

## The Unity of Heaven and Earth in the *Zhuangzi*

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### ABSTRACT

My scholarly approach is to consider and treat the inner chapters of the *Zhuangzi* as an integral text regardless of whether its composition is the result of many hands. I treat this in much the same fashion as Western biblical scholars study the Western bible for its meaning, whether or not it actually came into being over many years and was the result of the work of multiple authorship. It is my opinion that such an approach is more appropriate to the eminent status of the text of the *Zhuangzi* in the traditional, Chinese cultural canon, to its philosophical and spiritual value as a testament to the idea of the union of heaven and earth in the Chinese cultural tradition, and to its actual functioning as a working guidebook to the understanding of how to achieve a practical expansion of the spiritual dimension of human experience. In essence, I will demonstrate that a proper academic, textual analysis of this seminal work is crucial to the understanding of how it functions as a document designed to explain, illustrate and point the way to spiritual freedom.

What I would like to present is the argument that the attempt to achieve the union of heaven and earth is indeed the main theme of the *Zhuangzi*. My argument is that the inner chapters are a literary and philosophical model of the cosmic unity of heaven and earth. My method of showing this is to show the developmental nature of the inner chapters. I begin by arguing that the myth of K'un transforming itself into P'eng with which *Zhuangzi* commences his work prefigures the main theme of the *Zhuangzi* which is that of spiritual transformation. The unity and integrity of the text is shown by a close examination of the chapters which follow.

The chapters form a developmental sequence. As the inner chapters develop, we are treated to a progression of "monster" types from the gentle and honorable form of the crippled military commander through physically crippled Shu to No-lips of triple deformity. Of Shu it is said, how much better if Shu, who is physically crippled, had crippled virtue. Then, as a philosophical development, *Zhuangzi* presents the madman whose conventional virtue is indeed crippled. Each character dialectically progresses, allowing the mind of the reader to expand with the progression of each monstrous character, until the mind of the reader can achieve the mental freedom that it longs for. Just as the pheasant longs to be free of its cage, so does the mind of the reader long for freedom from its cage of concepts. The mind is gradually prepared by the progressive development of the monster forms until it can break free of its conventional concepts to achieve the unity of heaven and earth.

Each monstrous character shows itself in turn to be more physically limited or monstrous or different in kind than the previous example, but nonetheless capable of achieving a transcendental freedom. This is the teaching of the Zhuangzi, that regardless of form and of physical limitation, man can achieve the unity of heaven and earth. The gallery of monsters are metaphorical role models for the reader to learn the lesson that physical limitation does not hinder one from reaching heavenly unity, but the proper understanding of physical limitation is the key to unifying heaven and earth. The physical oddities of Zhuangzi's messengers work together to function to break down conventional value judgments and enable the reader of the text to receive their message which is the message of the achievement of transcendental freedom.

Key Words: Zhuangzi, Unity of Heaven and Earth, Conventional values, Spiritual Transformation, Inner Chapters, Monstrous Characters, Metaphorical language

## 莊子裡的天地合一

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### 摘要

我的學術方法是將莊子內篇視為完整的文本，不管它是不是出自多人之手。這個方式很像是西方聖經學者在研究西方聖經的意義，不管它其實流傳了多少年，或其實是許多作者的作品結集。我認為這個方法更貼近莊子在傳統中國文化經典裡的重要地位，它在見證中國文化傳統裡的天人合一時的哲學和精神價值，也有助於我們理解如何擴充人類經驗的精神向度。基本上，我要證明，對於這部影響深遠的作品的學述性的文本分析，有助於我們理解它在解釋、證明和指出精神自由的道路方面的功能。

我在論證中要提出的是，天地合一的嘗試的確是莊子裡的主題。我的主張是，內篇是天地合一的文學和哲學模式。我的證明方法是突顯內篇的開展本質。我首先要說明，莊子在作品開頭所說的鯀化為鵬的神話，預示了莊子的主題，也就是精神的變容。仔細檢視以下諸篇，可以證明文本的統一性和完整性。莊子諸篇形成一個開展的次第。隨著內篇的敷演，我們看到許多「畸形」的類型，從少了一條腿的「右師」，到身有殘疾的「支離疏」，最後到三重身體缺陷（支體拆裂、佝僂殘病，又無唇）的「闔跂支離無脤」。談到支離疏時，它說身有殘疾的疏，如果有殘疾的德性，那就更好了（又況支離其德者乎）。接著作為哲學的鋪陳，莊子談到楚狂，他的世俗德性的確是有殘缺的。每個角色都辯證性地發展，讓讀者的心靈隨著每個畸形人物的發展而更加開闊，直到讀者的心靈達到它所渴求的自由。正如澤雉渴望脫離樊籬，讀者的心靈也渴望脫離它概念的樊籬。隨著各種畸形形式的漸次發展，心靈也逐步掙脫世俗的概念，達到天地合一。

每個畸形角色的身體缺陷都比上一個例子來得嚴重，卻都能成就超越性的自由。這就是莊子的學說，無論外形或身體的缺陷，人都可以成就天地合一。各種畸形人物都是隱喻的角色，讓讀者明白，身體的限制不會阻礙人成就天地合一，正確地理解身體的限制，才是天地合一的關鍵。莊子的信使的身體殘疾共同打破了世俗的價值判斷，讓讀者收到如何成就超越性自由的訊息。

關鍵詞：莊子、天地合一、世俗價值、精神轉化、內篇、畸形人物、隱喻語言。

## The Unity of Heaven and Earth in the *Zhuangzi*

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What I would like to present is the argument that the attempt to achieve the union of heaven and earth is the main theme of the *Zhuangzi*. In an earlier work, I set this idea forth as spiritual transformation in my *Chuang-Tzu for Spiritual Transformation: An Analysis of the Inner Chapters*.<sup>1</sup> My argument is that the inner chapters are a literary and philosophical model of the cosmic unity of heaven and earth.

While some commentaries on the *Zhuangzi* illuminate the likelihood and the character of the multiple authorship of the *Zhuangzi*, and the various schools of philosophy it represents, my approach, following the Chicago school of literary criticism, is to treat the inner chapters of the *Zhuangzi* as an integral text regardless of whether its history is made up of the composition of many hands – in much the same fashion as Western biblical scholars study the Western bible for its meaning, whether or not it actually came into being over many years and was the result of the work of many hands. This approach is not unlike the study of Shakespeare's plays as texts rather than contemplating whether or not the plays were the works of one William Shakespeare or, as it has well been argued, the works of the Earl of Oxford. It is my opinion that such an approach is more appropriate to the eminent status of the text of the *Zhuangzi* in the traditional, Chinese

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Elliott Allinson, *Chuang-Tzu for Spiritual Transformation: An Analysis of the Inner Chapters*, with a foreword by Robert C. Neville, Suny Series in Philosophy, Robert C. Neville, (ed.), State University of New York Press, Albany, 1989, cloth and paper, Sixth Impression, 1996. Published in CD-ROM, Boulder, 2000. {Published in Chinese language version by Liu Dong, Beijing University, Editor of China Studies Overseas, Jiangsu People's Press, Nanjing, 2004; published in Korean language translation by Greenbee Publishing Co., Korea, 2004, Available in paper, in Kindle and as a Google E-book.

cultural canon, to its philosophical and spiritual value as a testament to the idea of the union of heaven and earth in the Chinese cultural tradition and to its actual functioning as a working guidebook to the understanding of how to achieve a practical expansion of the spiritual dimension of human experience. In short, I would like to show that a proper academic analysis of this seminal text is crucial to the understanding of how it functions as a document designed to explain, illustrate and point the way to spiritual enhancement.

The text opens with the story of the transformation of a great fish, K'un which transforms itself into the great bird, P'eng. This beginning of the text points the way towards understanding the message of the entire text. The fish may be understood as the unconscious and also limited by boundaries of its domain, the ocean. The transformation of the fish into the bird is the transformation of the ignorant and limited into the possibility of obtaining knowledge – the wider and higher vision of the bird – and spiritual freedom symbolized by the physical freedom of the power of the bird to fly freely through the air. This beginning message signifies the theme which is to be developed progressively throughout the *Zhuangzi*, the theme of spiritual liberation. With the fish-bird transformation, we witness a way in which the cosmos transforms itself. While it may be argued that this is fictional, nevertheless, it must be recognized that it is a metaphor for spiritual change. The bird does not change back into the fish. The transformation is one way: it is unidirectional. In this great first example, the metaphor given of the fish symbolizes that the spiritual journey is to transcend and unite directly with heaven.

If one asks why *Zhuangzi* does not simply state this theme directly and why he resorts to metaphors of fish and birds, this is because he is well aware that if direct language is utilized that the meaning of this language will be quickly appropriated by the intellect and will stay at the level of an intellectual understanding. It will not function as a device for spiritual transformation. In the fish-bird metaphor the cosmos is being described as being in the process of changing from ignorance to knowledge. In the child's world of the imagination, such an alteration may work unhindered by the intrusion of the intellectual mind of the reader which will quickly intervene and argue that such a change from fish into birds is counter to scientific fact and is to be ignored. By using the story telling device of myth, the reader undergoes a willing suspension of disbelief and the metaphorical power of the message can work on the unconscious of the reader directly. Such metaphors are able to perform their transformatory function freed by the properties of myth from the disbelief of the conventional mind of the reader, that is symbolized by the metaphors of the skeptical cicadas and doves who find the journey of P'eng to be impossible. The fish-bird transformation and the journey of P'eng symbolize both the beginning of the *Zhuangzi* and the beginning of the journey for the subject reader.

The first chapter sets the theme of the *Zhuangzi* and the end goal which is to be reached. The journey is both the method of achieving the spiritual unity of heaven and earth and the goal of reaching that unity. The unity is achieved by progressing to spiritual freedom which is achieved by following the cosmos, or the way of nature. This method and goal is the freeing of the mind from attached ways of thinking and behaving which is the way of heaven. While on earth, the human must follow the way of nature to unify heaven and earth. At the end of the first chapter, the higher understanding to be gained is an understanding of how to utilize the gifts which heaven has gifted us. If we do not understand how to utilize heaven's gifts, we will not gain a great reward. If we sell an ointment for money, (the metaphor of a physical ointment

standing for a mental ointment or healing medicine of philosophy for the mind}, we will not take proper advantage of the gift of the prescription of the ointment. If, on the other hand, we offer the ointment for the services of the king, we may receive a permanent gift, symbolized by the gift of land. While money is spent and gone, the land is permanent. Our reward for making the highest use of our prescription, (the philosophy of the *Zhuangzi*), by giving it to the King, will be great. We must therefore utilize our highest understanding for a life-long purpose, and not for some short-term gratification.

We will examine some of the literary devices used in the following chapter to show the progression of spiritual understanding through the examples offered of the unity of heaven and earth. That the metaphors progress (and sometimes regress as in the movement of the *Yijing*), suggests that it is not anticipated that one metaphor by itself will suffice to communicate the message of the unity of heaven and earth, but that the general message of the *Zhuangzi* will require that the message is delivered in developmental stages. This analysis is not explicitly narrated or it would be pure didactic prose. It is presented in *Zhuangzi's* *tour de force* package of unlikely messenger and message.

The question is, why is it presented in the package and not explicitly narrated? The answer to this question is itself on two levels. First of all, this reflects the temperament and sensibility of the author. This level is not illuminating because it remains on the psycho-biographical level. The second level is that this device possesses a pedagogical superiority. The pedagogical superiority has to do with its tapping a higher cognitive function which enables us to think and act in accord with our real (pre-conceptual) nature. Our pre-conceptual nature, which represents our unity with the cosmos, is reachable when our intellectual functions are suspended so that our unity with heaven is most easily achieved. The intellectual appropriations break this unity and as a result need to be temporarily suspended.

One of *Zhuangzi's* most artful methods of achieving this suspension of the intellectual, critical, scientific mind is his use of "monsters". This is not unique to *Zhuangzi* as one finds a similar use of unlikely messengers or monsters in Western philosophers as well, such as Plato or Nietzsche. It cannot escape mention that there is a plethora of monsters in the *Zhuangzi* that far exceed the use of "monsters" that one finds in Plato or Nietzsche. It may be objected that my use of the term "monster" is misleading as some of the associations carried by the term do not fit perfectly well. For example, the term 'monster' normally carries with it the connotation of the frightening. Surely, cripples and hunch-backs, which I use as examples of monsters, are not frightening. I would maintain that they are. They may not be frightening to everyone, but in some way they summon up something that is frightening and to that extent, they are socially avoided. Thus, while they might not be truly monstrous in the sense of the monsters of science fiction movies, they are monstrous in the way in which they function. In a philosophical sense, they are feared. They are monsters in the sense of falling outside of the social norm.

For Plato, the monsters are less graphic. They are horse trainers and shoemakers. They resemble *Zhuangzi's* use of figures like cook Ding. Nonetheless, they serve the same function. They serve, as the fool in Shakespeare's plays, the function of delivering the message when it is least expected and therefore can have its most powerful effect. Blue collar laborers function as lesser monsters in the sense that in a dialogue which is philosophical, one expects that the

interlocutors will be from the upper, intellectual classes. The use of blue collar laborers such as butchers possesses shock value in just the same sense as does the use of the full fledged physical monsters as we will discuss below. The blue collar worker as a social class monster is only a different type of monster and, as such, the same discussion that applies to the more flagrant cases of monsters applies *mutatis mutandis* to the blue collar workers.

Zhuangzi's messengers are more extreme in their deviation from their expected forms. They not only are unexpected and therefore provide a surprise. They carry with them an unexpected feeling: a feeling of why has heaven created such creatures – they should not be here and yet they serve the most important purpose of delivering the most important messages. The monstrous messengers root out the conventional rigidities of the mind. The fish into the bird was a light passage. It opened the symphony with a gentle note. The mind has been readied. Now, it is prepared for sterner stuff. The deeper rigidities of the mind require scarier forms to exorcise their hold on the mind.

Those who are crippled at birth are indeed monsters in Aristotle's definition as abnormal births. What Zhuangzi is doing here is showing the unity of heaven and earth. The monstrous birth of Aristotle is the work of heaven for Zhuangzi. While the monstrous birth is heaven's work, the mind of the reader, in appropriating the message of the monster, is able to unify heaven and earth in its assimilation of the metaphorical meaning of the message. If the message were given in a prose paraphrase, or via direct exclamation, it would be seized by the critical, intellectual mind, debated or negated by philosophical argument. By being given in an unexpected form, the critical, adult mind is set aside and the child's mind of the reader is able to take on the message, that is, appropriate or existentialize the message directly without interference from the intellectual mind. This is the unity of heaven and earth.

This is not to say that a monster, in the sense in which I am using the term ought to be feared or socially avoided. By the use of the term 'monster' a certain shock value is achieved and this is the desired and necessary effect. Our fixities of consciousness require a sudden and sometimes unpleasant shock to become broken down.

Consider Master Shu, whose physical description makes him sound like a Yoga contortionist:

My back sticks up like a hunchback and my vital organs are on top of me. My chin is hidden in my navel, my shoulders are up above my head, and my pigtail points at the sky.

In any event, whether the monster is a simple monster as in the case of a cripple or a compound monster such that he is a genuine freak, the monster is abnormal. The monsters differ from each other only in degrees of abnormality. If a simple cripple is less fearsome to us, it is only a matter of degree.

The use of the monster serves two philosophical functions. First, the monster is a living counterexample to the norm, whether cultural or biological or both. When given philosophical lines, the monster becomes philosopher. The monster type as philosopher is an embodiment of

the philosophical principle which is also feared and avoided by the normal. What is this philosophical principle that is avoided by the multitude?

That which all monsters possess, which is feared and avoided by those who live according to the rule, is spontaneity. In a very subtle way, then, the first philosophical significance of the monster is to make us aware that the value represented by the monster—spontaneity—is a value which is feared and avoided by normal society! It is highly apposite that a monster, which is a biological violation of the rule of nature, should stand for a social violation of a rule of society. If one looks through the various philosophical positions adopted by the monsters one will find that spontaneity is a feature that all of them have in common. Perhaps, it is because of the fact that they have no fear that they are spontaneous. If they are already feared for their physical appearance, what do they have to lose by adopting viewpoints that will also be fearsome? Philosophical monsters are a bit like madmen; they are free to say what they like. In fact, the madman is really another form of monster, the mental monster. The spontaneity of the monsters is how heaven works. It is the direct work of heaven and is not constrained by man-made conventional values and judgments.

In addition to representing spontaneity, the second philosophical function of the employment of monsters is to function as a bridge between the purely mythical creature and the historical/legendary character that is also employed by *Zhuangzi* for carrying philosophical messages. The unity of the cosmos is demonstrated by the continuity of metaphors that range from pure fiction to abnormal fact. This panoply of diverse categories shows how heaven and earth unite in fiction, surrealistic fact and monstrous exceptions. In many cases the historical/legendary characters are put to monstrous uses; that is, they are credited with holding doctrines which are very much contrary to their actual, historically known philosophical positions. The monster is a fantasy visual image which is one step closer to life than the fantasy visual image of myth. With the monster, one need not rely upon a literary tradition. One may utilize people around one in daily life: the hunchback, the cripple, the blind man and other deviations from and distortions of what is generally held up to be the standard or the norm to admire. In terms of the cognitive function of the use of monsters, the monster leads us one step closer to the living embrace of the values represented, the success of the unity of heaven and earth.

In the case of myth, such values as are represented might still be taken as not fully actualized or actualizable. In the case of legend, such values might be taken as actualizable, but only by the supernormal. In the case of the monster, such values are represented in daily life examples of the creatures around us. Oddly enough, the values would appear to be overachievable in that they are achieved by the subnormal. This is another way of saying that they are not achieved by the normal—but at the same time if they can be achieved by the subnormal then they are eminently achievable by the normal. With the monster, fiction and reality merge. With the use of the monster, who carries with him a spiritual message, we have the perfect example of the unity of heaven and earth. While even normal men can signify this, such a unity will not be noted. The monstrous image shows that heaven and earth are unified when the message of the monster is understood.

Of course, all of this is paradoxical. The use of an unideal type as ideal is paradoxical in itself. One is shocked by visual monstrosity in the same fashion as one is shocked by the verbal

monstrosity of the paradox. The visual paradox is even more powerful than the verbal paradox, because its shock value takes place entirely beneath the plane of conscious evaluation. With the verbal paradox, it is relatively easier to conceive of it as an intellectual play of some kind or another. It may still deaden the analytic mind by cancelling out the logical options, but in the case of the verbal paradox the cancellation is more self-conscious. Hence, its sleight of mind may be more easily spotted. In the case of the visual monster, the paradox presented is more buried. There may be a verbal paradox which the monster presents, which can add to the subtle dimension presented. In either case, the paradox is that a view which is to be endorsed is being endorsed by a view-holder whom we normally shun. In a word, we are told both to follow and not to follow what is advocated!

In terms of the verbal statement which the monster makes, we are told (implicitly at least) to follow or endorse what views are being put forth. In other words, in most cases, the viewpoints of the monsters are honorifically held and have the tacit implication all honorifically held viewpoints possess: that we should hold these viewpoints as well, at the very least, that it is good to hold these viewpoints. Characteristic of the monster viewpoints, then, is that we are being implicitly enjoined to embrace them as well.

But, the monster image tells us simultaneously to hold back. It requires immense social and philosophical courage to follow the lead of the physically lame, the repugnant, the old and deformed, and the hunchbacked. If we can identify with the monsters, then what will be held back will be our own conventional value judgments. If the monster image "works" we will suspend our consciously learned preconceptions in order to embrace the values that are being imparted in just the same way that we will have to overcome our abhorrence of the misfit and the reject in order to be receptive to what they are saying. The monster image is an immediate shock to the conceptual system. It shocks the conceptual system into paralysis, which enables us to approach and assimilate the ideas being offered for their intrinsic value. Since more often than not the ideas will be shocking in and of themselves, it is better that we are given the monster as novocaine in order to stand the shock value of the ideas that are presented.

From a cognitive standpoint, the cognitive process that is involved in the appropriation of the point of view of the monster is the suspension of conscious and conventional evaluation. As one cannot be very effectively (or self-consistently) enjoined explicitly (or consciously) to suspend conscious evaluation, one can only be led to the act of suspension of conscious evaluation through a subliminal, non-conscious or pre-conscious device. The monster is just such a device. In accepting the monster as a bonafide holder of values, one must switch off conscious, habitual judgment. This is exactly what one does when one treats seriously whatever statement is placed in the mouth of a monster. This is the beauty of the monster's speech: it can be entirely appreciated (and in fact it can only be appreciated) during the at least partial disengagement of the conscious, analytical judgment. The effectiveness of the monster image lies in the opposition between its own ugliness and the beauty or truth of the message which it bears (sometimes this is reversed). Its own ugliness, if effective, is so shocking that it turns off the conscious mind. Because of its shock value, it is of all devices the most effective in dulling the dominance of the analytical, conscious function. Because of its oppositional quality, by the same token, it is the most effective in providing an occasion for the emergence of the aesthetic function. In the clear-cut separation between form and content (monster and true message), there is the greatest chance

for the cancellation of the analytical judgment at the same moment as the engagement of the receptive, intuitive function. While the sharpest delineation is present, the successful functioning of this device depends upon the greatest employment of philosophical courage. The acceptance of the monster as a sister or brother takes social and philosophical courage. Such an acceptance, in a philosophical sense, means that one is willing to set aside conventional value judgments. If one is able to do this, the chances of being able to apprehend the truth value of what is being spoken are very great. By the same token, the measure of difficulty in being able to do just that is also very great. As Spinoza says at the end of his *Ethics*, “All noble things are as difficult as they are rare.”

The mind cannot, as it were, do two things at once. To appropriate the monster, its conventional standards must be disrupted. This, in turn, has a twofold implication. On one level, it allows the message or theme unimpeded access for cognition. On another level, it carries with it the hidden stipulation that we must violate conventional standards of judgment if we are to attempt to appropriate such views as are being put forward. The two fold process of cancellation is both oriented toward the present and future paced. We must cancel or suspend conscious evaluation to apprehend the message at the moment of hearing it. At the same time, the mere fact that we have done so also carries with it the implication that in order to apprehend such value messages in the future, we will have to be prepared to cancel or suspend our normal or ordinary standards of judgment. Heaven and earth must be united in the exact moment wherein the immanence of earth, highlighted in the grotesque form of the monster that heaven gives, forces cancellation of the logical faculties, whereby our higher minds can assimilate heaven’s message unfiltered by the critical editing of the conventional, conceptual mind.

Let us now discuss the dialectical progression of the monster form and then supply a few examples from the text to offer some illustrations of the use of the monsters. *Zhuangzi* begins with myth (unlike Plato whose use of myth appears in the middle, late or at the end of his dialogues). The myth, as a literary device, is an account of what is ostensibly real, the fish that transforms itself into a bird, all of which is actually a human invention (the myth), and moves to the really real (empirical examples which are, to be sure, selectively chosen). They are really real in the sense that they are presented as historically real people (the gallery of monsters). In the myth, the creatures are not presented as fantasy; they are presented as real. It is only our knowledge of fact that prevents us from taking them as real. But, our knowledge of fact does not prevent us from taking the cripples as at least possibly real. His last choice of characters, the historical figures used unhistorically, are a blend or a synthesis of the two previous types. In this third type we have real figures again used in ostensibly real situations.

To review, firstly we have pure fiction parading as fact (myth). Secondly, we have a selected version of reality which portrays an unlikely story. Thirdly, we have historically real figures from the past (a blend of the past quality of myth and the real quality of history which at the same time borrows from legend the larger than life quality of these historical figures) used unhistorically as myth. The process of transformation is from pure fiction to selected reality to quasi-fiction. This seemingly queer progression or, if you like, dialectically progressed casting of characters, is designed to gradually soften the mind to enable it to attain to the unity of heaven and earth. At the same time, the developmental continuity in one microcosm followed by another embodies and shows forth the unity of heaven and earth in the cosmic macrocosm.

As we look at the use of monsters in the *Zhuangzi*, we can also consider another element that the monster as metaphor borrows from the myth: the overlay of magic. The monster carries with it the teaching story quality of the mythical creature and the legendary figure. Just as the deviation from the norm represented by the mythical creature is understood in some tacit sense to be magical, the deviation from the norm represented by the monstrous also possesses this magical quality. The hunchback almost seems to us to be an unreal creature. The stronger the deviation, the more magical the transformation will appear to be. The magical element represented by the physical appearance lends its strength to the authority given to the statements uttered by the monster narrators. This adds a certain paradoxical quality. While before we discussed the reluctance of the mind to take as serious what a monster might be saying, here we are suggesting that the monster borrows from the myth a certain authoritative status. Both are true. The analytical function of the mind is reluctant to consider seriously anything which an un-ideal type might be saying. But, the intuitive or holistic function of the mind is charmed by the magical function of the monster. The intuitive function of the mind, excited at the prospect of meeting a monster in real life, so to speak, is prepared to grant certain magical properties to the statements spoken by the monsters. There is a certain tacit understanding that just as the physical properties of the monster are indications that the monster is a transformation from the normal, what the monster has to say may also carry a transformational or magical quality.

The monster type is truly complex. At the risk of compounding this complexity, I would like to discuss one further way in which the monster metaphor borrows from the mythical form. In the myth we were led to expect something strange as content and at the same time realize that it would be all right to accept that content within the form of the myth. The teaching medium of the monster borrows this same quality from the more customary teaching medium of the myth. From the lips of a cripple we expect to hear something strange as a message; we are already accustomed, having first been exposed to the form of the myth in the order of cognitive assimilation, to anticipate that the message, however strange sounding it might seem, will be all right within its context. Quite naturally, all of these cognitive lessons take place on a pre-conscious level as nothing concerning the pedagogical technique is stated overtly, but is contained only in the dialectical progression of the forms of presentation.

We move from the form of the myth, which we accept as humanity's teaching story, to the physical and social grotesques around us who will now figure as society's teaching agents. While all of this is a bit unbelievable, it is in turn only a preparation for the ultimate use of the sage as the final carrier of the message, the supreme mythical exemplar. The sage, a figure, the discussion of which must wait upon another occasion, is the ultimate blend of myth, legend, and reality. However, in a sense, the sage is too good to be true, and although the sage is the ultimate teaching principle, it is not necessarily the best one. It may well be that we are more likely to learn from the more unlikely bearer of the message, the monster.

There is no need for a complete catalogue of monsters since a few choice examples should serve as a means for identifying others that the reader will come across in the body of the *Zhuangzi*. We can classify monsters by their deformities, of which there appear to be four major categories:

1. Cripples, who can be subdivided into varieties of the lame such as one-footed or no-toed.

2. Miscellaneous deformities such as hunchbacked, missing lips, and physically contorted.
3. Simple uglies, including those whose only monstrous quality is a deviation from the norm in terms of being unbeautiful.
4. Madmen who are mentally deformed, robbers (who are a species of madmen), and social deviates

I would exempt from the monster catalogue the fabulous sage of old, who I think fits better into the category of myth, and the sage, who is a blend of myth, legend and reality.

All of the above types represent deviations from the normal course of development, whether biological or social. That the monster as educator is not an accidental literary device should be apparent not only from the dialectical progression of teaching figures that I have indicated earlier, but also from the number of times the strategy is employed and the variety of the types of monsters that are given parts to play. Needless to say, there is an overlap between the above categories as there are many examples of mixed types.

I must stress that the order of the appearance of the monster types is of utmost importance. Indeed, the ordering of the monster gallery is one of the most powerful indicators of the strategic composition of the *Zhuangzi* and the organic unity of the text. Once, one has traversed through the monster gallery, in the way in which one might arrange photographs in a slide show, one becomes fully aware of the progressive nature of the gallery of monsters, each one in turn constituting a microcosm of the order of the cosmos, each monster form an embodiment and an illustration of the unity of heaven and earth.

“It was Heaven, not man,” said the commander. “When Heaven gave me life, it saw to it that I would be one-footed. Men’s looks are given to them. So I know this was the work of Heaven and not of man. The swamp pheasant has to walk ten paces for one peck and a hundred paces for one drink, but it doesn’t want to be kept in a cage. Though you treat it like a king, its spirit won’t be content.”

What is of special interest for us to note is the care with which Zhuangzi introduces the first cripple in his gallery of monsters. The cripple is first of all a former military commander, which gives his deformity a certain dignity. The granting of a high military rank to this cripple bestows more authority on what he will have to say.

Secondly, the deformity is traced to the work of Heaven. This too elevates the deformity and prompts us to look at it with respect. It is as if Zhuangzi is aware of the natural reluctance to face the deformed. He introduces his first cripple buffered with military and heavenly status. It is to be noted that it is a cripple that is first introduced to us, not a hunchback. The spontaneous sympathy we feel for the cripple is different from the instant repugnance and horror that is inspired in us by the hunchback, who is introduced next, and the madman, who inspires in us the greatest fear and is introduced very late.

The story of the crippled, military commander is both an introduction and an end-piece. If we understand this metaphor, we can stop here. The crippled military commander is the unity of heaven and earth *par excellence*. Earth is symbolized by the social profession; heaven by the

giving of the deformity. Man can unify both, heaven's deformity and human accomplishment. This "monster", a most gentle and dignified monster, tells the story of the pheasant who longs to be free. The pheasant is a metaphor for every man. Every man is in a cage of concepts, whether the cage is iron or gold. Every man longs for freedom and the freedom here is a metaphor for spiritual freedom. A man becoming a military commander despite his infirmity shows the possibility of the unity of heaven and earth. If this can be accomplished for social success, how much more importance it can hold for spiritual success. If we cripple our conventional mind, so to speak, and return it to heaven's form, we can achieve the freedom from the cage of concepts that is the physical birthright of the pheasant bird and the spiritual birthright of the human.

The pheasant is the reappearance of the fish-bird transformation. There, the cosmic unity of heaven and earth was prefigured; here, it is the human possibility of the unity of heaven and earth that is portrayed.

In his gentle and buffered introduction to the world of deformity, Zhuangzi is like a painless dentist, first injecting us with the novocaine of an honorably crippled man so that by the time he drills us with madmen, we are perfectly willing to accept as philosophically valid some message that issues forth from the lips of a madman!

Notice how subtly the message of the commander is woven into the description of the commander's appearance. It is almost as if there is no break between the self-description and the philosophic point the commander has to make. The story of the swamp pheasant is a non sequitur from the description of the man's injury as destined. We can, of course, make the connection in that the need for freedom in the swamp pheasant is also inherent in us. But, there is no obvious cleavage between the self-description and the point that is to follow. This is a flawless example of the monster metaphor at work and a flawless example of the unity of heaven and earth. The conceptual capacity is lulled into silence at nearly the very same moment that the theme is given to the intuitive capacity, whose interest has been aroused by the arresting aesthetic imagery of the crippled commander.

The second appearance of the archetype of the cripple is Shu, whom we described before as having the body of a Yoga contortionist. Zhuangzi has definitely escalated here as Shu is described as unredeemingly crippled. Shu seems to resemble the village idiot who is left alone precisely because of his deformity and even benefits from it:

When the authorities call out the troops, he [Shu] stands in the crowd waving good-by; when they get up a big work party, they pass him over because he's a chronic invalid. And when they are doling out grain to the ailing, he gets three big measures and ten bundles of firewood. With a crippled body, he's still able to look after himself and finish out the years Heaven gave him. How much better, then, if he had crippled virtue!

The story progresses. Crippled virtue, or virtue that is altered from its conventional form, is what is needed. If Heaven has given him a crippled body and he has done well, then our task is to alter our concepts to further unify heaven and earth.

There is a general comment made about the monstrous which is highly relevant for our discussion of the use of monsters in general. It is the concluding comment made to the short list of creatures unusable for sacrifices. We may examine the entire passage in which it appears:

In the Chieh sacrifice, oxen with white foreheads, pigs with turned-up snouts, and men with piles cannot be offered to the river. This is something all the shamans know and hence they consider them inauspicious creatures. But, the Holy Man for the same reason considers them highly auspicious.

Incidentally, we notice here the use of the monstrous in animals which are also for that reason understood as either being disvalued or valued. What is of interest for us is the opposite interpretation that can be placed on the monstrous (disvalued-valued), depending upon the source of the valuation. From the standpoint of the shamans, who are interested in sacrificing creatures (apparently men with piles are considered on the same level here as monstrous animals), creatures possessing these deformities are disvalued because they cannot be sacrificed. From the standpoint of the Holy Man (which, from the appellation we construe as an honorific standpoint), the very same quality renders these creatures (including the unfortunate men with piles) valuable. What is valuable about these creatures according to the Holy Man is precisely that they possess a life-saving quality. Their monstrosity is to be prized because it saves their life. It is plain from this passage that *Zhuangzi* sets a very high store on monsters to the extent that he gives them a certain endorsement from a figure of authority and reverence. Oppositely, those with small minds, set only upon immediate gains, disvalue the monstrous because of its inutility. The shamans are another exemplar of the petty minded men that appear in the first chapter of the *Zhuangzi* in the persona of the cicada and the dove. While the ordinary man looks down upon the monstrous, those who possess insight know that the monstrous possess a very special value. One must further note here that there is a definite hierarchy of values rather than a reduction of all values to each other. The Holy Man, versus the pretender (or conventional authority), prizes the monstrous, whilst the conventional authority would sacrifice the monstrous. It is clear that the actions of the Holy Man are preferred.

*Zhuangzi* takes no pains to introduce us to Shu in a gentle or honorific way as he did with the crippled commander. He introduces us to Shu immediately within the context of pigs with turned-up snouts and men with piles. Shu's description is enough for us to know that this is no monster of a minor status. Apparently, by this stage in the text, *Zhuangzi* feels confident that he can dispense with the niceties of softening the monstrous blow. The shocking quality of Shu's appearance is designed as a strong shock to our conceptual system, especially when we consider the context in which it is given. From a cognitive standpoint, then, all conceptual barriers are briskly swept away with the somewhat shocking appearance of Shu amidst monstrous pigs and other sacrificial animals and even men. In this numbed state of consciousness, we are given not prescriptive utterances, but rather a description of the benefits Shu gains from his chronic invalidism (the English language offers an irresistible pun here in the word for sickness and the word for an illogical argument). This description of benefits can be taken in by the intuitive mode of apprehension so that on a subliminal level we are left with the definite impression that there is something good about being monstrous. It is on the very tails of that impression that the one and only injunction appears:

‘How much better, then, if he had crippled virtue!’

After we have been very exhaustively prepared for the acceptance of physical deformity the suggestion is planted that even Shu would be better off if his thinking were askew. The conclusion here, which is the major point of the example, is given at the end in an almost offhand fashion when we least expect it. It is given at a point when the defenses are the most worn down and when they least expect to be faced with a new, positive feature of Shu. It is precisely for this reason that the point that Shu would be even better off with a different way of thinking can have its maximum effect.

Of special interest is a case of a mixed type, a monster who possesses three deformities. He is lame, is a hunchback and, most interestingly of all, has no lips and is given no lines. The lack of the ability to speak altogether would be better indicated by the example of a man who lacked a tongue, not one who lacked lips. *In fact, later on in the text it is said that No-lips talked with Duke Ling. But none of his lines are reported in the Zhuangzi.* This further strengthens the impression that the speech of No-Lips would be something out of the ordinary.

The subliminal impression created, of course, is that the message of the *Zhuangzi* is so extraordinary it can be understood only by a special language, in this case, the language which is unheard. It does occur (unlike the unspoken language of the tongueless man) since he conversed with Duke Ling of Wei, but mysteriously enough, we are not told what he said. This adds to the effect of his having no-lips that what he had to say possessed such a mystique that it was above ordinary reportage. *It is not that that which is to be known cannot be expressed in language at all. In that case we would have the example of the mute and not that of the man who lacked the conventional mechanism for word formation.* What we are in fact treated to is the example of a man who, in order to communicate, would have to form words in a very special manner. What better image of the *Zhuangzi* could we find than this! If we are to understand the message of the *Zhuangzi* we have to realize that language and its forms are not being used in any ordinary fashion, but in a very special form which make up in fact a special language of its own. *How much is given to us in this image of the man with no lips!*

The mystique of the unheard speech of the man with no lips is augmented by the bizarreness of the no lips portion of the triad of deformities possessed by the no-message bearer. While other deformities, such as a hunchback or club foot might be relatively normal abnormalities, the absence of lips carries with it a heightened degree of bizarreness that shocks our sensibilities to a greater degree than the ordinary deformity. This degree of shock and heightened bizarreness is appropriate to the heightened degree of understanding that would have to be reached to comprehend the higher message not delivered directly by Mr. No-Lips. It is fitting, then, that the monster with no lips should be given no lines.

However, in the course of talking about Mr. Lame-Hunchback-No-Lips, *Zhuangzi* does manage to say something about the nature of true forgetting. While it is not a line spoken by No-Lips, it is a statement which appears in such close proximity to No-Lips that it will most certainly be associated with him. That it is not spoken by No-lips is a clue that higher meaning requires a double messenger. Thus, this remarkable passage belongs to the commentator. This is a message regarding how metaphorical messages are to be understood. It is an intervention from *Zhuangzi*

explaining how his message is to be understood. The passage about true forgetting appears in a most paradoxical form:

‘But when men do not forget what can be forgotten, but forget what cannot be forgotten —that may be called true forgetting.’

One must use words in order to speak. But one must “forget” that one is using words in order to communicate. In reality, that we must use language cannot literally be forgotten. However, when we truly communicate on a higher level, we do “forget” the bridge of language. This is the unity of heaven and earth where there no longer is the connecting (and therefore disjoining) bridge of language. This is the meaning of no lips. The deformity of language (which is obvious when Mr. No-Lips would attempt to form words and therefore cannot be overlooked), is “forgotten” or transcended in order to receive the message that language attempts to deliver. Language must be transcended in order to achieve the unity of heaven and earth.

No-lips is the metaphor of the *Zhuangzi* that is the key to understanding the need for metaphor for the purposes of communication. If the message were that communication was impossible, or if the message were that silence was to be preferred, then the metaphor would be of the tongueless man. If Zhuangzi were a skeptic, as many commentators think, No-lips would be tongueless, since, as Spinoza has said, the consistent skeptic must be dumb. Indeed, if Zhuangzi were an epistemological Humian,(but not Greek) skeptic, the messenger would be tongueless and earless since there would be no point in listening to others since their messages would also be meaningless. The tongueless and earless man would constitute a metaphor that contradicted the brilliant, earlier metaphor of words and bird sounds. It would be a true *dialogue de sourds*. But, No-lips does have ears. No-lips signifies that the message can be and should be transmitted, but it will emerge in a garbled or, if you like a strange and wondrous form. No-lips signifies the limitations of language. That the capacity for language exists, but is only reported, signifies not only that what is to be understood takes place beyond language, but that if one wishes to understand the method of using language to communicate beyond its limits, one requires the services of the philosopher. The ordinary person knows how to tell the time, but the watchmaker knows how the watch works.

No-Lips is heaven and earth combined. No-lips is given by heaven and it is Zhuangzi the philosopher who must exist in order to show that the unity of heaven and earth is achieved through a way of talking, metaphor, that points to and embodies the unity, but cannot talk about it in any ordinary way. While Wittgenstein tells us, at the end of his *Tractatus Logicus Philosophicus*, that ‘wovon man kann nicht sprechen, darauf, er muss schweigen,’ (that of which we cannot speak, of that we must be silent), Laoji says about the Dao in the first line of his *Dao de jing*, and then proceeds to do nothing but talk about it. What is the end of philosophy for Wittgenstein, marks the beginning of philosophy for Laoji. For Zhuangzi, it is not silence at all, but strange and wondrous speech that is the province of philosophy. The unity of heaven and earth cannot be spoken about, but only pointed to and this requires the strange and wondrous speech of metaphor.

What of the case of the simple ugly as a metaphor of the monstrous? This metaphor is a penultimate *dénouement*. The classic case of the simple ugly is introduced rather late, in chapter

five of the *Zhuangzi*: Ai T'ai-t'o attracted both men and women alike despite or perhaps because of his ugliness. Women in particular were said to be attracted to him by the numbers:

‘... when women saw him, they ran begging to their fathers and mothers, saying, ‘I’d rather be this gentleman’s concubine than another man’s wife!’—there were more than ten such cases and it hasn’t stopped yet....

On top of that, he was ugly enough to astound the whole world.. ,’

It could be easy enough to explain such a case away by arguing that it was on account of some internal quality that one was attracted (as in the case of the notorious physical ugliness of Socrates), but for *Zhuangzi*, this is not quite the whole story. Part of the magnetism of the attraction is a direct result of the physical ugliness which acts as a repulsion-attraction. The irregularity of the features draws at the same time it repels. Of course, an inner magnetic quality must exist as well. But, inner magnetism could exist together with physical attractiveness. Here, it is the combination that is of special importance. The physically repugnant features act as a drawing card. The very fact that they are strikingly incongruous with the norm is part and parcel of their drawing power. While we may be amazed and incredulous that someone so ugly could be considered that attractive to the opposite sex, the entire point of the story is to shock us, to upset our normal scale of values and to permit the non-conceptually laden or the child’s mind to absorb the inner meaning of the message.

It could be argued that the simple ugly should precede the cripple as the softest form of the monster. This would entail a re-positioning of this fragment in the text. However, there is a method to *Zhuangzi*’s madness. It appears quite late in dialectical sequence in the text, after the madman. On the one hand, as the simplest of the types and the least deviated from the norm, it would appear to belong first. It is on account of its very simplicity that it functions so powerfully as a metaphor. However, its simplicity is deceptive. Actually, it is a fairly advanced form. As a *dénouement* to the progression, it is situated correctly, after the madman. However, for our purposes, it is less distracting to the main thread of our argument to treat it after the multiplied deformed monster and before the madman. It would not work as the beginning type because it is important, as I have argued above, that *Zhuangzi* begin his types with an honorable monster to set the stage for monsters as ideal types. An ugly man, to whom women are attracted, would not be as sympathetic and credible a figure.

The simplicity of the simple ugly as a type is deceptive because this type functions so powerfully for three reasons. Firstly, it is surprising in its simplicity because we are not expecting ugliness as a form of monstrosity, thus, it is capable of breaking through our conceptual defenses by virtue of this surprise element. Secondly, it is, of all types, next to the madman, perhaps the best example of simple polar opposition. Ugliness and beauty seem to be at the extremes of opposition to us, like black and white. And yet here, the extreme opposite of beauty acts as the force of attraction. This powerful reverse of expectancy is a strong assault on our conceptual dividing lines and creates much confusion for the conceptual mode of valuation. Thirdly, when this is coupled with the fact that the content of the example is an aesthetic content (beauty/ugliness), the conceptual/aesthetic criteria of evaluation become confused with each other. This is what is meant to be and what makes for the power of this example. The very objective of replacing a conceptual framework with an aesthetic one is hinted at in the choice of the example

and then the traditional aesthetic values are reversed as well. A simple inversion of one normal scale of values where the ugly, on account of its ugliness—mixed with the appropriate inner values— becomes more attractive than the beautiful on its own terms (the power to attract the opposite sex), creates a powerful push-pull to our conceptual/aesthetic values and creates the greatest possible confusion by disturbing both spheres of the mind simultaneously. This is why the simplicity of the example is deceptive. It is not enough to replace our conceptualizing with an aesthetic mode of apprehension. Our aesthetics themselves must seek a re-orientation. Wars are waged simultaneously on two fronts. The aesthetic fights the conceptual and wages a civil war with itself. Such is the deceptiveness of the simple ugly which reveals itself as one of the most complex of all the types in the monster gallery. It is another perfect example of the unity of heaven and earth. Ugliness is plainly a gift of heaven. With this gift, the physically ugly man is able to attract women, married and unmarried alike.

The last example with which we will deal is that of the madman. From the standpoint of a philosophical catalogue rather than a conventional, visual one, the madman is the ultimate archetypal monster in that it is clear that the distortion is inherently mental. It is clear that whatever is being said by or attributed to the madman is inherently self-contradictory. A man who is by definition mad cannot say something which is sane. This is the most monstrous assault on our intellect. We are being told to value something which is in essence completely outside the range of conventional value.

The madman as mental monster functions in precisely the same way as the physical monster, except that the contradiction that is presented is more accessible to the intellectual reader. The sleight of mind that is required is a sleight of mind that is more obviously required. For that reason, the madman as a device, although it does represent the ultimate form of monster—a mental monster—is used less frequently than the physical monster. It is almost as if we have an example here of a metaphor that is too good to be true. The onslaught on the conceptual mind is so devastating with the case of the madman that it is a case of overkill. It may be that the recognition of this kept Zhuangzi from employing this device on too grand a scale.

The madman is the most threatening image of all to us. For this reason, perhaps, we tend to hide such figures from the rest of society by secreting them behind the walls of clandestine and removed institutions to which there is virtually no public access. These institutions are removed not for the sake of the inhabitants or the safety of the normal population, but more so from the desire to keep these institutions and their inhabitants out of our consciousness.

The reason why this type is feared is the same as the reason why all monsters are feared. It is only that the property is more obviously inherent in the case of the madman than in the case of any other of the monster types. The property is spontaneity. It is nature itself at work. Spontaneity is the course of nature set by heaven: it is the course of nature unrestrained by man's technological meddling. The madman is feared because she or he has the license to say whatever she or he wants. The freedom of thought available to the madman is what we find most truly fearful.

The madman, in a philosophical context, is feared because she or he is not bound by the rules of logic. The use of the madman, then, carries with it the overlay that the normal rules of

logic will not apply in considering the putative truth of the madman's message; while this is no doubt true from the standpoint of the *Zhuangzi*, it is also somewhat obvious. The obvious quality of the device is what keeps it from being too effective. On the other hand, when Zhuangzi does use the madman as metaphor, the lines that he gives to the madman are powerful indeed. Consider the first appearance of the archetype of the madman in the *Zhuangzi*, immediately after the story of crippled Shu. We are very well prepared for this story by its having been preceded by that of Shu. In fact, the last line about Shu anticipates the madman: "How much better, then, if he had crippled virtue!" We are then treated to an example of one who, by definition, has an abnormal frame of reference. The madman is out of his mind, so anything he will say cannot be measured by the standards of normalcy. On the other hand, we have also been excellently prepared by this point. Normal standards have time and time again been found lacking. We are prepared to accept the message of a madman. And what the madman has to say is surprisingly sane.

The madman makes his entrance in the corpus of the *Zhuangzi* by assuming the role of a critic of Confucius. This in itself could be taken as a mad act given the esteem and authority in which Confucius was held. One cannot help but think that Zhuangzi does this tongue in cheek, knowing that it is his own position that he is putting into the speech of the madman. The madman shouts out (the entire episode reminds one forcibly of Nietzsche's madman in Zarathustra shouting out in the marketplace) a criticism of Confucius. I will reproduce but a part of it here:

'When Confucius visited Ch'u, Chieh Yii, the madman of Ch'u, wandered by his gate crying, "Phoenix, phoenix, how his virtue failed! The future you cannot wait for; the past you cannot pursue. ... Happiness is as light as a feather, but nobody knows how to bear it. Calamity is as heavy as the earth, but nobody knows how to avoid it. Leave off, leave off—this teaching men virtue!"'

The madman criticizes Confucius both for not being virtuous and for attempting to teach virtue. Implicit in his criticism is his own positive view. As he chastises Confucius for anticipating the future and pursuing the past, it is plain that the remaining option, to experience the present, is the correct one to be taken. In making one of the most memorable remarks in all of the *Zhuangzi*: "Happiness is as light as a feather, but nobody knows how to bear it," the madman proves himself full of philosophic wisdom. No one had thought that happiness would be something difficult to bear. But the madman-philosopher notices that no one stays happy for very long. His trenchant remark is so shocking that it does full justice to his mental condition. We are reminded of Dryden's, "Great wits are sure to madness near allied, and thin partitions do their bounds divide."

The madman is spontaneity personified. The madman can get away with saying what he wants, as he is not mentally responsible. Consequently, he can make the most daring statements and he does. In criticizing Confucius, the madman is daring. Only a crazy person can advise Confucius to stop teaching virtue. Only a crazy person can tell us that nobody really knows how to be happy. Happiness is our birthright though we spend our lives running from it. Happiness is the unity of heaven and earth. It takes crazy person to tell us something so far removed from our ordinary values.

The madman as monster brings us to the end of the types of monsters in the *Zhuangzi*. With the madman and the later robber type, Zhuangzi pulls no punches. We are fully prepared for the madman's statements to be strange, for if they were not, he would not be mad. As the madman is a critic of Confucius we are being philosophically prepared for the position that Confucius is to be criticized, and to criticize him successfully we must adopt a position which is akin to madness.

Since the madman has been given some strong truth-bearing lines, we know that there is some association between being mad and being able to see and speak the truth. The association of madness is with the ability to be free from conventional standards of judgment. There is a further association of madness with wisdom in that it is in the very dropping of conventional standards that one is capable of possessing access to one's true nature. It is only by dropping one's conventional values that one is able to achieve the unity between heaven and earth.

The unlikely messenger, the message bearer, breaks down our automatic negative response; the defenses against the spiritual message have been broken down, by humor, by eccentricity, by improbability, and by a rhythmic succession of literary images, the brilliance of which have already awakened the aesthetic sensibilities of the reader. The mind of the reader, suitably dazzled into an aesthetic reverie, is prepared to accept the spiritual transformation which it is offered. The *tour de passe-passe*, the magic show of Zhuangzi, the poet-philosopher, is complete. The surrealistic images have cancelled out the conventional, practical mind. Progressively, the mind has been broken down and its disbelief has been unwittingly suspended. This suspension is key to the reception of the spiritual transcendence which, on its own, would have been too much to bear. Now, through the strategic artistry of Zhuangzi, transcendence may pierce through the veil of reason and offer meaning that can be paraphrased after leaving the gallery, but not reduplicated save through revisiting and reexperiencing its *tête-à-tête* with Zhuangzi's philosophical and literary unification of heaven and earth.

