Deleuze and Asia

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**CAMBRIDGE
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INTRODUCTION

During the last twenty years, interest in the French philosopher Gilles Deleuze has increased exponentially. Over three hundred books on Deleuze and his frequent collaborator, Félix Guattari, are now available in English. Since, 2007, the journal *Deleuze Studies* has published over one hundred essays on Deleuze, while sponsoring international conferences in Cardiff, Cologne, Amsterdam, Copenhagen, New Orleans and Lisbon, each meeting drawing 200-300 scholars from around the world. During the last decade, interest in Deleuze has grown even more markedly in Asia, as was evident at the First International Deleuze Studies in Asia Conference, held at Tamkang University in Taipei, Taiwan, May 31-June 2, 2013. Here, participants from Taiwan, the People's Republic of China, Hong Kong, Singapore, Japan, South Korea, Indonesia, the Philippines, India and Pakistan met with scholars from Australia, the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, Austria, Finland, Lithuania and Turkey to seek a broader perspective on the significance of Deleuze's work for a global audience.

Especially evident at the Taipei meeting was the emergence of a focus in Deleuze studies on the relevance of his thought for understanding Asian culture—a focus not limited to Asians alone, but shared by many of the Western participants. The Taipei conference, in short, brought to light a new, rapidly expanding area of research—what might be called Asian Deleuze Studies. The essays in this volume, generated by the Taipei conference, represent the first publication dedicated to this exciting, emergent field of study.

The Taipei Conference topic was "Creative Assemblages." In the Call for Papers, participants were invited to reflect on Deleuze's concept of the assemblage and the ways in which it might foster new lines of research. The word assemblage, or *agencement* in French, denotes both an arrangement of entities and the process of forming such an arrangement—both an assemblage and an assembling, as it were. Assemblages bring together heterogeneous elements that cohere without constituting a whole. They form irreducible multiplicities, which coalesce, mutate, disaggregate and open toward new configurations as they change. Given that the essence of the assemblage is one of metamorphic and unrestricted connection, the concept lends itself to interdisciplinary work, and

conference participants were asked to test the concept's potential as an analytic tool for studying interdisciplinary connections and as a generative force for creating new connections that might reshape contemporary configurations of practice and thought. The essays collected here fulfill the spirit of the conference topic, establishing connections across fields ranging from philosophy and religion to new media studies, cultural studies, theater, architecture, painting, film and literature.

The first three essays address conceptual parallels between Deleuzian thought and Asian philosophical and religious traditions. Liao's paper explores the onto-aesthetics of Deleuze's philosophy and the Taoist worldview enunciated in *Zhuangzi*'s well-known reflection on his dream of a butterfly (who is dreaming of whom, the butterfly or I?). Rather than interpreting Zhuangzi's dream as a simple meditation on illusion and reality, Liao reads it as an expression of the concept of *you*, which he translates as "roam-revel." *You*, Liao demonstrates, provides a Chinese counterpart to Deleuze's "atheistic mysticism," one that views the cosmos as simultaneously an ontological and an aesthetic domain of thought, action and feeling. See's contribution likewise investigates Deleuze's ontology, in this case via the concept of immanence. Through a detailed tracing of Deleuze's remarks on immanence in Scotus, Spinoza and Nietzsche, See argues that Deleuzian "univocity of being" bears remarkable similarity to the teachings of Mahāyāna Buddhism, especially that of the "Original Enlightenment Thought" promulgated by Nichiren, Saichō and their successors. Higaki also touches on ontological questions in his essay, but his attention is drawn to the important twentieth-century Japanese philosopher Nishida and the similarities between Deleuze's and Nishida's engagements with Leibniz, Bergson and Neo-Kantian philosophers. Leibnizian monadism, Bergsonian becoming, and the "logic of the predicate," Higaki shows, play essential roles in the development of the thought of Deleuze and Nishida. Nishida, unlike Deleuze, draws on Asian as well as Western metaphysical traditions, yet ultimately Deleuze and Nishida are both modernists who embrace a mode of "Natural thought" that stresses becoming and poiesis.

The next three essays approach Deleuze via the arts of theater, architecture and painting. Bogue's concern is that of Deleuze's thought *as* theater and Deleuze's thought *about* theater. After sketching the theater Deleuze envisions as a model for thought and as an exemplary practice, Bogue shows that the Asian theaters of Beijing Opera, Kathakali Dance Drama and Nō Drama resemble Deleuze's ideal theater much more closely than do traditional Western dramatic forms. He argues further that these Asian theaters offer exemplary instances of the Deleuzian distinction

between emotion and affect, and that the theoretical texts that inform the practices of Kathakali and Nō may help to extend Deleuze's investigations of emotions/affects and of the relationship between theater and thought. Jiang's interest is in the aesthetics of space enunciated by Deleuze in *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque* (1989). Jiang notes the visual orientation of Deleuze's notion of the Baroque "fold," and the way in which that visual aesthetic shapes Deleuze's remarks on architecture. Jiang argues, however, that implicit in Deleuze's thought is an aural dimension to the fold, and that such aurality may be brought to bear on contemporary architectural theory's concern with the affective dimension of space. In Jiang's view, the fold as affective concept is given its most powerful expression in the sacred spaces of Chinese temples, which in traditional Buddhist practice are treated as sonic spaces of disciplined chanting and listening. In the third essay of this cluster, Donoghue gives another reading of the Deleuzian "fold," in this case as a means of exploring the space rendered in Hokusai's "Thirty Six Views of Mount Fuji." Donoghue argues that Hokusai deliberately presents irreconcilable spatial systems in his art, and that Hokusai's object is to disclose a world replete with multiple perspectives. In this regard, Hokusai's aesthetic is close to that of the Western Baroque, Donoghue shows, and Deleuze's concept of the fold provides the most direct means of demonstrating this parallel between Eastern and Western art.

The next two studies offer insightful contributions to contemporary media studies. Bradley's meditation on the Walkman as motif in Deleuze, Guattari and other French philosophers, and as quintessentially Japanese cultural object, draws out the tensions inherent in global information-culture, while at the same time elucidating the dynamics of Japanese *anomie*. Rather than simply condemning the effects of technology, however, Bradley offers cautious guidance toward a positive utilization of such forces. Chang takes a similar stance in her analysis of the manipulation of the face through plastic surgery, cosmetics and digital tools such as Photoshop. Focusing on a specific internet event involving Korean beauty contestants, Chang goes beyond the usual critiques of the event in terms of capitalism, standardization, commodification, and so on, asserting instead that all the modifications and manipulations of the face exemplified in this internet phenomenon are symptomatic of a global uneasiness over the reproducibility and malleability of the face and the body that transcends its Korean context.

Ying's and Lee's essays are devoted to film, Ying's to the cinema of Lou Ye and Wong Kar-wai, and Lee's to the Taiwanese blockbuster *Warriors of the Rainbow: Seediq Bale* (2011). Ying's study uncovers the

motif of "wind" in the films of Lou Ye, which Ying ties to the Deleuzian concepts of affect and "haecceities," and then shows that the fragmented spaces of Wong Kar-wai's films may likewise be seen as domains of affect and haecceities, albeit with decidedly different tonality in Wong than in Ye. Lee's paper uses Deleuze's concept of a "people to come" to consider the issues of ethnicity and nationality raised in *Warriors of the Rainbow*. Lee argues that the film's depiction of Taiwanese Aboriginals fighting Japanese forces during the colonial occupation of Taiwan, although easily assimilated within the categories of postcolonial theory, is in fact more complex than that theory would allow, and that the notion of a "people to come" discloses elements of the film that offer potentials for political action that go beyond those of postcolonial struggle.

Chan's essay on the *Nu Shu* writing system, like Lee's study of *Warriors of the Rainbow*, is concerned with a people to come—in this case, with efforts to form a female collectivity that escapes traditional patriarchal institutions. The *Nu Shu* writing system, first brought to public attention in the 1980s, is the world's only writing system developed exclusively by women for communication among themselves. In existence for over a thousand years, it recorded a female dialect and functioned as a mode of performance in various ceremonies, thereby forming the foundation for a collective practice that made possible the conception of a future community of gender equality. Chiu's closing essay also examines the theme of collective identity, and like Chan, he finds in the Deleuzian concept of "minor literature" a useful means of thinking about language and social action. Chiu proposes that contemporary debates about globalization and nationalism in Asian literature need to be rearticulated in terms of regional literatures, which may be both sub-national and supra-national. Much of contemporary Asian literature, he shows, is best understood as regional literature, and the diverse regional literatures of Asia are manifestations of the mechanisms of deterritorialization and reterritorialization characteristic of Deleuzian minor literature.

The assemblages traced in these essays forge connections between Deleuze and Asia that are intended to initiate fresh lines of inquiry rather than delineate a specific field of study. The authors' aim is not to apply Deleuze to Asia, but to use Deleuze as a generative force of inquiry in Asian contexts, and to use Asian culture and thought as a means of probing and testing the viability of Deleuze's own philosophy. Our hope is that these essays will foster multiple connections and assemblages in future research that will continue to bring Deleuze into Asia and Asia into Deleuze.

CHAPTER ONE

BECOMING BUTTERFLY:
POWER OF THE FALSE, CRYSTAL IMAGE
AND TAOIST ONTO-AESTHETICS

SEBASTIAN HSIEN-HAO LIAO

For no reason the zither has fifty strings
Each string and each fret recall a lost year
Scholar Zhuang was lost in the butterfly he had become in a pre-dawn
dream
Emperor Wang entrusted his springtime heart to a cuckoo bird
In the blue sea under the bright moon, the pearls shed tears
In Azure Fields in warm sunlight, the jade mine evaporates into steam
This feeling could have become a life-long memory
But at the moment it was already impenetrable
                    —Li Shang-yin, "The Brocaded Zither"

"Existing not as a subject but as a work of art. . . ."
                    —Gilles Deleuze, *Negotiations*

I. Two Dreams in *Zhuangzi*

Two of the most famous episodes about dreaming in *Zhuangzi*[1] seem to work together toward a moral. The first is a Borgesian dream:

One night, a man dreamed of himself drinking and was so happy, but in the morning, he found that he could not help but cry [over a disaster]. Another night, he dreamed of himself crying [over a disaster], but in the morning, he went out hunting [and had a great time]. When one was dreaming, one did not know he was. And in that dream, one had another dream and actually tried to divine from that dream what omen it represented. But when one woke up from the dream, one realized that it was but a dream. And there were people who eventually had a big awakening and realized that they had been in a big dream whereas fools believed that they had

woken up and were proud that they had. But Kings and Peasants, Confucius and you, are all but in a dream. I am telling you this, but in fact I am also in dream. ("On Equaling All Things")

A few passages later, there appears another dream episode, which sums up this chapter on "equaling all things." This is the well-known episode about the author himself having had a dream in which he had become a butterfly and woke to wonder which was the dreamer and which the dreamed:

> Once upon a time, Zhuang Zhou dreamed that he had become a butterfly; he felt so real as a butterfly. And he felt he was quite happy with it and had forgotten that he was Zhuang Zhou. All of a sudden, he woke up and was amazed with wide eyes that he was Zhuang Zhou again. He did not know whether it was he who had dreamed of becoming the butterfly or it was the butterfly that had dreamed of becoming him. And yet we cannot say there is no longer any difference between Zhuang Zhou and the butterfly. And this is what I call "becoming things/things becoming" (wu-hua). ("On Equaling All Things")

This butterfly dream seems to provide just the antidote to the doubt aroused by the *mise en abîme* from that Chinese-boxes dream structure. In Deleuzian parlance, it could be interpreted as: on the molecular level, there is no distinction between truth and fiction, reality and dream. But this interpretation is not Deleuzian enough. The Big Awakening mentioned in the first dream refers to the initiation into the truth of life, which is the Tao. From the perspective of *Zhuangzi*, however, the Tao is often obfuscated by the commonsensical discourse about life, which is here compared to a big dream. Thus, awakening does not initiate the awakened into "reality" as we live it, but into the Tao, which is hidden from us by our "reality." As it turns out, these two episodes do not form a relativist interpretation of human existence, but rather a contemplation on ontology, on what substantiates the world. That is, on the Tao. But the butterfly dream not only serves as a response to the Chinese-boxes dream but actually has a larger, even central, role to play in *Zhuangzi*. While it is indeed a contemplation on ontology, it is also, and probably more importantly, a crystallization of an onto-aesthetics that laid down the cornerstone for traditional Chinese aesthetics as well as poetics.[2] Before we embark on an exploration of the butterfly dream in terms of its onto-aesthetic implications, let us first re-visit onto-aesthetics as Deleuze (and Guattari) understand it.

II. Deleuzian Onto-aesthetics

Following Alliez, Stephen Zepke defines the Deleuzian conception of art as both constructing and expressing Life (5). On that score, Zepke sees Deleuze's contribution to aesthetics as an "ontological transvaluation of aesthetics" (28). By characterizing Deleuze's philosophy as a "philosophy of creation," Peter Hallward goes even further, suggesting that the whole of Deleuze's philosophy revolves around an onto-aesthetics since he "presumes that being is creativity" (1).

Indeed, "creativity" seems to be the keyword to understand Deleuze's philosophy precisely because "Deleuze's ontology is meant to revitalise or re-energise being, to endow it with a primary and irreducible dynamism" (Hallward 13). "Everything I've written," writes Deleuze, "is vitalistic, at least I hope it is" (*Negotiations* 143). Indeed, many critics have pointed to creativity or creation as the central motif of Deleuze's philosophy. Bogue, for instance, observes that

> Deleuze, like Bergson, sees artistic invention as a manifestation of a general process of cosmic creation, and he also views genuine artistic creativity as an affective activity, "desire" and "desiring production" functioning in Deleuze's treatments of the arts as rough counterparts of Bergson's "creative emotion." (*Deleuze's Way* 96)

Jeffrey Bell also argues that "It is to the restoration of this creativity that Deleuze's micropolitics is directed" (14). Similarly, O'Sullivan asserts that Deleuze and Guattari's "collaborative projects, and their single authored works, offer us a 'new image of thought,' one in which process and becoming, invention and creativity, are privileged over stasis, identity and recognition" (2).

But being can create not because it is something transcendent and "produces" according to pre-established plans. It is rather an immanence, or as Deleuze terms it in his last work, *Pure Immanence: Essays on A Life*, "a Life," ("pure immanence . . . is A LIFE, and nothing else") (27). For Deleuze, the difference between true philosophy and the traditional kind of philosophy seduced by religion can be summarized in the opposition between "love of immanence" and "devotion to transcendence or vertical Being" (Pearson 141). It is precisely this reclamation of immanence that enables philosophy to rid itself of religious contaminations and return to real thinking. For the concept of immanence no longer posits a being that "is conceived as given once and for all, complete and perfect" but unfolds "the 'open' whose nature is to constantly change and to give rise to the new" (Pearson 146-47).

Immanence or a life is "a world of pre-individual, impersonal singularities" (Deleuze, *Desert* 142). "It appears," writes Deleuze, "therefore as a pure stream of a-subjective consciousness, a pre-reflexive impersonal consciousness, a qualitative duration of consciousness without a self" (*Pure Immanence* 25). Thus, a life or immanence is very much like Bergsonian Time, which is in essence "invention" (Bergson 361), or Prigoginean "Nature," which is "change, the continual elaboration of the new, a totality being created in an essentially open process of development without any preestablished model" (Prigogine and Stengers 92).

But a life's creativity is guaranteed by an inherent dynamic. Again, like Bergsonian Time, which is "affirmative and vitalist," this "a life," also called "Life" or "desire" (Bogue, "Aesthetics" 259-60) is an "explosive force" that serves as "the vehicle of a continuous creativity" (Hallward 14-15). Thus, the artist-thinker's job is to do two things. On the one hand, he is embarked on a "counter-actualising" movement (Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?* 159-60; Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense* 161) or in Keith Wylie Faulkner's words a "return journey" (52), which takes us back to the "complicated state of original time" (52) and "constructs the virtual and infinite world anew" (Zepke 225).[3] It is "in and through the reversal of the actual that we return to the virtual, to an intensified, transformed, redeemed or converted virtual, one restored to its full creative potential" (Hallward 65). What counter-actualization ultimately achieves, observes Deleuze, is "the only subjectivity" called "time": "non-chronological time grasped in its foundation . . . Subjectivity is never ours, it is time, that is, the soul or the spirit, the virtual" (*Cinema 2* 82-83). In a word, what the artist does with his art work is to "make patent an experience of the body" that "lead[s] one beyond the phenomenological 'lived body' to the chaotic 'body without organs'" (Bogue, "Aesthetics" 260) where the body resonates with "'a non-organic life,' a 'Power more profound' than the lived body 'and almost unlivable'" (Deleuze, *Francis Bacon* 33); or simply, "hurls you into direct contact with the anonymous expanse of creation as a whole" (Hallward 109). And this is what Deleuze means by saying "any work of art points a way through for life" (*Negotiations* 145).

On the other hand, in order to execute the counter-actualizing movement, the artist-thinker, as Deleuze says of Bacon's art, must "make visible invisible forces," thereby "addressing a problem common to all the arts" (Bogue, "Aesthetics" 264-65), "'not that of reproducing or inventing forms, but that of harnessing forces'"(*Francis Bacon* 39), meaning to "harness that which sensation gives us forces that are not given and to make sensate the forces that are non-sensate" (Bogue, "Aesthetics" 260). Hence, Hallward's observation that "there can be no counter-actualisation

that is not accompanied by forms of re-actualisation" (35). In the art work, which is apparently individualized and actual, the artist "creates the finite that restores the infinite" (Zepke 173).

Understood as forces, immanence (Zepke 156) constantly differs/ becomes and therefore creates the new; this "creativity" is without doubt "absolute or unlimited," "saturat[ing] the whole of being with no remainder" (Hallward 6). All in all, "being and differing are one and the same" (Hallward 13).[4]

III. The power of the false

But what is the goal of such a vitalistic and immanent and therefore creationist philosophy? Like Bergson's *The Creative Mind: An Introduction to Metaphysics*, Deleuze's philosophy of creation is above all meant to posit an "art of living" (Herzog 5). For, among other reasons, in capitalist society, where "our daily life appears standardized, stereotyped and subject to an accelerated reproduction of objects of consumption," there is an urgent need "to instill art into everyday life" (Bell 17). "Our task," observes Deleuze, "is nothing less than to develop mechanisms 'that liberate man from the plane or level that is proper to him, in order to make him a creator, adequate to the whole movement of creation'" (*Bergsonism* 111). Based on this concept of onto-aesthetics, one that eventually would make everyone a creator, Deleuze develops the concept of art that can exercise its power to bring man into contact with an otherwise blocked immanence.

Without "thinking," however, there is no art. "Thinking" is how creation brought forth by immanence manifests itself. For "Life activates thought, and thought in turn affirms life" (Deleuze, *Pure Immanence* 66). Immanence is not Law or some superegoic commandment but "the outside and inside of thought, as the not-external outside and the not-internal inside" (Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?* 59-60); it makes itself felt only when we are made to truly think. Thus, thinking or thought, which "takes place in terms of a move from the actual to the virtual, that is, in the opposite direction to natural perception" (Pearson 149), is necessarily creative and therefore synonymous with art. And the power Deleuze mentions that can compel people to think is called "the power of the false."

A concept adopted from Nietzsche, "the power of the false" "replaces and dethrones the form of truth, since it poses the simultaneity of incompossible presents or the coexistence of not-necessarily true pasts" (Deleuze, *Cinema 2* 131); it is "a power of becoming, of metamorphosis

and transformations that renders fixed, stable, 'true' identities perpetually 'false'" (Bogue, *Deleuze on Cinema* 149). Associated with values such as "Indiscernibility, inexplicability, undecidability, and incompossibility," it is brought forth in artistic products such as "Chronosigns and falsifying narration" that "augment our powers of life by affirming change and by creating images of thought that put us in direct contact with change and becoming as fundamental forces" (Rodowick 137). And it is the Nietzschean "will to power," which is "an artistic will that would turn a will to deception into a superior, creative will" (Bogue, *Deleuze and Guattari* 18), that "substitutes the power of the false for the form of the true, and resolves the crisis of truth . . . in favour of the false and its artistic, creative power" (Deleuze, *Cinema 2* 131). In other words, "the will to power realized in art . . . is the power of the false" (Rodowick 138).

But for art to truly bring forth the "power of the false," it must first become a "simulacrum" itself. Simulacra, in Deleuze's definition, refers to "those systems in which different relates to different by means of difference itself. What is essential is that we find in these systems no prior identity, no internal resemblance" (*Difference and Repetition* 299). A "new name" for art given by Deleuze (Zepke 25), the simulacrum "is the affirmation of a power that escapes the Idea, and embodies Nietzsche's explicit attempt to reverse Platonism's philosophy of representation" (Zepke 26). In other words, Deleuze has turned Plato's negative concept of "simulacrum" into a positive (affirmative) one that wields the power of the false, one that can unsettle all fixed identities and truths.

For Deleuze, everything has to "become its own simulacrum" (*Difference and Repetition* 67) so that it would no longer be bound to a fixed identity and therefore be free to create. That is, for anything to be adequate to its own inherent force or energy, it has to become "art" first since, for Deleuze, as for Nietzsche, the highest powers of the false are realized in the work of art (Flaxman xx). When art sets in motion the power of the false, it produces a "crystalline regime," which transvalues all the "organic regimes" that try to adhere to and defend commonsense identities and truths (Rodowick 85-86). With art understood as simulacrum, the world is constantly being created anew (Zepke 28). Or as Bonta and Protevi have it: art tries to keep the intensive far-from-equilibrium processes from congealing (16). Thus, the nature of such an art is ontological as well as ethical: to affirm life and to rejoice in life, or as Deleuze puts it, to regain "belief in the world"[5]: "This is the art of politics in the most creative sense, where lying—as art—is the ethical practice of affirmation, the affirmation of life" (Zepke 27).

But art as simulacrum exercises the power of the false through

uniquely artistic ways. The creative artist who "takes the power of the false to a degree which is realized, not in form, but in transformation," is a "creator of truth, because truth is not to be achieved, formed, or reproduced; it has to be created" (Deleuze, *Cinema 2* 146). But to create is to "create signs" (Flaxman 183). Deleuze sees signs, not as semiotic tropes, but as forces of encounter, or objects of fundamental encounter (Kennedy 109; Smith 30). In his definition, the sign is a paradox: "not a sensible being but the being *of* the sensible" (*Difference and Repetition* 139-40). Unrecognizable except when being sensed, a sign "moves the soul, 'perplexes' it—in other words, forces it to pose a problem . . ." (Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition* 139-40). A sign is therefore an enigma or intensity that deterritorializes (Smith, "Deleuze's" 39; O'sullivan 20) and thus "produces thought, instigates interpretation," which "in turn produces apersonal points of view from which truths emerge" (Bogue, *Deleuze on Literature* 52). Thus, a sign is a foregrounding of art's asignifying potential (O'Sullivan 38), "a trigger point for movement" of thought (20).

IV. Art as Crystal Image

The kind of art that wields the power of the false may be most beautifully and conveniently epitomized in the "crystal image" that Deleuze posits in *Cinema 2*. The crystal image is "the central figure informing Deleuze's nondialectical metaphysics of becoming"; it "holds the secret of Deleuze's superior empiricism" and "embodies the Deleuzean demand for pure immanence" (Moulard-Leonard 116). While time-images are often manifested as opsigns and sonsigns, that is, images "cut off from [their] motor extension," their "heart" is the crystal image. "When the actual optical image crystallizes with its own virtual image" then we have the "true genetic element" of these isolated images—the crystal image (Deleuze, *Cinema 2* 69). What characterizes a crystal image is the "indiscernibility of the real and the imaginary, or of the present and the past, of the actual and the virtual" (Deleuze, *Cinema 2* 69).

Since "the crystal constantly exchanges the two distinct images which constitute it, the actual image of the present which passes and the virtual image of the past which is preserved: distinct and yet indiscernible" (81), it creates a *mise en abîme* through the formation of a hall of mirrors (Bogue, *Deleuze on Cinema* 122-23, 125) in which there is no distinction between the original and the copy; everything is a simulacrum pregnant with the "power of the false," which is able to "falsif[y] the truths of commonsense space and time" (Bogue, *Deleuze on Cinema* 148).

According to Deleuze, the above-mentioned exchange and indiscernibility

"follow each other in three ways in the crystalline circuit: the actual and
the virtual (or the two mirrors face to face); the limpid and the opaque; the
seed and the environment" (*Cinema 2* 71). The third modality actually
elaborates on how this indiscernibility leads to an epiphanic moment
where the crystal image becomes the seed that transforms the universe
(*Cinema 2* 108). In this light, the crystal-image has the following two
aspects:

> internal limit of all the relative circuits, but also outer-most, variable and
> reshapable envelope, at the edges of the world, beyond even moments of
> world. The little crystalline seed and the vast crystallisable universe:
> everything is included in the capacity for expansion of the collection
> constituted by the seed and the universe. (*Cinema 2* 80-1)

The fact that the crystal image may serve as a seed crystal, that is, may
be considered the most powerful time-image, arises from its being a sign.
The indiscernibility created by the crystal image ultimately reveals what
Deleuze identifies as the gap, the irrational cut, between the actual and the
virtual (Bogue, *Deleuze on Cinema* 172; Mullarkey 96), that which allows
the "internal outside" to be accessed through the interstice (Zepke 105;
Bogue 173). The result of this "confusion" or "alteration" of the one with
the other is that we are enabled to "see Time in the crystal" (Deleuze,
Cinema 2 81). Thus, writes Deleuze, "what constitutes the crystal-image is
the most fundamental operation of time: since the past is constituted not
after the present that it was but at the same time, time has to split itself in
two at each moment as present and past" (*Cinema 2* 81). The time we see
in the crystal thus is no longer any ordinary sequential time, but "the
perpetual foundation of time, nonchronological time, Cronos and not
Chronos . . . the powerful, non-organic Life which grips the world"
(*Cinema 2* 81). In other words, the real time glimpsed in the crystal image
is "a life" or immanence. But, as mentioned earlier, time, being immanence
itself, is also force (Rodowick 131). A counter-actualizing movement from
actualizations necessarily induces more becomings because the force of
time is itself "change or pure becoming" (*Cinema 2* 81). As Deleuze
himself has stressed, "The formation of the crystal, the force of time and
the power of the false are strictly complementary, and constantly imply
each other as the new co-ordinates of the image" (*Cinema 2* 132).
    All in all, Deleuze's philosophy necessarily posits an onto-aesthetics.
Thinking, best manifested in art, produces the power of the false by
harnessing force from Time or immanence or Life (Smith 43; Bogue,
"Aesthetics" 257; 264-65) in order to "[transvalue] truth" (Zepke 30) or
"[put] truth into crisis" (Rodowick 137) so that a counter-actualizing

movement will occur and more becomings will follow from this access to Time, immanence or Life. But the power is most effectively produced through the crystal image, in which one sees Time directly.

V. Zhuangzian Onto-Aesthetics

Neither *Tao-te-ching* nor *Zhuangzi*,[6] the two founding Taoist texts, deal directly with aesthetics, even though Taoism as a whole, as mentioned earlier, has consistently inspired traditional Chinese aesthetics and poetics. The two texts, however, do talk about "beauty" both in the phenomenological and non-phenomenological senses. *Zhuangzi* for instance mentions "beauty" (mei) a few times in the context of critiquing the perception of it as relativistic.[7] But *Zhuangzi* devotes most of its discussion to "absolute beauty" (da-mei: grand beauty; zhi-mei: absolute beauty), which is always associated with absolute truth.[8] And *Zhuangzi*'s aesthetics is closely connected to how this absolute truth "explicates" itself from its "complicated" state and back again. For his philosophy is firmly rooted in the Tao, which creates the myriad things and keeps becoming and making them become. In other words, it is due to the fact that the Tao is creativity that *Zhuangzi*'s philosophy may be considered an onto-aesthetics. The Tao is at once the highest goal for philosophical contemplation and what saturates and transforms the myriad things (Tang 136). A powerful immanence, the Tao can create precisely because it is univocal rather than analogical, immanent rather than transcendent, and becoming rather than being.[9] It was first adumbrated in the *Tao-te-ching*, *Zhuangzi*'s predecessor, as a will-less primordial force that gives birth to the world and its myriad things ("The myriad things in the world were born from 'there-being' [you] and 'there-being' was born from 'there-being-not' [wu]" [ch. 40]), as well as permeates and affirms them ("The great Tao permeates the world and is found in everything and everywhere. It nourishes the myriad things but does not own them, so it can be called small; the myriad things return to it but it does not own them, so it can be called great. It does not consider itself great and therefore it is great" [ch. 34]).[10]

In *Zhuangzi*, the Tao is further elaborated and has undergone a "democratizing" change. As in *Tao-te-ching*, it is infinite either temporally or spatially. The most powerful portrayal of the Tao comes from the chapter of "The Grand Master":

> The Tao is itself the foundation and the roots. It has existed since before there were heaven and earth. It gave birth to spirits and kings, heaven and earth. It has existed since before Tai-ji and should not be considered high; it has existed beneath the six ends and not considered deep; it was born before

heaven and earth and not considered long; it has grown since the antiquity
and not considered old. ("The Grand Master")

In a word, "It is infinity, but people think it has an end; it cannot be
measured, but people think it has boundaries" ("Being Free and
Accommodating"). But this infinity is univocal, its actualization being the
same as creation itself except that it possesses infinite virtuality or
potentiality. Having that potentiality, the Tao does not create the world
only once. The creation process is a "non-stop, continuous process which
constantly produces the new" (Han 13).[11] That the Tao constantly changes
and becomes is its most outstanding characteristic. Whereas in
Tao-te-ching, the Tao basically serves a political or ethical function, that is,
to make the people "become on their own" (zi-hua) (ch. 57) through
influential people who have grasped the Tao, in *Zhuangzi*, the Tao may be
re-discovered by any individuals. Once one succeeds in becoming one
with the Tao, one is able to become on one's own as well as make others
become.[12] Making oneself and others become continuously is the sole
purpose of explicating the Tao from its original complicated state.[13] And
this alone proves that for Taoism, especially *Zhuangzi*, being is becoming
and therefore creativity.

But how does one cultivate the ability to become? And what would be
the state in which one may be considered successfully becoming? We have
to first examine the relationship between the Tao and the *qi* or vital force.
The *qi* is an ancient Chinese concept that has been appropriated both by
Taoism and Confucianism, but in Taoism, it is used in a much more radical
way.[14] The *qi* or vital force is not a purely metaphysical state of being
(Zhong 117), nor is it a purely material power (128). It is instead the root
(ben-gen) of the myriad things, that is, another way of saying the Tao
(130).[15] According to Taoism, things are made of the *qi* ("What unites the
world is but one *qi*" ["Mr. Zhi Roams Northward"]), which is fluid and
always becoming ("Now it seems indiscernible and therefore non-existent,
but it persists; now it surges forward with no form, but it functions
miraculously" ["Mr. Zhi Roams Northward"]). "When the *qi* is collected
or enfolded [ju], there is life; when the collected or enfolded *qi* is
dispersed [san], there is death" ("Mr. Zhi Roams Northward"). But human
perception of things turns everything into fixed and isolated objects and
beings, what is described in *Zhuangzi* as "being tethered to things [i.e., *qi*
being congealed] [wu-you-jie-zhi]" ("The Grand Master").[16] And the goal
of Taoism is to "de-congeal" (jie) the congealed *qi* in us so that we are no
longer enslaved by things ("we should respond to becoming and be
released [jie] from things" ["Under the Heaven"]) and to make all things
mutually interpenetrating and nourishing again.[17] We see very clearly how

this argument against the congealing of vital forces is echoed in Deleuze.[18]

The *qi* can be felt and as a result affect us, which is its substantial or actual (shi) dimension, but it is also empty or virtual (xu) in the sense that it is from a transcendental plane of immanence and therefore is fluid and ungraspable (Zhong 128-30). When *Zhuangzi* recommends that one "empty up" (xu) one's *qi*, it does not mean one should "evacuate" one's *qi* but rather one should de-congeal one's fixed identity and organization and embark on a "return journey" from one's social body through one's lived body to one's "*qi* body," which is the matrix of the Tao (Zhong 114-15).[19] To be able "to de-congeal the mind and release the *qi*" ("Being Free and Accommodating"), then, means to resonate with the Tao because now one has "become completely still as if you had no soul" ("Being Free and Accommodating").

And the way we attain to being at one with the Tao and regain the ability to become is through revealing the nature of becoming inherent in all things. That has to begin with changing our perception of the world. That is, denuding ourselves of "human perception" and attaining to the perspective of the Tao. *Zhuangzi* variously describes this process of denuding as "sitting into oblivion" (zuo-wang) ("The Grand Master"), "fasting the mind" (xin-zhai) ("In the Human World"), and "I abandoning self" (wu-sang-wo) ("On Equaling All Things").[20] A typical process may be found, for instance, in the description of "fasting the mind":

> Do not listen with your ears, but listen with your mind; do not listen with your mind but listen with the *qi*. All the ear can do is listen to the sound and all the mind can do is find correspondences. But the *qi* enables an emptying-up (xu) to await the thing [itself]. The Tao collects at the emptied-up places. This emptying-up is called "fasting the mind." ("In the Human World")

And a mind in fasting or emptied-up mind is a subject with no self and thus is no longer trammeled by mundane binary oppositions but becomes/ transforms along with the Tao. "What to do? What not to do? Just transform/become with the Tao that by nature transforms/becomes" ("The Floods of Autumn").

When one has returned to the Tao, one is able to transcend one's human perception and look at things from the perspective of the Tao. As Fang Dong-mei has observed, "one is able to transcend one's body . . . and raise oneself into the 'great emptiness' (tai-xu; i.e., the *qi* or the Tao) and 'become things while not limited by them' (wu-wu er bu wu-yu-wu)" (307). In *Zhuangzi*'s own words, this is also called "viewing things from the [perspective of the] Tao" (yi dao guan zhi), as opposed to "viewing

things from [the perspective of] things" (yi-wu guan zhi) ("The Floods of Autumn"). As *Zhuangzi* argues, "If one views things from the [perspective of the] Tao, there is no distinction between the worthy and the worthless. But if one views things from the perspective of things, then one tends to consider oneself worthy and the others worthless" ("The Floods of Autumn").

This ultimate state of becoming with the Tao is what is called in *Zhuangzi* "roam-reveling" (*you*).[21] But despite the fact that "true man" (zhen-ren) who has attained to the perspective of the Tao is time and again said to "roam-revel" *outside* the world, he in fact never really leaves the world. On the contrary, to have de-congealed or reconnected with the *qi* is to have learned to become and also help other people and for that matter the myriad things become (Zhong 138). This is best expressed in the Zhuangzian concept of "both work" (liang-xing) ("On Equaling All Things"), which means to live double-visionedly in the mundane world.[22] A different way of saying this is "constant alternation" (fan-yan) ("The Floods of Autumn"), meaning to constantly exchange the two extremes of a binary opposition.[23]

Since the Tao permeates all things, they then all have their own *raison d'être*. The univocal Being/Becoming can be said of everything and therefore everything should be equally appreciated "no matter whether it is a grass stem or a pillar of a house, a loathsome mangy woman or a beauty like Xi-shi—anything strange and bizarre is threaded through by The Tao" ("On Equaling All Things"); each and every one of them is the Tao in its microcosmic form. But what is common to the myriad things is not a static essence but "what is natural" (zi-ran) or change itself ("Life/the Tao is sometimes empty while other times full; it does not have a fixed shape" ["The Floods of Autumn"]) because "Once things were born [from the Tao], they gallop like a horse and rumble on like a chariot; there is no movement without becoming, nor is there passing of time without change" ("The Floods of Autumn"). But as long as things follow their "natural" course, they are grounded ontologically and therefore are true becomings.

As the central concern of *Zhuangzi* is how one can become one with the Tao in order to make oneself become and thereby also to make others and for that matter the whole world become, it is a philosophy of creation through and through. But like immanence in Deleuze, the Tao does not create following a pre-established plan or model. It itself is Nature and its workings "natural" or "spontaneous." The fact that the *qi* is understood as both the actual and virtual dimensions of the Tao prompts some critics to compare the Tao to Time (Zhao, *Zhuangzi* 93). In fact, the Tao does bear a strong resemblance to Absolute Time, with all the potentiality in its

complicated state. And like absolute Time too, it explicates and is manifested in all becomings and creations. That is, creativity is compelled by the vital force of the Tao the same way creativity in Deleuze is compelled by the force of Time.[24] That is why "things are marked by life and death" whereas "the Tao has no beginning and no end" ("The Floods of Autumn"); it is "expressed" and "constructed" by the myriad things that it constantly creates and that constantly transform/become much in the same way Life in Deleuze is "expressed and constructed" by art, which crystalizes the most living and thinking state.[25] Consequently, the Tao is creativity. That explains why it has been argued that in *Zhuangzi*, the grand beauty is the same as the grand truth (the Tao) (Hsu 49-51; Xu 213; Liu 66).

VI. The Power of falsifying language

In the previous section, we have pointed out a Zhuangzian way to attain to being at one with the Tao by means of a special kind of "cultivation" (gong-fu), one that may be summarily termed "cultivation of no self," in that it purges our "organized mind" (cheng-xin) ("On Equaling All Things") of the sense of self. Language actually is another important way to achieve the same goal. Despite the fact that in popular understanding language is deeply distrusted both by *Tao-te-ching* and *Zhuangzi* in discoursing about the Tao,[26] neither of them believes human beings must or can abandon language in approaching the Tao. In fact, in order to reveal the Tao, *Zhuangzi* adopts a uniquely creative or aesthetic way of using language. What *Zhuangzi* does is very similar to what Bergson or Deleuze suggests: use a minor language, one that explodes commonsense modes of meaning production in order to prove that the Tao, like Bergsonian Time or Deleuzian immanence, "carr[ies] with it events and singularities" (*Pure Immanence* 29).[27] I call this unique use of language "falsifying language," one that relies very much on word play that as it were pulls the rug out from under conventional ideas and reveals their repressive nature.

These minor uses of language are focused on the unreliability of ordinary language or conventional discursive practices. It is by means of a combined use of these minor linguistic strategies and the "cultivation of no self" that *Zhuangzi* adumbrates a powerful onto-aesthetics. In Deleuzian terms, what is important about these strategies is how *Zhuangzi* thereby disrupts the "form of the true," and replaces it with "the power of the false" (*Cinema 2* 131) in order to disclose the eclipsed immanent Tao.

In the second chapter of *Zhuangzi*, a most unconventional theory of

language is laid out where commonsense language is completely turned
upside down and inside out:

> But speech is not like the blowing of the wind; the speaker has a meaning to
> express. But, as whatever he says cannot measure up to an absolute criterion,
> does he then really speak or not? He thinks that his words are different from
> the chirpings of fledgelings; but is there truly any distinction between them
> or not? But how can the Tao be so obscured that there should be "a True"
> and "a False" in it? How can speech be so obscured that there should
> be "the Right" and "the Wrong" about them? Where does the Tao go to that it
> ends up not being found? Where is speech found that it ends up being
> considered inappropriate? The Tao becomes obscured through small
> successes, and speech becomes opaque through over-embellishments. So it
> is that we have the contentions between the Confucians and the Mohists, the
> one side affirming what the other denies, and vice versa. If we get caught up
> in such a vain project, there is no better way out than reflect on things with
> the thus-ness of our mind. ("On Equaling All Things")

This is no doubt a language pregnant with the power of the false, for its
deployment challenges and upsets all existent categories and beliefs. Due
to its fluid, intoxicating and dizzying characteristics, this special use of
language has been compared to Nietszche's Dionysian language (Zhao,
"The Art" 39) and with good reason. In *Zhuangzi*, this falsifying language
is referred to in three ways: parabolic words (yu-yan), weighty words
(zhong-yan), and decentering words (zhi-yan) ("Under the Heaven"). The
first is the easiest to understand: words that present a parable. The second
refers to words that are put into the mouth of sages and other important
people to underscore their weightiness. The third is the most obscure.
Traditionally there are at least three interpretations of *zhi-yan*: changing
language, drinking language and decentering language.[28] But the author's
own summary of the kind of language he uses in the last chapter of
Zhuangzi may best help us understand *zhi-yan*:

> Employing far-fetching discourses, unbounded words, and ungrounded
> rhetoric, I give free rein to my thoughts without having prejudices and
> seeing the world from one single angle. ("Under the Heaven")

In light of this passage, *zhi-yan* seems to be a kind of paradoxical language,
one that he elsewhere actually names "paradoxical": "I say you are
dreaming. But I may be doing this in a dream. This kind of language I call
paradoxical language" ("On Equaling All Things"). Given this supporting
evidence, the meaning of "decentering language" or "language that
decenters" seems to fit best here. And some would even argue that all three
kinds of linguistic strategy used in *Zhuangzi* may be subsumed under this

one since all of them aim to transvalue fixed beliefs and cliches.[29]

A proper grasp of the true function of this paradoxical language or de-centering language "depends on how we understand the kind of commonsensical thoughts that they try to debunk" (Xiao 118). This is typical of Taoist thought: "If the whole world recognizes something as beautiful, then we should be disgusted with it" (*Tao-te-ching*, ch. 2). As *zhi-yan* invariably speaks from an unusual angle and explores terra incognita underneath conventional thinking, every use of decentering language creates a simulacrum that has no precedent and therefore copies no original. Take the following passage:

> To use a finger to judge other fingers as non-fingers is not as good as to use a non-finger to judge other fingers as non-fingers; to use a horse to judge other horses as non-horse is not as good as to use a non-horse to judge other horses as non-horse. Heaven and earth can be dealt with as the fingers are and the myriad things can be dealt with as the horses are. It works because it works and it does not work because it does not. A path is formed because of being constantly treaded on; a thing exists because of its being constantly called a name. Why is it such? Because it is such from being such. Why is it not such? Because it is not such from being not such. Everything has its own suchness and has its workability. Nothing does not have its suchness or its workability. No matter whether it is a grass stem or a pillar of a house, a loathsome mangy woman or a beauty like Xi-shi—anything strange and bizarre is threaded through by The Tao. ("On Equaling All Things")

This is simulacrum in its most elaborate form. But the purpose of such a strategy is not simply to create aporia while avoiding ontology as the deconstructionist does. In other words, while at first look, *zhi-yan* may seem to be merely a form of illogical language, in fact, like a Deleuzian simulacrum, it is meant to bring out the power of the false to give the lie to commonsense so that the Tao may be revealed; it makes detours to the "round," which is another name for the Tao. As the whole book relies on such a language strategy, it itself is an artwork that resonates with cosmic creation by the Tao. Without the least doubt, falsifying language is an apt means to initiate a "return journey" back to the Tao.

Making a "return journey" or "counter-actualization" to the Tao is in fact one of the most prominent themes in *Zhuangzi* as well as in its predecessor *Tao-te-ching*. See for instance: "While often indulging in carving and polishing, one should eventually return to the crude" ("Mountain Woods") or "Being crude and unembellished, one has no rival under heaven with regard to his beauty" ("The Way of Heaven").[30] This return journey counter-actualizes from mundane beauty back to the unspeaking (unarticulating) grand beauty, from sensuous pleasures back to

the grand happiness, from small intricacies back to the grand craft that creates the world (Hsu 49-51).[31]

Ultimately, the counter-actualizing move follows the "natural" (zi-ran,) path: "The sage is he who traces from the beauty of heaven and earth back to the Principle of the myriad things. Thus, the perfect man (zhi-ren) does nothing and the greatest sage (sheng-ren) initiates nothing; rather, all they need to do is observe [the model of] heaven and earth" ("Mr. Zhi Roams Northward").[32] By embracing the "natural" and abandoning the "artificial" ("[rules of] Heaven rather than [rules of] man"),[33] Taoist thought does not, however, attempt to return to a static "natural state," but rather advocates "becoming" as what unites the myriad things both by speaking a paradoxical language and letting go of an organized self. To use Deleuzian parlance, it is through becoming a "crystalline regime" that *Zhuangzi* becomes art. By either cultivating no self or using falsifying language, one learns from the Tao: to affirm Nature or Life by counter-actualizing and at the same time creating more becomings.

When the artist "grasps the truth in him, he can bring to life this spirit externally . . . the beauty of perfection does not have any man-made traces" ("The Fisherman"). Using the Zhuangzian onto-aesthetic way of looking at things, they no longer are objects outside of us. For, as mentioned earlier, now we are no longer viewing things from "me," not even from "things themselves," but from the Tao.[34] Like Time in Deleuze, the Tao is also the only subjectivity in *Zhuangzi*. For those who have succeeded in participating in the ever becoming Tao, being and creativity are one and the same. "Therefore the sagely man roam-revels in that from which nothing will be lost, and in which all things come into existence" (The Grand Master").

All told, as a book, *Zhuangzi* itself demonstrates how art should be produced by exploiting the power of the false. But of all the three language strategies it uses, the "decentering language," with its unique topology, may be the most intricate in its ruses and therefore most powerful in terms of disrupting the commonsense identities and organizations. And this particular strategy may in fact be summarized by the butterfly dream, which is very much like a Deleuzian crystal image.

VII. The Crystalline Butterfly Dream

Let's look again at how Deleuze defines the crystal image:

> As the crystal constantly exchanges the two distinct images which constitute it, the actual image of the present which passes and the virtual image of the past which is preserved: distinct and yet indiscernible, and all the more

> indiscernible because distinct, because we do not know which is one and
> which is the other. (*Cinema 2* 81)

This is exactly how Zhuang Zhou feels when he wakes up from the butterfly dream. He does not know how to distinguish the actual image of the present (himself as Zhuang Zhou) and the virtual image of the past (the butterfly).

In other words, the butterfly dream may be considered a crystal image, which, being the most powerful device in expressing and constructing Life, is paradigmatic of an onto-aesthetics in Deleuze. As the linguistic strategy of *zhi-yan* or decentering language also has as its main function that of bringing about an indiscernibility or alternation between the two extremes of a binary opposition, it may be construed as a non-imagistic crystal image. And it is not without reason that the butterfly dream occurs at the end of the "On Equaling All Things" chapter, throughout which one finds the *zhi-yan* strategy. This dream is used to illustrate "becoming things/things becoming" (wu-hua,) a concept that means that since all things are equal on account of their being rooted in their common foundation, the Tao, they can transform into each other when the circumstances are right. By concluding this chapter, this dream allows us to see the Tao through this alteration of the actual and the virtual and thereby sums up the chapter in the manner of an event, a scandalizing episode that aims to produce a crystal image.

Being a crystal image, the power of this dream in offering access to the Tao is derived from its connection not to the Freudian unconscious but to the Deleuzian one, which, being "the home of the work of art," Deleuze and Guattari argues, is "a questioning and problematizing force" (*What Is Philosophy?* 108). For this unconscious is Time itself, the matrix of multiplicities and forces.[35] Nor is becoming butterfly merely another becoming animal, for the dream context has made it something else, even though becoming butterfly does share something with becoming animal at its root. Unlike a typical becoming animal, becoming butterfly in the dream relies on the unique characteristics of the crystal image to undo confining molar identities.[36]

And the liminality of dreams provides the dreamer with a lot more potential to move back and forth between the actual present and the virtual past than the usual crystal image. This explains why "becoming in a dream" may serve as the paradigmatic metaphor for art defined in an onto-aesthetic way. First, in a dream, becomings are felt as less certain than that which happens "in broad daylight" and therefore may enhance the sense of becoming's not being "becoming anything in particular." In recollection, a butterfly is not clearly and necessarily re-membered as a

butterfly. As the dream is recalled in memory, it becomes a blurry, "impoverished object," one that is "deprived of the characteristics that might make it a complete, understandable entity." But at the same time, it is also an object "full of potentially noteworthy characteristics to it, an arresting palpability" because, being "somehow strange and unreal, dreamlike, hallucinatory" (Bogue, *Deleuze on Cinema* 114), it calls for Bergsonian "attentive recognition" and automatically becomes a Deleuzian opsign (Bogue, *Deleuze on Cinema* 108-20). For when we recall having a dream of some kind, we are no longer in a dream, nor are we yet in an actual memory. The liminality of the dream prolongs the threshold experience resultant from the tension between the present and the dream and thereby causes the recollection of it to alternate between what Bergson proposes to be the two ends of a continuum, one being the actual memory and the other the past, "through which we encounter the virtual past" (Bogue, *Deleuze on Cinema* 116).

And, more importantly, all this happens within the context of two types of related *mise en abîme*. First of all, the author who is recalling this particular dream creates a *mise en abîme* through the forming of a hall of mirrors (Bogue, *Deleuze on Cinema* 122-23; 125)—by the famous question Zhuang Zhou the dreamer poses after he wakes up from the dream: who is the dreamer and who the dreamed ("I wonder if it was Zhou who dreamt of himself being butterfly or it was the butterfly who dreamt of being Zhou" ["On Equaling All Things"])—in which the images reflect one another *ad infinitum*. But there is also another kind of *mise en abîme* that concretizes what Bergson portrays as how perception and memory work together. This *mise en abîme* is not exactly a hall of mirrors but a kind of hall of receding images, a kind of retreat into virtuality, during which objects keep fading into objects in contiguity while expanding the memory circuit: the author who is dreaming of having become a butterfly and the butterfly, the butterfly and all the virtual butterflies that could be in its position, the butterflies and all the other living things that fly, all the things that fly and all the things that float in the air, and so forth. In both *mise en abîme*, then, there is no distinction between the original and the copy. As a result, both become a simulacrum pregnant with the "power of the false," which is intended to "falsif[y] the truths of commonsense space and time" (Bogue, *Deleuze on Cinema* 148).

Thus, being emblematic of a joyous affirmation of life as manifested by *you* or roam-reveling, the butterfly dream as crystal image helps us see through the dream content to the dream-work, that is, it compels a Deleuzian attention to the irrational cut, or the interstice, between the dreamer and the dreamed, and thereby allows one to reach unto the Tao, or

the internal outside/external inside, once the aforementioned famous question is posed. When this question is posed, it presupposes a puzzling dream, an unanalyzable dream, an enigmatic dream, that is, a pure dream that alerts us to the Outside behind and beneath both dream and reality.

To the extent that the butterfly dream image scrambles the boundaries between the actual and the virtual in order to hint at the Tao, it is also the seed crystal that transforms the universe (*Cinema 2* 108) by what *Zhuangzi* emphasizes as becoming and making become through *you*. Thus, like Deleuzian onto-aesthetics, Zhuangzian onto-aesthetics is also ethical. It is not, as many believe, a philosophy that is centered on personal salvation, but one that, following the *Tao-te-ching*, aims also at transforming the world. That being the case, we may perhaps argue that all art aspires to become a butterfly dream, though not every art is able to do so; that is, to create a crystal image, a simulacrum with the power of the false.

Deleuze's seeing time in the crystal and therefore restoring a connection with pure immanence is about assuming a new perspective. That perspective, one from the vantage of pure immanence, has been compared to an inhuman "third eye" (*Cinema 2* 18). Likewise, as mentioned earlier, the Zhuangzian becoming one with the Tao through the crystal enables one to attain to a perspective from the Tao. But for neither of them is this attainment of a transhuman perspective an end in itself. The affirmation of Life is the true goal of both forms of onto-aesthetics. For Deleuze, the affirmation of Life is embodied in reclaiming a "belief in the world," whereas for *Zhuangzi*, it is manifested in being able to *you* or roam-revel under any circumstances. But it cannot be overemphasized that this *you* or roam-reveling does not refer to living beyond the mundane world but living double-visionedly, as borne out by *Zhuangzi*'s insistence on the necessity of "liang-xing" ("On Equaling All Things") and "fan-yan" ("The Floods of Autumn"), both of which mean to have a balanced view of both sides of a binary opposition and most fundamentally of both living in the world and living beyond this world. "I alone communicate with the spirit of Heaven and Earth but do not condescend toward the myriad things. I do not bother about right or wrong and mingle with the common people" ("Under the Heaven").

Thus, what happens to the dreamer Zhuang Zhou is not a complete merger with the dream content. That is why *Zhuangzi* says, "And yet we cannot say there is no longer any difference between Zhuang zhou and the butterfly" ("On Equaling All Things"). For one thing, the dream content itself is not the Tao, but the beginning phase of the expanding virtual past in the Bergsonian memory diagram. Instead, it is the indiscernibility between the dreamer and the dreamed that matters. Thus, it is rather the

merger with the Tao, not things, that this dream affords us. This merger in fact not only enhances one's belief in the world but also makes one a double-visioned seer. What that means is that a Zhuangzian true man (perfect man or sage) attains to a kind of ultimate state of becoming, a supreme "art of living," where one prolongs one's threshold experience so that one can simultaneously maintain a mundane and yet creative existence.[37] Let me quote *Zhuangzi* one more time to end this essay: "Heaven and earth grow together with me and the myriad things become at one with me" ("On Equaling All Things").

Notes

1. The book was presumed to have been written by Zhuang Zhou, also called Zhuangzi. (ca 369-286 BC). Despite the fact that the authorship is not absolutely certain, for the purpose of discussion, we will refer to him as the author. Also, in our discussion the texts cited from *Zhuangzi* will be identified only by their chapter titles in English translation.

2. Even though Confucian and Buddhist (mainly Chan Buddhist) influences on traditional Chinese art are also conspicuous, their influences are often indirectly derived from Taoism. Theories of painting and poetry were overwhelmingly derived from Taoist thinking. In his *The Spirit of Chinese Art*, for instance, Hsu Fu-kuan posits that while traditional Chinese art was both influenced by Confucianism and Taoism, the latter's role was predominant. He devotes nine out of the ten chapters of this book to elaborate on how Taoism became the main staple of Chinese painting as well as poetry. Other literary critics such as James J. Y. Liu (1975) and Wai-lim Yip (1980) also consider Taoism the main theoretical support of Traditional Chinese poetics. See also Liu Shao-jin (79-92, 146-50) for an overview of this line of argument.

3. To explain his immanent creationism, Deleuze borrowed the Neoplatonist concepts of complication, explication, and implication through Spinoza (Bogue, *Deleuze on Cinema* 27).

4. However, reading Deleuze too dualistically, Hallward misrepresents his philosophy as presupposing an opposition between the human creative becoming and the created being/creature (Crockett 16). The following quote, for instance, indirectly refutes this humanist labeling of Deleuze by a posthumanist description of Deleuzian creationism: "[Deleuze and Guattari] refuse to mystify this creativity as something essentially human and therefore non-natural. For them, the creativity of consistencies is not only natural, but also extends far beyond the human realm. Thus not just the creative work of territorial animals on the 'alloplastic stratum' they share with humans (i.e. precisely, their 'deterritorialization') but also the creativity of 'nonorganic life' . . . would always outflank any form of hermeneutic or existentialist humanism" (Bonta and Protevi 5).

5. Arguing that "The link between man and the world is broken" (*Cinema 2* 171), Deleuze urges us to reclaim "the belief in the world." But to do so requires not a blind attachment to the world striated by organization and institutionalization but a