

On the role and purpose of the human being in the Zhuangzi

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2023

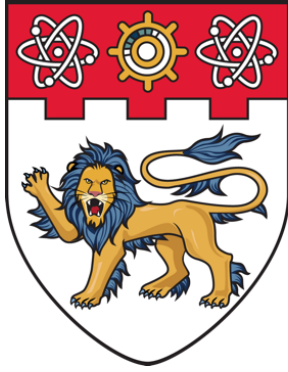
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**NANYANG
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SINGAPORE

KOO HAO WEI (邱浩崑)
SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES
2023

**ON THE ROLE AND PURPOSE OF THE HUMAN BEING IN
THE ZHUANGZI**

KOO HAO WEI (邱浩崑)

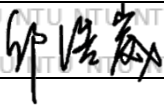
School of Humanities

A thesis submitted to the Nanyang Technological University in partial
fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts in Philosophy

2023


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I certify that all work submitted for this thesis is my original work. I declare that no other person's work has been used without due acknowledgement. Except where it is clearly stated that I have used some of this material elsewhere, this work has not been presented by me for assessment in any other institution or University. I certify that the data collected for this project are authentic and the investigations were conducted in accordance with the ethics policies and integrity standards of Nanyang Technological University and that the research data are presented honestly and without prejudice.

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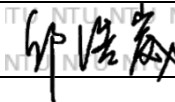
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To my beloved Chris and Mao.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SUMMARY	
CHAPTER ONE On the notion of Tian in the Zhuangzi	1
The Origin of Tian	1
Reinterpretations of Tian in the Spring Autumn and Warring States	2
Tian in the Daodejing, Analects and Mozi	4
Tian in the Mengzi and Xunzi	7
Zhuangzi's notion of Tian.....	9
CHAPTER TWO The Heavenly Human in the Zhuangzi.....	17
The Conflict between Tian and the Human	17
The Impact of the Conflict.....	20
Letting Things be Themselves	25
Caveat: Hasty Distinction of Tian and the Human	29
Conclusion	35
Works Cited	36

SUMMARY

This thesis is devoted to the exposition of the Zhuangzi's vision of the purpose and role of the human being, which is intricately connected to the Zhuangzi's central concept, *tian* (天). The thesis puts forth the proposition that because the Zhuangzi sees the human being within the backdrop of a natural world arising from *tian*, its understanding is that the human being shares its place equally amongst the myriad things and thus the purpose of the human being is to partake in the spontaneous generation of things as themselves, all the while refraining from interfering with other things' being themselves. The thesis consists of two chapters. In the first chapter, I introduce the central concept of *tian* in the Zhuangzi alongside some background information about the Chinese character *tian* and its usages in other philosophical texts in the Pre-Qin period. In the second chapter, basing on the understanding of *tian* in the first chapter, I highlight the potential conflict that the Zhuangzi pointed out between *tian* and the human being and looked at the impact of human preferentiality which the Zhuangzi sees as problematic. Combining the understanding that the Zhuangzi sees the human being in the backdrop of the natural world as arising from *tian*, I arrive at the interpretation that the Zhuangzi envisions the human being who shares an equal position among the myriad things, partaking in the spontaneous generation of things themselves and refraining from interfering with the course of other things' being themselves. Thereafter, I attempt to address its inconsistency with the Zhuangzi's passages on the hasty distinction of *tian* and the human.

CHAPTER ONE

On the notion of Tian in the Zhuangzi

Tian (天) is a central concept in the Zhuangzian philosophy that is one of its kind. All thematic discussions in the source text are by and large built upon this central concept. This is particularly the case when it comes to understanding how and why it sees the human being in a certain way that is relative to this central concept, and what sort of role the Zhuangzi envisages the human being to take up in the Zhuangzian worldview in view of a certain understanding and significance of the concept. The first chapter of this paper aims to provide a guide as comprehensive as possible to understanding the notion of *tian* in the Zhuangzi. This is done so in largely three sections: Firstly, the chapter offers some background information on the origin of the character *tian* and as well as the general overview of its development through the Zhou period. Next, the chapter offers accounts of *tian* made by other notable Pre-Qin philosophers to the extent that it provides some insightful basis of comparison between their accounts and the Zhuangzi's. Lastly, the chapter ends off with looking at the Zhuangzi's notion of *tian* with the aid of secondary literature inputs and as well as one further contribution on my part.

The Origin of Tian

The Chinese character *tian* today is traced back to the Oracle Bone Script (甲骨文, *jiǎ gǔ wén*), which was a form of pictographic script used during the Shang period for divination records. Like other Chinese pictographs found on the oracle bones which depict observable things or objects, *tian* is a pictogram which literally depicts the top of the head of a human being. This is represented by the use of a sub character “大” (*dà*), which depicts a front view of the human being with another sub character “一” (*yī*) above it. We should not confuse the sub character “一” in the case of *tian* to refer to the numerical meaning “one” because its earliest form was not so but really the depiction of a human head (𠄎) with an irregular circle. The replacement of the irregular circle with the sub character “一” was a revision made only around the Western Zhou period.²

¹ The Chinese character is now understood to mean something “big”, “wide”, etc.

² If we are familiar with the ways in which the Chinese character *tian* is used to mean various things today, we would realize their contrast with the pictographic meaning articulated above. Occasionally, we hear others invoking *tian* as an omnipresent and just entity in colloquial sayings such as the case of “old Heaven has eyes” (老天有眼, *lǎo tiān yǒu yǎn*) to mean that justice has been served. More often, we point to the phenomenal skies, calling it “天空” (*tiān kōng*), literally the “space of *tian*” to describe weather phenomena, e.g., “天空下雪了” (*tiān kōng xià xuě le*), “the sky is snowing”. In another circumstance, we encounter the use of *tian* as part of the compound term “天然” (*tiān rán*) to mean that something is “organic” or “natural”, which is a quality assurance commonly found on ingredient packages or product marketing advertisements. These divergent usages that we readily employ did not occur out of nowhere barring foreign import such as the Christian notion of “Heavens”. Instead, they are a product and cultural inheritance of an ancient past that marked the historical evolution and novelty of the Chinese character *tian*, and they are prevalently attributable to when we have come to appreciate as the Zhou (周) dynasty period.

Reinterpretations of Tian in the Spring Autumn and Warring States

The Zhou dynasty is a period chronologically divided into the Western and Eastern Zhou, with the Eastern Zhou further divided into the Spring Autumn (春秋, *chun qiu*) and Warring States (战国, *zhan guo*) era. This was a time when we observe that *tian* was reinterpreted and consequently used in a way that is different from what it originally means in the context of the Oracle Bone Script, and these reinterpretations are by no means expressed in the proliferation of philosophical works of that time that had dealt with the idea of *tian* either at the heart of its account or at its periphery as an extended implication. Such reinterpretations cut across various contexts from political legitimacy to spiritual espousals, and we are particularly interested in Zhuangzi's reinterpretation.

An expedient way of getting a sense what *tian* meant between the two eras is to conceptualize the reinterpretations to fall largely within two strains. One strain reinterpreted *tian* as a natural feature or phenomena while the other understood *tian* as referring to a supernatural entity or, for the lack of a better word, a god. It is unclear whether if one strain preceded the other from a historically linear timeline perspective. However, it is apparent that the strain which reinterpreted *tian* as referring to a supernatural entity was the mainstream account throughout the period. The understanding that *tian* refers to some natural feature or phenomena remained an alternative account and that was the case even when Zhuangzi and Xunzi came into the picture in the later years of the Warring States era. It seems that the notion of *tian* has been open to two different meanings, depending on the context on which it is used, since the Western Zhou period. As a case in point, we compare two usages of *tian* that are found in the Book of Changes (易经, *yi jing*), a source which purportedly dates back to the said period.

夫「玄黃」者、天地之雜也。天玄而地黃。

“The mention of that as being (both) 'azure and yellow' indicates the mixture of heaven and earth. Heaven's (colour) is azure and earth's is yellow.”³

在師中吉，承天寵也。

“He is in the midst of the host, and there will be good fortune:’ - he has received the favour of Heaven.”⁴

In the first usage, *tian* refers to the literal wide blue skies and this was often evoked alongside the earthen lands that we stand on to form the compound term “*tian-di*” (天地) as we see in the citation. In the second usage, however, *tian* was described as something that has taken an anthropomorphic persona (i.e., favouring something), and it is unclear as to whether the *tian* invoked here is a similar one to the first usage. In fact, it is not unreasonable to say that both usages appear to be somewhat dissociated since one usage paints a sentient being while the other does not. Questions about their origins then become significant although not pertinent to the purposes of what we are trying to achieve here in this paper. But there is still value in suggesting what their origins might be as it continues to value-add to the point stated here about their dissociated meanings.

³ *The I Ching*. Translated by James Legge, edited by Max F. Müller, 2nd ed., vol. XVI, *Dover Publications, Inc.*, 1962, p.421.

⁴ Legge, p.276.

I must confess that I find no origin with regard to the first usage of *tian* as referring to the literal blue skies. It seems that the reinterpretation of *tian* from the initial meaning of referring to the top of one's head to referring to the literal skies is as natural and inevitable as realizing that what is above the top of one's head is the vast celestial space. And the fact that disparate, ancient human civilizations share a consensus in this realization adds weight to my observation on hindsight. The second usage of invoking *tian* as mysteriously taking the form of an anthropomorphic persona appears to have been a novelty associated to the rise of the Zhou polity. In the Book of Poetry (诗经), which is a source of ancient literature but also arguably a Zhou political propaganda, it is said that there existed this god-like entity that came to be known as *tian*. The ancient literature narrated a story in which *tian* transferred the mandate to rule from the Shang dynasty, which was a preceding dynasty, to Zhou, thereby vesting the latter with political power and legitimate rulership. This is evidential in the poem Huang-yi (皇矣),

穆穆文王、於緝熙敬止。
假哉天命、有商孫子。
商之孫子、其麗不億。
上帝既命、侯于周服。

“August is Wen the king;
Oh, to be revered in his glittering light!
Mighty the charge that Heaven gave him.
The grandsons and sons of the Shang,
Shang's grandsons and sons,
Their hosts were innumerable.
But God on high gave His command,
And by Zhou they were subdued.”⁵

The above passage spoke of *tian* as also being referred to as “*shang-di*” (上帝) or “*di*” (帝) in short, which was also the name given to an entity which the Shang dynasty worshipped, as seen in the case of the Book of Documents (尚书, *shang-shu*), when it detailed Shun's (舜) worship,

在璇玑玉衡，以齐七政。肆类于上帝，禋于六宗，望于山川，徧于群神。

“...”

Benjamin Schwartz suggested that the introduction of such an association between *tian* and *shang-di* may in fact be a deliberate attempt by the Zhou polity to establish itself as the legitimate ruler, having overthrown the Shang. It is not the purview of this paper to validate nor question Schwartz's suggestion, nor is it in our interest to deliberate whether the Zhou and Shang were referring to the same entity. However, by interjecting Schwartz's suggestion, it is my point to show that Schwartz made such a suggestion or that his suggestion was made possible on the premise that both the Zhou and Shang people showed a similar awareness of, and appreciation for, a higher being. And this awareness of and appreciation for a higher being pre-existed the use of *tian* as its referent, which would mean by implication that the use of *tian* in this context was likely one that was borrowed, either from and in place of the Oracle Bone Script meaning or the

⁵ *The Book of Songs*. Translated by Arthur Waley, edited by Joseph R. Allen, 1st ed., *Grove Press*, 1996, p.236-7.

meaning of *tian* as a natural feature or phenomena. This is perhaps the first novelty of *tian* in the Zhou context which set the tone for the subsequent reinterpretations built on it.

Tian in the Daodejing, Analects and Mozi

As it was intimated earlier that the reinterpretations which occur in the period concerned fall within two different strains, we can conceive of them as “addendums” to the strains. It is these “addendums” put forward by various authors of the time that gave the strains twists, making these author’s accounts unique in their own ways. The most notable of these accounts, and purportedly the earlier ones, were perhaps the Daodejing, Analects and Mozi. In the Daodejing, we will find that the text is overall consistent in its representation of *tian* as a natural feature or phenomena, i.e., the skies. This representation is characteristically represented in the following verse of the Daodejing,

天地不仁，以万物为刍狗；圣人不仁，以百姓为刍狗。天地之间，其犹橐籥乎？

“Heaven and earth are ruthless, and treat the myriad creatures as straw dogs; the sage is ruthless, and treats the people as straw dogs. Is not the space between heaven and earth like a bellows?”⁶

What is unique about the Daodejing’s account of *tian* is that it additionally clarified the position of *tian* relative to other aspects which it considers in its cosmological account,

人法地，地法天，天法道，道法自然。

“Man models himself on earth.

Earth on heaven.

Heaven on the way.

And the way on that which is naturally so.”⁷

The position that the author of the Daodejing, purportedly to be Laozi, ascribed to *tian* clearly is not the highest position. Rather, the *dao*⁸ (道) and spontaneity (自然, *zi-ran*) ranked higher than *tian*, with spontaneity esteemed at the highest position. In fact, as the verse indicated, *tian* merely emulates the *dao*, with the later doing the same with spontaneity. We can take the Daodejing to mean that the unfathomable skies that we see are not without its patterns and trajectories, and these things are not inherent but drawn from other sources and they may all be reducible to spontaneity. This is contrary to the other strain which represented *tian* as a god-like entity and somewhat the ultimate deference and source of political legitimacy that we see in the Book of Poetry.

The Analects, as a Confucian text, appears to have inherited the use of *tian* in the sense of a god-like entity. This is not unexpected since Confucius himself advocates the resurgence of Zhou ritual and propriety, which its legitimacy also fundamentally depends on the premise that *tian* gave Zhou the political mandate to rule. In the following passage from the Analects, we continue to see the portrayal of *tian* as having taken an anthropomorphic persona and the

⁶ *Lao Tzu*. Translated by D.C. Lau, 1st ed., *Penguin Group*, 1963, V 15-16, p.9.

⁷ Lau, XXV, 58 p.30.

⁸ With sensitivity to the consistent use of the capitalized “Dao” throughout the Daodejing, the *dao* that is being expressed here appears to be different. This difference is commonly understood within the scholarly community as one between the “big *dao*” and “small *dao*”.

authority to alter worldly state of affairs, as in the case of the Book of Poetry when *tian* gave the mandate to rule over to Zhou and the Shang as subordinates of the former,

仪封人请见。曰：“君子之至于斯也，吾未尝不得见也。”从者见之。出曰：“二三子，何患于丧乎？天下之无道也久矣，天将以夫子为木铎。”

“A border official from the district of Yi asked to have an interview with Confucius, saying, “I have never been denied an interview with a gentleman who has come to this place.” Followers of Confucius arranged a meeting for him, and when he came out, he said, “Why should you worry about [your teacher] not having an official position? The world has been without the Way for a long time now. Heaven is about to use your master as the wooden tongue of a bronze bell.””⁹

The above passage described *tian* as going to make Confucius its spokesman, as indicated by the metaphor that Confucius shall be used as the “wooden tongue of a bell”. According to the border official of Yi, then, Confucius appears to be precisely the kind of tongue or clapper that *tian* is looking for, shaped to its preference and rings with the intended sound when struck against the bell. What is unique about the Analect’s account of *tian* in this passage is that if we were to read it in the context that the significance of Confucius’s work lies in its convincement that the “gentleman” (君子, *jun-zhi*) is not just a literati but above all a moral individual that cares for the people of his community, the Analects is actually alluding that *tian* is morally inclined or that it appears to act on the basis of a moral calculus which will validate Confucius’s approach. However, there also other passages which appear to be saying otherwise about this, as in the case when Confucius expressed about the death of his prized disciple Yan Hui,

颜渊死。子曰：“噫！天丧予！天丧予！”

“When Yan Yuan [Yan Hui] died, the Master cried out, “Oh, Heaven is destroying me! Heaven is destroying me!””¹⁰

In the above sentence, Confucius expressed that *tian* was “destroying” him and this stands in contrast with what the border official Yi said. Perhaps we can understand that the reason why Confucius expressed such is that Yan Hui was the very embodiment of the moral character that Confucius espouses and teaches, and Confucius once intimated that no one knows him better than *tian*,

子曰：“不怨天，不尤人。下学而上达。知我者，其天乎！”

The Master said, “I begin my learning on the ground and travel up to reach a higher knowledge. It is, I believe, only Heaven that understands me.”¹¹

Perhaps one way to make sense of all of this is that the Analects did not intend to paint a definitive picture of *tian* with regard to its moral calculations. Instead, what the Analects possibly mean to say is that there exists a god-like entity which the Zhou has intimately referred to as *tian*, which is believed to be morally inclined although the extent of its calculations is not entirely comprehensible to the human being. In general, the discourse about *tian* in the Analects

⁹ *The Analects: Lunyu/Confucius*. Translated by Ann-ping Chin, *Penguin Group*, 2014, 3.24, p.40.

¹⁰ Chin, 11.9, p.164

¹¹ Chin, 14.35, p.239.

accentuated the moral aspect of *tian* more than its initial form in the beginning of the Zhou polity, which was primarily about the punishing of Shang for its despotic rulership.

Anyone who understood the scholastic climate in the Pre-Qin era would have known that the Confucianists and Mohists were the predominant schools and strong opponents of one another. Be that as it may, the Mozi and the Analects shared a similar representation of *tian* although their “addendums” differed. Like the Analects, the Mozi understood *tian* to be a god-like entity, but however goes on to articulate the existence of *tian* as occurring within a polytheistic backdrop which acknowledges the existence of other entities,

古之今之为鬼，非他也，有天鬼，亦有山水鬼神者，亦有人死而为鬼者。

“The ghosts of ancient and modern times are the same. There are ghosts of Heaven, there are ghosts and spirits of the mountains and rivers, and there are also the ghosts of people who have died.”¹²

The polytheistic view of the Mozi is a hierarchical one which consists of two levels with the human beings occupying the third level – the lowest level in the Mohist cosmology. *Tian* is the supreme entity situated at the highest level of this polytheistic hierarchy, presiding over the human beings and all other spiritual entities which occupies the secondary or middle position between *tian* and the human beings. For the Mozi, the will of *tian* appears to be *eo ipso* the will of all spirits and the human beings since what is beneficial to *tian* must be beneficial for all spirits and people,

顺天意者，义政也。[...] 此必上利于天，中利于鬼，下利于人 [...]

“To obey the will of Heaven is to accept righteousness as the standard. [...] This is beneficial to Heaven above, beneficial to the spirits in the middle sphere, and beneficial to the people below.”¹³

And while the Analects understood *tian*’s moral calculations as something that is not entirely visible and comprehensible, the Mozi appear to think that it is clear, graspable and aimed at righteousness,

[...] 天亦何欲何恶？天欲义而恶不义。

“[...] what does Heaven desire and what does it abhor? Heaven desires righteousness and abhors unrighteousness.”¹⁴

And depending on the deeds of the ruler, *tian* goes on to reward or punish them according to its desired righteousness,

曰：天子为善，天能赏之；天子为暴，天能罚之 [...]

“Master Mo Zi said: “[...] if the Son of Heaven does what is good, Heaven is able to reward him. If the Son of Heaven does what is tyrannical, Heaven is able to punish him.”¹⁵

¹² *The Mozi: A Complete Translation*. Translated by Ian Johnston, *The Chinese University Press*, 2010, p.303

¹³ Ian Johnston, p.278.

¹⁴ Ian Johnston, p.233.

¹⁵ Ian Johnston, p.246-7.

Contrary to the Analects, the Mozi's version is one in which *tian*'s intentions are apparent and morally inclined, and its actions are purportedly just as it presides and judges over the world.

Tian in the Mengzi and Xunzi

Like the Analects and Mozi, the Mengzi's representation of *tian* continues to be that of a god-like entity that is interested in the human affairs. However, it is now one whose intentions appear to transcend the dualistic qualities of good and bad, and the Mengzi articulates this unreservedly in the following,

孟子曰：“天下有道，小德役大德，小贤役大贤；天下无道，小役大，弱役强。斯二者天也。顺天者存，逆天者亡。[...]”

“Mencius said, “When the Way prevails in the world, those of small Virtue serve those of great Virtue and those of great ability serve those of lesser ability. When the Way does not prevail in the world, the small serve the great, and the weak serve the strong. Both of these are owing to Heaven. Those who follow Heaven are preserved, while those who rebel against Heaven perish. [...]”¹⁶

In this passage, the Mengzi paints a picture of *tian* as an entity who is somewhat cruel and unconcerned about whether the righteous in the world receives what it is due. Instead, its concern remains merely as to whether the denizens accord with its will. In another passage, in his advice to Duke of Teng Wen, Mengzi made it implicit that *tian* does favour someone simply because they are a morally good individual,

孟子对曰：“君子创业垂统，为可继也。若夫成功，则天也。君如彼何哉？强为善而已矣。”

“Mencius replied, “The noble person creates a legacy and hands down a beginning that may be carried on. When it comes to achieving success—that is determined by Heaven. What can you do about Qi? Devote all your strength to being good, that is all.”¹⁷

That said, the reason why Mengzi told Duke of Teng Wen to simply focus on being good is because it is in the Mencian philosophical account that *tian* created human beings to be capable of goodness, something which made us unique from other living creatures on earth,

孟子曰：“[...] 仁义礼智，非由外铄我也，我固有之也，弗思耳矣。”

Mencius said, “[...] Humaneness, rightness, propriety, and wisdom are not infused into us from without. We definitely possess them. It is just that we do not think about it, that is all.”¹⁸

心之官则思，思则得之，不思则不得也。此天之所与我者 [...]。

“Mencius said, “[...] The faculty of the mind is to think. By thinking, it apprehends; by not thinking, it fails to apprehend. This is what Heaven has given to us.”¹⁹

¹⁶ *Mencius*. Translated by Irene Bloom, edited by Philip J. Ivanhoe, *Columbia University Press*, 2009, 4A7, p.77

¹⁷ Bloom, 1B14, p.25.

¹⁸ Bloom, 6A6, p.124.

¹⁹ Bloom, 6A15, p.130.

The Mengzi had also differentiated itself from the Analects and Mozi by putting forth the understanding that *tian* behaves in a definitive way that it calls “*cheng*” (诚), which is commonly translated into “sincerity” or the quality of being “true” or “real”.

[...] 是故诚者，天之道也 [...].

“[...] Therefore, to be sincere is the Way of Heaven, and to think about sincerity is the human Way.”²⁰

Although the *Xunzi* and *Mengzi* are representative works of Confucianism, they were known for their supposedly opposing views on human nature. And for the purposes of this paper, I would add that their representations of *tian* are also of opposing views too. In the *Xunzi*, a whole chapter is dedicated to discussing *tian*. Contrary to the Analects and *Mengzi*, the message of this chapter is that *tian* is simply “divested of conscious knowing and moral desiderata”²¹. The opening passage of the chapter sums it up,

天行有常，不为尧存，不为桀亡。应之以治则吉，应之以乱则凶。

“There is constancy to the activities of Heaven. They do not persist because of Yao. They do not perish because of Jie. If you respond to them with order, then you will have good fortune. If you respond to them with chaos, then you will have misfortune.”²²

The *Xunzi* made it clear that *tian* is but the celestial skies, its bodies, the changes we observe of it and presumably all other celestial phenomena, which the *Xunzi* compares to the earth that we walk on which gives us the natural resources,

天有其时，地有其财 [...].

“Heaven has its proper seasons.
Earth has its proper resources [...].”²³

曰：日月星辰瑞历，是禹桀之所同也 [...] 治乱非天也。

“I say: The sun, the moon, and the stars are wondrous calendrical phenomena. These things were the same for both Yu and Jie [...] so order and disorder are not due to Heaven.”²⁴

However, the *Xunzi* also acknowledged that *tian* is more than what we see with our naked eyes, namely that *tian* is both the work that it produces which we come to know as the celestial phenomena, and *tian* itself which the *Xunzi* has admitted to being formless,

不见其事，而见其功，夫是之谓神。皆知其所以成，莫知其无形，夫是之谓天功。

²⁰ Bloom, 4A12, p.80.

²¹ *Zhuangzi: The Complete Writings*. Translated by Brook Ziporyn, *Hackett Publishing Company, Inc.*, 2020, p.286.

²² *Xunzi: The Complete Text*. Translated by Eric L. Hutton, *Princeton University Press*, 2016, p.175.

²³ Hutton, p.176.

²⁴ Hutton, p.176.

“What is such that one does not see its workings but sees only its accomplishments—this is called spirit-like power. What is such that everyone knows how it comes about, but no one understands it in its formless state—this is called the accomplishment of Heaven.”²⁵

The Xunzi’s account of *tian* is a naturalistic one and secondary literatures such as Hutton’s understood it to be espousing “an understanding of Heaven as much more like what we might call “Nature”, namely an impersonal force in the world that is responsible for various phenomena and does not react to human virtue or vice, or supplication”²⁶.

Zhuangzi’s notion of Tian

Readers who are familiar with the Zhuangzi would know that it is made up of a complex set of chapters of which its authorship continues to be studied. Be that as it may, there is a general agreement that the Zhuangzi is an anthological work consisting of, to name a few, the original work of Zhuangzi, the Huang-Lao texts and purportedly texts of the disciple of Zhuangzi that follows closely after the original works of Zhuangzi. This difficulty in authorship is only an issue if we are trying to sieve out one authorship from the other or if we are trying to identify new authorships within the Zhuangzi that was perhaps overlooked, or if we are interested in the authenticity of the texts presented to us. In terms of the objective of this paper and this chapter, the difficulty in authorship does not present an impasse since we can look at the Zhuangzi on the whole and take it as what it is — the only extant text. We are interested in what *tian* stands for overall in the *Zhuangzi* and there is no better way to start this than to look at what other secondary literature authors have said.

As one of the earliest and notable translators of the Zhuangzi, Burton Watson briefly opined that the Zhuangzi’s usage of *tian* appeared to exist in three variegated forms, that is, as “Nature”, as indicative of what is natural versus artificial and as an alternative name to the Dao (道),

“Zhuangzi uses the word to mean Nature, what pertains to the natural, as opposed to the artificial, or as a synonym for the Way.”²⁷

It is not unusual to think that the Zhuangzi speaks of *tian* as “Nature” since there are indeed texts within which that seems to suggest so, such as the following,

死生，命也，其有夜旦之常，天也。人之有所不得与，皆物之情也。

“Life and death are fated, and that they come with the regularity of day and night is of Heaven — that which humans can do nothing about, simply the way things are.”²⁸

The above text recognizes things in the world as having its inevitable regularity or constancy and as well as its facticity. This is a common feature expressed in the Xunzi’s chapter which exclusively discusses *tian* as well, and which consequently motivated secondary literature authors such as Hutton to believe that the Xunzi is effectively describing what we come to know as “Nature”. This citation here in the Zhuangzi appears to be saying no less of it. However, later translator Brook Ziporyn pointed out that likening *tian* in the Zhuangzi to the notion of “Nature”

²⁵ Hutton, p.176.

²⁶ Hutton, p.xxix.

²⁷ *The Complete Works of Zhuangzi*. Translated by Burton Watson, *Columbia University Press*, 1968, p.xxviii.

²⁸ Ziporyn, p.55.

may not be apposite as the latter denotes a sense of orderliness and knowability which is absent in early Chinese philosophy,

“The term nature has been used by some early translators [in the translation of the *Zhuangzi*], but the implication of Nature as an ordered and knowable system, running according to “Natural Laws”, which are rooted in the wisdom of a diviner lawgiver, is profoundly alien to the early Chinese conception [...].”²⁹

Anyhow, Watson appears to be right to say that the *Zhuangzi* uses *tian* in a way that is in dualistic opposition to what is artificial. For instance, in the short passage below, the *Zhuangzi* used *tian* in opposition to *ren* (人) to precisely mean just that,

公文轩见右师而惊曰：“是何人也？恶乎介也？天与，其人与？”曰：“天也，非人也。 [...]。”

“When the Honorable Ornate Highcart went to see the Rightside Commander, he was astonished. “What manner of man are you, that you are so singularly one-legged? Is this the doing of Heaven or of man?”

He answered, “It is of Heaven, not man. [...].”³⁰

Watson also seems to be right to say that the *Zhuangzi* uses *tian* in such a way that it becomes synonymous with the Dao, as seen in the case below,

何谓道？有天道，有人道。无为而尊者，天道也；有为而累者，人道也。主者，天道也；臣者，人道也。天道之与人道也，相去远矣，不可不察也。

“And what is meant by “one’s Course”? There is a Course of Heaven and a Course of Man. The Course of Heaven is to be exalted in non-doing. The Course of Man is to be always fettered in doing. The ruler’s part is the Course of Heaven and the minister’s part is the Course of Man. How far apart they are, the Course of Heaven and the Course of Man! This must never be neglected!”³¹

无为为之之谓天 [...].

“The doings of non-doing; that is what is meant by the Heavenly.”³²

Although the first passage presented asks a question about the Dao, from which an answer was given to say that there is a “Course of Heaven” and a “Course of Man”, the passage goes on to qualify that the “Course of Man” is in fact subordinate to the “Course of Heaven”. This is the point at which we distinguish between the “Course of Heaven” to be indicated by a capitalized “Dao” while the “Course of Man” as represented by a small letter “dao” because, in the Daoist context, the Dao is “*wu-wei*” (无为) or “spontaneity” itself. As in the case of Daodejing when it said that,

道常无为而无不为。

²⁹ Ziporyn, p.286.

³⁰ Ziporyn, p.30.

³¹ Ziporyn, p.96.

³² Ziporyn, p.98.

“The way never acts yet nothing is left undone.”³³

When we assemble these together with the second passage presented on how the Zhuangzi spoke of *wu-wei* as *tian*, it is seemingly indisputable or uncontroversial to affirm that the Zhuangzi does employ *tian* as if it is an alternative term to the Dao. This analysis was also separately put forth by Xu Fuguan (徐复观), who noted that the remarkable difference between the Zhuangzi and the Daodejing, albeit both espousing the same philosophical core, is that the Zhuangzi frequently uses *tian* in place of the Dao that was originally expressed in the Daodejing.³⁴

Besides Watson’s account, there are also other secondary literature authors that have put forth a variegated understanding of the Zhuangzi’s *tian*. Hans-Georg Moeller and Paul J.D’Ambrosio has argued that, in relation to the Book of the Mean’s (中庸, *zhong-yong*) imperative that it is the way of humankind to “make sincere”, and while “Sincerity is the *dao*/way of nature/heaven”³⁵, the Zhuangzi rejects the Confucian notion that it is the objective of mankind to be *cheng* (诚), which may be rendered as “sincere”, “authentic” or “genuine”.³⁶ While this chapter is not concerned about whether it is the way of humankind to “make sincere”, it is interested in the implication which arises from Moeller and D’Ambrosio’s argument, which is that the way of heaven is sincerity or *tian* is sincere. This is a possible reading since if we accept that the Zhuangzi says that *tian* is the Dao and the Dao is spontaneous or spontaneity itself, then in order to be so, *tian* or the Dao is sincere since spontaneity cannot be actively created in the first place, at least according to the Daoist canon. This is communicated in the following passage from the Zhuangzi when it elaborated what it means to be *zhen* (真), a quality that the Zhuangzian paragon exemplifies,

“真者，精诚之至也。[...] 真者，所以受于天也，自然不可易也。”

“The genuine is whatever is most unmixed and unfaked. [...] the genuine is what one receives from Heaven, which is so of itself and cannot be deliberately altered.”³⁷

Ziporyn himself has offered another variegated understanding of the usage of *tian* in the Zhuangzi as referring to an agentless creation process and a collective name for whatever that happens without being able to identify its doer and why things happened,

“This is the sense of the term that emerges front and center in Zhuangzi’s usage: the spontaneous and agentless process that brings forth all beings, or a collective name for whatever happens without a specific identifiable agent that makes it happen and without a preexisting purpose or will or observable procedure. [...]”³⁸

This particular understanding of the usage of *tian* is perhaps best represented by the iconic motif the “piping of Heaven” (天籁, *tian-lai*) in the Zhuangzi,

³³ Lau, XXXVII, p.42.

³⁴ “庄子与老子显著不同之点，则是庄子常使用“天”字以代替原有“道”。”

Hsü, Fu-kuan. *The History of The Chinese Philosophy of Human Nature: The Pre-Ch’in Period*. 台湾商务印书馆股份有限公司 [Taiwan Shang Wu Yin Shu Guan Gu Fen You Xian Gong Si], 1969, p.366.

³⁵ Moeller, Hans-Georg, and Paul J. D’Ambrosio. *Genuine Pretending: On the Philosophy of the Zhuangzi*. Columbia University Press, 2017, p.9.

³⁶ Moeller and D’Ambrosio, p.9.

³⁷ Ziporyn, p.257.

³⁸ Ziporyn, p.286.

敢问天籁。”子綦曰：“夫吹万不同，而使其自己也，咸其自取，怒者其谁邪！”

“[...] What then is the piping of Heaven?”

Sir Shostrap said, “It is the gusting through all the ten thousand differences that yet causes all of them to come only from themselves. For since every last identity is only what some of them picks out from it, what identity can there be for their rouser?”³⁹

Ziporyn remarked that since *tian* does not refer to a particular agent but as a quality of the myriad things themselves, the translation of *tian* is to be rendered as “the Heavenly”, a rendition that is equally shared by Watson,⁴⁰

[...] Since the term no longer refers to a particular agent but to a quality or aspect of purposeless and agentless process present in all existents, it is here often translated as “the Heavenly” rather than the substantive “Heaven.”⁴¹

The use of “the Heavenly” in the passages of the *Zhuangzi* is often contrasted with what is of human, such as the account below which tries to indicate what is a result of the spontaneous being of things themselves and what is a result of human intervention,

牛马四足，是谓天；落马首，穿牛鼻，是谓人。

“That cows and horses have four legs is the Heavenly. The bridle around the horse’s head and the ring through the cow’s nose are the human.”⁴²

Having shared accounts from various secondary literature works that attempt to underscore the notion of *tian*, it is important that I contribute by adding on to the list of existing works on what I think about the *Zhuangzi*’s *tian* and why. On this, I must agree with Ziporyn’s opinion on the difference between *tian*, and “Nature” which connotes orderliness and knowability. Ziporyn himself has already explained that the orderliness and knowability connoted by the term “Nature” depends on the existence of a divine lawgiver, and his account of *tian* in the *Zhuangzi* has shown that those things are absent since *tian* is not some specifically identifiable agent. By extension, there is no purposeful reason to be proffered as to why things occur the way they are because any purposeful reason is only purposeful insofar as the reason themselves are latched onto a doer, i.e., a specifically identifiable agent. However, the explanation provided leaves behind a vacuum for one to ponder: What, then, if not orderliness and knowability?

At this juncture, it is my intention to respond to this question and in so doing, offer some sort of account about *tian* with the help of various citations in the *Zhuangzi*. In place of orderliness and knowability, what precisely underscores the *Zhuangzi*’s *tian*, and which makes it stand out as a class of its own apart from the other Pre-Qin works, is that the *Zhuangzi*’s *tian* connotes “transformative” and “enigma”. Returning to the phrase which suggests *tian* to be responsible for some sort of constancy,

³⁹ Ziporyn, p.12.

⁴⁰ Watson, p.XXVIII.

⁴¹ Ziporyn, p.286.

⁴² Ziporyn, p.139.

死生，命也，其有夜旦之常，天也。人之有所不得与，皆物之情也。

“Life and death are fated, and that they come with the regularity of day and night is of Heaven – that which humans can do nothing about, simply the way things are.”⁴³

On the face value of it, the phrase appears to imply that the constancy is marked by some sort of orderliness or regularity since all things move in a definite trajectory from life to death just as it is from day to night. However, what the *Zhuangzi* really means by “constancy” is the constant transformation that things are put through by *tian*,

[...] 子舆 [...] 曰：“伟哉！夫造物者，将以予为此拘拘也！曲偻发背，上有五管，颐隐于齐，肩高于顶，句赘指天。”阴阳之气有沴 [...]

[...] 曰：“亡，予何恶！浸假而化予之左臂以为鸡，予因以求时夜；浸假而化予之右臂以为弹，予因以求鸚炙；浸假而化予之尻以为轮，以神为马，予因以乘之，岂更驾哉！ [...]？”

“[...] Sir Transport [...] said, “How great is the [Creation of Things⁴⁴], making me all tangled up like this!” For his chin was tucked into his navel, his shoulders towered over the crown of his head, his ponytail pointed toward the sky, his five internal organs at the top of him, his thigh bones took the place of his ribs, and his yin and yang energies in chaos. [...]

Sir Transport said, “[...] Perhaps he will transform my left arm into a rooster; thereby I’ll be announcing the dawn. Perhaps he will transform my right arm into a crossbow pellet; thereby I’ll be hunting down an owl to roast. Perhaps he will transform my backside into a pair of wheels and my spirit into a horse; thereby I’ll keep on riding along—will I need any other vehicle? [...]?”⁴⁵

In the above passage, we see that Sir Transport was relishing in the possible changes that the “Creation-Things” (造物者, *zao-wu-zhe*) is supposedly going to do to him, which also reflects the *Zhuangzi*’s positive attitude towards the notion of transformation. If we recall at this point the motif of the “piping of Heaven”, we will see that this motif and the “Creation of Things” are in fact alternative names to *tian* for the *Zhuangzi*. The “gusting” or “blowing” (吹, *chui*) which describes the motif has been very much connected to the concept of *qi* (气) and the notion of vitality since early Chinese conception. The “gusting” or “blowing” described in the motif is akin to the English expression of “breathing things to life”, a description of creation process. This is cross supported by another passage in the *Zhuangzi*, in which, experiencing the death of his own wife, *Zhuangzi* said that,

庄子曰：“[...] 察其始而本无生，非徒无生也，而本无形，非徒无形也，而本无气。杂乎芒芴之间，变而有气，气变而有形，形变而有生 [...]。”

“[...] But then I considered closely how it had all begun: previously, before she was born, there was no life there. Not only no life: no physical form. Not only no physical form: not even energy. Then in the course of some heedless mingling mishmash a change occurred and there was

⁴³ Ziporyn, p.55.

⁴⁴ I have taken the liberty to amend the initial translation “Creator of Things” to “Creation-Things” so as to be consistent with Ziporyn’s point that *tian* is not some specifically identifiable agent but just a collective name for things that happened.

⁴⁵ Ziporyn, p.58-9.

energy, and then this energy changed and there was a physical form, and then this form changed and there was life. [...].”¹⁶

If we look at the way the Zhuangzi has described the transformation that *tian* puts things through, the impression that we get from it is nothing close to orderliness or regularity. In fact, the descriptions were weird and bizarre as the kind of transformation that we are looking at appears to be haphazard and random, with the narrative character concerned having no indication as to what comes next for him, at which point it is uncontroversial to say that the workings of *tian* in its transformation is enigmatic and not in the least of knowability. In the same narrative later, we see that it gave *tian* another alternative name alongside “Creation-Things” as “Creation-Transformation” (造化者, *zao-hua-zhe*),

“[...] 今一犯人之形，而曰‘人耳人耳’，夫造化者必以为不祥之人。今一以天地为大炉，以造化为大冶 [...]。”

“[...] Now if I, having happened to stumble into a human form, should insist, ‘Only a human! Only a human!’ Creation-Transformation would certainly consider me an inauspicious chunk of person. So now I look upon all heaven and earth as a great furnace, and the Process of Creation-Transformation as a great blacksmith [...].”¹⁷

In the above, having named *tian*, the Zhuangzi had also, through the voice of the narrative’s character, articulated its vision of the world as a “great furnace” of which *tian* is the “great blacksmith” or “Creation-Transformation” that works on all things in it. It is also significant to note that while Ziporyn translated “*da-zhi*” (大冶) as the “great blacksmith”, the original meaning was a verb/noun which refers to “bringing peace and order to” or “great order” in the Rites of Zhou (周礼, *zhou-li*). Appropriating the original sense so as to value-add to the existing translation, the “great ordering” of *tian* was not seeing to it that things are ultimately being regulated in a definitive manner, but in perpetual transformations, and these transformations can appear to be in somewhat of an incoherent mess.

In another famous passage in the Zhuangzi involving Huzi (壶子), Liezi (列子) and the shaman of Zheng, we can also observe the connotations of “transformative” and “enigma”, which underpins the account of *tian* that the narrative is trying to express although nothing was directly said about them. In the narrative, Liezi came to be amazed by a shaman in Zheng who was able to articulate the specifics of people’s fortunes and thought that his teacher Huzi’s teachings about the *tian*/Dao was no better. Huzi, having heard this, challenged Liezi to invite the shaman of Zheng over on four consecutive occasions in an attempt to show Liezi the “inner reality” of the *tian*/Dao since he has not. In each of these occasions, Huzi revealed the different levels and aspects of the *tian*/Dao, each time deeper and increasingly indecipherable to the shaman of Zheng. In the last occasion,

明日，又与之见壶子。立未定，自失而走。 [...]

壶子曰：“乡吾示之以未始出吾宗。吾与之虚而委蛇，不知其谁何，因以为弟靡，因以为波流，故逃也。”

¹⁶ Ziporyn, p.145.

¹⁷ Ziporyn, p.59.

“The next day Liezi brought him to see Huzi again. But before the shaman had even come to a halt before him, he lost control of himself and bolted out the door. [...]

Huzi said, “Just now I showed him the unbegun-to-emerge-from-my-source, where I and he both together are a vacuity that is nonetheless serpentine in its twistings, admitting of no understanding of who is who or what is what. It thus seemed to him something endlessly collapsing and scattering, something flowing away with every wave. This is why he fled.”⁴⁸

Once again, the Zhuangzi has articulated its version of the *tian*/Dao through its narrative character, this time round through Huzi. The very last description that Huzi provided is enigmatic, and this seems to be intentional as the ultimate form of *tian*/Dao, which coheres with the understanding that we have gathered from the motif of the “piping of Heaven” and “Creation-Transformation”. For there is no way of admitting *tian*/Dao, or the “source” (宗, *zong*), as some specifically identifiable agent, and there is no knowing of it as a force that puts the myriad things through perpetual transformation since the kind of transformation that it engineers is one that cannot be anticipated and seemingly, as intimated earlier, haphazard and random. In fact, when we look at the four different occasions in which Huzi revealed a different countenance of *tian*/Dao to the shaman of Zheng, each time deeper and unfathomable, what makes them intricately related is that *tian*/Dao is also precisely transformation itself.

If we are still unconvinced that the significance of the Zhuangzi’s *tian*/Dao lies in its connotations of being transformative and enigmatic, we can refer to the last chapter of the Zhuangzi, in which there is an autobiography of the overall works of the Zhuangzi, and it begins by highlighting the said connotations,

笏漠无形，变化无常，死与生与！天地并与！神明往与！芒乎何之？忽乎何适？万物毕罗，莫足以归，古之道术有在于是者。庄周闻其风而悦之。[...] 芒乎昧乎，未之尽者。

“Blank and barren, without form! Changing and transforming, never constant! Dead? Alive? Standing side by side with Heaven and Earth? Moving along with the spiritlike imponderables as well as the clear illuminations? So confused—where is it all going? So oblivious—where has it all gone? Since all the ten thousand things are inextricably netted together around us, none is worthy of exclusive allegiance. These were some aspects of the ancient art of the Course. Zhuang Zhou got wind of them and was delighted. [...] Vague! Ambiguous! We have not got to the end of them yet.”⁴⁹

The understanding of *tian*/Dao which was articulated by Ziporyn aligns with the above passage’s saying that *tian*/Dao is “Blank and barren, without form!” while my proposition – that a complete picture of the Zhuangzian *tian*/Dao is also marked by its transformative and enigmatic qualities – coheres with the passage’s subsequent description of “Changing and transforming, never constant!”. The Zhuangzian *tian*/Dao is definitely an offshoot from the strain which saw *tian* as some sort of natural phenomena in comparison to the personification of *tian* as a theistic entity. But this is not without its creative additions of *tian* as Dao itself, and, as Dao, something transformative, mysterious and magical even.

⁴⁸ Ziporyn, p.71.

⁴⁹ Ziporyn, p.272.

At this juncture, this chapter is also competent to conclude on the sort of “constancy” which was earlier found to be articulated in the *Zhuangzi*: The only constancy there is that is attributable to *tian*/Dao is ironically its never being constant (无常, *wu-chang*) and ever changing and transforming (变化, *bian-hua*). Interestingly, it seems that the *Zhuangzi* has anticipated such an attempt to underscore the *Zhuangzian tian*/Dao as being characterized by a regulated and rationalized sense of constancy, and this is represented in the misadventure of Chaotic Blob (混沌, *hun-dun*),

儻与忽谋报浑沌之德，曰：“人皆有七窍，以视听食息，此独无有，尝试凿之。”日凿一窍，七日而浑沌死。

“[Swoosh and Oblivion] decided to repay Chaotic Blob for [its] bounteous virtue. “All men have seven holes in them, by means of which they see, hear, eat, and breathe,” they said. “But this one alone has none. Let’s drill him some.” So every day they drilled another hole.

Seven days later, Chaotic Blob was dead.”⁵⁰

The character name Chaotic Blob was originally used in ancient Chinese folklore to refer to the primeval state of the universe. However, in the context of the *Zhuangzi*, it appears to be a caricature of the *Zhuangzian tian*/Dao whose name connotes an incomprehensible, formless mess that resembles Huzi’s description of the ultimate reality of *tian*/Dao. Although the narrative spoke of the misadventure of Chaotic Blob in a playful and comical sense, the message that it brings across is a serious one: Any attempts to resort to the human way of making sense the *Zhuangzian tian*/Dao, or in fact the Daoist Dao, is to effectively kill it by distorting or mutilating it, as in the case of Swoosh and Oblivion’s attempts to make Chaotic Blob look like a human by drilling holes into it. As a precursor to the next chapter of this paper, it is pertinent to ask—Why? If we are to preserve the *Zhuangzian tian*/Dao, what then, is left of the human? What constitutes to being a human in the context of doing so? Can we continue to live a normal life as the kind of human being envisaged in the *Zhuangzian* context?

CHAPTER TWO

The Heavenly Human in the *Zhuangzi*

Having understood the meaning and significance of *tian*/Dao in the *Zhuangzi*, this chapter moves on to discuss the core of this paper, which is the role and purpose of the human being in the *Zhuangzian* worldview. The chapter first introduces the conflict between *tian*/Dao and the human by suggesting and elaborating on the tendency of the human being to alter the natural course of things with its preferentiality. Followingly, the chapter looks at the impact of the conflict and why it is of concern to the *Zhuangzi*. Next, the chapter proceeds to look at the *Zhuangzi*’s ideal role and purpose of the human being. Lastly, the chapter looks into the *Zhuangzi*’s self-admitting caveat of having hastily distinguished between *tian*/Dao and the human, and what that could mean for the role and purpose of the human being in the *Zhuangzian* worldview.

⁵⁰ Ziporyn, p.72.

The Conflict between Tian and the Human

In the Zhuangzi, we are confronted with a conundrum: We were told that the Zhuangzian *tian*/Dao is the “Creation-Things” from which all things come to life, including the humans. However, we also gathered the impression from the misadventure of Chaotic Blob that there is something problematic about being human which consequently led to the tragic demise of the former, a caricaturizing of *tian*/Dao itself. What informs this theatrical narrative seems to be the concern that the human touch can potentially affect *tian*/Dao. But what exactly is so potentially worrying about the human touch? Can one truly affect the Zhuangzian *tian*/Dao? If so, in what sense? These questions are important because they help shed light on the role of a human being in the Zhuangzian worldview that is rarely discussed in the existing secondary literature.

Fortunately, there are passages within the Zhuangzi which appear to address the questions above. The following is a passage that somewhat answered those questions,

是非之彰也，道之所以亏也。道之所以亏，爱之所以成。

“[...] When rights and wrongs wax bright, the Course begins to wane. What sets the Course to waning is exactly what allows preference for one thing over another to succeed in reaching its full formation.”⁵¹

In the above cited portion of the passage, the Zhuangzi plainly stated that *tian*/Dao is affected by the full formation of human preference for one thing over another, such as in the case of judging what is right or wrong.⁵² Particularly, it is said that human activities that are motivated by preferentiality causes *tian*/Dao to “wane” (亏, *kuī*). In recognizing so, the Zhuangzi has implicitly acknowledged the possibility that *tian*/Dao can wane, but it also goes on to give an ambivalent answer about whether there is indeed such a thing as the waning of *tian*/Dao,

果且有成与亏乎哉？果且无成与亏乎哉？有成与亏，故昭氏之鼓琴也；无成与亏，故昭氏之不鼓琴也。昭文之鼓琴也，师旷之枝策也，惠子之据梧也，三子之知几乎！皆其盛者也，故载之末年。唯其好之也，以异于彼，其好之也，欲以明之彼。非所明而明之，故以坚白之昧终。

“But is there really any waning versus fullness? Or is there really no such thing as waning versus fullness? In a certain sense there exists waning versus fullness, loss versus success. In that sense, we can say that the Zhaos are zither players. But in a certain sense there is no such thing as waning versus fullness, no loss versus success. In that sense we can say, on the contrary, that the Zhaos are not zither players. Zhao Wen strumming his zither, Master Kuang tapping out the time, Huizi leaning on his desk—the understanding these three had of their arts waxed most full. This was what they flourished in, and thus they pursued these arts to the end of their days. They delighted in them, and observing that this delight of theirs was not shared, they wanted to shine its light and make it obvious to others. So they tried to make others understand as obvious what was not obvious to them, and thus some ended their days in the darkness of debating about “hardness” and “whiteness”, and Zhao Wen’s son ended his days still grappling with his father’s zither strings. [...]”⁵³

⁵¹ Ziporyn, p.16.

⁵² See also the Zhuangzi’s criticism of humaneness and righteousness (仁义, *ren-yi*).

⁵³ Ziporyn, p.16.

In the passage, the Zhuangzi's seeming response to the question of whether *tian*/Dao wane is that it depends on how the human being concerned acts. It does so by alluding to Zhao Wen, a historically illustrious zither player—when Zhao Wen is playing the zither, *tian*/Dao wanes, but when Zhao Wen stops playing, *tian*/Dao did not wane. It seems that the waning of *tian*/Dao is a temporaneous occurrence, and it occurs correspondingly to the concerned human act, at least according to how the Zhuangzi described it. That is to say that the waning of *tian*/Dao occurs only while the act is being carried out which otherwise ceases. The Zhuangzi then went on to explain what is problematic about actions that causes waning and attributed to the fact that such actions involve trying to intervene with others by making clear our own preferences to those who do not share them. This seems to be implying trying to force others to deny their own preferences and accept ours so that they “become” like us. The implication seems to be well supported by the fact that the examples that the Zhuangzi alludes to as such acts throughout its texts by and large involve cases whereby there is an imposition or influence with universal or even interpersonal maxims that attempt to homogenize people. For instance, Mozi's blanket burial standard which the Zhuangzi went on to criticize,

今墨子独生不歌，死不服，桐棺三寸而无槨，以为法式。

“But now Mozi alone would have no singing in life and no ceremonial attire in death, making a three-inch-thick coffin of paulownia wood with nothing enclosing it the enforced standard for everyone.”⁵⁴

Or the criticism of Confucian advocacy of humankindness and responsible conduct (仁义, *ren-yi*), and the discerning of rights and wrongs,

“[...] 民湿寝则腰疾偏死，鱗然乎哉？木处则惴栗恟惧，猿猴然乎哉？三者孰知正处？民食刍豢，麋鹿食荐，螂且甘带，鸱鸦耆鼠，四者孰知正味？猿，獮狙以为雌，麋与鹿交，鱗与鱼游。毛嫱、丽姬，人之所美也，鱼见之深入，鸟见之高飞，麋鹿见之决骤。四者孰知天下之正色哉？自我观之，仁义之端，是非之涂，樊然淆乱，吾恶能知其辩！”

“[...] When humans sleep in a damp place, they wake up deathly ill and sore about the waist—but what about eels? If humans live in trees, they tremble with fear and worry—but how about monkeys? Of these three, which ‘knows’ what is the right place to live? Humans eat the flesh of their livestock, deer eat grass, snakes eat centipedes, hawks and eagles eat mice. Of these four, which ‘knows’ the right thing to eat? Monkeys take she-monkeys for mates, elks mount deer, male fish frolic with female fish, while humans regard Mao Qiang and Lady Li as great beauties—but when fish see them they soar into the skies, when deer see them they bolt away without looking back. Which of these four ‘knows’ what is rightly alluring? From where I see it, all the sproutings of humankindness and responsible conduct and all trails of right and wrong are hopelessly tangled and confused. How could I know how to distinguish and demonstrate any conclusions about them?”⁵⁵

We can gather from the above passage that the Zhuangzi does not think that mankind or any other living things for that matter is capable of deliberating on universal standards since each specie is inevitably lodged in its own preferences that influence their way of behaviour. With this, the Zhuangzi went on to criticize the Confucian values, which appear to be an implicit criticism

⁵⁴ Ziporyn, p.268.

⁵⁵ Ziporyn, p.18-9.

of Mengzi's account of how every human is ethically inclined with each having the tip of humankindness and responsible conduct (仁义之端, *ren-yi-zhi-duan*), and the ability to discern what is right from wrong, etc. The reasoning appears to be flawed since the inability to deliberate on a universal standard that cuts across species does not mean that a specie-based standard cannot be derived. However, I think what the Zhuangzi is getting at cuts deeper than just that upon further reflection.

Although we share similar features as human beings, our existence makes each of us unique in the sense that we are brought into this world – by none other than *tian*/Dao – and our paths are ours alone to walk,

道行之而成 [...]。

“Courses are formed by walking them.”⁵⁶

That we are so is already intimated earlier in the significance of the Zhuangzi's “piping of Heaven”, which stated that *tian*/Dao, in its creation-things process, makes it such that all things are themselves (使其自己也, *shi-qi-zi-ji-ye*). Elsewhere in the Zhuangzi, this facticity when described from the perspective of the myriad things who are themselves is also known as “*du*” (独),

天之生是使独也 [...]。

“Heaven, in its generation of each thing as ‘this’, always makes it singular, unique, alone. [...]”⁵⁷

With all that is said, we are now in a better position to make sense of the waning of *tian*/Dao. The waning of *tian*/Dao is not the waning of *tian*/Dao itself but the deviation and hindering of the myriad things from being themselves. The Zhuangzi has attributed the waning to human preferentiality, which tended toward the homogenization of people and things in a relatively forceful and unnatural way in comparison to the creation process of *tian*/Dao, which drives the emergence of unique and spontaneous things and therefore tended toward diversification. To better understand the waning of *tian*/Dao, we can visualize *tian*/Dao as analogous to a holographic source that produces the myriad things in its projection such that each thing is being themselves. Among them came the human beings who started to interfere with the holographic projection by forcefully making changes to the behaviour and how things look. The holographic source is very much unaffected itself, but the things that emerged from this source is affected. In terms of how things may be affected, we can take the case of Zhao Wen for instance. Although Zhao Wen may be an illustrious zither player, his playing involves the selection of various musical notes that are then composed into something meaningful to the human ears. This is a violation of the preservation of diversity since it is an act of elevating a selection of musical notes into prominence with the exclusion of all others. For the Zhuangzi, such refined music pieces are a precise reflection of the flaw in human agency to be able to replicate the kind of completeness that we see in the “piping of Heaven”, which described *tian*/Dao's blowing into the ten thousand things and letting them be themselves. The Zhuangzi also mocks the human appreciation for what it sees as a preference for fragmented or refined things rather than the integral sound of *tian*/Dao's blowing into the ten thousand things,

⁵⁶ Ziporyn, p.15.

⁵⁷ Ziporyn, p.30.

大声不入于里耳，《折杨》、《皇琴》，则嗑然而笑。

“Great music makes no impression on the ears of the villagers, but play them “Snap the Willow” or “The Magnificent Flowers” and they will light up with pleasure.”⁵⁸

In the passage, the Zhuangzi observed that the humans enjoy refined musical pieces such as “Snap the Willow” (折杨, *zhe-yang*) or “The Magnificent Flowers” (皇琴, *huang-fu*), which are historically existing musical pieces, and we can imagine Zhao Wen to be involved in playing such musical pieces with the zither. The “Great music” which we can take the Zhuangzi to be indicating what the “piping of Heaven” describes or the completeness of music, on the other hand, does not make an impression in the ears of people. If we ponder about what this “Great music” is in practical terms, it is the most complete form of music that is already immanent in the natural world. By not playing the zither, there is no selection of musical notes and by extension the composition of refined musical pieces that then allure men into developing a similar and unnatural liking. What we hear is then the natural sounds that we are already hearing—the sound of the bustling myriad things, which, will not cause *tian*/Dao to wane since there is no preferentiality that sets up interferences caused to the spontaneous living of other things. There is no fragmentation since the most complete form of music is one that reflects what *tian*/Dao does by letting things be themselves.

The Impact of the Conflict

We have talked about what the conflict between *tian*/Dao and the human entails, namely that human preferentiality tends to alter the natural course of other things, and this is done at the expense of the spontaneity and diversity of things which was inherited from *tian*/Dao, and which is thus inherent in things themselves as “the Heavenly”. We have also talked about how the waning of *tian*/Dao is not the waning of *tian*/Dao itself per se but the hindering and deviating of the myriad things from being themselves. At this point of time, I believe we are beginning to get a sense that this issue that the Zhuangzi is concerned about is more than just a concern about *tian*/Dao—it is also, and much more at heart, a concern for the myriad things. What is so concerning about the myriad things being prevented from being themselves?

The significance of this issue is perhaps most vividly described in the Zhuangzi’s recollection of Bo Le’s achievement in domestication of horses,

马，蹄可以践霜雪，毛可以御风寒，齧草饮水，翹足而陆。此马之真性也。虽有义台、路寝，无所用之。及至伯乐，曰：“我善治马。”烧之剔之，刻之雒之，连之以羈罽，编之以皂栈，马之死者十二三矣；饥之渴之，驰之骤之，整之齐之，前有楸饰之患，而后有鞭厠之威，而马之死者已过半矣。

“Here are the horses, able to tramp over frost and snow with the hooves they have, to keep out the wind and cold with their coats. Chomping the grass and drinking the waters, prancing and jumping over the terrain—this is the genuine inborn nature of horses. Even if given fancy terraces and great halls, they would have no use for them. Then along comes Bo Le, saying, “I am good at managing horses!” He proceeds to brand them, shave them, clip them, bridle them, fetter them with crupper and martingale, pen them in stable and stall—until about a quarter of the horses have dropped dead. Then he starves them, parches them, trots them, gallops them, lines

⁵⁸ Ziporyn, p. 107.

them up neck to neck or nose to tail, tormenting them with bit and rein in front and whip and spur behind. By then over half of the horses have dropped dead.”⁵⁹

I think it is uncontroversial to say that the Zhuangzi would be agreeable to saying that in the case of Bo Le’s domestication of horses, Bo Le did not show proper respect for the horses as living things. In fact, he treated the horses as dispensable in his pursuance of excellence in managing the horses, of which many horses had died in the process according to the Zhuangzi. Arguably, Bo Le is a paradigmatic representation of the self-aggrandizement in human beings that the Zhuangzian worldview sees as damaging thus worrying to maintaining a spontaneous and diversified world.

Apart from Bo Le’s case, the Zhuangzi is also avidly concerned about how, as human beings, we tend toward the imposition of what we think is good for things themselves when in truth it is not. These sorts of passages are plentiful in the Zhuangzi, with the following being one such passage which spoke of how a seabird died from forceful assimilating of living conditions, ironically by the marquis of Lu, a human being,

“昔者海鸟止于鲁郊，鲁侯御而觴之于庙，奏九韶以为乐，具太牢以为善。鸟乃眩视忧悲，不敢食一膻，不敢饮一杯，三日而死。此以己养养鸟也，非以鸟养养鸟也。夫以鸟养养鸟者，宜栖之深林，游之坛陆，浮之江湖，食之鳧鰿，随行列而止，委蛇而处。”

“In olden times a seabird came to roost in the outskirts of Lu. The marquis of Lu took it riding in his chariot to the temple, where he prepared a banquet for it, having the music of the Nine Shao performed for its entertainment and supplying it with the best chops from the butcher for its delectation. The bird looked at it all with glazed eyes, worried and distressed, not daring to eat a bite, not daring to drink a sip, and after three days of this, the bird was dead. The marquis was trying to use what was nourishing to himself to nourish the bird, instead of using what was nourishing to the bird. Those who wanted to nourish a bird with what is nourishing to the bird would let it perch in the deep forest, roam over the altars and plains, float on the rivers and lakes, gorge itself on eels and minnows, fly in formation to wherever it stops and find its place willy-nilly wherever it wants.”⁶⁰

In other passages, the Zhuangzi also spoke of how one can come to accept or internalize whatever that was imposed on them without understanding the consequence of abiding by these imposition in their living,

颜回见仲尼请行。[...] 回尝闻之夫子曰：‘治国去之，乱国就之，医门多疾。’愿以所闻思其则，庶几其国有瘳乎！”仲尼曰：“嘻！若殆往而刑耳！夫道不欲杂，杂则多，多则扰，扰则忧，忧而不救。”

“Yan Hui went to see Confucius, asking leave to depart. [...] [Yan Hui said,] I have heard you say, Master, ‘Leave a well-ordered state and go to one in chaos. At a physician’s door there are always many invalids.’ I wish to take what I have learned from you and to derive some standards and principles from it to apply to this situation. Perhaps then the state can be saved.”

⁵⁹ Ziporyn, p.81.

⁶⁰ Ziporyn, p.147.

Confucius said, “Ah! You will most likely go and get yourself executed! If you are following a course, it’s better not to mix anything extraneous into it. Mixing in the extraneous you wind up with multiple courses, which leads to mutual interference, which means constant anxiety. And yet all your anxiety will not save you.”⁶¹

In the passage, Yan Hui suggested to apply whatever Confucius has taught him to correct the tyrannical conduct of the ruler of Wei, which therein expressed a certain preconception arising from his own preferentiality about which teachings to apply, to which the Zhuangzian-in-disguise Confucius warned that this mixing of the extraneous would endanger Yan Hui’s life. This is probably because the Confucian teachings that Yan Hui persistently hold on to might just make him more rigid and susceptible to friction in the practical course of his interaction with the ruler of Wei, and this is all the more the case when Yan Hui have not even begun to know about the ruler of Wei in person. Although the narrative is fictitious, it reflects the general paradigmatic reality at the individual level whereby, at various stages of our lives, we find ourselves having adopted approaches to things or people based on our preferentiality that land us in some sort of predicament while handling future efforts; they become a hindrance to our ability to move along with a dynamic environment. It is perhaps in view of this implication that the Zhuangzi described imposition efforts as making people or oneself tip-toe and be shackled with manacles and fetters, for these imposition did not anchor itself to *tian*/Dao (thus the tip-toe) and from there advocated ways that deviate the things from being themselves,

而儒、墨乃始离跂攘臂乎桎梏之间。[...] 吾未知圣知之不为桁杨接榷也，仁义之不为桎梏、凿枘也 [...]

“And now the Confucians and Mohists come along standing apart from [the people in chaos] on tiptoe and rolling up their sleeves amidst the manacles and fetters. I am far from convinced that sagacity and wisdom are anything more than the fitted wedges that hold the cangues together, or that humankindness and responsible conduct are anything more than the interlocking bolts that fasten the shackles.”⁶²

In yet another passage, the Zhuangzi spoke of how mourners in Lao Dan’s funeral purportedly expressed unnatural emotions, implicitly hinting at some sort of artificial efforts which prevented human beings from expressing themselves naturally, which it takes to be inappropriate,

有老者哭之，如哭其子；少者哭之，如哭其母。彼其所以会之，必有不蘄言而言，不蘄哭而哭者。是遁天倍情，忘其所受，古者谓之遁天之刑。

“I saw elders among them weeping as if for their sons, and the young among them weeping as if for their mothers. With such as these gathered there, I, too, would have no doubt proceeded to utter some unsought-for words and weep some unsought-for tears. But this would be to flee from the Heavenly and turn away from what is real, forgetting what one has received, which is why the ancients called such things, ‘The punishment for fleeing from Heaven.’”⁶³

Perhaps by combining this passage with another in which Confucius commended Mr. Mengsun for his non-pretentious mourning, in which Mengsun showed no real sorrow, we can

⁶¹ Ziporyn, p.34.

⁶² Ziporyn, p.92.

⁶³ Ziporyn, p.31.

go on to interpret the Zhuangzi as talking about how, as humans, we tend to have preconceived notions about natural processes, in this case of death,

仲尼曰：“夫孟孙氏尽之矣，进于知矣。唯简之而不得，夫已有所简矣。孟孙氏不知所以生，不知所以死 [...]”

“This Mr. Mengsun has gotten to the end of the matter, beyond mere knowing. For when you try to distinguish what is what but find it is impossible to do so, that is itself a way of deciding the matter. This Mr. Mengsun understands nothing about why he lives or why he dies.”⁶⁴

In Lao Dan’s funeral, the mourners were expressing the death of Lao Dan as an unfortunate event, i.e., as if losing one’s son, although in truth human beings as one of the many myriad things that were brought into existence probably knew nothing about the significance of death itself. Rather, death as something laden with various connotations, whether negative or even positive, is preconceived and in that sense built on top of death itself, like a fashioning of things however we perceive or want it to be according to our preferentiality. But death itself as itself is precisely a brute fact that cannot be overcome in the Zhuangzian worldview because things are made to be themselves such that there is no way in which they can identify a doer that has brought them into the world and put them through this process of life and death. However, human norms such as the ancient practice of enforcing a prolonged three-year mourning for one’s parents, or the employment of mourners to mourn in the funeral in an attempt to amplify the tragedy of losing one’s love to death—these are things that precisely deviates human beings from seeing death for what it is and in that sense misleading. The Lao Dan’s funeral context also seem to imply that having been misled, people also in the process alter their psychological state by becoming excessively emotional without realizing, and this very heedless state becomes a punishment self-inflicted which the Zhuangzi called it “The punishment fleeing from Heaven” (遁天之刑, *dun-tian-zhi-xing*). In a similar talk of punishment, the Zhuangzi expressed that imposition efforts that deviate from *tian*/Dao resemble corporal punishments that seeks to mutilate the natural face of myriad things and in that sense making them handicaps that can no longer properly manoeuvre themselves within the twists and turns of the natural world,

许由曰：“[...] 夫尧既已黥汝以仁义，而劓汝以是非矣，汝将何以游夫遥荡、恣睢、转徙之途乎？”

“Xu You said, “[...] Yao has already tattooed your face with humankindness and responsible conduct, and de-nosed you with right and wrong. How can you ever roam in the far-flung and unconstrained paths of wild unbound twirling and tumbling?”⁶⁵

When we look at these passages on a whole, the Zhuangzi’s concern, as intimated earlier, is that human preferentiality seems to give rise to quite a number of undesirable things in the Zhuangzian worldview that we have come to classify them as impacts above. In no order of significance nor an exhaustive listing, we first come across the concern that the alteration of the course of the myriad things as a result of our preferentiality are done at the expense of disregarding the life of individual things and treating them with dispensability. Then, we encounter the Zhuangzi’s concern that it is also the tendency of the human preferentiality in its alteration of the course of things that it imposes what it thinks is good for its own kind or other things, possibly resulting in strife and friction with other things, self-limitation and warped

⁶⁴ Ziporyn, p.61.

⁶⁵ Ziporyn, p.62.

psychological state, or, even worse, the loss of one's life. And on top of these things, there is an added dimension of things becoming muddleheaded and entangled themselves, and therefore lost as a result of their course being altered by human preferentiality.

Looking at all of these concerns, I think the Zhuangzi appears to very much concern about the role of the human being, having implicitly acknowledged the natural propensity of human beings to alter the course of the myriad things and the undesirable impacts arising from human preferentiality. I would think the Zhuangzi is very much similar to other Pre-Qin philosophers such as Mengzi and Xunzi in the sense that they were concerned about the role and purpose of human beings. However, what makes the Zhuangzi different from the likes of Mengzi and Xunzi is his understanding that the current human societies are over meddling the affairs of the natural world. The Mengzi and Xunzi, on the other hand, thinks that we should do more by regulating the natural world as custodians. The Mengzi had already in the beginning assumed that ethics is the first philosophy with its observation that human beings are naturally inclined to moral goodness and therefore the purpose of men in life, to put it in short, is to utilize and spread moral excellence. In the case of the Xunzi, generally put, it thinks that the human is key to understanding the myriad things,

故错人而思天，则失万物之情。

“Thus, if one rejects what lies with man and instead longs for what lies with Heaven, then one will have lost the grasp of the disposition of the myriad things.”⁶⁶

Hutton has suggested that there are two senses to what the Xunzi is saying here, namely,

“(1) failing to understand how the myriad things operate because [of one's] mistaken understanding that [*tian*/Dao] exercises greater influence over them than it really does, and (2) missing the opportunity to control the condition of the myriad things (because one mistakenly focuses on [*tian*/Dao's] influence over them).”⁶⁷

This is to say that the Xunzi thinks that human beings are made precisely by *tian*/Dao to order the world and its myriad things, and that any undue emphasis on *tian*/Dao is a false impression. For the Xunzi, the focus rests not on *tian* but on the human. Be that as it may, the series of impacts that the Zhuangzi is concerned about, which I have listed them above and we are acquainted by now, suggests that the Xunzi is perhaps optimistic about the potentiality of deliberate human efforts. The Xunzi's elevation of the role of human being to the primary responsibility of ordering the world and its myriad things alongside Heaven and Earth also allowed the Xunzi to sidestep from the examination of the role of the human being in the natural world, which the Zhuangzi had to confront by contrast. Because of this difference in backdrop which the human being is being seen in, it is no wonder that the Zhuangzi had a less humancentric account of things. However, that does not mean to say that the Zhuangzi does not appreciate what is essentially the human (人, *ren*). It just means that the Zhuangzi is examining the role and purpose of a human being from a wider perspective: How the human beings fit in the natural world.

⁶⁶ Hutton, p.181.

⁶⁷ Hutton, p.181.

Letting Things be Themselves

It should not come as off a surprise now to say that the central feature of *tian*/Dao is the spontaneous emergence of the myriad things in which they know not their origins and that they are born to be themselves. We have also said that the issue is that the human being is capable of altering the course of the myriad things with their preferentiality. To rephrase the issue, what we are encountering here is one in which, in order to solve it, the human being needs to precisely refrain from doing more than what is required according to the standard of *tian*/Dao—letting things be themselves. This is concisely put by Lao Dan to Confucius after the latter insisted on prescribing humankindness and responsible conduct as part of what is inherent in the human being,

夫子亦放德而行，循道而趋，已至矣，又何偈偈乎揭仁义 [...]

“[...] You, sir, must release each to its own intrinsic powers and let them proceed accordingly, push each forward only on its own course, for that is already perfection, already a kind of arrival. What use is there then to go on with this militant advocacy of humankindness and responsible conduct [...].”⁶⁸

In another passage, this inhibitive mode of letting things be themselves is also described as a “non-doing” (无为, *wu-wei*),

汝徒处无为，而物自化。 [...]

“Just stay in the state of non-doing and all things will transform themselves. [...].”⁶⁹

However, being in the mode of “non-doing” does not mean to say that the human being literally does nothing. Rather, it is a doing of doings which precludes any doing that aims at deliberately interfering with the myriad things. The *Zhuangzi* seemingly made Liezi a model of this when it said that Liezi, having realize that he had not truly learned anything yet about *tian*/Dao from his master Huzi,

然后列子自以为未始学而归，三年不出。为其妻爨，食豕如食人。于事无与亲，雕琢复朴 [...]

“That was when Liezi realized that he had not yet begun to learn. He returned to his home and did not emerge for three years, cooking for his wife, feeding the pigs as if he were serving guests, remaining remote from all endeavors and letting all the chiseled carvings of his character return to an unhewn blockishness.”⁷⁰

In the narrative, Liezi seemingly gave up trying to understand *tian*/Dao, and this is precisely to be become attuned with the Heavenly in him and thus with *tian*/Dao, as in the case of all other human beings and myriad things. The reason is because, as intimated earlier, the spontaneous emergence of the myriad things is such that the myriad things themselves are divested of any knowledge of the origin of their beginnings, as is characteristically put forth below by the *Zhuangzi*,

⁶⁸ Ziporyn, p.114.

⁶⁹ Ziporyn, p.94.

⁷⁰ Ziporyn, p.71.

万物云云，各复其根，各复其根而不知。

“All things throng and flourish, but each returns to its root. Each returns to its root, and yet they do not know it!”⁷¹

Not only did Liezi gave up trying to understand *tian*/Dao but according to the Zhuangzi's description of how he lived his life thereafter, Liezi also seemed to return to a sincere state of mundane living without any deliberate efforts to try and achieve additional things, as indicated by the Zhuangzi to be “remote from all endeavors”, which consequently allowed him to live out his years in a manner described by the Zhuangzi as letting all the chiselled carvings of his character return to an unhewn state (雕琢复朴, *diao-zhuo-fu-pu*). This returning to an unhewn state in the Zhuangzian worldview context is none other than to return to the original state in which *tian*/Dao's process made the myriad things to be: Spontaneously being themselves and not knowing how they came about or who is behind the deeds of their creation and their being so. The chiselled carvings could be understood as one of those instances of undesirable impacts mentioned earlier that then caused us, for instance, to be unable to be ourselves and therefore in that sense incomplete, mutilated or handicapped.

The narrative account of Liezi also indirectly tells us that besides “non-doing” in the inhibitive sense of not interfering with the course of other things, it is also one in which we return ourselves as part of the myriad things that emerge from *tian*/Dao. The Zhuangzi made it explicit that the human being is no different from the rest of the myriad things in terms of having the Heavenly aspect, except that our appearance is that of a human being,

故曰：天在内，人在外，德在乎天。知天人之行，本乎天，位乎得。

“Hence it is said, the Heavenly is internal while the human is external. The intrinsic virtuosities belong to the Heavenly. Those who know which activities are of the Heavenly and which are of the human root themselves in the Heavenly and position themselves comfortably in whatever they attain from it.”⁷²

Here, the passage presents the Zhuangzi's vision of the human being as one inherently rooted in the Heavenly. The human, being something external, hints at it being temporary. Indeed, if we recall the narrative in the previous chapter which spoke of *tian*/Dao as the blacksmith that transforms the myriad things, being a human is a form which *tian*/Dao transforms one into, and the fundamentality in all of *tian*/Dao's transformations, as expressed in the “piping of Heaven”, is that all things are spontaneously themselves.

Perhaps what is said thus far about the role and purpose of the human being is nicely summarized in the passage below, wherein Zhuangzi put forth the notion that for him, the human being is “*wu-qing*” (无情),

惠子谓庄子曰：“人故无情乎？”庄子曰：“然。”惠子曰：“人而无情，何以谓之人？”庄子曰：“道与之貌，天与之形，恶得不谓之人？”惠子曰：“既谓之人，恶得无情？”庄子曰：“是非吾所谓情也。吾所谓无情者，言人之不以好恶内伤其身，常因自然而不益生也。”[...]

⁷¹ Ziporyn, p.95.

⁷² Ziporyn, p.138.

“Huizi said to Zhuangzi, “Can a human being really be without the characteristic human inclinations?”

Zhuangzi said, “Yes.”

“But without the characteristic human inclinations, how can he be called a human being?”

“A course gives him this demeanor, Heaven gives him his physical form, so why shouldn’t he be called a human being?”

“Since you call him a human being, how can he be without the characteristic human inclinations?”

Zhuangzi said, “Affirming some things as right and negating others as wrong are what I call the characteristic inclinations. What I call being free of them means not allowing likes and dislikes to damage you internally, instead making it your constant practice to follow along with the way each thing is of itself, going by its spontaneous affirmations, without trying to add anything to the process of generation.”⁷³

The notion of *wu-qing* in modern day context refers to the quality or characteristic of someone being pitiless or ruthless. However, this is not quite the meaning the Zhuangzi is referring to when it uses the notion. Rather, as Zhuangzi has responded to Huizi, *wu-qing* refers to a characteristic inclination or factual behaviour, in this case of not letting preferentiality (presumably of our own and of other’s) affect the Heavenly in us and letting things be themselves (as well as letting ourselves be driven by the Heavenly). Although what we have said of *wu-qing* here is in a positive sense, Zhuangzi himself appears to also give it a negative sense in that the notion is also a negation (无, *wu*, can also be understood as “to negate”) of a certain *qing* (情, a certain facticity), in this case that of preferentiality (是非吾所谓情也, *shi-fei-wu-suo-wei-qing-ye*). However, this negation does not mean that one becomes devoid of preferentiality at all but rather one’s attitudinal “negation” of preferentiality even though they factually exist. The hint at this and its reason is precisely indicated in the positive sense of *wu-qing*— so that one is unaffected despite the kinds of preferentiality that one encounters (不以好恶内伤其身, *bu-yi-hao-wu-nei-shang-qishen*). However, all of this is on my basis of assumption that the Zhuangzi uses “*shi-fei*” (是非), also better known as “rights and wrongs”, and “*hao-wu*” (好恶), also better known as “likings and disliking”, interchangeably to indicate preferentiality.

With all that is said thus far, we might be wondering what the Zhuangzi thinks of instances of inevitability whereby the myriad things are compelled to act in a certain way. This is especially the case as human beings since we live in evolvingly complex human societies, and it seems that who we are is always in one way or another inevitably determined by overarching structure, trends, influences and authority. This makes it difficult for us to achieve letting things be themselves, particularly us as ourselves. However, the Zhuangzi appears to think that going by what is inevitable is not something that we should be worried about or to be worked against by deliberately avoiding or running away from it. In fact, to be in such a situation and respond according to the inevitabilities is to have arrive at the best course of action for the Zhuangzi,

⁷³ Ziporyn, p.51.

托不得已以养中，至矣。何作为[...]！

“Hand it all over to the unavoidable so as to nourish what is central within you. That is the most you can do. What need is there to deliberately [...]!”⁷⁴

Taking the example of a noble man who is inevitably put to govern the world, the Zhuangzi explains that because it is not an act of choice on the part of the noble man, the noble man is precisely acting in such a way that he is divested of the kind of deliberate efforts based on the exercising of preferentiality, and thus a state of non-doing,

故君子不得已而临邪天下，莫若无为。

“So if a noble man cannot escape having to oversee the world, there is no better option than non-doing.”⁷⁵

This non-doing, as was intimated earlier, is the non-intervention of the course of things being themselves, in this case, it is a non-intervention of his own being, which is equivalent to the former because he is no different from the myriad things. It was also said earlier that this non-doing is the way to ensure that one does not deviate from their Heavenly aspect of being oneself.

We can extrapolate the point of having to accept the inevitability and react accordingly in the case of the noble man to other possible scenarios that we can encounter in real life. Some examples of what constitutes to *ming* in the Zhuangzi are,

死生存亡，穷达贫富，贤与不肖，毁誉、饥渴、寒暑，是事之变，命之行也；日夜相代乎前，而知不能规乎其始者也。

“Death and life, surviving and perishing, failure and success, poverty and wealth, superiority and inferiority, disgrace and honor, hunger and thirst, cold and heat—these are transformations of events, the proceedings of fate. Day and night they come to us, one replacing another, and yet our understanding can never compass what it is that begins them.”⁷⁶

The Zhuangzi appears to mean that the inevitabilities that one encounters in the course of one’s life is actually an integral part of the course of one’s being themselves, something which the Zhuangzi calls it “*ming*” (命). The term is possibly rendered as “lifespan”, “command” or more fittingly in the context of discussion here rendered as “fate” or one’s “allotment”. In fact, based on the Zhuangzi’s description of the examples of what it considers as *ming* to be occurrences in which one cannot figure out as to why they happen is reminiscent of the Zhuangzi’s description of *tian*/Dao as an agentless and spontaneous process in which no things can begin to identify a doer or causer. Indeed, in a separate passage, the Zhuangzi called one’s unable to identify the circumstances in which one is in *ming*, a phenomenon which is in fact a reflection of *tian*/Dao’s agentless and spontaneous process but from the perspective of the myriad things,

“吾思乎使我至此极者而弗得也。父母岂欲吾贫哉？天无私覆，地无私载，天地岂私贫我哉？求其为之者而不得也。然而至此极者，命也夫！”

⁷⁴ Ziporyn, p.39.

⁷⁵ Ziporyn, p.90.

⁷⁶ Ziporyn, p.49.

“I have been thinking about what could have caused me to reach this extreme state, and I can find no answer. My mother and father would surely never wish to impoverish me like this. Heaven covers all equally, earth supports all equally, so how could heaven and earth be so partial as to single me out for impoverishment? I search for some doer of it all but cannot find anything—and yet here I am in this extreme state all the same. This must be what is called Fate, eh?”⁷⁷

Based on the examples given, I am also of the impression that the Zhuangzi seems to intend *míng* to be something which broadly covers all inevitabilities that one can encounter in the course of one’s life. This is because the examples given not only cover natural inevitabilities such as death and life but also one’s being wealthy or poverty or even disgrace and honor, which we typically associate with as a consequence of one’s deeds or the deeds of others. This makes the Zhuangzi’s account of the myriad things being themselves not only characterized by spontaneity but also in a fatalistic and enigmatic sense. Having considered these things, it seems that *míng* is in fact just another way of talking about *tian*/Dao at work on the myriad things but *from* the perspective of the myriad things. This being the case, it is intuitive here to then think that the Zhuangzi would expect the human being to be accepting of what *míng* or fate has in stall for him. The Zhuangzi has expressed this as a letting *míng* to play out by itself,

吾所谓臧者，[...] 任其性命之情而已矣；

“Goodness, as I understand it [...] is just fully allowing the uncontrived condition of the inborn nature and allotment of life to play itself out.”⁷⁸

The role and purpose the Zhuangzi would ascribe to the human being based on whatever is said thus far would be something in the likes of this: The role of the human being is that it is a part of the myriad things that continues to undergo transformation and the spontaneousness of its own being. This is contrary to Confucian philosophers such as Mengzi and Xunzi, who ascribes to human being a higher position in comparison to the myriad things. As part of the myriad things, the purpose of the human being would then be to partake in the process of *tian*/Dao, accept *míng* and not interfere with the course of other things (or with its own) given that there is a propensity and tendency for the human being to do so, which the Zhuangzi considers to be undesirable.

Caveat: Hasty distinction of Tian and the Human

Despite all that is said about the conflict between *tian*/Dao or the Heavenly and the human, the Zhuangzi seemed to admit of a hasty distinction between them in first place. This is seen in the following passage when the Zhuangzi questions the possibility of a clear distinction,

知天之所为，知人之所为者，至矣。知天之所为者，天而生也；知人之所为者，以其知之所知，以养其知之所不知，[...] 是知之盛也。虽然，有患。夫知有所待而后当，其所待者特未定也。庸詎知吾所谓天之非人乎？所谓人之非天乎？ [...]

““To understand what is done by Heaven, and also to understand what is to be done by the human, that is to reach the utmost.”

“To understand what is done by Heaven”: Heavenly, skylike, that is how things are born.

⁷⁷ Ziproyn, p.63.

⁷⁸ Ziporyn, p.80.

“To understand what is to be done by the human”: that would be to use what your understanding understands to nourish what your understanding does not understand. [...] And that would indeed be the richest sort of understanding.

However, there is a problem here. For it is only through its relation of dependence on something that our understanding can be considered correct, but what it depends on is always peculiarly unfixed. So how could I know whether what I call the Heavenly is not really the human? How could I know whether what I call the human is not really the Heavenly?”⁷⁹

In the above passage, the *Zhuangzi* commended one’s ability to be able to clearly distinguish between the workings of *tian*/Dao and the workings of the human being, having gone on to further elaborate the distinction by giving each a specific definition. Thereafter, it alerted us about a certain trouble or danger with that kind of a distinction, namely that the distinction is made on the basis of dependence on (待, *dai*) something that is unfixed. But what is this thing that is unfixed?

If we were to look through the *Zhuangzi* for the use of this phrase, we will observe that the *Zhuangzi* typically leaves the readers hanging as to what is this thing which things are dependent on.⁸⁰ However, there is a passage in the *Zhuangzi* that seems to give away the answer plainly,

仲尼曰：“化其万物而不知其禪之者，焉知其所终？焉知其所始？正而待之而已耳。”

“Confucius said, “On and on go the transformations of all the ten thousand things, and yet we do not know what it is that brings about their succession, one after another. So how could we know where it ends? How could we know where it begins? We can only right ourselves and await what comes next, nothing more.”⁸¹

In the above, in responding to Yan Hui’s question about the phenomena of having no beginning that is not also an ending, the *Zhuangzian-in-disguise* Confucius said that it refers to the endless transformation (化, *hua*) of things by something that is unknown. Thereafter, Confucius advised Yan Hui that they should both “right” themselves and “await” for what comes next, of which the same Chinese character *dai* is used to describe this awaiting. The give away in this passage is that the *Zhuangzian-in-disguise* Confucius had asked Yan Hui to await *for* the next transformation to come. At this point, I think we are no stranger to the understanding that this endless transformation or waiting for the next transformation to come is in fact describing about the transformative facet of *tian*/Dao, as explained earlier in chapter one of this thesis in which one of the *Zhuangzi*’s passages described *tian*/Dao as “Creation-Transformation” (造化者, *zao-hua-zhe*). We are also no stranger to the enigma of *tian*/Dao as the unknown and unidentifiable cause or doer or rouser, which was also explained in chapter one of this thesis with the motif of “piping of Heaven”. These correspondences led me to infer that any significant use of the Chinese character *dai* in the *Zhuangzi* is in fact suggesting the awaiting for *tian*/Dao.

We are now able to understand why the *Zhuangzi* had to consider its distinction between *tian*/Dao or the Heavenly and the human being hasty: The *Zhuangzi*’s account is paradoxical. On the one hand it firmly advocates *tian*/Dao as something enigmatic that is unidentifiable and

⁷⁹ Zipyorn, p.53.

⁸⁰ Zipyorn, p.276.

⁸¹ Zipyorn, p.163.

unknowable, and yet it is behind the creation, constant transformation and the spontaneousness of the myriad things' being themselves. On the other hand, however, the Zhuangzi specified that it is the tendency of the human being to make sense of what it does not know. But because the human being is only one kind of being amongst the myriad things, its making sense of what it does not know, i.e., about *tian*/Dao, is relegated to a subjective, perspectival account for the Zhuangzi. If we recall in chapter one, it was already intimated that the Zhuangzi shared that each creature had its own preferences, from which the Zhuangzi arrived at the understanding that none of the creatures know what the objective standard(s) of the world is. Extending this understanding to the passage above, we can also understand that when the Zhuangzian-in-disguised Confucius advised Yan Hui to “right”, he is not saying that they should arrive at some objective distinction between beginnings and ends. Rather, Confucius is saying otherwise that they arrive at nowhere—that they had the slightest idea. This is because, for the Zhuangzi, the myriad things encounter *tian*/Dao precisely in its ignorance. In the case of the human being, it is an encounter before its tendency of making sense kicks in. The implication of this is that any attempt to be definitive about *tian*/Dao must ultimately take a U-turn or be cut short at one's ignorance or unknowability. For instance, when Xu You criticized Master Thinkyou and said that he is definitively beyond saving as he was tattooed with humankindness and responsible conduct, and de-nosed with right and wrong,

意而子曰：“夫无庄之失其美，据梁之失其力，黄帝之亡其知，皆在炉锤之间耳。庸詎知夫造物者之不息我黥而补我劓，使我乘成以随先生邪？”

许由曰：“噫！未可知也。[...]。”

“Thinkyou said, “But Wuzhuang lost his beauty, Juliang lost his strength, the Yellow Emperor lost his wisdom, all from being knocked about in the great smelting and hammering. How do you know the Creator of Things will not wipe away my tattoo and restore my nose, making me intact to follow you?”

Xu You said, “Ah! It is indeed unknowable. [...].”⁸²

Master Thinkyou responded to Xu You by questioning his definitiveness of *tian*/Dao, which he calls the “Creator of Things” here and named various characters for the purposes of showing that all human beings, including Xu You himself, is subjected to the transformation of *tian*/Dao which no one can admit of a beginning and an end to it. Xu You admitted that there is no way of knowing it. The Zhuangzi also seems to be saying that as myriad things, it is not in our position to pass judgement on the outcome of the course of other things and in that sense Xu You's response has a dual purpose of relegating the fate of Master Thinkyou to *tian*/Dao, the outcome of which Xu You must admit as unknowable, and the negation of his initial judgement on the fate of Thinkyou. In the previous passage, we see that the Zhuangzi is disagreeable about a distinction between *tian*/Dao and the human, which it opined to be premature since we cannot be definitively sure of their distinction. This passage involving Master Thinkyou and Xu You demonstrates to us that the Zhuangzi is also disagreeable with the understanding that *tian*/Dao and the human exists in a for-and-against relationship. We see this through Xu You's play with the possibility of *tian*/Dao making him whole again in response to Master Thinkyou's allegation that he is abandoned by *tian*/Dao into perpetual deformity. This ambiguity is only possible because one cannot definitively tell if one thing is the work of *tian*/Dao or the human in the world

⁸² Ziporyn, p.62.

of Zhuangzi, and this continues to reflect the qualities of *tian*/Dao that I have intimated earlier, e.g., a transformative, enigmatic, unspecifiable and unidentifiable agent.

On hindsight, the Zhuangzian paragon, the *Zhen-ren* (真人), appears to be a paragon for the Zhuangzi precisely because he is able to live his years reflecting this very ambiguity without resorting to making sense with his mind as a human being,

古之真人，不知说生，不知恶死；其出不欣，其入不距；翛然而往，翛然而来而已矣。不忘其所始，不求其所终；受而喜之，忘而复之。是之谓不以心捐道，不以人助天。是之谓真人。

“The Genuine-Humans of old understood nothing about delighting in life or abhorring death. They emerged without delight, sank back in without resistance. Whooshing in they came and whooshing out they went, nothing more. They neither forgot where they came from nor inquired into where they would go. Receiving it, they delighted in it. Forgetting all about it, they gave it back. This is what it means not to use the mind to fend off the Course, not to use the human to try to help out the Heavenly. Such is what I’d call being human yet genuine, genuine yet human: the Genuine-Human.”⁸³

If we were to compare this passage with Qin Shi’s description of Lao Dan at his funeral, we will realize that they are similar except the part on not to use one’s mind to fend off or perhaps “donate” in the sense of adding on to *tian*/Dao, and not using the human to try to help out the Heavenly, all of which appears to be a further elaboration of the preceding description.

But the Zhuangzi did not just stop there. It went further to lead us to the philosophical position that *tian*/Dao and the human are, for the lack of a better word, relationally coexisting such that they were never meant to win out over the other,

其一也一，其不一也一。其一，与天为徒；其不一，与人为徒。天与人不相胜也，是之谓真人。

“Their oneness was oneness, and their non-oneness was also oneness. In their oneness, they were followers of the Heavenly. In their non-oneness, they were followers of the human. This is what it is for neither the Heavenly nor the human to win out over the other. And that is what I call the Genuine-Human.”⁸⁴

The text appears cryptic at the onset. However, if we were to link it with whatever is said before in this thesis, what the Zhuangzi is essentially saying then is that the distinction of the Heavenly and the human, which we have come to recognize them to be at odds with one another, is in fact a fragmentation of what is originally something complete, something the Zhuangzi had expediently described as a “oneness”. This is evidential in the Zhuangzi’s seemingly oxymoronic expression that “their oneness is oneness” (其一也一, *qi-yi-ye-yi*) and “their non-oneness was also oneness” (其不一也一, *qi-bu-yi-ye-yi*). For by now we would have realized that there are two levels of oneness that the Zhuangzi is trying to express, an absolute oneness and a oneness that is comparative to non-oneness. The distinction made between the Heavenly and human merely exists within the lesser level of oneness. The Zhuangzi’s criteria for one to be recognized as a

⁸³ Zhiporyn, p.54.

⁸⁴ Zhiporyn, p.55.

Zhen-ren, then, is someone who is able to arrive at the absolute oneness. Linking this with what is said about how the human being encounters *tian*/Dao in his ignorance or unknowability, what the Zhuangzi is presumably saying here then is that the fragmentation of the Heavenly and the human, performed by the human being unto himself or other human beings, by the very fact of their distinguishability, admits of a definitive understanding of *tian*/Dao. But this is precisely contradicting our understanding that, *tian*/Dao, from the perspective of the myriad things, is precisely something which the myriad things cannot even begin to identify or know, much less being able to tell which part of their existential constitution belong to the Heavenly and which to them is as the human being. So the *Zhen-ren*, in the face of such a distinction of the Heavenly and the human, would probably admit that “he really knows nothing”. The Zhuangzian paragon is presumably called *Zhen-ren*, literally the “True/Genuine” man because the *zhen* denotes his ability to genuinely reflect his ignorance or unknowability of *tian*/Dao as part of the myriad things, and at the same time, be able to reflect the facticity of *tian*/Dao as something that cannot be identified and known.

The implication to the above then is that the Zhuangzi’s point about the undesirability of the human being in altering the course of the myriad things with its preferentiality also admits of a certain understanding of *tian*/Dao by fragmentizing human preferentiality and isolating it as “the human”, which, in the case of the Zhuangzian paragon, it would not admit of such a thing. This being the case, whether it is the role and purpose of the human being to be acting in such a way that it does not interfere with the course of other things with its preferentiality becomes unclear. In fact, in bringing the implication to its extreme, one can wonder if the human preferentiality that alters the course of the myriad things is not the human but of the Heavenly, and ultimately ending in unknowability. This is because, if we recall what was said earlier about the scope of the meaning of *ming*, which the Zhuangzi provided examples including things such as disgrace and honor, it seems that the Zhuangzi would consider human preferentiality or any other human-induced inevitabilities as part and parcel of *ming* although it did not explicitly articulate that. The presence of the human being then is not only indicative of its own existence as a specie or as an individual thing. At the same time, it also ostensibly denotes the presence of some underlying cause of its own existence that is unspecifiable or knowable to the human being himself, one that the Zhuangzi has come to stylize as *tian*/Dao. This parallel denoting of *tian*/Dao and the human is the most fundamental for the Zhuangzi.

There is, however, a different rendition of the above’s cryptic text regarding the *Zhen-ren* in the secondary literatures. It has been put forth that the *Zhen-ren* is simply someone who is able to adopt a certain right attitude, to which he is then considered to have “true” or “genuine” knowledge (真知, *zhen-zhi*),

“It is not “knowledge” *per se* that defines the true person. Instead, certain attitudes must be in place before anyone can be said to have “true” knowledge.”⁸⁵

This is derived from pointing to the context of death in which the Zhuangzi “intimates that certain attitudes and actions would be contrary to *zhen*.”⁸⁶ For instance, the author stated that the Zhuangzi said that death from the perspective of the ordinary man would be something grievous while from the heavenly perspective it need not be mourned although the author also

⁸⁵ Chong, Kim-chong. “The Concept of Zhen 真 in the Zhuangzi.” *Philosophy East and West*, vol. 61, no. 2, 2011, pp. 324–346, <https://doi.org/10.1353/pew.2011.0019>.

⁸⁶ Chong, p.325.

recognizes the Zhuangzi to have said that such a distinction between what is of the heavenly and human is problematic.⁸⁷ As a result, the author interprets the *Zhen-ren* as someone who transcends the distinction between heaven and the human by referencing the story of Cook Ding in the Inner Chapters of the Zhuangzi, pointing to the fact that the cook “accords with the natural patterns of heaven [and] he has a “spiritual desire” (*shen yu*) that enables this.”

However, it was said in the story of Cook Ding that as years of experience built up for him, the cook no longer sees the cow in front of him which he dissects. Instead, he lets his spirit “meet” or “encounter” (神遇, *shen yu*) without the use of his vision with his faculty of understanding and knowledge ceased. This was then called letting the spirit move desiringly (神欲行, *shen-yu-xing*). This spiritual desire that the author above mentioned, vis-a-vis the notion of letting one’s spirit encounter, appears to be different from the likes of one having to desire in the sense of “willing”, from which the author has associated with the understanding that the *Zhen-ren* adopts a certain attitude. The portrayal of Cook Ding in the Zhuangzi did not seem to be from a purposeful intent or doing or adoption of a certain stance or attitude. In fact, the Cook Ding is known for his prowess precisely because he *opens* himself to the possibility of encountering cows of various sizes and shapes, and through which he arrived at a certain flexibility and spontaneity that allowed him to look beyond the mere appearances of the cow he dissects. This thing which I have called the “opening” of oneself has been described by the Zhuangzi in various parts of its text as an “awaiting” (待, *dai*) in which one is to empty himself, which was also mentioned in this thesis earlier as a dependence on something.⁸⁸ In modern day colloquialism, we call it “letting the thing we regard speak to us”. Having come from such an understanding, I feel that there is more than it meets the eye to be called a *Zhen-ren* than just the adoption of a certain attitude. In regards to my thesis, I think it is so in the sense that what the Zhuangzi said about how one needs to be a *Zhen-ren* to have true knowledge is fundamentally existential rather than attitudinal, and the fact that the Zhuangzi articulated that whether one is a follower of the Heavenly or human, one is already necessary one, appears to be a strong evidence to my point. The advocacy that the *Zhen-ren* is someone who adopts a certain attitude appears to also run contrary to the Zhuangzi’s paradox that whether one is coming from the heavenly or the human perspective, one is necessarily part of a “oneness” which was consequently understood to be one, wherein the heavenly and the human does not win out the other. Meaning to say that there is no one attitude, if we take the Zhuangzi’s words seriously, that is above all other attitudes, whether for-human or for-heavenly. My take in this thesis was that the Zhuangzi was referring to a paradox fundamental to human existence which was not meant to be resolved, and in realizing so, return the heavenly and human into its original unison, and this is to be done in the spontaneous and ordinary living of the myriad things (Recall the story of Liezi and Huzi). I understood the author’s interpretation of the *Zhen-ren* as an account that still remains at the level of the human versus the heavenly, and this seems to be the case when the author concluded that, “Zhuangzi does mention certain general principles [that] encapsulate the general attitude toward natural events as not being under the control of human beings, and the harmonious relationship

⁸⁷ Chong, p.338.

⁸⁸ See also the term “*xu*” (虛), which Confucius described to Yan Hui that the fasting of Yan Hui’s mind, in preparation for his meeting with the state tyrant, in simply a matter of arriving at that.

that human beings should have with heaven. The person who is able to live in accordance with these principles [...] will have an attitude of equanimity [...].”⁸⁹

Conclusion

The Zhuangzian paragon’s ignorance or unknowing of a distinction between the Heavenly and the human has made it such that there is nothing as a human being that can be fragmented and isolated as “the human” in the first place. If we take a step back and understand the implication of this, what the Zhuangzi has done is that it has made the human being *completely* Heavenly. By doing so, the Zhuangzi is in effect saying that there is *only* the Heavenly human or person (天人, *tian-ren*), and it is saying it on the premise that the human being is born out of the spontaneous generation of *tian*/Dao, with the latter also being recognized as the “source” (宗, *zong*),⁹⁰

不離于宗，謂之天人。

“Those who are never separated from their source are called Heavenly Persons.”⁹¹

If we were to think about what the Zhuangzi means by “Those who are never separated...”, we would come to the understanding with all that is said in this chapter that there is never exactly any human being that is separated from their source, i.e., *tian*/Dao, in the first place. For all human beings come to exist because of *tian* in the world of the Zhuangzi. Consequently, all of them are Heavenly humans. They are to be (which they already are) a part of the myriad things that continues to undergo transformation and the spontaneousness of its own being without having recognized some extraneous doer or cause to their coming-about. They are always at a loss about why and how their lives turned out in a certain way or why they had to encounter various inevitabilities in life. They were born without a preexisting role and purpose except to be themselves.

⁸⁹ Chong, p.338.

⁹⁰ 宗, *zong*; also better known as “ancestors” or “ancestral”, a “school” or “sect”.

⁹¹ Ziporyn, p.266.

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