

# A World in Discourse



# A World in Discourse:

## *Converging and Diverging Expressions of Value*

Edited by

Sydney Morrow and Matthew Izor

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# INTRODUCTION

Aloha!

This volume is a selection of papers that were presented at the 2013 Uehiro Cross Currents Philosophy Conference held at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, a conference organized and hosted by the graduate student community. As this immensely isolated university boasts the sterling reputation of being the premier institution for comparative philosophy, this conference receives submissions from around the world, with many contributors submitting papers year after year in hopes of continuing to present ideas in this fertile one of a kind venue. In addition to the twenty students at the 2013 conference, who together comprised six full panels over two days, the conference also welcomed perspectives from two distinguished speakers. Nobel Prize Nominee Ashok Malhotra from SUNY Oneonta opened the conference with his lecture "Role of Religion in Civilizational Development," which was followed by a P4C-style discussion led by Dr. Thomas Jackson. The Keynote address, given by Dr. Kathleen Higgins of the University of Texas at Austin, was an insightful and moving talk titled "Grief and the Aesthetics of Loss and Mourning." The topics discussed at the 2013 conference not only touched upon various and creative aspects of comparative philosophy, but also showcased a variety of unique perspectives on solely Western materials. Doubtlessly, the presence of what one may call Eastern philosophical perspectives lurks just below the surface of these approaches to perennial questions. Despite the range of topics, the theme woven through the selections we've chosen to publish in these proceedings is the upheaval of the common, the taken for granted, and even the very bases of comparison in favor of novel approaches to the exercise of comparative philosophy. The idea that there is no new ground to explore has never crossed the mind of these authors.

There are two parts to these proceedings, which follow after a particularly unique perspective titled "Food for Thought: The Role of Eating in the Transformation of Things" to serve as an amuse bouche for this delectable collection. The first part, *Alterity in Dialogue*, features cross-cultural comparisons forged by talented graduate students from around the globe. The dialogues featured in these papers are doubly valuable inasmuch as they do not merely bring out similar aspects of divergent philosophical perspectives, such as in "Material Flows: Human

Flourishing and the Life of Goods,” but also the value of the dissimilarity in making comparative claims, an approach featured in “Questioning Metaphysics.” The second part features authors who make it a point to renounce accepted, stale readings, and in effect bring the Western canon to colorful life, as in “The Physis of Language: Perspective on Merleau-Ponty’s Phenomenology.” It is our belief that comparative philosophy is not only the effort to bring into dialogue philosophical perspectives from different regions in the world, but more broadly to increase the breadth of potential resources one can use to consider any idea, “Western” or otherwise. Each year, participants in the Uehiro conference, who are often the only or one of the few members of their respective departments doing comparative research, both to further and continue to define this exciting approach. What follows, for those who are new initiates to the field of comparative philosophy, is a brief description and history of our department and what we do.

## **Defining Comparative Philosophy**

The forging of comparisons and the invocation to create new perspectives is the bedrock of philosophical discourse. Comparative philosophy, however, seeks to attain a global, holistic, yet not necessarily syncretic viewpoint that hopes to participate in disparate traditions and numerous conversations, and so cannot be classified in any but its own unique category. In so doing, adherents to this school find that although their knowledge of the Western philosophical canon rivals any in the field of Philosophy, and their fluency in Eastern philosophical and religious traditions allows for dialogue in fields not strictly considered Philosophy proper, they find themselves branded “other” within the Philosophy profession. Members of the comparative philosophy community cultivate the ability to approach a broad range of topics philosophically, which creates flexibility invaluable in this modern, global age. Rather than classifying texts that have obvious philosophical import, though are not a part of the history of Philosophy beginning in Mediterranean climes with the search for the ontological underpinning of existence, as something other than Philosophy, comparative philosophers begin with the assumption that Philosophy is not an institution, but a questioning, a curiosity, an address to the world asking “Why?” The University of Hawai‘i, from its inception, has housed a Philosophy department unlike any other. It actively seeks voices from around the world to participate in an ongoing conversation about what makes the world and what our part is in it.

## **Comparative Philosophy at Home**

The University of Hawai'i Mānoa has, from its creation in 1936 by Charles A. Moore and Wing-tsit Chan, been a fount of comparative philosophy. In 1939, the Philosophy Department hosted the first East-West Philosophers' Conference (EWPC), which continues to grow and flourish, attracting presenters from around the world. The first conference was host to six presenters, and the most recent conference in 2011 showcased the work of 260 scholars in a room overlooking a verdant Japanese-style garden scented by the fragrant tropical breeze. Situated as it is in the center of the Pacific Ocean, Hawai'i is an ideal place for comparative philosophy, and it provides an excellent reprieve for scholars from either side to gather and share ideas. The rich cultures and traditions of the Pacific Islands and the diverse nature of Hawai'i itself creates the perfect environment for the creation of new perspectives and, much like the creation of new lands from the oozing eruptions on the Big Island of Hawai'i, many of the dialogues and collaborations radically broaden the field of Philosophy.

The Philosophy Department at UH Mānoa is home to experts in the fields of Chinese, Japanese, Indian, and Islamic, as well as Continental, Greek, Analytic, and American Philosophy. It is also home to the premier journal of comparative philosophy, *Philosophy East and West*, published by the University of Hawai'i Press. Each year, students clamor for a place among the graduate student community so that they too can help to make a future for this exciting and challenging field. The Uehiro Cross Currents Philosophy Conference is designed not only to showcase the work of its own graduate student community, but also to serve as a welcoming, temporary home for students from other institutions to participate in the comparative discussion.

## **Broadening the Field and Sharing Comparative Philosophy with the World**

The good fortune of collaboration with the Uehiro Foundation on Ethics and Education, established by Tetsuhiko Uehiro, is inestimable in the eyes of all who comprise or support the field of comparative philosophy as well as the Department of Philosophy at UH Mānoa. Since its creation in 2003, facilitated by the graduate student community, the Uehiro Cross Currents Philosophy Conference has grown and flourished. The annual Call for Papers reaches inboxes in dozens of countries around the globe, with international participants from Japan, the United Kingdom, and China becoming regular contributors each year. Themes of past

Uehiro Cross Currents Philosophy Conferences include “Navigating a Pluralistic World” (2006), “Comparative Philosophy Today and Tomorrow” (2007), “Comparative Responses to Global Interdependence” (2011), and “Locating and Losing the Self in the World: Cross-Cultural Reflections on Self-Awareness and Self-Transcendence” (2012). Each year, the graduate students extend their hospitality and stretch their minds to facilitate global and holistic inquiry into issues that span across oceans and across cultures.

An unexpected delight in the 2013 conference was the submission of papers that on the surface did not seem to be comparative at all. But during the selection process, the reviewers agreed that there was something special about the contributions. They indicated a foundation that included more than the Western philosophical canon had to offer. A unique flexibility in interpretation indicated a mind that had been exposed to a wide range of ideas and a lack of prejudice that characterizes the practice of comparative philosophy. We have decided to dedicate half of this volume to those voices, in part to answer the cynics who disparage our knowledge of the Western philosophical canon. The truth is that contributors to the field of comparative philosophy are no less knowledgeable about the traditionally accepted realm of Philosophy than their non-comparatively trained counterparts. Rather, they have taken on twice the work and twice the responsibility in presenting their cross-cultural perspectives and their paradigm-exploding arguments. In these proceedings, we show the world how not only is comparative philosophy representative of a cross-cultural exercise, but also a remodeling of the philosophical mind which, in effect, improves the acuity while at the same time emphasizing the humility in the use of this instrument.

With all this in mind, we invite you to relax and take in these various perspectives that are somehow united in their uniqueness. They are held together by the belief that any culture can contribute to a common narrative, and that one should not be privileged over another simply because of the inertia contributed to ideas by history. This volume joins those of the previous years in illuminating the exciting field of comparative philosophy.

Mahalo nui loa  
Sydney Morrow & Matthew Izor  
Honolulu, July 2015

## CHAPTER ONE

# FOOD FOR THOUGHT: THE ROLE OF EATING IN THE TRANSFORMATION OF THINGS

NICOLAS HUDSON

This essay is an attempt to show that the *Zhuangzi's* cosmology of thingly transformation is tied up with what I call the problem of eating, namely that in order to live, we must kill other living beings. While I will focus on eating, the problem of eating is a specific case of a more general problem: causing change in other things. Eating is the paradigmatic example of this problem because here the necessity of causing both change and harm is brought to the fore: nothing survives being eaten, yet eating is necessary for us to survive. Causing change in another need not always be harmful—after all, one can change things for the better. Nonetheless, it is important to recognize that since we are dependent upon others in countless ways, we cannot avoid causing change and that the change we cause is often morally problematic. Children depend on and change their parents. The sick depend on and change their care-givers. Friends depend on and change one another. Humans depend on and change the natural world. Thus while in this essay I will stick closely to the narrower problem of eating, it should not be forgotten that it does have broader implications.

The problem of eating, however, is not a problem that the *Zhuangzi* itself raises. Instead, it is raised by a number of Indian texts, particularly *The Laws of Manu*. But it is a problem that given the *Zhuangzi's* cosmology should be raised, especially because this problem is ultimately an ethical question. Therefore, in this paper I will first give a brief description of the *Zhuangzi's* cosmology, then describe the problem of eating further and show how it fits into the cosmology of the *Zhuangzi*. Finally, I will examine *The Laws of Manu* and a few potential Chinese responses to the problem, before giving one of my own.

## Transformation, Life-and-Death, and Dependency

There are three important and interrelated concepts that run through much of the *Zhuangzi*: transformation (化), life-and-death (生死), and dependency (待). And in fact life-and-death is merely one type of transformation, though by far the most important. It is also the transformation we will focus on in this essay. Life-and-death as transformation is expressed most clearly by Lao Dan who states, “One transforms and is born, one transforms again and dies,”<sup>1</sup> but the connection between transformation and life-and-death is explored in many different passages. In most of these passages, the sting of death is undermined by considering it to be yet another transformation.<sup>2</sup> For instance, in one story the fatally ill Ziyu is excited to see what he will change into next, exclaiming, “If my left arm was changed into a rooster, then I could keep track of the time at night. If my right arm was transformed into a bow, then I could bring down an owl to roast, and if my butt transformed into a carriage and my spirit into a horse, I could ride it.”<sup>3</sup> Even a story such as Zhuang Zhou and the butterfly—in which Zhuang Zhou dreams he is a butterfly and upon awaking is unsure whether he is Zhuang Zhou who dreamt he was a butterfly or a butterfly who is dreaming he is Zhuang Zhou—that explicitly concerns transformation and makes no explicit mention of life-and-death is often traditionally interpreted as referring to life-and-death. For instance Wang Anshi writes, “Life-and-death is like waking-and-sleeping, this principle is very clear.”<sup>4</sup>

This should not be surprising. The *Zhuangzi*, like nearly every work of classical Chinese philosophy, is not concerned with abstract metaphysical issues. Thus it is not concerned with change as some abstract metaphysical concept. Instead, it is concerned with change because change, particularly in the form of life-and-death, affects humans.

The third concept, dependency, relates to the other two because it explains why things change. This is perhaps most famously shown in the dialogue between the penumbra and the shadow. There,

The penumbra asked the shadow, saying, “Formerly you moved, now you stop. Formerly you sat, now you stand up, why are you without anything to hold onto?” The shadow replied, “I have something I am dependent on and that is all. And what I am dependent on also has something it is dependent on. I am dependent on a snake’s scales or a cicada’s wings. Who knows what it is? Who knows what it is not?”<sup>5</sup>

Everything is dependent on something else even if, like the penumbra that questions the shadow, one might believe that what one is dependent

on is in fact unconditioned by anything else. But just as the shadow has that which it is dependent on, so too does everything else. If this were not the case, then one would not be subject to change or death. One would be entirely self-determined, immune from being affected by others. These others can be like the hungry tiger that ate baby-faced Shan Bao despite the fact he “nourished his internals” (養其內) or the sickness that undid the wealthy Zhang Yi who “nourished his externals” (養其外).<sup>6</sup> Despite *Zhuangzi* being composed by various authors, the impossibility of avoiding dependence and thus death is a consistent theme. While there is admiration for people like Liezi who manage to lessen their dependence on things by mastering obscure arts like walking on the wind,<sup>7</sup> they nonetheless must depend on something and are thus vulnerable. So while their feats are impressive, they too must come to terms with transformation and life-and-death. The only way to avoid life-and-death is to identify oneself with the world in its entirety. This is shown in a famous passage that compares one’s body to a boat one must hide from a thief:

The great clod gives me a shape, labors me with life, eases me into old age, and brings me to rest with death. Therefore what makes my life good is also what makes my death good. If I hide my boat in a gully and my nets in a pond, that is called secure. Yet at midnight a strong person could carry it away without you knowing it. Hiding the small in the big is appropriate, yet it still can be taken. But if you hide all under heaven in all under heaven, there is no way it can be taken. This is the great situation of the constancy of things.<sup>8</sup>

As long as one identifies oneself with any particular aspect of the world—be it your body, your family, or anything particular—that is dependent on other things and can, and no doubt one day will, be stolen away and perish. Only by identifying oneself with all under heaven, which despite its particular parts constantly changing is dependent on nothing for there is nothing apart from it, can one avoid dependency and perishing. But passages such as this are rare. For the most part, the *Zhuangzi* stresses that we are all dependent on other things and can only enjoy the ride.

And it is this notion of dependence, which is crucial if the world is one of thingly transformation, that opens the door for the problem of eating since we are dependent on food. Therefore, we will next turn to the problem of eating.

## **The Problem of Eating**

As already mentioned, this problem is not one that is raised in the *Zhuangzi*. Instead, it is raised by Indian texts where, as Francis

Zimmerman observes, “[w]hat we in Europe, in the classical period, called ‘the chain of being’ is presented in India as a sequence of foods.”<sup>9</sup> What these texts, especially *The Laws of Manu*, stress is that the world is comprised of eater and eaten.

Those that do not move are food for those that move, and those that have no fangs are food for those with fangs; those that have no hands are food for those with hands; and cowards are the food of the brave.<sup>10</sup>

Everything is dependent on something else for nourishment and consequently for it to live, its food must die. Nor should we forget that whatever is on top of the food pyramid dies and is eaten in its turn. The world is one in which suffering and destruction are seemingly inevitable. This is an alternative perspective on dependency, change, and life-and-death that introduces concerns that are largely absent from the *Zhuangzi*. The stories and critiques found in the *Zhuangzi* allow for one to be dependent on a broad range of things. Liezi, for instance, though he could ride the clouds, “still had that which he was dependent upon,”<sup>11</sup> namely the clouds upon which he rode.

Although changes and a variety of deaths are multifarious in the *Zhuangzi*, *The Laws of Manu* simplifies things by focusing on eating. While this focus is narrower than the scope of the *Zhuangzi*, I nonetheless think this perspective must be taken into account when we read the *Zhuangzi* because it is a plausible extension of his own account of thingly transformation. To see how, we must examine more closely the relation between dependency and change.

As we have seen, in the *Zhuangzi*, the character *dai* (待) can mean “dependent.” However, its root meaning is “to wait.” And this seems to be how change occurs in the *Zhuangzi*. Mengsun Cai explicitly does not know what comes first and what comes later, he simply awaits change whatever it may be.<sup>12</sup> It is because of that that he is able to mourn without grief his mother’s death, a seemingly paradoxical (and unfilial) act that the *Zhuangzi*’s Confucius praises.<sup>13</sup> Shadows and their penumbræ have no agency of their own and must wait for other objects—their body, the sun or other sources of illumination—to change. Though the character *dai* (待) is not used, Ziyu, whose marvel at all his body could transform into has already been mentioned, has a similar attitude towards transformation and life-and-death: he simply waits and observes what changes he happens to undergo. But what this ignores is that no one simply waits for change to occur. While we need not cling to any particular form, e.g. being a human,



we still perform actions to maintain our form. To do so, one of the primary actions we perform is eating.

The act of eating constantly generates significant change, not only through digestion but also by bringing the food to the table: animals are rarely alive when eaten, fruit rarely picked up from the forest floor. Instead, we hunt, harvest, and cook our food, changing it from something that was living to something that is now dead but will nourish our life. Therefore, life-and-death and change are not events that simply happen to one, but events that one causes. Eating shows how the very dependency observed in the *Zhuangzi* makes one vulnerable to change also makes one cause change. Short of starvation, there is no way to avoid this. But choosing to starve is decidedly not an option in the *Zhuangzi*. Zisang laments his poverty that causes him to starve<sup>14</sup> and Zhuang Zhou is angered by the Marquis of Linhe's refusal to give him food to feed his family.<sup>15</sup> If there is anything entirely disliked by the authors of the *Zhuangzi*, it is starvation.<sup>16</sup>

It is odd that the *Zhuangzi* does not stress this aspect of life-and-death and dependency since eating and food does play a large role in the book. The first mentioned ability of the spiritual person from Guyi is that she does not eat the five grains and simply inhales the wind and sips on dew.<sup>17</sup> While the text does not comment on it, she, like Liezi who travelled on clouds, has something she depends upon, namely the wind and dew that she must consume in order to stay alive. Elsewhere, Cripple Shu is praised for his ability to sustain himself and ten others with food.<sup>18</sup> Clearly there is an awareness that food is central to a human's continued existence and we are dependent on what we eat. Yet the connection between eating and change is rarely made: while Cook Ding undoubtedly changes the ox he is carving, the moral of the story is how one can preserve one's own life, and the story's irony lies not in preserving one's life at the expense of another, but in the lord learning from a humble cook.

There is, however, one story in which life-and-death, dependency, and eating are brought together. That is the story of Zhuang Zhou poaching in Diaoling. Here Zhuang Zhou is found roaming, looking out for an animal to bring down. When he finally spies a likely target, a strange, large bird, he also notices the bird capture a praying mantis that is intent on its own prey. Both the bird and the mantis "seeing profit, forgot their bodies"<sup>19</sup> thus endangered themselves. Startled, Zhuang Zhou looks around and realizes that a game warden is closing in on him while he is intent on killing the bird. Safely fleeing home, he does not leave his house for three months, reflecting on his close encounter.

A.C. Graham interpreted this story as Zhuang Zhou's turn away from Yangism, which stressed self-preservation, to his own distinctive philosophy, claiming that "(w)atching the animals prey on each other...he discovers that the whole order of nature is inimical to survival" and makes "the discovery that 'it is inherent in things that they are tied to each other.'"<sup>20</sup> While such an interpretation would be welcomed, it is not supported by a close reading. Zhuang Zhou does learn that things are tied to one another through predation, but it frightens him and he only momentarily breaks free of it by fleeing back to his house. There is no hint he is about to become "the irreverent drop-out of the more characteristic tales."<sup>21</sup> What Zhuang Zhou learns is not that survival is impossible, but that one should not forget one's body. If anything, one suspects that it is a conversion *to* Yangism since Zhuang Zhou learns that one must first tend to one's body because of the harm that can befall it; only then can one turn one's mind to profit. While the story does show that this Zhuang Zhou is not yet the Zhuang Zhou we know and love from the Inner Chapters—his roaming is not true roaming since it has a fixed purpose and when stumbling across a large and unusual bird his first thought is food and not some strange and wonderful tale—it does not show how he became the Zhuang Zhou who supposedly wrote the Inner Chapters. More importantly for this essay, while the story does show that there is a circle of eater and eaten, there is little concern for what one does eat. Instead, the concern is that one might be eaten (or arrested and executed). So while this story could have led to a reassessment of our dependency on other things—just as the story of the useless tree from "In the World of Men" (人間世) sections 5 and 6 is re-evaluated in "The Mountain Tree" (山木) section 1 where the uselessness of the tree spares it from being cut down but the uselessness of the goose causes it to be cooked—it does not. The story of Zhuang Zhou in Diaoling is a lone hint at the world as a circle of eater and eaten, one that is not pursued.

Why is it that no part of the *Zhuangzi* focuses on the changes eating causes? Eating is an important part of the *Zhuangzi* and falls nicely into its account of how change and life-and-death are due to dependency on other things, so one wonders why it does not make this now obvious connection. The answer is because contra Xunzi, the *Zhuangzi* favors humans and does not know nature.<sup>22</sup> The numerous animals that appear in the *Zhuangzi*—the Peng and the quail, the praying mantis who tries to stop a chariot—are used almost entirely as the vehicle of metaphors: the *Zhuangzi* rarely, if ever, emphasizes them as creatures that exist in their own right. As mentioned earlier, nearly all Chinese philosophy is ultimately concerned with human problems. While this is most obvious in the Confucian

writings, it is no less true with the *Zhuangzi*. Thus the only times eating becomes problematic is when it is a human who is the prey—literally in two of the Miscellaneous Chapters,<sup>23</sup> where the state of the world is so bad that humans are eating one another, and metaphorically when Zhuang Zhou is nearly caught by the game warden. The needs of other living beings and how we should react to them simply are not addressed.

This failure is not unique to the *Zhuangzi*. In Chinese philosophy one's circle of moral concern often is limited to humans: in the *Mencius* "King Hui of Liang A" (梁惠王上) the lessons learned from King Xuan's compassion for the sacrificial ox are to extend that compassion to one's kind and stay out of the kitchen. In the *Mozi*, the doctrine of universal love (兼愛) does not extend to non-human animals. They are referred to mostly as examples of disorder, or how humans should not live. For instance, a passage from the chapter "Exalting Conformity II" (尚同中) reads,

The disorder of all under heaven is like that of the birds and beasts, without regulations of lord and minister, superior and inferior, old and young or rituals of father and son, older and younger brother, this is what causes all under heaven's disorder.<sup>24</sup>

The *Zhuangzi*, however, is decidedly neither the *Mencius* nor the *Mozi*, and while it is no surprise that the latter two books are unconcerned with animals, it is considerably more surprising that the *Zhuangzi* is likewise unconcerned. After all, in one of the book's most famous stories Zhuangzi admits to knowing the happiness of fish.<sup>25</sup> Moreover, the key doctrine of Zhuangzi's friend Huizi is to "Love all things, for heaven and earth are one body."<sup>26</sup> So there is clearly reason to believe that the *Zhuangzi* could include animals within the circle of moral concern.

Furthermore, one fruit of realizing the importance of eating is the recognition that the *Zhuangzi*'s cosmology of change requires some sort of ethic for the change that one causes in others, a change that often results in destruction. Unfortunately, the *Zhuangzi* does not explore this aspect. But since one of the primary themes in the *Zhuangzi* is change and dependency, and as we have seen eating should be an essential part of any account of change and dependency, a morality of eating is not something that the *Zhuangzi* should avoid. Moreover, it is not as if eating is the only case in which our dependency necessitates change. Humans are dependent on other things and other humans in innumerable ways, and require them to change for the sake of survival. So even if one still held that one need not include animals within one's circle of moral concern—a view that is getting less and less tenable as it becomes clear that the differences

between humans and other animals are often differences in degree, not kind<sup>27</sup>—there still must be some ethical account if one is to adopt a *Zhuangzian* cosmology of thingly transformation. Nonetheless, I will not address the issue of a broader morality of thingly transformation and will instead continue to focus on the problem of eating. Since it was originally *The Laws of Manu* that inspired us to view the *Zhuangzi* in the light of eater and eaten, perhaps it can help us arrive at such an account.

## An Ethics for Thingly Transformation?

### The Laws of Manu

There are two projects that run throughout *The Laws*: the first is the construction of a caste system, the second an account of the stages of one's life. Each project has four divisions. The castes are divided into servants, commoners, rulers, and priests<sup>28</sup> and the stages of life are divided into student, householder, forest-dweller, and ascetic.<sup>29</sup> Both projects have the similar goal of producing a caste or individuals who are no longer tainted by the stain of destroying other living beings for food. If either system did what it was designed to do, we might have our ethical account.

Unfortunately, neither is a project that we can or should endorse. The caste system that *The Laws* describe has had a baneful effect on Indian society, one that resonates even today. As Wendy Doniger and Brian Smith remind us, “Even today, Manu remains the pre-eminent symbol—now a negative symbol—of the repressive caste system: it is Manu, more than any other text, that Untouchables burn in their protests.”<sup>30</sup> That reputation is not undeserved, for according to the *Laws*,

All of this belongs to the priest, whatever there is in the universe; the priest deserves all of this because of his excellence and his high birth. The priest eats only what is his own, he wears what is his own, and he gives what is his own; other people eat through the priest's mercy.<sup>31</sup>

One could argue that the other castes exist primarily for the sake of the priests: the rulers to protect them, the commoners for producing goods for them, and servants to provide whatever else they need.<sup>32</sup> It is difficult to see how such a caste system could, or should, be imposed.

Nor is it easy to see any benefit in the stages of life it describe. One ends up with householders killing plants and animals and then giving them as alms to members of the other three stages:<sup>33</sup> the student who studies the *Vedas*,<sup>34</sup> the forest-dweller who purifies himself,<sup>35</sup> and the ascetic who seeks Freedom from rebirth.<sup>36</sup> This is because violence stains the one who

commits it, making the student unfit to study the Vedas and the forest-dweller and ascetic unable to achieve liberation. The householder, accordingly, commits violence for them so that they can eat. In effect, the violence is outsourced. This is also true with regard to the castes: the priests are untainted by violence not because violence does not occur, that living things are not killed, but because they are not the ones committing it. What matters is not the harm done to the eaten, but the taint that can afflict the eater. Therefore, despite making us aware of the problem of eating, the two solutions *The Laws of Manu* provides are not tenable.

### A Potential Confucian Solution: Wang Yangming

Perhaps the Chinese tradition ultimately has adequate resources to address this issue. While traditional Chinese thought paid little heed to animals, later authors have discussed the matter. One of them is the Ming dynasty philosopher Wang Yangming. He opens his discussion of the *Great Learning* with the following passage:

Therefore when you see the child about to enter the well, your heart-mind of compassion must be startled; it's through humanity you join with the child and make one body. The child and you are the same kind. Seeing the cries and trembling of animals, you must have the unbearable mind;<sup>37</sup> it's through humanity you join with the birds and beasts and make one body. The animals, like you, have awareness. Seeing plants broken, you must have a mind of concern; it's through humanity you join with the plants and make one body. The plants, like you, are alive. Seeing stones damaged/destroyed and you must have mind of care; it's through humanity you join with stones and make one body.<sup>38</sup>

Wang Yangming starts with the traditional ideas of the heart-mind of compassion associated with the child and the well in addition to the unbearable mind (不忍之心) associated with King Xuan and the ox from *Mengzi*. But he goes further. Plants and even stones become objects of concern and care. Not only are these not objects of concern in the *Mengzi*, the heart-minds of concern and care do not exist for him. But more importantly for us, humans are not the only focus. Where in the *Mengzi* Mencius told King Xuan to use his unbearable heart-mind on fellow humans, Wang Yangming suggests that the unbearable mind is used in relation to all beings which together comprise one body.

Stressing that one makes one body with everything else is not a doctrine that the *Zhuangzi* would view unfavorably—after all, as has been already mentioned, Zhuang Zhou's constant companion, Hui Shi, argued

that one should “love all things for heaven and earth are one body.”<sup>39</sup> Wang Yangming, however, does not stress this dependency. Keeping with his idealism, it is only through the mind broadening its sympathy to include others that the one body is made. But this overlooks the fact that we are already one body with all things because we are dependent on them. It is not something that is created by us sympathizing with them.

A further reason to not be satisfied with Wang Yangming’s system as laid out here is that it values others, including other humans, only insofar as one can identify with them. It is because you and the child are the same kind or that plants are also alive that you are moved by them. But there is no great chain of being with humans occupying the highest position and the rest of creation occupying progressively lower ones. By treating the ten thousand things as if they were simply humans without certain key facilities—e.g. perception, life—one is unable to approach them on their own terms. One only approaches them insofar as they remind one of oneself. This may work with animals such as chimpanzees and bonobos that are closely related to us.

Consequently, while Wang Yangming evidences a concern for non-human beings that is often lacking in the Chinese tradition, his account is not satisfactory to speak to my concern.

I’m going to speak some wild words to you; you should listen to them wildly, too.<sup>40</sup>

Because of the failure of the *Zhuangzi*, *The Laws of Manu*, and Wang Yangming to give us such an ethic, I feel that I should try to give such an account. Moreover, any essay on the *Zhuangzi* without some wild words would betray the *Zhuangzi*’s spirit of freely roaming thoughts. In an essay that has no doubt been filled with some wild words, here are my concluding wild words concerning an ethic that recognizes our dependency in a world of eater and eaten.

The opening chapter of the “Classic of Filial Piety” (孝經) asserts that one has received one’s body, bones, hair and flesh from one’s parents. That, of course, is an understatement. The care children receive from their parents is immense (as are the transformations that follow parenthood). We are entirely dependent upon them and the nourishment—physical and intellectual—that they give us. What makes this statement important is what it entails: that we should consequently be filial. But we are also nourished by and dependent upon our food. Consequently we should use an expanded notion of filiality to encompass both our relationship with our parents and the natural world that nourishes us.

This is unlikely to be a Confucian idea of filiality, which focuses on grown children taking care of aged parents. The character for filiality, *xiao* (孝), represents a child (子) supporting an elder (老) and the tasks that follow Confucian filiality—supporting one’s parents, carrying on the family line, making a name for oneself—are hardly tasks of dependents, let alone tasks we can perform with regard to the plants and animals we eat. Instead it is the filiality of dependents that we should follow. While demanding care—for otherwise they would perish—these dependents are nonetheless attentive to the needs of their caregivers. These filial dependents demand only what they need and to the best of their ability care for their caregivers as well. It is this filiality that should be applied to our relations with our food-to-be. Thus we should not kill what we do not need (and we rarely, if ever, need meat), nor should we raise it or kill it in ways that cause it unnecessary suffering. We should also be grateful and appreciative of the sacrifice it makes—an involuntary one to be sure, but then again the sacrifices our parents make are not entirely voluntary either. Furthermore, we should recognize that we too will end up as food someday and not fear the prospect. Instead, like Ziyu we should wonder at what we shall become but also welcome the chance to serve.

This is an approach that is not found in the *Zhuangzi*. Nor, so far as I know, is it found in the Confucian tradition, despite the importance of the “Classic of Filial Piety.” Nevertheless, it is one that I feel helps answer the question of what we should do when we realize that in this world of thingly transformation, we are not just the transformed, but also the transformers.

## Bibliographic Endnote

The first source for Chinese texts I used was Donald Sturgeon’s invaluable *Chinese Text Project* at [ctext.org](http://ctext.org). I would then turn to more authoritative and helpful annotated editions. For the *Zhuangzi*, Wang Shumin’s *Zhuangzi Jiaoquan* (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 2007) was invaluable. I used A.C. Graham’s translation *Chuang-tzu: The Inner Chapters* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2001) helpful, though I obviously disagreed with his interpretation of Zhuang Zhou and the gamekeeper. While they played less a role, I also used Jiao Xun’s *Mengzi Zhengyi* (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 2007), Wang Xianqian’s *Xunzi Jijie* (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 2007), Ian Johnston’s *The Mozi: A Complete Translation* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press of Hong Kong, 2010), and Wang Shouren’s *Wang Yangming Quanj*. (Shanghai Guji Chubanshe, 2006) primarily to check [ctext.org](http://ctext.org)’s texts. Henry Rosemont and Roger

Ames' *The Chinese Classic of Family Reverence: A Philosophical Translation of the Xiaojing* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2009) gave me the Chinese text of the *Xiaojing* and a very thoughtful interpretation of it. Since I am unable to read Sanskrit, Wendy Doniger and Brian Smith's *The Laws of Manu* (New York: Penguin, 1991) was essential and contains a wonderful introduction that contributed to how I read the text.

Apart from those primary sources, I found Roger Ames' "Death as transformation in classical Daoism" from Jeff Malpas and Robert C. Solomon (eds.) *Death and Philosophy*. (London: Routledge, 1998) a tremendous account on how death is just another transformation in the *Zhuangzi*. Brian Smith's "Eaters, Food, and Social Hierarchy in Ancient India: A Dietary Guide to a Revolution of Values" (*Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, Vol. 58, No. 2 [Summer, 1990], pp.177-205) confirmed to me the central importance of eating in *The Laws of Manu*. Francis Zimmerman's *The Jungle and the Aroma of Meats: An Ecological Theme in Hindu Medicine* (Berkeley: University of California, 1987) is a fascinating book in its own right, though I primarily cannibalized it for one great quote, one that Smith first brought to my attention in his paper.

Finally, Sir Thomas Browne's Browne's *Religio Medici and Urne-Buriall*, edited by Stephen Greenblatt and Ramie Targoff (New York: New York Review Books, 2012) is relegated to a footnote. Browne is perhaps the greatest English prose writer and should be quoted whenever possible.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all translations from the Chinese are mine. The citations from Chinese texts are from ctext.org since it is easily accessible. I have also compared them with more authoritative editions: Graham, A.C. *Chuang-tzu: The Inner Chapters*. Indianapolis: Hackett, 2001; Johnston, Ian. *The Mozi: A Complete Translation*. Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press of Hong Kong, 2010; Rosemont, Henry and Roger Ames. *The Chinese Classic of Family Reverence: A Philosophical Translation of the Xiaojing*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2009. "Knowledge Roams North" (知北遊), 5. 已化而生, 又化而死。

<sup>2</sup> Ames, Roger. "Death as transformation in classical Daoism" in Jeff Malpas and Robert C. Solomon (eds.) *Death and Philosophy*. London: Routledge, 1998. Ames' essay brings together a large number of passages on death and transformation, convincingly showing that for the *Zhuangzi*, death is a transformation. In addition to the Ziyu passage, two other important passages are "Heavenly Ways" (天道), 1 "To the one who knows heavenly joy, their life is heavenly action, their death



thingly transformation” (知天樂者，其生也天行，其死也物化) and Zhuangzi reflecting in “Utmost Joy” (至樂), 2 on his wife’s death, “Her shape changed and there was life, now it changed again and there is death” (形變而有生，今又變而之死)

<sup>3</sup> “Great Ancestor Teacher” (大宗師), 5. 浸假而化予之左臂以為雞，予因以求時夜；浸假而化予之右臂以為彈，予因以求鴟炙；浸假而化予之尻以為輪，以神為馬，予因以乘之，豈更駕哉！

<sup>4</sup> qtd. in Wang Shumin, *Zhuangzi Jiaoquan* (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 2007), 96. 死生入覺夢，此理甚明白。

<sup>5</sup> “Making Things Equal” (齊物論), 13. 罔兩問景曰：「曩子行，今子止，曩子坐，今子起，何其無特操與？」景曰：「吾有待而然者邪！吾所待又有待而然者邪！吾待蛇蚺、蜩翼邪！惡識所以然？惡識所以不然？」

<sup>6</sup> “Understanding Life” (達生), 5

<sup>7</sup> See “Free and Easy Wandering” (逍遙游) 3

<sup>8</sup> “Great Ancestor Teacher” (大宗師), 2. 夫大塊載我以形，勞我以生，佚我以老，息我以死。故善吾生者，乃所以善吾死也。夫藏舟於壑，藏山於澤，謂之固矣。然而夜半有力者負之而走，昧者不知也。藏大小有宜，猶有所遜。若夫藏天下於天下，而不得所遜，是恆物之大情也。

<sup>9</sup> Francis Zimmerman, *The Jungle and the Aroma of Meats: An Ecological Theme in Hindu Medicine* (University of California, 1987), 1. Zimmermann is wrong in suggesting that this view is limited to India. In his *Religio Medici* Thomas Browne writes, “*All flesh is grasse*, is not onely metaphorically, but literally true, for all those creatures which we behold, are but the hearbs of the field, digested into flesh in them, or more remotely carnified in ourselves. Nay further, we are what we all abhorre, *Antropophagi* and Cannibals, devoureres not onely of men, but of our selves; and that not in an allegory, but a positive truth; for all this masse of flesh which wee behold, came in at our mouths: this frame wee looke upon, hath beene upon our trenchers; In briefe, we have devoured our selves and yet do live and remaine ourselves.” (Sir Thomas Browne, *Religio Medici and Urne-Buriall*, edited by Stephen Greenblatt and Ramie Targoff, New York: New York Review Books, 2012, 42-43). However, this view (which Browne later suggests the Pythagoreans also held) is decidedly not as mainstream or fleshed out in the West as it is in India.

<sup>10</sup> Doniger and Smith, *The Laws of Manu* (New York: Penguin, 1991), 102. V.39.

<sup>11</sup> “Free and Easy Wandering” (逍遙游), 3. 猶有所待者也。

<sup>12</sup> “Great Ancestor Teacher” (大宗師), 7. 不知就先，不知就後，若化為物，以待其所不知之化已乎！

<sup>13</sup> See “Great Ancestor Teacher” (大宗師), 7

<sup>14</sup> “Great Ancestor Teacher” (大宗師), 10

<sup>15</sup> “External Things” (外物), 2

<sup>16</sup> “Yielding the Throne” (讓王), 7 and 16 could be possible exceptions but both seem out of place in Zhuangzi—which is unsurprising given they are in the

“Miscellaneous Chapters” (雜篇). 7 reads like a cross between a crude Yangist tale and a Confucian story on the fickleness of rulers like “King Hui of Liang B” (梁惠王下), 23 from the *Mencius* where a courtier easily persuades the duke not to visit Mencius. In it, Liezi, though starving, turns down a gift of grain, explaining to his understandably upset wife, “The lord does not know me himself. It is because of others’ words he offered me the grain, and if later he blames me, it will be because of the words of others. That is why I did not receive it.” (君非自知我也。以人之言而遺我粟，至其罪我也，又且以人之言。此吾所以不受也。) 16, with its praise for Bo Yi and Shu Qi who starved to death instead of eat the grain of a ruler they disapproved of, reads like Confucian text that has somehow slipped into *Zhuangzi* and is offset by 盜跖, 1 where Robber Zhi claims Bo Yi and Shu Qi perished for the sake of fame and should have nourished their lives instead.

<sup>17</sup> See “Free and Easy Wandering” (逍遙遊), 5. 不食五穀，吸風飲露。

<sup>18</sup> <sup>1</sup> “In the Human World” (人間世), 7. 挫鍼治繻，足以餬口；鼓篋播精，足以食十人。

<sup>19</sup> “The Mountain Tree” (山木), 8. 見利而忘其真。I am reading 真 as 身。

<sup>20</sup> A.C. Graham, *Chuang-tzu: The Inner Chapters* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2001), 117

<sup>21</sup> <sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, 118

<sup>22</sup> <sup>1</sup> See (解蔽), 5 where in his famous account of other thinkers, Xunzi claims, “Zhuangzi was biased towards heaven and did not know people.” (莊子蔽於天而不知人。)

<sup>23</sup> <sup>1</sup> “Geng-sang Chu” (庚桑楚), 2 and “Xu Wu-gui” (徐無鬼), 12.

<sup>24</sup> <sup>1</sup> 尚同中, 1. Chinese text from Johnston, *The Mozi: A Complete Translation* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press of Hong Kong, 2010), 90. 天下之亂也，至如禽獸然，無君臣上下長幼之節，父子兄弟之禮，是以天下亂焉。

<sup>25</sup> <sup>1</sup> “Autumn Waters” (秋水), 13

<sup>26</sup> “Under Heaven” (天下), 7. 汎愛萬物，天地一體也。

<sup>27</sup> This is shown in a number of works but particularly Frans de Waal’s *Chimpanzee Politics: Power and Sex among Apes* (John Hopkins University Press, 1982) and *Primates and Philosophers: How Morality Evolved* (University of Chicago, 2006).

<sup>28</sup> See *The Laws of Manu*, I.87-91 and X.1-4.

<sup>29</sup> <sup>1</sup> Book II concerns the duties of the student. Books III and IV concern the householder while V and VI concern the forest-dweller, and Book VI. 42 ff concern the ascetic.

<sup>30</sup> <sup>1</sup> Doniger and Smith, *The Laws of Manu*, lvix.

<sup>31</sup> <sup>1</sup> *ibid.*, 13-14.

<sup>32</sup> This is supported by a cynical reading of I. 88-91: “For priests, he ordained teaching and learning, sacrificing for themselves and sacrificing for others, giving and receiving. Protecting his subjects, giving, having sacrifices performed, studying, and remaining unaddicted to the sensory objects are, in summary, for a

ruler. Protecting his livestock, giving, having sacrifices performed, studying, trading, lending money, and farming the land are for a commoner. The Lord assigned only one activity to a servant: serving those (other) classes without resentment.” (ibid., 12-13)

<sup>33</sup> See for instance *The Laws of Manu*, III. 77 or VI. 89.

<sup>34</sup> See *The Laws of Manu* III 1-2.

<sup>35</sup> See *The Laws of Manu* VI 29-30.

<sup>36</sup> See *The Laws of Manu* VI 33-37.

<sup>37</sup> The translation of 不忍之心 as “unbearable mind” is taken from lectures given by Prof. Takahiro Nakajima during the 2012 University of Tokyo-University of Hawaii Summer Residential Institute in Comparative Philosophy.

<sup>38</sup> Wang Yangming, p. 968. 是故見孺子之入井，而必有怵惕惻隱之心焉，是其仁之與孺子而為一體也。孺子猶同類者也，見鳥獸之哀鳴殫瘁，而必有不忍之心，是其仁之與鳥獸而為一體也。鳥獸猶有知覺者也，見草木之摧折而必有憫恤之心焉，是其仁之與草木而為一體也。草木猶有生意者也，見瓦石之毀壞而必有顧惜之心焉，是其仁之與瓦石而為一體也。

<sup>39</sup> “Under Heaven” (天下), 7. 汜愛萬物，天地一體也。」

<sup>40</sup> “Making Things Equal” (齊物論), 12. 予嘗為女妄言之，女以妄聽之，奚？



# PART I

## ALTERITY IN DIALOGUE

The works featured in the first half of these proceedings facilitate cross-cultural comparisons, and so are the mainstay of comparative philosophy as a field. These approaches require a fluency that not only indicates familiarity with Western philosophical perspectives, but also shows an extensive knowledge of non-Western materials and viewpoints. Neither of the voices put into dialogue in these essays were intended to speak to one another, and this radical difference indicates a degree of insurmountable alterity that the comparative philosopher must acknowledge. The makings of an unsuccessful comparison arise when one attempts to bring out similarities while ignoring dissimilarities. These essays were chosen because not only do they provide maps for new philosophical discovery, but they also exercise responsible comparative techniques. Much like a successfully orchestrated dinner party, they bring together voices that may have never spoken to one another otherwise into a fruitful dialogue, each sharing their secrets and hopes in order to bring about friendship and understanding. The respective uniqueness of these essays is what makes them similar, and the comparisons featured have the effect of enriching each perspective.

In the first selection, Holly Swantek presents a view of Confucianism that acknowledges the context that shapes the *Lunyu* and its reflections on womanhood, but does not promptly label it as a sexist discipline. Bringing the focus to the Chinese character *de* (德) enables her to assert that the difference between man and woman is not strictly hierarchical or submissive, but operates within what is appropriate in particular circumstances. The following two contributions take a deconstructive approach that serves as a guidepost for circumventing problematic and potentially unfruitful comparisons. Mary Riley artfully brings out similarities found in the *Zhuangzi* and the pragmatic approach of John Dewey, but cautions her readers that to take them as having similar grounds for detesting standards, rules, and unquestioning assent to objective concepts would discount the respective motives of each. Jingyi Liu, in her comparative approach, takes topics and themes found in

philosophical Daoism to comment upon the state of metaphysics in the wake of Alfred North Whitehead's contribution to the field. In hopes of broadening the capacity for comparison between works of Aristotle and Buddhism, Kevin Taylor here explores the potential for bringing the Buddhist concept of *mottainai* into conversation with the virtue ethic of Aristotle in order to facilitate an environmental virtue ethic. The final selection in part one, contributed by Wakako Godo, provides a cross-cultural, analytic approach to the issue of perception and understanding in the context of human development.