and art of the North and South also demonstrate differences in temperament, with that from

¹¹ See Analects 2.4, 11.26; Eno 1984, pp. 150-154, 176-192; and Fingarette 1972, for a persuasive look at the Confucians as something other than a set of dry old men discussing constraints and rules.

¹² It was customary for the students of a master to record his teachings after his death. See D.C. Lau 1963, p. 149.

the South

tending to be more flowery, more fantastic, more linguistically varied.¹³

Chuang Tzu has much in common with works which are indubitably products of the southern tradition. Like much of the Ch'u Tz'u 楚辭, the earliest and one of the most important collections of poetry from the southern area of China, Chuang Tzu is full of extravagant linguistic usage and extraordinary dreamlike voyages, birds and fish, rivers and lakes, clouds and dragons--a lush world teeming with wildlife. Does this reflect the actual physical world in which the Southern Chinese of the centuries B.C. found themselves, or was it purely based on cultural symbols?¹⁴ There is no way to answer this question definitively. Archaeological evidence as interpreted and reported by K.C. Chang (1980, pp. 136-141) suggests that China in general was richer in resources and more varied in flora and fauna than it is today. A comparison between Northern and Southern literature and art yields significant differences in the sorts of wildlife portrayed. If the environmental fecundity was instrumental in shaping the linguistic and literary habits of its inhabitants, then in

¹³ See Hawkes 1985, pp. 15-28, for a treatment of the differences between Northern and Southern, and socially- and individually-oriented literature in ancient China.

¹⁴ K.C. Chang 1983, p. 61, asks this question of earlier, Shang, art. Was it iconic, that is, was there a representational quality to it, or was it purely creative? His answer was that from a representational basis, artists were able to take off freely given the constraints of the materials with which they had to work.

the colder, harsher North with its political struggles and indoor living, one would expect the emphasis to be on order, agriculture and regularity, and the support of a community,¹⁵ while in the South there would be a reflection of the greater freedom from physical travail as well as from political constraint. Environmental factors may have been partially responsible for writers such as Chuang Tzu to embrace the creative swirl of change. The more hospitable environment would also be portrayed differently in the South than would be the exigent climate of the North.

Sung and Ch'u were also known as the areas which retained Shang ritual and magical practices, in contradistinction to the--relatively--increasingly secular and materially-oriented Chou centered in the North.¹⁶ If the Shang, and the Western Chou, were characterized by a great concern with matters divine and the intercourse between human and heavenly, then Chuang Tzu's attempt to return to a world where this duality lay along a continuum rather than being a pair of discrete oppositions finds a contextual home. Given that the text has frequent recourse to wildlife imagery, it has much in common with visual artifacts of the period used for sacrifice and probably shamanic ritual (Chang 1983). This remained a quality of Southern writing far longer than it was of the North. And Chuang Tzu, being from Sung, the repository of Shang traditions, would have been disposed toward

¹⁵ See Henri Maspero 1978, and Granet 1932 for descriptions based on Northern sources.

¹⁶ See Allan 1981 for a treatment of Chou rationalization, which was so primarily in contrast with the Shang.

choosing these sorts of symbols in his support of the earlier practices.¹⁷

Having established a religious and historical context in which Chuang Tzu must be situated, we now turn to the text.

I. The Natural

Chuang Tzu is overwhelmingly concerned with 'the natural', tzu-jan 自然, particularly as opposed to the artificial. The latter is epitomized by the Juist focus on li 禮, 'ritual', and i 義, 'righteousness',¹⁸ and seems to include as well the extreme gymnastic practices such as are associated with later religious/practical Taoism. Chuang Tzu has some very clear and pointed critiques of these practices¹⁹ but even more interesting are the images he offers of contrast with life not constrained by convention.

¹⁷ The above contrasts between North and South, and between Chuang Tzu and other contemporary philosophical texts, among them some which would later be identified as "Confucian" texts (the Analects, Mencius, the I Li, and Hsun Tzu), will be dealt with in more depth as they are relevant to particular items in Chuang Tzu.

¹⁸ These terms are among the most debated in Chinese thought. Every Western scholar seems obliged to present his or her own translation and explanation of them. I refer the reader to the representative exegeses of Munro 1969, pp. 26-28, 75-76; and Eno 1984, p. 136 ff.

¹⁹ See for example 40/15/5-6 for a sarcastic description of the Taoist adepts' ridiculous strivings after immortality. References to the text will be to the Harvard-Yenching Index, with page/chapter/line numbers given, and then to Watson's complete translation. Translations are my own, based primarily upon those of Watson and Graham.

Yu: The effortlessness of butchery

One of the most famous sections of Chuang Tzu is the passage about Butcher Ting, a master carver who could carve oxen without looking, in harmony with the sang-lin 桑林 dance,²⁰ and with such skill that his nineteen-year-old knife was "as fresh as if it had just come off the grindstone." Other butchers had to change knives every month or year, so roughly and brutally did they hack. The whole passage is allegorical, the analogy lying between butchering oxen and the way to live life, as is made clear when Lord Wen Hui, the ruler under whom Butcher Ting served, exclaimed about the butcher's great skill. The latter corrected Lord Wen Hui's assumption by replying, "What your servant cares about is the Way, which is beyond skill." (7/3/5) Thereupon he described the process by which he had learned his skill. Lord Wen Hui said finally, "Excellent! Listening to the words of Cook Ting, I have learned from them how to nurture life!" (8/3/12) The metaphoric nature of the passage is remarked upon explicitly, that is, in terms of the allegorical relation between butchering and nurturing life. Let us look closely at the constitution of the central moments.

The focus of the passage lies in what happens as the knife strikes the ox.

There are spaces between the joints, and the blade of the

²⁰ According to Ch'en Ku-ying, p. 97, this is the name of the music of T'ang 湯 of the Yin 殷 (Shang 商) dynasty. Note this description; we will recall it in the later section on shamanism.

knife has no thickness. If you insert what has no thickness into such spaces, then there's plenty of room--more than enough for the blade to play about (yu 游) in. That's why after nineteen years the blade of my knife is still as good as when it first came here from the grindstone. (7-8/3/8-10)

The image here is of effortless sliding, one thing between others without friction, as a person may ideally live in the world without trouble. In the absence of difficulty, one can yu 游, taken by context to mean 'play about, move smoothly'. It happens too that in Chuang Tzu yu is one of the most commonly used verbs descriptive of the advisable way to be in the world, and that its set of associations includes 'swim, wander, play, travel, roam'. The modern form of the character has a radical (semantic component)²¹ for walking (辵) whereas it appears that in earlier times the character with a water radical (氵) which is now used primarily for 'swim' and 'travel', though they are still interchangeable in many cases, was used for all of these senses.²²

Like a fish in water: Chuang Tzu and the physical world

Yu, a term descriptive of fluid, unconstrained movement such as playing, may also mean 'swim'. It is used figuratively to mean 'live', and yet there is also much presence in the text of Chuang Tzu of the actual phenomenon of swimming. Fish are the quintessential swimmers (in China people rarely swim), and their

²¹ See Appendix 2 for a brief description of the Chinese written language and its historical development. Radicals and their characteristics are explained as well.

²² Karlgren does not list an archaic reading for this character.

appearances in the text are numerous. In the book as we now possess it, the first chapter opens with the sentence "In the Northern sea there is a fish whose name is K'un; no one knows how many leagues in size it is. It transforms into a bird whose name is P'eng; no one knows how many leagues its back is." (1/1/1)

The very chapter title contains the word yu: "Hsiao yao yu" 逍遙遊, or "Free and Easy Wandering," in Burton Watson's apt translation. Fish and birds are exemplars of animals able to move in accord with the dictates of their own natures, as long as they remain in their own proper habitats. A fish out of water, as a person out of his/her element, is useless.

When the springs dry up and the fish are left stranded on the ground, they spew each other with moisture and wet each other down with spit--but it would be much better if they could forget each other in the rivers and lakes. Instead of praising Yao and condemning Chieh,²³ it would be better to forget both of them and transform yourself with the Way. [or: transform your ways. hua ch'i tao 化其道] (16/6/22-24)

Granting the word yu its 'swim-wander-play' nuance, and noting the frequent appearance of fish in Chuang Tzu, we may identify a fish-swim thread which pervades the book along with other animal words and motion words, yielding a sort of backbone upon which all else hinges.

One with a materialist bent may remember our earlier mention of the southern Chinese world, a world of rivers and lakes and

²³ Yao 堯 was the first of the mythical sage emperors, and a frequently invoked cultural hero. Chieh 桀 was the last king of the legendary Hsia dynasty, whose decadence caused the downfall of that dynasty and its loss to the Shang.

wildlife. Why would Chuang Tzu not mention fish and birds (see below) if his world included them so saliently? The answer is the cautious one that their actual physical presence was one of several factors motivating the choice of such images. These are always "overdetermined".

As this is one of the main theoretical points I am trying to make in this paper, a slight digression to explain what I mean by "overdetermination" seems to be in order. An example from our everyday experience may clarify this: "We are programmed to react that way." This is a perfectly transparent sentence which conveys a psychological explanation, using computer language, or a metaphor in which computers and people are compared. Is this chosen because that is simply the way we twentieth-century Americans now say things (a frozen metaphor)?²⁴ Because the speaker intends the comparison with computers to be made? Or because our society is quite caught up with the phenomenon of computers and it comes readily to mind, although freshly? The only acceptable explanation is a "thick" one (Geertz 1973), one which refuses the simple-minded choice and acknowledges the complexity of motivation.

So it is with Chuang Tzu's imagery. Chuang Tzu was not merely a lone literary genius operating solely from his own imaginary world. He lived in a physical world, and shared his

²⁴ The literature on metaphor is extensive. Bickerton 1969, Black 1962, Burke 1969, Ching et al. 1980, Fernandez 1974, Lakoff and Johnson 1980, Sacks 1978, Sapir and Crocker 1977, and van Dijk 1975 will provide a fair sampling of the more interesting things said about that topic during the past two decades.

language with others. As Bakhtin said in an oft-quoted phrase, "As a living, socio-ideological concrete thing, as heteroglot opinion, language, for the individual consciousness, lies on the borderline between oneself and the other. The word in language is half someone else's." (Bakhtin 1981, p. 293)

And so it is important to see that one possible source of the choice of the fish/bird motif is their actual existence before the eyes of the author. This does not diminish the possible equation: as fish move through their world of water, and birds through their world of air, so humans move through their world of Tao. Both interpretations may hold good simultaneously.

One species of fit

Chuang Tzu and Hui Tzu were strolling (yu) along the dam of the Hao River when Chuang Tzu said, "See how the minnows come out and dart around where they please! (ch'u-yu ts'ung-jung 出遊從容) That's what fish really enjoy!"

Hui Tzu said, "You're not a fish--how do you know what fish enjoy?"

Chuang Tzu said, "You're not I, so how do you know I don't know what fish enjoy?"

Hui Tzu said, "I'm not you, so I certainly don't know what you know. On the other hand, you're certainly not a fish--so that still proves you don't know what fish enjoy!"

Chuang Tzu said, "Let's go back to your original question, please. You asked me how I know what fish enjoy--so you already knew I knew it when you asked the question. I know it by standing here beside the Hao." (45/17/87-91; Watson pp. 188-89)

Minnows dart and come out, happily--in great swarms. As

long as they do not go against their own natures, they can exist in communities of harmony. They swim in the rivers as fish are supposed to, avoiding one another no matter how great their numbers. Their happiness is not as ours would be, but that is only right and proper. We too must learn to do what is appropriate, shih 適,²⁵ for ourselves--as other species do so much better than we do. Before human beings were tied up in too great awareness of others, there was no problem with social life; some species of animals remain thus unencumbered. This remains a sort of ideal state in Chuang Tzu.

Like a bird

Not only are birds and Heaven brought up often in the text, but even when they are not specifically present there is frequent use of words whose basic association is with birds or flying. The most interesting example of this is in Chapter 6, in which the characterization of "the true man/men of old" (ku chih chen jen 古之真人) is "He came hsiao-ly, went hsiao-ly, and that's all there is to it." (15/6/8) We know from the preceding lines that this exemplary figure was unfazed by extremes and was able to transcend his environment.

The true man of old did not rebel at solitude, did not find success heroic, did not plan to be an official.

²⁵ This character has a movement radical, and a very interesting set of usages. Unfortunately I do not have the time to cover them thoroughly. The fundamental meaning seems to be something like 'to go where it is appropriate; to suit'; this kinetic aspect is virtually missing in its modern Mandarin uses, but it is still quite strong in Chuang Tzu.

One like this--if he passed by he did not regret it, if he succeeded he was not self-satisfied. One like this could climb to heights without fear, could enter water without being made wet, could enter fire without being burned. Those whose knowledge can climb high by means of the Tao are like this. The true man of old slept without dreaming, woke without rejoicing. He ate without tasting [the food's] sweetness. His breath was deep. The true man breathes from his heels. The common man breathes from his throat...The true man of old knows not joy of life, knows not fear of death. He does not delight in going out, nor resist going in. He goes hsiao-ly, comes hsiao-ly, and that's all there is to it. (15/6/4-8)

Is this simply a description of what Taoist wizards, or shamans, wu ^巫 26 were capable of accomplishing? Walking on fire is a practice still to be found in Taiwan; breathing exercises are quite commonly associated with trances and other magical states. Viewing the text as one descriptive of proto-religious-Taoist practices is certainly justifiable. In such a case there is metaphor involved, but only because it is difficult otherwise to talk about such things.²⁷

Those who like to deny Chuang Tzu's connection with later religious Taoism, reserving him for their own purely philosophical tastes, may choose to interpret this entire passage as purely

²⁶ See deGroot 1964 pp. 1187-1211, p. 1205; Eberhard 1968; K.C.Chang 1983, Harper 1985, Granet 1926, Waley 1973, for a sampling of the complex topic of Chinese shamanism. Eliade, Shamanism, has a discussion of this as well in his treatment of the general phenomenon, and O'Keefe, Stolen Lightning, talks about magic and magicians with mention of their Chinese versions. Both of the last two books rely on Granet for their basic information. Hopkins 1945 treats the question of the origins of the character wu 'shaman' and its relation to wu 'dance.'

²⁷ See DeWoskin 1982 for a similar account of the vocabulary for descriptions of music.

metaphoric, descriptive of an ideal man's way of being in the world--but in psychological, not physical, terms. For the reasons discussed above, I believe that we need not decide on a single explanation.²⁸

The word hsiao 翛 is not a common one in Chinese, but it does appear in dictionaries.²⁹ Commentaries and explanations of the commentaries give a set of meanings such as 'the sound of feathers flying; the appearance of flying quickly; the appearance of being unconcerned/unconnected/unattached; the appearance of coming and going being easy; suddenly; of itself and without intention; to follow traces ceaselessly.' Other written forms are given: 翛, 倏, 翺, and 倏, and ~~翛~~. The form appearing in most texts is 翛, with 羽, the feather radical, conspicuous. The other forms have the flesh, dog, and 黑 radicals. At the core is a set of attributes of a flying bird or of a quickly moving animal: quick, effortless, unconnected (literally), unconcerned (emotionally), suitable, sudden, natural, effortless, without (mental) intention. The bird's flight also has the physical

²⁸ In the passage about Butcher Ting discussed above, Butcher Ting explains that now he "encounters things by means of his shen 神 'spirit,' and does not look at them with his eyes. His senses cease and his spirit prepares to hsing 行 'move.'" (7/3/6) Once again, as frequently occurs in the text, it looks "metaphoric" because we have difficulty in believing it as literal. We may consign it to the pile of potentially superstitious belief in spiritual journeys, or think of it as an interesting image. I think it likely that Chuang Tzu did believe in the existence of "supernatural capabilities", though none as dull as merely walking on fire or achieving a long life.

²⁹ This is most likely because of the popularity of this text; study and glossing of all the pre-Ch'in texts is extensive. This character, however, is not to be found in Karlgren.

qualities of: the feathers' sound, the elongated appearance, the shadow cast. While the first set of qualities have more in common with what we would imagine an ideal person's motion to be like, the second set is by no means a priori excluded from operating. There is a nonexclusiveness here which helps account for the richness of the text and its appeal across millennia.

But if there is a literal dimension, description of flight, what or who was it that flew, and what was the significance of flight in Chuang Tzu? I believe that flight (1) referred back to a time when barriers between different kinds of beings--shen 神 'spirits', jen 人 'men', and wu 物 'animals'--could be crossed, and (2) indicated the movement of those beings still able to move between the realms: the shamans.

II. The Shamanic Strand

Religion in ancient China was characterized by a world populated by spirits, both natural and ancestral. There was a variety of means available for the purpose of communicating with the spirits, among them supplication by means of sacrificial ritual. The sacrificed animals served as a medium by which to cross to the spiritual world. This crossing could also be accomplished by a specialized group of living human mediums, the shamans. According to Maspero:

Since antiquity, sorceresses had communicated with the gods by sending their souls to the gods' dwelling-places. Donning the costume of the divinity who came to possess them, they entered into trances by various

means, the best-known being an increasingly rapid dance, to the sound of drums and flutes...Thus they mimed the voyage. (Maspero 1981 [1971], pp. 28-29)

This sort of ecstatic possession, perhaps accompanied by the drinking of great quantities of alcohol, became less and less acceptable to the increasingly strict Chou people. It also bore the memory of the conquered Shang, who were isolated in the east (Sung)--and perhaps of other non-Chou peoples such as those of the south (Ch'u)--but still retained the power to threaten the Chou--at least magically. Such ritual possession, as described in the Chiu Ko 九歌 (Nine Songs) in the Ch'u Tz'u 楚辭 (Songs of the South),³⁰ survived in Ch'u. The major components of these rituals were: dance, possession, and the Heavenly journey.

Dance in ancient China was intimately connected with shamanic ceremonies and ritual in general. It was no more a unique attribute of Taoist culture than was breathing; but just like breathing it had attributes which were different in Taoist context than in other contexts. Dance was the means by which the shamans, wu 巫, made contact with the spirits, and were able to begin their spiritual, heavenly journeys. The Ch'u region was

³⁰ 屈原 The alleged author of the entire anthology is Ch'u Yuan 屈原; but the Nine Songs is stylistically so different from the Li Sao (離騷), for instance, that I have difficulty accepting that attribution. See my papers "Voice in the Nine Songs" and "What Does the Text Do? A Close Look at Tian Wen." Waley 1973 interprets the Nine Songs solely as songs to be accompanied by dances, performed by shamans in their wooing of the spirits. Hawkes 1985 has more flexibility in his interpretation. I have argued that they are actually literary versions of popular songs based on songs sung in shamanic ritual. But whatever they believe the balance to have been, all acknowledge the shamanic, ritual element.

well known for its wu, where perhaps they had remained after Northern China began to be more rationalistic in its approach to the spirits. Confucius, after all, "never talked of prodigies, feats of strength, disorders, or spirits" (7.2; Waley 1938, p. 127) and said that people should be respectful of them, but "keep them at a distance." (6.22; Waley 1938, p. 20) Mo Tzu wondered if they existed at all, concluding that they did, but demonstrating the possibility of doubting.

Recall the description of Butcher Ting, where his movements are said to ho yu sang-lin chih wu 合於桑林之舞 "to harmonize with the sang-lin dance." This dance, or the music for it, is that of the Shang ancestor T'ang the Victorious, and was performed by the dukes of Sung who thus "acquired for themselves [his] Virtue." (Maspero 1978, p. 129)³¹ Butcher Ting encounters the ox with his shen, 'spirit', he does not see with his eyes. His sensory organs cease and his spirit is about to move, relying on t'ien-li 天理 "the ordering patterns of Heaven." (7/3/6) This set of descriptions points to something more than mere skill with a knife. If we regard it as a political--"political" in its greater sense of power relations among groups--statement about the Sung preservation of the ability, like their Shang ancestors, to traffic with the spirits and travel to the Heavens, many of the terms are accounted for.

Recall also that Butcher Ting's knife can yu in the spaces

³¹ Granet 1926, p. 445, believes that Chuang Tzu evoked quite consciously the decapitation of a human victim; Sang-lin was also the name of the eastern gate of the city of Sung.

between the joints. Yu is, coincidentally, the term used to designate the shamanic "Heavenly journey", yu t'ien 遊天 which appears in Shan-hai ching 山海經 (Classic of Mountains and Seas)³² and has so many other associations, as we have seen above. So now we have established a connection between dance (on which more will follow), journeys into the Heavens, and the interpenetration of the spiritual and material, joined around the concept of Shang shamanic ritual practices. The concept of the Heavenly is of great importance in Chuang Tzu, so we must explore it in greater depth.

Heaven Accessible

Birds, which are mentioned in Chuang Tzu nearly as frequently as fish, fly in the Heavens. The Chinese word t'ien 天 'sky, Heaven, god,'³³ is used in Chuang Tzu to refer to 'the innate, the natural, the spontaneous,' in contrast to jen 人, literally 'man,' which indicates 'civilization' and 'artifice.' (Cf. 'man-made.')

This pair of terms appears in the opening section of "The Great and Venerable Teacher" (Watson pp.77-91) about knowledge of the action of Heaven and of man (15/6/1), about the

³² See Mathieu 1983 for a translation, with lengthy introduction and very helpful index.

³³ There is a substantial body of literature dealing with the term t'ien and its religious meaning. It appears that the Shang term had been Ti 帝 'Divine ancestor' while the Chou term was T'ien. For many years Sinologists assumed that the terms were interchangeable, while now it is clear that they were not. See Creel 1970, pp. 493-506; Creel 1960; Eno 1984, pp. 47-81; Savage 1985; and K.C. Chang 1983.

relativity of heaven and earth ("The singular man is singular in comparison to other men, but a companion of Heaven. So it is said, the petty man of Heaven is a gentleman among men; the gentleman among men is the petty man of Heaven." 18/6/74; Watson p. 87), and a good many other passages.

Chinese cosmology identifies a basic contrast between t'ien and jen. Another is between t'ien and ti 'earth.' T'ien is symbolized by the round, yuan 圓, and earth by the square, fang 方. These follow naturally from the primitive experience of the heavens as circular and spherical and the earth as square and flat (quoted in Maspero 1978, p. 11). The well known lovely passage about the piping of earth and the piping of Heaven (3/2/3-9) makes use of this contrast. This set of images in Chuang Tzu resonates as well with the set mentioned above: yu fang chi nei/wai "strolling within/outside the bounds." If fang is square--and its earliest meaning is that of "boats in tandem" (Chung-wen ta tz'u-tien, Vol. 15, p. 221)--then Chuang Tzu urges liberation from the square confines of the earth, echoed by the artificial strictures constructed by men, in favor of roaming in the heavens.

Eliade notes that:

[E]ven when the celestial gods no longer dominate religious life the sidereal regions, uranian symbolism, myths and rites of ascent, and the like, retain a preponderant place in the economy of the sacred. What is 'above,' the 'high', continues to reveal the transcendent in every religious complex. (1959, p. 128; emphasis in original)

We must be wary of applying this too directly to China or to

Chuang Tzu. I think that Chuang Tzu does contain a significant amount of "sacred" symbolism, but without urging transcendence of the worldly. What is most significant is that it implies no abrupt differentiation between the two realms; in an impulse which might be characterized as restorationist, conserving the old religion with its possibility of intercourse between the spirits and human beings, Chuang Tzu reiterates the ideal of balance between t'ien and jen. In the Shang, or so the Chou perception went, there was freedom of traffic between the realms of spirit and matter. Interpenetration, not superiority of one over the other, was the norm. This may be achieved by means of 'transformation', hua 化. In later religious practice, this was taken to mean changing from something flawed, such as a mortal human being, into something perfect: an immortal. But Chuang Tzu makes very clear, at least in most passages, that no form is to be preferred over any other.

There is a passage in Chuang Tzu in which Confucius speculates with his disciple Hui Hu about what the mother of Meng-sun will become after her death, since Mr. Meng-sun did not mourn. (18/6/75-82) Confucius says,

Mr. Meng-sun does not know why/how she was born, does not know why/how she died...If she is transformed into an animal (juo hua wei wu 若化為物), is it simply that he is waiting for the transformation of what he does not know? On the verge of transformation, how can one know changelessness? On the verge of changelessness, how can one know that one has already been transformed?--Is it that you and I only have not yet woken from our dreams?...You dream you are a bird and fly into the Heavens, dream you are a fish and submerge in the depths, and are unaware of today's talks. Are you awake? Are you dreaming?...Send it away and go

transform (ch'u hua 去化), then enter into the vast (liao 寥) Heavenly unity.

A similar passage (17/6/45-60) has four friends, one of whom is dying. He admires the changes about to be made of him--he will be made into a dog, or a chicken, or a bow or a wheel.

The term used is invariably hua, and the attitude toward it is invariably acquiescence. Notice the imagery in the first passage mentioned above, where Heaven is invoked, as are birds and fish. I do not think this is an arbitrary selection of imagery; it resonates too perfectly with the subject matter as a whole for that to be possible.

As Graham points out (1981, p. 257), in the Outer and Miscellaneous Chapters, Chuang Tzu begins to choose Heaven as the preferred of the pair, but in earlier chapters he is neutral with respect to this duality. In a sense he is neutral with respect to all dualities, such as life and death, high and low, human and animal. The "grounding" (as it were) for all of this equalizing (Cf. the title of Chapter 2, "Ch'i-wu lun", "Discourse on equalizing things") lies in the most earthy and yet the most abstract of terms: Tao.

Tao

Although the only Warring States writers considered to have been 'Taoist', tao-chia 道家 are Chuang Tzu and Lao Tzu, in fact tao 道, 'way', is a term shared by all Warring States thinkers and writers to indicate something like 'the path'; in Chuang Tzu

it is sometimes naturalized to mean something like 'the way of the universe.' In contrast to Western conceptions of the journey as a goal-oriented quest,³⁴ even among the different varieties of thought, early Chinese usage has much in common. Among other things, as Fingarette so insightfully pointed out, there is no crossroads imagery in Confucius, no set of options among which a person had to, or was able to, choose. "Which tao?" might be a meaningless question, much in the way that "Which God?" would have been meaningless to a Middle Ages Christian. Modern Mandarin has the phrase shang kuei-tao 上軌道 'to be on the right track, to be [morally] in line.' The image here is of a straight worn wheel-track; if one leaves the established path, there is nowhere to go.

But beyond certain similarities of conception between the various thinkers of the period, Chuang Tzu's notion of tao has its own nuances. These emphasize, I believe, the kinetic properties of the path. The very character, composed of a 'head' radical 首 and a 'walking' radical 辵, while it has had the meaning of 'to speak [of one's way]' from early times,³⁵ is unquestionably concerned with movement. Chuang Tzu has the line, "One is completed by travelling the tao" (tao, hsing chih erh

³⁴ See Roppen and Sommer 1964 for a treatment of one "journey metaphor" in Western literature. It struck me as a fairly typical conception of this theme.

³⁵ Hansen 1983, in his article "A tao of tao in Chuang Tzu," emphasizes this meaning of the term. I disagree with his view of Chuang Tzu as principally a philosophical work, but there is much of interest in Hansen's work despite the difference in basic outlook.

ch'eng 道 行之而成 [4/2/33]).

In the Outer Chapters there is an explicit characterization of the Tao which seems to me to accord with the notion as presented in the Inner Chapters. It is very famous, and I quote it at some length.

Tung-kuo-tzu inquired of Chuang-tzu
'Where is it, that which we call the Way?'
'There is nowhere it is not.'
'Unallowable unless you specify.'
'It is in molecrickets and ants.'
'What, so low?'
'It is in the weeds of the ricefields.'
'What, still lower?'
'It is in tiles and shards.'
'What, worse than ever!'
'It is in shit and piss.' (59/22/43-46;
Graham 1981, p. 161)

All is equal, in its possession of this natural Way. The sacrality of all things, a remnant of a time when this was common, is implied.

Chuang Tzu celebrates the dirty ground, which is at least as connected with the Heavens as the sky. He implies that one may do the shamanic dance anywhere, in any shape. The most famous of dances is that of Yu, the founder of the Hsia dynasty and the hero who tamed the rivers: Yu was one-footed.³⁶ His right-sidedness was mimicked by sorcerers and dancers; as dynasties alternated cosmological principles, Shang shamans had to be left-sided. This provided an ancient precedent for Chuang Tzu's concern with wholeness and his defense of the flawed. It is most

³⁶ See Granet 1973; Eberhard 1968 also talks about the dance of Yu as a property of shamans in the southern regions--still! Jordan 1972 describes contemporary shamans in Taiwan, who persist in many similar practices.

salient in his treatment of those flawed of feet: cripples.

III. The Crooked and the Straight

One-foot, two-foot: a pedestrian base

Chieh Yu, the crazy man from Ch'u, is crippled. Unlike his appearance in the Analects 18.5.³⁷, here he is sane and unharmed. In Ch'u, Confucius meets Chieh Yu who says, "The sun, the sun, don't harm my walking. My walking is crooked (ch'u), it doesn't harm my feet." (12/4/89) Chieh Yu walks a crooked (ch'u 曲) path. The basic meanings of this word are varied, though the most common are 'broken, bent; evil; private, secluded; part, a side; small, insignificant;' in the earliest Chinese dictionary, the Shuo-wen chieh-tzu, the definition given is 'a vessel.' In many Chou texts, if the word is used for valuative description, then it is automatically negative.³⁸

³⁷ There, Chieh Yu walks by Confucius, talking about the danger of holding office when Power is in decline. Confucius wants to speak with Chieh Yu, but the latter "hurried off to avoid him."

³⁸ The contrast is with the clearly desirable property, cheng 正 'straight, proper, upright.' In Chuang Tzu this is used only skeptically. Chuang Tzu asks, in Chapter 1, if the P'eng bird looking down sees the sky's true color? ch'i cheng se yeh?, to which question the only answer is "It depends on how you look at it." In Chapter 2 there is a similar passage about which of three animals lives in the right place: "Which knows the right, proper, (cheng) place [to live]? Which of four animals has the proper (cheng) tastes in food?" "Which knows the proper (cheng) color of the sky?" (6/2/68, 70) All of these are rhetorical questions. The response must be to point out the relativity of the proper. It depends on one's perspective; the framing of the question demonstrates disbelief in absolute propriety.

As this chapter concludes with a reminder that all know the usefulness of the useful but none know the usefulness of the useless, so the crooked path is ordinarily considered useless as a crooked tree or a person with a crooked back, but they manage better to preserve life, escaping or avoiding force or unnatural conditions. They all manage to survive intact. They do so by having a different sort of usefulness. A crooked tree is of no use to a carpenter whose concern is to find lumber that can be made into flat straight boards--but precisely because in the ordinary sense of the term this tree has no use, it is able to survive unharmed. A person with a crooked back cannot be used for military service, for corvee labor, or any of the other things which ordinary healthy people are forced to do--and so he may outlive them all, and comfortably.

This is not unconnected with the fact that life, particularly as an official (as most literate people were), in Warring States China was indeed dangerous.³⁹ Stability of practice, of life, was greatly threatened, and perceptions of undesirable flux must have been overwhelming. Lao Tzu also has suggestions about the evasion of danger in difficult times: "The submissive and weak will overcome the hard and strong." (XXXVI, 79a; Lau 1963, p. 95) "One who assists the ruler of men by means of the way does not intimidate the empire by a show of arms." (XXX, 69; Lau 1963, p. 88) Chuang Tzu's appeal to the crooked, the useless,

³⁹ Maspero 1978, pp. 223-268 has an account of some of the major upheavals taking place as the states readjusted their power.

for its survival value, is quite tied to its historical moment.

The image of the "crooked" fits also with the sorts of imagery discussed above. Water flows in a crooked way over shallow ground. Birds often fly indirectly, crookedly. Fish swim in nonlinear paths. And Chieh Yu walks a crooked path. All survive, and survive naturally. Crooked motion, a crooked being, are natural and, as long as it is in keeping with the mover's own species, are ideal for survival in difficult times.

But the crippled man walking in a crooked path brings up another set of associated terms and images common throughout Chuang Tzu. The most prevalent type of handicap is a problem with the feet. Chapter 5, entitled "Signs of Virtue Complete," is especially full of cripples, hunchbacks, and one-footed people. These sorts of people are well known in Chinese mythology. Chuang Tzu may be bringing up a point about the efficacy of his society's shamans. He may be using cripples ironically, like the crooked trees, to attack our assumptions about what is efficacious. All of these are probably present. We need not select among them, but we do need to recognize the cluster of images.

In any case, these are mirrored at the level of word choice. There are many words written with the radicals for 'foot.' Why? Because feet are the organ, the means of walking, which is the form of movement natural to human beings. Why else? Feet are in contact with the ground, which is ordinarily considered the basest (literally and figuratively) of all. But as Chuang Tzu

says that the Tao can be found in excrement, that a cripple can live better than a healthy person, so by taking a new perspective may one see that the feet are to be admired. Tao itself is a path, along which one moves by walking, which is done by means of the feet.

Yet another association of the term tzu 足 'foot' is in the compound chih-tzu 知足 'to know satisfaction [lit.: to know feet], to be satisfied.' There may be puns inherent in each use of the term in its more concrete sense. In the abundance of anecdotes about cripples, amputees, people with bound feet, webbed feet, no heels, no toes, breathing from the heels rather than the throat, Chuang Tzu reinforces the set of metaphors identified so far in this paper--motion of different sorts as metaphor for living.

Not only are there frequent references to kinesis in general, such as words like yu and tao, but Chuang Tzu also has words descriptive of particular types of movement. While Mao No. 237 of the Shih Ching [Book of Songs] praises Duke Tan-fu for directing the building of homes in which the plumb-lines were straight, Chuang Tzu recommends a different sort of line--the crooked line. This contrasts significantly with most of the other Northern Warring States texts, such as the Analects 10.12 where Confucius describes the exigencies of the chun-tzu 君子 'gentleman': "When his prince sends him a present of food, he must straighten his mat and be the first to taste what has been

sent." "Straighten his mat" (cheng hsi 正席) is a requirement of a civilization where the walls provide guidelines to straightness and the disorder of the outer world must be kept at bay. Confucius' students say of him that "He must not sit on a mat that is not straight." (10.7) (hsi pu cheng pu tso 席不正不坐) This is the ideal of a Northern world where civilization reigns supreme, where much of the year the farmers may not venture outside. And in contrast with this we have terms used in Chuang Tzu which celebrate the crooked, the wild, the natural, the circular. One such term is p'ang-huang 徬徨, a binome describing a particular type of motion.

The style of the demon dance: p'ang-huang 徬徨, 彷徨

P'ang-huang belongs to a class of binomial adverbs of motion. They are often difficult to understand with precision; sometimes there seems to be an onomatopoeic aspect to them; Boodberg (1937) uses them to reconstruct a set of consonant clusters in ancient Chinese. In modern Mandarin it is still used, meaning 'hesitating, irresolute, indecisive, to go in circles, to turn back and forth.' The first of its three appearances in the Inner Chapters is in Chapter 1, in the second of two stories about Chuang Tzu's friend Hui Tzu, a frequent foil for the sophist position. Hui Tzu shows his bad sense in not knowing what to do with an oversized gourd or a huge twisted tree. Chuang Tzu counters with:

Now if you have a great tree and think it's a pity it's so useless, why not plant it in the realm of Nothingwhatever,

in the wilds which spread out into nowhere, and go roaming away to do nothing at its side, ramble around and fall asleep in its shade? Spared by the axe / No thing will harm it. / If you're no use at all, / Who'll come to bother you? (3/1/46-47; Graham, p. 47)

"...go roaming...in its shade" is a translation of p'ang-huang hu wu-wei ch'i ts'e, hsiao-yao hu ch'in-wo ch'i hsia 徬徨乎無為其側, 逍遙乎寢臥其下. Here, p'ang-huang is parallel to hsiao-yao, just as wu-wei is parallel to ch'in-wo. This parallelism indicates that in some sense the items in similar position are semantically equivalent, especially since we know what wu-wei and ch'in-wo mean, and they are more equivalent than contrary (the other common relationship between terms in parallel position being antonymy). Ch'in-wo means 'to sleep, reclined'. Hsiao-yao yu is the title of Chapter 1, meaning "Free and easy wandering." 'Meandering, rambling, roaming' are suggested. Yao means 'to shake'; it is also the Liang and Ch'u dialectal word for 'far.'⁴⁰ Although wu-wei 'non-purposeful action' (Creel 1970, pp. 48-78) is not precisely synonymous with ch'in-wo 'to sleep', they share the notion of 'positive, quiet, non-purposeful'. Similarly, hsiao-yao and p'ang-huang share the sense of 'roaming about without purpose'.

Again parallel to hsiao-yao, the next appearance of p'ang-huang is in Chapter 6, in a passage in which Confucius explains to his somewhat lead-footed disciple Tzu Kung about the difference between their sort of person and the more free-spirited

⁴⁰ Chung-wen Ta Tz'u-tien, Vol. 33, p. 197. Yao still has this meaning in the Mandarin compound yao-yuan.

friends who sang beside the corpse of their friend rather than mourning as convention demanded.

[T]hey are the sort that roams beyond the guidelines (yu fang chih wai) ...I am the sort that roams within the guidelines...Heedlessly they go roving (mang-jan p'ang-huang) beyond the dust and grime, go rambling through the lore in which there's nothing to do. How could they be finicky about the rites of common custom, on watch for the inquisitive eyes and ears of the vulgar? (18/6/66-71; Graham pp. 89-90)

The character of Confucius here uses words that have, in general, negative associations: mang/huang 茫 'vast, vague, idle'; mang-mang 'tired, weary, vast; extensive, abundant', and p'ang-huang. But it is clear that in this location their use is not negative at all. If anything, Confucius speaks a bit wistfully about those others so different from himself. It is interesting to notice that this image of idle rambling motion co-occurs with the imagery of 'outside the squareness'; we will discuss this later in greater depth.

Most interesting is its use as the name of a demon, and as the name of a dance.⁴¹

P'ang-huang also occurs in Chapter 19 where it is the name of a creature, a ghost, named in a list which includes the Pei-a 倍阿 and Kuei-lung 鯀龍 which are characterized by jumping about (yueh 躍), and the K'uei 夔 which is known as a one-legged creature. (Bodde 1975, pp. 106-107; Granet 1926) Ssu-ma Piao's commentary identifies it as an insect which is "in appearance like a snake, with two heads and five colors." (Cited in Ch'en

⁴¹ See Granet 1926, pp. 269, 307.

Ku-ying 1983, p. 484) Harper (1985, p. 481; See also Granet 1926, p. 269, 307) mentions it as the spirit of the wilds having "an underlying connotation of shamanic dancing. It is probably this connection with shamanic dancing that accounts for the use of p'ang-huang, wang-liang, and other related binomes in pre-Han and Han literature to describe qualities of motion." (Harper 1985: 482, note 68) What can we make of this?

To do some philological digging, huang 蝗, with an 'insect' radical, is a cicada, an insect which flies around in circles. It can also fly above and beyond the dust, at least for a time, which is something which the snake Ssu-ma Piao suggests cannot do.⁴² In any case these are insects with conspicuous sorts of movement, movement of the sort Chuang Tzu suggests is suitable for living life--sinuous, in whatever element is appropriate, indirect, nonlinear. Their name could easily be understood as descriptive of a particular type of dance.

As I have interpreted it, with its connotations of aimless wandering and shamanic dancing, p'ang-huang resonates strongly with yu, the meanderings going nowhere, and with the creatures--fish and birds--which move so effortlessly through their own environments without destinations. But what, finally, do we know

⁴² Of course no insect is more eternally in the dust than a snake, making its use in a passage about motion outside the world of dust quite ironic, an irony of the sort of which Chuang Tzu is a master. Transcendence of the physical is consistent with other passages in which a spirit roams inside a still and contemplative body, in which a crippled form easily reaches the completeness of virtue, in which usefulness results from uselessness. See Chapter 1.

about Chuang Tzu?

Conclusion

We have seen that words with a kinetic meaning appear frequently in the text of Chuang Tzu. They are often found in passages where significant statements are being made, the nearest things Chuang Tzu has to abstract philosophical treatises.⁴³ I have pointed out my explanations of these terms and their functions along the way, but now I would like to suggest that in general there are a certain number of possible explanations, and to explain why it is that I would most often opt to accept them all in favor of a "thick description" which may be inelegant but more faithful to the forces actually at work in determining a text's features.

What is it that Chuang Tzu "does"? Can we peg it as belonging to a certain genre of literature? This has always been done as if it were not problematic. But in order to understand such a question, we must look at what we know of the author's historical environment, and at what we know of the other sorts of

⁴³ This is where I differ so much from the viewpoints of Graham and Hansen. I believe that they overemphasize the sorts of philosophizing which we as Westerners are trained to recognize, at the expense of a balanced view of the function of the text. Graham does note in his introduction (1981, p. 33) that Chuang Tzu is always both poet and philosopher; but he chooses in favor of the latter when forced. Giving him the benefit of the doubt, I must say that most previous English translations of Chuang Tzu have tended to the literary.

literature with which it may contrast. Is Chuang Tzu a "philosophical Taoist" text? Is it beautiful, fantastic literature? Is it poetry? Is it a handbook for practice? Are the motion words metaphoric?

This paper was conceived originally as an investigation into the metaphoric usages prevalent in the text of Chuang Tzu. Certainly there are many passages which we as twentieth-century Westerners are disinclined to regard literally. The more we love and embrace the text for its literary qualities, the more there has been a tendency to deny its commitment to some of the more fantastic and magical content of the text, if not to reject them outright. As I will explain below, I found myself unable to accept such a convenient writing-off of so much in the text.

But in addition to this, I found that the more I tried to understand "metaphor," the less I was able to. "Metaphor" makes sense only in contrast to something "literal," and in order to know which is which all sorts of metaphysical questions have to have been answered. Derrida, in his lovely piece "White Mythology," argues convincingly that this identification of the origin, the early literal meaning from which we have retained only a metaphoric or abstract shadow, has been a perennial quest in Western philosophy, and that it is time to stop asking this simplistic question. This does not mean that we cannot look at imaginative word use, but the conclusions we draw must be more complex.

With this in mind, I tried to account for the prevalence of

words signalling kinesis. Once again here is a representative list of possibilities:

- (1) They describe Taoist gymnastic practices.
- (2) They hint at shamanism.
- (3) They describe the physical environment of the author.
- (4) They are its author's way of presenting his/her philosophy.
- (5) They are evidence of the author's creative literary genius.
- (6) They are representations of the prevalent Chinese language characteristics of 4th century B.C. China; Sung China; China in general.

As is perhaps obvious by my tone, I prefer to accept all of these factors as determinant of the linguistic choices in the text. No language event has a single function, it seems to me. But while Chuang Tzu's literary genius and philosophical content have been frequently recognized, the other functions have not. Throughout the paper I have tried to point out several determining factors whenever possible. This of course leads to a richly constructed text.

I would allege that the historical situation of the author, if taken into account, explains the text's affinity to Southern literature, its advocacy of following the seemingly crooked path, its opposition to the unnaturalness of civilization's distorting arts, its choice of birds and fish to represent species which know how to live--and as creatures sharing the world with men--,

its descriptions of living as if it is a shamanic dance, and its acceptance of transformations from one form to another.

Much of this has to do with Chuang Tzu's opposition--^{to} or dialogue with--the prevailing culture which separates the spiritual from the material and insists on rigid conformity to artificial standards. In following the thread of kinetic imagery, we have identified many significant contrasts with other schools or writers. Most interesting to me is the conservative strain of identification with the older religion, at Chuang Tzu's time being superseded by an increasingly rationalistic, agnostic ethical religion.

Finally, I would like to state the strong position of alleging that most pre-Ch'in texts have been misunderstood, whether by contemporary scholars wishing to read nothing but "relevant" political allegories and ethics into the older texts, or by scholars in intervening centuries using the old texts in order to speak through them. By sticking to the linguistic surface and asking what the text really says, not what annotators have so conveniently explained for us, we have a chance of learning how to undo a lot of misreading of which we have all been guilty. Before we are too quick to decide that some strange-sounding sentence is "metaphoric," we must try to see it on its own terms. Just because we do not find communication with spirits, or mediums by which to achieve it, plausible, we are not justified in reading all of such belief out of the texts we like. Admiration is not a substitute for the discipline of engaging

with the text and trying to coax out of it all the significance
one can--no matter how peculiar it looks.

Appendix I
Word Frequency

This is a chart comparing word-frequency in some Warring States texts. The terms under consideration include those discussed in the paper, as well as some other words of the kinesis family. For each term I list:

- (1) The written character
- (2) A gloss
- (3) Its pronunciation in modern Mandarin
- (4) The number of occurrences in each text / accompanied by its relative frequency in that text--that is, the number of occurrences divided by the approximate total number of words in the text.*

1	2	3	Number of Occurrences/Relative in Texts Frequency				
			Chuang Tzu	Men- cius	Hsun Tzu	Ana- lects	I Li
遊	'wander'	yu	89/13.7	8/2.2	3/4	5/3.1	0
游	'swim'	yu	10/1.5	0	8/1.1	0	0
正	'upright'	cheng	59/9.1	39/10.5	114/15.2	24/15	2 2
足	'foot'	tzu	138/21.2	64/17.3	199/26.5	30/119	2
道	'way'	tao	313/48.1	153/41.3	-	-	-
通	'penetrate'	t'ung	50/7.7	5/1.4	69/9.2	1/.6	0
外	'outside'	wai	91/14	26/7	62/8.3	0	14
內	'inside'	nei	70/10.8	22/5.9	72/9.6	9/5.6	12
變	'change'	pien	47/7.2	16/12.7	55/7.5	0	0
化	'transform'	hua	74/11.3	5/1.4	61/8.1	0	0

*Relative frequencies are expressed in terms of occurrences per 10,000 words and are based on word counts of:

<u>Chuang Tzu</u>	65,000
<u>Mencius</u>	37,000
<u>Hsun Tzu</u>	75,000
<u>Analects</u>	16,000

Appendix II

Written Chinese Language Characteristics and the Commentary Tradition

Written Chinese has several attributes which make it especially interesting and amenable to investigation of semantic qualities. Words are formed in six basic ways,⁴⁴ the most common of which is known as hsieh sheng, a combination of two components, one for the sound (the 'phonetic') which is usually a well-known word with the requisite sound or one very close to it, and one for the meaning (the 'radical' or 'semanteme'). Since the compilation of the K'ang Hsi Dictionary in 1710, it has been traditional to identify 216 (214) radicals.⁴⁵ In many cases the radicals were not added, or at least not systematically, until the Ch'in unification of China in 221 B.C., when Ch'in Shih-huang ordered standardization of the script.⁴⁶

The above account is the idealized one, which as with all ideals does not conform perfectly to the actuality. China is a huge country and communication has always been poor; regional

⁴⁴ See Ma Hsu-lin, Liu Shu Chieh-li, for a traditional account of these ways of forming characters.

⁴⁵ See Teng and Biggerstaff, pp. 129-130. There are two different counts for the number of radicals.

⁴⁶ See Barnard 1978 for a thorough introduction to the issue of the Ch'in script reform. And see Jeffrey Riegel's review, where he points out that 70% of the characters found on recently excavated bronze vessels are identical to their modern forms.

identity and variation have been more the reality than has any sense of unity. There are even now, with much standardization well under the guidance of the government on the Mainland, as well as in Taiwan, very many cases of variants. A word may be written with one of several radicals, or with no radical at all, or with slightly different components from other forms (e.g., pien or 'everywhere; a turn'). Pronunciations show a great amount of variation, and there is at least some degree of correlation between the spoken and written languages used in any given region. In the Warring States China in which the text Chuang Tzu got its form, there had not yet been the Ch'in script reforms. We must therefore be cautious in drawing significance from any particular scriptal detail.

In general, however, the following illustration can be used to account for the vast majority of characters.

The word ch'ing means 'green, blue, black'. Ch'ing with the 'ice' radical, means 'to cool', or 'fresh, cool'. With the 'heart/mind' radical, ch'ing means 'facts (of a case); emotions'. With the 'water' radical, ch'ing means 'clear, pure'. When the 'speech' radical is added, ch'ing means 'to ask, invite, request'. Except for tone, all of the words have the same pronunciation. There are also words with similar sound, such as ching, meaning 'quiet, calm'.

Another set of such related characters (and we may safely say, words) is lun. By itself it means 'to arrange, to think'. Adding a 'man' radical, lun means 'constant, regular,

right principles'. With a 'water' radical, lun means 'ruined, engulfed, lost, or eddying water'. With a 'silk' radical, lun means 'silken threads, to twist or wind silk'. With a 'speech' radical, lun means 'to discuss, arrange, reason, argue, speak of', and with a 'carriage, vehicle' radical lun means 'to revolve, a wheel, a revolution, a turn'.

In many cases it is not only the case that the phonetic of these words was similar, but also that the meanings were related. In speaking of ch'ing, it is likely that the original color was that of water or sky or plants, and that other words referred to things which shared qualities of the water, such as 'coolness, clarity, quiet'. Lun meant 'to turn around', thus 'arrange, think, twist silk, revolve, eddying water'. Conceivably these were once single words with a large cluster of meanings which later needed to be differentiated, either because they were being used in different ways with differentiated semantic ranges, or because they had already been used differently in speaking and the writing system became more sophisticated and allowed greater precision.

One important aspect of traditional Chinese commentaries on literary works has been the 'fixing' of the written text to agree with the system of writing contemporary with the commentator, which frequently has involved simply the addition of radicals. Throughout pre-Han works, for example, the word nu 'female' is used; commentators may specify it as either ju 'you' or nu 'female', depending on context. The original sounds were much

closer, according to Karlgren (1957 Nos. 94 j. and 94 a.) *nio and *nio. In some cases this sort of alteration may be nearly automatic, while in others it may involve quite an interpretive leap, so much as virtually to reverse the meaning.

Added to this is the fact that we have no material texts from this early period, but only copies of copies of copies...There are many places where errors in copying were made, others where sections of commentary were included within the text, where the bamboo strips upon which many early books were written became disordered.

So we must exercise care when using these texts--but also when relying on commentaries. We cannot but use them, but we must remain suspicious.

In terms of the aims of this paper, in which I claim that there is a preponderance of 'motion' words in Chuang Tzu, I am clued into words falling into this category by the presence of 'motion' radicals, such as words with 'foot' or 'walking' radicals. This does not mean that all 'motion' words have 'motion' radicals, but we can be fairly certain that words with 'motion' radicals are 'motion' words. A sufficient number of people must have perceived them as such, so that these 'motion' radicals were added.

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