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ON CHUANG TZU AS A DECONSTRUCTIONIST WITH A DIFFERENCE

In an attempt to bring the *Chuang-Tzu* into dialogue with contemporary philosophy, I wish to demonstrate that Chuang Tzu was a deconstructionist with a purpose.¹ It is well known that his deconstructionism was aimed at destroying rigid patterns of thinking, thinking which relied heavily on eristic logic and thinking which relied upon conventional beliefs. But Chuang Tzu's deconstructionism goes farther than the deconstruction of conventional thinking patterns and conventional beliefs. His deconstructionism embraces the deconstruction of the self.

His objective was to achieve a spiritual state of awareness that was a higher awareness of life. This higher awareness is referred to below as a reconstruction. It is not a reconstruction of a self but rather of a higher state. This higher state may be referred to as the Tao.

The higher awareness that one attempts to reach is a level of insight, understanding, or knowledge. It is not epistemological skepticism. There is textual evidence that a higher understanding can be reached if one can only possess the appropriate level of insight. Consider the passages from the opening chapter of the *Chuang-Tzu*: "We can't expect a blind man to appreciate beautiful patterns or a deaf man to listen to bells and drums.² And blindness and deafness are not confined to the body alone—the understanding has them too, as your words just now have shown." And, again, "Little understanding cannot come up to great understanding."³

While there is a paradox in the project of self-deconstruction, nevertheless this project is ultimately explicable in principle. Its explicability cannot be rendered fully in the language of concepts. The language of myth and metaphor play an indispensable role in rendering the project of self-deconstruction intelligible.

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THE USE OF MYTH

The *Chuang-Tzu* begins with a myth, a myth of deconstruction and reconstruction. It is the myth of a fish that is deconstructed as a fish and reconstructed as a bird. The very first line of the *Chuang-Tzu* relates this story of deconstruction/reconstruction, a story that on the one hand is not possible (fish do not turn into birds) and on the other hand must contain a deeper sort of analogical truth.

The deeper, analogical truth that is prefigured here is a one-way transformation, from bound vision to unbound vision. It is not an endless, cyclical transformation of fish into birds and birds back into fish. It is a movement from lower to higher, from that which is bound to that which is free. It is also not a transformation from a state of knowledge to a state of confusion. It is a transformation from a point of view that is limited to a point of view that is unrestricted and far seeing.

The bird that flies upward into the air symbolizes the attainment of a higher state, a state that betokens a higher, wide-ranging and liberated point of view. The story, while ostensibly about a physical fish transforming itself into a physical bird, is really about the reader and the reader's need to deconstruct the lower self which is bogged down and circumscribed by limitations and reconstruct a higher state of mind in which the mind is freed from boundaries.

When one reads a myth one realizes that this is a fiction but at the same time realizes that it is a fiction which is applicable to our lives and thus possesses an important truth value. A myth contains a moral lesson that we are encouraged to learn; in this case, we are being encouraged to emulate and embody in our lives the heroic action and symbolic meaning of the myth. Thus myth, while literally false, ultimately contains object lessons of high importance for the human race.

The ultimate "myth," the myth of deconstruction/reconstruction, while a myth containing a great moral for humanity cannot be understood on a literal level. There is no self to be deconstructed and therefore the project of self-deconstruction/ is a fictional or mythical project.⁴ On the other hand, the project of self-deconstruction/ is the most important project of life. It is a project in which one is called to engage upon and while seemingly impossible, when enacted, represents the greatest possible achievement in human life. Since it is impossible to explain in conceptual terms how there can be a deconstruction/ of a no-self, it can only be explained in the language of myth. The myth presents to the mind the *possibility* of this self-deconstruction/. The possibility, which is from a conceptual standpoint impossible, is, if you like, the possibility of the impossible. In the Great Sage story, to be discussed below, self-deconstruction is presented

simultaneously as possible, as paradoxical, as achievable, as valued, and as intelligible.

STRATEGIC DECONSTRUCTIONISM

Chuang Tzu, recognizing that higher realities require the special language of myth and metaphor, plunges into mythical discourse at the very beginning of his work. Because the myth is placed at the very beginning of the book, our normal reading pattern is deconstructed. The adult mind of the philosophical reader is deconstructed, but it is not left without any pattern at all. It is left with the primordial pattern of myth. The entire text of the *Chuang-Tzu* is to be understood as a special kind of myth. As adult readers of the *Chuang-Tzu*, we read the text as if we were “philosophical children.” We read the *Chuang-Tzu* with the subliminal expectation that we will be given an important lesson for our lives. We can thus consider the beginning of the *Chuang-Tzu* a necessary fiction. This necessary fiction, to use the language of the poet Wallace Stevens, is a prelude to the total message of the *Chuang-Tzu* that also will be eventually discarded. It will not be totally discarded because it will be kept as a story, in the form of a myth. It is the myth in the end that will be retained. The myth will be retained as a teaching story for humankind.

THE PROGRESSION: EVIDENCE OF STRATEGIC DECONSTRUCTIONISM AND STRATEGIC CONSTRUCTIONISM

The first appearance of a cripple as an interlocutor is in chapter three of the *Chuang-Tzu*. The cripple represents the deconstruction of the body of the self.

“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.”⁵

The story of the swamp pheasant is a *non sequitur* from the description of the man’s injury as destined. The crippled commander tells the story of the swamp pheasant, a story repeated in Bertrand Russell’s *Autobiography*, a story that prizes freedom. If a pure relativism were intended, there would be no difference between a swamp pheasant imprisoned and a swamp pheasant freed. It is obvious that the swamp pheasant freed is the desired state.

It is important to note that the idea of freedom is best appreciated nested in the embodiment of the swamp pheasant. The “explanation” of the anecdote as intending the message of freedom does not possess the same cognitive value as the anecdote unaccompanied by explanation. The higher understanding achieved by the use of poetic language is irreducible.

The “explanation” is similar in its effect to the explanation of a joke to someone who does not “get” the joke. Something is lost when the joke is explained. It is no longer funny. Here, it is not humor that is lost. It is the transformative message that is lost. The analytic faculties have captured the message. But the message is now inside the cage. The swamp pheasant has already flown away. When the story is “explained” as a story that is “about” freedom; the subject reader’s mind is no longer free. It is now bound by the concept of freedom. When the story is left unexplained, it is the subject reader’s mind that is set free.

The second appearance of the archetype of the crippled interlocutor is Shu in chapter four:

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!⁶

Shu’s physical deconstruction is not sufficient. Shu is not crippled enough. How much better, then, if he had crippled virtue!

A new message is being introduced. It is insufficient to take note of the way in which language is being used poetically, for example, that monsters are introduced into a philosophical discourse. Such an awareness would be equivalent to recognizing a physical deconstruction. We would only recognize that there was an outward change in our language forms. Philosophers were utilizing monsters in their narratives. How charming! Or, contrariwise, how distracting! *What is needed is a higher awareness as well, that such discourse enables a higher mental comprehension than literal language affords.* Being physically deformed is not enough. One must engender mental deformity, mental deconstruction, which has a higher value.

The reader realizes that despite the benefits that Shu gains from his crippled state, this is not the reason why this story is introduced. For being crippled is not truly a desirable state. The reader knows that Chuang Tzu is not really advocating being physically crippled. The ultimate point of the story is that we should consider being able to think in a different direction. And the beginning of that way of thinking has to do with deconstructing—should I say distorting?—our con-

ventional value judgments. It also leaves the reader with the impression that higher understanding is only possible when our conventional, literal way of understanding is deconstructed. The physical cripple is introduced in order to introduce the higher message that mental crippling is what is needed.

THE CONSTRUCTIONIST PROJECT: THE PROJECT OF SELF-TRANSFORMATION

The constructionist project is the project of self-transformation. While this is of course a deconstructionist project, *par excellence*, as well, when the self is transformed or altered, which is deconstruction, it must change into, be transformed into, something else as well. This something else is the construction. The constructionist side of self-transformation appears in the *Chuang-Tzu* under various labels, most frequently as entering into Heaven or obtaining the Tao or the Way. The key to the attainment of the Tao or the entrance into Heaven is the employment of the strategy of deconstructing the mind. While the English translation for the Chinese is normally “forgetting,” in Chinese it literally means the losing of the mind. In order to bring this discussion into contemporary debate, we can conceive of this as deconstructing the mind. If one is successful in mental forgetfulness, one can be said to have achieved the state of unity with the Tao. At one juncture of the text, one is enjoined to forget one’s self in order to achieve entrance into Heaven. The deconstruction of the self is the means by which one is able to enter into Heaven.

Forget things, forget Heaven, and be called a forgetter of self. The man who has forgotten self may be said to have entered Heaven.⁷

It is interesting to take note of the fact that while in the beginning sentence of the quotation all things and Heaven are mentioned as what are to be forgotten along with the self, in the following sentence it is the self that is singled out as the most important element to forget. This is because if one is capable of forgetting things (that one might wish to possess) and Heaven (as a goal), then one has successfully forgotten the self, or the ego. This forgetting of the ego is the real entrance ticket into Heaven.

THE DREAM ANALOGY: THE WAY TO DECONSTRUCTION AND RECONSTRUCTION

The dream anecdotes one finds in the *Chuang-Tzu*, when coupled with their concomitant awakening anecdotes may be referred to as the dream analogies. Just as we awaken from a physical state of sleep

and realize that of which we dreamt was not real, so we can awaken from a mental state of slumber and realize that the values we held to be the most real were not the most real. In Western philosophy, we have the famous example of Kant's awakening from his dogmatic slumber after reading Hume. What we awaken from in the state of the obtainment of the highest level of mental transformation is the illusory concept of the "I".

There are dream anecdotes that occur throughout the text that suggest that the "I" that we think of as real is part of a dream-like illusion. For example, in the sixth of the inner chapters of the *Chuang-Tzu*, a dream argument is introduced that questions the reality of the existence of the "I" as we imagine it to be:

What's more, we go around telling each other, I do this, I do that—but how do we know that this "I" we talk about has any "I" to it? You dream you're a bird and soar up into the sky; you dream you're a fish and dive down in the pool. But now when you tell me about it, I don't know whether you are awake or whether you are dreaming.⁸

It is the "I" that is directly pointed to here as the illusion. The connection of the concept of the illusory nature of the "I" with the attainment of a transformed stage of consciousness is also implicit in what I have referred to as the Great Sage dream anecdote of chapter two of the *Chuang-Tzu* if one includes the dream subject as an object of the dream just as much as the other subjects in a dream are dream objects.⁹ Just as when one awakens to the illusory nature of the objects of one's dream, one also awakens to the illusory nature of the dream subjects:

He who dreams of drinking wine may weep when morning comes; he who dreams of weeping may in the morning go off to hunt . . . Only after he wakes does he know it was a dream. And someday there will be a great awakening when we know that this is all a great dream . . . Confucius and you are both dreaming! And when I say you are dreaming, I am dreaming, too. Words like these will be labeled the Supreme Swindle. Yet, after ten thousand generations, a great sage may appear who will know their meaning, and it will still be as though he appeared with astonishing speed.¹⁰

The Great Awakening includes the awakening from the illusion of the "I". In an ordinary dream, the dream subject who was drinking wine does not exist in the morning. (I am using the term "subject" to stand for the character in the dream, not the physical dreamer). Even after waking, if I claim that another is dreaming, I am dreaming as well. My existence is just as questionable as the existence of the dream subject who was drinking wine.

If everything as we know it is all a great dream, this manifestly includes the dreamer as well as the dream subject. The illusory nature of the dream subject is utilized as an analogy for the illusory nature of the dreamer. It is the “I” in the waking state that is being pointed to as illusory.

In the Great Awakening, “I” will awake to know that this “I” is an illusion. This is not skepticism. Knowledge is in principle possible. And one of the things that is to be known is the illusory nature of the “I”.

What this entire “argument” is leading to is the recognition of the illusory nature of the waking, empirical ego. It is this recognition that is pointed to as the conclusion to the “argument.” The chief deconstruction is the deconstruction of the “I”.

Waking, by definition, involves the literal deconstruction of the dream. *The “I” as part of the dream content is dissolved. Without the deconstruction of the “I”, the very understanding that the “I” was an illusion, there can be no awakening or enlightenment.*

When we wake up from a dream, the dream subjects (the hunters, the wine imbibers) no longer exist. But the dream story is, after all, only a metaphor. It is a metaphor that on a physical level stands for a mental awakening on a higher level. Just as the dream subjects disappear and dissolve into waking consciousness when the dreamer awakens, likewise, when the philosopher finally awakens, he or she too will realize that his or her philosophies were all philosophical dream fictions. The key awakening to which every philosopher must awaken is the fictional nature of the “I”.

It is important to recognize that the Great Awakening is precisely that—it is not an ordinary state of wakefulness. Whether one refers to this transformed state as a Great Awakening as Watson or Fung Yu-lan or as even more pointedly, the *ultimate* awakening as does Graham, the understanding is that there is a state beyond ordinary consciousness or ordinary awareness that is posited as achievable. This is the state not of questioning, but of knowledge. As in Graham’s translation:

Only at the ultimate awakening shall we *know* that this is the ultimate dream.¹¹

That which is the ultimate dream includes the reality of the subject, the “I”. The ultimate fruit of knowledge is the realization that this “I” is but a philosophical dream fiction.

The ultimate piece of knowledge is the knowledge that there is no “I”. Of course, this is paradoxical, for if there is no “I”, who can possible know this? It is important to note, however, that this is referred to as something that can in principle be known however paradoxical

the possession of this knowledge might be. The paradox, while a paradox, is intelligible in principle. If this is mysticism, it is explicable mysticism:

Words like these will be labeled the Supreme Swindle. Yet, after ten thousand generations, a great sage may appear who will know their meaning, and it will still be as though he appeared with astonishing speed.¹²

The deconstruction of the “I” is presented as intelligible, not as a piece of mysticism to be taken on faith. The intelligibility of this paradox will, however, require the services of a gifted interpreter. This gifted interpreter will be able to explain how what is a swindle, a deceit, nonetheless represents the truth.

TAO ATTAINMENT

The solution that is posed by Chuang Tzu is to look beyond any particular standpoint to something like a view from nowhere, but here it is a “nowhere” that is a higher spiritual, perspectiveless perspective, a lack of “ego” that is thereby an illumined eye.

As Chuang Tzu puts it:

Where there is recognition of right there must be recognition of wrong; where there is recognition of wrong there must be recognition of right. Therefore, the sage does not proceed in such a way, but illuminates all in the light of Heaven.¹³

The point seems to be that every stance that someone is “right” automatically implies that someone else is “wrong.” The sage, or the wise one, attempts to transcend individual differences in order to gain a higher perspective that transcends that of individual egos or selves. The need to transcend the subject-object or in this case the subject-subject dichotomy is reflected in the description of the Tao as the state that is the absence of subject-object distinctions:

When the self and the other (or the this and the that) lose their contrareity, there we have the very essence of the Tao.¹⁴

The Tao is that state that exists in the absence of the “I”. As we recall, “the Perfect Man has no self.”¹⁵

PARADOX, TEMPORALITY, AND THE LIMITS OF LANGUAGE

How can we resolve the paradox involved in the notion of Tao attainment or self-deconstruction/? How can we talk about deconstructing the self? Who would be deconstructing the self? If there is no one to

deconstruct the self, then plainly the self cannot be deconstructed. If there is one who deconstructs the self, then the self is not deconstructed. The concept of self-deconstruction seems inherently self-contradictory.

If there is someone who attains to the Tao or Heaven, then there is no Tao or Heaven, for the very existence of a separate “one” who obtains the Tao rules out the possibility of there being a Tao. On the other hand, if there is no one to attain to the Tao, the concept also appears to be impossible to maintain. The concept of the Tao seems inherently self-contradictory. Not only is there no deconstruction; there is also no reconstruction.

Can we use the concept of the Tao as a lure for the subject seeker in the sense of a regulative idea as in the philosophy of Kant? Can the concept of the Tao or self-deconstruction/ exist as a goal for the subject seeker to pursue? While the concept of Tao or self-deconstruction/ makes no sense as a descriptive concept for the moment of the accomplishment of the goal, can it nevertheless serve as a lure? In chapter twenty-six of the *Chuang-Tzu*, we find a charming expression of this idea:

The fish trap exists because of the fish; once you've gotten the fish, you can forget the trap. The rabbit snare exists because of the rabbit; once you've gotten the rabbit, you can forget the snare. Words exist because of meaning; once you've gotten the meaning, you can forget the words. Where can I find a man who has forgotten words so I can have a word with him?¹⁶

A higher message contained here is that words, understood as descriptive language, must be forgotten. Words can be utilized after such a higher understanding has been attained. *What is forgotten is the descriptive function of the words.* There is no harm at all in using words so long as one remembers that words—in a higher sense—serve a higher cognitive function, not a literal, descriptive function. The metaphors, analogies, and poetic discourse of the *Chuang-Tzu* are not literary indulgences intended to whet the palette of the reading *literati*. Rather, they are crucial to the very project of understanding. For understanding is only possible through the deconstruction of the literal. It is the deconstruction of the literal that enables the higher cognitive function, which in turn allows one to “forget” language, that is forget its literal, descriptive use. It is the literal, descriptive use of language that is deconstructed.

Nevertheless, there seems to be a built-in paradox in the concept of obtaining enlightenment or higher understanding. It is one thing to say for the subject seeker that the concept of self-deconstruction/ is of use as a regulative but not as a descriptive concept. But if there

is no self, then how can the concept of self-deconstruction/ function even as a regulative concept?

This is deconstructionism with a *difference*. It is a deconstruction that never took place at all in the first place. It is a deconstruction that did not have to take place because there never was any subject matter to be deconstructed in the first place. There was no subject matter to deconstruct and no one to perform the deconstruction. The very concept of deconstruction has been deconstructed.

Can we argue just as Antonio Cua has argued that in the case of concept of harmony in the *Chuang-Tzu*, the concept of deconstruction/ can be known only negatively, once it no longer is?¹⁷ In chapter nineteen of the *Chuang-Tzu*, we find this description of the state of realization:

When the shoe fits
the foot is forgotten
When the belt fits
the belly is forgotten
When the heart fits,
“Right” and “wrong” are forgotten.¹⁸

But it seems that this is still to speak paradoxically. For the notion of forgetting “right” and “wrong” still implies the existence of one who forgets. It seems that we are still being swindled.

The reason that we cannot totally eliminate the aspect of paradox from the *Chuang-Tzu* is that any language is by definition dualistic as it involves both subjects and objects. Language involves a separation between the language speaker and the language hearer. It involves a separation between what is described and the language of description. Any attempt to use language to describe the state of unity is bound to involve paradoxical elements. Such paradoxical elements are non-eliminable.

The only means of bridging the subject-object divide is through the use of poetic language. When poetic language is utilized properly, subject-object language is obviated or at least “forgotten.” It is only possible to transcend paradox through the use of poetry. While this may seem tantamount to explaining the obscure by reference to the opaque, if the argument has been followed so far, this is not the case.

It is the higher understanding, the understanding that does not understand through concepts, that understands beyond paradox. The paradox is a paradox for the conceptual understanding, the understanding that has not been able to reach the highest level of comprehension. It is only when language is properly forgotten that the higher understanding can be achieved. When language is properly forgotten and this forgetting includes forgetting subject-object language as well, higher comprehension is possible.

So important is the poetic use of language to the higher level of understanding that exists beyond the reach of bare concepts! The poetic description enables a higher level of comprehension. Poetic language, the language of myth, indicates that a truth is being told even though such a truth cannot be understood or described on a literal level.

MYTH AGAIN

The “answer” of the *Chuang-Tzu*, inasmuch as it is an answer, is not a literal truth. It is a poetic approximation. Just as a myth is neither absolutely true nor absolutely false, the concept of self-deconstruction/—the Tao—is a concept that is not absolutely true nor absolutely false. It cannot be appropriately appraised from the level of understanding that is afforded by concepts. The concept of the Tao is, if you like, a kind of myth. Whatever we say about the Tao must contain some element of falsity, since all talk about the Tao requires our separation from the Tao and the essence of the Tao is the absence of separations. Whatever we say about the Tao must always be from the standpoint of separation from the Tao. *This is what is meant by interpreting a dream while one is still in a dream.* We cannot say very much about the actual state of self-deconstruction/ except to say that it is a state that is beyond the self. Even this is a false description since there is no self to be beyond. If there is no self to be beyond, there is also no beyond. In this sense, to speak of the state of the Tao as being beyond opposites is, at best, only a kind of approximation of the truth, a likeness of the truth rather than the truth itself. It is, if you like, a kind of swindle, a counterfeit. It is the kind of swindle of which Picasso spoke when he defined art as the lie that told the truth.

The description of the Tao as the absence of opposites is not absolutely false, since this description of the Tao is more true than to say that the Tao consists of a state of subject-object dichotomies. But to say that the Tao consists of a state in which there is neither subject nor object is not absolutely true either. To say that the Tao is beyond duality is less false than to say that it is composed of opposites.

Why do I insist upon calling the concept of the Tao or of self-deconstruction/ a myth? We must keep in mind that whatever description we come up with for a description of the ultimate goal to be reached is still, after all, a description from the standpoint of subjects and objects. The Tao does not even call itself Tao. The Tao is, of course, absolutely silent. We must speak, but any description we come up with must be false. Any description involves the subject-object dichotomy, so anything we say about the Tao must be false. We can only call the

concept of the Tao a myth. When we recognize that it is a myth, we also realize that we have used a *literary* description. The description is not only non-literal; it is literary. We can only understand the concept of Tao attainment poetically.

The level of poetic understanding cannot be rendered into a prose paraphrase without remainder. The “remainder” is beyond the grasp of language. But it is not only that it is beyond language; it is a cognitive state. One does understand in this state.¹⁹ The myth as a form of explanation is neither pure poetry nor pure prose. It is something in between. Its strength as a form of explanation is that as a form of explanation it is slightly more acceptable to the conventional intellect than pure poetry. Thus, Plato enlists its aid in his dialogue with intellectuals. However, its strength at the same time contains its weakness. Its removal from poetry also signifies its removal from the higher level of understanding. The myth is not as convincing as pure poetry.

Once words have been forgotten, we may use them again. When the descriptive function of language has been deconstructed, we may use language. We do not, as Wittgenstein, have to remain silent. We may interpret the dream while we are dreaming. It is a dream that we are interpreting, for even our description of it as reality or as Tao is only our dream fiction. Tao does not call itself Reality. It is in this sense that we can understand the question of Chuang Tzu, who asks, [in his dream] “Where can I find a man who has forgotten words so that I can have a word with him?” Chuang Tzu, unlike the goose that is killed for supper, was not mute. In ending this way, with poetry instead of myth, we end on a higher note. But the philosopher must have the last word.

For Plato (remembering that there are two Plato’s just as there are two Wittgenstein’s) and more importantly, for Chuang Tzu, the myth forms an essential part of the explanation. The myth is an irreducible cognitive element. In the moment of proper understanding that the ultimate explanation of the project and the goal of the *Chuang-Tzu* are mythical, a comprehension takes place that no longer can be described by a subject-object relation. This is the cognitive dimension of the myth. In a supreme moment of understanding, for what else could the Great Awakening be, the self is deconstructed. In that moment of understanding, Great Understanding replaces little understanding. One’s deconstruction of the self is accomplished in the very act of understanding that there never was a self to deconstruct in the first place. The realization of the no-self is the freedom that is the objective of the *Chuang-Tzu*. One is freed from the concept of the self.

Of course, this seems paradoxical. Who reaches such a state of freedom? But it is the question that unlocks the answer. It is the ques-

tion that frees the mind from the concept of the ego. It is only when one realizes in a Great Understanding that there is no one to reach a state of freedom and no freedom to be reached that one is free. The realization that there is no self to be freed and no freedom to be reached *is* freedom.

That freedom exists when there is no freedom to be reached defies conceptual understanding. That the self is free when there is no self to be free defies conceptual understanding. An important deconstruction of the *Chuang-Tzu* is the deconstruction of the primacy of conceptualization. It is thus ultimately more radical in its deconstructionism than contemporary deconstructionism.

On the other hand, the *Chuang-Tzu* is reconstructionist because it replaces conceptualization with the unique and irreducible cognitive dimension of metaphorical understanding. The literary symbol of the irreducible cognitive dimension of metaphorical understanding is the myth. The myth is both the symbol and the means of understanding the message of the *Chuang-Tzu*. What is fictional becomes both the source of truth and the source of knowledge. The literary art and the philosophical art become one.

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ENDNOTES

1. For convenience sake, I occasionally use the name *Chuang-Tzu* to refer to an author, but it actually refers to a text. For a complete explanation, kindly see Robert E. Allinson, *Chuang-Tzu for Spiritual Transformation* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1989, 1996). It is also available on CD-ROM (Boulder, CO: 2000) and will be published in a Chinese translation (Liu Dong, Beijing University, Editor of China Studies Overseas [Nanjing, China: Jiangsu People's Press Overseas, forthcoming in 2004]).
2. Burton Watson, *The Complete Works of Chuang-Tzu* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), p. 33.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 30.
4. For the sake of convenience, deconstruction/ will be used to stand for deconstruction/reconstruction.
5. Burton Watson, *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu*, p. 52.
6. *Ibid.*, 66.
7. For an excellent discussion of self-forgetting, cf. Anthony S. Cua, "Forgetting Morality: Reflections on a Theme in Chuang Tzu," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 4 (1977): 305–328. Note Cua's etymological breakdown of the character wang 忘: 亡 = to lose
心 = mind.
8. Watson, p. 88.
9. Cf., Robert E. Allinson, *Chuang-Tzu for Spiritual Transformation*.
10. Watson, pp. 47–48.
11. A.C. Graham, *Chuang-Tzu, The Inner Chapters* (London: Hackett, 1991), p. 60. (emphasis added) Cf., Fung Yu-Lan, *Chuang-Tzu, A New Selected Translation with an*

- Exposition of the Philosophy of Kuo Hsiang* (New York: Paragon Book Reprint Corporation, 1964), p. 62. (First published in 1933 in Shanghai).
12. Op. cit.
 13. Watson, p. 40.
 14. Wing-tsit Chan's translation of Chuang Tzu in *Sources of Chinese Tradition* edited by William Theodore de Bary (New York: Dover, 1962), p. 71.
 15. Watson, p. 32.
 16. Watson, p. 302.
 17. Anthony S. Cua, "Forgetting Morality: Reflections on a Theme in Chuang Tzu," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 4 (1977): 305–328.
 18. Kuang-ming Wu, *Chuang Tzu: World Philosopher at Play* (New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1982), p. 136. I have used Wu's modified version of Merton's "translation" in Thomas Merton, *The Way of Chuang Tzu* (New York: New Directions, 1965), p. 112.
 19. For illustrations of understanding that takes place beyond concepts, one may be referred to Robert E. Allinson, *A Metaphysics for the Future* (Burlington, VT: Aldershot, 2001) and *Space, Time and the Ethical Foundations* (Burlington, VT: Aldershot, 2002).