

## Disappearing Ground: The Uses of Saying in Chuang-tzu

*Frank Stevenson*

Lao-tzu has already said:

道可道，非常道；  
名可名，非常名。  
無，名天地之始；  
有，名萬物之母...

The way that can be spoken of is not the constant way  
The name that can be named is not the constant name  
No name (Nothing names), heaven-earth's origin  
Named (Being named), the ten thousand things' mother. . . .<sup>1</sup>

so we know that Tao is, in a way, unsayable because it is either a Nothing or a nameless Something or a named-and-nameless Something. As nameless Origin, Tao is darkly imaged as a thing that precedes heaven and earth, a Nothing or Chaos. But does the name of "mother," in its solidity and Being, carry cosmogonic echoes or traces of "earth mother," thus giving Tao a certain "geocentric" shape? We remember that Hesiod has said:

*Hoi toi men protista chaos genet. . . .* Verily first of all did Chaos come into being, and then broad-bosomed *Gaia* (earth), a firm seat of all things for ever. . . . Earth first of all brought starry *Ouranos* (sky), equal to herself, to cover her completely round about, to be a firm seat for the blessed gods (*theois*) forever.<sup>2</sup>

In this kind of cosmogony, this archetype of origins, Chaos as a Nothing or indeterminate Something precedes earth, and earth brings forth heaven to form the primal pair. When Lao-tzu says (chapter 41), "Tao is hidden with no name" (*Tao yin wu ming* 道陰無名), the *yin* 陰 as earth-female-darkness-silence-passivity is felt to lend Tao a faintly geocentric shade or image; yet it is this very *yin*-darkness that obscures Tao in the nameless

Chaos of pre-origin, pre-thing, robbing it of identity. And when Chuang-tzu, in his "piping of earth," tells us that "The great clod (*ta-k'uai* 大塊) belches out breath and its name is wind" (夫大塊噫氣, 其名爲風), we may again feel that Tao is lurking here dimly behind the indeterminate or chaotic "thingness" of the "big thing," the big earth.<sup>3</sup> But Chuang-tzu's earth is a metaphor for body (self) and his "wind of earth" for "words"; the earth's "blowing" is an act of self-expression and self-naming of the nameless and inexpressible thing-Origin. Thus, at least as mythical or archetypal images, earth (as thing and origin of things) and naming or saying (as self-identity of things and origin) would seem to share a common ground.

Just after the piping of earth, Chuang-tzu's Tao (or earth, or primal wind of self-expression) is likewise hidden and obscured with a *yin* 隱:

道惡乎隱而有真僞?

言惡乎隱而有是非?

What is Tao hidden by that we have true and false?

What is saying darkened by that we have right and wrong?<sup>4</sup>

Whether by burying or by being buried, saying and naming would seem to have acquaintance with — to play in the neighborhood of — the earth. Like Lao-tzu's earth, Chuang-tzu's earth has a sense of ground.<sup>5</sup> It is a ground which conceals as well as bears up and supports — "a firm seat of all things for ever" — and perhaps which grounds things too by bringing them "back down to earth." But besides being ground, earth is just earth in its relation to heaven, the Other or *yang* 陽 principle. The dialectical opposition of heaven-earth (*yang-yin*, creativity-receptivity, male-female, light-darkness, Being-Non-being) is grounded in, or disappears into, the larger and deeper ground of (earth as) Chaos or Nothing. The wind of earth blows, "saying" the ten thousand things and, in saying them, grounding their plurality (individuation and self-opposition) in the oneness and self-identity of its saying. And so this saying of things/words — which is also a thinking of things/thoughts — remains, as the unity of the whole hidden beneath the individuation and naming of its parts, a not-saying, not-distinguishing.

Here I propose to take a look at senses or uses of "saying" in the *Chuang-tzu*, particularly as "saying" manifests itself in the first two chapters.<sup>6</sup> But saying keeps throwing us — its main "use," perhaps — to the/its ground in not-saying, or (what both is and isn't the same thing) in saying that interchanges and identifies opposites. Indeed, saying may simply be the

ground, since both saying and ground seem so readily to hide themselves from view, to disappear. In trying to approach Chuang-tzu's "saying," we must ever keep in mind Lao-tzu's warning that "Tao's movement is reversal" (chapter 40) or that "Straight words are bent" (chapter 71). Although the notion of saying as disappearing ground might suggest Nagarjuna's *prajñapti*, Derrida's *sous rature* ("erasure") or (perhaps most tellingly) Heidegger's *Grund*, *Abgrund* and *Sagen* (Ground, Abyss and Saying) — points we shall return to briefly at the end of this discussion — it seems simplest to start with the ground that disappears.<sup>7</sup>

In chapter 26, one of the "Miscellaneous Chapters," Chuang-tzu has a brief conversation with his logician friend Hui-tzu:<sup>8</sup>

惠子謂莊子曰：「子言無用。」

莊子曰：「知無用而始可與言用矣。天地非不廣且大也，人之所用容足耳。然則廁足而墊之，致黃泉，人尚有用乎？」

惠子曰：「無用。」

莊子曰：「然則無用之爲用也亦明矣。」

Hui Tzu said to Chuang Tzu, "Your words are useless!"

Chuang Tzu said, "A man has to understand the useless before you can talk to him about the useful. The earth is certainly vast and broad, though a man uses no more of it than the area he puts his feet on. If, however, you were to dig away all the earth from around his feet until you reached the Yellow Springs, then would the man still be able to make use of it?"

"No, it would be useless," said Hui Tzu.

"It is obvious, then," said Chuang Tzu, "that the useless has its use." (Watson, pp. 136-37)

Here the metaphor and analogy in Chuang-tzu's little "saying" give(s) us the image of earth or ground (*t'ien-ti* 天地, "heaven-earth").<sup>9</sup> When walking we use only the ground immediately beneath our feet, and think that the ground beneath that ground, which supports or "grounds" it, is useless. (Or more likely its usefulness to/for us resides in our not thinking of it or not "saying" it at all.) But the "use" of that deeper ground becomes clear when it disappears, as in Chuang-tzu's little image or phantasm, fantasy here, since then it can no longer support the ground we are walking on, or the way we are following. The character for "foot" is 足 *tsu*, which also can mean "base" and "sufficient." The left side of 道 *Tao* is derived from 辵 or 止, so that *Tao*, as Needham points out, is really a "foot" on the left

and a "head" on the right, or a "person headed somewhere on a path," a synthesis of thought and action.<sup>10</sup>

The ultimate usefulness of the sage's (seemingly useless) "deep ground" is compared, via the metaphor/analogy, with the usefulness of his words, his customary "way of saying." The comparison is both subtle and pragmatic: Chuang-tzu shows Hui-tzu the use of a sage's words by drawing him the picture of the disappearing ground. Such a "big" and "far away" image (or so big because so near and thus hidden from ordinary men?) is just the sort of "saying" that Hui-tzu would have ignored as useless and yet, in a kind of inwardly-reflecting play-within-play or Chinese box puzzle, Chuang-tzu uses this "big saying" to vindicate itself. The big saying is the big image (of earth/ground); like deep ground beneath our feet it can support and contain all arguments and points of view, undercutting them in their opposition and grounding them in their larger unity. The imminence of disappearing ground underlies the shakiness of the surface, the relativity and interchangeability of all things and points of view. The praxis of big saying that stands on this ground is the understanding and absorption of all opposition.

The image of idea of the deep ground is almost unthinkable or unimaginable — at least for ordinary men — and it can perhaps only be seen or felt as the emptiness it leaves when it is removed. But if we take this removal "literally," the use of deep ground is strikingly clear: without it we die, we fall to our death. It is only by imagining this that we can really feel the use of the ground that we had taken for granted because it is so immanent, so "near" us. In chapter two Chuang-tzu (or one of his voices) says: "As the heart (*hsin* 心) nears death nothing can make it revert to the *Yang* 陽," giving perhaps a *yin* 陰-geocentric priority to death.<sup>11</sup> The radical immanence (and imminence) of earth, death and falling breathes through the disappearing ground passage. But this is just the immanence of everydayness and survival: the presence of the deep ground, after all, bears up the surface ground and our own existence ("standing out") on the surface.<sup>12</sup> The sage's knack of unifying all things in their deep ground (which is too a no-ground) is also used to unify himself with his world of lived experience, the matter at hand. This is the praxis of spontaneous action of Chuang-tzu's "knack" passages: the wheelwright making wheels, Cook Ting carving the ox. As for the latter:

庖丁釋刀對曰：「臣之所好者道也，進乎技矣。…官知止而神欲行。依乎天理，批大却，導大窾，因其固然。」

Cook Ting laid down his knife and replied, "What I care about is the Way, which goes beyond skill (*chi* 技). . . . Perception and understanding have come to a stop and spirit moves where it wants. I go along with the natural makeup, strike in the big hollows, guide the knife through the big openings, and follow things as they are." (Watson, pp. 46-47)

In his fusion with nature or Tao, then, the sage's knack "goes beyond skill" because there is no longer an object or "other" for him to work upon, only the empty spaces and disappearing ground of spontaneity. The use of the sage's big saying is also pragmatic: since he sees all language and meaning as based on relativistic — shaky and potentially disappearing — ground, he speaks an "ordinary" language, a fluid language that "follows things as they are," that understands the everyday meanings of words but doesn't take them too seriously. Chuang-tzu speaks of "spillover saying" (卮言, "vessel saying") which is "new every day, smooth it out on the whetstone of Heaven — Use it to go by and let the stream find its own channels, this is the way to last out your years" 卮言日出, 和以天倪, 因以曼衍, 所以窮年.<sup>13</sup> Graham claims that this spillover saying is a "fluid language which keeps its equilibrium through changing meanings and viewpoints."<sup>14</sup>

The sage's big saying, like the "head and foot" of Tao, would seem to have a double modality, simultaneously contemplative and pragmatic. By saying the deep ground, the sage sees and says the underlying oneness of the plurality of words and things (meanings), though the Being of this oneness easily vanishes into the Nothing of no-ground, and sends the sage on his yogic flight of pure ("cleaned") consciousness. (What greater praxis than the power or flight when ground disappears! ) At the same time, the big saying as "little saying" grounded in the knowledge of groundlessness is a fluid speech that, in its very fluidity and spontaneity, its ability to "interchange" meanings according to the moment of the speech-act, permits he who uses it "to last out his years." But the two sides of this saying, or Tao, are finally inseparable. We shall now take a closer look at these two aspects — the "mystical-contemplative" that is really a praxis and the "everyday knack" which is really an awareness.

The contemplative view of the deep ground sees it as what is unknown. In his reconstruction of Chuang-tzu's third chapter ("What Matters in the Nurture of Life"), Graham prefaces the traditional opening, Cook Ting's

carving of the ox, with a fragment from the end of chapter 24 that contains "affinities of theme and phrasing."<sup>15</sup> Graham's chapter 3 begins:

吾生也有涯，而知之無涯……，故足之於地也踐，雖踐，恃其所不踐而後善博也；人之於知也少，雖少，恃其所不知而後知天之所謂也。……大一通之，大陰解之，大目視之，大均緣之，大方體之，大信稽之，大定持之。

My life flows between confines, but knowledge has no confines. . . . Hence, as the ground which the foot treads is small, and yet, small as it is, it depends on the untrodden ground to have scope to range, so the knowledge a man needs is little, yet little as it is he depends on what he does not know to know what is meant by "Heaven." . . . The ultimate One makes things interchangeable, the ultimate *Yin* unravels them, the ultimate eye looks out at them, the ultimate adjuster sets a route by them, the ultimate in scope identifies with them, the ultimately truthful verifies them, the ultimately fixed supports them.<sup>16</sup>

The vastness of the unknowability of unknown ground beneath or beyond his feet buoys the sage, for "he depends on what he does not know to know what is meant by Heaven." The sage is a traveler, and his "knowing" of Heaven (*T'ien* 天) is often imaged by Chuang-tzu as the yogic or mystical flight through space, the zone of no-ground. But this kind of knowing is really grounded in the knowing or seeing of the relativity of things and of the sizes or "spaces" of things, the wide view of the "ultimate eye" perhaps or the "ultimate in scope." The themes of relativity (big seeing), the buoyant ground and shamanic flight are conjoined in the fable of the P'eng bird that opens chapter 1. Here the giant K'un fish transforms into the giant P'eng, "his wings . . . like clouds all over the sky . . .," and "sets off for the southern darkness, which is the Lake of Heaven." 其翼若垂天之雲。南冥者，天池也。The fish/bird can be a figure of the shaman/sage with his power of self-transformation (*tsu-hua* 自化) and mystical flight. The fantastic images of this tale, whose "objectivity" Chuang-tzu grounds in a book called "Universal Harmony" (or "Tall Stories," Graham), look like visions, as Izutsu points out, of the shaman himself in his higher (yogic) state of consciousness.<sup>17</sup> The bird's flight becomes a reflection on relativity:

塵埃也，生物之以息相吹也。天之蒼蒼，其正色邪？其遠而無所至極邪？其視下也，亦若是則已矣。

Wavering heat, bits of dust, living things blown about by the wind — the sky looks very blue. Is that its real color, or is it because it is so far away and has no end? When the bird looks down, all he sees is blue too. (Watson, p. 23)

For those of us who live on the earth, the sky (heaven) looks not much different from the way the earth (including us) looks to those who fly high in the air. This is relativism of perspectives or frames of reference. The earth-bound cicada, little dove and quail all laugh at the absurdity of the P'eng bird's ninety thousand *li* flight, for they can't really believe it or take it seriously, and this because they can't comprehend it. These small beasts of the air represent the attitude of ordinary men when faced with the (seemingly impossible and/or useless) powers and feats of the shaman/sage. Their vision is too narrow, they lack the (relativistically) wide view. That this is because ordinary men lack, like insects and small birds, the necessary ground for the big understanding or big view is implicit in Chuang-tzu's images here:

且夫水之積也不厚，則負大舟也無力。……風之積也不厚，則其負大翼也無力。故九萬里，則風斯在下矣，而後乃今摠風。背負青天，而莫之夭闕者，而後乃今將圖南。

If water is not piled up deep enough, it won't have the strength to bear up a big boat. . . . If wind is not piled up deep enough, it won't have the strength to bear up great wings. Therefore when the P'eng rises ninety thousand *li*, he must have the wind under him like that. Only then can he mount on the back of the wind, shoulder the blue sky, and nothing can hinder or block him. Only then can he set his eyes to the south.

(Watson, pp. 23-24)

Just as deep ground supports our deep walking, so deep water buoys up heavy floating, and deep air high flying. But the deep ground is already a disappearing ground; the state of unity of Being falls into the state of Non-being; the sage with mind (or heart, *hsin* 心) empty, purely mirroring

heaven-earth, can "set his eyes to the south" and fly to the Lake of Heaven. Nonetheless, the practical necessity of the ground is emphasized here: "he must have the wind under him like that." Wind as ground of flight might suggest the two sides or co-dependence of the sage's self-cosmos fusion; it surely suggests the *te* 德, virtue or power required for flight. In chapter 28, Lao-tzu compares the sage to a valley, "And being such a valley/He has all the time a power (德) that suffices; /He returns to the state of the Uncarved Block."<sup>18</sup> 爲天下谷, 常德乃足, 復歸於樸. But when Lieh-tzu takes off in the wake of the P'eng bird the wind is taken as a limited ground due to its very solidity:

夫列子御風而行, 冷然善也, 旬有五日而後反……此雖免乎行, 猶有所待者也。若夫乘天地之正, 而御六氣之辯, 以遊無窮者, 彼且惡乎待哉。

Lieh Tzu could ride the wind and go soaring around with cool and breezy skill, but after fifteen days he came back to earth. . . . He escaped the trouble of walking, but he still had to depend on something to get around. If he had only mounted on the truth of Heaven and Earth, ridden the changes of the six breaths, and thus wandered through the boundless, then what would he have had to depend on? (Watson, p. 26)

Here it is the truth (*cheng* 正) of heaven-earth that the sage really wants for his buoyant ground, something a bit thinner and more refined than air. This is the true ground as emptiness, as no-ground. But the sage also "rides the changes of the six breaths (*liu-ch'i* 六氣)." *Chi* as vital (self-cosmic) breath-energy and "six" suggesting the six dimensions of space help to form the image of the man-cosmos identity, but it is the notion of "change" as ground that is especially striking here. The ground as change (*pien* 辯) is also deep ground as disappearing ground, the imminence (and immanence) of the falling away, Tao as a dialectic of Being and Nothing or self and Other whose very self-transformation and self-reversal is grounded somehow in *yin*-earthiness, rest and nothingness, not-knowingness.

It is clear that the destination and ground of this sort of not-knowing flight is really a nowhere, as suggested by the "changes of six directions," or "six dimensions," and "wandering through the boundless." We remember that the P'eng bird was headed for the southern darkness, "which is the

Lake of Heaven"; but a few lines later we return to the K'un (鯤, fish roe) fish, out of which the P'eng metamorphoses, back in the "northern darkness" where "there is a dark sea, the Lake of Heaven (*Tien-ch'i* 天池)." The lake is itself an image of no-where-ness and boundlessness. Echoing Lao-Tzu's famous description of Tao as an "empty vessel/That yet may be drawn from/Without ever needing to be filled/. . . bottomless . . . / . . . a deep pool that never dries" 道中，而用之或不盈。淵兮似萬物之宗 (chapter 4), Chuang-tzu gives us the Lake of Heaven again in chapter 2:

故知止其所不知，至矣。孰知不言之辯，不道之道？若有能知，此之謂天府。注焉而不滿，酌焉而不竭，而不知其所由來，此之謂葆光。

Therefore understanding stops when it has reached what it does not understand. Who can understand discriminations that are not spoken, the Way that is not a way? If he can understand this, he may be called the Reservoir of Heaven. Pour into it and it is never full, dip from it and it never runs dry, and yet it does not know where the supply comes from. This is called the Shaded Light.<sup>19</sup> (Watson, p. 40)

This reservoir is too a kind of bottomless ground, simultaneously empty and full (of what, emptiness?): he who can understand Tao that is not Tao (and ground that is not ground, or that is groundless) becomes just such a (grounding/groundless) reservoir or vessel. But now that we have reached the limits of (contemplative) understanding, it may be useful to have a look at the "vessel" whose use is uselessness (emptiness) as it appears in one of the three short pragmatic (or didactic) dialogues, on the use of "big things," toward the end of chapter 1. Here Chuang-tzu is himself the speaker, and advises his friend Hui-tzu how to use a "huge gourd," gift of the King of Wei, for which the logician could find no use:

莊子曰：「夫子固拙於用大矣……今子有五石之瓠，何不慮以為大樽，而浮乎江湖，而憂其瓠落無所容？則夫子猶有蓬之心也夫！」

Chuang-tzu said, "You certainly are dense when it comes to using big things! . . . Now you had a gourd big enough to hold five piculs. Why didn't you think of making it into a great tub so you could go floating around the rivers and lakes, instead

of worrying because it was too big and unwieldy to dip into things! Obviously you still have a lot of underbrush in your head!" (Watson, pp. 28-29)

Here the logician's head (heart, 心) is too "dense" and "full of underbrush"; if he could empty it out like a gourd he would easily think of a use for the large hollow "thing." Rather than trying to dip it "into things," he could use it as a container or buoyant ground for his own body, himself. But Hui-tzu fails to make a leap to the frame of reference or way of seeing by which he would have thought of this use. Underlying the didactic point that the use of (big) things lies not in the thing but in its *use* (application), we have the subtle association of empty gourd with human body and mind: perhaps the gourd is an "earth-body" or "astral body" by/in which the sage could just go "floating around the rivers and lakes," a "free and easy wandering" (the title of chapter 1) to the Lake of Heaven.

We have already mentioned Chuang-tzu's "spillover saying" that keeps its balance through changing meanings and viewpoints; Graham supposes it to be "named after a kind of vessel designed to tip and right itself when filled too near the brim."<sup>21</sup> At the beginning of chapter 27 (*yü yen* 寓言 "Language" or "Symbols"), Chuang-tzu (or one of his followers and compilers) says: "Language which flows constantly over, as from a full goblet, is in accord with Heaven."<sup>22</sup> Ware translates the *chih yen jih ch'u, hê i t'ien ni*, 卮言日出, 和以天倪 as "I talk imprecisely every day to bring harmony with the horizon," and Graham takes it as "spillover saying is new every day, smooth it out on the whetstone of Heaven."<sup>23</sup> A few lines later we hear: "The Potter's Wheel of Heaven is the whetstone of Heaven" (*t'ien ni* 天倪 heaven's "equilibrium" for Giles).<sup>24</sup> Here this kind of saying is contrasted with *yü yen* 寓言 "saying from a lodging-place" (or "language put into other people's mouths") and *chung yen* 重言 "weighted saying" (or "language based upon weighty authority"), a point to which we shall soon return in our discussion of chapter 2. But what is most striking about "spillover" saying is the hollow vessel that keeps its own balance — or the cosmic balance — as an image for saying, a hollow saying that grounds, contains and replenishes itself.

Our circuitous (and free-floating) route brings us back now to the theme of "big saying" as it appears in the third of the three dialogues on the "use of big things," just at the end of chapter 1. This passage echoes the

disappearing ground anecdote, as it is again Chuang-tzu's own words that are in question:

惠子謂莊子曰：「吾有大樹，人謂之樗，其大本擁腫而不中繩墨，其小枝卷曲而不中規矩，立之塗，匠者不顧；今子之言，大而無用，衆所同去也。」

莊子曰：「……今子有大樹，患其無用，何不樹之於何有之鄉，廣莫之野，彷徨乎無爲其側，逍遙乎寢臥其下。不夭斤斧，物無害者，無所可用，安所困苦哉！」

Hui Tzu said to Chuang Tzu, "I have a big tree named ailanthus. Its trunk is too gnarled and bumpy to apply a measuring line to, its branches too bent and twisty to match up to a compass or square. You could stand it by the road and no carpenter would look at it twice. Your words, too, are big and useless, and so everyone alike spurns them!"

Chuang Tzu said, "... Now you have this big tree and you're distressed because it's useless. Why don't you plant it in Not-Even-Anything Village, or the field of Broad-and-Boundless, relax and do nothing (*wu wei* 無爲) by its side, or lie down for a free and easy sleep under it. Axes will never shorten its life, nothing can ever harm it. If there's no use for it, how can it come to grief or pain?" (Watson, pp. 29-30)

As with the ground, it seems we must begin with the concrete image of the tree and work (or imagine) our way back to the idea of "big words." And the tree brings us back to the question of use as survival: the tree survives because ordinary men (the woodcutters) don't care about it, don't even notice it, and this is because it is too old, too ugly, too "ordinary." But the ordinary everydayness of the tree is also its very "naturalness"; it is so "rough" that measuring line, compass and square cannot "apply" or "match up" to it. That is, as pure manifestation of nature and tree-ness, this tree is far from human logic, from the ideal precision of (Euclidean/Platonic) geometry or Confucian *li* 禮, propriety or *li* 理, reason. The *chêng* 正 (truth) of the tree is not a logical truth but the "truth of Heaven and Earth" that Lieh-tzu might have mounted on, it is a "fitness" to or for survival and life rather than cold logic. (Giles renders 正 in the Lieh-tzu passage as "fitness": "But had he been charioted upon the eternal fitness

of Heaven and Earth . . .").<sup>25</sup> The sage, like the old tree, is firmly rooted in deep ground, ground so deep — or, in its ordinariness, so invisible — that the axes of logicians and reasonable (or “practical”) men cannot undercut it.

The use of the tree’s everydayness is the use of deep or disappearing (“boundless,” “not-even-anything”) ground: it supports the surface and gives the tree a long life. But it is the same ground that grounds the sage’s big saying. His words seem useless to ordinary men — and so are “spurned” by them — because too big, too far away (abstract and remote), not “down to earth.” But ironically, if the tree is a direct metaphor for the words, the cosmic ground or no-ground of the sage’s saying is at the same time its groundedness in nature and in spontaneity. The deep ground is also immanent ground. Perhaps the sage’s language, like the tree, is camouflaged by its very everydayness. This big saying viewed from the standpoint of its unifying/nihilating ground is too deep to be undercut or understood; viewed from the standpoint of its pragmatic spontaneity it is a spillover saying, too fluid to be caught, measured or chopped up. Or perhaps only the “big words,” already discarded, can be caught but not their meaning?

荃者所以在魚，得魚而忘荃；……言者所以在意，得意而忘言。吾安得夫忘言之人而與之言哉！

“The fish trap exists because of the fish; once you’ve gotten the fish, you can forget the trap . . . 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? (Watson, p. 140)

To follow the irresistible bait of the metaphor one step further, perhaps the logicians, woodcutters and ordinary men who are hunting down the sage’s “big meaning” may find the discarded traps of his words but, on opening them, find nothing, as the meaning would have been already removed. Or: the emptiness of the inside would simply be the (only, or final) meaning and ground, unfortunately invisible (and so useless) to the hunters. Perhaps too the meaning inside, as the ground or purpose of being (ex-istence) of the word/trap, is like a seed in disappearing earth, from which the deep-rooted cosmic tree will grow. One thinks too of Lao-tzu’s “nameless origin (始) of heaven-earth”; Needham takes 始 as woman on the left

and embryo on the right and so "mother in mother," suggesting the concealment of the origin (as "secret essence," 妙, woman on the left again) in its/her offspring.<sup>26</sup> Or one might think of the eggs of the giant K'un fish, whose name 鯤 means "fish eggs." But is this the seed of *yin* (earth, female) in the womb of *yin* ("Tao is *yin* with no name"), or the seed of *yang* in the womb of *yin* (Hexagram 24 of the *I Ching*, 復, "Thunder in the Earth")?<sup>27</sup> In any case, as Lao-tzu says, the "root" (*kên*, 根) or underlying ground is both origin and destiny:

夫物芸芸，  
各復歸其根，  
歸根日靜，  
足謂復命。

Things are unceasingly moving and restless,  
Yet each one is returning to the root (*kuei-kên* 歸根).  
Proceeding back to the origin is quiescence (*ching*, 靜).  
To be in quiescence is to return to destiny (*fu-ming*, 復命).<sup>28</sup>

The root and ground of contemplation is simultaneously the root and ground of praxis. The usefulness of the sage's (seemingly useless) big words is again intimately conjoined with the praxis of survival through self-nature fusion in the first of the three "use of bigness" dialogues in chapter 1. And the theme of the dialogue is again the reprimand and giving of advice by a wiser man to one who fails to understand or appreciate big things/words. But the speakers are not Chuang-tzu and Hui-tzu; this dialogue is more complex in its modality, involving the interplay of four of Chuang-tzu's voices, characters or persona.

肩吾問於連叔曰：「吾聞言於接輿，大而無當，往而不反。吾驚怖其言，猶河漢而無極也；大有逕庭，不近人情焉。」連叔曰：「其言謂何哉？」曰：「藐姑射之山，有神人居焉，肌膚若冰雪，淖約若處子。不食五穀，吸風飲露。乘雲氣，御飛龍，而遊乎四海之外。其神凝，使物不疵癘而年穀熟。吾以是狂而不信也。」連叔曰：「然。瞽者無以與乎之章之觀，聾者無以與乎鐘鼓之聲。豈唯形骸有聾盲哉？夫知亦有之。是其言也，猶時女也。之人也，之德也，將旁礴萬物以爲一世蕪乎亂……之人也，物莫之傷，大浸稽天而不溺，大旱金石流土山焦而不熱……」

Chien Wu said to Lien Shu, "I was listening to Chieh Yu's talk — big and nothing to back it up, going on and on without turning around. I was completely dumfounded at his words — no more end than the Milky Way, wild and wide of the mark, never coming near human affairs!"

"What were his words like?" asked Lien Shu.

"He said that there is a Holy Man living on faraway Ku-she Mountain, with skin like ice or snow, and gentle and shy like a young girl. He doesn't eat the five grains, but sucks the wind, drinks the dew, climbs up on the clouds and mist, rides a flying dragon, and wanders beyond the four seas. By concentrating his spirit, he can protect creatures from sickness and plague and make the harvest plentiful. I thought this was all insane and refused to believe it."

"You would!" said Lien Shu. "We can't expect a blind man to appreciate beautiful patterns or a deaf man to listen to bells and drums. And blindness and deafness are not confined to the body alone — the understanding has them too, as your words have just now shown. This man, with this virtue 德 of his, is about to embrace the ten thousand things and roll them into one. . . . There is nothing that can harm this man. Though flood waters pile up to the sky, he will not drown. Though a great drought melts metal and stone and scorches the earth and hills, he will not be burned. . . ." (Watson, pp. 27-28)

Here the *te* 德 "power or virtue" of the Holy Man is his ability to "embrace the ten thousand things and roll them into one," a uniting of self with a nature (cosmos) seen as a single "big thing" which benefits nature and protects the self from all harm. For the self having become nature, and transforming itself with nature, is already "part" of natural disasters like floods and droughts and so cannot be harmed by them. But the big words or images of the madman Chieh Yu that picture this power of the sage, when reported to Chien Wu, fell upon deaf ears, or rather blind and deaf understanding. Lien Shu, on the other hand, has an understanding (*chih* 知) that can understand, that is, can see and hear. As Heraclitus says, "Evil witnesses are eyes and ears for men, if they have souls that do not understand their language" ("*barbarous psuxas*," "barbarian souls," which almost fits the context of Lien Shu's seething rebuke).<sup>29</sup>

The "rolling of things into one" is, as we know, the sage's special power

of big saying, the saying that sees the common (and disappearing) ground of things. But Chien Wu is dumfounded by the big words/images of Chieh Yu that *describe* the Holy Man and his power; even if we assumed Chieh Yu to be the Holy Man's equal in sagacity, it is not clear that big saying which describes or depicts power is identical with the big saying that *is* that power. Nonetheless, it may be safe to assume that for Chuang-tzu this distinction (like all distinctions) is a false one, based on "logic" after all, and that either the two sayings are (basically) the same or the former (description-saying) is a direct reflection of the latter. The same problem, in more subtle form perhaps, underlies the Chinese box structure of the disappearing ground passage. The big saying or big image of disappearing ground is meant to show/describe the usefulness of deep ground/big saying; the usefulness of the latter is just its power of saying (grounding) big things. Perhaps it's simply that only big saying can image or describe (the power of) big saying; or has the sage thrown away his words, so that only big saying can catch his big meaning?

In any case, the "talk" that is Chieh Yu's description or tall tale of the Holy Man is "big and nothing to back it up . . . no more end than the Milky Way, wild and wide of the mark . . . !" The "nothing to back it up" is *ta erh wu tang* 大而無當, "big but no guarantee" or "big but nothing to take or image it as" or perhaps "big but no ground." Now taking this big talk as description of the sage, the "nothing to back it up" can simply mean that (Chien Wu thinks) there really exists no such person as this Holy Man, that the madman's tall tale has no validity, no basis or ground in reality. (Thus Chien Wu "thought this was all insane and refused to believe it.") Taking this big talk as the knack or power of big saying, the "nothing" takes on of course the metaphysical/ontological sense we have been giving it all along: such saying is indeed rooted in ground so deep that it falls into nothingness, or boundlessness, into a cosmic frame of reference that is too vast and too far away for ordinary men to grasp, appreciate, take seriously or believe possible. For they, unlike the sage, cannot "embrace the ten thousand things. . . ."

But when Lien Shu asks him, "What were his words like?" Chien Wu goes ahead and gives him the description of the Holy Man, in a form presumably not too different from that in which Chieh Yu gave it to him. He proceeds, that is, with the description that he has already described as "big . . . wild and wide of the mark. . . ." (Relativity is at play here: the "big talk" is big to Chien Wu, wild in *his* eyes and wide of *his* mark. We

nonetheless are left wondering to what extent these attributes apply to the big talk in and of itself.) In this description or tall tale, the words and images present a picture of the flying Holy Man which, if "understood," will convince the listener of their truth, and so the truth of the shamanic power they depict. Chuang-tzu's visual images have an aesthetic impact that directly parallels or reflects the "logical" or "philosophical" import of the words and sentences. In Toshihiko Izutsu's analysis, the images of the shaman/sage's vision (at a higher level of consciousness) and the philosophical truth(s) are part of a single "mythopoeic thinking":

What characterizes Chuang-tzu's myths in general and definitely distinguishes them from the narrative or lyrical poems of pure shamanism is the fact that in Chuang Tzu there is clearly observable, behind the creative and artistic process of evolving imagery, the process of philosophizing, with no discrepancy between the two processes. The two are in fact the single process of mythopoeic thinking.<sup>30</sup>

It seems we can no longer delay making explicit what has lain implicit: the problem of the seeming priority of the "image" in any sort of direct description of what big saying is, or says. It's hard to resist the temptation to ground the metaphysics or ontology of "ground" (that emerges in Chuang-tzu) in the image-pattern of the welling up of vessel or lake and the free-floating on the surface and/or in space. Indeed, it's hard to even approach the meaning of the "disappearing ground" and the various flying passages without falling back on the (visual/poetic/aesthetic) images, so that it's not completely clear that the "process of philosophizing" is "behind" the "process of evolving imagery," and not rather the other way. Or can the two processes be distinguished at all? A possible line of analysis not developed by Izutsu would point out that "idea" as Platonic *eidon* has the sense of "image" as well as that of "concept," or that in any case it may be finally difficult to define what "logical" or "philosophical" meanings are, or "concepts" or "ideas," without resorting in a way to images. ("Concept" is from "*concipere*," "to conceive," "something conceived in the mind"; the "cept" as "taking in" echoes "perception." The image of birth or conception seems central, as we have seen, to the notion of 始 ("Origin") as essence concealed within manifestation, the growing of the tree of life or cosmic tree. And we will not even speak of the "imaging" nature of at

least some Chinese characters.<sup>31</sup>)

In any case, it is clear that, as Izutsu says, the poetic/metaphorical impact of the visual images of the various tales of flying is somehow on a different plane from discursive/philosophical points or meanings. On the other hand, or perhaps looking from another frame of reference, the larger (archetypal-symbolic) patterns formed by the putting together of individual images — deep ground, welling vessel and lake, floating and flying, cosmic tree — are quite possibly what the “logical” meanings (of a putative “discursive text”) are trying to indicate or show. We have seen the sage’s praxis and flight as based on or aimed at the “disappearing ground.” But when we try to visualize the deep ground that falls into a no-ground, though clearly we leave the “word” behind and try to get to the “meaning,” do we go beyond the “image” into the zone of “logical concept” or the other way? Or do we not transcend, or fall beneath, both image and concept into the not-knowing, not-thinking of Tao, into the disappearing ground itself?

Perhaps we can say that the big saying which describes the sage’s power — as in Chieh Yu’s tall tale — indicates a big image or big meaning which cannot be grasped by (ordinary) understanding or logic. (And the big saying which is the sage’s power is the ability to see things in terms of this big image, which is their common ground or unity and which falls into a no-ground or non-image, image of Nothing.) Chieh Yu’s talk is for Chien Wu “big and nothing to back it up”: the words have become “empty words” that no longer mean anything because what they image is too big for his narrow understanding, or because in their groundlessness he cannot get to the bottom of them. In Izutsu’s analysis, since these images have been evolved in or by the shaman’s vision in a higher state of consciousness, the listener to a tale of such images cannot grasp them unless he too has seen them, or their source, in the same sort of vision in the higher state:

If one finds Chuang-tzu’s words too “big,” too bizarre and grotesque to be taken seriously, it is simply because, instead of trying to understand them in their proper dimension, one tries consciously to bring them down to the ordinary level of discourse and interpret them there. . . . In order that (Chien Wu) might be able to understand (Chieh Yu’s) story in terms of the mythopoetic level, he must have already seen in the ecstatic dimension of consciousness the very source from which spring forth visionary images of this kind. . . . The listener, in short, must *live* the same images.<sup>32</sup>

This may well be true. But "the very source from which spring forth visionary images of this kind" may also be the source of meaning of the logical/philosophical ideas; this "source" itself is or points to an image of ground, well, spring or root that in its groundlessness seems to transcend both logical and visionary thinking. In any case if, as we assume, the listener must have already "seen" and "lived" the same images (or their source) in order to understand them, this raises the old problem of how to teach intuitive knowledge, natural virtue or talent (*te* 德, power). In the *Meno* Plato argues that virtue (*arete*, "proper excellence") cannot be taught because either one already "knows" what it is (i.e., "has" it) or, not having it and not knowing what it is, one has no standard by which to identify it (or grasp or perhaps ground it) and so cannot "learn" it. Chuang-tzu's wheelwright also claims he cannot teach the knack of wheel-making-which involves the praxis of subject-object unity and spontaneous action — to his son. For Chuang-tzu, as we have seen, it is above all a power, knack or "use" which must be taught. And yet the "use" of the sage's big saying lies in its "uselessness": "A man has to understand the useless," as Chuang-tzu tells Hui-tzu in the disappearing ground passage, "before you can talk to him about the useful." If this kind of praxis can be taught at all it can perhaps be taught only through the power of big saying that deflates logic and, picking the listener up with its big image, shocks him into awareness (as in a Zen koan or mondo), dropping the ground from under him.

Still, we must wonder, when big saying speaks, how are we to listen to it if we must go down beneath sense-perception, images, ideas and thinking? How do we listen with the "eyes and ears of understanding"? In chapter 4, Yen-hui asks Confucius (who seems in this instance to serve as Chuang-tzu's mouthpiece):

問曰：「敢問心齋。」仲尼曰：「若一志，無聽之以耳而聽之以心，無聽之以心而聽之以氣。聽止於耳，心止於符。氣也者，虛而待物者也。唯道集虛，虛者，心齋也……絕迹易，無行地難……聞以有知知者矣，未聞以無知知者也……夫徇耳目內通而外於心知……」

"May I ask what the fasting of the mind (*hsin chai* 心齋) is?"

Confucius said, "Make your will (*chih* 志) one! Don't listen with your ears, listen with you mind (*hsin* 心, "heart"). No, don't listen with your mind, but listen with your spirit (*ch'i* 氣). Listening stops with the ears, the mind stops with

recognition, but spirit is empty and waits on all things. The Way gathers in emptiness alone (*wei Tao chi hsi* 唯道集虛). Emptiness is the fasting of the mind. . . . It is easy to keep from walking; the hard thing is to walk without touching the ground. . . . You have heard of the knowledge that knows, but you have never heard of the knowledge that does not know. . . . Let your ears and eyes communicate with what is inside, and put mind and knowledge on the outside.” (Watson, pp. 54-55)

“Let your ears and eyes communicate with what is inside”: this is the usefulness of the not-seeing, not-hearing, not-saying, or of not-using (ears, mind, words). We must listen only with our “spirit” or “vital breath” (*ch'i* 氣) which flows within and without the body. After all, this “inside” is where we can find the “very source from which spring forth visionary images of this kind,” even further “in” (toward the *yin* “earth-imaging center”), perhaps, than the ground of conceptual conceiving and thinking. To learn the “fasting of the mind,” it may not be necessary that the learner have experienced it already, but he must at least be able to follow the direction of pointing, as toward the Milky Way, Benetnash star or “inner source,” “well” and disappearing ground of the spirit.<sup>33</sup> It is interesting too that understanding (*chih* 知) has an arrow on the left.

We are now ready to hear the famous “piping of earth” that opens chapter 2. Here the sage Tzu-ch'i, in response to Tzu-yu's question, “Can you really make the body like a withered tree and the mind like dead ashes?” 形固可使如槁木，而心固可使如死灰乎？ explains his yogic trance by saying, “Now I have lost myself. Do you understand that? You hear the piping of men, but you haven't heard the piping of earth. Or if you've heard the piping of earth, you haven't heard the piping of Heaven!” 今者吾喪我，女知之乎？女聞人籟而未聞地籟，女聞地籟而未聞天籟夫！ And when Tzu-yu asks what this means, Tzu-ch'i tells the following myth or tale:

子綦曰：「夫大塊噫氣，其名爲風。是唯無作，作則萬竅怒號。而獨不聞之參寥乎？山林之畏佳，大木百圍之竅穴，似鼻，似口，似耳，似枅，似圈，似臼，似洼者，似汙者；……厲風濟則衆竅爲虛……」  
子游曰：「地籟則衆竅是已，人籟則比竹是已，敢問天籟。」子綦曰：「夫吹萬不同，而使其自己也，咸其自取，怒者其誰邪！」……喜怒哀樂，慮歎變態，姚佚啓態；樂出虛，蒸成菌。日夜相代乎前，而莫知其所萌……

Tzu-ch'i said, "The Great Clod belches out breath and its name is wind. So long as it doesn't come forth, nothing happens. But when it does, the ten thousand hollows begin crying wildly. Can't you hear them, long drawn out? In the mountain forests that lash and sway, there are huge trees a hundred spans around with hollows and openings like noses, like mouths, like ears, like jugs, like cups, like mortars, like rifts, like ruts. . . . And when the fierce wind has passed on, then all the hollows are empty again. . . ."

Tzu-yu said, "By the piping of earth, then, you mean simply (the sound of) these hollows, and by the piping of man (the sound of) flutes and whistles. But may I ask about the piping of Heaven?"

Tzu-ch'i said, "Blowing on the ten thousand things in a different way, so that each can be itself — all take what they want for themselves, but who does the sounding?" . . .

Joy, anger, grief, delight, worry, regret, fickleness, inflexibility, modesty, willfulness, candor, insolence — music from empty holes, mushrooms springing up in dampness, day and night replacing each other before us, and no one knows where they sprout from. . . . (Watson, pp. 31-33)

Here we have earth blowing wind through itself and into itself, "naming" itself as wind or breath by naming ("playing") its parts. This wind expresses itself as the unity of and behind (or "beneath") all those ten thousand things, the "caves." We assume the "big saying" of the big thing/image that is the earth — and Chuang-tzu makes the wind-saying metaphor explicit a few lines later with "Words are not just wind" — can somehow image or express the sage-shaman's power of big saying, unifying things. Or, if the wind of earth can't express it, perhaps the wind of heaven can. But the wind of heaven seems in a way to disappear into the wind of earth, which itself falls through into nothingness.

We notice in the first place Tzu-ch'i's words: "Now I have lost myself. Do you understand that? You hear the piping of men, but you haven't heard the piping of earth. Or if you've heard the piping of earth, you haven't heard the piping of Heaven!" Here, rather than try to get to the ground that Tzu-yu has arrived at or will understand, the sage quickly jumps to a (relativistically) higher level or ground of attainment or understanding (or perhaps of Nothingness) which he knows Tzu-yu will not have arrived at:

the "piping of Heaven." Or should we call it a deeper ground or, more fittingly perhaps, the already falling ground? If Tzu-yu, the implication goes, could but hear the "wind of Heaven," he might begin to understand how Tzu-ch'i can make — and/or if he really makes — his "body like a withered tree and the mind like dead ashes." If Tzu-yu can at least hear the wind of earth, he may be pointed in the right direction. But he must *hear* this piping or saying (or "playing") directly, he cannot simply "hear of" it, as in "hearing of" the sage's power (in the tall tale) or "hearing of the knowledge that does not know." Or does it, again, come to the same thing?

In the second place we notice that the big image of earth breathing out wind — an explicit metaphor for "big body" (as Chuang-tzu develops it) or "self" which also "breathes" and "says" — is a traditional and archetypal cosmogonic image. We remember that at the beginning of Hesiod's *Theogony* he says that first Chaos came into being, and then "broad-bosomed earth," who brought forth "starry sky, equal to herself, to cover her completely round about. . . ." It seems clear (or does it?) that Chuang-tzu's earth does not create or express heaven-sky — being rather in a way grounded in it — although earth's wind can be a more immanent (or "everyday") kind of sky. But the earth here does seem to fall back, in a sense, into its own Chaos. In playing or naming itself it must play or differentiate the ten thousand things which make it up. But those "things" are "caves," empty vessels, wells and disappearing grounds: the gaps of inner space or "betweenness" of the big thing/image, the earth. The plurality of which earth is unity is a chorus of empty holes, and the wind blowing through the hollows of the trees (and the hollows or caves of the earth, according to at least some interpretations of the passage) announces itself in the unity of its saying, a unity and Being grounded in disappearing ground and Non-being.<sup>34</sup>

But in this cosmogonic image that personifies the earth as a giant body blowing breath or wind, "saying," we also get the personification of the tree-hollows and openings that look "like noses, like mouths, like ears, like jugs, like cups, like mortars, like rifts, like ruts." The ten thousand "things" themselves are the openings into interiority of sense organs and receptacles, empty vessels that receive the wind of saying into themselves, listening to and echoing it: "In a gentle breeze they answer faintly, but in a full gale the chorus is gigantic. And when the fierce wind has passed on, then all the hollows are empty again." The earth-image is organic and, like Hesiod's, cosmogonic: it "brings forth" out of itself, it "speaks." But,

unlike Hesiod's earth which creates sky and a succession of natural and supernatural forces, Chuang-tzu's earth "speaks to itself." The wind of earth speaks through the ten thousand hollows and they hear it, they answer back, each making its individual sound. The big image of earth in this myth is an image of saying-and-listening, of self-communication. We remember that Confucius has said to Yen-hui, "... listen with your 氣 (spirit). ... Let your ears and eyes communicate with what is inside. ...". The words of the *skoteinos*, "obscure" Heraclitus might also come again to mind here: "Listening not to me but to the Logos it is wise to agree that all things are one" (*hen panta einai*).<sup>35</sup>

But what, again, of the wind of Heaven? Watson comments that "Heaven is not something distinct from earth and man, but a name applied to the natural and spontaneous functioning of the two" (p. 32). In his analysis Izutsu seems essentially to agree with this, though he gives a distinct priority to the wind of Heaven:

The "sound of Earth" which is actually audible to our physical ears differs from one hollow to another. Thus the dimension of the "sound of Earth" is the dimension of Multiplicity. But, Chuang Tzu argues, one must hear the soundless "sound of Heaven" behind the various sounds of Multiplicity. Rather, in hearing the "sound of Earth," one is really hearing nothing other than the "sound of Heaven." ...

As the "sound of Heaven," which is in itself absolute Nothingness — or Void (*hsü* 虛), as Chuang Tzu sometimes calls it — acts upon the hollows which are in themselves "void" and "nothing," the latter become activated and emit divergent sounds in such a way that they "imagine that it is they themselves that emit these sounds." They do not know that they are simply serving as different loci in which the soundless "sound of Heaven" actualizes itself in a myriad of audible sounds.<sup>36</sup>

Although this interpretation is reasonable enough, it seems to give a priority to the "piping of heaven" in the sense that for Izutsu the earth "falls through" into heaven: "in hearing the 'sound of Earth', one is really hearing nothing other than the 'sound of Heaven'." My own tendency is to give a *yin*-geocentric priority to earth and the "piping of earth," with heaven disappearing into its ground in earth and earth collapsing inward,

toward the interior “void” and nothingness. That is, the very inward-directedness of Chuang-tzu’s metaphor here — earth “talking to itself” — seems to me to suggest such a priority. But one could equally well look at it the other way or, perhaps best of all, from a vantage point in which (wind of) earth disappears into (wind of) heaven and the other way round simultaneously: “Tao’s movement is reversal.” It is clear to me, in other words, that (wind of) heaven is Nothing as (absolute) ground but this ground can equally well be located — as in fact it is — within the interior hollows of the earth. The interiority of Chaos — the Nothing that grounds the Being of earth — seems implicit in Hesiod’s cosmogony:

There of murky earth and misty Tartaros and unharvested sea and starry sky, of all of them, are the springs in a row and the grievous, dank limits which even the gods detest. . . . There are the gleaming gates, and brazen threshold unshaken, fixed with continuous roots, self-grown; and in front, far from all the gods, dwell the Titans, across murky Chaos.<sup>37</sup>

Here we get a picture of the inner-Earth gulf or chasm as Chaos: the “dank limits” of the origin, a kind of polar Non-being (*wu-chi* 無極). Chuang-tzu’s earth as the “big clod” grounded on/composed of emptiness could be an image of such a Chaos, like Lao-tzu’s Tao of chapter 25: “Before the Heaven and Earth existed/There was something nebulous” (*you-wu hun-cheng* 有物混成; Lau: “a thing confusedly formed,” Chang: “a gathering chaos”).<sup>38</sup> Cornford points out that Hesiod’s Chaos can be taken as the original *xa*, “gap” that yawns between heaven and earth, separating them, as well as the primordial opening or Nothing or “dim thing” in which earth first appears or manifests itself.<sup>39</sup> Perhaps we have a similar kind of ambiguity with Chuang-tzu’s void (虛) that grounds earth, his *sunyata*.<sup>40</sup>

Izutsu claims that Chuang-tzu’s “image of Chaos” is “ultimately pure and absolute Nothingness,” but that it is not *only* Nothingness:

Thus in the philosophical system of Chuang-tzu, Chaos is to be considered not so much Nothingness itself in its absolute sense as the very world of Being or Multiplicity, our world of empirical reality, as it appears to the spiritual eyes of the True Man when he views it from the vantage point of absolute Nothingness. Chaos in this sense is not sheer negativity. Quite

the contrary, it is the plenitude of Being in its true reality. . . . Chaos may thus be represented as the lower half, so to speak, of absolute Nothingness. It is the face of Nothingness turned toward the empirical world.<sup>41</sup>

Izutsu goes on to describe the “chaotified” mind of the True Man, in/for which the world is a “metaphysical dimension in which all things are ultimately found to be ‘transmutable’ to one another (*wu-hwa* 物化). . . . The ‘chaotified’ mind is a mind that is no-mind. . . .”<sup>42</sup> This brings us back to the problem of the relation between “earth breathing wind” as cosmogonic image and “earth saying itself” as metaphor for human self-identity: in either case the earth/body, in its very act of “self-identification,” grounds itself in disappearing ground. I tend to see the Chaos as the self-grounding of the “thing” (or origin, or Tao, or self) in “nothingness” — though perhaps this comes to the same thing, finally, as saying that Chaos is the empirical world (“ten thousand things,” including one’s own body) viewed “from the vantage point of absolute Nothingness.” The crucial point here is the sage’s praxis, which, we recall, has both a “contemplative” and a “pragmatic” side. The former is the sage’s big saying as his awareness of the oneness of all things, the One Being that falls into the Non-Being. The latter is the sage’s (resulting) viewpoint on the (pluralistic) world and his “knack” of (subject-object unified) spontaneous action in that world. The earth/body “speak” — a positive action — and simultaneously “listens to itself” — a passive receptivity. Izutsu’s Chaos as the “lower half” of Nothingness strikes me as the pragmatic side of the sage’s praxis: his spillover saying, knack of maintaining equilibrium, radical immanence or everydayness.

In Chuang-tzu’s “body and emotions” passage that follows “piping of earth,” it becomes clear that the *hsin*-heart (or mind, 心) — like its analogue, heaven or heavenly virtue? — cannot take priority as the “center” or “master” of the body/self:

非彼無我，非我無所取……若有真宰，而特不得其朕。可行已信，而不見其形，有情而無形。百骸、九竅、六藏，骸而存焉，吾誰與為親？如是皆有為臣妾乎？其臣妾不足以相治乎？其遞相為君臣乎？其有真君存焉？如求得其情與不得，無益損乎其真。

Without (feelings) we would not exist; without us they would have nothing to take hold of. . . . It would seem as though they

have some True Master, and yet I find no trace of him. He can act — that is certain. Yet I cannot see his form. He has identity (*ching* 情, “essence”) but no form (*hsing* 形, “shape”). The hundred joints, the nine openings, the six organs, all come together and exist here as my body (*ch'un yen* 存焉). But which part should I feel closest to? . . . But if they are all servants, then how can they keep order among themselves? Or do they take turns being lord and servant? It would seem as though there must be some True Lord among them. But whether I succeed in discovering his identity or not, it neither adds to nor detracts from his Truth. (Watson, p. 33)

Here the “saying” of earth/body explicitly announces the problem of self-identity. There is awareness of individual “feelings” — or parts of the body/Self — and also of their unity or totality as “I.” But the “true” or absolute “master” of the Self — the underlying essence, meaning or identity of the totality of feelings (contents of consciousness) — lies like a secret shadow beneath or within that plurality, that chaos. “He has essence (identity) but no form (shape)”: this essence is the agent of action, for “He can act — that is certain.” The very source of the sage’s knack of spontaneous action is this hidden and unnameable self-essence — like Lao-tzu’s *Tao* “hidden (*yin*) with no name,” or “something nebulous” — because this pragmatic power arises from the no-Self, the fusion of Self and Other. Graham translates the *fei-fi wu-wo, fei-wo wu so-ch'ü* 非彼無我, 非我無所取, which Watson takes as “Without (feelings) we would not exist; without us they would have nothing to take hold of,” like this: “Without an Other there is no Self, without Self no choosing one thing rather than another.”<sup>43</sup> The implication is, of course, that (in some way) there is no Other (no feelings, no pluralistic contents of consciousness) and so also no Self, and so also no “choosing one thing rather than another,” but rather a relativity and inter-changeableness of all words/things, a “big saying.”

The problem of ego seeking its “essence” is the play of ego and ego-image: we can’t seem to have one (the thing, the signified) without the other (the word, image, signifier), and yet in the very act of thinking or naming the “object” (Self) the ground seems to disappear from under us. It is, perhaps, a problem of the *différance* that always underlies the signification of things: self-identity, like any sort of identity, depends on a matching of signifier and signified.<sup>44</sup> But when Chuang-tzu asks, “how can (my

contents) keep order among themselves?" we may discern two possible approaches to the problem of the *différance*. Given that there is no (logocentric) Heaven-soul or heart/mind/master which clearly "orders" the body/Self, it may be that the Self is self-ordering, that is, ordered through the self-ordering of all the parts. (Needham emphasizes the *chih-ling* 自令, self-ordering nature of Lao-tzu's Tao.<sup>45</sup>) Or, as Graham suggests, "Isn't (the heart) merely one of many organs each with its own functions within an order which comes from beyond us, from the Way?"<sup>46</sup> Of course, given the sage's self-Tao interfusion and reversal, this again comes no doubt to the same thing.

In moving from the cosmogonic image of "breathing earth" to the explicit problem of self-identity at the outset of chapter 2, Chuang-tzu announces his attack — in a manner not wholly unlike that of Nagarjuna or Derrida — on conventional logic. Indeed, the conventional logic of disputation of the "One Hundred Schools" is already symbolized, or set up for mockery, in the blowing of earth's wind through the ten thousand hollows, and (most explicitly) in the "piping of man." As Graham explains:

Chuang-tzu's parable of the wind compares the conflicting utterances of philosophers to the different notes blown by the same breath in the long and short tubes of the pan-pipes, and the noises made by the wind in hollows of different shapes. It is natural for differently constituted persons to think differently; don't try to decide between their opinions, listen to Heaven who breathes through them.<sup>47</sup>

Although Graham seems to assume here the same "ouranocentric" (dare one say logocentric?) priority that Izutsu also does — for one could also say "listen to Earth who breathes through them" or "listen to the interiority into which the exteriority (of heaven) disappears" — it is clear that the image is meant, in one of its several uses, to represent the "conflicting utterances" of Confucians, Mohists and Sophists, several of whom (e.g., Confucius, Hui-tzu, the Sophist Kung-sun Lung) appear in Chuang-tzu's text "in person" (as characters in the various "disputations") or through their "utterances." We know that the "saying" of earth/body can represent the sage's "big saying" that under-cuts or "embraces" the "little saying" of philosophers that clearly distinguishes "Self" and "Other," "this" and "that"; perhaps it expresses the little saying and (underlying) big saying

at the same time. Shortly after the "loss of identity" passage, Chuang-tzu says:

夫言非吹也，言者有言，其所言者特未定也。果有言邪？其未嘗有言邪？其以為異於聲音，亦有辯乎，其無辯乎？道惡乎隱而有真偽？言惡乎隱而有是非？道惡乎往而不存？言惡乎存而不可？……故有儒墨之是非，以是其所非而非其所是。欲是其所非而非其所是，則莫若以明。

Saying is not blowing breath, saying says something; the only trouble is that what it says is never fixed. Do we really say something? Or have we never said anything? If you think it different from the twitter of fledgelings, is there proof of the distinction? Or isn't there any proof? By what is the Way hidden, that there should be a genuine or a false? By what is saying darkened, that sometimes "That's it" (*shih* 是) and sometimes "That's not" (*fei* 非)? Wherever we walk how can the Way be absent? Whatever the standpoint how can saying be unallowable? . . . And so we have the "That's it, that's not" of Confucians and Mohists, by which what is it for one of them for the other is not, what is not for one of them for the other is. If you wish to affirm what they deny and deny what they affirm, the best means is illumination (*ming* 明).<sup>48</sup>

The Tao, or "saying" (*yen* 言), like the smooth surface of the "uncarved block" in Lao-tzu, is hidden (*yin* 隱) beneath the/its distinctions which are carved on its surface, the discriminations of language or little saying such as *chên wei* 真偽, true/false and *shih/fei* 是非, "right and wrong" in Watson's translation, which thus seems to give the logical-disputational *shih/fei* an explicitly moral tone.<sup>49</sup> But is the Tao to be identified with *yen* 言 ("saying") here? They are either identified or closely related in their common obscurity and namelessness: this Tao (or big saying) is nameless not just in the sense of having no name but also, as we know, in the sense of not "naming" or "saying" things, that is, not making distinctions. As such, it is the deep ground underlying all distinctions, the disappearing ground of the sage's praxis and spillover saying that interchanges meanings. To see the disappearing ground upon which all (opposed) meanings are based is to see with *ming* 明, illumination or clarity.

Closely related to the *shih/fei* 是非, "That's it/That's not" (or "right/

wrong”), if not indeed finally the same thing, are Chuang-tzu’s “disputational” *pi/shih* 彼是, “Other/It” for Graham and “that/this” for Watson. These terms are “played” in Chuang-tzu’s continuing mockery of logical disputation in the following passage:

是亦彼也，彼亦是也。彼亦一是非，此亦一是非。果且有彼是乎哉？果且無彼是乎哉？彼是莫得其偶，謂之道樞。樞始得其環中，以應無窮。是亦一無窮，非亦一無窮也。故曰莫若以明。

What is It is also Other, what is Other is also It. There they say “That’s it, that’s not” from one point of view, here we say “That’s it, that’s not” from another point of view. Are there really It and Other? Or really no It and Other? Where neither It nor Other finds its opposite is called the axis of the Way (*Tao shu* 道樞). When once the axis is found at the centre of the circle there is no limit to responding with either, on the one hand no limit to what is *it*, on the other no limit to what is not. Therefore I say: the best means is Illumination (明).<sup>50</sup>

This “axis of the Way” – suggestive as it is of the cosmogonic earth-image that is simultaneously grounded and groundless, rotating in directionless space – is “where neither it nor other finds its opposite” (*pi shih mo te ch’i ou* 彼是莫得其偶). They cannot find their opposites because their opposites are hidden inside themselves, that is, there *are* finally no opposites, no oppositions. And so as the great earth/Chaos rotates on its axis of Tao, east/west and day/night are constantly interchanged, losing their absolute identities. “Simultaneously with being alive one dies, and simultaneously with dying one is alive,” 方生方死，方死方生，as Chuang-tzu says. Or, as Heraclitus says: “And as the same thing there exists in us living and dead and the waking and the sleeping and young and old: for these things having changed round are those, and those having changed round are these.”<sup>51</sup>

The ambiguity of Chuang-tzu’s *shih* 是 – “That’s it,” “Right,” “It,” “This” -- as a logical term need not necessarily be a problem, since we are anyway meant to glimpse the underlying “chaos” and unity of things. To translate the *pi/shih* as “objective/subjective,” as do both Giles and (following him apparently) Meishi Tsai in a recent essay, seems to narrow and “ethnocentric,” unnecessarily delimiting the wide scope (or “chaos”) of possible meaning. On the other hand, it’s also true that a close “logical” study of

Chuang-tzu is rendered extremely difficult — or relative, or equivocal, or indeed meaningless — by the extreme concision and repetition of his Chinese, especially in the discursive passages. Such a study is in any case beyond our present means, but for those working with English translations it may be crucial to notice a distinction — apparently not noticed by many — made by Graham between Chuang-tzu's *wei shih* 爲是, "The 'That's it' which deems," and his *yin shih* 因是, "The 'that's it' which goes by circumstance." Graham explains:

It was also recognized in current disputation (as we find it in the Mohist *Canons*) that one can say both "Y is long" (in relation to X) and "Y is short" (in relation to Z), and that even with words such as "black" and "white" which are not comparative one has to decide whether to "go by" (*yin*) the black parts or the white when deeming someone a "black man." Chuang-Tzu sees it as the lesson of disputation that one is entitled to affirm or deny anything of anything. . . . "The 'That's it' which deems" (*wei shih*): in disputation over whether an object fits the name "ox," the object is "deemed" (*wei*) an ox by the judgement "That's it" (*shih*). Chuang-tzu allows the flexible "That's it' which goes by circumstance" (*yin shih*), but rejects absolutely the rigid "That's it' which deems."<sup>52</sup>

We get the *yin shih*, for example, in this passage just after the "hiding of Tao": "If going by circumstance that's it then going by circumstance that's not, if going by circumstance that's not then going by circumstance that's it. This is why the sage does not take this course, but opens things up to the light of Heaven; his too is a 'That's it' which goes by circumstance" 因是因非, 因非因是, 是以聖人不由, 向照之於天, 亦因是也. Graham comments: "Here Chuang-tzu tries to discredit disputation by the objection that at any moment of change both alternatives will be admissible. . . . any statement will remain inadmissible at the moment when it has just become admissible."<sup>53</sup> But this awareness of the sage, spontaneously attuned to the "moment of change" (and one thinks too of Jung's Preface to the *I Ching*), is just his knack of "big saying" as a ("spillover" or equilibrium-maintaining) "That's it' which goes by circumstance," the relativistic "That's it' which stands on disappearing ground."<sup>54</sup>

As for the "That's it' which deems," Chuang-tzu tells us that when it

……是舉……恢恠譎怪，道通爲一。其分也，成也；其成也，毀也。凡物無成與毀，復通爲一。惟達者知通爲一，爲是不用而寓諸庸。庸也者，用也；用也者，通也；通也者，得也；適得而幾矣。因是已。已而不知其然，謂之道。

... picks out ... things however peculiar or incongruous, the Way interchanges them and deems them one. Their dividing is formation, their formation is dissolution; all things whether forming or dissolving in reverting interchange and are deemed to be one. Only the man who sees right through knows how to interchange and deem them one; the "That's it" which deems" he does not use, but finds for them lodging-places in the usual (*yü* ... *yung* 寓 ... 庸). The "usual" is the usable (*yung* 用), the "usable" is the interchangeable (*t'ung* 通), to see as "interchangeable" is to grasp (*te* 得), and once you grasp them you are almost there. The *yin shih* comes to an end, and when it is at an end, that of which you do not know what is so of it you call the "Way."<sup>55</sup>

The sage does not use the *wei shih*, "That's it" which deems," but rather finds for things "lodging-places in the usual," that is, temporary points of rest or "meaning" in ordinary or everyday discourse. This sounds again like the sage's praxis of spillover saying, or perhaps his *yin shih*, that shifts easily between opposite meanings and interchanges them. He may use the *yin shih* but does not use the *wei shih*; only Tao itself interchanges things/meanings "and deems them one" (*tao-t'ung wei-i* 道通爲一). In terms of the contemplative and pragmatic sides of the sage's "big saying," perhaps we might try to see a relation between, on the one hand, the *wei shih* and the contemplative vision of the image of unity, the deep ground that falls into nothing, and, on the other, the *yin shih* and the pragmatic dance of equilibrium on the disappearing surface. The heavy emphasis on everyday pragmatism is unmistakable in this passage: "The usual is the usable, the usable is the interchangeable, the interchangeable is grasping (*t'ung yeh chê, te yeh* 通也者, 得也) . . ." But the pragmatism of using the *yin shih* or "interchange-saying" is perhaps finally not distinguishable from the pragmatism of not using the *wei shih*, the deeming-saying, i.e., of hot-saying.

Echoing the above passage, a little later in Chapter 2 we hear:

化聲之相待，若其不相待。和之以天倪，因之以曼衍，所以窮年也。忘年忘義，振於無竟，故寓諸無竟。

It makes no difference whether the voices in their transformations have each other to depend on or not. Smooth them out on the whetstone of Heaven, use them to go by and let the stream find its own channels; this is the way to live out your years. Forget the years, forget duty, be shaken into motion by the limitless, and so find things their lodging-places in the limitless.

What is meant by "Smooth them out on the whetstone of Heaven"? Treat as "it" even what is not, treat as "so" even what is not. If the "it" is really it, there is no longer a difference for disputation from what is not it; if the "so" is really so, there is no longer a difference for disputation from what is not so. (Graham, p. 60)

We may assume that here what is "really it" is the unnameable absolute ground of unity and Being (that falls into Non-being). This ground identifies all things, and so absorbs both so and not-so, it and not-it. We also suppose that this "really it" cannot be "deemed" or said. But Graham's comment on the passage gives us food for thought:

Since anything may at one time or another be picked out as "it," (*shih* 是), if it were really the name of something (in Western grammatical terms, if it were not a pronoun but a noun) it would be the name of everything. Chuang-tzu likes the thought that instead of selecting and approving something as "it" one may use the word to embrace and approve everything, to say "Yes!" to the universe. . . . (Graham, p. 60)

This saying "Yes!" to the universe — a kind of Nietzschean yes-saying or affirmation of life, perhaps — sounds like a kind of absolute *wei shih* or "That's it" which deems." But this the sage only says, perhaps, in the not-saying. On the other hand, the pragmatic admonition to "Smooth them out on the whetstone of Heaven, use them to go by. . . ." sounds like the *yin shih*; it is, in fact, an echo of the description of *chih yen* 卮言, "spillover saying" that we have already heard at the opening of chapter 27, *yü yen* 寓言 ("Language"). It is clear enough, however, in the passage in chapter

27, that the spillover saying itself falls into the abyss of not-saying, or that its priority too is to the ultimate "evenness" (smoothness, oneness, unity) of the smooth surface of not-saying:

厄言日出，和以天倪，因以曼衍，所以窮年。不言則齊，齊與言不齊，言與齊不齊也，故曰無言。言無言，終身言，未嘗不言；終身不言，未嘗不言。

"Spillover" saying is new every day, smooth it out on the whetstone of heaven (*hè-yi t'ien-ni* 和以天倪, Ware: "harmony with the horizon"; Giles: "equilibrium" of heaven). Use it to go by and let the stream find its own channels, this is the way to last out your years. If you refrain from saying, everything is even; the even is uneven with saying, saying is uneven with the even. Hence the aphorism "In saying he says nothing." If in saying you say nothing, all your life you refuse to say without ever failing to say, all your life you say without ever saying.

(Graham, p. 107)

As mentioned at the outset of this investigation, Chuang-tzu's big saying has certain affinities with Nagarjuna's Madhyamika Buddhist logic. Buddhist *sunyata* (or *nirvana*) as possible analogue for Chuang-tzu's *hsu* 虛 ("void") or *wu* 無 ("Nothing") comes to mind, as does the Nagarjunist *prajnapti* as possible analogue (or metaphor) for Chuang-tzu's disappearing ground, or *pratitya samutpada* (dependent co-arising) perhaps for *hsiang sheng* (相生, "mutual arising"), or for the "Chaos of things," or *t'ung* 通 ("interchange"). The central problem for both philosophers seems to be the problem of "(self-) identity" as a signifier-signified or "factor-mirror" relationship which, upon closer scrutiny, breaks down or dissolves. The Nagarjunist *prajnapti* is a name that "points" to a (logocentric) concept or idea, which idea itself, on closer analysis, dissolves to reveal a still deeper "ground" or "core." "For example, the Nagarjunist *prasangika* compresses and cracks the theory of entitative causality (the *prajnapti*, in this case), but the theory leads to relational causality, which is put under erasure but exposes *sunyata*."<sup>56</sup> It may be in his focus on the *prajnapti* of *svabhava*, self-existence that Nagarjuna comes closest to the play of reversal and disappearing ground in Chuang-tzu. But the Indian, with his exhaustive tetrallemmas (X is Y, X is not-Y, X is both Y and not-Y, X is neither Y nor not-Y) is clearly more systematic and "serious" than the playful Chuang-tzu with his paradoxes, images and

metaphors.

In the modern French "deconstructionist" philosophy of Derrida and his followers, we have a more intrinsically playful and thus perhaps closer model. As Magliola explains it:

Derrida's strategy will be, then, to assault the principle of identity, that is, the theory of signified and signifier, as it functions in explanations of language and of how language composes the identity of things. Then he feels he can, step by step, "close in" on the citadel which is personal consciousness itself, and its precious "center," the *nominans-nomen* (the principle of personal identity). . . . Derrida wants to argue that . . . all so-called signs can only be *pure signifiers*, that is, *only* signifiers, through and through.<sup>57</sup>

The signifieds or "named things," "named ideas" themselves become, for Derrida, signifiers, *prajnaptis* which too will dissolve, just "names," and the traditional logocentric metaphysics which sees signifiers (names) mirroring or imaging "transcendental signifieds" (concepts) gets reversed, so that finally there is only the movement inward, the pointing toward further and further (transcendental) signifiers. Chuang-tzu's awareness of names and what cannot be named, indeed the absurdity of attempting to name (or demarcate) things/ideas/feelings, places him in the same domain with Derrida. But in their common ground they are even closer, for they share an awareness of the "absence in presence," the disappearing ground. As Ms. Chien says:

The best way for us to see the structure of Derrida's trace and Chuang-tzu's Tao is to start from the idea of "alterity," which means a totally other, or absence/otherness of self or meaning. Since a sign is never completely transparent, part of the meaning is absent. That which is hidden leaves its trace in the visible sign. The strategy of "taking inside out" or exposing the double register of a sign is exercised by Derrida and Chuang-tzu, when they try a counter reading of their adversary's discourse in order to cut away the adversary's ground of knowing. . . . In Chuang-tzu's kidnapping the dangerous dialectical closure of Confucius's Tao, we have already seen that Chuang-tzu's Tao resists dialectical opposition in order to escape from such a

closure. Therefore, if Derrida's differance and trace aim at deconstructing, not privileging, another ontological truth, Chuang-tzu's Tao aims at the same thing: Tao, which is neither a word nor a concept, attempts "not a theological thematics but the theme of strategy." For Chuang-tzu this strategy is carried out by using paradox.<sup>58</sup>

Although Chuant-tzu still seems to maintain a traditional mystic's (logocentric?) interest in "that which is hidden," or Tao or Saying, as well as in "its trace in the visible sign," it is clear that his "Spillover saying" that interchanges meanings by un-grounding them is an attack on "dialectical opposition" and on "closure" (firm-groundedness). Indeed, there seems to be much room for fruitful deconstructionist interpretation of Chuang-tzu, who, after all, in the off-logical pursuit of his (off-) Way is constantly deconstructing or cutting away his own ground.

However, I think the closest analogue to Chuang-tzu's Taoism in modern philosophy, as Chang Chung-yuan surely also feels, is Martin Heidegger.<sup>59</sup> This may be because, in the first place, Heidegger is a poetic philosopher whose metaphors and images are really, in a way, the core of his "saying." And in the second place, Heidegger wants to get back to the beginning and the *ground* of metaphysics — before logic or "metaphysics" as traditionally understood — and so dwells in his thinking near the imagistic or "holistic" thinking/saying of Being of the early Greek philosophers. And so too he appears to dwell in the neighborhood of Lao-tzu and Chuang-tzu. Although Derrida's *differance* also seems to strike a sympathetic chord in Chuang-tzu, it is Heidegger's "ontological difference" — which in some way influenced Derrida — that, at least in my view, comes closest to the same ground, the same soil. Heidegger speaks of Nothing as the horizon (of possibility of meaning) of Being, and in *Introduction to Metaphysics* talks about the *Grund* ("ground" or "fundamental reason") that falls away into the *Abgrund*, "abyss." In his Preface to the Third Edition (1949) of *Vom Wesen des Grundes* (*The Essence of Reasons*), Heidegger says:

Nothingness is the Not of being and thus is Being experienced from the point of view of being. The Ontological Difference is the Not between being and Being. Yet Being, as the Not to being, is no more a nothingness in the sense of a *nihil negativum* than the Difference, as the Not between being and Being, is

merely a distinction of the intellect (*ens rationis*).

The nihilating Not of Nothingness and the nihilating Not of the Difference are not, indeed, identical. But they are the same in the sense that both belong together insofar as the Being of being reveals its essence. This sameness is a matter which merits thought. . . .<sup>60</sup>

In thinking of Chuang-tzu, we must keep in mind not only the (contemplative) "nihilating Not of Nothingness" or of the "Difference" as "Being experienced from the point of view of being"; we must also remember the differential "not" of the sage's pragmatic return-to-earth and everydayness (Heidegger's *Alltäglichkeit*) that comes the other way, looking at the "chaos" of being-in-the-world from the transcendent viewpoint of Being. Or, for Chuang-tzu, are the two directions of the "not" reversible and finally identical? "This sameness merits thought" echoes Lao-tzu in chapter 1: "This sameness (of essence and outcome) we call the mystery (*hsüan*), . . . The Doorway whence issued all secret essences" 同謂之玄 . . . 衆妙之門. And so, at least for he who would learn to make the "body like a withered tree and the mind like dead ashes," the way is pointed for further investigations. As Chuang-tzu says at the end of chapter 3, "Though the grease burns out of the torch, the fire passes on, and no one knows where it ends" 指窮於爲薪火傳也, 不知其盡也 (Watson), a rather obscure sentence which Legge translates: "What we can point to are the faggots that have been consumed; but the fire is transmitted elsewhere."<sup>61</sup>

## Notes

1. This is essentially D. C. Lau's translation of the opening lines of chapter 1 in *Lao Tzu, Tao Te Ching* (London: Penguin Books, 1963).
2. Kirk and Raven, *The Presocratic Philosophers* (Cambridge: University Press, 1963), Chapter 1, p. 24.
3. Burton Watson, *Chuang Tzu: Basic Writings* (N.Y.: Columbia U. Press, 1964), Chapter 2, p. 31. Unless otherwise denoted, subsequent quotations from the *Chuang Tzu* will be drawn from Watson's translation.
4. This is close to A. C. Graham's translation in *Chuang-tzu: The Inner Chapters* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1981), Chapter 2, p. 52 or rather mixes it with Watson's translation, Chapter 2, p. 34. Watson, following the newer interpretation here of Chang Ping-lin, takes the *yin* 隱 as "rely upon" rather than "hidden by" or "darkened by."
5. Though it might be hard to distinguish ground (*ti* 地) from earth (地) in Chinese; this may or may not be an important point to keep in mind.
6. The emphasis is more on "uses"; I leave the relation between "senses" and "uses" as a moot (and perhaps significant) point; "sense" is more "conceptual."

7. See Magliola's treatment of Nagarjuna in *Derrida on the Mend* (Indiana: Purdue University Press, 1984), Part 3; see his treatment of Derrida in Part 1; Heidegger is most explicit on *Grund* and *Abgrund* in *Introduction to Metaphysics*.
8. Watson's note on p. 28: "The logician Hui Shih who, as pointed out by Waley, . . . 'stands for intellectuality as opposed to imagination.' Hui-tzu, with his 'hair-splitting semantics,' is not far from the Sophist Kung-sun Lung."
9. Earth as "heaven-earth" (often translated "nature" or "universe") would seem, on the face of things, to give "heaven" (*t'ien* 天) a geocentric weight/priority.
10. Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilization in China* (Cambridge: Cambridge U. Press, 1954), Volume II, Chapter 13, p. 228.
11. Graham, *ibid.*, p. 50.
12. The Greek sense of *ex-stasis* as the (human) standing out from Being is made much of by Heidegger; immanence and imminence are almost interchangeable here.
13. Graham, p. 107. The Chinese is taken from *Chuang-Tzu tu-pen*, (Taipei: *san-min shu-chü* Press, 1983), pp. 317-18.
14. *Ibid.*
15. *Ibid.*, p. 62.
16. *Ibid.*
17. Toshihiko Izutsu, "The Archetypal Image of Chaos in Chuang Tzu" in *Anagogic Qualities of Literature*, ed. Joseph Strelka (Univ. Park: The Penn. State University Press, 1971), pp. 269 ff.
18. Arthur Waley's translation in *The Way and Its Power* (N.Y.: Grove Press, 1958).
19. In his translation here, Watson takes the obscure *Pao kuang*, 葆光, as "Shaded light"; Graham claims "there is a plausible variant, *Yao-kuang*, 'Benetnash', the star at the far end of the handle of the Dipper" on p. 57. (Which dipper?)
20. Watson takes this title, *Hsiao yao yu* 逍遙游, as "Free and Easy Wandering," Graham as "Going wandering without a destination" and Giles, characteristically, as "Transcendental Bliss." (He often alludes to Emerson in his running commentary). Giles, trans., *Chuang Tzu* (London: Unwin Paperbacks, 1889).
21. Graham, p. 107.
22. Giles' translation, p. 266.
23. Ware's translation, *The Sayings of Chuang Tzu* (Taipei: Confucius Pub. Co.), p. 344; Graham, p. 107.
24. Giles, p. 267.
25. Giles, p. 29.
26. Needham, Chapter 13, p. 222.
27. Richard Wilhelm and C. F. Baynes, trans., *I Ching* (N.Y.: Bollingen Foundation, 1950), Book I, "The Text," p. 97.
28. Lau's translation of Chapter 16. The following lines go: 復命日常, 知常日明, "return destiny is constant, know constant is enlightenment."
29. Kirk and Raven, *ibid.*, Chapter VI, p. 289 (Heraclitus' Fragment 201).
30. Izutsu, *ibid.*, p. 275.
31. For "cosmic tree" with roots in earth and branches in heaven, see Eliade and many others. One must be careful when speaking of the "imaging" nature of Chinese ideograms, as this is true within limits; Fenellosa & Pound go too far.
32. Izutsu, pp. 277-78.
33. For "Benetnash star" see my note 19 above.
34. Graham translates the beginning of this passage: ". . . ten thousand hollow places

- burst out howling . . .," leaving the matter ambiguous. But Giles translates: "Caves and dells of hill and forest, hollows in huge trees. . . ."
35. Kirk and Raven, *ibid.*, p. 188 (Fragment 199).
  36. Izutsu, pp. 282-83.
  37. Kirk and Raven, Chapter 1, p. 30.
  38. Lin Yu-t'ang takes it as "something nebulous" in *The Sayings of Lao Tzu* (Taipei: Confucius Publishing Co.); Chang Chung-yuan's "gathering chaos" appears in *Tao: A New Way of Thinking* (Taipei, 1975), where he often shows Heidegger's influence.
  39. Kirk and Raven, Chapter 1, note on Hesiod's *Theogony* 695 ff., pp. 28-29.
  40. Both *sunyata* and *hsü* 虛 may be a kind of "fertile void." I briefly compare Nagarjuna's Buddhism with Chuang-tzu's Taoism at the end of this article. To take Nothing as simple absence of Being is different from taking it as the difference ("betweenness") of heaven-earth or Being-beings (the "ontological difference" in Heidegger, for which see the conclusion of this paper).
  41. Izutsu, p. 284.
  42. *Ibid.*, p. 285.
  43. Graham, p. 51.
  44. See Saussure, Derrida or any number of commentators. I have mainly used Magliola, *Derrida on the Mend* (see note 7 above), Part 1.
  45. Needham relates this "internal ordering" of Tao to its de-personalization.
  46. Graham's comment on p. 51. He emphasizes Chuang-tzu's scepticism about "the organ with which we think, which, it may be worth repeating, is not the brain but the heart." (p. 11). (He is speaking of the situation in Chinese, where *hsin*, 心, is translated as both "mind" and "heart.")
  47. Graham's note on p. 49.
  48. Graham's translation, p. 52.
  49. Or perhaps it is meant to have such a tone, in its attack on conventional Confucian ethics; Graham by contrast is extremely "analytic."
  50. Graham, p. 53.
  51. Kirk and Raven, Chapter VI, pp. 189-90 (Fragment 205).
  52. Graham's notes on pp. 52-53 and p. 54.
  53. *Ibid.*, p. 52.
  54. R. Wilhelm & C.F. Baynes, *ibid.* (June speaks of "synchronicity" in this essay.)
  55. Graham's translation on pp. 53-54.
  56. Magliola, *ibid.*, Part 3, p. 106.
  57. *Ibid.*, Part 1, pp. 6, 11.
  58. Chien Chi-huei, "Theft's Way": A Comparative Study of Chuang Tzu's Tao and Derridean Trace," an essay written at Tamkang University, Tamsui, Taiwan. Chien cites Mou Tsung-shan's analysis in *Nineteen Chapters on Chinese Philosophy*, claiming "he rightly points out that *wu* (無, nothing) is not an ontological concept and that the relation between *yu* (有, being) and *wu* is not reconciliation but circularity. He says that *wu* and *yu* cannot be separated but operate in a 'deep' and 'profound' way . . . Mou thus says that the emphasis of Chuang Tzu's Tao is on *hua tiao* (化掉), which literally means 'to dissolve' - 'to deconstruct' . . ."
  59. Chang Chung-yuan, *ibid.*
  60. Martin Heidegger, *The Essence of Reasons* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1969), p. 3.
  61. Watson's note on p. 49.

