

【書評】 Book Review

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Kim-Chong Chong,
*Zhuangzi's Critique of the Confucians:
Blinded by the Human.*
(New York: State University of New York Press, 2016.)[§]

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Here I will briefly review the chapters and content of Kim-Chong Chong's latest book, entitled *Zhuangzi's Critique of the Confucians: Blinded by the Human*. My critique of the book focuses on what I find to be missing or only implied in the work. In particular I will focus on the neurophysiology of Zhuangzi's meditation or breathing exercises that comprise a bi-modal or non-dual perception of the world and human life. I propose that Zhuangzi's use of metaphor is closely linked to the brain's learning patterns by embodied analogy and comparison. The non-dual logic that Zhuangzi employs plays an important role in his worldview and the way of life that he advocates. The correlative thinking or non-dual logic offers a unique vision that complements the breathing exercises and flow experience of achieving a sort of freedom, release or cutting loose (*jie* 解), by living beyond the limitations of the Confucian way of moral, social and political order. Chong's excellent and comprehensive scholarship will continue to stimulate debate on the meaning, purpose and significance of Zhuangzi's critique of the Confucians for some time to come.

The book is comprised of an introduction, seven chapters, acknowledgments,

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frequently cited works, extensive notes, a bibliography and an index. In the first chapter, entitled “Blinded by Heaven,” Chong first sets the context in which Zhuangzi offers his critique of Confucius. He uses and inverts Xunzi’s criticism of Zhuangzi being blinded by *tian* 天 or nature to offer his own interpretation of Zhuangzi’s criticism that the Confucians are blinded by over emphases on the human realm. I fully agree with Chong’s reading of Zhuangzi’s question as to which organ rules the body, namely, there is no one ruling organ and it is certainly not the heart-mind as other texts, such as the Xunzi, propose. I read that as a begging-the-question-joke, entailing a negative reply. I also agree with his proposal that we follow A.C. Graham’s translation of *qing* 情 as the facts or reality of human life in this context. When Chong states that “... Zhuangzi shows no respect for authority and is very witty in the way he dismisses the messenger or officials.” (p. 17), I would clarify that he has no respect for the authorities running the government. Zhuangzi does respect his own “authorities.” So I would suggest we temper our understanding of Zhuangzi’s antiauthoritarian stance with the understanding that he is against imposed governmental or moral authorities. He does respect his own masters of the natural way to live. I agree with Chong that Zhuangzi is not seeking revenge against the worldly, but rather offering an optimistic image of a liberated life of oneness, ratio equity (Chong uses equality), diversity and plurality.

Chapter two of the book, entitled “The Pre-Established Heart-Mind,” focuses on the *Zhuangzi*, chapter two, *Qiwulun* 齊物論, chapter 4, (“The Human World”), *Renjianshi* 人間世, developing a Daoist critique of Confucian notions of autonomy and moral autonomy. Chong rightly notes that, for Zhuangzi, there is no dichotomy between the cognitive and the affective or the motivational and the emotional functions. This unity of cognitive and affective functions is further borne out by brain neurology. The brain functions as a whole, not as separate and distinct operations. Neurophysiology also confirms the importance of using

metaphor, allegory and analogy because the brain learns by these means.¹ Chong translates *cheng xin* 成心 as the “pre-established heart-mind” (p. 21). Later he uses Shuen-fu Lin’s view to translate *cheng xin* as “the fully formed mind-heart” (p. 109). I think that the “mature heart-mind” or Lin’s suggestion “the fully formed mind-heart,” are better translations than “pre-established” because the “pre” implies a temporal element of a time “before,” while Zhuangzi is saying that people have already made up their minds about how the world operates without going to the things of the world directly, that our thought about the way the world works or our preconceived ideas overrun the reality we live. Maybe Chong means to use the word “pre-established” in the everyday sense of “preconceived” or a mind that is “already made up.” The brain wants to know, and it wants to know now. The brain functions on a survival process that relies heavily on filling in missing knowledge by appealing to analogy or metaphor and causal explanation. These brain functions dispose or predispose people to make faulty analogies and false cause arguments regularly. The organic survival operations of the brain worked well on the savanna, but they can and do lead to misunderstandings in civil society.²

When Chong states that “Thus, the remark that Nanguo Ziqi’s heart-mind is like ‘dead ashes’ means that he has lost his ‘self’ in this respect, thereby achieving a state of stillness or calmness” (p. 23), I propose that it is the other way around, namely, that the state of stillness or emptiness is achieved first or simultaneously with the loss of self-awareness.³ The correlative thinking, bimodal or non-dual logic at work in the *Zhuangzi* is tied to the meditation practices and the insights derived from those experiences. Those experiences are tied to the neurophysiology of the brain.⁴

1 Kathleen Taylor & Catherine Marienau, *Facilitating Learning with the Adult Brain in Mind* (San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass publishers, 2016), chapter 1.

2 See K. Taylor & C. Marienau, *Facilitating Learning with the Adult Brain in Mind*.

3 See Livia Kohn, “Forget or Not Forget? The Neurophysiology of Zuowang,” in *New Visions of the Zhuangzi*. (St. Petersburg, Florida: Three Pines Press, 2015), pp. 165-183.

4 See Livia Kohn, “Forget or Not Forget? The Neurophysiology of Zuowang,” and James

The *Zhuangzi* does not employ the concept of *xin* again, until the fourth chapter in the famous fasting of the heart-mind passage. After contextualizing the historical significance of the passage to highlight Zhuangzi's inversion, i.e. Confucius dissuading Yan Hui from going to the state of Wei, Chong links the metaphor of "fasting the heart-mind" to the use of "clarity" *ming* 明 as a form of stilling the heart-mind or using it like a mirror to reflect what exists rather than a quest for epistemic certainty or truth. This kind of clarity is linked to forgetting and losing the self. Chong seems to down play the importance of meditation in the *Zhuangzi* as a form of mysticism that he returns to later in Chapter 4 of his book.

Chong reviews the Confucian view of an innate moral capacity to think in moral terms as a basis of moral autonomy. If the Confucians, in fact, accept an innate moral capacity, then I wonder if it is not a form of innate moral determinism, not autonomy. Being innate, it is something a person has no choice about. Innate behaviors are not open to free-will choices of autonomy. Chong presents the Confucian view to further highlight Zhuangzi's disregard for the pre-established, socially constructed, ideas and judgments of the heart-mind. This leads to a discussion of perspectives in the *Zhuangzi*. Zhuangzi offers a plethora of perspectives. He does this to show us an image of the perspective of no-perspective in developing his position of no-position or an understanding that goes beyond understanding. This is how non-dual logic or correlative thinking is taken to an outcome of enlightenment. For Zhuangzi everyone has a perspective, and our perspectives are limited by our habits, our experiences, our place, our ways of living, thinking and so on.⁵ The practice of mediation opens the practitioner to a different experience of the world that is founded on direct experience not mediated by linguistic or other trappings. Hence the position of

Sellmann, "Field, Focus, Focused-field: A Classical Daoist World View and Physiology," *International Communication of Chinese Culture*, Volume 4, Issue 1 (Spring 2017), pp. 25-33.

5 James Sellmann, "Field, Focus, Focused-field: A Classical Daoist World View and Physiology," (2017).

no-ordinary position can be achieved by focusing on the meaning of the experience rather than the meaning of the words expressing it.⁶

Chong says that for Zhuangzi:

There is no absolute or perfect knowledge because there are no fixed rules for there needs to be a constant weighing and revision of things, and knowledge is not necessarily to be equated with what is 'big' (p. 40).

This is the basis for Zhuangzi's bi-modal, non-dual logic or correlative thinking. In non-dual logic or correlative thinking, the apparent opposites of big and small, right and wrong, this and that, reason and emotion, etc. are not separate and distinct. Rather the apparent opposites are linked together, interpenetrate and resolve or transform into each other. Like yin and yang, apparent opposites are co-dependent, interconnected and interpenetrating; they cannot be separated in reality but only in our linguistic or mental constructions. Non-dual logic or correlative thinking informs Zhuangzi's perspective, requiring us to go beyond the limitations of one-sided or two-sided thinking, embracing a world of transformations where changing forms and ideas open us up, or free us to a world of possibilities, a world of diversity, pluralism, parity (Chong uses equality) and liberation. Chong's point in this chapter is that the mature or established heart-mind is not capable of cognitive judgments independent of affective emotional states..

Above I suggested there are links between the brain's neurophysiology, how the brain uses metaphor and analogy to learn, and how Zhuangzi uses metaphor to teach, and there are connections between the cognitive and

6 See the end of *Zhuangzi* Chapter 26; "Where can I find a man who has forgotten words so I may have a word with him" Burton Watson, *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu* (New York, New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), p. 302.

affective states of “mind” in the *Zhuangzi* and in brain physiology.

In Chapter 3, “The Transformation of Things,” Chong focuses on the dream analogies, especially the butterfly dream at the end of Chapter 2 to highlight the importance of *hua* (transformation) 化 express a sense of liberation and unity or oneness. The chapter ends with the passage “(Between) Zhou and the butterfly there must be a distinction. This is called the transformation of things” (p.46). In analyzing those concluding statements of the butterfly dream, Chong does not consider that the concluding statements could be commentarcomments that were inserted into the text. He goes on to propose that the statement insisting on the necessity of some distinction is begging the question (p. 47). I have always considered that comment to be a joke with the implicit punchline that there is NO DISTINCTION between things, including Zhou and the butterfly. That is to say, distinctions are constructs made for human convenience and communication. If we accept that all things are one already, then there are no more distinctions to be made. If we accept that their rapid transformation also makes them indistinct, then again there are no actual distinctions; only our convenient expressions of them.

Because Chong plays down the role of meditation in the *Zhuangzi*, he grapples with the expression the “great awakening” in Chapter 2, the *Zhuangzi*. If we think that meditation does play a central role in the text, then the notion of a great awakening is not tied to absolute knowledge at all, but rather tied to the notion of cutting lose, *jie* 解, from the artificial restrictions of civil society to awaken, *jue* 覺, from the subconsciously imposed social dream, returning to the natural roots of one’s life which entail both being awake and asleep. For Chong, embracing the transformation of things allows *Zhuangzi* to overcome death anxiety by being free of a fixed ego, or overly self-conscious “I,” which is, either an illusion, or is in constant flux itself without a fixed form or agenda. Chong contrasts Xunzi’s idea of the natural process of transformation with *Zhuangzi*’s idea of the transformation of identity. Chong argues that the examples of

transformation in the *Zhuangzi*, e.g. Kun to Peng, Zhou into a butterfly and vice versa, the bodily parts of a person changing into other things, etc. are examples of identity transformation. He contrasts Xunzi's conception of nature having fixed principles or patterns that are humanly discernable with Zhuangzi's conception of nature having no discernable patterns or formula. He appeals to the story of Butcher Ding dismembering an ox as a metaphor for finding a free flowing, non-ridge, or free and easy, spontaneous dance-like performance that cannot be reduced to a set of rules. Embracing the radical transformation of things, Zhuangzi is able to counter the Confucian world view of a fixed moral character, to *tian* 天 or nature, with a different world view of the rapid transformation of things, ephemeral, constantly changing, coming into and going out of existence. He concludes that the dream analogies evoke a sense of the oneness of all things. The dreams have a liberating or awakening effect. They liberate us from death anxiety. They liberate us from holding on to fixed forms of human order or a single perspective on human life. They free us from a simplistic one- or two-sided world view to embrace a world of diversity, multi-variance, plurality and natural transformation.

Chapter 4 is entitled “*Zhen*—Some Normative Concerns.” In this chapter, Chong focus on *zhen* 真 as a form of what is true or really natural. Following Wim de Rue, Chong contrasts the flexibility of the metaphor of the *tian jun* (a potter's wheel of nature or heaven) with the *Mozi*'s reference to fixed form of the wheelwright's compass and the carpenter's square. “So the sage harmonizes with both right and wrong and rests in the potter's wheel of heaven.” Wim de Rue notes that the sage's heart-mind is like the center of the potter's wheel, that is, composed and non-confrontational. Chong notes that the sage's heart-mind is still, flexible in response, harmonizing with things to live out one's life span.

He goes on to discuss *tian* 天, *ming* 命, and *zhen* 真 in the inner chapters of the *Zhuangzi*. Chapter 6 of the *Zhuangzi* begins by discussing the *zhen ren* 真人 in terms of a contrast between what *tian* does and what humans do, or the

inversion of what we think is natural and human. It goes on to define *tian* in terms of the destiny (*ming*) of life and death saying: “Death and life are *ming*; they have the constancy of night and day; they constitute *tian*. There are matters which humans can do nothing about, and this is a fact about all things” (p. 67). *Ming* does not necessarily mean determinism or fatalism, and Chong argues there is room for free will with the mandate of life’s destiny. The term “destiny” is not fatalistic; we create or at least participate in the development of our destiny. Chong interprets the claim that there must be a true person before there can be true knowledge by focusing on the true person’s state of mind of equanimity of experience, that is, not feeling wet in water or hot in fire or anxiety in life or dreams. Of course all human knowledge is based on human bodily experiences. The idea that there are artificial or constructed experiences formed by culture and society versus natural or authentic experiences is itself a distinction that needs to be ameliorated by Zhuangzi. Chong analyses *zhen* in the outer chapters. He discusses the various dialogues involving *zhen*. He discusses the true person at length, focusing on the Butcher Ding story as an example of a true person who exhibits true knowledge by his flow experience in cutting up the ox. I note that the cutting up, *jie* 解, is also a metaphor for cutting oneself lose from the restrictions of moral, civil society and from all socially constructed ideas and practices. The free flowing movements are grounded in the concrete reality of being in the natural zone while acting freely and spontaneously, and a general metaphor for how one can live and nurture life in a natural manner that is focused, attentive and yet free of anxiety or any imposed sense of labor or strain.

Chong turns to discuss mysticism in the text. He sides with Rur-bin Yang’s view that there is a meditative practice used to bring about a state of “synesthesia commonly found in religious and artistic experience” (p. 80). Chong is concerned to find a way to balance the psychological flow experience with the mystical experience. I would propose that it is a matter of language and our artificial focus that thinks the psychological experience is different from the so-called religious or mystical experience. From my perspective, being in the flow

zone experience and the nature mysticism of oneness with all things are the same experience. There is no discernable difference between being at one with the activity and being at one with some other aspect of nature. It is the experience that matters, not the limitations of our description. Isn't this what Zhuangzi is trying to show us, namely, that we need to forget the words after we have grasped the meaning? Chong concludes: "... Zhuangzi warns against being attached to absolute distinctions and having fixed conceptions" (p. 82). Moreover, the true person can harmonize the natural and the human by maintaining a calm attitude, and a still, reflective, and empty heart-mind as exemplified by Butcher Ding (p. 82).

In Chapter 5, "The 'Facts' of Human Construction," Chong argues that *qing* 情 is best understood and translated as "facts" rather than as "emotions" in the *Zhuangzi*. He draws on Searle's distinction between "constitutive rules" that regulate certain forms of behavior through the creation of "institutional facts." He uses this distinction to propose that the *qing* or "facts" that people have added to their lives, by means of social construction, have an ethical duty or deontic character that binds people's moral relationships. Chong, with some caveat, agrees with A.C. Graham's proposal that *qing* is best understood as "facts" in the above sense of institutional facts that bind people to a moral duty. Hence, when Zhuangzi proposes, at the end of Chapter 5, "The Sing of Virtue Complete," that humans can be without *qing* he means that "right and wrong find no place in one's body." (p. 84). Chong's detailed analysis of the passage makes good sense. What Zhuangzi means is that humans can go beyond the social construction of moral and other social rules such as mourning rites. In this sense, *wu* 無 would be better understood as "going beyond" rather than simply "being without" in the sense that people can cut lose (*jie* 解) or liberate themselves from the moral duties imposed by humanly construed institutional facts. Going beyond the binding facts of human life is described as "right and wrong find no place in one's body." (p. 84) or as "neither grief nor joy can affect someone," (p. 86), or as "a human being who does not let likes and dislikes internally harm his body,

(but instead) constantly adheres to the natural (*zi ran*)” (p. 89). These examples point to the idea that *wuqing* 無情 or going beyond the facts of human life means to be free from socially construed and imposed value judgments of all sorts, moral or other socially construed preferences or values. Society’s made up values go against the grain of the natural flow of life. In the “Recapitulation” section, Chong notes that *wuqing* entails release from various social norms, beliefs and practices that distance us from living a natural, spontaneous life. To further develop the point that social norms are social constructs, Chong reviews Xunzi’s view of ritual action, *li* 禮. Xunzi’s view also allows Chong to weave into the discussion how the ritual practices influence the emotions to further link the “facts” and the “emotions” in the wide and various uses of *qing*. In the conclusion to the chapter, Chong notes that he is only arguing that Zhuangzi advocates that we disengage from certain, not all, social “... practices, norms, emotional attitudes or dispositions that are not (seen as being) in accord with *tian*” (p. 98). He goes on to propose following Michael Puett that the character *qing* 情 has a broad semantic range. So he argues that the emotions constitute ways of interpreting the facts of the world to further link the two concepts to the character *qing* 情. Brain science makes this connection, because the old philosophical separation of reason and emotion is not grounded in the brain’s organic operations in which emotional feelings are never separated from other cognitive functions.⁷

Chapter 6 is entitled “Metaphor in the *Zhuangzi* and Theories of Metaphor.” Chong reviews the three forms of metaphorical language deployed in the *Zhuangzi*. He discusses the expression “words of [those] whom people respect” (*zhong yan* 重言) used above in Chapter 2. He reviews the use of “imputed words” (*yu yan* 寓言) or the metaphorical stories and images depicted in, for example, the Kun fish transforming into the Peng bird, Zhou’s butterfly dream or other transformation stories noted above in Chapter 3. This chapter focuses on an

7 Kathleen Taylor & Catherine Marienau, *Facilitating Learning with the Adult Brain in Mind*, pp. 51-55.

analysis of “goblet words” (*zhi yan* 卮言). Chong uses the insightful interpretation of Shuen-fu Lin, again, who says that the ideal state of the heart-mind is to be like this goblet, to be “empty of all preconceived ideas and values until the occasion for speech arises and, at the end of a discourse, empties out the ideas and values which one has previously taken from outside.” (p. 101).⁸ Lin proposes that a person should “only engage in the verbal act that is always natural, free, spontaneous, non-judgmental, and non-discriminatory, and that always brings your [heart-mind] back to its original state of pristine naturalness, harmony, transparency and emptiness” (Chong, p. 101-102; citing Lin, p. 66). I would add humor to the list. The best verbal act is expressed in a joke.⁹

Chong does an excellent job of explaining the status of Zhuangzi’s own words in criticizing the Confucians and Mohists for their debates by focusing his analysis on the different ways metaphor is deployed in the *Zhuangzi*, in different contexts, as opposed to merely following a theory about the essence of metaphor. Chong takes on Robert Allinson’s interpretation of metaphor in the *Zhuangzi* by showing that there is no loss of any special cognitive content in attempting to paraphrase a metaphor according to Allinson’s view. Chong argues that just because a metaphor cannot be paraphrased does not necessarily mean that the metaphor has not been understood conceptually or even pre-conceptually. It could be that there is nothing there to understand; that there is no special meaning hidden in the metaphor. Chong employs Donald Davidson’s theory of metaphor to bolster his critique of Allinson, namely, there is no cognitive meaning or content beyond the literal content or meaning of a metaphor (p. 105).

Chong analyzes the structure of the goblet words metaphor. He proposes that Zhuangzi does not make claims or state propositions that should, then, be

8 Citing Shuen-fu Lin 林順夫, “The Language of the Inner Chapters of the *Chuang Tzu*,” in W.J. Peterson, A.H. Plaks and Ying-shih Yü 余英時 (eds.), *The Power of Culture: Studies in Chinese Cultural History* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1994), p. 65.

9 See James Sellmann, “Transformational Humor in the *Zhuangzi*,” in Roger T. Ames (ed.), *Wandering at Ease in the *Zhuangzi** (Albany: SUNY Press, 1998), pp. 163-174.

tested for their veracity, but rather that Zhuangzi uses words in "... a spontaneous and nonjudgmental nature that resists being pinned down to any position" (p. 108). He contends that this occurs in two ways: first, the *chang xin* 常心 or constant mind (I'd call it the "everyday mind," that is, the "natural mind," which is also used in Chan/Zen), as opposed to the preconceived *cheng xin*. The natural heart-mind operates like a mirror or calm water by reflecting without storing what is present. Second, the empty and free-flowing character of the metaphorical structure of the goblet words themselves. He reviews examples of both of these approaches to present the position of no ordinary position, drawing from Lin's interpretation. Lin proposes that "*Zhi yan*, then, is speech that is natural, unpremeditated, free from preconceived values, always responding to the changing situations in the flow of discourse, and always returning the mind to its original state of emptiness as soon as a speech act is completed" (p. 109).¹⁰ Zhuangzi's use of metaphor is a way for him to empty the heart-mind of distinctions, thereby liberating the reader from the limitations of conventional ways of communicating and understanding. He shows, following Yuet-Keung Lo's argument, how using clarity (*yi ming* 以明) is not merely illumination, and maybe an ironical expression of darkness, or for stopping (using *yi* 以 as *yi* 已) clarity, shows that Zhuangzi is not attached to only one perspective but expresses an openness to multivalence.

He proposes that the expression "walking two roads," or "Letting both alternatives proceed," as being possibility problematic for some readers, proposing that it allows for the probability of using what is apparently useless. For me, these issues are explained by appealing to correlative thinking or the bimodal, non-dual logic at work in the *Zhuangzi*, and Chinese philosophy in general. When we get beyond the dualistic thinking promoted by two valued (true/false) logic and we understand the way the processes of the world operate, we acknowledge that there is always a sloppy grey area. Things are rarely, if ever,

10 Citing Shuen-fu Lin, "The Language of the Inner Chapters of the *Chuang Tzu*," p. 65.

pure and untainted substances or essences; statements are rarely entirely true or false, outside of a mathematical equation or a tautology. That is to say, the principle of the excluded middle rarely if ever applies. Because the principle of the excluded middle proposes that there is no grey “maybe” between truth and falsehood, right and wrong, or existence and non-existence, non-dual thinking embraces the grey “maybe” between the opposites and is able to accept an apparent inconsistency or an outright contradiction. The principle of non-contradiction makes good sense for linguistic communication. However, the principle of non-contradiction never applies in a world of the radical transformation of things. The dualistic logic is based on the faulty ontological idea of unchanging essences or substances that define or make things what they are. In non-dual logic, based on an ontology of radical change; there are no unchanging substances or essences, therefore, “things” are effervescent, and ephemeral to their contextual transformations, and the viewing subject making or interprets them to “appear” to be (relatively) stable and unchanging, when in reality, they are not. In this sense, even the principle of identity, that a thing can only be itself, like truth is truth, and cannot be otherwise, does not apply to Zhuangzi’s view of the transformation of identity in which change is so radical that it mutates the natural identity of that “thing”-in-process.

After further refuting Allinson’s interpretation of the butterfly dream, Chong studies Edward Slingerland’s application of George Lakoff’s and Mark Johnson’s work concerning embodied metaphors. Lakoff and Johnson base their work on brain physiology, noting that metaphors are non-propositional structures of thought based on unconscious or non-conscious sensory-motor experiences. For Chong, the problem with Slingerland’s approach is that he relies on the notion of an “... essential self ... [that] seems to be a universally accepted convention ...” (p. 118), which is problematic for the *Zhuangzi’s* approach to self.

Chong proposes in the next sub-section that metaphor is dependent on how it is being used rather than a hidden essence. Chong rejects Davidson’s narrow

view of metaphor as different from other forms of speech, say simile, and cannot be paraphrased without a remainder due to its essential character. Chong cites Qian Zhongshu's 錢鐘書 analysis of how the metaphor of the moon reflected in still water is used to depict both the highest perfection of awakening and the lowest imperfection of the impermanent floating world (p. 119) to show that there is no fixed core or essence to a metaphor. He argues that, along Wittgensteinian lines that like the meaning of words, the meaning of a metaphor depends on its *use* in specific contexts. I would note that, because Buddhism also uses a non-dual (*advaita*) logic in which "nirvana is samsara and samsara is nirvana," or "form is empty and emptiness is form," using the reflected moon as a metaphor for both the highest and the lowest experience is not too surprising, nor is it a contradiction or inconsistency from the non-dual perspective.

In the conclusion, Chong states:

But there is no need to bring in the use of unconscious metaphorical schemas here, especially when there is a conscious sense of the 'non-propositional' that can be accounted for in referring to the structure of goblet words. Reference to the 'cognitive unconscious' is unhelpful in giving due recognition to the deliberate use of this metaphorical device and its non-propositional nature (p. 121).

On the surface this is fine. What I proposed above is that we need to look at the neurophysiology of the brain because Zhuangzi's use of metaphor consciously or unconsciously has hit the mark on how the brain learns. Zhuangzi's use of metaphor is that of an enlightened master-teacher's pedagogue to enlighten or awaken the reader to a new perspective on life, that is, to awaken to different ways of nurturing and caring for our short life spans. Philosophers need the facts of science to develop our theories and arguments. Although Chong provides a tight argument for his position, nevertheless, I'm suggesting that a

deeper understanding of the way the brain learns by creating metaphors and analogies is important for understanding the use of metaphor in the *Zhuangzi*.

It is also interesting how Zhuangzi's philosophy seems to anticipate the findings of developmental psychology. Taylor and Marienau review and compare three constructive-developmental models, showing how mature people are able to multi-frame and hold on to contradictions without confusion, are independent, and construct knowledge and values based on the context or situation. These self-actualizing values appear to fit well with what Zhuangzi is doing, trying to lead the reader to a new and improved or more balanced way of living as an adult.¹¹

In the "Conclusion: Self, Virtue (*De*), and Values in the *Zhuangzi*," Chong both summarizes his work and projects further research areas. He reviews the previous findings, namely that there is no "true ruler," making the self an unstable mix of affective and cognitive experiences. The study of the transformation of things did not lead to the total elimination of a self but only liberation from attachment over life and death, and by extension, other hierarchical attitudes. Being a mirror of what is present without storing or passing judgment leads to the practice of stripping away elements of enculturation and socialization. Chong shows that the *zhen ren* is not like the main character in the *Immoralist* by Andre Gide, proposing that Zhuangzi is not advocating the elimination of all social norms, only those that restrict our natural experiences, feelings and life spans.

Chong, then, discusses "Individuals with non-Confucian *De*" in the next subsection, reviewing five examples to show that though their virtue-power, *de*, is imperfect or deformed, they are also free of restrictive social norms. They are at one with themselves and the things of the world in the recognition that everything is constantly changing. Thereby they always "make it be spring with

11 Kathleen Taylor & Catherine Marienau, *Facilitating Learning with the Adult Brain in Mind*, pp. 273-283.

everything” (p. 128).¹² In the next section, entitled “Values in the *Zhuangzi*,” Chong reviews the core tenets. He holds a somewhat conservative interpretation by primarily limiting himself to what is explicitly stated in the *Zhuangzi* such that he limits Zhuangzi’s lack of social, political guidance to primarily a critique of corrupt and overly controlling Confucian ritual order. Zhuangzi’s values are expressed in contrast to Confucian teachings. While Xunzi advocates for a natural moral order discerned and instituted by the sages, Zhuangzi rejects office and prefers personal freedom and personal integrity. Given the myriad transformations of things, Zhuangzi values a type of equality, for Chong, as noted above I prefer to think of this as a ratio parity rather than mere equality. Chong links this idea of equality to Martha Nussbaum’s concept of “common humanity” (p. 130) and her analysis that Confucian Golden Rule arguments clearly present a hierarchical social order that contrasts with Zhuangzi’s view of parity-equity. Chong stresses how friendship in the *Zhuangzi* presents friends as equals, but this is not the case in Confucian friendship where age or social status will also put friends in a hierarchical order. Another value is Zhuangzi’s love for diverse and plural perspectives, allowing others to hold their views without having to impose on them as expressed by the fable of Hundun, in Chapter 7, *Zhuangzi*, or the seabird that dies in captivity from Chapter 18. These and other passages show how Zhuangzi tries to counter the monolithic, imposed values of Confucian ritual order with various different conceptions of what a good life could be. “We have found in the *Zhuangzi* the following implied values: individual freedom, expression and development; a sense of common humanity and fundamental equality of persons; and recognition of the plurality of values, commitments, and conceptions of the good life” (p. 133).

Then he concludes with a discussion of “Contemporary Confucian Replies and Objections” to show that, at least, some modern Confucians are attempting to integrate the teachings with constitutional democracy that recognizes plural life

12 Burton Watson, *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu*, p. 74.

forms. In concluding this subsection, Chong notes that there is no contradiction between Zhuangzi's criticism of Confucian moral autonomy, and Zhuangzi's implicit call to freedom to live the good life according to one's own or one's group's conception. In these concluding remarks, Chong's conservative reading is further exposed in that he considers the limitations of the *cheng xin* and its cognitive and affective feelings being mixed and united as universal human limitations. Chong seems not to recognize that Zhuangzi is proposing that the *zhen ren* or his conception of the sage, can walk both ways, and thereby, break out of the limits of the *cheng xin* and one's own limited perspective on things. Through the practice of meditation one can develop empathy for others and their point of view. The possibility of a Great Awakening (Chapter 2) or entering the Great Pervade or Thoroughfare, or entering the silent oneness of nature (Chapter 6), all, at least for me, point to an optimism that people can cut lose from our limited perspectives of our preconceived and socialized heart-minds. In other words, there can be a release or liberation from these limitations to see things and to live our lives differently. For me it is not merely the case that the limitations of the preconceived heart-mind or the mix of cognitive and affective feelings are acknowledged and kept in check, but they can be done away with, if not entirely extinguished, at least, for a enough time to experience an alternative way of living.

Finally, he offers a two and one-half page long Conclusion, highlighting eight major points.

1. There is no normative order that is laid down by *tian*. ...
2. The distinction between what belongs to the realm of the human and what belongs to *tian* is not self-evident or absolute.
3. Human norms such as *li* and the attitudes and emotions that they engender are human constructions. They have been socially constituted and can be changed.
4. There is no human essence that dictates one form of life.

Conceptions of value and the good life are pluralistic and should be respected. 5. Humans have limited perspectives, and there is no epistemic and moral certainty. 6. Humans are psychologically complex and not always in control of their actions and of their lives, which are full of contingencies. 7. In these regards (5 and 6 above), there is a common vulnerability and humanity. At base everyone is equal. 8. Despite being vulnerable, it is possible to live spontaneously, carefreely, and with equanimity through a sense of the 'oneness' of things. This is what is meant by being able to 'make it be spring with everything.' The person who can do this has the virtue of (non-Confucian) *de*. He or she is the *zhen ren* or "true person" (p. 139-140).

He continues:

"There is no sorrow in this flow of transformation. Neither is there any joy. Instead there is a contemplative calmness that does not feel bound by life's contingencies and that has transcended consciousness of self with its various attachments, such as merit and fame. Perhaps there are meditative and even "mystical" self-cultivation techniques that enable this calmness or equanimity, which is not just contemplative, as some would claim. But, even so, this should not lead us to ignore the fact that Zhuangzi was a social critic in the ways that we have described" (p. 140).

"Nevertheless, Zhuangzi's 'heavenly' words express a deeply liberating impulse and spirit that is relevant to all times" (p. 140). In a sense what Zhuangzi is proposing is a solution to the political chaos of his time by suggesting a no-ordinary political solution, or to put it another way, he gives a dis-solution to the problem rather than a solution. Instead of offering more social and political ideas of how to manipulate the masses, maintain the court and economic control

through ritual, law or the military, Zhuangzi offers a radical proposal “to stop doing that,” to stop trying to impose another humanly constructed artificial system of order by returning to the ongoing natural order that is before us. This is not a return to a past golden age, because Chong rightly notes that the “past golden age” is an idea developed by others in the Outer Chapters. Some of those images of the natural life contain a picture of life before or at the dawn of agriculture, at least, a return to the values of the Paleolithic age. Of course, this seems to create an artificial distinction between the natural and the human; Chong has already shown that Zhuangzi grappled with and resolved that paradox by allowing for natural human conceptions of various forms of good lives or the apparent inconsistency of different conceptions of THE good life are held simultaneously. This of course opens the paradoxical possibility that there could be a natural Confucian conception of one or more good lives.

Kim-Chong Chong’s scholarship is outstanding; he brings forward a number of Chinese secondary sources that the English readers would not likely encounter. Chong’s arguments and interpretations will stimulate further discussion and scholarship on the *Zhuangzi* for some time to come. ♦

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