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Reconciling Tension between Plurality and Unity – A Dialogue between Robert Musil’s *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften* and Taiyan Zhang’s “Qiwulunshi”

DISSERTATION

submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements  
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in German

by

Yao Pei

Dissertation Committee:  
Professor David Pan, Chair  
Associate Professor Kai Evers  
Professor John Smith  
Professor Michael Fuller

2022



# DEDICATION

To

Educators who hold high moral standards to themselves

And

Dedicate themselves to helping others to freely unfold their potentials

Constantly

Practice understanding

Pursue wisdom

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## GLOSSARY

(Buddhist terms in the alphabetical order of the first character in Chinese *pinyin*<sup>1</sup>)

### A

阿賴耶識 (*alaiyeshi, ālaya-vijñāna*): ālaya consciousness

阿陀那識 (*atuonashi, ādāna-vijñāna*): ādāna consciousness, appropriating consciousness

阿摩羅識 (*amoluoshi, amalavijñāna*)

庵摩羅識 (*anmoluo shi, amala-vijñāna*): amala consciousness

### B

本識 (*benshi, mūla-vijñāna*): root consciousness

遍計所執 (*bianjisuo zhi, kun brtags*): fabricated nature

比量 (*biliang, anumāna-pramāṇa*): reasoning

般若宗 (*bore zong, prajñāpāramitā*): the sect of prajñā/wisdom

### C

剎那 (*chana, kṣaṇa*): moment, very short instant

常見 (*changjian, śāśvata-dṛṣṭi*): eternalistic

成唯識論 (*Cheng weishi lun, Vijñapti-mātratā-siddhi-śāstra*): Discourse on the Theory of

Consciousness-Only/Yogācāra, Demonstration of Nothing but Consciousness

成心 (*chengxin*): Completed mind

### D

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<sup>1</sup> official romanization system for Standard Mandarin Chinese in China.

大乘起信論 (*Dasheng qixinlun, Mahāyāna śraddhotpāda śāstra*): *Awakening of Mahāyāna*

*Faith*

大乘入楞伽經 (*Dasheng rulengqie jing, Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra*)

等流心 (*dengliu xin*): mind retaining similar tendencies before and after karmic transformations

對待 (*duidai, apekṣya*): attitude towards each other

F

法空 (*fakong, ātma-sūnyatā*): the emptiness of dharmas

法執 (*fazhi, dharma-grāha*): grasping the dharmas

分別我執 (*fenbie wozhi*): attachment to a self by discrimination

J

見分 (*jianfen, darśanabhāga*): cognitive discrimination, subjects, the ability to perceive objects,  
conceptualize

決定心 (*jueding xin, niścitāc cittāt*): mind of certainty

決定藏論 (*Juedingzang lun, Viniścayasamgrahaṇī*): Compendium of Ascertainments

俱生我執 (*jusheng wozhi*): inborn attachment to self

K

空宗 (*kongzong, śūnya*): emptiness schools

L

兩行 (*lianghang*): walking two ways

亂識 (*luanshi, bhrānti-vijñāna*): disturbed consciousness

N



涅槃 (*niepan, nirvāṇa*): nirvana

## P

平等性智 (*pingdengxingzhi, samatā-jñāna*): wisdom of equality, cognition of essential identity

## R

染淨心 (*ranjing xin*): mental state of impurity and purity

人類公理 (*renlei gongli*): universal principles of mankind

如來藏緣起 (*rulaizang yuanqi, tathāgatagarbha pratītya-samutpāda*): dependent arising/co-origination from the *tathāgatagarbha*/matrix of the thus-come-one

## S

三量 (*sanliang*): three meanings of cognition

善根 (*shangen, kuśala-mūla*): good roots

攝大乘論 (*She dasheng lun, Mahāyāna-saṃgraha-śāstra*): *Compendium of the Great Vehicle*

聖教量 (*shengjiaoliang, āgama-pramāṇa*): the sages words

生空 (*shengkong*): the emptiness of person

十地經論 (*Shidi jing lun, Daśabhūmivyākhyāna*): *Commentary on the Discourse on the Ten*

*Stages [of the Bodhisattva Path], or 地論 (dilun): Stages Treatise*

率爾心 (*shuaier xin*): immediate or instantaneous, the first impression

俗諦 (*sudi, saṃvṛti-satya*): conventional truth

## T

天倪 (*tianni*): Heavenly Transitions

天下大同 (*tianxia datong*): the Great Harmony

W

唯識 (*weishi, vijñapti-mātratā*): the Consciousness-Only/Yogācāra School

唯識三十論頌 (*Weishi sanshi lun song, Trīṃśikā*): *Thirty Verses on the Vijñapti-mātra Treatise*

我執 (*wozhi, ātma-grāha*): grasping the self

无方分 (*wufangfen*): no space

無垢識 (*wugoushi*): spotless consciousness

無盡緣起 (*wujin yuanqi*): inexhaustible conditioned arising

無漏法 (*wuloufa*): dharmas of purity

無因之論 (*wuyin zhilun, asat-kārya-vāda*): the doctrine of non-causality

X

相 (*xiang*): mark (*lakṣaṇa*), perceptual image (*ākāra*), object, thing

相分 (*xiangfen, nimittabhāga*): objects, phenomena

現量 (*xianliang, pratyakṣa-pramāṇa*): perception

現識 (*xianshi*): perceptual consciousness

尋求心 (*xunqiu xin, paryeṣakam cittam*): discursive thought

虛妄分別 (*xuwang fenbie, vikalpa*): false discrimination

Y

業識 (*yeshi*): karmic consciousness

意根 (*yigen, manêndriya*): the ability to think, faculty of thought

一切種子識 (*yiqie zhongzishi, sarvabījaka-citta*): consciousness with all the seeds

有方分 (*youfangfen*): space which can be split infinitely

緣起 (*yuanyi, pratīya-samutpāda*): dependent arising, also 緣生 (*yuansheng*): produced by

causal conditions

瑜伽師地論 (*Yuqie shidi lun, Yogācārabhūmi-Śāstra*)

Z

真諦 (*zhendi, paramārtha-satya*): the ultimate truth (also 勝諦, *shengdi*)

執 (*zhi, upādāna*): grasping

真如 (*zhenru, tathatā*): the essence of the absolute real, thusness, the absoluteness of the real

中論 (*Zhonglun, Madhyamika*)

眾同分(心) (*zhongtongfenxin, sattva-sāmya*): common nature, commonality of sentient beings

轉識 (*zhuanshi*): transforming consciousness

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## ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Reconciling Tension between Plurality and Unity – A Dialogue between Robert Musil’s *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften* and Taiyan Zhang’s “Qiwulunshi”

by

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Professor David Pan, Chair

This dissertation studies how German-Austrian author Robert Musil (1880-1942) and Chinese author Zhang Taiyan (1869-1936) pursue the same project: reconciling the tension between a plural phenomenal world and an inconceivable in their respective texts *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften* (*The Man without Qualities*) and “Qiwulunshi” (齊物論釋, An Interpretation of ‘Equalizing Assessments of Things’). To conduct this comparative research, the dissertation develops the method which sees the same project both authors pursue as the common basis for comparison. The result of this comparison can be summarized in four similarities and two major differences. The dissertation finds out that both Musil’s and Zhang’s texts negate a single universal discourse dominating the phenomenal world. Instead, they believe that this realm should embrace a plurality of perspectives. Both texts also aspire for a metaphysical realm which unites the plurality in the phenomenal realm. However, given that

the metaphysical realm is nothingness, and it precedes human consciousness, the unity remains an inconceivable realm. The plural phenomenal world and the united metaphysical world seem to be incompatible to each other. Facing this problem, both texts attempt to reconcile the tension by seeking a synthesized representation which includes both the plural phenomenal world and the unified metaphysical world. However, there are two major differences which can be perceived in both texts. Whereas Musil's text puts its focus on the human world and believe in human potentials, Zhang's text is not only confined within this human realm, and he acknowledges the insurmountable limitation of human powers. Building on confidence in human capacity, Musil's text constantly explores different forms of human interactions. Therefore, the novel becomes the optimal genre for Musil to extend his endless explorations in the human. In contrast, Zhang sees the limitation of humans and he therefore negates human's chances to approach the metaphysical realm. As a result, Zhang sole explorations in the human world cannot bring him further. Zhang thus does not need to further explore human potentials in a novel, but rather lays out his logical analysis in an argumentative form. The dissertation follows the MLA style.



## Chapter 1 Introduction

*Robert Musil (1880-1942) and Zhang Taiyan (1869-1936)*

Robert Musil<sup>2</sup> from the German-Austrian tradition and Zhang Taiyan<sup>3</sup> from China are contemporaneous writers. Both pursue similar projects which resist aspects of modernization in their own separate contexts: challenging a unified universal discourse and embracing differences, reestablishing metaphysics, and treating the phenomenal and the metaphysical worlds equally.

These three projects are analogous reactions against three similar social trends. First, in order to challenge a dominant social discourse, Musil and Zhang argue for embracing different perspectives in the phenomenal world. Second, due to the inadequacy of language, human capacity to approach the metaphysical realm is put into question. Musil and Zhang both aim at representing the metaphysics beyond human conceptualization. Third, it is controversial to determine a relationship between the phenomenal and the metaphysical worlds. Both Musil and Zhang try to balance both worlds and treat them equally.

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<sup>2</sup> Robert Musil (1880-1942), an Austrian writer. Musil graduated from a military academy in Vienna and then switched to mechanical engineering. However, he never gave up his interest in literature and philosophy. In 1909, Musil completed his doctorate with a thesis on Ernst Mach. He joined the army during WWI. After the war, he returned to Vienna and continued his literary writings, including his masterpiece of *MoE*. In 1938, he left for exile in Switzerland with his Jewish wife, Martha.

<sup>3</sup> See appendix D.

The aforementioned topics are very well exemplified in both masterpieces: Musil's *The Man without Qualities* (*Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, abbreviated as *MoE*)<sup>4</sup> and Zhang's "Qiwulunshi" (齊物論釋, An Interpretation of 'Equalizing Assessments of Things').<sup>5</sup> This dissertation closely reads both novels and analyses in detail their respective challenges against discourses in their respective backgrounds.

### *Challenging a Universal Discourse*

In the European background, there has been a trend to negate a united universal goal for the human world. For example, in Friedrich Nietzsche's *On Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense*, Nietzsche argues that human should have different opinions towards objects. Thus, there should not be the universal truth. Nietzsche believes that subject and object initially belong to two absolutely different spheres. ("between two absolutely different spheres, as between subject and object" (Nietzsche, 5)). Between these two spheres, "there is no causality, no correctness, and no expression" (Nietzsche, 5). However, human beings create thought systems

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<sup>4</sup> *MoE* (1930-1943) is an unfinished novel written by Robert Musil. The novel takes place in Austro-Hungarian monarchy and describes the council which organizes "Parallel Campaign" – a campaign in preparation for a celebration of the 70 years of the Austrian Emperor Franz Joseph's reign. The councils attempt to identify a great idea which captures the spirit of the Austro-Hungarian empire. Therefore, many philosophical and historical ideas are discussed within this novel, making it a novel of "story of ideas." The novel is divided into three parts. The first part is titled "A Sort of Introduction," in which the main motive and figures of the novel are introduced. Ulrich is introduced as a central figure of the novel who is characterized as "a man without qualities." Ulrich is a member in the council. The second part is named "Pseudoreality Prevails," in which actual attempts to search for the great idea within the group unfold. The third part is entitled "Into the Millennium (The Criminals)," in which the protagonist Ulrich returns to his hometown after the death of his father and meets his younger sister Agathe. Both experience a mystical incestuous relationship. This novel does not have an official ending, but Musil leaves huge number of drafts and notes in manuscript.

<sup>5</sup> See appendix D and E.

to interpret the objective world. For example, Enlightenment thinkers are convinced of progress and human perfection and regard it as a universal truth. In Nietzsche's perspective, this belief is actually only an image generated by "a nerve stimulus" (Nietzsche, 5) to connect between the subject and the object. This image is only a coincidental "appearance" (Nietzsche, 5), but not the universal truth. During the long time period in human history, this idea of progress and human perfection "has been generated millions of times and has been handed down for many generations appears on the same occasion every time for all mankind" (Nietzsche, 5). Therefore, this belief would be consolidated and taken for granted as a universal truth, as if "it were the sole necessary image," and the "strictly causal" counterpart of the "original nerve stimulus." In essence, a cultural convention cannot be regarded as a universal truth. Consequently, Nietzsche questions ideas of "eternal consistency," omnipresence, and fallibility of the laws of nature." "Every person who is familiar with such considerations has no doubt felt a deep mistrust of all idealism of this sort" (Nietzsche, 5).

Nietzsche further gives an example and shows that scientific truth which is in essence only conditional tends to be elevated to a generalized truth. For example, scientists only represent a fraction of truth, the scientific truth. "Just as the bee simultaneously constructs cells and fills them with honey, so science works unceasingly on this great columbarium of concepts" (Nietzsche, 6). Consequently, scientists can only reveal a fraction of reality based on "this great columbarium of concepts" (Nietzsche, 6). Science "is always building new, higher stories and shoring up, cleaning, and renovating the old cells," therefore consolidating this building of concepts. However, the building science is only based on concepts. It's efforts merely "arrange

therein the entire empirical world, which is to say, the anthropomorphic world.” Topics outside of this realm remain untouched to science. Therefore, science only unveils a limited version of truth. However, science sticks to this limited view and tries to “bind his life to reason and its concepts so that he will not be swept away and lost.” Belief in a scientific truth even creates enchantment. Therefore, “man has an invincible inclination to allow himself to be deceived and is ... enchanted with happiness” (Nietzsche, 7). With scientists’ blind devotion to the single notion of scientific truth, science becomes a totalitarian idea which deceives people to see a broader picture.

As a result, a believer in science fails to embrace possibilities, and therefore “keeps falling over and over again into the same ditch” (Nietzsche, 8). The whole scientific task is only an effort to find shelter under only one single reality of scientific concepts. In a world of possibilities, “there are frightful powers which continuously break in upon him” (Nietzsche, 6). These powers are powers “which oppose scientific truth with completely different kinds of ‘truths’” (Nietzsche, 6). Because all the possibilities are various, these different ‘truths’ “bear on their shields the most varied sorts of emblems” (Nietzsche, 6). Scientific works cannot unveil all other “completely different kinds of ‘truth’” (Nietzsche, 6).

In short, the world contains endless possibilities with “completely different kinds of ‘truth’” (Nietzsche, 6). One single discourse such as science only represents a small fraction of the ultimate truth under certain conditions. With changing conditions, then there would be other different versions of truth. Therefore, different possibilities need to be justified, and there is no

representation for the ultimate universal truth. Nietzsche thus negates a totalitarian discourse and introduces different perspectives and possibilities.

Like Nietzsche, Robert Musil is also a representative who reacts against a universal discourse and appeals for possibilities. In his *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften* (abbreviated as *MoE* in this dissertation), Musil introduces the notion of realities and possibilities to question established value systems. Whereas realities represent established value systems and a sense of reality shows people's clinging to one established value system, possibilities are challenges against such value systems and present a crisis of values.

Pursuing the universal ideal is also an important topic in China at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in that China was trying to emulate the Western universal ideal. According to Lianfen Yang, late in the Qing Dynasty (1636-1912), the Western powers brought their cultures to and initiated colonial wars against China. Without advanced technology, China failed in imperial wars and had to sign unequal treaties, ceding territory and paying indemnities. China thus realized the power of Western civilization and tried to imitate the West (Lianfen Yang, 31-39).

In China, there was the process of trying to unite different opinions under one reality. For example, in his *The One-World Philosophy* (*Datong Shu*, 大同書), Kang Youwei (1858-1927) unifies different cultures through the one single idea of the Great Harmony (*tianxia datong*, 天下大同) – the highest social value of unity and prosperity in the Chinese tradition starting from

Confucius. Kang believes *tianxia datong* to be universal principles of mankind (*renlei gongli*, 人類公理), which are carried out through a “a public Parliament” which establishes rules for the world and regulate the implementation of the rules. For example, “national languages must be abolished as being one of the major barriers which perpetuate disunity in the world” (Kang, 99); “measurements, capacities, and weights will be the same for the whole world” (Kang, 100); “spoken and written language should be the same for the whole world” (Kang, 101). This quote shows that Kang wishes to achieve a unification of different cultures and nations under only one world and one measure.

In order to sustain this system unity, Kang still resorts to violence against different opinions. For example,

when an individual state violates [the code] of civilization and the public peace and happiness, and disobeys the public law of the nations (i.e. international law), the public parliament may use the public joint military forces [composed of troops] of the individual states to repress it (Kang, 94).

Further, any privacy such as “private dating by religious leaders or monarchs will not be permitted, in the interests of unification” (Kang, 100). “It will not be permitted to have different systems and different names” (Kang, 100). Any individualism will have to give in to the bigger unity. Kang’s universal unity also requires conformity and oppression without allowing for difference voices and opinions.

Zhang Taiyan vehemently rejects this universal unified discourse. In his article “An Interpretation of ‘A Discussion of the Equalization of Things,’” Zhang Taiyan criticizes the

teleological Darwinism and Hegelian philosophy and wishes for a world of equality in which all different civilizations and cultures are regarded as equally justified possibilities. Although the Chinese discourse represented by Kang Youwei falls back into the attempt for achieving one dominating rule, Zhang Taiyan<sup>6</sup> reopens this discourse and promotes the equality of beings<sup>7</sup> in the world as possibilities. As argued by Murthy, Zhang's discussion of equality implies a celebration of equality among different perspectives (Murthy, 144).

### *Approaching the Unconceivable – Revisiting Metaphysics*

In the European context, the limitation of human conception negates the possibility to approach metaphysics. Friedrich Nietzsche argues for the subjectivity of human perspectives through the example of language. For Nietzsche, human language is merely arbitrary assignment. Human beings arbitrarily “separate things according to gender, designating the tree as masculine and the plant as feminine” (Nietzsche, 2). When we speak of a “snake,” then it implies an ability to “twist itself.” A “worm” also possesses this ability. Therefore, “snake” is not a precise definition for “snake.” It also contains the meanings of “worm” in it. The words of “snake” and “worm” do not differentiate from each other. “Snake” is thus not “an adequate expression” of snake (Nietzsche, 2). As a result, language is created as “the boldest metaphors” (Nietzsche, 3). Therefore, when we “speak of trees, colors, snow, and flowers,” “we possess nothing but metaphors for things” (Nietzsche, 3).

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<sup>6</sup> Zhang, Taiyan (1869-1936), also known as Zhang, Binglin, was a Chinese philologist, philosopher and revolutionary.

<sup>7</sup> Beings in a Heideggerian sense, which refers to things of existence in this world. Existence itself is Being.

Given that the representation of the world through language only unveils metaphors which “correspond in no ways to the original entities,” there should be no ultimate truth which is adaptable to all human beings. Therefore, “the man of truth, the scientist, and the philosopher” who later on “work and build” on language, cannot gain insight into “the essence of things” (Nietzsche, 3). There could be only one single truth: “one original sound-man” in the “entire universe” (Nietzsche, 5). However, what people can perceive in the world are “infinitely multiplied copy of one original picture-man” (Nietzsche, 5) in form of metaphors in language. It is therefore impossible for human beings to understand the truth through language. As can be seen in the previous example, Nietzsche focuses on concrete individual opinions and gives up the attempt to further seek this universal truth in unity.

Robert Musil acts against the Nietzschean relativism and attempts to reestablish the metaphysical world. Musil also sees the limitation of language and believes that it does not lead to the metaphysical world. Musil describes a metaphysics which remains nothingness without any establishment. The novel firstly negates the traditional notion of God. The skeptical world “believe[s] in neither God nor humanity, kings nor morality (Musil, MwQ, 470)” (“glaubt weder an Gott noch an die Humanität, weder an Kronen noch an Sittlichkeit” (Musil, MoE, 432)) This version of metaphysics in *MoE* should be a metaphysics of negation which denies any possible establishment of “any great ideas.” Secondly, Musil builds a metaphysics without establishment. In Agathe’s experiences, it can be described as “dark creation, the abyss of the world” (dunkle Schöpfung, den Abgrund der Welt!) (Musil, MoE, 1090). In this metaphysical



world, there is only darkness and falling into an endless abyss without anything to count on. It is an absolute nothingness.

At the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, many Chinese scholars also tried to negate the concept of the noumenal. This can be seen in the so-called debate of science and philosophy of life (or science and metaphysics debates). This is a debate in 1923 with some of the harshest critics of metaphysics (Makeham, 23). Geologist Ding Wenjiang 丁文江 (1888-1936) is one of the chief protagonists with critic of metaphysics (Makeham, 23). In his essay “Metaphysics and Science” (*Xuanxue yu kexue*, 玄學與科學), Ding advocates “skeptical idealism.” As argued by Makeham, Ding “associates with the theories of perception subscribed by Huxley, Darwin, Spencer, William James, Karl Pearson, and Ernst Mach” and argues that

because they hold that sense perception is the only method by which we can know objects (*wuti*), our concepts of objects are psychological phenomena and hence we say it is idealism. As to whether there are things in the realm beyond sense perception or behind self-consciousness, or what kind of things objects are, they all maintain that this is not known (*bu zhi*, 不知) and should not be discussed, hence we say “skeptical” (Makeham, 23-24).

By separating objects into the realm of knowing as psychological phenomena (idealism) and the realm of the “skeptical” which remains unknown and should not be discussed, Ding supports a single authoritative scientific discourse in the phenomenal world and negates the possibility of uniting different perspectives in a metaphysical world.

This opinion is further represented by Yan Fu’s 嚴復 (1853-1921) introduction of positivist philosophy. Yan Fu follows Spencer’s division of the world into the phenomenal and the

unknowable and believes that knowledge can only lead to understanding in the phenomenal world. In Makeham's translation, Yan Fu argues that "there is no way we can learn about what is not of this world and even if one should attempt to do so it would have no bearing on human affairs" (Makeham, 24). Yan Fu's argument negates the total discourse of metaphysics.

Zhang Taiyan does not simply confine himself within the phenomenal world and gives up the attempt to seek unity in a metaphysical realm. In his "Qiwulunshi," Zhang reestablishes metaphysics without establishment using Chinese philosophical Daoism and Yogācāra Buddhism.

### *Merging the Phenomenal and the Metaphysical Worlds*

After situating Musil's and Zhang's approaches towards the phenomenal and the metaphysical worlds in the previous sections, a controversy can be perceived – the representation of one world limits the representation of the other. If one only focuses on the phenomenal world and concentrates on the representation of possibilities, these possibilities are lacking of essence. If one only focuses on the metaphysical world, this representation could form one dominating universal perspective which rules out other possibilities. The representation of either the phenomenal world or metaphysical world remains insufficient. Therefore, it is necessary to determine the relationship between and seek a representation of both the phenomenal and the metaphysical worlds. Both Musil and Zhang attempt to balance both worlds and in their representation of a dual world-structure (phenomenal plus metaphysical worlds).

Robert Musil attempts to see both perspectives (phenomenal and noumenal) in equal positions. On the one hand, he carefully examines single reality and develops different possibilities in his novel of *MoE*. On the other hand, Musil develops a parallel discourse to the phenomenal world and seeks a new mystical unity which can be regarded as a basis for all of existing possibilities. Musil shows the width through realities and possibilities on the level of the physical world, and the depth through the metaphysical truth. In addition, Musil develops the method of essayism to capture both worlds, thus enables a representation of this dual world-structure. Similar to Musil, Zhang Taiyan equally values both the phenomenal world and the metaphysical world, seeing this attitude as “Walking two Paths (*lianghang*, 兩行).” Zhang’s representation of both worlds is called “Heavenly Transitions (*tianni*, 天倪).” Both worlds are manifested within this concept.

### *Novel or Argumentative Text*

When comparing Robert Musil’s *MoE* and Zhang Taiyan’s “*Qiwulunshi*,” it is noticeable that both texts belong to different genres. Whereas *MoE* is a novel, “*Qiwulunshi*” is an argumentative text – explication of a classic text. The major difference between these two genres is that: whereas arguments raised in Zhang’s essay represent his own opinion, different figures and perspectives in Musil’s novel do not directly represent Musil’s perspective. Instead, Musil distances himself from various perspectives sketched out in his novel and explores different possibilities through different figures. As argued by Moser, a fictional text establishes

a contract between the author and the reader: “an author establishes with his reader is the ‘as-if’ modification that both of them must apply to the propositions of the fictional text, so that any pretense to referential truth or any obligation of moral responsibility or even juridical liability be suspended in their communication” (Moser, 411).

As a result, Musil’s novel is an experimental space to explore different discourses, while the author hides himself behind those voices. As analyzed in Moser’s text, the narrator starts the novel with weather-description using scientific facts:

A barometric low hung over the Atlantic. It moved eastward toward a high-pressure area over Russia without as yet showing any inclination to bypass this high in a northerly direction. The isotherms and isothere were functioning as they should. The air temperature was appropriate relative to the annual mean temperature and to the aperiodic monthly fluctuations of the temperature. The rising and setting of the sun, the moon, the phases of the moon, of Venus, of the rings of Saturn, and many other significant phenomena were all in accordance with the forecasts in the astronomical yearbooks. The water vapor in the air was at its maximal state of tension, while the humidity was minimal (Musil, MwQ, 3).<sup>8</sup>

According to Moser’s analysis, this factual and scientific description of weather gives readers the impression that they are “reading a scientific text” (Moser, 412). However, this is not a scientific text, but a fiction.

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<sup>8</sup> German original: Über dem Atlantik befand sich ein barometrisches Minimum; es wanderte ostwärts, einem über Rußland lagernden Maximum zu, und verriet noch nicht die Neigung, diesem nördlich auszuweichen. Die Isothermen und Isotheren taten ihre Schuldigkeit. Die Lufttemperatur stand in einem ordnungsgemäßen Verhältnis zur mittleren Jahrestemperatur, zur Temperatur des kältesten wie des wärmsten Monats und zur aperiodischen monatlichen Temperaturschwankung. Der Auf- und Untergang der Sonne, des Mondes, der Lichtwechsel des Mondes, der Venus, des Saturnringes und viele andere bedeutsame Erscheinungen entsprachen ihrer Voraussage in den astronomischen Jahrbüchern. Der Wasserdampf in der Luft hatte seine höchste Spannkraft, und die Feuchtigkeit der Luft war gering (Musil, MoE, 9).

The aforementioned scientific discourse is not the only way the novel presents. At the end of the paragraph, the narrator uses one sentence to summarize the whole paragraph above:

In a word that characterizes the facts fairly accurately, even if it is a bit old-fashioned: It was a fine day in August 1913 (Musil, MwQ, 3).<sup>9</sup>

Moser analyzes that compared to the “lengthy deployment of scientific jargon,” the narrator now “makes a quite different use of language,” “a sentence that could easily be taken for the beginning of a realistic novel.” The narrator therefore gives the reader “two different versions of the same beginning”: “first in an elaborate scientific manner, and then ‘in short,’ in everyday language” (Moser, 412). The first is a “better” version, and the second is a “more useful” (“more human and understandable”) version (Moser, 413). Without making a judgement of which version of description is more advantageous, the narrator simply provides these two ways of reading and “leaves it up to make a decision” (Moser, 413). Therefore, instead of making one decisive argument, the first paragraph of the novel provides two possible parallel discourses.

Moser further argues that these two different positions ironize each other. The detailed scientific discussion leaves the impression that the text pursues scientificity. However, this impression does not hold long. The second more general description of the weather in a short form blurs the “precise information” and introduces imprecision. The seemingly precise version

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<sup>9</sup> German original: Es war ein schöner Augusttag des Jahres 1913 (Musil, MoE, 9).

is relativized through an imprecise version of the everyday language. Therefore, the beginning of the novel sets the tone that instead of bringing up a totalizing answer to a question, a novel provides different answers to the same question and introduces indeterminacy. Instead of taking position, it forces the readers to experience a pluralism of perspectives.

### *Methodology*

Given that Robert Musil is a German-Austrian author and Zhang Taiyan comes from a Chinese background, it is necessary to look at methods to compare the East and the West. One of the major comparative methods is to find a common ground as the basis for comparison, and then builds the comparison based on this shared basis. However, it is difficult to define the range of this common ground.

For example, in his book *Methods of Comparative Philosophy*, Liat introduces the method of re-evaluation. This method identifies “key terms with analogous positions in the respective system.” This key term can be a point which brings “two systems together within an inclusive perspective.” The new juxtaposition as a result of two systems “will lead to a new perspective and may accentuate their significance.” Similarly, Zhang Xudong proposes “a common ground or a shared frame of reference” “grounding in discourses or conceptual frameworks of the universal” (Zhang Xudong, 27). In Zhang Xudong’s understanding, these objects of study could be themes which are “gigantic perspectives or central questions in human experience and knowledge,” or “specific issues or phenomena,” such as “sickness in literature” and “drinking in

ancient and modern (or Chinese and Persian) poetry” which illuminates a deeper universal discourse (Zhang Xudong, 24). In Liat’s and Zhang Xudong’s arguments, key terms which bring both cultures together should be significant discourses, gigantic perspectives and central questions which could go universal. It proposes a grand and generalized narrative. Even though Zhang mentions specific terms such as “sickness” and “drinking,” the aim is to dig out big and significant meanings from them.

To establish a generalized grand narrative through the comparison could run into three problems. First, it “invariably leads to something too capricious or too general” (Zhang Xudong, 20). Existing discourses are mostly established based on one specific cultural tradition. A discourse which may well capture the development of one cultural tradition may not be suitable to grasp cultural phenomena in a completely foreign culture. If one compares two writers from different cultural backgrounds, one of them could belong to a certain discourse, the other one might fully fall out of it. For example, the background of Robert Musil can be well related to the discourse of industrial revolution as a general social development. However, China does not experience such a movement. The concept of “industrial revolution” fails to capture Zhang Taiyan’s background.

One might still argue that we can find a common discourse shared between both cultures. However, even both cultures share the same discourse, an existing universal discourse would be too general to capture their specific connections and thus become farfetched. For example, although both Robert Musil and Zhang Taiyan belong to the literary period of modernism, and

modernism could be a universal discourse which connects both, both share more specific similarities than the concept of modernism. If one uses the concept of modernism as the common ground to compare both, then this comparison fails to unveil more concrete and specific connections between them.

The third problem is that comparison examined through grand discourses is not only inaccurate, but it can get political and then fall into binary “rivalry” “in a time of conflict and cultural imperialism” (Yao Sijia, 19). A universal discourse implies a certain structure expected to be fulfilled. It implies “an international agreement that is reached through discussions and negotiations.” As argued by Zhang Xudong, a universal discourse “must be historical and critical thus ultimately political in nature” (Zhang Xudong, 21). Therefore, a universal discourse is often concerned with subjects such as “internationally cooperative project to achieve global economic development,” “transnational work to save the poor or stop war,” “an environmental agreement to solve the urgent problems of global warming and resource depletion” (Yao Sijia, 15). These discourses have certain goals, thus they create standards to measure and evaluate things. If comparisons come because of deploying these hierarchical standards, they form competitions “driven by power and struggle, thereby creating opposing binaries: inferiority and superiority, dominance and suppression, violence and hegemony” (Yao Sijia, 14). These competitions impede genuine dialogues between cultures.

To avoid these three problems, I develop three new criteria for the common basis for intercultural comparison. First, I deploy Yao Sijia’s concept of “third term comparison.” To



depoliticize the judgmental comparative field, Yao argues for the method of third term comparison which criticizes the “dominant sociopolitical orders”/discourses (Yao Sijia,16). Instead of existing “fixed concepts,” third term comparison develops a common purpose which can “provide a basis for revealing disparate connections yet also subtle differences in the relational comparative mode” (Yao Sijia, 15). This new common purpose should not form a competitive discourse which frames China and the West as “opposing binaries” or “competing hegemonies.” Instead, it introduces “relational and conversational” dialogues between them (Yao Sijia, 15). For example, this dissertation explores and compares Robert Musil’s and Zhang Taiyan’s methods to reconcile tension between plurality and unity. This topic becomes a common purpose which belongs to the method of third term comparison and thus avoids a binary opposition.

Beyond the criterium worked out based on Yao’s third term comparison, I further argue that the common ground for comparison should avoid generalized common terms which easily label Robert Musil and Zhang Taiyan. For example, both Robert Musil and Zhang Taiyan are contemporaneous writers at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century. However, similar time period is too general a common ground for conducting this comparison. Their common ground needs to be so specific that it is only tailored to suit both Musil and Zhang. Musil’s and Zhang’s contemporaneous authors develop different projects in their works, but only Musil and Zhang highlight the question of presenting a “plural-unified world structure.” Therefore, “approaches to explore the plural-unified world

structure,” rather than “authors at the turn of the century” should be the common ground for the comparison.

In addition, the common ground should also avoid concepts that only exist in one cultural realm but not the other, such as industrial revolution which only happened in Musil’s background, but not in Zhang’s context.

Identifying a general-adaptive, specific, and non-binary common ground for comparison becomes the method of this dissertation. Through this comparison, this dissertation aims at understanding similar and different approaches towards the project of “plurality, unity and possible interpretations of world-structures related to them.” The understanding of these approaches in this project illuminates Musil’s and Zhang’s different ways in their cultures. The Western readers will have a new understanding of Zhang Taiyan and Chinese readers will also gain a clearer picture of Robert Musil.

### *Description of Chapters*

The dissertation tries to identify similar approaches which Robert Musil and Zhang Taiyan deploy to challenge the existing order and reestablish a world which follows a metaphysical entity and still stays open to difference. To demonstrate this thesis, I divide the dissertation into two major parts. In the first part, I focus on Robert Musil’s novel, *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, and try to characterize in detail challenges against the single perspective; possibilities; the

metaphysical world; and the balance between both the phenomenal and the metaphysical worlds. In the second part, Zhang Taiyan's "Qiwulunshi" will be analyzed in a similar order. I will discuss how Zhang Taiyan describes one's persistence in a single worldview; equality of various perspectives; the ultimate world; and the interconnection between the world of the conventional truth and the world of the ultimate truth.

The first part which concentrates on Robert Musil is separated into four chapters. Chapter 2 and 3 describe the phenomenal world. Chapter 2 explores the concept of "a sense of reality" as a limited and dominating worldview. Chapter 3 attempts to break with insistence on "a sense of reality" in form of "a sense of possibility." Chapter 4 discuss the process to approach the metaphysical world and the difficulty of representing it. In chapter 5, both the phenomenal and the metaphysical worlds are brought together. I will discuss their relationship characterized in the novel and essayism as an ultimate representation of both worlds.

In chapter 2, I try to showcase how Musil's novel describes a world defined by only one consolidated perspective through the concept of "a sense of reality." This can be seen in the character of Diotima. Diotima can be seen as a person of vanity. She sticks to her value of self-importance and rejects any other different opinions. This insistence on her own version of reality makes her a person with "a sense of reality" who fails to embrace difference. In chapter 3, I describe "a sense of possibility" as the challenge against Diotima's "sense of reality" – a single and unified perspective to approach the world. I focus on the protagonist Ulrich, who is characterized as the "man without qualities." Ulrich negates any reality he ever believed in and

constantly creates new possible understandings. He is never seriously attached to any idea, thus remains open and indifferent.

In chapter 4, I use the story of Ulrich and Agathe to show that both figures have compensating personalities. Motivated by their sense of possibility, both figures achieve an incestuous stage. In their incestuous relationship, they overcome their limitations (their own personalities) and merge with the personalities of the other person. In this way, both Ulrich and Agathe achieve the highest unity of the mankind. This unity could be analogous to the concept of the metaphysics. However, the kind of metaphysics described in the novel is a metaphysics which contains nothingness. Experiences of Ulrich and Agathe are perceived through consciousness and conveyed by language. Therefore, it is difficult to connect Ulrich and Agathe's incestuous experience with the metaphysics of nothingness.

A solution to this topic will be further explored in chapter 5. In chapter 5, firstly, a relationship between the phenomenal and the metaphysical world is determined. In the novel, a balance between the phenomenal world and the metaphysical world can be clearly perceived. Essayism is a literary method which achieves a united representation of both the phenomenal and the metaphysical worlds. When describing the phenomenal world, essayism captures a specific point of view. However, this view remains a momentary snapshot which will not be consolidated as an established dominating value system. Instead, it is in a constant flow of change in line with uncertainty in the concept of "a sense of possibility." Besides focusing on the phenomenal world, essayism alludes to a world which is unknown and never admits any

encompassing statement. In this way, essayism achieves a representation of the metaphysical world without having to concretely describe it. In this way, *MoE* develops a representation of both the phenomenal world and the metaphysical world.

In the second part, I conduct a detailed analysis of Zhang Taiyan's "Qiwulunshi" to show that Zhang actually develops similar approaches to Musil regarding the understanding of the world-structure. The second part is also divided into four parts. In chapter 6 and chapter 7, I describe Zhang's understanding of the world of the conventional truth. I argue in chapter 6 that Zhang's concept of "grasping" is similar to Musil's concept of "a sense of reality," which describes the insistence on certain values without accepting differences. In chapter 7, Zhang's idea of breaking one single grasping and treating different types of grasping equally is comparable to Musil's understanding of "a sense of possibility." In chapter 8, the world of the ultimate truth is introduced. Similar to Musil, Zhang believes that the ultimate world is a realm of sheer nothingness. This is also a world which is unconceivable to human perception. In chapter 9, I summarize that similar to Musil, Zhang also describes a balanced relationship between the world of the conventional truth and the world of the ultimate truth. Similar to Musil's essayism, Zhang also develops a method to simultaneously represent both world – Heavenly Transitions (*tianni*).

In chapter 6, I focus on Zhang Taiyan's usage of the Buddhist concept of grasping (*zhi*, 執) which refers to the mental stage when a person is drawn into a state of mind without being able to acknowledge other views. This results in a limited perspective. In chapter 7, I argue that Zhang

breaks with grasping in that he proposes to treat different types of grasping equally. Facing different perceptions of the world, Zhang attempts to understand each of them in their respective context. In this way, Zhang positively acknowledges differences. Zhang specifically mentions two examples: treating history and present equally, treating civilization and barbarism equally. At Zhang's time, historical rules were established as the sole standard which impeded the free unfolding of the individuals. To spread civilization to barbaric countries was also used as an excuse for invasion by colonial powers. Therefore, in Zhang's opinion, it is important to see each perspective within its own context without clinging to only one opinion and advancing it to become a universally valid law.

In chapter 8, I argue that besides treating different types of grasping equally, like Musil, Zhang still pursues a metaphysical realm which has a foundational significance for the whole world. Zhang firstly examines the human possibility to conceive this metaphysics. Zhang deploys the Buddhist concept of "three meanings of cognition" (*sanliang*, 三量) to explore this question. Three meanings of cognition are three epistemological methods human possess to approach the world: perception (*xianliang*, 現量, *pratyakṣa-pramāṇa*), reasoning (*biliang*, 比量, *anumāna-pramāṇa*) and the sages' words (*shengjiao liang*, 聖教量, *āgama-pramāṇa*). Zhang negates all three methods and claims the inconceivability of metaphysics to human beings. Zhang tries to establish metaphysics through Yogācāra Buddhism, which is concerned with the question of making sense of the inconceivable.<sup>10</sup> He argues that the metaphysical world

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<sup>10</sup> See appendix A.

consists of both amala consciousness (*anmoluo shi*, 庵摩羅識, *amala-vijñāna*) and ālaya consciousness (*alaiye shi*, 阿賴耶識, *ālaya-vijñāna*). In addition, ālaya consciousness also gives rise to the phenomenal world. Therefore, in Zhang’s worldview, both the phenomenal world and the metaphysical world are connected through the ālaya consciousness. The inconceivable metaphysical world is inherently contained with the phenomenal world.

In chapter 9, I put forward the argument that similar to Musil, Zhang also proposes a balanced relationship between the phenomenal and the metaphysical worlds in that he argues for “walking two ways” (*lianghang*, 兩行). In addition, Zhang also borrows and develops the concept of “Heavenly Transitions” (*tianni*, 天倪) in *Zhuangzi* to capture both worlds at the same time. Heavenly Transitions refer to natural division of things in constant change in a phenomenal world. When Zhang uses this term to characterize the phenomenal world, this characterization does not form a consolidated grasping, but is rather in motion and therefore conditioned by various contexts. Thus, these context-dependent situations require equal treatment of various graspings. Further, the phenomenal world and the metaphysical world are inherently interconnected in Zhang’s argument. Although the metaphysical world goes beyond word, the representation of graspings in the phenomenal world actually also reflects the metaphysical world.

In conclusion, I summarize Musil’s and Zhang’s similar approaches towards reconciling tension of a pluralized phenomenal world and a unified but inconceivable metaphysical world which is discussed in the previous chapters. I also identify their major difference – whereas Musil holds

an anthropocentric perspective, Zhang broadens his perspective to the non-human world. I also clarify why this difference is crucial to understanding the genre differences between both texts.



## Part I Robert Musil's *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*

### *Introduction*

In the Enlightenment tradition, scholars aspire for gradual progress of mankind which reaches the universal unity. Therefore, the discussion about ontology which unites the whole of humanity beings dominates the major scholarly discourse. With the development of the Nietzschean perspectivism, the ultimate world has been negated, and only the conventional world and everyday life are justified discussion topics.

Musil is a writer who picks up both traditions: the tradition which seeks the unified ultimate world, and the tradition which focuses on the conventional and phenomenal world. On the one hand, it showcases the process by which the world of the united whole separates itself and forms the world of realities and possibilities. This connects to the discourse which tries to focus on the phenomenal world. On the other hand, it describes that separated realities attempt to overcome their own limitations to regain the united whole. This attempt follows the traditional trend which aspires for the transcendent ontology. The following 4 chapters are going to show how both traditions are played out in Musil's *MoE*.

## Chapter 2 Diotima: A Sense of Reality

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter starts with the discussion about the phenomenal world using the example of *MoE* through the term of “reality,” “real possibility” and “a sense of reality,” so as to provide a description of the phenomenal world in Musil’s *MoE*.

*MoE* presents an assumption that the world forms a united whole. The initial stage of the world before it is separated into any reality is an “ideal of oneness” (Musil, *MwQ*,<sup>11</sup> 981). As argued by one of the figures, Agathe,<sup>12</sup>

When I remember as far back as I can, I’d say that there was hardly any separation between inside and outside. ... After all, we hadn’t yet taken charge of ourselves. In fact, we didn’t really yet exist; our personal condition was not yet separated from the world’s. It sounds strange, but it’s true: our feelings, our desires, our very selves, were not yet quite inside ourselves (Musil, *MwQ*, 979).<sup>13</sup>

In the beginning, “there was hardly any separation between inside and outside,” and everything melted in “the ideal of oneness” (Musil, *MwQ*, 981).<sup>14</sup> Human beings were still a part of the

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<sup>11</sup> *MwQ* refers to the English translation of *MoE* which is translated by Sophie Wilkins.

<sup>12</sup> Agathe is the sister of the protagonist, Ulrich, who has not seen her brother Ulrich for many years, but directly starts a quasi-romantic relationship with him after the death of their father. She is regarded as a person with perspective intuition in this novel.

<sup>13</sup> German original: Wenn ich mich an meine frühesten Zeit erinnere, so möchte ich sagen, dass damals Innen und Außen kaum noch getrennt waren. ... Wir besaßen und ja noch nicht selbst; eigentlich waren wir überhaupt noch nicht, unsere persönlichen Zustände waren noch nicht deutlich von denen der Welt abgeschieden. Es klingt sonderbar, und ist doch wahr, wenn ich sage, unsere Gefühle, unsere Willnisse, ja wir selbst waren noch nicht ganz in uns darin (Musil, *MoE*, 902).

<sup>14</sup> German original: die wesenhafte Einung (Musil, *MoE*, 904)

united world. They “hadn’t yet taken charge of ourselves” and “didn’t really yet exist,” and their „personal condition was not yet separated from the world’s.” Human “feelings,” “desires,” and their “selves” were “not yet quite inside” themselves. Natural talents and decision making based on their nature are human talents which had not developed at a time “as far back as” one can imagine.<sup>15</sup>

However, there follows a process of separation on two levels. First, the separation of subjectivity out of nothingness.<sup>16</sup>

Everything you touch, including your inmost self, is more or less congealed from the moment you have achieved your “personality,” and what’s left is a ghostly hanging thread of self-awareness and murky self-regard, wrapped up in a wholly external existence (Musil, MwQ, 979).<sup>17</sup>

Although the world was initially unseparated, a subject still gradually separates itself from the “oneness” of the world. By “touch[ing]” things, including the “inmost self,” a subject gradually achieves its “personality,” “a ghostly hanging thread of self-awareness,” and “murky self-regard.” Therefore, it differentiates itself from the “wholly external existence.” Second, there is a separation of the objective world into different realities and possibilities.<sup>18</sup> “You know that

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<sup>15</sup> This refers to the mystical stage in “der andere Zustand.” As argued by Zingel,

Bei diesem mythischen Identifikationsangebot handelt es sich um den Androgynie-Mythos, der sich in Platons *Symposium* findet. ... Motive: Es existiert ein idealer Zustand, in der der Mensch ein Ganzes ist, d.h. sein eigenes Universum in sich trägt. Das findet seinen Ausdruck in dem Bild der Doppelmenschen und ihrer Doppelgeschlechtlichkeit (Zingel, 185).

<sup>16</sup> The birth of subjectivity is comparable to the concept of *jianfen* (見分) in Zhang’s “Qiwulunshi.”

<sup>17</sup> German original: Alles, was du berührst, bis an dein innerstes verhältnismäßig erstarrt, sobald du es erreicht hast eine „Persönlichkeit“ zu sein, und übriggeblieben ist, umhüllt von einem durch und durch äußerlichen Sein, ein gespenstiger Nebelfaden der Selbstgewißheit und trüber Selbstliebe (Musil, MoE, 902).

<sup>18</sup> The formation of objectivity is similar to the concept of *xiangfen* (相分) in Zhang’s “Qiwulunshi.”

myth Plato tells, following some ancient source, that the gods divided the original human being into two halves, male and female?" (Musil, MwQ, 980).<sup>19</sup>

Agathe uses the *Kugelmensch* metaphor to illustrate the next step of the separation of the world: the self's exploration in the objective world. After gaining "personality" and "self-awareness," the subject starts to explore the objective world around and gains the awareness of otherness. In this metaphor, the meaning of "male" emerges with the meaning of "female." A subject defines certain characteristics as "male," and the negation of the identity of "Mann" becomes the definition of "female." Creating a meaning of "male" separates the world into two parts and creates a world order. This world order can be regarded as the creation of a reality.

Following the separation into different genders and further on into different individuals, everyone represents a certain reality. The goal of this chapter is to understand the perspective of reality and real possibility in *MoE*, in order to show that a reality creates a stagnated perspective to approach the world. In this chapter, we talk about Diotima and how Musil presents her perspective in order for us to understand reality as a value-centered system and a person with a sense of reality. The figure of Diotima has two contrasting realities, namely marriage and affair. Although she sways between these two realities, her value of own social status as a result of marriage determines that she chooses marriage which guarantees her

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<sup>19</sup> German original: Kennst du den Mythos, den Platon irgendwelchen älteren Vorbildern nacherzählt, dass der ursprüngliche ganze Mensch von den Göttern in zwei Teile geteilt worden sei, in Mann und Weib? (Musil, MoE, 903)

fame. The value of social image is then Diotima's reality. With a sense of reality, Diotima sticks to this single reality of marriage as well as social status and refuses to open up to other perspectives. Reality separates the world into a certain perspective and consolidates its separation. This concept of reality and a sense of reality will be compared with Zhang Taiyan's concept of grasping in chapter 8.

#### DISCOURSE ON REALITY IN *MOE*

The novel has not offered explicit definitions for reality, possibility, a sense of reality and a sense of possibility. Scholars such as Ingrid Berger noticed this problem, and she argues that the concept of "reality" is not clear and distinct (Berger, 112).<sup>20</sup> Sebastian Hüscher also argues that the concept of reality is more like a rough outline rather than concise definition (Hüscher, 188).<sup>21</sup> Scholars thus try to give reality and possibility a definition within the discourse of *MoE*. It is either connected to this discourse in the Musilian philosophy or it is understood in the context of *MoE*. The representation of the philosophical discourse is Matthias Luserke's dissertation of *Wirklichkeit und Möglichkeit. Modaltheoretische Untersuchung zum Werk Robert Musils* (*Reality and Possibility, Modal Theoretical Exploration of Robert Musil's Works*). The representation of a textual reading is Sebastian Hüscher's *Möglichkeit und Wirklichkeit, Eine vergleichende Studie zu Søren Kierkegaards Entweder-oder und Robert Musils Mann ohne*

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<sup>20</sup> German original: Der Begriff der Wirklichkeit, wie er im Roman *explizit* verwendet wird, ist nicht eindeutig (Berger, 112).

<sup>21</sup> German original: der Begriff der Wirklichkeit... freilich eher in gröberen Umrissen als in Form einer prägnanten Definition (Hüscher, 188).

*Eigenschaften (Possibility and Reality, a Comparative Study to Søren Kierkegaard's Either-Or and Robert Musil's Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften).*

Both the philosophical and textual definitions in the Musilian discourse, represented by Luserke and Hüscher, fail to establish connections between reality and possibility in *MoE* and the historical background of endorsing and challenging “a universal ideal,” so scholars are not aware of the significance of the discourse of reality and possibility in *MoE* through a larger picture. The philosophical definition of Luserke understands reality and possibility as “science” and “essay.” “Essay” stands for the non-logical, non-systematic “wraparound (Rundherumschreibung),” which is in stark contrast to the logically determined, exact “science.” That is to say, the discussion of “possibility” and “reality” starts from a discussion of “objective reality (gegenständliche Wirklichkeit)” versus “emotional-physical possibility (emotional-psychische Möglichkeit),” or „objectivity and combinatorics (Gegenständlichkeit und Kombinatorik)” versus “unlimited combinatorics of the scholars” (schrankenlosen Kombinatorik des Dichters) (Luserke, 32).<sup>22</sup> Further, in Musil's essay “The Indecent and Sick in Art” (Das Unanständige und Kranke in der Kunst) written in 1911, he argues that „the artist is interested in an individual emotional context, the scientist in a comprehensive scheme of the real; the artist in expanding the register of what is still internally possible (Musil, VIII, 981).<sup>23</sup> This quote

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<sup>22</sup> More reference to this point can be seen in Musil's essays: „Franz Blei – 60 Jahre,“ „Literat und Literatur. Randbemerkungen dazu“, 1931, „Die Krisis des Romans“, 1931, „Bedenken eines Langsamen“, 1933, „Vorrede zu einer zeitgenössischen Ästhetik“ 1933/4, Essays, Essayfragmente, Tagebuchnotizen, 1919-30.

<sup>23</sup> German original: interessiert sich der Künstler für einen individuellen Gefühlszusammenhang, der Wissenschaftler für ein zusammenfassendes Schema des Wirklichen, der Künstler für die Erweiterung des Registers von innerlich noch Möglichem (Musil, GW 8, 981).

shows that artists are responsible for non-accurate essays which resemble the state of human feelings, which can be characterized as “the innerly possible” (innerlich Mögliche), and scientists are responsible for the system of the outer world, which is named “the reality.” From this quote, we already have a general understanding of the Musilian separation of the world:<sup>24</sup>

World of the feelings: <b>artist, essay, inaccurate, emotion</b> , feelings, borderless, inner world, <b>Inner world</b> , emotional, phisic und <b>conceptual</b> possibility – possibility
World of the science: <b>scientist, accurate, logical</b> , knowledge, <b>exactness</b> , border, outer, <b>reality, extramundane</b> reality – reality

Different from Luserke who focuses on philosophical terms, Hüsck defines reality and possibility on the textual level. Reality refers to repetitive establishment in society, and possibility are uncertainties which challenge these establishments. “Reality is 'there it is', so to speak, and it is best to orient oneself to the framework given by it” (Hüsck, 138).<sup>25</sup> This quote shows that reality is an established existence:

A fixed reference is assigned to the term, namely society... that there is an infinite sequence of things that are always the same, that is to say that society as a society always behaves in the same way (Hüsck, 186).<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> More reference of essays to this topic: „Penthesileiade,“ „das Unmögliche,“ „R. Profil eines Programms“ 1912, „Über Robert Musils Bücher,“ 1913, „Skizze der Erkenntnis des Dichters“ 1918, „Das Geistliche, der Modernismus und die Metaphysik,“ 1912.

<sup>25</sup> German original: Wirklichkeit sozusagen ‚eben da ist‘ und man sich am besten an dem durch sie gegebenen Rahmen orientiert (Hüsck, 138).

<sup>26</sup> German original: Dem Begriff wird ein fester Bezug zugeordnet, nämlich die Gesellschaft..., dass es eine unendliche Abfolge von Immergleichem gibt, das heißt, dass die Gesellschaft sich als Gesellschaft immer gleich verhält.

In this quote, reality is repetitive rules in society. Reality is understood as “necessity” (Notwendigkeit) (Hüsch, 173), which is fixed within the social structure. In contrast, possibility refers to uncertainties which can be seen in the “youth” (Jugend) (Hüsch, 173). The awareness of possibility challenges “necessity” (Notwendigkeit) even in the process of getting old. The person with the awareness of possibility

did not take it (reality) as a matter of course, internalize it, but questioned it again and again, reflected on its necessity or inevitability and came to the (paradoxical) conviction that everything could also be different (Hüsch, 174).<sup>27</sup>

Ingrid Berger connects the discourse of the Musilian reality and possibility with other philosophical discourses other than the Musilian discourse (here Luhmann’s theory of contingency and observation (Beobachtung)). Luhmann establishes connections between contingency and understanding in modern society. Luhmann characterizes it as

the attempt to try to interpret the notion of contingency through the notion of observation, in order to arrive at a theory that is meaningful for an understanding of modern society (Luhmann, 98).<sup>28</sup>

As a result, Luhmann states that “observation” and “contingency” become an important perspective which unveils the nature of modern society. Berger, in connecting Musil’s reality and possibility to Luhmann’s observation, successfully connects the Musilian discourse of reality and possibility to the discourse of understanding a “modern society.”

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<sup>27</sup> German original: hat sie (Wirklichkeit) nicht wie selbstverständlich angenommen, internalisiert, sondern er hat sie immer wieder hinterfragt, auf ihre Notwendigkeit oder Zwangsläufigkeit reflektiert und ist dabei zu der (paradoxen) Überzeugung gelangt, dass alles auch anders sein könnte (Hüsch, 174).

<sup>28</sup> German original: Den Versuch, den Begriff der Kontingenz durch den Begriff der Beobachtung zu interpretieren, um auf diese Weise zu einer Theorie zu kommen, die für ein Verständnis der modernen Gesellschaft aussagekräftig ist (Luhmann, 98).



In his *Observations on Modernity (Beobachtungen der Moderne)*, Niklas Luhmann defines two types of observations: the first-order observation (Beobachtung erster Ordnung) and the second-order observation (Beobachtung zweiter Ordnung). Luhmann defines the first-order observation as the tradition of “self-reference of knowledge (Selbstreferenz des Wissens).” It is communicated in the form of “wisdom (Weisheit).” For Luhmann, the “sage (Weise)” and his “wisdom (Weisheit)” are self-referential. This self-referential knowledge, according to Luhmann, “is developed at the stage of first-order observation and does not leave this stage” (Luhmann, 80).<sup>29</sup> As the first-order observation, the person is self-referential, in that „the sage observes himself, practices his wisdom on himself, and does not seek to align himself with the perspectives of others or with other perspectives of his own” (Luhmann, 81).<sup>30</sup> This shows that a person with the first-order observation reflects on one’s own practice within one’s own personal realm, without being able to integrate a different possible perspective. However, the transition to the second-order observation requires a person to problematize the established, self-referential knowledge.

Both in law and in theology, there is a renunciation of wisdom as soon as inconsistencies are noticed due to the already abundant written texts and give reason to problematize the way of observation "hermeneutically" (as one will then say) assuming that the texts are constant regarding their content<sup>31</sup> (Luhmann, 81).

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<sup>29</sup> German original: auf der Stufe der Beobachtung erster Ordnung entwickelt wird und diese Stufe nicht verlässt (Luhmann, 80).

<sup>30</sup> German original: der Weise sich selbst beobachtet, seine Weisheit an sich selbst praktiziert, und nicht versucht, sich mit den Sichtweisen anderer oder mit anderen eigenen Sichtmöglichkeiten abzustimmen (Luhmann, 81).

<sup>31</sup> German original: Sowohl im Recht als auch in der Theologie kommt es zum Weisheitsverzicht, sobald auf Grund von schon reichlich vorhandenen schriftlichen Texten Inkonsistenzen auffallen und Anlass geben, die

This quote shows that the second-order observation gives up the established „wisdom“ and is a “renunciation of wisdom.” It requires a person to deal with “inconsistencies” in „the already abundant written texts.” It is to problematize the assumption that “the texts are constant.”

Berger connects the second-order observation to Musil’s reality. According to Luhmann, “first-order observer [has] nothing to do with constructions, but with objects. It will no longer recognize binding representation, but itself” (Luhmann, 84).<sup>32</sup> In Berger’s interpretation, “Luhmann identifies this level as” what-observation (was-Beobachten), “that only sees what it sees and not what it doesn’t see” (Berger, 34).<sup>33</sup> From this quote, we understand that this observation of the first type is connected to construction of a world of reality connected to objects. It is “eine geordnete Welt mit unbezweifelbaren Werten voraussetzt, deren Merkmale richtig oder falsch beschrieben werden können“ (Berger, 34). We see that this constructed world by the observation of the first type are based on “unquestionable values (unbezweifelbaren Werten)” pre-determined by the values set up in the perception of different brain structures. Based on these values, there could be the judgement of “right and wrong” (richtig oder falsch) for each individual system.

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Beobachtungsweise „hermeneutisch“ (wie man dann sagen wird) zu problematisieren bei Voraussetzung einer Konstanz der Texte, um die es jeweils geht (Luhmann, 81).

<sup>32</sup> German original: Beobachter erster Ordnung [hat] nicht mit Konstruktionen zu tun, sondern mit Objekten. Sie wird keine verbindliche Repräsentation mehr anerkennen, sondern sich selbst (Luhmann, 84).

<sup>33</sup> German original: das nur das sieht, was es sieht und nicht, was es nicht sieht (Berger, 34).

Berger further connects Luhmann's the first-order observation to Musil's possibility. Whereas the first-order observation concentrates on itself, Luhmann's second-order observation is closely related to "self-disinterest" (Selbst-Desinteressierung) (Luhmann, 85), uncertainty and freedom.

Then it would not be about a potential for security, but about a potential for insecurity. And not about attachment, but about freedom: about the place of arbitrariness that finds no place anywhere, about imagination (Luhmann, 91).<sup>34</sup>

This quote shows that the second-order observation no longer describes what is there, namely "what-observation" and "unquestionable values." Instead, it questions this "security" and gives "a potential for insecurity," "freedom," and "imagination."

Only the second-order observations give reason to include contingency and possibly to reflect on it conceptually. Second-order observations are observations of observations. It can be observations by other observers or observations by the same or other observers at a different point in time. ...everything becomes contingent when what is observed depends on who is observed (Luhmann, 100).<sup>35</sup>

This quote confirms that the second-order observation is a reflection on and challenge against the existing observation, and is therefore concerned with contingency. Berger further uses the notion of the second-order observation to interpret Musil's possibility. According to Berger, Musil's protagonist, Ulrich, is introduced as a "contingency-aware person" (sich der Kontingenz

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<sup>34</sup> German original: Dann ginge es nicht um ein Potenzial für Sicherheit, sondern um ein Potential für Unsicherheit. Und nicht um Bindung, sondern um Freiheit: um den Ort der Willkür, die nirgendwo einen Platz findet, um Imagination (Luhmann, 91).

<sup>35</sup> German original: Erst Beobachtungen zweiter Ordnung geben Anlass, Kontingenz mitzumeinen und eventuell begrifflich zu reflektieren. Beobachtungen zweiter Ordnung sind Beobachtungen von Beobachtungen. Es kann sich um Beobachtungen anderer Beobachter handeln oder auch um Beobachtungen desselben oder anderer Beobachter zu einem anderen Zeitpunkt. ... alles wird kontingent, wenn das, *was* beobachtet wird, davon abhängt, *wer* beobachtet wird (Luhmann, 100).

bewusste Mensch) as well as “a man of possibility” (Möglichkeitensmensch) (Berger, 108). At the same time, he is also recognizable as the second-order observer (Berger, 109).

In short, both Luserke and Hüsck understand reality and possibility in a Musilian discourse, thus fails to unveil the significance of Musil’s reality and possibility in *MoE* in a larger picture.

Whereas Luserke understands the meaning of reality and possibility within the concrete emotional and logical worlds in a Musilian discourse, Hüsck deploys a sociological approach with a focus on social structure and defines reality as “necessity” (Notwendigkeit) in social rules. Berger’s reading connects the discourse of reality and possibility in *MoE* with Luhmann’s contingent theory, thus broadens this discourse and extends it to all value systems perceived by brain structures. In Berger’s understanding, reality and possibility are neither only confined within Luserke’s emotional and logical worlds, nor Hüsck’s social structures, but every value perceived by a human being, including the differentiation between emotional and logical worlds, and the perception of social structures. Therefore, Berger extends the connotation of reality and possibility from concrete conceived ideas to all human perceptions of the world and provides a more abstract way of understanding reality and possibility. She connects reality to Luhmann’s “unquestionable values” (unbezweifelbare Werte), meaning the support of certain values. This theory thus connects reality and possibility in *MoE* with the topic of contingency and observation in modern societies. Similar to Luhmann’s contingency and observation, as can be seen in the introduction, the debate between having a totalitarian worldview and not having it is also an important topic in Musil’s time. However, reality and possibility in *MoE* has not yet been thoroughly interpreted through this perspective. This dissertation will give an attempt to

reinterpret the discourse reality and possibility in *MoE* through the concept of “challenging a totalitarian value system” and use the figure of Diotima to illustrate it.

#### DEFINITION OF VALUES

Before we move on to give examples to analyze the discourse of reality and possibility in *MoE* through value systems, it is necessary to provide a working definition of values. Value is a term traditionally deployed in sociology. In the *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, Croissant argues that value has two forms, either “as a noun meaning core ideals and norms,” or as “a verb meaning the process by which things acquire importance or economic price” (Croissant, 581). Values are understood in two categories, “objective values” (Smith, 577) and “subjective values” (Harrison, 578). Objective values refer to “economic values” which imply “the valuation of goods and services being bought and sold in the market,” as well as “cultural values” which describe “the ideals, principles, and goals that people define for themselves as they pursue the ‘good life’ and the ‘good society’” (Smith, 577). The development of “cultural values” which should be “universal, transhistorical, or transcultural” (Smith, 577), is developed against a trend of relative value discourse represented by Nietzsche. As argued by Smith, “Nietzsche (1844-1900) was the first modern thinker to project the concept of value outside the sphere of economics (and mathematics) to the sphere of culture” (Smith, 578), influencing Max Weber (1860-1920) who believes that “the subjective value orientation of individual social actors was a fundamental starting point of sociological analysis” (Smith, 578). According to Smith, both Nietzsche’s and Weber’s theories of values fall into “relativism and subjectivism.”

In reaction to Nietzsche and Weber, liberal-democrats and Marxist-socialists develop “universal values” which “transcend location, time, and culture” (Smith, 578).

Representatives of objective social values are Émile Durkheim and Talcott Parsons. Both evaluate values on the level of society. In his *The Division of Labor in Society*, Émile Durkheim evaluates value in society and raises the concepts of “social values” and “moral values.” Both are neither “absolute value” which could be universal, nor are they “relative value” which is individualized. “Social values” are “a determined value” “each object of exchange has” “at each moment” “in a given society” (Durkheim, 382). “Moral values” refer to collective “common conscience” in a society” (Durkheim, 397). Although “every people makes for itself some particular conception of this type which pertains to its personal temperament, Each represents it in his own image” (Durkheim, 397). one has the duty to “resemble everybody else, not to have anything personal about one’s beliefs or actions.” This refers to “the collective conscience of the group of which we are a part” (Durkheim, 396). Instead of Nietzsche and Weber, Durkheim also acknowledges that “values” give society “fundamental conditions of social solidarity” (Durkheim, 398). It gives society rules and laws to obey. Following Durkheim, Talcott Parsons also understands by value a social term to stabilize the society. In his “An Outline of the Social System,” Parsons argues that value is a concept to stabilize institutions (Parsons, 425) and defines it as “the shared normative component,” and “the sharing of values becomes an essential condition of integration of the system” (Parsons, 430). As argued by Cauwer,

the prevailing moral codes, including social roles, symbols and hierarchies, serve as firm guidelines for people to feel like they belong to a meaningful

and ordered society in which they have a specific role and place (Cauwer, 100).

Individualism of values represented by Nietzsche and Weber can be regarded as “the concept of subjective value” which believes that “each individual has their own preferences for objects or actions” (Harrison, 578). According to Harrison, “the assumption of subjective value is that people seem to make different consumption decisions, even when the circumstances are otherwise the same” (Harrison, 578). For example, “subjective value elicitation” and “the concept of consumer sovereignty” are thoughts on subjective value in an economical way (Harrison, 579). Instead of connecting values to an objective discourse such as society and economics, this dissertation follows the discourse of “subjective value” and treats the concept of “value” as personal inclinations.

Therefore, we adopt one of the “common definition of values” (Hitlin, Piliavin, 362) from Rokeach in his book *The Nature of Human Values*. According to Rokeach,

*A value is an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence. ... A value system is an enduring organization of beliefs concerning preferable modes of conduct or end-states of existence along a continuum of relative importance (Rokeach, 5).*

In this definition, value is “an enduring belief,” which means that values are stable. Rokeach further explains that values are “initially taught and learned in isolation from other values in an absolute, all-or-none matter” (Rokeach, 6). This means that the learning of one value is in isolation from other values, so a value is absolute and can be enduring. As a “belief,” an

individual holding a certain value can use it to evaluate actions and decides a personal preference. An action is initiated by this preference. Rokeach defines “mode of conduct” as *instrumental* values and “end-state of existence” as *terminal* values. A value as a preference can also be understood as a “conception of the preferable.” Based on a value, a person has a “definable preference for something to something else” (Rokeach, 10). For example, judged according to a certain value, if there are “two mutually exclusive modes of behavior or end-states,” there is a preference for “one mode of behavior over an opposite mode, or a preference for one end-state over an opposite end-state” (Rokeach, 10). In a value system, several learned values are integrated into an organized system of values, “wherein each value is ordered in priority with respect to other values” (Rokeach, 11). This hierarchical value system is an enduring system of reference which determines a person’s decision and guides a person’s action. For Rokeach, value orientations are different orientations of values which can be disseminated without a certain order, but a value system has to be systematic and hierarchical, with a clear preference and order which establishes a clear direction (Rokeach, 22).

This dissertation defines reality in *MoE* as a value system and a person with a sense of reality as a person who supports a reality.

To try to readily distinguish the realists from the possibilists, just think of a specific sum of money. ... But a fool will tuck the money away in his sack, say the realists, which a capable man will make it work for him (Musil, *MwQ*, 11).<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> German original: Wenn man nun in bequemer Weise die Menschen des Wirklichkeits- und des Möglichkeitssinns voneinander unterscheiden will, so braucht man bloß an einen bestimmten Geldbetrag zu denken. ... Aber ein Narr



In this quote, one is convinced of the pragmatic usage of money, in that he/she believes that money fulfills the function of exchange and brings benefit to other people. This conviction is for the narrator in *MoE*, a value. Based on this value, one further distinguishes two types of people. A person who “tuck the money away in his sack” is a fool. The other who lets money “work for him” is “a capable man.” Further distinctions of people based on the value of “pragmatic usage of money” are consequences of this value. Values and consequences based on this value form a value system. This established value system is called a reality. A “realist” is a person who is convinced of a certain value system. He emphasizes (“says” in the quote) the value system in his mind. A “realist” (Wirklichkeitsmensch) is also called “a man with a sense of reality” (Mensch des Wirklichkeitssinns).

#### DIOTIMA

Diotima is one of the central figures in Musil’s *MoE*. She is the spiritual leader of the Parallel Campaign, a campaign initiated to celebrate the jubilee of the Austrian Emperor. As written in the letter from the father of the protagonist, Ulrich,

There will take place in Germany in 1918, specifically on or about the 15<sup>th</sup> of June, a great celebration marking the jubilee of Emperor Wilhelm II’s thirtieth year upon the throne, to impress upon the world Germany’s greatness and power. ... Now you are certainly aware that in the same year our own revered Emperor Franz Josef will be celebrating the seventieth jubilee of his accession and that this date falls on December 2<sup>nd</sup> (Musil, *MwQ*, 79).<sup>37</sup>

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steckt sie in den Strumpf, sagen die Wirklichkeitsmenschen, und ein Tüchtiger schafft etwas mit ihnen (Musil, *MoE*, 17).

<sup>37</sup> German original: In Deutschland soll im Jahre 1918, u.zw. in den Tagen um den 15. VI. herum, eine große, der Welt die Größe und Macht Deutschlands ins Gedächtnis prägende Feier des dann eingetretenen 30jährigen

It seems that the celebration in Germany which would happen in June would be earlier than the Austrian emperor. In order to outperform the Germans, Austria also starts to prepare a parallel campaign which intends to “bear the full weight of a seventy-year reign, so rich in blessings and sorrows, against a jubilee of a mere thirty years [the German campaign]” (Musil, MwQ, 79).<sup>38</sup>

Further,

Inasmuch as December 2<sup>nd</sup> cannot of course possibly be moved ahead of June 15<sup>th</sup>, someone came up with the splendid idea of declaring the entire year of 1918 as a jubilee year for our Emperor of Peace (Musil, MwQ, 79).<sup>39</sup>

Therefore, the Parallel Campaign in Austria aims for a celebration of nation with a nationalistic motive to outperform the Germans. Diotima “occupies a prominent position in the project”<sup>40</sup> (Musil, MwQ, 79), of the Parallel Campaign. Later on in this book, we see that Diotima’s house is the gathering place for the Planning Committee and she is the hostess of this salon.

Although Diotima occupies an important position in Austria now, she was initially not an aristocrat.

She was the eldest of three daughters of a secondary-school teacher without private means, so that Tuzzi had been considered a good catch for her even

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Regierungsjubiläums Kaiser Wilhelms II. stattfinden; obwohl es bis dahin noch mehrere Jahre sind, weiß man doch aus verlässlicher Quelle, dass heute schon Vorbereitungen dazu getroffen werden, wenn auch selbstverständlich vorläufig ganz inoffiziell (Musil, MoE, 78).

<sup>38</sup> German original: um das volle Gewicht eines 70 jährigen, segens- und sorgenreichen Jubiläums gegenüber einem bloß 30 jährigen zur Geltung zu bringen (Musil, MoE, 79).

<sup>39</sup> German original: Da der 2. XII. Natürlich durch nichts vor den 15. VI. Gerückt werden könnte, ist man auf den glücklichen Gedanken verfallen, das ganze Jahr 1918 zu einem Jubiläumsjahr unseres Friedenskaisers auszugestalten (Musil, MoE, 79).

<sup>40</sup> German original: nimmt eine hervorragende Stellung in dem Projekt ein (Musil, MoE, 79).

before he had been anything but an as yet unknown middle-class vice-consul (Musil, MwQ, 99).<sup>41</sup>

Later on, Tuzzi gained more social acknowledgement. With the improvement of his position, Tuzzi becomes Section Chief Tuzzi of the Imperial Foreign Office. According to Musil's narrator, Tuzzi

Was the head of the most influential section, was considered the right hand – even the brains, it was rumored – of his Minister, and was one of the few men who could influence the fate of Europe (Musil, MwQ, 94).<sup>42</sup>

Together with the rise of Tuzzi, his wife Diotima also gains social importance. Diotima even becomes an important person for Count Leinsdorf, the head of the Parallel Campaign. Count Leinsdorf introduces Diotima in the following way:

There's a woman you must get to know. ... She has such an ineffable spiritual grace. ... She is our loveliest and cleverest woman" ... "She is an ideal woman" (Musil, MwQ, 93).<sup>43</sup>

Diotima's life experiences show that marriage and her social position could be important values to her.

However, for Diotima herself, she madly falls in love with the capitalist, Arnheim. Arnheim is a German capitalist. As said in one of the titles, "Was alle getrennt sind, ist Arnheim in einer

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<sup>41</sup> German original: Sie war die älteste von den drei Töchtern eines Mittelschullehrers gewesen, der kein Vermögen besaß, so dass ihr Gatte für sie schon als gute Partie gegolten hatte, als er noch nichts als einen unbekanntem bürgerlichen Vizekonsul darstellte (Musil, MoE, 97).

<sup>42</sup> German original: Leitete darin die einflußreichste Sektion, galt als die rechte Hand, gerüchtweise sogar als der Kopf seiner Minister und gehörte zu den wenigen Männern, die auf die Geschicke Europas Einfluss hatten (Musil, MoE, 92).

<sup>43</sup> German original: Diese Frau müssten gerade Sie kennenlernen! ... Sie hat eine unbeschreibliche geistige Anmut. ... Sie ist unsere schönste und gescheiteste Frau. ... Sie ist eine ideale Frau! (Musil, MoE, 92).

Person” (Musil, MoE, 188) (What all others are separately, Arnheim is rolled into one (Musil, MwQ, 201)). Arnheim is obviously a capable and prominent figure. According to Diotima, he is

A German nabob, a rich Jew, and an eccentric who wrote poetry, dictated the price of coal, and was the German Kaiser’s personal friend (Musil, MwQ, 201).<sup>44</sup>

There was a man who could speak with everyone in their own language, and that man was Arnheim (Musil, MwQ, 201).<sup>45</sup>

That he could discuss industry with industrial giants and the economy with bankers was to be expected, but he could also chat just as freely about molecular physics, mysticism, and pigeon shooting. ... His reading and his memory were of truly extraordinary compass; he could give experts the subtlest cues in their own fields, but he also knew every person of note in the English, French, and Japanese nobility, and was at home at racetracks and golf links not only in Europe, but in Australia and America as well (Musil, MwQ, 202).<sup>46</sup>

However, in Count Leinsdorf’s eyes, Diotima is a good and loyal wife. When Ulrich asks him about Diotima: “Well then, who is her lover?” (Musil, MoE, 93) (Und wer ist denn nun eigentlich ihr Geliebter? (Musil, MoE, 92)). Count Leinsdorf directly answers: “An affair?” ... “You’re quite right. No one would ever suspect her of such a thing” (Musil, MwQ, 93) (Ein Verhältnis? ... Sie haben ganz recht. Kein Mensch käme auf diese Vermutung (Musil, MoE, 92)). Affair seems to become another important value to Diotima which determines her reality.

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<sup>44</sup> German original: Einen deutschen Nabob, einen reichen Juden, einen Sonderling, der Gedichte schrieb, den Kohlenpreis diktierte und der persönliche Freund des deutschen Kaisers war (Musil, MoE, 188).

<sup>45</sup> German original: Es gab einen Mann, der mit jedem in seiner Sprach reden konnte, und das war Arnheim (Musil, MoE, 188).

<sup>46</sup> German original: Dass er mit Großindustriellen über die Industrie und mit Bankleuten über die Wirtschaft zu sprechen vermochte, war verständlich; aber er war imstande, ebenso unumschränkt über Molekularphysik, Mystik oder Taubenschießen zu plaudern. ... Seine Belesenheit und sein Gedächtnis hatten wirklich einen ungewöhnlichen Umfang; er vermochte Kennern die feinsten Stichworte ihres Wissensgebiets zu bringen, kannte aber ebensogut jede wichtige Person aus dem englischen, dem französischen oder japanischen Adel und wusste auf Renn- und Golfplätzen nicht nur in Europa, sondern auch in Australien und Amerika Bescheid (Musil, MoE, 189).

Diotima is an interesting figure to look at in order to understand the concept of a sense of reality in *MoE*. She has two contrasting realities, marriage and affair. How she understands both values and directs her life gives an example of values, realities, a sense of realities in *MoE*. Diotima is the cousin of the protagonist of *MoE*, Ulrich. In the letter from Ulrich's father to Ulrich, Diotima is introduced as the daughter of a cousin of Ulrich's father's late brother's widow (Musil, *MoE*, 79) (Musil, *MwQ*, 79). Ulrich is a person of possibilities and is the only person in this book who sees through Diotima's realities, her limitation of realities. Throughout the book, Ulrich and Diotima exchange their positions on reality and possibility which enables a conversation between two concepts.

#### DIOTIMA AN EXAMPLE OF A SENSE OF REALITY

Diotima is a figure the novel shapes which shows reality as a value system.

So far Diotima had been hampered by the moral sleaziness and the unattractive air of irresponsibility that were inseparable from all the stories of adultery that had ever come her way. She simply couldn't imagine herself in such a situation ... a certain moral complacency of her body resisted the thought (Musil, *MwQ*, 463).<sup>47</sup>

If Diotima believes that marriage requires loyalty, then the betrayal of her husband is, for Diotima, a moral degradation. This can be seen from the word choice "the moral sleaziness and

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<sup>47</sup> German original: Allerdings, Diotima hatte bisher noch nie über jenes peinlich Kokottenhafte und unschön Leichtsinrige hinwegkommen können, das an allen Ehebruchsschilderungen haftete, die sie kannte. Sie vermochte sich selbst in einer solchen Lage nicht recht vorzustellen. ... eine gewisse moralische Geruhsamkeit ihres Körpers wehrte sich dagegen (Musil, *MoE*, 426).

the unattractive air of irresponsibility.” Moreover, “she simply couldn't imagine herself in such a situation” and “a certain moral complacency of her body” always “resisted the thought.” From this analysis, we see that Diotima strongly emphasizes this moral system on which her marriage is based. She must emotionally suffer from it if she had to sacrifice this system. Loyalty to marriage and its following moral codes become the first reality to Diotima.<sup>48</sup>

At the same time, Diotima hopes to conform to another reality based on her desire for Arnheim.

She would gladly have dropped her campaign altogether and married Arnheim, as a little girl solves her problems by forgetting all about them and leaping into her father's arms (Musil, MwQ, 460).<sup>49</sup>

Although Diotima sees marriage as moral restrictions, within her marriage, she still “would gladly have dropped her campaign altogether and married Arnheim.” Diotima would wish to forget all about restrictions and “problems.” She sees Arnheim as a father-like figure and seeks shelter in “her father's arms” – the arm of Arnheim. This impulsion unveils another value she holds: her strong desire for Arnheim within marriage. For Diotima, Arnheim represents “great, luminous life” (*großes, durchglänzttes Leben*) in her dream, and she “saw herself airborne at this adored man's side” (Musil, MwQ, 462) (*flog an der Seite des geliebten Mannes* (Musil, MoE,

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<sup>48</sup> In her dissertation *Diotima and Clarisse in Robert Musil's Novel Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, Lynda Jeanne King also notices that Diotima commits to social values. “Her whole existence now based on ideals society has fed her, Diotima has accepted and cultivated them as the correct basis for her life” (King, 45-6). This quote shows that the “correct basis for her life” is “ideals society has fed her.”

<sup>49</sup> Am liebsten würde sie Ihre Aktion stehen gelassen und Arnheim geheiratet haben, so wie für ein kleines Mädchen alle Schwierigkeiten gut sind, wenn es sie fallen lässt und an die Brust des Vaters stürzt (Musil, MoE, 423).

425). These quotes further confirm Diotima's admiration for Arnheim and her furious passion for being at his side.<sup>50</sup>

The previous analysis shows that Diotima has two conflicting realities, moral restrictions in a marriage and desire for an affair. If she devotes to one reality, then the other one can only remain as a possibility. On the one hand, Diotima married to diplomat Tuzzi who secures her social status; on the other hand, she falls in love with the great capitalist, Arnheim. For a married Diotima, a Diotima in love remains a possibility. For a Diotima in love, the married Diotima is a possibility. Only one reality can be realized and the other one remains a possibility. She gets into conflicts and has to choose between her husband Tuzzi and Arnheim, "Diotima suffered sleepless nights, during which she was torn between a Prussian industrial autocrat and an Austrian bureaucrat (Musil, *MwQ*, 462) (Diotima hatte schlaflose Nächte; in diesen Nächten schwankte sie zwischen einem preußischen Industriechef und einem österreichischen Sektionschef (Musil, *MoE*, 425)). Loyalty to one's husband is the moral standard required by society which secures her social position. If Diotima betrays her husband, she has to give up her position as the wife of a diplomat and a well-reputed hostess of a famous salon. However,

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<sup>50</sup> Whether Diotima is in love or not is a contentious topic in research on Diotima. In her dissertation of Diotima and Clarisse in Robert Musil's Novel *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, Lynda Jeanne King argues for a romantic love between Arnheim and Diotima. "They believe themselves chosen by the stars, or fate, or some 'geheimnisvolle Kräfte, . . . Kräfte, ungeheuer denen des Menschen überlegen, den Sternen verwandt' to become lovers" (King, 72). However, Gassenmeier argues that they have not really fallen in love with each other. According to Gassenmeier, although a "unbekannt geliebene erotische Anziehung" develops between them, Musil's narrator still argues that "weder Diotima noch Arnheim hatten geliebt" (Gassenmeier, 55). This dissertation believes that Diotima had a feeling for and desired Arnheim, but then she gives up this feeling for Arnheim and turns to self-love.

Arnheim confirms her intelligence and self-esteem. If she gives up Arnheim, she will betray her personal feelings.<sup>51</sup>

A sense of real possibility is a process of closing possibilities and reducing them to realities.

But it is a sense of possible reality and arrives at its goal much more slowly than most people's sense of their real possibilities. He wants the forest, as it were, and the others the trees, and forest is hard to define, while trees represent so many cords of wood of a definable quality (Musil, MwQ, 12).<sup>52</sup>

The narrator explains in the quote that a person with “possible reality Wirklichkeit” sees the whole picture of the forest, whereas a person with “real possibility Möglichkeit” only sees individual trees. Because trees have specific characteristics which people can define, whereas the image of a forest as an accumulation of trees contains more uncertain elements can hardly be grasped by language. A forest can contain different types, amounts and combinations of trees. It contains many different possibilities. Each single variation in type, amount and combination of trees creates a new possibility to interpret a forest, which makes the goal of concretely describing a forest unapproachable. Therefore, the narrator explains that the attempt of a person with “possible reality” to describe a forest arrives at the goal much more

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<sup>51</sup> In her dissertation of Diotima and Clarisse in Robert Musil's Novel *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, Lynda Jeanne King also sees this conflict. “There is definitely a conflict arising in Diotima's life between the very pleasant emotional attraction she feels for Arnheim and her fear of the ‘wolf,’ of situations over which she has no control” (King, 80). Hassler-Rütti also describes this conflict. “Diotima sieht sich offenbar im Dilemma zwischen ‚Pflicht und Neigung,‘ ... signifikant moderne Aufspaltung in körperliche und geistig-seelische Bedürftigkeit“ (Hassler-Rütti, 67). She also points out that Diotima is in a “Entscheidungszwang” to have to decide between “nur zwei Alternativen” (Hassler-Rütti, 87).

<sup>52</sup> German original: Aber es ist ein Sinn für die mögliche Wirklichkeit und kommt viel langsamer ans Ziel als der den meisten Menschen eignende Sinn für ihre wirklichen Möglichkeiten. Er will gleichsam den Wald, und der andere die Bäume; und Wald, das ist etwas schwer Ausdrückbares, wogegen Bäume soundsoviel Festmeter bestimmter Qualität bedeuten (Musil, MoE, 17).



slowly than a person with “real possibility” who wants to describe trees. This shows that possible reality is to confront with more possibilities, which can be understood as the process of imagining the possibility of a forest based on the reality of a tree. It opens up realities to more possibilities. In contrast, “real possibility” is to ignore the uncertainty which presents in understanding a forest and only concentrates on the goal of describing a single tree. It reduces possibilities down to realities.

In short, the difference between “real possibility” and “possible reality” is whether different possibilities are accepted. For example, in the case of Diotima, she has two conflicting realities, moral imperative in a marriage and desire for an affair. If she has a sense of “real possibility,” she would reduce these two possibilities to one reality; if she has a sense of “possible reality,” she would then embrace both possibilities and not need to reduce them to one single reality. As a person of “real possibility,” Diotima fails to accept both marriage and affair and sees a struggle between these two values. She experiences sleepless nights hesitating between these two values. In the end, Diotima synthesizes both affair and marriage and understands them through the new reality of self-love, and thus reduces both possibilities to one reality.

Diotima is a person of “real possibility.” Facing her two conflicting realities/possibilities, instead of happily accepting both of them as two justified possibilities, Diotima suffers from this conflict.

A love that had to live with a dagger through the heart. There was something decidedly upright about it, with a background of classic ruins under fleeting clouds. Guilt and its transcendence, passion expiated by suffering, trembled in

this image and filled Diotima with an unutterable intensity and awe (Musil, MwQ, 463).<sup>53</sup>

On the one hand, Diotima stays loyal to her marriage. In this sense, her desire for Arnheim against this restriction is named as “guilt.” On the other hand, Diotima develops romantic love towards Arnheim besides her marriage. Loyalty to marriage therefore becomes a huge restriction for Diotima. She needs to put a lot of efforts into it if she wishes to overcome this restriction. These two possibilities are two different paths which bring uncertainty and inefficiency (“arrives at its goal much more slowly”), and she hence needs to suffer sleepless nights (“sleepless nights”).

In order to save herself from her sufferings, Diotima’s final resolution does not keep both possibilities. As a person with a sense of “real possibility,” Diotima reduces two possibilities to one single reality. She develops a new reality of self-elevation to reinterpret both marriage and affair, therefore combining both of them. Initially, Diotima understands affair as “guilt” (Schuldgefühl). However, Diotima is very convinced of her own righteousness. Because she is the protagonist of the affair, she justifies affair as something with “an unutterable intensity and awe.” Diotima sees her affair as commanding sacrifice, “a love” as “a dagger through the heart.” Diotima, as the performer of this action, victimizes herself and understands her “passion” as her “suffering.” The action to pursue the suffering therefore becomes something

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<sup>53</sup> Eine Liebe, die mit dem Dolch im Herzen lebt. Das konnte sie sich nicht genau vorstellen, aber es war zweifellos etwas Aufrechtes; mit geborstenen Säulen, über denen Wolken fliegen, als Hintergrund. Schuld und Überwindung des Schuldgefühls, Lust, gesühnt durch Leid, zitterte in diesem Bild und erfüllte Diotima mit einer unerhörten Steigerung und Andacht (Musil, MoE, 426).

with “an unutterable intensity and awe.” It is a moralized and sacred “transcendence.” This shift of perspective creates a sublime image of Diotima who conducts the morale of sacrifice which suffers from pain. She therefore becomes a figure of transcendence. Based on this self-elevation, Diotima’s affair is no longer “guilt,” but the glorified transcendence. Also, this new realization causes Diotima’s great effort. She is so extremely proud of it that she even needs to “tremble.” This shows that Diotima is totally convinced of her attempt of self-elevation. Reinterpreted through self-confirmation, affair as a “guilt” becomes “an unutterable intensity and awe” with “something decidedly upright about it.”

Diotima’s self-reverence also predetermines her marriage. She originally belongs to the middle class in society. She was the “daughter of a modest secondary-school teacher and [a] young wife of a middle-class vice-consul” (Musil, MwQ, 245) (Tochter eines bescheidenen Mittelschullehrers und jungen Gattin eines bürgerlichen Vizekonsuls (Musil, MoE, 227)). The mentality that she is a common citizen “remain[s] in the freshness of her heart” (Musil, MwQ, 245) (in den frischesten Teilen ihres Wesens bisher doch wohl geblieben war (Musil, MoE, 227)). However, since her childhood, she seeks pride and fame.

In her girlhood she had had nothing but her pride, and since her pride had nothing to be proud about, it was only a rolled-up propriety bristling with feelers of sensitivity. But even such as posture may conceal ambition and daydreams, and can be an unpredictable force (Musil, MwQ, 99).<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> German original: In ihrer Mädchenzeit nichts gehabt als ihren Stolz, und da dieser hinwieder nichts hatte, worauf er stolz sein könnte, war er eigentlich nur eine eingerollte Korrektheit mit ausgestreckten Tastacheln der Empfindsamkeit gewesen. Aber auch eine solche verbirgt manchmal Ehrgeiz und Träumerei und kann eine unberechenbare Kraft sein (Musil, MoE, 97).

Later on, her marriage brings her fame and dominance. However, with the rising position of her husband, she experiences a rise in society and becomes the dominant figure of the Parallel Campaign, a prominent figure of the country. Her awakening “sense of position” (Musil, MwQ, 245) (Das Gefühl der Position (Musil, MoE, 227)) gives her an enjoyable “nervous breakdown (Nervenzusammenbruch).”

Even as it kept quivering and pulsating in her body, brought Diotima a kind of happiness she had never known before. It was a shudder, a being endlessly showered with significance, ..., a prickling like the awareness of nothingness when one stands on the summit of the highest mountain peak for miles around (Musil, MwQ, 245).<sup>55</sup>

Without her marriage, Diotima was a common citizen. However, within the marriage, she is able to experience “a being endlessly showered with significance.” The feeling of significance is exactly the feeling of “the awareness of nothingness when one stands on the summit of the highest mountain peak for miles around,” and it keeps “shudder[ing]” as “a being endlessly showered with significance.” This huge emotional upsurge brings her “a kind of happiness she had never known before.” This shows that proving her own “significance” in this social structure at any cost is of great importance to Diotima. This is only realized through marriage with Tuzzi. Therefore, because of Diotima’s reality of self-advancement and self-importance, she justifies her marriage.

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<sup>55</sup> German original: Immer zitternd in ihrem Körper pochte, schenkte Diotima aber nun ein Glück, das sie noch nicht gekannt hatte. Es war ein Schaudern, ein Überrieseltwerden von Bedeutsamkeit, ..., ein Prickeln wie das Gefühl des Nichts, wenn man auf einer weithin alles überragenden Bergspitze steht (Musil, MoE, 227).

Our analysis shows that Diotima's self-love serves as the basic value of Diotima's world structure. Because she loves herself, Diotima interprets affair as self-sacrifice; because marriage brings her self-significance, Diotima defends her marriage. Based on the value of self-love, Diotima further justifies the values of marriage and affair. Self-love, marriage and affair belong to one single value system which form a reality. Instead of sticking to marriage and affair as two independent possibilities, Diotima interprets them as ramifications attaching to the value of self-love, thus creates a hierarchical structure to direct the world. Having two different realities of marriage and affair initially, Diotima would have a chance to extend to more possibilities in her life. However, Diotima's sense of reality and real possibility restrict her. Diotima refuses any possible chances to embrace uncertainty. She only allows herself to approach the world through the single perspective of self-importance. Her following thoughts and actions are all results based on her established perspective.

#### REALITY STAGNATES A SEPARATED WORLD STRUCTURE<sup>56</sup>

Diotima gives up her versatile identities and different possibilities of marriage and affair and subsumes herself under one single reality of self-love. Although her single reality gives her an identity, it also makes her too stubborn to reflect on the limitation of her own reality. In the next part, we are going to further discuss this limitation in detail.

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<sup>56</sup> Hayasaka also argues that „Wirklichkeitssinn“ stagnates human perception. It is like “Fliege,” which is caught by „Fliegenpapier“ which cannot move oneself and would “wie eine Fliege zu sterben” (Hayasaka, 74).

Because of her self-love, Diotima believes that she holds the only standard. She has dominance and significance. Diotima only uses her own perspective to evaluate Ulrich's arguments and everything Ulrich says needs to be compared with her idea.

Diotima felt that Ulrich had been, for some time now, expressing views closer to her own, and yet there was always something amiss and whatever he said never came quite close enough (Musil, MwQ, 515).<sup>57</sup>

When Diotima evaluates Ulrich's views, she does not firstly consider what his views look like. Instead, she compares his views to her views. Her only standard is whether the person has been "expressing views closer to her own." Diotima feels that she holds the only standard and is the person who is qualified to judge other people. If Ulrich's view does not match with hers, she would judge his perspective as "always something amiss." Compared to her standard, "whatever he said never came quite close enough."

As a result, in Diotima's perception, Ulrich is seen as someone who always disagrees and challenges her values.

Then everything Ulrich was saying tended toward a single effect, ... but was immediately reminded of an incident when, as a young girl, she had carried a little boy away from some danger, and how he had kept hitting her in the belly with his knees to make her let him go (Musil, MwQ, 518).<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> German original: Ulrich hatte nach Diotimas Auffassung seit einiger Zeit die Eigenschaft, dass seine Ansichten den ihren nahe kamen, aber es blieb doch immer verfehlt und nicht ganz ausreichend, was er sagte (Musil, MoE, 473).

<sup>58</sup> German original: Was Ulrich sagte, einzig und allein die Wirkung zu haben, ... aber es erinnerte sie gleichzeitig daran, wie sie als Mädchen einmal einen kleinen Knaben auf ihren Armen an seiner Gefahr getragen, und er hatte sie eigensinnig mit den Knien immerzu gegen den Bauch gestoßen, um sich dagegen zu wehren (Musil, MoE, 475-6).

Diotima wishes to decide what it means to be “danger” based on her values. However, Ulrich does not agree to her decision and keeps “hitting her in the belly with his knees.” This is a metaphor which shows that Ulrich does not agree with Diotima’s judgement and wishes to break away from her values. This example shows Diotima’s dominating position in evaluating other opinions.

Because of her dominance, Diotima interprets different opinions as something irritating. Ulrich and Diotima are relatives. He tries to challenge her to just show her natural emotions without paying attention to her personal image. Ulrich asks Diotima: “Please, won't you make love to me, just to be nice?” (Musil, MwQ, 313) (Schenken Sie mir eine Umarmung, rein aus Liebenswürdigkeit (Musil, MoE, 290)). Ulrich hopes that she can show her pure love for him for the sake of “being nice” (aus Liebenswürdigkeit) to him.<sup>59</sup> However, as a person with a sense of real possibility, Diotima’s moral image always plays the predominant role. The requirement to show real affection towards Ulrich presupposes Diotima’s putting aside her own personal significance and concentrating on the other with a selfless attitude, which is a challenge against her own reality of self-love. Diotima hence does not take this persuasion seriously.

Taking in what he was saying as his usual kind of chatter, somewhere  
between amusing and irritating, commanding no more of her attention than

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<sup>59</sup> This approach towards Ulrich is seen as the third possibility of Diotima by Hassler-Rütti, in that she argues that “Ulrichs Angebot, es mit ihm zu versuchen, eröffnet Diotima eine neue, nicht ganz abwegige Möglichkeit. Denn wenn sie glaubt, den einen nicht verlassen und dem anderen nicht angehören zu dürfen, was liegt da näher, als ihre Liebe auf einen Dritten zu übertragen, und sei es auch nur verbal?” (Hassler-Rütti, 88). Instead of seeing it as the third possibility, this dissertation understands it as an extension of the Diotima’s first possibility of unveiling her affectionate feelings towards Arnheim.

at most the corner of an eye. At this moment he really had no influence whatsoever on her (Musil, MwQ, 313).<sup>60</sup>

For Diotima, instead of embracing Ulrich's perspective, she uses her values of self-love to judge Ulrich's argument. Diotima's reality of self-love thinks about herself in the first place. Her natural emotions are all processed and filtered through the idea of maintaining her good image, and then only processed emotions can be allowed to reveal themselves. Therefore, expressing pure emotions towards others without considering herself would make her lose control of herself. She does not welcome this idea. Hence this new suggestion would seem to be "amusing and irritating" to Diotima's perfect self-esteem. Diotima does not take it seriously. She tak[es] in what he was saying as the „usual kind of chatter, somewhere between amusing and irritating," and which "command[s] no more of her attention than at most the corner of an eye."

Diotima's reality of self-love results in her protective gesture against challenges. Ulrich actually wants to develop a more genuine relationship with Diotima by encouraging her to show her natural emotions which might not be perfect. However, in Diotima's eyes, Ulrich merely makes fun of her belief in her self-image and wishes to ridicule her.

"If you ever saw me doing something horrible, something really awful," she said unexpectedly, "I'm sure you'd be an angel about it (Musil, MwQ, 513).<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> German original: Nun seine Rede wieder als ihr bekannte, zwischen Unterhaltung und Ärger schwankende Gerede hinnahm, dem sie nicht mehr als einen Augenwinkel schenkte. Er hatte in Wahrheit in diesem Augenblick ganz und gar keinen Einfluss auf sie (Musil, MoE, 290).

<sup>61</sup> German original: "Wenn ich mich einmal von Ihnen" sagte sie unvermittelt "ganz gemein und schlecht benehmen könnten, würden Sie sicher wundervoll wie ein Erzengel sein!" (Musil, MoE, 471).



For Diotima, to conduct “something horrible, something really awful” would be an action which is not in accordance with her envisioned self-image in her eyes. Diotima is adverse to it in the depth of her heart and mentally rejects any attempt which aims at challenging her perfect image. In addition to her adversary comments on the deeds, Diotima interprets them as his attempt to see her lose face. Therefore, she reads this thought as Ulrich’s revenge on her. Diotima therefore takes a self-protective gesture. She interprets Ulrich’s intention as a challenge against her in order to gain a great sense of satisfaction. Because he would be so satisfied that he could then be so happy that he could be very nice to her, acting like an angel Diotima deploys her own value system to judge every disagreeing suggestion from her own perspective, therefore fails to take in other perspectives. Diotima makes great efforts to protect her world structure and fights against all different possibilities. As a result, she remains in her stigmatized world view and invalidates any challenges.

As a result, twice in the book, Ulrich feels that Diotima disrespects his personality. The first time Ulrich meets Diotima, he already feels that “despite his maturity and experience, he felt like a destructive little worm being eyed attentively by a large chicken” (Musil, MwQ, 97) (trotz seiner Jahre und Erfahrung kam er wie ein schädlicher kleiner Wurm vor, den ein großes Huhn aufmerksam betrachtet (Musil, MoE, 95)). Later on, Ulrich again feels that “again he saw Diotima’s soul in the shape of a colossal chicken pecking at his own soul, in the shape of a little worm” (Musil, MwQ, 618) (er sah Diotimas und seine Seele wieder in der Gestalt eines großen Huhns vor sich, das einen kleinen Wurm aufpickt (Musil, MoE, 566)). “His soul, in the eyes of Diotima, is “in the shape of a little worm” which is pecked at by a colossal chicken. Fully

convinced of her dominating position, Diotima desperately attacks possible challenges to secure her own position.

Even for a person she desires, Diotima cannot get rid of her self-love to actively realize her affair. Diotima believes that she loves Arnheim.

“But I *am* madly in love!” (Diotima)... Ulrich openly smiled at this. “You are quite incapable of it,” he said. “A human being would have to be wholly objective – which is almost the same as being impersonal, after all – to be wholly a personification of love. This means being all feeling and sensibility and thought. Now, all the elements that make up a human being are tender, since they yearn toward each other; only the human being itself is not. So being madly in love is something you might not even want for yourself” (Musil, MwQ, 519).<sup>62</sup>

Diotima, while reflecting on her love for Arnheim, believes that she can experience endless love for him (“But I *am* madly in love!”). However, Ulrich criticizes her, saying that she cannot endlessly fall in love with someone (“You are quite incapable of it”). According to Ulrich, only people who do not care about his/her self (“impersonal”) are able to fall in love with someone. Diotima is unable to overcome her image of the self. Her “self” prevents her from pursuing the awareness of a whole. To love someone endlessly, in Diotima’s case, is to give up her marriage and social connections and eventually her self-confirmation. In other words, everything that is important in Diotima’s life must be given up. If Diotima would follow this path, then, in the end, Diotima would have to give up all her personalities, and further negate all qualities she once

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<sup>62</sup> German original: Aber ich bin ja maßlos verliebt! Ulrich lächelte ihr ins Gesicht. „Das können Sie gar nicht“ sagte er. ... “Denn nur wenn Menschen ganz sachlich wären – und das ist ja beinahe dasselbe wie unpersönlich –, dann wären sie auch ganz Liebe. Weil Sie nur dann auch ganz Empfindung und Gefühl und Gedanke wären; und alle Elemente, die den Menschen bilden, sind zärtlich, denn sie streben zueinander, nur der Mensch selbst ist es nicht. Maßlos verliebt sein, ist also etwas, das Sie vielleicht gar nicht möchten ...! (Musil, MoE, 476).

possessed and totally indulge herself in the idea of tenderness and “yearn toward each other.” In this world, there would be only different values (“objective”), but none of them could be in her possession. This would be a world of possibilities. However, Diotima, as seen in our previous analysis, tries to imprint her names on almost everything and actively seeks for a reality as her identity. Even her emotional struggles (“trembled”) is understood as her self-elevation. For this reason, Ulrich comments that for Diotima as a man with qualities, “so being madly in love is something you might not even want for yourself.”

Ulrich’s comments are correct. Diotima and Arnheim’s relationship only remains in mind without real actualization. Diotima thought that she has fallen in love with Arnheim, and even experiences sleepless nights contemplating getting together with him. However, she has never taken any action which might damage her own reputation to pursue her romantic love. We might therefore argue that Diotima has never really fallen in love with Arnheim. Her love for Arnheim is only a proof of her self-confirmation.

Diotima had after all reached the point of regarding the risks of an affair as the more considerate and civilized alternative to the crude catastrophe of smashed lives, while Arnheim had long since opted morally against accepting such a sacrifice and was ready to marry her. They could have each other, one way or another, at any moment, and they both knew it, but they did not know which form it should take, for their happiness swept their souls, made for it as they were, to such solemn heights that the fear of spoiling everything by some awkward move paralyzed them (Musil, MwQ, 550).<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> German original: Diotima war doch schon so weit, dass sie es wenigstens im Geiste zuweilen für zartfühlend und überlegen gehalten hatte, das Fährnis des Ehebruchs der groben Katastrophe einer Zerschmetterung von Lebensläufen vorzuziehen, und Arnheim hatte sich moralisch längst entschieden, dieses Opfer nicht anzunehmen und sie zu heiraten; sie konnten sich also auf die eine oder andere Weise jede Sekunde bekommen, das wussten

Attracted by each other, both Diotima and Arnheim have mentally made up their mind to get together. Diotima is mentally aware that she wishes to approach Arnheim through divorce. Similarly, Arnheim<sup>64</sup> “had long since opted morally” for a braver action to unite with Diotima. He has decided “to marry her,” though in the mind as well. Although it is actually fairly easy for both of them to “have each other,” in “one way or another,” “at any moment,” neither of them has put it into action.

The reason for this lack of action is the premise of self-love. Diotima has made huge efforts towards her significant position in the Parallel Campaign. She is clear that an affair would bring her humiliation and she would have lost everything she has gained so far. Her self-respect would be hurt. Likely, having Diotima as his wife would not bring economic benefits for Arnheim. Instead, he would have a difficult relationship with Diotima’s husband, Minister of Diplomacy in Austria. His image and influence in this country will be much weakened. Both of them would not conduct in “one way or another” to “have each other,” because they have “the fear of spoiling everything by some awkward move.” Both Diotima and Arnheim simply reject everything which could have hurt their vanity.<sup>65</sup> Both Diotima and Arnheim gain their personal

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sie beide, aber sie wussten nicht, wie sie es wollen sollten, denn das Glück riss ihre dazu geschaffenen Seelen in eine solche feierliche Höhe, dass sie dort eine Angst vor unschönen Bewegungen litten (Musil, MoE, 504-5).

<sup>64</sup> Similar to Diotima, Arnheim also has a sense of reality who strives for self-importance. As mentioned by Hayasaka, “so entsteht der Zustand, dass man immer die Stimme der Vernunft hört ... wegen dieser Stimme kann Arnheim seine Liebe zu Diotima nicht vollkommen verwirklichen” (Hayasaka, 70). “Er ist auch der ‚Gefangene‘ der Wirklichkeit” (Hayasaka, 73). According to Braun, „Arnheim cannot suffer opposition; his “fiction” of unity, of all-powerfulness does not permit rejection or defeat” (Braun, 35).

<sup>65</sup> Similar to Diotima, Arnheim also makes effort to elevate his own significance. According to Ulrich,

He’s [Arnheim] a monster of vanity. How can I make you see the full extent of it? I mean vanity in the biblical sense: all cymbals and sounding brass to hide a vacuum. A man is vain when he prides himself on

significance and self-confirmation in the first place, and then they start to appreciate another person who has also reached “such solemn heights.” They have to firstly secure their own personal significance, and then they can acknowledge the “happiness,” which “swept their souls” when they meet a person at “such solemn heights.” Diotima’s and Arnheim’s love for each other presumes a self-love. They love themselves much more than they love the other person. Their love towards other is only an appearance. The essence of it is the wish to confirm their own way of living. Hence Diotima’s self-love prevents herself from acknowledging the possibility of an affair. Her single reality prevents herself from facing another reality. As argued by Hassler-Rütli, she “rushes away and retreats into her own reality and ideality which become solid” (Hassler-Rütli, 89).<sup>66</sup>

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having seen the moon rise over Asia on his left while on his right Europe fades away in the sunset – this is how he once described to me his crossing of the Sea of Marmara.

According to Ulrich, Arnheim world view revolves around the central interpretant of “vanity”. He develops all of his talents to demonstrate his own significance. Arnheim takes pride in the description that “having seen the moon rise over Asia on his left while on his right Europe fades away in the sunset” during his “crossing of the Sea of Marmara”. This description shows that Arnheim is the center of the world, having Asia and Europe next to him and coexist with the moon and sunset. Arnheim himself is of great importance. Moreover, Arnheim’s versatility is used to “hide a vacuum”. This vacuum is the acknowledgement of the inferiority of himself. Arnheim only works on emphasizing his own presence and cannot accept his perfect image before others being challenged. Ulrich unveils his unmoral intentions in Parallel Campaign,

‘I’ve been told that your interest in our Parallel Campaign and everything connected with it, Frau Tuzzi and my humble self thrown in for good measure, has to do with your acquiring major portions of the Galician oil fields’. Despite the failing light, Arnheim could be seen to have turned pale (Musil, MwQ, 701).

Arnheim’s real intention which is to “acquire major portions of the Galician oil fields” is unveiled. When this intention is discovered by Ulrich, Arnheim’s selfish intention to increase his own capital become completely bared. Arnheim feels that his perfect image as a moral member in this Campaign has been destroyed. Arnheim “could be seen to have turned pale” “despite the failing light”. This is to say that Arnheim’s reality is based on his own vanity. From this analysis, it is clear that Arnheim strives for self-significance, just like Diotima.

<sup>66</sup> German original: eilt allerdings von dannen und wieder zurück in ihre fest gewordene Realität und Idealität

In short, the narrator names Diotima as “people with a cloud under their feet” (Musil, MwQ, 550) (“Menschen, die eine Wolke unter den Füßen haben” (Musil, MoE, 505)), because her sense of superiority is self-deception. Diotima’s feeling of self-expansion is only a result of ignoring other perspectives. She simply plays down Ulrich’s intelligence, in order to satisfy her own sense of significance and satisfaction. She tries to persuade herself of her own significance and impresses herself by her self-defined significance. This feeling of dominance is only a result of ignoring different opinions which might challenge her. Just like what Ulrich comments: “You leave out whatever doesn’t suit you” (Musil, MwQ, 625) (Ihre Auffassung lässt aus, was Ihnen nicht passt (Musil, MoE, 573)). Diotima cowardly hides herself and her weakness of vanity behind the protection of her reputation. Her significance is only a self-approved show. She is the only audience for herself. Diotima desperately struggles to force her value onto every aspect of her life. She subsumes her identity under a rigid structure based on her social position, and her own personality is dominated by a hypocritical reputation. Even her most natural feeling of love can only survive under the guise of her reputation. From the example of Diotima, we see that a person with a sense of reality fully commits to a certain value to approach the world and therefore rejects any other different possibilities which might challenge this reality. Therefore, a sense of reality creates a rigid separation and hierarchy which is self-protective. It further excludes possibilities. It is therefore difficult to break through this separation created by a sense of reality.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> In Musil scholarship, there are proofs that Diotima has realities of marriage as moral imperative, romantic love as experiential imperative, and social standing as basis of self-love. However, Diotima has not yet been situated within the discourse of reality and possibility. This dissertation understands Diotima’s different values as reality and connects Diotima to the discourse of reality and possibility in Musil scholarship.

In contrast to Diotima, Ulrich sees the boundary of Diotima's value and tries to overcome its limitation. On the one hand, Ulrich understands Diotima's value of self-love. When Diotima claims that she is "madly in love" with Arnheim, Ulrich is clear that "madly in love" presupposes a full devotion for others which is selfless and "impersonal." Ulrich thus points out that Diotima, who boasts the reality of self-centrism, perhaps does not really want to be in love. On the other hand, Ulrich tries to show Diotima the excluded side of her reality. He suggests to Diotima that she overcome her self-love through revealing her genuine feeling without considering the social image, therefore suppressing her believed value of self-love and subsuming it under the free expression of personal feeling. Ulrich can unveil the foundational value Diotima holds, and he is able to remind Diotima of the blind spot in her system. Without devoting to either the value of self-love or the negation of self-love, Ulrich remains an analytical and objective viewer and tries to show his understandings of both positions.<sup>68</sup> The analytical understanding of a reality and the limitation of reality makes Ulrich a person with a sense of possibility. The sense of possibility enables him to destabilize the established system of reality and overcome the stagnated perspective created by this reality.

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<sup>68</sup> Like Hayasaka argues,

Er sieht voraus, dass die jungen Leute und die mit der Parallelaktion befassten Menschen, die nach dem absoluten Wert oder nach der höchsten Idee streben, am Ende zu nichts gelangen werden. So nimmt er Abstand von der Wirklichkeit (Hayasaka, 75).

## SUMMARY

As argued in the introduction, *MoE* conceives two worlds, the noumenal and the phenomenal world. This chapter tries to show how the phenomenal world is understood in *MoE* through a sense of reality. This chapter gives the definition of reality, possibility, a sense of reality, and a sense of real possibility through the figure of Diotima. Convinced of the values of marriage as moral imperative, romantic love as experiential imperative, Diotima has two realities that she devotes to. Although Diotima could have a chance to embrace two different possibilities, with a sense of real possibility, she reduces both realities to one single reality of self-love. A sense of reality and a sense of real possibility firmly constrains Diotima within a single perspective. She takes a self-protective gesture in order to retain a stagnated world view. This example shows that reality enables the approaching of the world from a certain perspective which consolidates and stagnates a specific world view. According to Agathe's example of the *Kugelmensch*, the initial world is united in one. With a sense of reality, the unified world is permanently separated and developed into a specific world view. Further, the basis of reality is only an arbitrary perception of an individual lack of a transcendental foundation. In this sense, reality results in arbitrary but permanent separation of the world without a persuasive basis. In the next chapter, we will analyze how possibility is developed to erase the stagnated world structure as an attempt to return to the initial unity.

This chapter can be read as parallel to chapter 6. I will demonstrate in chapter 6 that Zhang Taiyan uses the Buddhist concept of "grasping" to describe a similar state of clinging to a



certain opinion without seeing other alternatives. Zhang Taiyan also sees the limitation of this way of thinking and argues for acceptance for multiple perspectives.

### *Chapter 3 Ulrich: A sense of possibility*

#### INTRODUCTION

As argued in the introduction of the previous chapter, *MoE* describes two counteracting processes, descending from the ontological world to the phenomenal world and ascending from the phenomenal world to the ontological world. In the previous chapter, I describe the process of descending from the ontological world to the phenomenal world. In this discussion, I argue that people with a sense of reality stick to certain values and thus create stagnated perspectives with limitations.

In this chapter, I will describe a counter movement portrayed in the novel which aims at overcoming the separations created by a sense of reality and returning to the ontological world of the absolute unity. I will introduce the idea of a sense of possibility to describe the first step this novel tries to develop to regain this ontological unity. Through analyzing the figure of Ulrich, we can understand that a sense of possibility negates the limitation of each reality and constantly creates new possibilities. Therefore, a sense of possibility overcomes all the limitation created by reality and approaches the original unity to a great extent. However, a sense of possibility presupposes a subject. Only a subject can critically reflect on reality and develop a sense of possibility. A subject has certain individuality as reality which cannot be overcome. The discussion of this chapter still remains in the realm of the phenomenal world.

This problem leads to the next chapter in which I discuss how *MoE* attempts to overcome subjectivity.

#### POSSIBILITY: FRAGMENTATION OR UNITY?

A sense of reality results in people's limited perspectives to see the world. This reinforces a separation of the world into one specific reality. In contrast, a sense of possibility takes other possibilities into consideration and overcomes the limitation of one single reality. This chapter focuses on the figure of Ulrich, the man of possibility, to illustrate this point. Most scholars read possibilities as deconstructing a totality. Possibilities only describe "the complex, chaotic scene that lies before him (Ulrich)" (Freed, 313) and "the personal particularities of the experience" (Freed, 315) which "lead to experiences of fragmentation and lack of totality" (Freed, 319). Such analysis shows that as a man of possibilities, Ulrich divides the world into fragmented sections. However, in contrast, Ulrich also experiences "a totality of being" "in moments of love and exaltation" in "the other condition" (*der andere Zustand*). "Ulrich experiences a sense of subterranean wholeness beneath the level of ordinary life" (Freed, 319). Mehigan argues that initial contrasting concepts, such as "truth and untruth" (*Wahrheit und eine Unwahrheit*) are "inextricably linked (*untrennbar miteinander verbunden*)" in "the inner meaning of feeling" (*den inneren Sinn des Gefühls*). The "third possibility" ( *dritte Möglichkeit*) serves to create "uniqueness" (*Eindeutigkeit*) of seemingly "two fundamentally different behaviors" (*zwei grundverschiedene Verhaltensweisen*) (Mehigan, 284). On the one hand, possibilities create separations in the world; on the other hand, as a man of possibilities, Ulrich also experiences a

sense of totality. These two analyses lead to a question: does a sense of possibility fall into fragmentation, or does it lead to unity?

ULRICH

In order to answer this question, I will first introduce the term of a sense of possibility in *MoE* through the example of Ulrich. The first question then goes: Who is Ulrich? Ulrich is the protagonist of this book. Ulrich's mother is "the daughter of a powerful industrial family in the Rhineland" who died early. His father is a law specialist. The father was "a university lecturer and law professor" who lately rises "to become the legal adviser to almost all the feudal nobility in the country" (Musil, *MwQ*, 9). Ulrich's father is a person with a sense of reality, and he believes in the value of respecting the aristocrats. For example, even in retirement, the old scholar takes great pains to demonstrate his continuing respect for them.

[He] made a careful catalog of every event concerning his circle of former patrons, extended with great precision from fathers to sons to grandsons. No honor, wedding, birthday, or name day passed without a letter of congratulation from him (Musil, *MwQ*, 9).<sup>69</sup>

From this sentence, it is clear that Ulrich's father, even though he has gained honor as the leading lawyer in the country, he still memorizes important dates of "former patrons" and their family members and congratulates them on all ceremonies. Through writing to the "former

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<sup>69</sup> German original: Wurden doch noch alle Ereignisse, die den Kreis seiner ehemaligen Gönner angingen, in eigenen Aufzeichnungen sorgfältig gebucht, mit großer Genauigkeit von den Vätern auf die Söhne und Enkel übertragen, und es ging keine Auszeichnung, keine Hochzeit, kein Geburts- oder Namenstag ohne ein Schreiben vorüber, das den Empfänger in einer zarten Mischung von Ehrerbietung und gemeinsamen Erinnerungen beglückwünschte (Musil, *MoE*, 14).

President of the Treasury and present Chairman of the Imperial Family Court Division, Office of the Court Chamberlain, His Excellency Count Stallburg” (Musil, MwQ, 78) (ehemaligen Präsidenten der Rechnungskammer und jetzigen Vorsitzenden der Allerhöchsten Familiengerichtspartikularität beim Hofmarschallamt, Exzellenz Grafen Stallburg (Musil, MoE, 78)). Ulrich’s father successfully finds a position in the Parallel Campaign for his son so as to “assure his future” (Musil, MwQ, 78).

Different from his father who firmly believes in the aristocratic values, Ulrich is constantly in conflicts.

When he is angry, something in him laughs. When he is sad, he is up to something. When something moves him, he turns against it. He’ll always see a good side to every bad action (Musil, MwQ, 63-4).<sup>70</sup>

In an angry moment, Ulrich tries to act against the anger and “something in him laughs.” When Ulrich is sad, he does not wish to be confined within a sad mood. Instead, he seeks new incentives and “is up to something.” As long as he is emotionally involved with something, he rejects this emotion and “turns against it.” When he is reminded of a good side of a certain thing, he also sees the bad side of it at the same time. When the outer environment/a reality pushes him to move into a certain direction, Ulrich acts against this direction and retreats to the beginning point. Walter comments that Ulrich is “nothing. That’s just it, it’s nothing!” (Musil, MwQ, 62) (Nichts. Eben nichts ist das! (Musil, MoE, 64)). Every time when Ulrich takes

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<sup>70</sup> German original: Wenn er zornig ist, lacht etwas in ihm. Wenn er Traurig ist, bereitet er etwas vor. Wenn er von etwas gerührt wird, lehnt er es ab. Jede schlechte Handlung wird ihm in irgendeiner Beziehung gut erscheinen (Musil, MoE, 65).

an action, he then negates this action. Ulrich constantly negates every step he has made forward. Therefore, every reality that Ulrich comprehends is deconstructed.<sup>71</sup> In the end, there is no established reality which is left. What is left is just “nothing.” If we say that a reality creates a way to separate the world, then Ulrich as a man without quality reunites this world by invalidating this reality.

Ulrich constantly moves to new possibilities. “Finally, Ulrich realized that even in science he was like a man who has climbed one mountain range after another without ever seeing a goal” (Musil, MwQ, 44).<sup>72</sup> Becoming the ensign is Ulrich’s first “mountain range.” After achieving this, Ulrich feels his personal power significantly inferior to an archduke. This goal has to be given up. The second mountain range is to become an engineer. However, after achieving this goal, Ulrich feels that the superficiality of this profession constantly narrows down his mind. Ulrich therefore loses his second goal. His third mountain range is to become a mathematician. After achieving this goal, Ulrich sees that the cold mathematical logic excludes humane thoughts. Ulrich has to give up this goal again. The more Ulrich follows this progressive path, the more he sees the limitation of each individual step. No matter what he achieves, a new limitation of this achievement forces him to give up this approach. It is an endless chase without seeing a tangible goal. Ulrich, therefore, “resolve[s] to take a year’s leave of absence from his life” (Musil, MwQ, 44),<sup>73</sup> giving up his previous reality leading up to progress.

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<sup>71</sup> Hayasaka argues that “Musil lässt Ulrich sagen: „die Wirklichkeit hat keinen Sinn mehr. ... Dies ist seine destruktive Tat“ (Musil, 575).

<sup>72</sup> German original: Schließlich entdeckte Ulrich noch, dass er auch in der Wissenschaft einem Manne gleich, der eine Bergkette nach der anderen überstiegen hat, ohne ein Ziel zu sehen (Musil, MoE, 47).

<sup>73</sup> German original: beschloss er, sich ein Jahr Urlaub von seinem Leben zu nehmen (Musil, MoE, 47).

## A MAN WITHOUT QUALITIES

After answering the question: who is Ulrich? I will further move on to the discussion about a sense of possibility in *MoE*. Musil's narrator defines possibility in chapter 4 as follows:

So the sense of possibility could be defined outright as the ability to conceive of everything there might be just as well, and to attach no more importance to what is than to what is not (Musil, *MwQ*, 11).<sup>74</sup>

Musil's narrator tries to understand "the sense of possibility" as an ability with two elements:<sup>75</sup> first, the ability to conceive possibilities: "to think everything that could just as well have been." "Everything that could just as well have been" refers to things that have not happened, namely "possibilities" which could "just as well be." A sense of possibility requires the ability to think these possibilities. Second, realities as "what is" would be as important as possibilities which are "what is not," and one thereby attaches equal significance to things which exist and things which do not exist, and which are only possible. From this definition, we see that "sense of possibility" is the ability to acknowledge the equal values of possibilities and realities. Our definition of value and reality contains within itself the "preference" to one "mode of conduct or end-state of existence" over the other (Rokeach, 5). Possibility, in contrast to reality, abandons this "preference" and treats all different perspectives equally.

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<sup>74</sup> German original: So ließe sich der Möglichkeitssinn geradezu als die Fähigkeit definieren, alles, was ebensogut sein könnte, zu denken und das, was ist, nicht wichtiger zu nehmen als das, was nicht ist (Musil, *MoE*, 16).

<sup>75</sup> A differentiation has to be made between "a man without qualities/Eigenschaftslosigkeit" and "a man of possibility/Möglichkeitssinn." According to Hassler-Rütli, *Eigenschaftslosigkeit* concentrates on the second aspect of "Möglichkeitssinn" which is an indifferent attitude. It is an "Gefühlsdefizit" (Hassler-Rütli, 42), "Identitätsmangel" (Hassler-Rütli, 43), meaning that it attaches equal significance to reality and possibility without "unreflektiert" taking certain realities as "selbstverständlich." However, "Eigenschaftslosigkeit" does not imply the first meaning of "Möglichkeitssinn" which negates existing realities and constantly conceives new possibilities.

A man without qualities, Ulrich, fits to the two aspects of a sense of possibility. Therefore, this chapter argues that Ulrich has a sense of possibility. Ulrich is firstly able to constantly negate realities.<sup>76</sup> Ulrich constantly negates the mode of action he commits to. For example, he firstly carefully calculates and measures traffic and the mass on the road,

for the last ten minutes he had been ticking off on his stopwatch the passing cars, trucks, trolleys, and pedestrians, whose faces were washed out by the distance, timing everything whirling past that he could catch in the net of his eye. He was gauging their speeds, their angles, all the living forces of mass hurtling past that drew the eye to follow them like lightning (Musil, MwQ, 6).<sup>77</sup>

This careful measurement might define his characteristic as organizing the world through precise mathematical calculations. However, after calculating the traffic for a while, Ulrich identifies the absurdity in the action he conducted, and then, after doing the arithmetic in his head for a while, “he slipped the watch back into his pocket with a laugh and decided to stop all this nonsense” (Musil, MwQ, 6-7).<sup>78</sup> This example shows, although Ulrich has a sense of reality by abiding by mathematical calculations, he is able to negate this reality, sees it as “nonsense”

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<sup>76</sup> As argued by Hassler-Rütti, possibility reigns reality and there is no close inner connections between both terms. “Möglichkeitssinn verhält sich wie ein Oberbegriff zu Wirklichkeitssinn, wie das Ganze zu seinen Teilen“ (Hassler-Rütti, 64). However, this argument separates reality and possibility. Cauwer and Barnouw combines reality and possibility by arguing that possibility goes into reality challenges the inner texture of it. As argued by Cauwer, “Ulrich is a character who gradually wants to break away from the rigid and deeply entrenched perspectives of his peers” (Cauwer, 111). And argues that Musil, like Hume, constantly pursues “skeptical intelligible inquiry into human social behavior” (Barnouw, 866). This dissertation goes with Cauwer’s and Barnouw’s reading.

<sup>77</sup> German original: zählte mit der Uhr seit zehn Minuten die Autos, die Wagen, die Trambahnen und die von der Entfernung ausgewachsenen Gesichter der Fußgänger, die das Netz des Blicks mit quirlender Eile füllten; er schätzte die Geschwindigkeiten, die Winkel, die lebendigen Kräfte vorüberbewegter Massen, die das Auge blitzschnell nach sich ziehen, festhalten, loslassen (Musil, MoE, 12).

<sup>78</sup> German original: kurz, er steckte, nachdem er eine Weile im Kopf gerechnet hatte, lachend die Uhr in die Tasche und stellte fest, dass er Unsinn getrieben habe (Musil, MoE, 12).



and stops further pursuing this reality. After negating the existing reality, Ulrich creates possibilities. The following three examples - evaluating measurement, understanding Moosbrugger and the passage to a leave of absence - show that Ulrich creates possibility.

By switching the perspective, Ulrich is able to create a new possible understanding of energy. It is known that the energy for Atlas “to hold up the world” (um die Welt zu stemmen) is also huge. Compared to Atlas, a human being who does not move would not create much energy. However, Ulrich turns it around, arguing that a person who “does nothing at all” (gar nichts tut) would produce more energy than Atlas. The reason is as follows. Although Atlas’s effort “to hold up the world” (um die Welt zu stemmen) is huge, human beings can still calculate this effort through a number. However, if we wish to measure the effort a person takes “to hold himself upright within the flow of traffic on a busy street” (um sich im Fluß einer Straße aufrecht zu halten), then we would have to measure “leaps of attention, flexings of eye muscles, fluctuations of the psyche” (die Sprünge der Aufmerksamkeit messen, die Leistungen der Augenmuskeln, die Pendelbewegungen der Seele). This measurement is much too intricate that it would seem to be an effort to try to “calculat[e] the incalculable” (das Unmögliche zu berechnen versucht). The “grand total” (Größe heraus) of this number would be immense and even “incalculable” (das Unmögliche zu berechnen). A person “hold[ing] himself upright” (um sich ... aufrecht zu halten) would already produce energy which cannot be measured. Therefore, we arrive at the conclusion that a person who merely “hold[s] himself upright” (um sich ... aufrecht zu halten) and “does nothing at all” (der gar nichts tut) would already produce energy whose “grand total” (die Größe heraus) would be “surely dwarf the energy needed by

Atlas to hold up the world” (Musil, MwQ, 7) (mit der verglichen die Kraft, die Atlas braucht, um die Welt zu stemmen, gering ist (Musil, MoE, 12)).

Ulrich further develops this new understanding which sees the mass as more powerful as the hero. Ulrich argues that “a man going quietly about his business all day long expends far more muscular energy than an athlete who lifts a huge weight once a day” (Musil, MwQ, 7).<sup>79</sup> If we measure the level of achievements, “an athlete who lifts a huge weight once a day” (“Athleten, der einmal im Tag ein ungeheures Gewicht stemmt”) makes high achievements in sport, whereas common people cannot carry out such impressive accomplishment. However, if we measure the total amount of bodily movement in a longer time span, let’s say, one day, an athlete only “lifts a huge weight once a day” (einmal im Tag ein ungeheures Gewicht stemmt) whereas a common citizen “go[es] quietly about his business all day long” (ruhig einen Tag lang seines Wegs geht). Adding up such small muscle movements of the citizen, the “muscular energy” (Muskelleistung) this citizen costs “expends far more muscular energy than an athlete” (ist bedeutend größer als die eines Athleten). In the end, Ulrich arrives at the conclusion that “the social sum total of everybody’s little everyday efforts, especially when added together, doubtless releases far more energy into the world than do rare heroic feats” (Musil, MwQ, 7).<sup>80</sup> This new reality is concerned with the relationship between the mass and a hero and understands that the mass overrides the hero, and quantity is more important than quality.

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<sup>79</sup> German original: die Muskelleistung eines Bürgers, der ruhig einen Tag lang seines Wegs geht, ist bedeutend größer als die eines Athleten, der einmal im Tag ein ungeheures Gewicht stemmt (Musil, MoE, 12).

<sup>80</sup> German original: also setzen wohl auch die kleinen Alltagsleistungen in ihrer gesellschaftlichen Summe und durch ihre Eignung für diese Summierung viel mehr Energie in die Welt als die heroischen Taten (Musil, MoE, 12-3).

Through negating a reality and establishing a new possibility, Ulrich reopens the rigid world structure confined within one reality, and overcomes this limitation.<sup>81</sup> From these examples, we see that Ulrich firstly negates people's conventional thought that Atlas is more powerful than a common person. He furthermore establishes a new possibility: if we measure in the long term, the energy of a common person is "far more" (bedeutend größer) than the energy of an athlete in a short term. In the long run, a common citizen "releases far more energy into the world" (setzen viel mehr Energie in die Welt) even than "rare heroic feats" (Musil, MwQ, 7) (die heroischen Taten (Musil, MoE, 13)). The mass is more powerful than the hero and quantity is more important than quality. The conventional thought of hero worship could be regarded as a reality. Ulrich does not conform to this reality. Instead, he switches his perspective and negates it. Following this negation, he also proves the justification for another contrasting reality, saying that a common individual actually releases much more energy than a hero. Therefore, the previous reality of hero worship does not become an established value which might refrain Ulrich from understanding other perspectives, as in the case of Diotima. With a sense of possibility, Ulrich is able to open up and embrace different perspectives and possibilities.

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<sup>81</sup> Rather than understanding a sense of possibility as negating and exploring possibilities in general, scholars also argue that Ulrich with a sense of possibility only tries to bridge two specific contrasting fields, "the realm of human valuation" and "the exact natural sciences" (Coble, 141). As argued by Coble "Ulrich seeks nothing less than a transformation of the aesthetic principles of *Sachlichkeit* ... into an ethical idea, a utopia of exact living." Therefore, Coble "defines the *Möglichkeitsmensch* as hyperbolic positivism" (Coble, 141). Also, Beeman points out Ulrich's attempt to "apply a sort of scientific or pedantic precision not to reality, but to the soul" (Beeman, 237). However, this understanding narrows down the connotation of possibility in a more general sense. See: Kelly Coble. "Positivism and Inwardness: Schopenhauer's Legacy in Robert Musil's *The Man without Qualities*. In: *European Legacy*, 11: 2, 2006, pp. 139-153. Naomi Beeman. "Moosbrugger Speaks: Nietzschean Truth and Lying in Musil's *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*." In: *Monatshefte*. Vol. 107, No. 2, Summer 2015. University of Wisconsin Press. pp. 219-241.

After developing new possibilities, secondly, Ulrich treats every reality/possibility equally.<sup>82</sup>

Diotima looked at him, wondering what he could mean. She again remembered how he had once hotly advocated “precision of feeling,”<sup>83</sup> while just now he was taking the opposite view.<sup>84</sup> He had accused Arnheim of insufficiently clean-cut intentions, while now he favored “letting things happen”<sup>85</sup> (Musil, MwQ, 627).<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Different scholars understand “a sense of possibility” differently. Whereas some scholars concentrate on the first point that it discovers new possibilities, some other scholars focus on the second point that it implies an indifferent attitude towards different options. Zingel commits to the first argument. “Jemand mit Möglichkeitssinn sieht nicht nur das, was ist, sondern stellt sich auch all das vor, was nicht ist” (Zingel, 48). Seeger argues that Ulrich has an indifferent attitude towards any of lifestyles in his life. For example, „folglich besteht der ihm vom Wirklichkeitssinn im kakanischen Palais aufgedrückte Lebensstil nur rein äußerlich und unterhält keine eigentlichen Beziehungen zu Ulrichs wahren, vom Möglichkeitssinn her geprägten Lebensstil des „anderen Zustands“ (Seeger, 312). This is „eine Weltfremde, die er in der bewussten Verkapselung und Distanz von den Dingen zu wahren sucht ... ein bloßes Zuschauen“ (Seeger, 314). This argument shows that Ulrich keeps distance from things and treats various possibilities indifferently, but it does not emphasize that Ulrich has the ability to produce possibilities. Also, as argued by Braun, Ulrich is an indifferent figure. “He is strangely indifferent to honors and rewards of this world” (Braun, 31). This indifference towards the world can be argued in another way. For example, “Ulrich besteht ja aus Eigenschaften ohne Mann.” “Alles ist eine heterogene Ablagerung verschiedener Komponenten” (Hayasaka, 69). It means that Ulrich rationally accepts different perspectives without committing to any one of them. As a result, Ulrich seems to be a sequence of different personalities without a core. Also, this indifferent attitude can be understood as Ulrich’s free action. As argued by Hassler-Rütti, “Was Ulrich rettet, ist also dieselbe „majestätsbeleidigende“ freie Haltung, die sich um keine Autorität und Moral schert, sondern autonom über alle geistigen Möglichkeiten, auch über die der Lüge, verfügt“ (Hassler-Rütti, 60).

<sup>83</sup> Original text: “Um maßlos zu sein,” erklärt er ruhig „muss man ganz genau und sachlich sein“ (Musil, MoE, 476). “In order to lose control,” he specified calmly, “one has to be quite precise and objective” (Musil, MwQ, 518).

<sup>84</sup> Original text: Ich war, was Sie nicht glauben werden, ein gutes Kind; so weich wie Luft in einer warmen Mondnacht. Ich konnte grenzenlos verliebt in einen Hund oder in ein Messer sein. ... Er führte auch diesen Satz nicht zu Ende (Musil, MoE, 575). “But I was a good child, mild as the air on a warm moonlit night. I could fall madly in love with a dog, a pocketknife ...” But then he left this statement unfinished too (Musil, MwQ, 627).

<sup>85</sup> German original: Diotima sah ihn zweifelnd an. Sie erinnerte sich wieder daran, wie sehr er seinerzeit für die „Genauigkeit des Gefühls“ gewesen war, während er heute dagegen sprach. Er hatte sogar einmal Arnheim ungenügende Reinheit des Sinns vorgeworfen und sprach heute für Gewährenlassen (Musil, MoE, 575).

<sup>86</sup> Original text:

„Was soll also eine Frau in jener Lage, von der wir gesprochen haben, im wirklichen Leben tun?“ fragte sie.

„Gewährenlassen!“ erwiderte Ulrich.

„Wen?“

„Was kommt! Ihren Mann, ihren Geliebten, ihre Entsagung, ihre Gemische“ (Musil, MoE, 573).

“But what is a woman to do, given the circumstances, in real life?”

“Let things happen,” Ulrich answered.

“What things?”

“Whatever happens. Her husband, her lover, her renunciation, her mixed feelings” (Musil, MwQ, 625).

According to Diotima's comments, Ulrich used to advocate the "precision of feeling," now he emphasizes a person who can "madly" fall in love. Also, he had "accused Arnheim of insufficiently clean-cut intentions," therefore seemingly hates Arnheim. However, Ulrich seems now to have been convinced that people should just "let things happen," and accepts Arnheim's "intentions" which he has accused of before. Evaluating Ulrich's comments, we might argue that Ulrich takes an indifferent attitude towards all contrasting perspectives. Instead of sticking to one of them, Ulrich treats all different perspectives as equal.

With a sense of possibility, Ulrich is able to justify and equalize two contrasting value systems, two realities. On the one hand, Ulrich is aware of the logic of the criminal justice system represented by the judge. Committing cruel crimes are regarded as a guilt to be punished. When the judge treats Moosbrugger's<sup>87</sup> case, he "start[s] with the police record and vagrancy" (Musil, MwQ, 75).<sup>88</sup> After knowing that Moosbrugger is a serial killer, he therefore ascribes the crime to the criminal Moosbrugger, "present[ing] it as Moosbrugger's guilt" (Musil, MwQ, 75).<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Scholars confirm similarities between Moosbrugger and Ulrich/Agathe who have a sense of possibility. Beeman argues that "Moosbrugger serves as a double for Ulrich, the protagonist." And "we read Moosbrugger as the linguistic shadow of Ulrich and Musil" (Beeman, 220), because both of them "defend themselves against the lack of distinction between arbitrariness and precision ... in language" (Beeman, 222). According to Beeman, Moosbrugger tries to "combat the continual fragmentation of the world in and by metaphorical language" through sewing together entities through violence (Beeman, 226). Similarly, Ulrich's "split life" also "veered onto the path of violence" as can be seen in the tree of violence in the garden. He also "describes the urban crowd as "a violent dissolution of human beings into their component parts" (Beeman, 225). Beeman's argument further confirms that Ulrich has inner connections with Moosbrugger so that he understands Moosbrugger's perspective. Also, Hassler-Rütli argues that Moosbrugger is similar to Ulrich and Agathe in that he also transgresses borders. Agathe conducts "gesetzwidrige Testamentsfälschung." Both Agathe and Moosbrugger "handeln spontan au seiner ursprünglichen, keiner Moral verpflichteten Unschuld heraus und aus ganz persönlichen, erfahrungsabhängigen Motiven. Beide Taten ... symbolisieren die endgültige Auflösung einer Beziehung zu einer anderen gegengeschlechtlichen Person und installieren ... individuelle Freiheit und Autonomie" (Hassler-Rütli, 241).

<sup>88</sup> German original: ausgehend von den Polizeiberichten und der Landstreicherei (Musil, MoE, 75).

<sup>89</sup> German original: und gab es als Schuld Moosbrugger (Musil, MoE, 75).

The judge represents the logic of law. At the same time, Ulrich also understands that Moosbrugger, on the contrary, is unaware of this justice system and the problem of cruelty. Whereas the judge fails to understand Moosbrugger's reasons, Ulrich comprehends Moosbrugger's motivation. Ulrich "well understood the deep resignation" (Musil, MwQ, 75)<sup>90</sup> of Moosbrugger. Moosbrugger does not intentionally violate the law, but his "lack of an education" makes him unable to comprehend the meaning of the law.<sup>91</sup> The criminal law system and Moosbrugger's criminal acts are two different ways to approach the world.

Ulrich understands and is fascinated with Moosbrugger's justification for his cruelty. Moosbrugger has not "gone out with intent to kill" (Musil, MwQ, 75),<sup>92</sup> "nor did his dignity permit him to plead insanity" (Musil, MwQ, 75).<sup>93</sup> Moosbrugger is only fully convinced of cruelty towards oneself and others. "[B]y a superhuman exertion of his moral sense" (Musil, MwQ, 74),<sup>94</sup> Moosbrugger once "cut a big wooden splinter out of his own leg because he was too impatient to wait for the doctor" (Musil, MwQ, 74).<sup>95</sup> Both cutting the splinter on one's own and waiting for a doctor solve the problem of injury. Obviously, the first one is faster but crueler, and the second is milder but slower. Because Moosbrugger believes in cruelty, he directly cuts the splinter instead of asking the doctor. When the girl "ha[s] the nerve to keep

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<sup>90</sup> German original: verstand gut die tiefe Entsagung (Musil, MoE, 75).

<sup>91</sup> Source: which left him helpless to undo the knots in this net woven of incomprehension" (Musil, MwQ, 75). Die ihn verhinderte, dieses aus Unverständnis geflochtene Netz aufzuknoten (Musil, MoE, 75)

<sup>92</sup> German original: war weder mit der Absicht ausgegangen zu töten (Musil, MoE, 75).

<sup>93</sup> German original: durfte seiner Würde halber krank sein (Musil, MoE, 75).

<sup>94</sup> German original: Moosbrugger verfiel mit einer geradezu überirdischen Anstrengung seiner Moral (Musil, MoE, 74).

<sup>95</sup> German original: hatte sich einmal einen großen Holzsplitter selbst aus dem Bein geschnitten, weil er zu ungeduldig war, um auf den Arzt zu warten (Musil, MoE, 74).

after him despite his exasperation” (Musil, MwQ, 73).<sup>96</sup> Moosbrugger wishes to get rid of her. The easiest and the most direct way is to make her disappear. Guided by his natural belief in cruelty, Moosbrugger resorts to violence and keeps “on stabbing her until he had completely separated her from himself” (Musil, MwQ, 74).<sup>97</sup> From this analysis, we understand that Moosbrugger understands cruelty as an efficient and admirable method to solve problems and conflicts. His world view is dominated by cruelty. Different from the judge who sentences Moosbrugger to crime and does not give a second thought for him, Ulrich respects Moosbrugger personal reality and “was especially taken with” Moosbrugger’s perspective (Musil, MwQ, 75).<sup>98</sup> In order to further justify Moosbrugger’s reality, Ulrich even tries to save Moosbrugger from the prison and visits him.

Moosbrugger’s criminal action and the judge’s jurisdiction form two contrasting parts of a united concept of human conceptual grasping. Moosbrugger’s criminal action exists in contrast to the justice system the judge represents. The laws are made in differentiating itself from the criminal actions. Without one of them, the other component does not exist. Therefore, they are complementary parts which form a conceptual unity. Their existence depends on the meaning of each other. The judge evaluates criminality as bad, whereas Moosbrugger justifies his criminal deeds. Both the judge and Moosbrugger have one similarity, they provide reasons which explain human conduct and represent two different interpretations for the action of

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<sup>96</sup> German original: hätte den Mut nehmen können, ihm trotz seines Unwillens zu folgen (Musil, MoE, 73).

<sup>97</sup> German original: stach so lange auf sie ein, bis er sie ganz von sich losgetrennt hatte (Musil, MoE, 74).

<sup>98</sup> German original: zog Ulrich besonders an (Musil, MoE, 75).

killing. Both realities belong to the category of human conception, a conceptual way to evaluate human action. Therefore, the nature of both justice and criminality are results of human conceptual grasping of a certain idea. Both justice and criminality are two complementary of a unity of human conceptual grasping.

With a sense of possibility, both realities can be understood as equal. To support the criminal, it defies the meaning of law. To endorse the judgement of law, the criminal needs to be punished. If one neither supports the criminal nor the law, given that criminality and justice are equal, then it is not necessary to stick to anyone of it (not reality), and therefore not necessary to distinguish between criminal and judge. Given that people do not commit to any of the differentiated part, making everything equal implies that differentiation and commitment to certain values, reality, is useless. In other words, no matter how a person understands human action, just or unjust, since both just and unjust are equal, it does not make any difference to make such a distinction. Equality of both separate elements of one conceptual unity nullifies the necessity to make any separation. The complementary parts need to be reunited and reform a unity, the bigger category of which contains both realities: the evaluation of human action, and this complementary pair does not need to exist anymore. Therefore, any separated and then stagnated perspective does not have independent meaning. There is always a contrasting part for any established reality. Both this reality and its complementary reality together point towards the more fundamental stage before this separation. Therefore, a sense of possibility shows the unnecessary of separating justice and criminality and reunites both realities under the unity of "judging human actions."



A person with a sense of reality, such as Diotima, negates other possibilities and tries to defend her own reality. By defending her own reality, Diotima gains a feeling of satisfaction and success. Different from a person with a sense of reality, Ulrich, as a person with a sense of possibility, constantly sees the border of the reality he conducts. The more he achieves in his path towards success in his initial reality, the more he is aware of the limitation of each reality he goes after. This fact deeply disappoints him, and Ulrich even complains that he cannot “ever see a goal” after climbing “one mountain range after the other.” Different from Diotima who in the end reduces her two different realities of marriage and affair to one bigger reality of self-love, Ulrich decides to give up all of the realities in the end and starts a life without a clear goal. He simply gives up everything he has gained and achieved until now in his life and calls it “leave of absence from his life.” Ulrich wishes to transgress borders defined by realities. He therefore negates reality. Once Diotima asks him irritably, “and what would you do ... if you could rule the world for a day?” (Musil, MwQ, 312).<sup>99</sup> Ulrich then answers that “I suppose I would have no choice but to abolish reality.” (Musil, MwQ, 312)<sup>100 101</sup> By negating reality, an established world

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<sup>99</sup> German original: und was würden denn Sie tun ..., wenn Sie einen Tag lang das Weltregiment hätten? (Musil, MoE, 289).

<sup>100</sup> German original: Es würde mir wohl nichts übrigbleiben, als die Wirklichkeit abzuschaffen! (Musil, MoE, 289)

<sup>101</sup> The idea of “abolishing reality/die Wirklichkeit abschaffen” appears many times throughout the book. It is an important motive in this book.

“Und während er so sprach, erinnerte er sich an den Augenblick, wo er zu Diotima gesagt hatte, man müsse die Wirklichkeit abschaffen (Kapitel 84).

“Sie dachte in dieser Zeit sonst nie an ihn, aber seine wunderlichen Äußerungen, er möchte die Wirklichkeit abschaffen (Kapitel 94).

„Wissen Sie, was Sie mir wieder erklärt haben? Daß man die Wirklichkeit abschaffen müßte (Kapitel 114).

Was sollte es heißen, daß er zu Diotima gesagt hatte, man müsse sich der Unwirklichkeit bemächtigen, oder ein andermal, man solle die Wirklichkeit abschaffen?! (Kapitel 116).

structure is abolished, and then it becomes a world in which every possibility can freely exist without having to be evaluated or limited. This world with no tolerance for stagnated separations is free, fluid, full of possibilities and directs towards the fundamental unity which encompasses all of possibilities and which enables everything to expand. This conclusion answers the question raised at the beginning of this chapter: a sense of possibility does not lead to further fragmentation, but it rather pursues a bigger unity.

#### THE PROBLEM OF SUBJECTIVITY

As described in the previous chapter, a world as a united oneness is separated into different fractions because of reality. In this chapter, I will argue that the separated world seeks to reunite into oneness through possibility. First, subjectivity seeks to reunite with the world. “But for a long time I’ve responded by having lost my love for this kind of ‘being myself’ and for this kind of world” (Musil, MwQ, 979).<sup>102</sup> “For this kind of ‘being myself’” and “for this kind of world” designate a world order separated into subjectivity and objectivity. The protagonist of the book, Ulrich, has “for a long time” “lost” his love for “this kind of ‘being myself’ and for this kind of world.” This means that Ulrich is unsatisfied with an eternal separation between his subject and the world outside. He wishes to challenge this world order and seeks a reunion of the subjectivity and objectivity into the “the ideal of oneness” (Musil, MwQ, 979) (wesenhafte Einung (Musil, MoE, 904)) again in the world. Second, separations within the objective world

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<sup>102</sup> German original: Aber seit langem habe ich es in der Weise beantwortet, dass ich die Liebe zu dieser Art Ichsein und dieser Art Welt verloren habe (Musil, MoE, 902-3).

wish to reunite as well. “Now those two pathetic halves do all kinds of silly things to come together again” (Musil, MwQ, 981).<sup>103</sup> A subject divides the world into “male” and “female,” creating a certain world order. However, these “two pathetic halves” do not wish to keep separated. They try to “do all kinds of silly things to come together again.” From the aforementioned analysis, we understand that Ulrich is convinced of an ultimate unity in the world. Differences are created in the world through separation. The eternal goal is to overcome all the separations and reunite the world in “the ideal of oneness” (Musil, MwQ, 979) (wesenhafte Einung (Musil, MoE, 904)).

Realities create separation within the objective world. A sense of possibilities breaks the limitations of realities as the first step to reunite the objective world. However, Ulrich, a person with a sense of possibility, cannot overcome his own subjectivity.

If you should sometime happen to ask yourself today, when you think you’re entirely in possession, of yourself, who you really are, you will discover that you always see yourself from the outside, as an object. ... No matter how intensely you try to look at yourself, you may at most find out something about the outside, but you’ll never get inside yourself (Musil, MwQ, 979).<sup>104</sup>

Ulrich makes great effort to try to take possession of himself. He tries to consider all different possibilities, thus manage himself from all different perspectives. However, he has several realities which he cannot overcome, for example, his gender as a male, and his character, the

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<sup>103</sup> German original: Nun stellen die unseligen Hälften allerhand Dummheiten an, um wieder ineinander zu fahren (Musil, MoE, 904).

<sup>104</sup> German original: Denn wenn du dich heute, wo du ganz im Besitz deiner selbst zu sein glaubst, ausnahmsweise einmal fragen solltest, wer du eigentlich bist, wirst du diese Entdeckung machen. Du wirst dich immer von außen sehn wie ein Ding. ... Du bleibst außer dir, was immer du unternimmst, und es sind davon gerade nur jene wenigen Augenblicke ausgenommen, wo man von dir sagen würde, du seist außer dir (Musil, MoE, 902).

innate rational and theoretical way of thinking. Ulrich tries to understand the possibility of himself from a female perspective, as a man, he remains an “outsider” from this discourse. He can “never get inside” himself in the form of a woman. Further, Ulrich is born to have a rational and theoretical way of thinking. He can rationally and theoretically imagine emotion and practice as “object[s]” (ein Ding). However, he can only observe these qualities “from the outside” (von außen sehn), given that his own subjectivity does not possess these qualities. In other words, Ulrich’s subjectivity characterized as male, rational and theoretical predetermines and therefore confines his border of perception. Ulrich is still confined within certain realities and cannot overcome them. In order to further overcome the existing realities as a result of subjectivity, hermaphrodite love is introduced.

#### SUMMARY

This dissertation argues that *MoE* connects the phenomenal world and the noumenal world. In the previous chapter, I argue that the noumenal world separates itself and forms the phenomenal world which features realities and a sense of reality. In this chapter, I try to reconstruct the process of returning to the world of the absolute unity in *MoE*. Through the example of Ulrich, a man with a sense of possibility, I argue that a sense of possibility takes the initial step to overcome separations created by a sense of reality and returns to the world of absolute unity. With a sense of possibility, Ulrich is firstly able to negate the existing reality, constantly creating new possibilities and then treat all different realities/possibilities equally. By treating contrasting realities/possibilities equally, there is no necessity to separate one unity into two contrasting parts. Therefore, the initially separated parts unite under a bigger unity.

This chapter can be read in comparison to chapter 7. In chapter 7, I introduce that Zhang actually takes a similar approach regarding the limitation of grasping, which is to treat different types of grasping equally. Through the figure of Ulrich, Musil shows justification for different perspectives. Also, seeing from a different perspective, one gains a new interpretation for the same thing. Similarly, Zhang also demonstrates that as long as a person sees from a specific angle, one can always find justification for a certain argument. Also, the same thing can be interpreted in different ways. This similar attitude enables both Musil and Zhang to challenge one unified discourse and preserve a broader perspective.

However, the attempt of a sense of possibility cannot realize the absolute unity, given that one still needs to overcome subjectivity. This can be called “the problem of subjectivity.” As a result, the discussion in this chapter still remains in the realm of the phenomenal world. The next chapter focuses on this problem and tries to transcend subjectivity through hermaphrodite love between two protagonists in “der andere Zustand.”

## *Chapter 4 Hermaphrodite love reaches the united origin*

### INTRODUCTION

In the previous two chapters, I discuss how the phenomenal world with realities and possibilities is portrayed in *MoE*. Description of the phenomenal world is the first topic *MoE* focuses on. In this chapter, I move on to the second topic *MoE* devotes to, the noumenal world of absolute unity in “der andere Zustand.” The questions this chapter tries to answer are: How is the absolute unity defined in *MoE*? What is the process to approach the transcendental world represented in *MoE*? How is this unity represented in *MoE*?

This chapter tries to demonstrate the following theses to answer the three questions through the interaction between Ulrich and Agathe. First, I argue that the absolute unity is defined as “der andere Zustand.” This is a stage where Ulrich and Agathe cross their limitations and approach each other. Second, the example of Ulrich and Agathe crossing their respective borders shows the process of approaching the absolute unity. As argued in the previous chapter, a sense of possibility reunites most of the separations created by a sense of reality. However, subjectivity still remains as realities which cannot be overcome. As long as one can overcome the reality created by one’s subjectivity, there would be an absolute unity in a transcendent world. Overcoming one’s subjectivity requires hermaphrodite love. Ulrich and Agathe in *MoE* have contrasting personalities. In addition, both have a sense of possibility. Ulrich and Agathe then enable the transgression of the limitation of their characteristics and

thus overcome their own subjectivities. Overcoming their subjectivities requires Ulrich and Agathe to overcome the moral restriction of incest taboo. Through supportive endorsement of incest, the siblings overcome their subjectivities and unite in the absolute unity in “der andere Zustand” in a metaphysical world. By experimenting the two contrasting subjects merging with each other, *MoE* gives us an insight into an encompassing unity.

Finally, I argue that this transcendent unity is represented as a mystic unity. “Der andere Zustand” is connected to the discourse of mysticism. “Der andere Zustand” can be represented through language in mysticism: it can firstly be described as ecstatic experiences, and secondly it is a godless mystical unity which is nothingness. I will further argue that even though mystic languages can characterize the unity as nothingness, there is still a problem in directly describing this unity through language. Given that nothingness precedes human awareness, human language cannot truly represent the state of nothingness.

#### DEFINITION OF “DER ANDERE ZUSTAND”

The first question this chapter tries to answer is the definition of the absolute unity in the metaphysical world. In *MoE*, this metaphysical world is described through the term of “der andere Zustand.” “Der andere Zustand” in *MoE* refers to the stage of nothingness which is achieved through the merging of borders and disappearance of subjectivity. “Der andere Zustand” is an important concept in Musil’s *MoE*. The term of „der andere Zustand” has been widely discussed in Musil scholarship. It is evident that “der andere Zustand” is a stage in which nothing exists. Also, almost all of the scholars understand it as the stage achieved through

border-crossing experiences between Ulrich and Agathe. The contentious point among scholars is that whether the border-crossing experiences should be understood in general terms or specific terms. Whereas some scholars see these experiences in a general sense, in which every contradicting parts unite; others try to understand it in concrete terms and argue that their border-crossing only enables the combination of a specific contrasting pair, such as understanding and emotion. This dissertation synthesizes both perspectives and believes that “der andere Zustand” is the result of the border-crossing experiences (general) which can be represented in different forms (concrete).

Some scholars understand “der andere Zustand” in concrete terms. For example, Gassenmeier argues that this border-crossing can be understood in an erotic way. He argues that

in the course of their increasingly confidential conversations about their lives up to now, they soon developed an affection for each other, which they matured into a love relationship via the three classic stages of erotic approach, via looks, touches and kisses (Gassenmeier, 171-2).<sup>105</sup>

Here, “der andere Zustand” is interpreted as “affection” and “erotic approaches.” For Gassenmeier, “der andere Zustand” means the “reconciliation of eros and caritas as an ideal” (Gassenmeier, 172).<sup>106</sup> Harald Gschwandtner understands “der andere Zustand” as a method to mitigate “rationality and the mystic.” Gschwandtner tends to equalize “der andere Zustand” and “tagheller Mysik.” In the state of “taghelle Mystik,” the person already experiences “falling

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<sup>105</sup> German original: im Verlauf ihrer zunehmend vertraulichen Gespräche über ihr bisheriges Leben bald eine Zuneigung füreinander, die sie über die drei klassischen Stufen der erotischen Annäherung, über Blicke, Berührungen und Küsse, zu einer Liebesbeziehung reifen ließen (Gassenmeier, 171-2).

<sup>106</sup> German original: Versöhnung von Eros und Caritas als Ideal (Gassenmeier, 172).



from the unity of the *unio mystica*” (Gschwandtner, 32).<sup>107</sup> This argument merely tries to understand “*der andere Zustand*” in mystic terms. Similarly, Tewilt argues that “*der andere Zustand*” is “the unity of emotion and understanding, sense and sensuality” (Tewilt, 171).<sup>108</sup> Here, Tewilt tries to deploy the contrasting pair of understanding and emotion to define “*der andere Zustand*,” therefore understands it in concrete terms.

Different from aforementioned scholars, others understand “*der andere Zustand*” simply as the stage of unity as a border-crossing process in more general terms. It only refers to the merging of contrasting parts which does not require a specific context. For example, Petersen argues that “*der andere Zustand*” serves as the merging of borders between separated parts. As can be seen in the following quote, “when *der andere Zustand* appears, the person gains an insight into the essence behind a single thing. And at the same time, the separation between gazing and the gazed object are reunified” (Petersen, 125).<sup>109</sup> This quote shows that “*der andere Zustand*” is just a combination of subject (gazing) and object (the gazed object) without referring to a concrete subject or object. It could mean all kinds of different contrasting pairs, such as “I and the world, I and you, sensuality and knowledge, thinking and feeling” (Petersen, 126).<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> German original: Herausfallen aus der Einheit der *unio mystica* (Gschwandtner, 32).

<sup>108</sup> German original: die Einheit von Gefühl und Verstand, Sinn und Sinnlichkeit. (Tewilt, 171)

<sup>109</sup> German original: Tritt der andere Zustand ein, so erkennt der Mensch hinter den Einzeldingen deren Wesensanblick, und zugleich hebt sich auch die Trennung von Anschauendem und Angeschautem auf (Petersen, 125).

<sup>110</sup> German original: Ich und Welt, Ich und Du, Sinnlichkeit und Erkenntnis, Denken und Empfinden (Petersen, 125).

Similarly, Boss argues that “der andere Zustand” refers to the urge to become a doppelgänger and merge with the other gender (Boss, 219).<sup>111</sup> Again, “doppelgänger” does not refer to the merging of two specific contrasting pairs, but the general unification of two contrasting parts.

Zingel also only mentions to overcome existing morals in a broader sense (Zingel, 119).<sup>112</sup>

According to Bücken, “der andere Zustand” refers to the synthesis between an abstract “inner” and “outside” (Bücken, 40).<sup>113</sup> Bücken further identifies “direct connections between *der andere Zustand* and the sea,” and try to argue that “der andere Zustand” is the fusion of all different currents which is too chaotic to be specified (Bücken, 44).<sup>114</sup> Jappe describes “der andere Zustand” as a merging experience which is outside of the discourse of the everyday life. Jappe also argues that it is the merging of the inner and the outside without referring to a specific context (Jappe, 117).<sup>115</sup>

This dissertation tries to synthesize both perspectives to define “der andere Zustand.” Musil himself defines “anderen Zustand” in his essay in 1925 “Approaches to New Aesthetics (Ansätze zu neuer Ästhetik)” that:

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<sup>111</sup> German original: mit dem von Ulrich festgestellten uralten Verlangen nach einem Doppelgänger im anderen Geschlecht (Boss, 219).

<sup>112</sup> German original: Abenteuer steht für den Versuch, sich über die Grenzen der bestehenden Moral hinwegzusetzen und eine neue Art von Weltwahrnehmung zu leben – den „anderen Zustand“ (Zingel, 119).

<sup>113</sup> German original: auch ist für den anderen Zustand selbst die Synthese von ‚Innen‘ und ‚Außen‘ bezeichnend (Bücken, 40).

<sup>114</sup> German original: direkter Bezug zwischen dem *anderen Zustand* und dem Meer (Bücken, 44).

<sup>115</sup> German original: „Den Begriff anderer Zustand verwendet Musil seinen Manuskripten und Entwürfen, in seinem Tagebuch und auch in seinen theoretischen Schriften für ein bestimmtes, dem gewöhnlichen Erleben oder Alltagsbewusstsein entgegengesetztes, verschmelzendes Erleben“ (Jappe, 117). „Der *andere Zustand* ist eine Erlebensform, bei der die Grenzen zwischen Ich und Welt verschwimmen und der Unterschied zwischen „Innen“ und „Außen“ aufgehoben wird“ (Jappe, 117).

It has been called the state of love, goodness, aloofness from the world, contemplation, looking, approaching God, rapture, lack of will ... and many other aspects of a basic experience that is found in religion, mysticism and ethics of all historical peoples returns just as unanimously as it has remained strangely undeveloped. ... the standing there of another world, like a solid seabed, from which the restless tides of the ordinary have receded, thou in the image of this world there is neither measure nor precision, neither purpose nor cause, good and evil simply fall away without that one had to rise above them, and in place of all these relationships there appears a mysterious, swelling and ebbing merging of our being with that of things and other people (Musil, GW II, 1144).<sup>116</sup>

First and foremost, this paragraph understands “der andere Zustand” as a specific stage of nothingness: “there is neither measure nor precision, neither purpose nor cause, good and evil simply fall away.” Given that all the rules fall apart, there is no clear separation between different parts. Musil’s paragraph already contains both scholarly perspectives. On the one hand, there is only a chaotic confluence of different ups and downs without certain patterns. In other words, the world of “der andere Zustand” merges the separation between established complementary parts and seeks a unity. This analysis demonstrates that Musil’s understanding of this term has more general connotations. On the other hand, given that it encompasses the merging of all complementary parts, every specific contrasting pair is a special representation of “der andere Zustand” in a specific context. “The state of love, goodness, aloofness from the world, contemplation, looking, approaching God, rapture, lack of will,” even “many other

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<sup>116</sup> German original: Man hat ihn den Zustand der Liebe genannt, der Güte, der Weltabgekehrtheit, der Kontemplation, des Schauens, der Annäherung an Gott, der Entrückung, der Willenlosigkeit ... und vieler anderer Seiten eines Grunderlebnisses, das in Religion, Mystik und Ethik aller historischen Völker ebenso übereinstimmend wiederkehrt, wie es merkwürdig entwicklungslos geblieben ist. ... das Dastehen einer anderen Welt, wie ein fester Meeresboden, von dem die unruhigen Fluten der gewöhnlichen zurückgetreten sind, du im Bilder dieser Welt gibt es weder Maß noch Genauigkeit, weder Zweck noch Ursache, gut und böse fallen einfach weg, ohne dass man sich ihrer zu überheben brauchte, und an Stelle aller dieser Beziehungen tritt ein geheimnisvoll schwellendes und ebbendes Zusammenfließen unseres Wesens mit dem der Dinge und anderen Menschen (Musil, GW II, 1144).

aspects of a basic experience that is found in religion, mysticism and ethics of all historical peoples” are specific contexts, in which “der andere Zustand” is represented. Building on Musil’s quote, this dissertation defines “der andere Zustand” as the stage of nothingness Ulrich and Agathe achieve through their attempts to merge the separation between their subjectivities (general) through the contexts of gender and characteristics (concrete).

#### CONTRASTING SUBJECTIVITIES

In this chapter, I am going to use the example of Ulrich and Agathe’s border-crossing experiences to reconstruct the process approaching “der andere Zustand.” As analyzed in the previous chapter, separations created by a sense of reality can be overcome by a sense of possibility. However, separations created by subjectivity still cannot be overcome. For example, Ulrich’s subjectivity implies that he is male, rational and theoretical. Although Ulrich has a sense of possibility, he still fails to experience a world which is female, emotional and practical. In order to experience the opposite world, Ulrich requires another individual with his complementing subjectivity to contrast with him. This person is Ulrich’s sister, Agathe, who is female, emotional and practical.<sup>117</sup> Agathe unveils and complements Ulrich’s own limitations. When Ulrich and Agathe come together, their contrasting characteristics combine with each other and reach a united whole.

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<sup>117</sup> This argument is also backed up by Musil scholars. For example, Jiyoung Shin also thematizes these differences between Ulrich and Agathe: “Das Zwillingtum zwischen Ulrich und Agathe stellt auf diese Weise auch die Opposition von Männlichkeit und Weiblichkeit, Denken und Fühlen, Vernunft und Gefühl, Theorie und Natur dar. (Shin, 140) „Die Zwillinge sind eben symmetrische Geschöpfe der Naturlaune“ (Shin, 141).

Agathe is the protagonist, Ulrich's sister. In the first and second parts of the novel, her name only appears once in the novel. However, Agathe becomes a crucial figure in the third part of the book ("Into the Millennium (The Criminals)/ "Ins Tausendjährige Reich (Die Verbrecher)") At the end of the second part of the book, Ulrich receives a telegram telling him that his father has died. Ulrich then returns to his hometown and meets his sister Agathe. Ulrich and Agathe develop an intimate relationship with each other. They live together in their father's house as a "couple" and have developed "a family of two" (Musil, MwQ, 777) (Familie zu zweien (Musil, MoE, 715)). Because they get along with each other so well, despite their age differences, (Ulrich is 32 years old and Agathe only 27), they regard themselves as "Siamese twins" (Musil, MwQ, 976) (Die Siamesischen Zwillinge (Musil, MoE, 899)).

Agathe has very contradictory characteristics, being tame and rebellious at the same time. On the one hand, Agathe is a delightful and well-behaved person.

There she was considered to be cheerful and tractable and later attended high school. When told something was necessary or true, she complied and took whatever was asked of her (Musil, MoE, 727).<sup>118</sup>

This quote shows that Agathe is an obedient person and she follows advice of elder people.

Agathe's obedience can also be seen in her marriage arrangement. In her first marriage,

Agathe's husband died early and she became a widow when she was only nineteen (Musil,

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<sup>118</sup> German original: Sie galt auch dort für heiter und lenksam und besuchte später das Gymnasium. Wenn man ihr sagte, etwas sei nötig oder wahr, so richtete sie sich danach und nahm alles, was man von ihr forderte. (Musil, MoE, 727).

MoE, 683) (Musil, MwQ, 742). Then, following her father's ideas, she married her second husband Professor Hagauer (Musil, MwQ, 742) (Musil, MoE, 683).

On the other hand, Agathe is rebellious and has a contemptuous attitude towards the world. She had "a curious illness" (eine wunderliche Krankheit) "after she had begun going to school." (bald nachdem sie angefangen hatte, in die Schule zu gehen.) "For more than a year she had suffered from a not inconsiderable fever that neither rose nor subsided." (Länger al sein Jahr hatte sie damals an einem nicht unbeträchtlichen Fieber gelitten.) Instead of being worried about this disease and feeling sorry for the failure of medicine, Agathe "feel[s] proud" (war stolz darauf) given that "the grownups' world had no power over her as long as she was sick" (die Ordnung der Großen keine Macht über sie hatte, solange sie krank war) and she "was still pleased to see that the doctors could not bring this about with their remedies" (Musil, MwQ,788).<sup>119</sup> Agathe's reaction clearly shows that she has a rebellious spirit. She actually enjoys her unique power over the grown-up world and wants to mock the others' attempt to tame her wildness (the disease in her body). In addition, she even falsifies her father's testament and plans to kill her husband Hagauer without having any sense of bad conscience.

In the following sections, I am going to firstly show in detail how Ulrich and Agathe have different personalities. Second, I will then show how Ulrich and Agathe merge their contrasting characteristics to form a united whole.

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<sup>119</sup> German original: freute sich doch darüber, dass die Ärzte es mit ihren Verordnungen nicht zuwege brachten (Musil, MoE, 725).

Gender is something which cannot be overcome by one person. Whereas Ulrich is born as a male, Agathe is born as a female. Their genders exactly compensate one another. Agathe uses the example of Plato's "Kugelmensch" to illustrate this sexual relationship when she was talking to Ulrich. "You know that myth Plato tells, following some ancient source, that the gods divided the original human being into two halves, male and female?" (Musil, MwQ, 980).<sup>120</sup> This quote shows that people with different genders, "male and female," are "divided" into "two halves" which are fundamentally separated. Therefore, gender separates Ulrich and Agathe and both cannot gain experiences of the other gender.

Whereas Ulrich is rational, Agathe is emotional. Ulrich is an analytical and rational person, in Musil's words, the "non-ratioide." Ulrich is good at logical and theoretical thinking, but hardly resorts to his own emotions. On the contrary, Agathe does not wish to comprehend a thing, but prefers to understand things through intuition, indulge with her emotions.<sup>121</sup> This is a realm through "non-ratioide."<sup>122</sup> When discussing the concept of love, Agathe gets emotional about

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<sup>120</sup> German original: Kennst du den Mythos, den Platon irgendwelchen älteren Vorbildern nacherzählt, dass der ursprüngliche ganze Mensch von den Göttern in zwei Teile geteilt worden sei, in Mann und Weib? (Musil, MoE, 903).

<sup>121</sup> Boss also agrees with me here. As argued by Boss, Agathe is a person of "mentalité primitive" (Boss, 222). Boss argues that Agathe is "Naturvölker," like people in "die niedrigen Gesellschaften" with "keine solchen logischen Denkopationen" (Boss, 224).

<sup>122</sup> According to Musil,

The ratioid area encompasses – roughly defined – everything that can be scientifically systematized, summarized in laws and rules, above all physical nature; but the moral only in a few exceptional cases of success. It is characterized by a certain monotony of facts, by the predominance of repetition, by a relative independence of facts from one another (Musil, GW II, 1026-7).

Das ratioide Gebiet umfasst – roh umgrenzt – alles wissenschaftlich Systematisierbare, in Gesetze und Regeln zusammenfassbare, vor allem also die physische Natur; die moralische aber nur in wenigen

the topic and answers with „passionate decisiveness“ (Musil, MwQ, 831).<sup>123</sup> „In the darkness of the room her face glowed with eagerness like a rose standing in the shade“ (Musil, MwQ, 831).<sup>124</sup> Eagerness and redness in her face are symptoms of emotional reactions. Also, the materials she works with are merely “passionate fragments of her memories” (Musil, MwQ, 830) which are lack of rational processing.<sup>125</sup> In the eyes of Ulrich, his sister is with “obvious passion” (Musil, MwQ, 830).<sup>126</sup> Facing this passion, Ulrich suggests that „let’s be a little more sober again, ... there can be too much fakery in these matters” (Musil, MwQ, 831).<sup>127</sup> This shows that Ulrich rejects emotions and tries to understand the world in a rather calm and rational way. This analysis shows that Ulrich is a theorist who tries to understand the world through sobriety and Agathe through sensuous feelings. Ulrich himself believes that he is like the stable woodcut with clear delineated borders and Agathe is like a pastel with unclear borders but more sentimental texture.<sup>128</sup>

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Ausnahmefällen des Gelingens. Es ist gekennzeichnet durch eine gewisse Monotonie der Tatsachen, durch das Vorwiegen der Wiederholung, durch eine relative Unabhängigkeit der Tatsachen voneinander (Musil, GW II, 1026-7).

In contrast to the „ratioide Gebiet“ is the “nicht ratioide Gebiet” “nur ein gradueller”, “aber jedenfalls ist er so polar, dass er eine vollkommene Umkehrung der Einstellung des Erkennenden verlangt (Musil, GW II, S. 1028).

<sup>123</sup> German original: schwärmerisch (Musil, MoE, 765)

<sup>124</sup> German original: im Dunkel des Zimmers glühte ihr Wang vor Eifer wie eine Rose, die im Schatten steht (Musil, MoE, 765).

<sup>125</sup> Source: was merely making passionate fragments of her memories into a sequence (Musil, MwQ, 830). reihte bloß leidenschaftliche Bruchstücke ihrer Erinnerung aneinander (Musil, MoE, 765).

<sup>126</sup> Source: the obvious passion of his sister (Musil, MwQ, 830). fühlbaren Leidenschaft (Musil, MoE, 765).

<sup>127</sup> Source: „let’s be a little more sober again,” Ulrich gently proposed. “There can be too much fakery in these matters” (Musil, MwQ, 831). „Lass uns jetzt wieder nüchterner reden; in diesen Fragen wird so viel Schwindel getrieben!“ (Musil, MoE, 765).

<sup>128</sup> Source: Ist sie mir wirklich ähnlich? Wieder kam ihm vor: vielleicht so wie ein Pastell einem Holzschnitt. Er hielt sich für den Festeren. Und sie war schöner als er (Musil, MoE, 745). “Is she really like me?” Again he thought: “Perhaps the way a pastel resembles a woodcut.” He regarded himself as the more stable. And she was more beautiful than he (Musil, MwQ, 809).



Whereas Ulrich is theoretical, Agathe is practical. Ulrich thinks about different possibilities, and seldom realizes possibilities in realities. Agathe on the contrary, does not have a lot of reflections, but only carries out things through actions. When Ulrich and Agathe come to the topic and discuss about their relationships, Ulrich's first instinct is to theorize it. When he "could not bring himself to talk about it" (Musil, MwQ, 815).<sup>129</sup> He then tries to identify their relationship through evaluation and contemplation. For example, Ulrich connects Agathe's bodily contact with him with his previous experiences with Arnheim, when Arnheim "had thrown an arm around him and the unregulated current of physical contact with another being had invaded him as through a breach" (Musil, MwQ, 815).<sup>130</sup> Ulrich also tries to identify the type of their relationship, whether it could be "between sister and wife, stranger and friend" (Musil, MwQ, 815).<sup>131</sup> Different from Ulrich, Agathe does not wish to categorize the type of their relationship, but just carry out this relationship in that she "had drawn up a chair, was crouching behind him and had simply nestled her face peacefully in his hair as though she were napping" (Musil, MwQ, 815).<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> German original: konnte sich nicht entschließen, darüber Rede zu stehen (Musil, MoE, 750).

<sup>130</sup> German original: Ulrich wurde davon Wunderlich an den Augenblick erinnert, so sein Feind Arnheim den Arm um ihn geschlungen hatte und die unregelt strömende Berührung eines anderen Wesens wie durch eine Bresche in ihn eingedrungen war (Musil, MoE, 750).

<sup>131</sup> German original: "Schwester," "Frau," "Fremder," "Freundin" (Musil, MoE, 750).

<sup>132</sup> German original: die nun einen Stuhl herangezogen hatte, kauerte hinter ihm und hatte ihr Gesicht einfach friedlich in sein Haar gelegt (Musil, MoE, 750).

## SENSE OF POSSIBILITY AS THE WAY TO “DER ANDERE ZUSTAND”

As argued in the previous section, Ulrich and Agathe have contradictory characteristics. Contrasting characteristics become the premise of their uniting with each other. In order for them to step towards each other, Agathe and Ulrich still need to feel unsatisfied with their existing reality and have the urge to constantly create new possibilities. This can be characterized as a sense of possibility. With this sense of possibility, Ulrich would be willing to transgress his own borders to unite with Agathe and Agathe transgresses her own limitations to unite with Ulrich. The next step this dissertation is going to demonstrate is that both Ulrich and Agathe have a sense of possibility. The previous chapter has already introduced that Ulrich has a sense of possibility. In this section, we will further demonstrate that Agathe also has a sense of possibility.<sup>133</sup>

As argued in the previous chapter, two of the most crucial aspects for a sense of possibility are: negating the old reality while creating new possibilities.

She willingly accepted everything required of her, because it seemed the least trouble and it would have seemed foolish to her to do anything against an established system that had no relevance to herself but obviously belonged to a world ordained by fathers and teachers. However, she did not believe a word of what she was learning (Musil, MwQ, 790).<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> This point of view is also confirmed by Zingel.

Seit ihrer Kindheit misstraut Agathe der Wirklichkeit. Sie steht ihr teilnahmslos und gleichgültig gegenüber, was ihr den Anschein großer Trägheit und Passivität verleiht. ... Die Welt, in die sie hineingeboren wird, ist für sie immer die der anderen, auf die sie keinen Einfluss hat (Zingel, 64-5).

Zingel's argument confirms that Agathe does not commit to any reality, thus does not have a sense of reality. Instead, she has an indifferent attitude towards reality, which can be characterized as a sense of possibility.

<sup>134</sup> German original: So richtete sie sich danach und nahm alles, was man von ihr forderte, willig hin, weil es ihr so am mindesten anstrengend vorkam, und es wäre ihr unsinnig erschienen, etwas gegen feste Einrichtungen zu

In this paragraph we can firstly see that Agathe negates her existing reality. Although confined within the reality of “an established system” “ordained by fathers and teachers,” Agathe is aware of the limitation of this system and she negates it. She “did not believe a word of what she was learning” and tries to get out of this system. Second, the rejection of existing system preserves an openness for Agathe to create a new possibility, a world in which “an established system” are meaningless. This analysis shows that Agathe has a sense of possibility.<sup>135</sup>

The sense of possibility enables Ulrich and Agathe to gain the motivation to overcome their own limitations and enter the realm of the other person. As argued above, Ulrich and Agathe have contrasting personalities. Ulrich is male, and has a rational, and theoretical way of living. Agathe is female and stays in the emotional and practical world. Clearly, Ulrich’s and Agathe’s subjectivities complement each other. What Agathe wishes can exactly be found in Ulrich, and what Ulrich cannot overcome is what Agathe possesses. With a sense of possibility, Agathe and Ulrich negate their own realities/their personalities and seek new possibilities which are different from their original realities. In other words, Ulrich negates his reality of maleness, rationality and theoreticality and seeks the different possibility of femaleness, emotion and practicality. Agathe negates her reality of femaleness, emotion and practicality and seeks the

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unternehmen, die mit ihr keinen Zusammenhang hatten und offenbar zu einer Welt gehörten, die nach dem Willen von Vätern und Lehrpersonen aufgebaut war. Sie glaubte aber kein Wort von dem, was sie lernte (Musil, MoE, 727).

<sup>135</sup> It has been similarly argued that Agathe also has a sense of possibility. According to Burckhardt, “Diese hier noch verhalten angedeutete Sehnsucht, sich immer starker aneinander anzugleichen, und der Wunsch, die wirklichen Gegebenheiten um das Unwirkliche zu erweitern und zu überhöhen“ (Burckhardt, 79). Burckhardt also argues that „Sie ist der Welt gegenüber gleichmütig, ja sogar gleichgültig. Sie tut zwar, was man von ihr fordert, aber ohne innere Anteilnahme (Burckhardt, 80). As argued by Shin, Agathe also has „Charakterlosigkeit“ and has “fehlenden Wirklichkeitssinn” (Shin, 138).

different possibility of maleness, rationality and theoreticality. This means that a sense of possibility urges both Ulrich and Agathe to give up their own personality and get into the opposite realm against their own realities. They come closer to each other, crossing their own borders, entering the realm of the other person and uniting with each other. As argued by Burckhardt,

in the desire to find themselves in the other, the siblings constantly search for mutual resemblance and are often sleep-like infused with a feeling of destined connectedness (Burckhardt, 80).<sup>136</sup>

If Ulrich and Agathe can unite with each other, then the separation resulting from their own subjectivity will be eliminated. The subjectivity will then disappear, and the world reunite in “the ideal of oneness” (Musil, MwQ, 979) (die wesenhafte Einung (Musil, MoE, 904)).

#### TRANSGRESSING BORDERS

The following two examples show how Ulrich and Agathe transgress their borders created by different genders and personalities and achieve “der anderer Zustand.” Firstly, both Ulrich and Agathe seem to have overcome differences in their appearances which might exist due to gender differences. I argue that at the scene they first meet each other, astonishing similarities between their outfits showcases that they overcome their gender differences. Rather than describing this process of approaching each other, most scholars only analyze their outfits in a static manner. Shin merely deploys similarities in their clothes to show that both are identical

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<sup>136</sup> German original: die Geschwister forschen in dem Wunsch, sich im anderen zu finden, immer neu nach gegenseitiger Ähnlichkeit und sind oft schlafartig durchdrungen von dem Gefühl schicksalhafter Verbundenheit (Burckhardt, 80).

to each other. She argues that their similar Pierrotkleid are used to show their “twinness/Zwillingstum” (Shin, 138). Boss argues that at the moment of anagnorisis, both coincidentally choose Pierrot and order which show similarities (Boss, 215).<sup>137</sup> In contrast to Shin and Boss, Gunia and Zingel point out contrasting colors in their Pierrot costum. Given that Agathe has “black-grey-squared (schwarz-grau-gewürfelten)” pajama and Ulrich has a “rusty counterpart (rostbraunes Gegenstück),” it becomes a “game of light and dark (Spiel von Hell und Dunkel)” (Gunia, 169), “a clear difference (ein deutlicher Unterschied)” (Zingel, 85). Different from scholars who pay attention to capture their clothes in static status, in this dissertation, I try to interpret this scene as in movement and understand it as Ulrich’s and Agathe’s attempt to try to move differences towards similarities.

Seeing that Ulrich and Agathe give up clothes in their respective gender conventions and take on features of clothes for the other genders, both of them tend to be similar and their gender differences tend to be unified. In the novel, it is argued that

The loose lounging suit of soft wool he put on was patterned in black and gray squares, almost a Pierrot costume, gathered at the waist, wrist, and ankles; he liked its comfort, which felt pleasant after that sleepless night and the long train journey, as he came down the stairs. But when he entered the room where his sister was waiting, he was amazed at his costume, for by some mysterious directive of chance he found his appearance echoed in that of a

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<sup>137</sup> Original quote from Boss:

ihr Moment der Anagnorisis stellt sich über einen ‚dress code‘ ein, der sich für Pierrot und Ordnung des Zufalls entscheidet (Boss, 215).

tall, blond Pierrot in a pattern of delicate gray and rust stripes and lozenges, who at first glance looked quite like himself (Musil, MwQ, 734).<sup>138</sup>

Although Ulrich and Agathe have different genders and should therefore look differently, their choice of “Pierrot” outfits neutralizes their differences and make them look similar. In other words, both Ulrich and Agathe do not emphasize their gender of male and female, instead, they try to negate their original gender and take a step towards the other gender. Agathe does not wear women dresses and tries to wear a more male-like clothes patterned as “stripes and lozenges” with more male colors such as “gray and rust.” Ulrich also does not wear clothes such as suit or ties which mark masculinity. Instead, a pajama which is even “soft wool” reminds of the texture of female clothes.

Secondly, Ulrich and Agathe transgress their borderlines set up by their realities due to the influence of each other. Influenced by Agathe, Ulrich becomes more emotional and active, whereas Agathe starts to understand the rational and passive approach of her brother through their conversation. After staying with Agathe for some time, Ulrich once emotionally holds Agathe’s hands.

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<sup>138</sup> German original: Es war ein großer, weichwolliger Pyjama, den er anzog, beinahe eine Art Pierrotkleid, schwarz-grau gewürfelt und an den Händen und Füßen ebenso gebunden wie in der Mitte; er liebte ihn wegen seiner Bequemlichkeit, die er nach der durchwachten Nacht und der langen Reise angenehm fühlte, während er die Treppe hinabstieg. Aber als er das Zimmer betrat, wo ihn seine Schwester erwartete, wunderte er sich sehr über seinen Aufzug, denn er fand sich durch geheime Anordnung des Zufalls einem großen, blonden, in zarte graue und rostbraune Streifen und Würfel gehüllten Pierrot gegenüber, der auf den ersten Blick ganz ähnlich aussah wie er selbst (Musil, MoE, 675-6).

Such a pleasing beauty! He shifted his grip from her finger to her whole hand, a warm, long hand full of life, which up to now he had held in his own only long enough for a greeting (Musil, MwQ, 809).<sup>139</sup>

Ulrich is a person whose innate characteristics are rationality and abstract thinking. It is hard to blur his borderline, alluring him to think emotionally and transfer his emotion into action.

However, Ulrich's sense of possibility, the wish to understand his sister, arouses his emotional feelings and action. He thus transgresses his initial reality of "rationality and abstract thinking," and braves into an emotional world. "Such a pleasing beauty" is a reaction which is obviously an emotional feeling aroused by Agathe's beauty. This feeling even further initiates an action which shifts "his grip from her finger to her whole hand." Until now, Ulrich has held her hand in his own "only long enough for greeting." However, attracted by Agathe's emotions and action, Ulrich braves out of his initial rational and actionless world, and negates his previously self-defined premise. As argued in Burckhardt's book,

Finally, what is important in this scene is that Ulrich, who up until now has always reflected on the events, has for the first time again been violently affected by the immediacy of an impression. This inner movement already indicates that new possibilities in life are open to him (Burckhardt, 80).<sup>140</sup>

Agathe also starts to comprehend the theoretical and rational way of thinking after communicating with Ulrich.

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<sup>139</sup> So angenehm schön. Er griff jetzt vom Finger nach ihrer ganzen Hand; es war eine warme, lange Hand voll Leben, und bisher hatte er sie nur zur Begrüßung in der seinen gehalten (Musil, MoE, 745).

<sup>140</sup> German original: Schließlich ist in dieser Szene noch von Wichtigkeit, dass Ulrich, der sich bis jetzt gegenüber den Ereignissen immer reflektierend verhalten hat, zum ersten Mal wieder von der Unmittelbarkeit eines Eindrucks heftig berührt worden ist. Diese innere Bewegung deutet schon jetzt darauf hin, dass ihm neue Lebensmöglichkeiten offen stehen (Burckhardt, 80).

Ulrich knew all sorts of other things as well about this room, which he had looked over thoroughly; his sister was especially impressed to hear that in their grandparents' day such formal décor had been seen as particularly natural. This was not easy for her to comprehend, since it looked to her like something spawned in a geometry class, and it took a while before she could begin to grasp the outlook of a time ... of being truer to nature in being pure, unadorned, and rational. But when she finally succeeded in grasping this shift of ideas, with the help of all the details Ulrich could supply, she was delighted to know so much about things that every experience in her life up until then had taught her to despise (Musil, MwQ, 780-1).<sup>141</sup>

Ulrich is interested in theoretical knowledge, so that he “had looked over thoroughly” the details about this room. He was trying to convey a “rational” idea to Agathe’s comprehension. Agathe used to think in a sensuous and emotional way and is not used to accept abstract theoretical knowledge. For Agathe, it is a “shift of ideas” and is difficult: “it took a while before she could begin to grasp the outlook of a time.” Agathe has generally “despised” such a theoretical way of thinking. However, under Ulrich’s influence, she tries to accept new ideas she despised before. She was “especially impressed” to know about the history of this “formal décor.” After she understands it, Agathe “was delighted to know so much about things that every experience in her life up until then had taught her to despise.” From this quote, we also see that Agathe willingly overcomes her impromptu and sensuous style which determines her world of reality in the past.

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<sup>141</sup> German original: Auch sonst wusste Ulrich allerhand von diesem Salon, den er sich gründlich angesehen hatte, und besonderen Eindruck machte auf seine Schwester die Erklärung, dass man in ihrer Urgroßväterzeit eine solche steife Einrichtung geradezu als besonders natürlich empfunden habe; das fiel ihr nicht leicht zu verstehen, denn ihr kam sie wie die Ausgeburt einer Geometriestunde vor, und es brauchte eine Weile, ..., im Sinn einer reinen, schnörkelfreien und als vernünftig gedachten Natur zu handeln. Als sie sich aber endlich diesen Wandel der Begriffe mit allen Einzelheiten, die Ulrich dazugab, vergegenwärtigt hatte, kam es ihr hübsch vor, viel zu wissen, was sie bisher, als gesamte Erfahrung ihres Lebens, verachtet hatte (Musil, MoE, 718).



In the previous two examples, we see that the process of approaching the “der andere Zustand” initiates an exchange of their personalities. As argued by Albertsen,

An “uncertain trembling of the border” (Musil, MoE, 765) gives the conversations between the siblings that indescribable vibrato. They are passionate, impatient, intense, but at the same time cautious, gentle, reserved, turned to each other; they are precise, skeptical, lucid and yet with a peculiar inner fire. Emotion is filtered through accuracy and irony, precisely observed and sharply understood in turn transposed into emotion and thus embodied (Albertsen, 107).<sup>142</sup>

“passion, impatient, intense” are characteristics of Agathe, and “alert, soft, restrained” are characteristics of Ulrich. However, in the state of “der andere Zustand,” these conflicting dialectical pairs are forced to experience different borders by trying to come with each other. We see that “emotion” is transformed into “precise observations” in logic. Further, the “precise observations” are transformed into “emotion” and becomes sensuous. As argued in the novel: “we had switched bodies without touching.”<sup>143</sup> In one of the previous versions, it is called “the bodies achieved the miracle. All of a sudden Ulrich was in Agathe or she in him” (my own translation).<sup>144</sup> The two separated bodies, feelings, and experiences exchange without touching each other and then go into each other. The previous border which determines the content of emotion and rationality becomes unclear<sup>145</sup> and people cannot tell what belongs to Ulrich and

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<sup>142</sup> German original: Ein „unsicheres Zittern der Grenze“ gibt den Gesprächen der Geschwister jenes unbeschreibliche Vibrato. Sie sind leidenschaftlich, ungeduldig, intensiv, zugleich aber auch behutsam, sanft, verhalten, einander zugewandt; sie sind genau, skeptisch, luzid und doch von einem eigentümlichen inneren Feuer. Gefühl wird filtrierte durch Genauigkeit und Ironie, präzise Beobachtetes und scharf Aufgefasstes wiederum transponiert in Gefühl und damit verleiblicht (Albertsen, 107).

<sup>143</sup> German original: Wir hatten unsere Körper vertauscht, ohne uns zu berühren (Musil, MoE, 1084).

<sup>144</sup> German original: Und da gelang den Körpern das Wunder. Ulrich war mit einemal in Agathe oder sie in ihm (Musil, MoE, 1411).

<sup>145</sup> This is also called “dialectic build-up (dialektische Aufschaukelung).”

what belongs to Agathe.

Through totaling devoting himself/herself to the other, the couple overcomes their limited subjectivities and achieves a unity.

“Once in a lifetime,” Agathe replied with passionate decisiveness, “everything one does is done for someone else. One sees the sun shining for him. He is everywhere, oneself nowhere. But there is no egoism à deux, because the same thing must be happening with the other person. In the end, they hardly exist for each other anymore, and what’s left is a world for nothing but couples, a world consisting of appreciation, devotion, friendship, and selflessness!” (Musil, MwQ, 831).<sup>146</sup>

In the description of Agathe, with her “passionate decisiveness,” she makes efforts to overcome her border of subjectivity. Given their contrasting characteristics, everything beyond her personal border can be found in her brother Ulrich. After overcoming her own border of gender, emotional and practical way of thinking, she gives up her personality and totally immerses herself in the world of Ulrich. In Ulrich’s world, “he is everywhere” and “the sun” shines “for him.” Agathe feels that “everything” she “does is done for someone else,” for her brother. Given that she has moved into his world, she feels that herself is “nowhere.” Further, she is convinced that her brother Ulrich must have the same experience as her. As a person with a sense of possibility, he is sure to transgress the borderline of his personality. When he steps out of his own subjectivity, he will encounter Agathe’s world which initially does not

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<sup>146</sup> German original: “Einmal im Leben,” antwortete Agathe darauf schwärmerisch entschieden „geschieht alles, was man tut, für einen anderen. Man sieht für ihn die Sonne scheinen. Er ist überall, und selbst ist man nirgends. Und doch ist das kein „Egoismus zu zweien,“ denn dem anderen muss es genau so gehen. Zuletzt sind beide kaum noch füreinander da, und was übrig bleibt, ist eine Welt für lauter zwei Menschen, die aus Anerkennung, Hingabe, Freundschaft und Selbstlosigkeit besteht!“ (Musil, MoE, 765).

contain his own personality. In this world, Agathe would be “everywhere” and “the sun” would shine for her. Everything Ulrich does in this world would seem to be something that is done for Agathe. Therefore, in “der andere Zustand,” there is only “egoism à deux,” but “no egoism.” Both Ulrich and Agathe enter into the realm of the others. At this point, they preserve their previous subjectivities through the other person, and they are also able to experience their contrasting subjectivity by themselves. They complement and contain each other. There “hardly exist” a Ulrich or an Agathe. Instead, both of them devote to each other, creating “a world for nothing but couples, a world consisting of appreciation, devotion, friendship, and selflessness.” Ulrich and Agathe therefore overcome their subjectivities which initially separate them and unite with each other in “der andere Zustand.”

As we have argued in the last chapter, a sense of possibility unites most of the separations created by a sense of reality in the world except for subjectivity. In this chapter, I analyze Ulrich’s and Agathe’s attempt to approach each other to show that in “der andere Zustand,” contrasting subjectivities merge with each other to achieve a unity. In the next part, I argue that this ultimate unity of the world, “the ideal of oneness” (Musil, *MwQ*, 979) (die wesenhafte Einung (Musil, *MoE*, 904)), is achieved through incest understood in a metaphorical way.

#### INCEST

Although Ulrich and Agathe try to approach each other, the moral restriction of incest taboo still stays in their way and becomes a barrier for them to get close to each other. *MoE* sees this the insistence on this moral restriction as a sense of reality which needs to be overcome. Incest

is also a central topic in Musil's *MoE*. Ulrich and Agathe's incestuous relationship could be seen as the highest form of their reunification as "der andere Zustand" in this novel.

Incest taboo is essential to establish human as a category universally. Incest taboo is a universal phenomenon. As Bagley and Bischof cite from Murdock, "incest taboos apply universally to all persons of the opposite sex within the nuclear family" (Bagley, 505-6; Bischof, 23).

Furthermore, scholars argue that incest taboo establishes the human culture fundamentally. According to Cohen, incest taboo is "one of the most fundamental establishments in human morality" (Cohen, 161). As Bischof quotes from Lévi-Strauss, incest taboo "is the fundamental step because of which, by which, but above all in which, the transition from nature to culture is accomplished: the prohibition of incest is where nature transcends itself. (Bischof quotes: Lévi-Strauss, 1970, p. 24) Also, Meigs and Barlow quotes Kottak and argue that "there is no simple or universally accepted explanation for the fact that all cultures ban incest." (Meigs, Barlow, 38; Kottak, 2000b: 255, 1994: 22) They argue further that according to

evolutionists such as Morgan (*Ancient Society*, 1877), Bachofen (*Das Mutterrecht*, 1861) and McLennan (*Primitive Marriage*, 1865) and echoed later by Freud (*Totem and Taboo*, 1913), ... the incest taboo transformed human groups from the chaotic and promiscuous state of nature into the ordered and (relatively) incest-free, certainly incest-condemning, state of culture. The taboo was, in fact, the instrument of becoming human, and incest was thereby distanced as precultural, inhuman, and unthinkable (Meigs, Barlow, 39).

As argued by Parker, "the role of the incest taboo" can be seen as "in the context of the growth of the human way of life." Any discussion of incest taboo "immediately faces the problem of when the human way of life became peculiarly 'human'" (Parker, 297). All these quotes show

that because of its universality, incest taboo establishes a generally accepted category of the human being.

Against the theory for incest taboo, there is a scholarly perspective which justifies the necessity for incest and even sees it positively. For example, in his book *Incest and Influence*, Adam Kuper argues that marriages between close relatives were commonplace in the nineteenth-century England and most urban elites married with their relatives. Kuper tries to positively justify incest by arguing that it is a strategic campaign to consolidate the bourgeoisie therefore provide the basis for the rise of capitalism. Cohen even further suggests that “the incest taboo may indeed be obsolete.” Cohen believes that according to the alliance theory, incest taboo has its widest extension when technology is least well developed, and people might still need to engage with large members of other groups (Cohen, 158). However, nowadays, with the technological development, people do not need to engage with bigger groups to earn their livings. Incest taboo therefore contracts within the realm of the nuclear family (Cohen, 159). Further, “as in connection with changing attitudes towards homosexuality, it may be maintained that incestuous relations between consenting mature adults are their concern alone and no one else’s” (Cohen, 160). By understanding incest from a personal rather than evaluating it from a social perspective, there is a more tolerant and accepting attitude towards incest.

Musil’s *MoE* follows the perspective of the second argument and even elevates incest as its culmination. As argued by Stefan Johnsson, Musil is “arguably the only writer to have

succeeded in inventing a prose capable of raising incest, a case of conventional bestiality, to the level of the angelic" (Johnsson, 273). Johnsson provides a representative interpretation of incest in *MoE*. He believes that incest is "a closure to the story" and "the final discovery in Ulrich's exploration of subjectivity" (Johnsson, 275). In Johnsson's argument, "the most fundamental principle of *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften* is the deconstructive mechanism of negativity" (Johnsson, 275). Johnsson believes that the first to erode is "the personal identity of Ulrich, then the cultural identity of the social group to which he belongs, and finally the feminine identity of Agathe" (Johnsson, 275). The novel can only end in a "nothingness that transcends the boundaries of human reality" (Johnsson, 275). Incest "shatters the social, narrative and political universe in its entirety," "represents the destruction of all ideological appellations of the subject, tearing apart the kinship structure through which groups are formed, and dissolving the fabric of society" (Johnsson, 275). Therefore, incest becomes the "logical conclusion of this story" and becomes the final stage of the novel.

Different from the concept of negativity, this dissertation provides a new interpretation of incest which sees it as the final passage to cross the border and reach the absolute unity. As argued by Titcher, "incest in this novel" has a higher significance in that it creates the passage to "attain the perfect union" (Titcher, 144). Ulrich and Agathe do not contain the personalities of the other person and are thus confined within their own separated categories. Based on incest taboo, it would be impossible for them to enter into the realm of the other person and they would never cross the categories limited by their subjectivities. However, as described in the novel, both but are eager to experience the life of the other person, which means to break the

incest taboo and develop an incestuous relationship. This enables Ulrich and Agathe to embrace “a more ‘constructive’ openness to more optimistic possibilities” (Agin, 287). They cross their own limitations resulted by their own subjectivities and gain a united totality of the separated parts. Just as what Titcher describes, this incestuous union is “bisexuality of the soul” (“Doppelgeschlechtlichkeit der Seele”) (Titcher, 154). Incest taboo is the most fundamental moral prohibition of human existence and it universally separates human beings. It is an ultimate border and separation. An embracing of incest is the rejection of all human category and morality. Incest disproves this fundamental human morality and ultimately reunites separated human categories.

In this section, I try to argue that the metaphorical portrayal of incest in *MoE* is the most fundamental dissolution of human category and approaches absolute unity to the greatest extent. Incest is argued to be a universal categorization of human beings. In all cultures, it is unethical and is often regarded as a crime. The supportive reading of incest in *MoE* gives insight into decategorizing human beings on a universal level. By endorsing incest, *MoE* frees Ulrich and Agathe from all moral restrictions and enables the unification of them to the largest degree. They are therefore able to overcome their contrasting subjectivities and experience the other possibility which they could not achieved under incest taboo. Incest in *MoE* even goes beyond its literal meaning and symbolizes the border-crossing of all kinds of limitations and separations in a more general sense. It also serves as a passage which leads to the absolute unity, “der andere Zustand.”

## “DER ANDERE ZUSTAND” AS A MYSTIC UNITY

In the previous section, we have discussed the process of achieving the absolute unity of the world through incest. In this section, we will further explore how this “absolute unity” is represented in *MoE*. This dissertation argues that the absolute unity achieved in “der andere Zustand”<sup>147</sup> is a mystical unity with two connotations: first, it describes ecstatic experiences; second, it is godless mysticism featuring a state of nothingness. The unity in “der andere Zustand” is closely related to mysticism. Spörl argues that neo-mysticism/godless mysticism is the presentation of the experience of unio (the absolute unity) and neo-mystic experiences (Spörl, 17). Similarly, Musil’s “der andere Zustand” also aspires for an experience of absolute unity. As argued by Bücken, “der andere Zustand” in Musil’s *MoE* is definitely connected with neo-mysticism (Bücken, 47). Following Spörl’s and Bücken’s arguments, this dissertation bridges Musil’s “der andere Zustand” with the discourse of mysticism and uses descriptions in mysticism to understand Musil’s “der andere Zustand.”

The first characteristic of Musil’s “der andere Zustand” is that it describes ecstatic moments Ulrich and Agathe experience. As argued by Dietmar Goltschnigg, Musil’s description of “der andere Zustand” mainly comes from the book describing ecstatic experiences. Martin Buber took notes on ecstatic/mystic experiences from different cultural backgrounds in the world and collected them in a book, *Ecstatic Confessions*. According to Dietmar Goltschnigg’s reading, Musil extremely thoroughly studied the source of *Ecstatic Confessions*. First and foremost,

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<sup>147</sup> Given that “der andere Zustand” describes the final stage to achieve the absolute unity, the unification of two contrasting subjects, we use “der andere Zustand” as another term for “the absolute unity” in this dissertation.



Musil quotes from Buber's *Ecstatic Confessions* for his description of "der andere Zustand" in his *MoE*. One can hardly overestimate the significance of mystical experiences described in this book for Musil's description of Ulrich's and Agathe's experiences (Goltschnigg, 62). Goltschnigg even argues that all of the descriptions of "unio mystica" in *Ecstatic Confessions* are transferred to describe "der andere Zustand," which is experienced by the siblings, Ulrich and Agathe (Goltschnigg, 62). Based on Goltschnigg's argument, we may conclude that the unity in "der andere Zustand" in *MoE* should be a mystical unity describing ecstatic experiences.

For example, as written in *MoE*, when Ulrich and Agathe try to enter into the realm of the other person, old established realities dissolve. „The border between them has fallen. They practice the unity of what was originally separate, for which Ulrich has been looking for so long" (my own translation).<sup>148</sup> In this quote, both Ulrich and Agathe share a private experience between themselves which is to cross the border of the other person. In this experience, both of them are practicing unusual rituals such as "the unity of the original separation." Also, as argued by Spörl, such ecstatic experiences can neither be described through rational thoughts, nor does it belong to the everyday language. It is the grasping of a moment of epiphany which might disappear in the next moment (Spörl, 17).<sup>149</sup> As written in *MoE*,

‘There are any number of minor deliberations, worries, calculations, and observations that make up the paper, as it were, that has the picture of the cows on it. We have no awareness of the paper, only of the cows!’ (Ulrich)

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<sup>148</sup> German original: Die Grenze zwischen ihnen ist gefallen, sie praktizieren die Einheit des ursprünglich Getrennten, nach der Ulrich so lange gesucht hat (Musil, *MoE*, 1240).

<sup>149</sup> In German it is called „transitorische Augenblickshaftigkeit.“

‘And suddenly the paper tears!’ Agathe broke in.

‘Right. That is, some tissue of habit in us tears. There is no longer something edible grazing out there, or something paintable; nothing blocks your way (Musil, MwQ, 827).<sup>150</sup>

If a person looks at the paper, then the person only sees directly the cows staying on them. The picture of the cows is a representation of rational thoughts and everyday language, such as „minor deliberations, worries, calculations, and observations.” However, this should not be the absolute unity. The absolute unity can only be experienced by the Siamese siblings when the everydayness of the cows on the paper falls apart. That is the moment when “the paper suddenly tears,” so that the “habit” in the common world and everyday life disconnects with normal reality. Then follows the epiphanic and ecstatic moment when cows are “no longer something edible grazing out there, or something paintable,” it is the time when the essence of the unity starts to appear. As argued by Albertsen, the negation of all reality provides with new freedom and gives an insight into what is lied behind, which is the essence of things (Albertsen, 124-5). All evidence above shows that the first characteristic of “der andere Zustand” is that it features ecstatic experiences at moments of epiphany.

The second characteristic of “der andere Zustand” is that it is a godless mystical unity.

According to Gschwandtner, Musil’s mysticism situates itself within the neo-mystic discourse,

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<sup>150</sup> German original: „Das sind unzählige kleine Absichten, Sorgen, Berechnungen und Erkenntnisse, und sie bilden gleichsam das Papier, auf dem das Bild der Herde steht. Man weiß nichts von dem Papier, man weiß nur von der Herde darauf –, (Ulrich)

„Und plötzlich zerreit das Papier!“ fiel Agathe ein.

„Ja. Das heit: irgendeine gewohnheitsmige Verwebung in uns zerreit. Nichts Essbares grast dann mehr; nichts Malbares; nichts versperrt dir den Weg“ (Musil, MoE, 762).

which is not a religious mysticism, but a godless mysticism (Gschwandtner, 26). According to Spörl, in neo-mysticism, the personified god is replaced by the “mystisch unio,” which is an “endless unity” (Spörl, 17). Similarly, Musil’s “der andere Zustand” establishes this “mystisch unio” as a stage of nothingness instead of using the concept of God.

For example, instead of God, the metaphor of a motionless tree and darkness is used in *MoE* to describe this unity.

“One possesses nothing in the world, one holds on to nothing, one is not held by anything,” Agathe said. “It’s like a tall tree on which not a leaf is stirring. And in that condition one could not do anything mean.” – “They say that nothing can happen in that condition which is not in harmony with it,” Ulrich added (Musil, *MwQ*, 828).<sup>151</sup>

Instead of seeing a god in “der andere Zustand,” one can only see a state of nothingness in which “one possesses nothing in the world, one holds on to nothing, one is not held by anything.” In this stage of nothingness, nothing is right or wrong, and everything is to be born and to be possible. Even the self does not exist. This nothingness of the world is like a tall tree. Individual separating from this tree could exert influence on this tree. However, even the movement of separation has been stopped and subjectivity cannot exist, so that not even a leaf is stirring on this tree.

In this mystical unity, everything melts into the darkness.

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<sup>151</sup> German original: Man besitzt nichts auf der Welt, man hält nichts mehr fest, man wird von nichts festgehalten“ sagte Agathe. „Es ist alles wie ein hoher Baum, an dem sich kein Blatt regt. Und man kann nichts Niedriges tun in diesem Zustand.“ – „Man sagt, es könne in diesem Zustand nichts geschehen, was nicht mit ihm übereinstimmte“ ergänzte Ulrich (Musil, *MoE*, 763).

All insurances express only one flooding experience. Night enfolds all contradictions in her shimmering maternal arms, and at her breast not a word is false or true, but each is the matchless birth of spirit out of the dark, which man experiences in a new thought (Musil, *MoE*, 1084).<sup>152</sup>

In “der andere Zustand,” every concrete establishment melts into a flux, and all the differences, all the separations and differences have been dissolved in glimmering arms of the mother, which is the darkness of night. On the “breast” of the mother of the night, words cannot be judged as right or wrong anymore, because they all merge into the breast of the darkness. The darkness would ultimately give birth to spirits which are the subjectivity, and furthermore realities and possibilities in the objective world. Therefore, the darkness is the ultimate unity, the “ideal of oneness.” In this description of the unity in “der andere Zustand,” a state of nothingness replaces the god to be the ontological unity for the whole world. Similar to neo-mysticism, the description of “der andere Zustand” is also a godless mystical unity.

#### PROBLEM OF HUMAN LANGUAGE

I argue that in *MoE*, the representation of the absolute unity in “der andere Zustand” is in form of ecstatic experiences and a godless mystical unity which is nothingness. This argument actually also presents a problem: the justification for representing this mystical unity through language. Since the ultimate unity nihilates subjectivity and is a state of “selflessness,” it thus makes it impossible for human consciousness to represent the mystical unity, not to say the

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<sup>152</sup> German original: Alle Versicherungen drücken nur ein einziges flutendes Erlebnis aus. Die Nacht schließt alle Widersprüche in ihre schimmernden Mutterarme, und an ihrer Brust ist kein Wort falsch und keines wahr, sondern jedes ist die unvergleichliche Geburt des Geistes aus dem Dunkel, die der Mensch in einem neuen Gedanken erfährt (Musil, *MoE*, 1084).

human language. In Agathe's understanding, the realm of the mystical unity is the realm of the "highest selflessness" (höchste Selbstlosigkeit). This realm requires the renounce of humanness. One has to silence one's desires, thought and heart. Language is established realities formed by human consciousness. If one gives up one's thought and desire, one also terminates the human language.<sup>153</sup> For Agathe, it seems to be an impossible task to completely get rid of humanness from her own human perspective, and she completely gives up this attempt after several tries.<sup>154</sup> This example shows that the mystical unity precedes human beings and the birth of human language. If we use the language to describe this unity (Dasein), then we distance ourselves from this unity through language. Therefore, it is impossible to use language to describe the ultimate unity.

*MoE* tries four different attempts which use language to describe this mystical unity which unfortunately fail. First, descriptions of the mystical unity through language can only be in form of metaphors as can be seen in the tree metaphor and the darkness metaphor. Although a metaphorical unity is represented, the real metaphysical experience remains undescribed. As can be seen in the following example,

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<sup>153</sup> German original: Ansichthalten muss man, bis Kopf, Herz und Glieder lauter Schweigen sind. Erreicht man so aber die höchste Selbstlosigkeit ... Es kam ihr aber vor, dass es, fest gewollt, auch erreichbar sein müsste; und sie nahm sich zusammen, als wollte sie sich totstellen (Musil, *MoE*, 1234).

<sup>154</sup> Aber bald erwies es sich als eine ebenso unmögliche Aufgabe, Gedanken, Sinnes- und Willensmeldungen ganz stillzustellen, ... und nach einiger Bemühung gab sie den Versuch ganz auf (Musil, *MoE*, 1234).

That miraculous feeling of the lifting of all bounds, the boundlessness of the outer and inner has love and mysticism have in common (Musil, MwQ, 830).<sup>155</sup>

Love and mysticism have a lot in common, given that both share “that miraculous feeling of the lifting of all bounds, the boundlessness of the outer and inner.” Whereas love can be represented, the mystical unity cannot be represented. Through the mediation of love, people can thus gain insight into this ultimate unity. However, love actually only initiates the urge to approach the mystic unity. It is the preparatory stage towards this unity, but not yet the unity itself. Love can be a metaphorical alternative which can help us to understand the unity, but it cannot replace the absolute unity. Therefore, using metaphorical language to find alternatives for the mystic unity still cannot represent the mystic unity itself.

In the second case, the person might describe the influence the mystic unity exerts on a person, as can be seen in the epiphanic moment in “Tonka.” However, the mystic unity itself cannot be described. A moment of mysticism in Musil’s literature can be seen in the end of “Tonka” as a moment of epiphany.

All that he had never understood was there before him in this instant, the bandage that had blindfolded him seemed to have dropped from his eyes – yet only for an instant, and the next instant it was merely as though something had flashed through his mind. From that time on much came to his mind that made him a little better than other people, because there was a small warm shadow that had fallen across his brilliant life (Musil, Tonka 1966, 122).<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> German original: Dieses wunderbare Gefühl der Entgrenzung und Grenzenlosigkeit des Äußeren wie des Inneren, das der Liebe und der Mystik gemeinsam ist! (Musil, MoE, 765).

<sup>156</sup> German original: Er fühlte sie von der Erde bis zum Kopf und ihr ganzes Leben. Alles, was er niemals gewußt hatte, stand in diesem Augenblick vor ihm, die Binde der Blindheit schien von seinen Augen gesunken zu sein;

In this epiphanic moment, the protagonist realizes the full expansion of Tonka's life. In one moment, he could be able to realize something "that he had never understood." However, what he exactly understands at this moment remains undescribed, not to say what influences him. Also, as claimed in the text, in this moment, "much came to his mind that made him a little better," and there "was a small warm shadow that had fallen across his brilliant life." These descriptions show that mystical experiences have positively influenced his life. However, these descriptions mainly describe how mystical experiences influence his life, but these cannot explain what these mystical experiences look like.

Third, one can destroy conventional usage of language and try to grasp pure human sensations at moments of "der andere Zustand."

You can't even form the word 'grazing,' because a host of purposeful, practical connotations go along with it, which you have suddenly lost. What is left on the pictorial plane might best be called an ocean swell of sensations that rises and falls, breathes and shimmers, as though it filled your whole field of view without a horizon' (Ulrich) (Musil, MwQ, 827).<sup>157</sup>

This quote shows a progressive attempt to grasp "der andere Zustand." At the first stage, the description of cows on the pictorial plane is a normal representation of a reality which is purposeful and practical. This step still remains in the conventional usage of language. Then, in

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einen Augenblick lang, denn im nächsten schien ihm bloß schnell etwas eingefallen zu sein. Und vieles fiel ihm seither ein, das ihn etwas besser machte als andere, weil auf seinem glänzenden Leben ein kleiner warmer Schatten lag (Musil, Tonka 2014, 35).

<sup>157</sup> German original: Du kannst nicht einmal mehr die Worte grasen oder weiden bilden, weil dazu eine Menge zweckvoller, nützlicher Vorstellungen gehört, die du auf einmal verloren hast. Was auf der Bildfläche bleibt, könnte man am ehesten ein Gewoge von Empfindungen nennen, das sich hebt und senkt oder atmet und gleißt, als ob es ohne Umrisse das ganze Gesichtsfeld ausfüllte. (Ulrich) (Musil, MoE, 762).

order to represent the mystical unity, conventional usage of language as “purposeful and practical” descriptions should be destroyed. Instead, one moves one step further and tries to develop a new form of language to describe the scene. Instead of conventional usage of language, one introduces pure human sensations to grasp the whole scene. Rather than see cows as cows, one uses pure human sensations and describes it as “an ocean swell of sensations that rises and falls, breathes and shimmers.” However, this newly developed attempt still presupposes human perception/subjectivity. Given that the mystical unity precedes human perception, one also cannot use human sensations to represent the true mystical unity.

Fourthly, “der andere Zustand” defines Ulrich’s and Agathe’s transgressing their initial borders. In other words, “der andere Zustand” includes a constant border-crossing process. However, there is never a clear borderline to be described.

This other state of mind is always described with as much passion as inaccuracy, and one might be tempted to see this shadowy double of our world as just a daydream (Musil, GW II, 1144).<sup>158</sup>

This quote argues that “der ander Zustand” is always inexact. Because there will always be the process of border-crossing in a shadowed dreamlike condition, language cannot capture this imprecise process.

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<sup>158</sup> German original: Dieser andere Geisteszustand wird immer mit ebenso großer Leidenschaft wie Ungenauigkeit beschrieben, und man könnte versucht sein, in diesem schattenhaften Doppelgänger unsrer Welt nur einen Tagtraum zu sehn (Musil, GW II, 1144).



As summarized by Ulrich and Agathe, both acknowledge their failure in capturing “der andere Zustand” through words.

Agathe did not, of course, put it in such terms, which already contain an explanation; she was merely making passionate fragments of her memories into a sequence. But even Ulrich, although he had often thought about it, could not offer any explanation of these experiences (Musil, MwQ, 830).<sup>159</sup>

Agathe cannot explain these experiences, but only recalls her memory and puts her sensuous impressions into words. This is obviously not the essence of the mystic unity. Even Ulrich who is skilled at representing experiences through language, cannot offer any explanations for these experiences.

Despite these four tries, *MoE* still fails to provide a good way to directly describe the mystic unity in “der andere Zustand” through human language. This leads to one of the questions which will be discussed the next chapter: would it ever be possible to include a representation of the noumenal world in *MoE*?

#### SUMMARY

Whereas the previous two chapters discuss how the phenomenal world is portrayed in Musil’s *MoE*, this chapter thematizes the transcendent world in *MoE*. I firstly define this absolute unity created as a result of Ulrich’s and Agathe’s border-crossing experiences as “der andere

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<sup>159</sup> German original: Agathe tat es natürlich nicht in solchen Worten, die schon eine Erklärung einschließen, sondern sie reihte bloß leidenschaftliche Bruchstücke ihrer Erinnerung aneinander; aber auch Ulrich, obwohl er schon oft darüber nachgedacht hatte, war keiner Erklärung dieser Erlebnisse mächtig (Musil, *MoE*, 765).

Zustand.” Next, I discuss the process of approaching this ontological unity through the border-crossing experiences of Ulrich and Agathe. I analyze how Ulrich and Agathe have contrasting personalities. They also have a sense of possibility which negates their subjectivity and creates new realities through approaching their counterparts. Additionally, both Ulrich and Agathe nullify the moral restriction of incest taboo to enable the entering into the boundary of the other person. By merging with each other, they overcome their subjectivities and achieve the absolute unity in the transcendent world. Then, I further argue that the representation of “der andere Zustand” relates to the discourse of mysticism and is in the forms of ecstatic experiences and a godless mystic unity which is nothingness. Finally, I contend that the real representation of the state of nothingness in the mystic unity is problematic. Given that the mystic unity precedes human awareness and human language is a production of human awareness, human language fails to truly depict the state of the mystic unity.

This whole discussion about the transcendent world in *MoE* establishes that besides detailed discussions about the conventional world with realities and possibilities, *MoE* also systematically discusses the transcendent world. It answers questions about how this world can be defined, approached, and represented. This paves the way for the discussion about the relationship between the noumenal and phenomenal worlds in the next chapter.

Like Musil’s positive attitude towards establishing metaphysics, Zhang also wishes to establish metaphysics. Zhang also presumes the existence of metaphysics and explores the human capacity to approach it. Instead of using a concrete story to characterize the process of

pursuing metaphysics, as can be seen in Musil's *MoE*, Zhang examines human epistemological methods from a theoretical perspective. Both Musil and Zhang agree that human language fail to represent this realm. Whereas Musil still attempts to develop a passage to the metaphysical realm from the human world, Zhang negates any human access to it. Instead, Zhang borrows the Yogācāra theory and chooses the theory about the ultimate world as his theoretical basis for the established metaphysical realm. Both Musil and Zhang see the metaphysical world as a world without any establishment. In Musil's terms, it is a world of the mystic unity or "der andere Zustand," whereas for Zhang Taiyan, it is a matrix of the thus-come-one (*rulaizang*, 如来藏) which contains amala consciousness and ālaya consciousness.

Whereas chapters 2 and 3 analyze the phenomenal world established in *MoE*, and chapter 4 establishes the transcendent world of mystic unity, in the next chapter, I am going to summarize the previous three chapters and analyze one central problem: between the phenomenal world and the metaphysical world, what is the ultimate concern for *MoE*? After answering this question, I will then further explore whether there would be, and if yes, what could be the representation of the ultimate world structure in *MoE*. The dissertation will also further explore whether this ultimate representation of both worlds could solve the problem of inefficiency in human language.

## *Chapter 5 Dual Worldview: The Phenomenal and the Noumenal Worlds*

### INTRODUCTION

In chapter 2 and 3, I thoroughly analyze the phenomenal world portrayed in *MoE* through the concepts of reality and possibility; in chapter 4, I try to characterize the metaphysical world portrayed in *MoE* through the mystic unity Ulrich and Agathe achieve in “der andere Zustand.” After laying out two perspectives to approach the world, the phenomenal way and the noumenal way, in this chapter, I am going to answer the question regarding the relationship between these two perspectives to approach the worlds. The central question regarding this chapter then goes: which perspective of the world is the more fundamental in *MoE*? Is it the phenomenal world, or the noumenal world, or both are equally important?

In scholarly discussions, it is generally acknowledged that the discussion about the noumenal world is more fundamental than the discussion about the phenomenal world in the novel. However, I argue that both the phenomenal world and the noumenal worlds are equally crucial in *MoE*. Even Ulrich as a man with a sense of possibility wants to return to a world with a sense of reality. In short, this chapter argues that *MoE* has a dual perspective to perceive the world. It not only embraces a phenomenal world which contains realities and possibilities, but it also considers integrating the metaphysical world in the form of mystical unity in “der andere Zustand.” Following this thesis, I will further explore a final question in the chapter: what would be the representation for this dual world view?

The second thesis this chapter stands for is that essayism developed in *MoE* is the combined representation for both the noumenal and the phenomenal world views. Essayism contains two aspects. On the one hand, it grasps a unique and individual perspective, establishing it as the representation of the phenomenal world. Because it is a decisive choice for establishment, it can be seen as a representation of reality. However, given that this established reality focuses on unique individuality, it varies depending on different people and time. Therefore, this reality is not an established ideology which refuses challenges and changes. It also incorporates possibilities and changes. Therefore, the description in essayism avoids limitations in a sense of reality. On the other hand, essayism describes many different sides without encompassing the whole. This non-encompassing indirectly alludes to the non-establishment in the metaphysical unity. As argued in the last chapter, a metaphysical unity precedes human consciousness, human language therefore fails to represent this mystic unity. Instead of directly representing this mystic unity, essayism avoids a direct representation through language and only chooses to preserve an unknown and unrepresentable part which alludes to the undefined nothingness in the world of the mystic unity.

#### DUAL WORLDVIEW

As we have analyzed in the previous three chapters, *MoE* discusses two attitudes: in the world of everyday life, there is commitment to certain values (reality) and destruction of commitment to these values (possibility); a sense of possibility leads to a world of the mystic unity which is the transcendent world. In Musil scholarship, there is also a discussion about the question:

which is more important, the phenomenal world with realities and possibilities, or the noumenal world of the mystic unity?

There is a commonly accepted perspective that *MoE* is more concerned with the world with a sense of possibility and furthermore the world of the mystic unity. Scholars holding this argument believe that the world exists in a process of examination whose final goal is to achieve the mystical unity in “der andere Zustand.” As argued by Jakob, a person should evaluate reality in an experimental and continuous way, (namely possibility), which must be constantly proved (Jakob, 17). Olmi argues that one needs to see reality as hypothesis, live in conjunctive, in the realm of possibilities (Olmi, 153-166). In Olmi’s reading, reality in *MoE* should be understood as hypothesis with unrealized things, namely possibilities. In other words, reality as established world structures should not be the basis. The basis should be possibilities which need to be constantly examined. Also, a sense of possibility enables Ulrich’s and Agathe’s experiment of border-crossing to achieve “der andere Zustand” in mystic unity. A world based on possibility is actually a world which leads to a mystic unity in “der andere Zustand.”

Therefore, the discourse of a sense of possibility and “der andere Zustand” rather than a sense of reality should be the foundation in *MoE*. This dissertation acknowledges that the discourse of a sense of possibility as well as the mystic unity are fundamental in *MoE*, however, this dissertation supplements this perspective and believes that both the conventional world with realities and possibilities and the transcendent world of the mystic unity are equally embraced in *MoE*. To demonstrate this thesis, I am going to firstly show that the world of a sense of reality is also necessary in the novel.

There are also scholars who see *MoE*'s ultimate concern as to position oneself in the conventional world within a sense of reality. Therefore, Ulrich would have to find a goal in his life. Kümmel argues that

As long as Ulrich hasn't found a suitable field of activity for his talent, which he doesn't exactly know what it consists of, he saves his strength. He hopes to be able to put them to better use in a suitable place... the least complicated procedure in such a situation is simply to wait... that there is simply no field of work that would be appropriate for people like Ulrich (my own translation).<sup>160</sup>

This quote shows that according to Kümmel, Ulrich still tries to find a field for his talent, and he is only currently not so well aware of it. Therefore, Ulrich saves his power and waits for a better place to use his strength. Through interpreting Ulrich as a person who waits for a reality which suits his own personality, Kümmel's argument already implies that a certain structure of the world is established and people simply need to submit themselves under social stratification into different realities. Kümmel's argument presumes that the conventional world which contains reality/possibility precedes a world of possibility. At another place, Kümmel further argues that a sense of possibility is not an ideal to pursue, but it is rather a pragmatic strategy (Kümmel, 543). A pragmatic strategy implies that the strategy of treating everything indifferently (a sense of possibility) is used to cope with established situations in the world. Established situations in the world represented as reality form the central framework and a sense of possibility is only a strategy to go about with reality. Similarly, Hassler-Rütti also argues

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<sup>160</sup> German original: Solange Ulrich kein geeignetes Betätigungsfeld für seine Begabung, von der er gar nicht so genau weiß, worin sie besteht, gefunden hat, spart er seine Kräfte. Er hofft, sie an geeignetem Ort besser einsetzen zu können ... das unaufwendigste Verfahren in solcher Situation ist einfach, abzuwarten ..., dass es einfach kein Arbeitsfeld gibt, das Naturen wie Ulrich gemäß wäre (Kümmel, 543).

that Ulrich nevertheless wants to rescue his personality and wants to do something that fits him well (Hassler-Rütli, 57). This perspective also supports the idea that Ulrich still tries to pursue concrete realization of reality in the phenomenal world.

Further, there is evidence in the novel which favors the necessity to embrace the world of reality and a sense of reality.

Such possibilists are said to inhabit a more delicate medium, a hazy medium of mist, fantasy, daydreams, and the subjunctive mood. Children who show this tendency are dealt with firmly and warned that such persons are cranks, dreamers, weaklings, know-it-alls, or troublemakers. Such fools are also called idealists by those who wish to praise them. But all this clearly applies only to their weak subspecies, those who cannot comprehend reality or who, in their melancholic condition, avoid it (Musil, MwQ, 11).<sup>161</sup>

A person who “cannot comprehend reality or who, in their melancholic condition, avoid it,” are regarded as “possibilists” (positively speaking, “idealists”). Without a sense of reality, such possibilists stay in their own personal realm without connecting to others. They “are said to inhabit a more delicate medium, a hazy medium of mist, fantasy, daydreams, and the subjunctive mood.” These people are negatively judged in society. If children in society would show tendency to avoid reality, then they are going to be “dealt with firmly and warned that such persons are cranks, dreamers, weaklings, know-it-alls, or troublemakers.” Even the narrator calls them “fools,” and “weak subspecies.” In this quote, it is clear that a person only

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<sup>161</sup> German original: Solche Möglichkeitsmenschen leben, wie man sagt, in einem feineren Gespinst, in einem Gespinst von Dunst, Einbildung, Träumerei und Konjunktiven; Kindern, die diesen Hang haben, treibt man ihn nachdrücklich aus und nennt solche Menschen vor ihnen Phantasten, Träumer, Schwächlinge und Besserwisser oder Krittler. Wenn man sie loben will, nennt man diese Narren auch Idealisten, aber offenbar ist mit alledem nur ihre schwache Spielart erfasst, welche die Wirklichkeit nicht begreifen kann oder ihr wehleidig ausweicht, wo also das Fehlen des Wirklichkeitssinns wirklich einen Mangel bedeutet (Musil, MoE, 16).



with a sense of possibility is valued negatively in society, and a person with a sense of reality is valued positively. Therefore, *MoE* presents a perspective which is in favor of understanding reality.

Another importance evidence for the endorsement of the phenomenal world is the discourse on the failure of “der andere Zustand” and the necessity to return to the conventional world. Jiyoung Shin argues in her chapter “Back to Reality”<sup>162</sup> that “der andere Zustand” is without empathy for the outside world,<sup>163</sup> and she describes “the essence of the siblings’ love”<sup>164</sup> as “autism” because this “siblings’ love reduces itself to a protest against the world” (Shin, 152). This protest does not represent any moments of the constructive utopia in a motivated life (Shin, 153).<sup>165</sup> In the end, the siblings decide to return to the conventional world and interact with other members of the society. Similarly, Bückler also talks about the failure of “anderer Zustand” and argues that it is the revulsion from the mystic back to the worldly, from the sacred to the mundane (Bückler, 209).<sup>166</sup> Rather than seeing the return to the secular world as a failure, this dissertation positively interprets this return from “der andere Zustand” as the evidence for the necessity of the phenomenal world. I am going to further demonstrate this point through the following example of Ulrich.

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<sup>162</sup> German original: Zurück zur Wirklichkeit

<sup>163</sup> German original: Anteilnahmslosigkeit der Liebe an der Außenwelt (Shin, 152)

<sup>164</sup> German Original: das Wesen der Geschwisterliebe (Shin, 153)

<sup>165</sup> German original: Geschwisterliebe reduziert sich damit auf einen Protest gegen die Welt, was keine positive Konstruktion der Utopie des motivierten Lebens darstellt (Shin, 153)

<sup>166</sup> German original: die Darstellung des Scheiterns des *anderen Zustands* agieren in einem Umschwung vom Erotischen zum Sexuellen und damit vom Mystischen ins Weltliche, vom Sakralen ins Profane (Bückler, 209).

In the novel, even Ulrich, a person with a sense of possibility, takes attempts to return to a world with a sense of reality. Before his sabbatical year, Ulrich had three attempts to become a great man, committing himself to three different realities, as a soldier, civil engineer, and a mathematician. He realizes later on that all of the three occupations are insufficient realities. Therefore, “he resolves to take a year’s leave of absence from his life in order to seek an appropriate application for his abilities” (Musil, MwQ, 44).<sup>167</sup> In his sabbatical year, Ulrich wants to “seek an appropriate application” and is constantly on search for more possibilities.

After searching for possibilities for a long time, Ulrich also starts to miss a life with clear goals and realities. One night, on his way home, Ulrich meets a prostitute who is a person with a sense of reality. A prostitute was trying to lure Ulrich to her business. She fully commits to the requirements of the work, and calls Ulrich “baby.” No matter whom she meets, she repeats this word again and again, saying it “hundreds of times in a night” to different people. Further, the prostitute is satisfied with her own world of reality, so she is “too numb to see anything out of place in this sound” (Musil, MwQ, 710).<sup>168</sup> This prostitute is fully convinced of the pattern of her work and follows it without any reflection. Similar to Diotima who blindly defends her reality of

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<sup>167</sup> German original: beschloß er, sich ein Jahr Urlaub von seinem Leben zu nehmen, um eine gemessene Anwendung seiner Fähigkeiten zu suchen (Musil, MoE, 47).

<sup>168</sup> Original text in English and German:

She was much shorter than Ulrich and had to look up into his face, yet she said “baby” to him again, too numb to see anything out of place in this sound she uttered hundreds of times in a night. Ulrich found it touching somehow (Musil, MwQ, 710).

Sie sah zu ihm empor und war viel kleiner als Ulrich, trotzdem sagte sie noch einmal „Kleiner“ zu ihm und fand in ihrer Teilnahmslosigkeit nichts Unpassendes an dieser Lautverbindung, die sie hunderte Male an einem Abend von sich gab (Musil, MoE, 651).

self-importance, the prostitute also blindly follows the working rule as a prostitute. Therefore, the prostitute is also a person with a sense of reality.

Although Ulrich is a person with a sense of possibility, when he encounters this prostitute who only has a strong sense of reality, Ulrich is still deeply touched by her personal commitment to her reality. Ulrich, as a man with a sense of possibility, should actually take different possibilities equally and never conform to any one of them. He should have taken this prostitute indifferently and walked on. However, at this point, he gives in to this prostitute, a person only with a sense of reality. For one moment, Ulrich gets rid of his personal reflections, respects the reality of this prostitute and willingly supports her wishes by giving her the money she wants. As is shown in the quote: “he could not bring himself altogether to disappoint the little person, who was waiting for him to strike a deal, ... he fumbled in his pocket, slipped approximately the amount she would have asked into her hand, and walked on” (Musil, MwQ, 710).<sup>169</sup>

Ulrich is obviously envious of people only with a sense of reality. The moment Ulrich encounters the prostitute, she also reminds him of the case of Moosbrugger. Similar to the prostitute, Moosbrugger represents a system of value judgements based on the single reality of “cruelty.” Cruelty as a basis for reality seems to be “rampant,” but it is a “rampant metaphor of

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<sup>169</sup> German original: Er brachte es nicht über sich, die kleine Person ganz zu enttäuschen, die darauf wartete, dass er in das Geschäft einschläge ... drückte eine Geldnote, die ungefähr dem Werte eines Besuchs entsprach, dem Mädchen in die Hand und ging weiter (Musil, MoE, 651-2).

order" (Musil, MwQ, 711),<sup>170</sup> a radical example of committing to one world order, one reality.

The awareness that Moosbrugger is a "rampant metaphor of order" is the clear indication that a sense of reality powerfully emerges within Ulrich's sense of possibility. As before, Ulrich almost always rejects commitments to any reality and "had apparently been living so long without some central purpose." However, at this point, facing the prostitute and Moosbrugger who commit to their realities, Ulrich is actually "envying" them, given that they have their "obsessions" and a "faith in the part he [she] was playing."<sup>171</sup>

A sense of reality, furthermore, becomes a deciding power for Ulrich's life. Although in his "sabbatical" year, "everything" in Ulrich's life "had been preoccupied with, tormented by, sometimes even delighted with" the pursuit of a sense of possibility, after seeing the prostitute and thinking about Moosbrugger, Ulrich makes a decisive move in that he "suddenly" takes action, "made a gesture as though thrusting something aside with the back of his hand." He

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<sup>170</sup> Original text in English and German:

When he imagined how she would have turned up her eyes and given the fake little moan she had learned to deliver at the right moment, he couldn't help feeling without knowing why that there was something touching about this deeply vulgar, hopelessly inept private performance for an agreed price. ... Even while he was still speaking to the girl he had thought fleetingly of Moosbrugger, the pathological comedian, the pursuer and the nemesis of prostitutes. ... He had apparently been living so long without some central purpose that he was actually envying a psychopath his obsessions and his faith in the part he was playing! ... A rampant metaphor of order, that was what Moosbrugger meant for him (Musil, MwQ, 711).

Aber wenn er sich vorstellte, wie sie den Blick ein wenig verrenken und einen jener kleinen, ungeschickt gemachten Seufzer ausstoßen würde, die sie im rechten Augenblick anzubringen gelernt hat, so strömte diese tief gemeine, völlig unbegabte Schauspielerei für einen ausgemachten Betrag doch auch etwas Rührendes aus ... und schon während Ulrich mit dem Mädchen sprach, hatte ihn eine sehr naheliegende Gedankenverbindung an Moosbrugger erinnert. Moosbrugger, der krankhafte Komödiant, der Prostituiertenjäger, ... er hatte offenbar so lange an einem Leben ohne innere Einheit festgehalten, dass er nun sogar einen Geisteskranken um seine Zwangsvorstellungen und den Glauben an seine Rolle beneidete! ... Ein entsprungenes Gleichnis der Ordnung: das war Moosbrugger für ihn! (Musil, MoE, 652-3)

<sup>171</sup> The "faith" here are realities that both Moosbrugger and the prostitute commit to.

gets loud, “press his lips together: and says ‘All of that has to be settled, once and for all!’” This shows that Ulrich decides to give up his search for possibilities and wants everything “to be settled” in realities. This wish is so strong that it even makes him emotionally agitated and drives him to action.<sup>172</sup>

After a long search, Ulrich “now at long last” would like to adopt “some attainable goal” in his life and follow certain rules which constrain himself. To “live like everybody else” means to realize the “rampant metaphor of order,” a reality. Ulrich would like to live like the prostitute who internalizes the code of conduct for prostitution and comes to terms with it; like Moosbrugger who follows his own reality of cruelty and implements his thoughts through his actions; like Diotima who pursues her perfect image in the upper-class society. Ulrich is aware that he needs to “come to grips with one of his impossible possibilities.” “Impossible possibilities” means that it is impossible to live in a world of possibilities without any realities.

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<sup>172</sup> Original text in English and German:

And suddenly Ulrich said: “All of that --” and made a gesture as though thrusting something aside with the back of his hand. He had not merely thought it, he had said it out loud, and reacted to hearing himself speak by pressing his lips together and finishing his statement in silence: “All of that has to be settled, once and for all!” Never mind what “all of that” was in detail; it was everything he had been preoccupied with, tormented by, sometimes even delighted with, ever since he had taken his “sabbatical” – everything that had tied him up in knots, like a dreamer for whom all things are possible except getting up and moving about (Musil, MwQ, 712).

Und plötzlich sagte Ulrich: Alles das --! und machte eine Bewegung, als würde er etwas mit dem Handrücken zur Seite schleudern. Er hatte es nicht zu sich gesagt, er hatte es laut gesagt, schloß jäh die Lippen und führte den Satz nur stumm zu Ende: „Alles das muss entschieden werden!“ Er wollte nicht mehr im einzelnen wissen, was „alles das“ sei; „alles das“ war, was ihn beschäftigt und gequält und manchmal auch beseligt hatte, seit er seinen „Urlaub“ genommen, und in Fesseln gelegt wie einen Träumenden, in dem alles möglich ist bis auf das eine aufzustehen und sich zu bewegen (Musil, MoE, 653).

Living in a big city like Vienna with an important social position, Ulrich cannot seriously commit to no realities in the world, he would have to return to realities.

The closer Ulrich is to his home, the more familiar the environment seems to him. This familiarity inspires him with a sense of reality. He feels that there is “a peculiar sense of hovering on some threshold.” Ulrich does not wish to hold himself back and retreat into the realm of non-action, and merely observe different possibilities. Instead, he is instilled with an impulse of commitment, feeling that he has impulse which moves him to “take action.” No matter how much Ulrich respects a sense of possibility and wishes to realize it, he finally willingly acknowledges the necessity of returning to reality.<sup>173</sup> The close reading of this passage clearly shows that even Ulrich as a man with a sense of possibility who seeks for the mystic unity is attached to a world of a sense of reality. One therefore cannot argue that only the world of possibilities and the mystic unity forms the foundation. Instead, *MoE* actually embraces both perspectives of the conventional world with realities and possibilities and the metaphysical world of the mystic unity.

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<sup>173</sup> Und Ulrich fühlte, dass er nun endlich entweder für ein erreichbares Ziel wie jeder andere Leben oder mit diesen „Unmöglichkeiten“ Ernst machen müsse, und da er nun in die Umgebung seiner Wohnung gelangt war, durcheilte er die letzte Gasse mit dem sonderbaren Gefühl, dass ihm etwas nahe bevorstehe. Es war ein beflügelndes, zu einer Tat strömendes ... Gefühl (Musil, *MoE*, 653).

Ulrich felt that he would now at long last have to either live like everybody else, for some attainable goal, or come to grips with one of his impossible possibilities ... he quickened his pace through the last street with a peculiar sense of hovering on some threshold. The feeling lent him wings, it moved him to take action (Musil, *MwQ*, 712).

The final question this chapter is going to discuss is a specific method to simultaneously represent both the conventional world and the metaphysical world in *MoE*. This dissertation argues that one can represent both worlds at the same time through essayism. In chapters 2 and 3, I argue that the representation of the conventional world is in form of realities and possibilities. However, the representation of this world presents a problem. If one simply represents reality, as the case of Diotima, then one rules out possibilities and the possibility to represent the mystic unity. I also argue in chapter 4 that human language fails to represent the mystic unity which precedes the existence of human. Would essayism be able to unite reality/possibility and the mystic unity and represent both of them? In this chapter, I argue that the representation through essayism unites and represents both reality/possibility and the mystic unity. Although the ultimate mystical unity cannot be directly represented through language, essayism alludes to it and therefore enables an indirect representation of this pre-human mystic unity. Also, when representing the phenomenal world, essayism focuses on uniqueness and avoids falling into a sense of reality which firmly grasps onto an idea which negates possibilities, thus incorporates possibilities in this representation.

Before we discuss the concept of essayism, we need to differentiate it from a similar term, “taghelle Mystik.” In Musil scholarship, “taghelle Mystik” contains two elements. It either refers to reality and possibility in the phenomenal world (see Seeger), or it refers to the mystical unity in the transcendent world and the precision of language in the phenomenal world (see Shin). Seeger argues that it is both a “perspectivistic sight” which implies a sense of possibility, given

that it is an indifferent attitude towards the world, and the identification with things in reality, meaning that it implies the confirmation of and identification with a reality in the world (Seeger, 314).<sup>174</sup> However, Seeger does not see that “taghelle Mystik” connects both the transcendent world and the phenomenal world. Different from Seeger, Shin’s understanding of “taghelle Mystik” refers to the combination of the unfathomable mystic in the transcendent world and the precise language in the phenomenal world (Shin, 159).<sup>175</sup>

This dissertation supports Shin’s perspective and also understands “taghelle Mystik” in *MoE* as the combination of the representation of a mystical unity through clear and descriptive language. “Taghelle Mystik” deploys rational language from outside to describe the mystic inner life of a person from the inside. As can be seen in *MoE*, “But it was all clear in them. No vision. More of an excessive clarity” (Musil, *MoE*, 1411).<sup>176</sup> “Taghelle Mystik” contains logical and analytical rationality without phantasy and pathology. In this rationality, everything is clear without blurring. This shows the importance of using a clear form in depicting the mystical unity. However, the object of description is mystic experiences which constantly attempts to evade the description of language.

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<sup>174</sup> German original: eine Schau in die Welt, ein rein perspektivischer Blick aus dem Fenster in den Straßenverkehr, dessen Eindrücke aber allmählich zu einer Identifikation mit den Dingen der Wirklichkeit überleiten (Seeger, 314).

<sup>175</sup> German original: taghelle Mystik, in der das ‚Unfassbare‘ des mystischen Erlebnisses mit der Taghelligkeit der Worte in Beziehung gesetzt wird (Shin, 159).

<sup>176</sup> German original: Aber es war alles klar in ihnen. Keine Vision. Eher eine übermässige Klarheit (Musil, *MoE*, 1656).



In the chapter of “Breath of a Summer Day” (Atemzüge eines Sommertags), Agathe has the experience of understanding the mystic experiences through a clear image of the garden. Agathe read mystical texts to Ulrich in the past and failed to understand its meanings.<sup>177</sup> However, in this clear, revealing light of midday, Agathe suddenly starts to make sense of this mystical language.<sup>178</sup> It is just like what she sees and feels in this garden right now: the garden is both abandoned and revived; she feels one thing after the other although there should be no existence of the time; she feels her brother next to her when there seems to be no room for it. Clear and meaningful language which captures these contradictions is suddenly sufficed to describe nightly mystic experiences and clarifies every piece in those mystic experiences.<sup>179</sup> Two conflicting entities: the rational clearness of thoughts Agathe feels in the garden and reflections as well as non-rational shimmering feelings and intuition Agathe read in texts from the past are listed next to each other. “Taghelle Mystik” is exactly the concept which combines these contrasting aspects and make them become one unity in a clear summer day.

The problem of “taghelle Mystik” is that when one tries to grasp the mystic world through language, one subsumes the metaphysical world under the phenomenal world. Language

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<sup>177</sup> German original: Ich habe alle meine Vermögen überstiegen, bis an die dunkle Kraft! ... Also klang in ihr die Klage der Mystikerwieder, in deren Herz Gott so tief eingedrungen ist wie ein Dorn, den keine Fingerspitzen fassen können. Viele solche selige Klagen hatte sie Ulrich damals vorgelesen (Musil, MoE, 1233).

<sup>178</sup> German original: Vielleicht war die Wiedergabe jetzt nicht genau, das Gedächtnis verfährt etwas befehlshaberisch mit dem, was es zu hören wünscht, aber sie begriff, was gemeint war (Musil, MoE, 1233).

<sup>179</sup> German original: Wie in diesem Augenblick des Blütenzugs hatte der Garten also schon einmal geheimnisvoll verlassen und belebt ausgesehen...obwohl es doch die Zeit nicht mehr geben sollte, eins *nach* dem andern das empfand; und während ihr Bruder, damit sie bei diesem Traum nicht Angst leide, *neben* ihr war, obwohl es auch keinen Raum mehr zu geben schien: schien die Welt, unerachtet dieser Widersprüche, in allen Stücken erfüllt von Verklärung zu sein (Musil, MoE, 1233).

belongs to the phenomenal world. Using language to describe the metaphysical world assumes that elements in the phenomenal world sufficiently represents the mystic unity. In other words, the metaphysical world could be fully reduced to the phenomenal world. The phenomenal world would contain the metaphysical world. However, as was argued in the last chapter, language fails to capture the mystical unity, given that the mystic unity precedes human being and therefore also precedes the human language. Language in the phenomenal world is in essence insufficient to represent the mystical world. This failure of language can be seen in Ulrich and Agathe's retreat from their secluded unity. As pointed out by Shin, the siblings initially attempt to approach the mystic unity in their created primitive experiences in a secluded realm through their private discussions, namely language. However, this attempt fails because both of them retreat from this secluded world and take part in common life while interacting with people there (Shin, 161). The failure of the siblings' pursuit of "der andere Zustand" shows that an attempt to grasp the mystic unity through language as described in "taghelle Mystik" fails.

Most Musil scholars understand essayism as similar to "taghelle Mystik" which concerns the precision of language and the mystical unity. For Shin, essayism is on the one hand "die Utopie des Essayismus," which is the attempt to find a totalizing solution which opens up the closed ideology (Shin, 126).<sup>180</sup> This interpretation understands essayism as the absolute unity. On the other hand, there is an intersection between "die Utopie des exakten Lebens" and essayism

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<sup>180</sup> Essayism is „Versuch einer totaleren Lösung,“ in that on the one hand, through essayism, "die geschlossene Ideologie" is "durch eine offene zu ersetzen" (Shin, 126). This is called "die Utopie des Essayismus."

(Shin, 121, 129),<sup>181</sup> meaning that essayism is also connected with the precise description of life. Similarly, Pieper argues that essayism can be separated into “inductive essayism” and “performative essayism.” Whereas “inductive essayism” focuses on exactness and rationality (Pieper, 27),<sup>182</sup> “performative essayism” deals with a world of openness and unrestricted possibilities (Pieper, 28).<sup>183</sup>

This dissertation argues that different from “taghelle Mystik” which aims at capturing the transcendent world through the precision of language in the phenomenal world, essayism tries to equally represent both worlds without reducing one to the other. Also, different from other scholars who understand essayism as the combination of exactness of language and the mystic world, this dissertation argues that essayism combines the phenomenal and the noumenal world.

On the one hand, essayism represents a decisive thought just like a value system represented by reality. Musil’s narrator defines essayism as “the unique and unalterable form assumed by a man’s inner life in a decisive thought (Musil, MwQ, 273).<sup>184</sup> This quote shows that although one can represent different perspectives in many attempts, an essay makes a decision and only

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<sup>181</sup> German original: In diesem bewussten Utopismus kann man einen Schnittpunkt zwischen dem Essayismus und der Utopie des exakten Lebens feststellen (Shin, 129).

<sup>182</sup> According to Pieper, „induktiver Essayismus“ of Ulrich “weist zwei Komponenten auf: die allein das Rationale favorisierende Exaktheit --- insbesondere die der Mathematik – und die Exaktheit, die Mystik und Liebe einbezieht“ (Pieper, 27).

<sup>183</sup> For Pieper, “performativer Essayismus” is “als einzig mögliche, als reale Daseinsform jedoch unmögliche Einstellung zum Leben... Offenheit, Unabschließbarkeit der Reflexion und unbegrenzte Möglichkeiten” (Pieper, 28).

<sup>184</sup> German original: die einmalige und unabänderliche Gestalt, die das innere Leben eines Menschen in einem entscheidenden Gedanken annimmt (Musil, MoE, 253).

picks out one unique representation of “a man’s inner life.” Therefore, an essay is a non-repeatable product which is unique and unalterable. This uniqueness is comparable to a unique version of reality represented by a certain figure, such as Diotima. The person grasps a thought which reflects one’s inner life and makes it become a decisive thought. This definition of essayism clearly pursues the grasping of a version of reality in the phenomenal world.

The specialty of essayism in representing the phenomenal world is that it does not fall back into a sense of reality with commitment to an unchanging idea and with the failure of seeing limitation of this idea. Instead, while deciding for a reality in a phenomenal world, essayism captures unique and transient individual decisions of different realities at specific moments. As can be seen in Musil scholarship, Hassler-Rütti argues that an essay is to focus on the provisional and the transient (Hassler-Rütti, 67), and it is the snapshot of the individual spiritual and psychological process (Hassler-Rütti, 72).<sup>185</sup> Pieper also sees this representation of the phenomenal world through essayism as the connection of different snapshots, particular solutions at renouncement of generality” (Pieper, 23).<sup>186</sup> Both arguments clearly show that rather than consistency, a reality represented in essayism features contingency. Therefore, the composition of the created reality is different according to different individuals at different times. This uniqueness of reality enables essayism to represent the phenomenal world free of a sense of reality.

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<sup>185</sup> German original: manifest Vorläufiges, künstlich Hergestelltes vorübergehend. ... Momentaufnahme des individuell geistigen und psychophysischen Prozesses, der sprachlich ... fixiert und damit realisiert werden kann.

<sup>186</sup> German original: die Verknüpfung von Momentaufnahmen, von partikularen Lösungen, der Versuchscharakter und der Verzicht auf Allgemeingültigkeit.

On the other hand, an essay depicts different perspectives of a certain object but leaves an undescriptive opening connecting with the world of unknown. This characteristic favors the description of possibility and the mystic unity.

An essay, in the sequence of its paragraphs, explores a thing from many sides without wholly encompassing it – for a thing wholly encompassed suddenly loses its scope and melts down to a concept. (Musil, MwQ, 270)<sup>187</sup>

A widely analyzed perspective in research emphasizes that an essay uses “the sequence of its paragraphs” to explore a thing “from many sides,” meaning that an essay takes various perspectives into consideration. It does not stick to only one discourse which is confined within the limitation of reality. Instead, it allows and appeals for different possibilities to engage. As argued by Pieper, Musil seriously corresponds with the Nietzschean basic idea of perspectivism (Pieper, 46).<sup>188</sup>

In addition, an essay always has an opening to the undescriptive. If a person defines a “thing wholly encompassed,” the thing “suddenly loses its scope” and “melts down to” certain concepts as different realities. For example, the Parallel Campaign seeks a great and encompassing idea which represents the Austrian national spirit. Despite constant effort of the

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<sup>187</sup> Ungefähr wie ein Essay in der Folge seiner Abschnitte ein Ding von vielen Seiten nimmt, ohne es ganz zu erfassen, -- denn ein ganz erfasstes Ding verliert mit einem Male seinen Umfang und schmilzt zu einem Begriff ein (Musil, MoE, 250).

<sup>188</sup> German original: “gravierende Übereinstimmungen mit Grundgedanken“ of Nietzsche, especially with that of Nietzsche’s “Perspektivismus“ (Pieper, 46). „In den die Reflexionen der Hauptfigur leitenden Begriffen des Möglichkeitssinns und des Essayismus wird der Perspektivismus Nietzsches im Roman jedoch auch theoretisch erörtert“ (Pieper, 49).

committee, people still fail to find it, because if an idea is consolidated, then this idea becomes a concrete reality which could exclude some more brilliant ideas. Only when this idea is not established, then there could still be the possibility to make it better. This means that the description of one object has to be insufficient and has to contain uncertainty. There has to be an element which remains unspeakable. This is similar to Pieper's analysis in which he argues that essayism is an unfinished and in principle unclosable movement of reflection (Pieper, 25).<sup>189</sup>

Whereas Pieper's sees the unfinished "movement of reflection" as seeking for new possibilities (Pieper, 25),<sup>190</sup> I argue that this undescriptive and unspeakable part bridges the world of reality with the world of the mystic unity. In the world of reality, the committee has the task to find a great idea to represent the Austrian nation. In the world of the mystic unity, there is nothing which can be established. Because the great idea being searched for in a world of reality can never be established, this unestablished idea thus becomes a representation of the world of the mystic unity. Without having to directly represent the absolute unity, *MoE* points to the belief that there is always an undefinable element in the description of a thing, which is connected to the mystic unity. Therefore, this second definition of essayism also alludes to the undescriptive world of the oneness. By alluding to the indescribable mystic rather than directly using

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<sup>189</sup> German original: "eine unabgeschlossene, prinzipiell unabschließbare Reflexionsbewegung, in der er sich selbst als eine neben anderen Möglichkeiten hinterfragt" (Pieper, 25).

<sup>190</sup> See the previous quote.

language to represent it as in “taghelle Mystik,” essayism solves the problem of the insufficiency of language and finds a way to reflect the mystic unity.

The description of Ulrich’s decorating his house<sup>191</sup> can be a good example for essayism. As we have analyzed, an essay has three different characteristics: first, according to its first definition, it does not represent generality, but is unique and decisive (avoiding sense of reality). Second, as can be seen in the second definition, essayism explores a thing from many sides (sense of possibility). Third, essayism cannot be wholly encompassing (mystic unity).

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<sup>191</sup> Original text in English and German:

He was free to follow any principle, from the stylistically pure to total recklessness, free to choose any style from the Assyrians to cubism. What should he choose? Modern man is born in a hospital and dies in a hospital, so he should make his home like a clinic. So claimed a leading architect of the moment; and another reformer of interior decoration advocated movable partitions in homes instead of fixed walls so that people would learn to trust their housemates instead of shutting themselves off from one another. ... Luckily for Ulrich, the little *château* already had three styles superimposed on one another, setting limits on what he could do to meet all these new demands. ... and began to design his future furniture himself. But no sooner had he come up with an impressively massive form than it occurred to him that something spare, and strictly functional, could just as easily be put in its place; and when he had sketched a form of reinforced concrete that looked emaciated by its own strength, he was reminded of the thin, vernal lines of a thirteen-year-old girl’s body and drifted off into a reverie instead of making up his mind (Musil, MwQ, 15).

Von der stilreichen Rekonstruktion bis zur vollkommenen Rücksichtslosigkeit standen ihm dafür alle Grundsätze zur Verfügung, und ebenso boten sich seinem Geist alle Stile, von den Assyrern bis zum Kubismus an. Was sollte er wählen? Der moderne Mensch wird in der Klinik geboren und stirbt in der Klinik: also soll er auch wie in einer Klinik wohnen! – Diese Forderung hatte soeben ein führender Baukünstler aufgestellt, und ein anderer Reform der Inneneinrichtung verlangte verschiebbare Wände der Wohnungen, mit der Begründung, dass der Mensch dem Menschen zusammenlebend vertrauen lernen müsse und nicht sich separatistisch abschließen dürfe. ... Zu Ulrichs Glück besaß das Schloßhäuschen, so wie er es vorfand, bereits drei Stile übereinander, so dass man wirklich nicht alles damit vornehmen konnte, was verlangt wurde ... begann seine zukünftigen Möbel eigenhändig zu entwerfen. Aber wenn er sich soeben eine wuchtige Eindrucksform ausgedacht hatte, fiel ihm ein, dass man an ihre Stelle doch ebensogut eine technisch-schmalkräftige Zweckform setzen könnte, und wenn er eine von Kraft ausgeehrte, Eisenbetonform entwarf, erinnerte er sich an die mährhaft mageren Formen eines dreizehnjährigen Mädchens und begann zu träumen, statt sich zu entschließen (Musil, MoE, 19-20).

First, if one takes a look at Ulrich's house, one can see that the whole process does not follow any existing plan but is rather an aggregate of personal arbitrary choices. The choice of "an impressively massive form," of "something spare, and strictly functional" form, of "a form of reinforced concrete," of "the thin, vernal lines of a thirteen-year-old girl's body" are just "decisive" judgements which reflect Ulrich's "inner" thought at the moment. Ulrich realizes each of his choices in his castle in an individual way. Adding up all these different decisions, Ulrich creates a "unique and unalterable form" of his castle. Only Ulrich imprints his "inner life" into this form. The choice of different styles in the process of decorating the house is an individual, "unique and unalterable form" for Ulrich. We cannot use any general concepts such as "truth," "error," "false," "wise" and "unwise" to evaluate this house. Ulrich's castle does not fit in any of these categories. It is only a unique being which represents Ulrich's individuality which should not be judged. This is the version of reality essayism represents.

This reality represented by essayism does not fall into the devotion to an unchanging value system which fails to see its limitation. The reason is that this representation of reality is not an ideology which one commits to, but a composition of different decisions which change according to different individuals from time to time. For a sense of reality, as exemplified in the case of Diotima, although she once struggled between the reality of desire and the reality of marriage/self-esteem, Diotima has always been subsuming her individual identity under the idea of self-esteem. In this case, the belief in self-importance confines her within this single reality. Instead, in Ulrich's reality, his individuality stands above an established idea. He makes an individual decision for a unique composition of different styles: whether "an impressively



massive form,” or “something spare, and strictly functional” form, or “a form of reinforced concrete,” or “the thin, vernal lines of a thirteen-year-old girl’s body” and to what extent this element should be incorporated. In addition, Ulrich’s decisions also change with time. Ulrich might want “an impressively massive form” this time and “a form of reinforced concrete” next time. Whereas a single value system dominates Diotima, Ulrich dominates different values. This aspect of individuality and uniqueness introduces different changes and possibilities into the discourse of the stagnated sense of reality and combines a sense of reality and a sense of possibility. As a result, in the representation of essayism, reality which is individual does not become an ideology and thus does not restrict people.

Further, in decorating the house, Ulrich tries out many different styles. Ulrich is “free to follow any principle” and is open to all decorating possibilities ranging from “the stylistically pure to total recklessness,” and “from the Assyrians to cubism.” A “leading architect of the moment” argues for the importance of a hospital for a modern man, so that Ulrich “make his home like a clinic.” “Another reformer of interior decoration” advocates “movable partitions in homes instead of fixed walls” so that “people would learn to trust their housemates instead of shutting themselves off from one another.” Ulrich does not prefer any of the suggested realities and has “three styles superimposed on one another” instead. And when one standard might strive for dominance and interfere with the boundary of other standards, Ulrich tries to “set limits on” it, so that “he could do to meet all these new demands.” As a result, Ulrich’s castle contains all three styles. Not a single one has the dominance, and they “superimpose on one another”

without having one overriding the other. Different decorating styles is an example that essayism represents different possibilities.

Meanwhile, there is always an opening and undecisive moment which stops Ulrich from finishing his project. As Ulrich “design[s] his future furniture himself,” when he was trying to carry out the reality of “an impressively massive form,” he sees the justification of something “sparse, and strictly functional.” When Ulrich “sketched a form of reinforced concrete,” “the thin, vernal lines of a thirteen-year-old girl’s body” reminded him of the softness and tenacity which arouses his imagination. Ulrich believes that the new form “could just as easily be,” meaning that both possible forms are equally satisfying. At this point, Ulrich stops to carry on with this project and he “drifted off into a reverie.” He gives up making up his mind and leaves it open. Ulrich wishes not to have an encompassing and complete project, but rather leave room for further contemplation. This incompleteness and undecidedness correlate with nothingness in the mystic unity.

#### SUMMARY

Whereas chapter 2 and 3 argue that *MoE* discusses the phenomenal world through the perspective of a sense of reality and a sense of possibility, chapter 4 discusses the noumenal world as a mystic unity in “der andere Zustand.” This chapter summarizes the previous three chapters and argues that both the phenomenal world and the noumenal world are equally significant in *MoE*. On the one hand, in describing the phenomenal world, *MoE* challenges a kind of human-designed order which would represent the dominating justification of all values.

This domination could lead to the danger of a hegemony of one single value and suppresses the justification of different perspectives. Therefore, *MoE* highlights individuality and differences in values. *MoE* calls for respect for every single phenomenon under every single condition. The novel supports a plurality of ideas and an exuberance of perspectives. On the other hand, *MoE* also explores the possibility of a united basis for all values in “der andere Zustand” in a mystical unity. *MoE* acknowledges that this attempt fails. Human perception cannot make sense of this ultimate unity of everything, because the existence of human awareness already presumes a separation of the world into human and non-human. Nevertheless, *MoE* constantly attempts to approach this unity through hermaphrodite love in “der andere Zustand.”

The representation of both worlds is in the form of essayism. While the decisiveness of essayism represents the phenomenal world, the opening of essayism refers to the noumenal world. In addition, the representation of essayism avoids the limitation of a sense of reality and the inefficiency of language. While representing the phenomenal world, essayism focuses on individuality and uniqueness of opinions which overcomes the belief in a generalized value. While representing the noumenal world, essayism avoids using language to directly describe the mystic unity and only indirectly confirms its existence.

Similar attempt to synthesize both the phenomenal and the metaphysical worlds can be seen in Zhang Taiyan’s “Qiwulunshi” as well. Zhang uses the concept of “Walking Two Paths (*lianghang*, 兩行)” to capture this relationship and argues that the sage knows how to value both worlds at the same time. Like Musil’s essayism, Zhang develops the term of “Heavenly Transitions”

(*tianni*, 天倪) to describe both the phenomenal and the metaphysical worlds. While representing the phenomenal world, Zhang also avoids falling back to a grasping and seeks an understanding and respect for different opinions.

After analyzing the structure of worldview in Musil's *MoE*, in the next part of the dissertation, I will move on to look at the piece of work, Zhang Taiyan's "Qiwulunshi," which was written almost simultaneously with *MoE*. I try to argue that "Qiwulunshi" also has a dual understanding of the world, the world of the conventional truth and the world of the ultimate truth, corresponding with the phenomenal world and the noumenal world in *MoE* in the European context. In parallel, I will also devote two chapters, chapters 6 and 7, to analyzing Zhang's world of the conventional truth, and chapter 8 to analyzing Zhang's world of the ultimate truth. In chapter 9, I will also discuss the relationship between the world of the conventional truth and the world of the ultimate truth in Zhang's text and the representation of both of them. After closely examining Zhang's text, I hope to find similar and different patterns between "Qiwulunshi" and *MoE*. I hope this exploration will bring more insight into the understanding of both authors from a new perspective.

## Part II Zhang Taiyan's "Qiwulunshi"

In Part I, I analyze Robert Musil's novel *MoE*. I argue that *MoE* represents a dual worldview. *MoE* takes both the phenomenal world and the noumenal world into consideration and presents dual understanding of the world structure. It therefore connects the discussion about the metaphysics and the debate about perspectivism in the conventional world. The question this part tries to answer is, what is it like in Zhang Taiyan's "Qiwulunshi"? Is there also a discourse which features a dual perspective towards the structure of the world? To answer these questions, I am going to conduct a close analysis of this text. This text is based on the traditional Yogācāra Buddhism in the Chinese tradition and Zhuangzi in Chinese philosophical Daoism. It also establishes "the two ways" to perceive the world, from the perspective of the conventional world and the perspective of the ultimate world.

In the upcoming four chapters in this part, I am also going to explore Zhang's discussions about the conventional world and the ultimate world one by one. Chapters 6 and 7 are devoted to the discussion about Zhang's conventional world using the Buddhist concept of "grasping"<sup>192</sup> and the "treating different types of graspings equally." In chapter 8, I am going to further analyze Zhang's transcendent world and try to understand the process to achieve the ultimate truth,

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<sup>192</sup> Grasping (*Upādāna*), also clinging, as argued by Anālayo, refers to the tendency of the mind which is to cling or grasp. When the mind grasps onto something, then "it arises in dependence on craving and leads on to becoming or existence, *bhava*." In other words, in Buddhism, grasping of the mind creates an inclination, which further leads to the existence of a thing. There are generally four types of grasping, "grasping at sensual pleasure, at views, at rules and observance, and at a doctrine of self (Anālayo, 5). Grasping is seen as one of the two primary sources for suffering. When a person gives up grasping, then this person achieves Nirvana. In Kawamura's translation of Gadjin M. Nagao's *Madhyamika and Yogācāra*, he use "attachment" as the translation of *upādāna*, *zhi*, 執.

the structure of the ultimate truth and the relationship between the ultimate truth and the conventional truth. In chapter 9, I am going to argue that Zhang equally values both the world of the ultimate truth and the world of the conventional truth. I also argue that the representation of Zhang's dual structure of the world is through Heavenly Transitions (*tianni*, 天倪).

Through a close analysis of Zhang's "Qiwulunshi," I find that, similar to Musil's *MoE*, Zhang also establishes a dual world view which incorporates the phenomenal and the noumenal worlds at the same time. In the phenomenal world, Zhang's "gasping" and "treating different types of graspings equally" can be read in parallel with Musil's "a sense of reality" and "a sense of possibility." In the noumenal world, Zhang's dependent arising (*yuanqi*, 緣起)<sup>193</sup> from the *tathāgatagarbha*/matrix of the thus-come-one is comparable to Musil's "mystic unity" in "der andere Zustand." This analysis shows inherent similar structures of two texts.

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<sup>193</sup> According to Charles Muller's entry in Digital Dictionary Buddhism, dependent arising can also be translated as "Conditioned genesis, dependent co-arising, interdependent arising (Skt. *pratītya-samutpāda*; Pāli *paṭicca-samuppāda*). Also written in Chinese as 緣生 and 因緣生. Everything arises from conditions; there is nothing that arises out of nothing; there is nothing that arises of itself; and things do not come into existence through the power of an external Creator. Thus, there is nothing that is self-contained, independent, or which has its own separate and independent nature. It is the condition of relationship to something else resulting in arising or production. In the meaning of causal production, all phenomena are given rise to due to the mutual relationships of countless causes (hetu: 因) and conditions (Skt. *pratyaya*: 緣) and are not independently existent. If all causes and conditions did not exist, no effects could come into existence. This is a basic Buddhist teaching common to all Buddhist sub-schools.

## Chapter 6 Grasping in the World of the Conventional Truth

### INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I am going to move to the concrete textual analysis of Zhang's "Qiwulunshi" starting from the world of the conventional truth.<sup>194</sup> The questions I am going to answer are: how does Zhang characterize the establishment of distinction in the world of the conventional truth? How is it represented? How is it connected to the world of the ultimate truth? What is the problem of this established distinction? I first define the insistence on distinctions in the world of the conventional truth through the concept of "grasping" (*zhi*, 執) in Yogācāra Buddhism. I further explain that Zhang unveils the illusory nature of grasping, arguing that it is only an illusion of the storehouse consciousness which represents a limited personal perspective. Zhang further argues that Zhuangzi believes that insistence on grasping would create oppression.<sup>195</sup>

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<sup>194</sup> In the appendixes, I introduced the background of Zhang's *qiwu* philosophy and some basic theories of Yogācāra Buddhism. First, I argue that Zhang's text of "Qiwulunshi" is embedded in the Chinese textual tradition of Yogācāra Buddhism and Zhuangzi's school of thoughts. Zhang contributes to this discourse in that he provides more comprehensive analysis and deploys Buddhism in a more active way. Second, I describe how, in Zhang's interpretation of Yogācāra Buddhism, the world of the ultimate truth contains eight consciousnesses which give birth to distinctions in the world of the conventional truth. If one destroys distinctions in the world of the conventional truth, one can regain the unity in the world of the ultimate truth.

<sup>195</sup> See: 其唯莊生，覽聖智之禍 (Zhang, *Qiwulunshi*, 3). Only Zhuangzi knew that the knowledge of sages tyrannized people through indoctrination resulted in calamity.

Given the limitation and even oppression created by grasping, in the next chapter, I will discuss how one can overcome the distinctions in the conventional world created by grasping and regain unity in the world of the conventional truth.

#### GRASPING AS ILLUSORY REPRESENTATION OF ĀLAYA CONSCIOUSNESS

Zhang tries to build on the theories of Yogācāra Buddhism to develop his own *qiwu* philosophy. Zhang starts with the world of the conventional truth (*sudi*, 俗諦, *saṃvṛti-satya*) and introduces a common phenomenon in the world of the conventional truth, grasping. In this section, I am going to summarize three aspects of grasping, its definition, its relativity and grasping as an illusory representation of the ālaya consciousness.

In Yogācāra thought, “grasping” is a clinging to aspects of the flow of empty phenomena, a clinging that in the very act of grasping, asserts the reality of the thing grasped. In Yogācāra thought, this attachment is the beginning of experiential differentiations. In Zhang’s reading, grasping can be understood as a firm belief in a certain value which rejects challenges. For example, time is regarded as a grasping. Time is regarded as an established concept and taken for granted<sup>196</sup> (Zhuangzi, 17; Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 12). “Already it is constantly coming to us day and night, this from which they are all born!” (Zhuangzi, 2020, 12). In this quote, because time “is constantly coming to us,” a person takes the concept of time for granted. Without further reflections, this person simply sticks to the idea of time and claims that time “[is] all born.”

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<sup>196</sup> Chinese original: 雖而日夜相代，莫知所始 (Zhuangzi, 17; Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 12).



Further, not only does one single person have the awareness of time, but the public also regards the term of time as a convention. The grasping of the public is called “commonality of sentient beings” (*zhongtongfenxin*, 眾同分心).” “Because we all have common nature following certain conventions (*zhongtongfen*), we all have such a concept (such as time), so that people take this as real.”<sup>197</sup> Although time is only an idea from one’s own perspective, grasping makes people insist on “time” as a universal value, take it for granted and tend to reject other alternatives.

Taking the concept of time for granted without seeing its relative essence is similar to Diotima’s commitment to her self-importance. In addition to personal grasping represented by Diotima in *MoE*, Zhang also considers the “common nature” as a public commitment towards a certain value, thus extending the concept of grasping to a broader realm.

Grasping makes one focus on one idea and reject alternative thoughts. The inertia of grasping can be characterized as the thought of *dengliu* 等流.

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<sup>197</sup> Chinese original: 但以眾同分心，悉有此相，世遂執著為實 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 12).

It is to say that the heart of *dengliu*<sup>198</sup> focuses on one thing (*xiang*, 相),<sup>199</sup> and suddenly forgets itself. It is just like someone who drowns and cannot return. ... This means one settles the mind (*dingxin*, 定心) and calms one's worries (*jinglv*, 淨慮) like the old person's will and appearance decline and his desires stop (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 12).<sup>200</sup>

In this quote, the idea of grasping is characterized as the heart of *dengliu*. We see that the heart of *dengliu* is a “focus on one thing” outside and forgets everything else, even “itself.” It is “just like someone who drowns and cannot return.” In the last stage of *dengliu*, this thought is consolidated as a belief or a value. “The heart” of awareness can be said to have “settled” in *dengliu*. This grasping does not need to experience any changing process, and it just becomes a generally accepted convention. “The thought” is therefore “peaceful” and turns into “a meditative mind.” This established thought is therefore compared to “an old person” who does not risk any challenges and changes. His/her “will and appearance decline and desires stop.”

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<sup>198</sup> Here refers to the five kinds of minds that arise in sequence when the mind is aware of the external environment (object). Namely: (1) the heart which is random and purposeless *shuaier xin* 率爾心, or *shuaierduo xin* 率爾墮心. *Shuaier* means suddenly. It is called the mind that arises in an instant when the eye-consciousness first arises from the external environment; this mind arises at will, so there is not yet distinction between good and evil. (2) the heart which searches for things in the objective world *xunqiu xin* 尋求心, that is, the desire to examine and understand the external environment, that is, to push and seek, and to generate the mind of different views. (3) the heart-mind of judging, making decisions about good and bad, *jueding xin* 決定心 which means that since the state of the object has been distinguished, it can be judged to determine good and evil. (4) the feeling of good and bad related to perceptions of the external world, *ranjing xin* 染淨心, which refers to the mind that arouses emotions such as likes and dislikes in the external environment. (5) mind of continuity of sameness, *dengliu xin* 等流心, *deng* means to wait; *liu* means to classify. It is said that since the Dharma of good and evil has been defiled and purified separately, each of them will continue according to its type; the good deeds continue to be purified, the evil deeds continue to be defiled; Among the five minds, *shuaierduo xin* is mostly a single thought, and the other the other four minds are often repeated with multiple thoughts.

<sup>199</sup> Thing/object *xiang* 相, in Yogācāra, *xiang* refers to appearance, that is, the appearance of external things before they are reflected in subjectivity. This is similar to the concept of object.

<sup>200</sup> Chinese original: 謂等流心專趣一相，忽忘自身，若溺者陷沒不還也。... 此謂定心靜慮，如老者形志衰而嗜欲息 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 12).

This thought, just like the old person, does not want to be challenged and needs to “take a rest.”

Seeing the limitation of “a sense of reality” is theorized in *MoE*, in that Diotima holds a defensive attitude towards her own version of reality and vehemently rejects Ulrich’s suggestions for changes. Similarly, Zhang’s concept of grasping also neglects other perspectives, in that it tends to “settlement” and to “take a rest.” The person thus rejects facing any challenges against the current mental state.

The idea of time is taken for granted as a solid and universal idea. However, grasping is not a universal basis, but only a relative opinion. For example, according to Zhang, time is a personal concept.

Young people feel time going slowly and people from middle aged onwards feel time going fast. For people who forget themselves, indulging in lust and play, time passes fast. People who husk rice with mortars and pestles, who drive the cart, who are diligent and who work hard, wait for the end of the day, which never comes (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 13).<sup>201</sup>

A young person has a long life before him/her, so that young people “feel that time goes slowly.” A person who passes his/her middle ages would not have as much time as a youth ahead, so they feel that “time goes fast.” People who enjoy their time “in lust, music and play” feel that “time passes fast.” For people who do hard work such as “husk[ing] rice with mortars

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<sup>201</sup> Chinese original: 童齷以往，覺時去遲，淫樂戲忘者，少選而歲逝，春輓勤苦者，待限而不盈 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 13).

and pestles,” “driv[ing] the cart,” and “work[ing] hard” do not enjoy life a lot and wish for “the end of the day which never comes,” and time seems to be longer.

Further, because time is only a relative concept for different people, the idea of long and short in time does not exist. As argued by Zhang, people use “the change of the sundial and the water clocks” to measure time.

If someone feels time go by slowly, then this person will also feel the changes in the sun, stars through the sundial and the water clock are slow. If one feels time going by quickly, then one will also feel the changes in the sun, stars through the sundial and the water clocks go quickly (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 13).<sup>202</sup>

As can be seen in this quote, for people who enjoy time, “the change of sun and water clocks” move fast. They have a shorter life. On the contrary, for people who suffer from life, “the change of sun and water clocks” move slowly. They seem to have a longer life than people who think “the change of sun and water clocks” move fast.

Moreover, Zhang argues that different creatures have different life spans. Other creatures other than human beings might have different standards for the length of time. For example, as can be seen in Zhuangzi’s other text which Zhang also cites, *Wandering Far and Unfettered* (*Xiaoyaoyou*, 逍遙遊), Zhuangzi argues that

A small consciousness cannot keep up with a vast consciousness; short duration cannot keep up with long duration. How do we know? The morning mushroom knows nothing of the noontide; the winter cicada knows nothing

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<sup>202</sup> Chinese original: 然覺時去遲者，其覺日星壺漏之變亦遲，覺時去速者，其覺日星壺漏之變亦速 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 13).

of the spring and autumn. This is what is meant by short duration. In southern Chu there is a tree called Mingling, for which five hundred years are as a single spring, and another five hundred years are as a single autumn. In ancient times there was even one massive tree whose spring and autumn were each eight thousand years long. And yet nowadays Pengzu alone has a special reputation for longevity, and everyone tries to match him. Pathetic, isn't it? (Zhuangzi, 2020, 5).<sup>203</sup>

Zhang builds on Zhuangzi's this argument and further says:

“The morning mushroom knows nothing of the noontide; the winter cicada knows nothings of the spring and autumn” (Zhuangzi, 2020, 5). [They are short-lived.] A huge toon tree of heaven and a tree called Mingling (冥靈)<sup>204</sup> live more than a hundred thousand years. How do we know those who are short-lived do not feel that time as long, and those who live long do not feel that time is short? (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 13)<sup>205</sup>

From a human perspective, we might say that the morning mushroom has the shortest time, and Mingling the longest time. However, for the morning mushroom itself, one day of life might already be too long for it. For Mingling, a thousand years might still be too short. Things who are short-lived” might still “feel that time as long,” whereas “those who live long” might “feel that time is short.”

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<sup>203</sup> Chinese original: 小知不及大知，小年不及大年。奚以知其然也？朝菌不知晦朔，蟪蛄不知春秋，此小年也。楚之南有冥靈者，以五百歲為春，五百歲為秋：上古有大椿者，以八千歲為春，八千歲為秋。而彭祖乃今以久特聞，眾人匹之，不亦悲乎！” (Zhuangzi, 4-5).

<sup>204</sup> Original *Zhuangzi's* text: “In southern Chu there is a tree called Mingling, for which five hundred years are as a single spring, and another five hundred years are as a single autumn. In ancient times there was even one massive tree whose spring and autumn were each eight thousand years long. (Wandering Far and Unfettered, *Xiaoyaoyou*, 逍遙遊)” (Zhuangzi, 2020, 4). In another interpretation, Mingling can be understood as a Spiritual Turtle living in the sea of the underground. See Chen Guying 陳鼓應's *Zhuangzi Jinzhu Jinyi*, 莊子今註今譯 (Zhuangzi, 1983, 10)

<sup>205</sup> Chinese original: 朝菌不知晦朔，蟪蛄不知春秋，而螟蛉大椿，壽逾千百，庸知小年者不自覺其長，大年者不自覺其短乎 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 13).

Although in this particular argument about time, Zhang uses the text from “Wandering Far and Unfettered” (Xiaoyaoyou, 逍遙遊), rather than “Equalizing Assessments of Things” (Qiwulun, 齊物論). However, if we look at the end of the section of the “Qiwulun,”

Joy and anger, sorrow and happiness, plans and regrets, transformations and stagnations, unguarded abandonment and deliberate posturing – music flowing out of hollows, mushrooms of billowing steam! Day and night they alternate before our eyes, yet no one knows whence they sprout (Zhuangzi, Ziporyn, 12).<sup>206</sup>

Zhang’s long discussion about time is building off this passage.

Similarly, Zhang argues that “when a person in his prime flexes his or her finger, it takes 64 moments (*chana*, 刹那, *kṣaṇa*, very short instant)” (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 13).<sup>207</sup> Although it is not clear how long a *chana* actually is, we might already infer that *chana* is a short period of time, an instant. A person might have a short life, but this person can take each instant seriously. As long as this person “takes the time of a sixty-four instants (*tanzhi*, 彈指) and does not forget any instant and moment of it (*haofen*, 毫分),” then we can already say that a short-lived person also “has a long life.” In contradiction, if a long-lived person does not treasure each moment and takes life for granted, this person might have a rather “short life” and “die young (*shang*, 殤)” (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 16).<sup>208</sup>

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<sup>206</sup> Chinese original: 喜怒哀樂，慮嘆變蜚，姚佚啟態一樂出虛，蒸成菌。日夜相代乎前而莫知其所萌。已乎，已乎！旦暮得此，其所由以生乎！(Zhuangzi, 12).

<sup>207</sup> Chinese original: 壯士彈指頃，經六十四刹那 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 13).

<sup>208</sup> Zhang’s this argument again derives from Zhuangzi’s “Qiwulun.” In “Qiwulun,” Zhuangzi argues that 夫天下莫大于秋豪之末，而太山為小；莫壽乎殤子，而彭祖為夭 (Zhuangzi, 27). Nothing in the world is larger than the tip

As we can see from above, the length of time is only personal and there is no universal standard for the concept of time. For Zhang, “time is created by the heart-mind and slowness or fastness also changes depending on the changes in the heart-mind” (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 13).<sup>209</sup>

Time changes following the heart-mind, and this is because the mental realm of person A and B are different. From this one can know that time is each person’s private thing and not the collective’s public thing. (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 12).<sup>210</sup>

Zhang argues that different people have different “mental realms” and they stay in their various realms, having different realities. Therefore, they would also have different perceptions of time. Time is “a private thing,” but not a public thing. Therefore, grasping on the concept of time and taking it as a universally valid concept is a huge misunderstanding.

Zhang further clarifies the problem of grasping from the perspective of Yogācāra Buddhism.

“Grasping” is to take illusion in the conventional world as the absolute truth of ālaya consciousness in the ultimate truth (*zhendi*, 真諦, *paramārtha-satya*). Grasping is an important concept in Yogācāra Buddhism. According to Hui ren, in Yogācāra Buddhism,

The most obvious characteristic of Consciousness is its ability of cognitive discrimination (*jianfen*, 見分), and the discrimination which changes things to images and which constructs realms (*xiangfen*, 相分). However, the object which is derived out of one’s heart-mind is confusing, because it shows very strong substantiality/reality, as if in an objective realm that stood separate

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of a hair in autumn, and Mt. Tai is small. No one lives longer than a dead child, and old Pengzu died and early death (Zhuangzi, Ziporyn, 17).

<sup>209</sup> Chinese original: 時由心造，其舒促亦由心變也 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 13).

<sup>210</sup> Chinese original: 時由心變，甲乙二心界有別故。由此可知，時為人人之私器，非眾人之公器 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 12).

from consciousness. Therefore, common people stubbornly insist/grasp that object which is shown and constructed through the heart-mind (*xiangfen*) is objective existence independent from consciousness (outer realm). At the same time, they take the insistence/grasping on the self as the subject which is separate from and opposite to the object (the real self). As a result, the originally unified dichotomic insistence/grasping becomes the opposite dichotomy. Self and existence [in an ontological sense] therefore separate from each other, and the dualistic view or the grasping of self and the grasping of dharmas is thereby produced. These illusionary and inverted views are content of cognition, which does not correspond with the real image (the heart-mind). Therefore, they belong to confusions of the cognitive faculty and the understanding/fabricated nature (*bianji suozhi*, 遍計所執)<sup>211</sup> and actually do not objectively exist (My own translation).<sup>212</sup>

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<sup>211</sup> *Bianji suozhi* refers to one of the three natures in Yogācāra Buddhism. The three natures of Yogācāra Buddhism are self-nature that depends on others *yitaqixing* 依他起性, understanding grasps as self-nature/confusions of the cognitive faculty and the understanding/fabricated nature *bianji suozhi xing* 遍計所執性, and complete self-nature/the self-nature of complete truth *yuanchengshixing* 圓成實性. According to Huiren,

依他起性指具有虛妄分別能力的認識主體，即第七，六二識，以及它們各自的間接認識對象，即第八識及五塵等，它們因緣而生，具有現實的作用與存在性。*Yitaqixing* refers to the subject of cognition with the ability to distinguish between true and false, namely the seventh and sixth consciousnesses (the seventh consciousness is manas consciousness, the consciousness of the self; and the sixth consciousness is the root of the ability to think), and their respective indirect cognition objects, namely the eight consciousnesses and the objects, etc. They are born due to conditions and have real functions and existence. 遍計所執性指第七，六二識（能遍計）對於存在（八識，五塵等）虛妄分別而產生的各種錯誤觀念，如自我與存在絕對同一，自我與存在二元對立等，它們由名言概念構成，與實相不符，沒有任何現實存在性。*Bianji suozhi xing* refers to the seventh and sixth consciousnesses (being able to calculate all kinds of misconceptions) arising from the false distinction of existence (eight consciousnesses and objects, etc.). For example, self and existence are absolutely identical, self and existence are dualistic etc. They consist of the notion of names, words and concepts, which do not correspond to reality and have no actual existence. 圓成實性指存在（依他起性）的真如實性，這是要斷除第七，六識上的我法二執（遍計所執性）後才能認識到的。*Yuanchengshi xing* refers to the true nature of existence which breaks with *yitaqixing*. It means that one should break the grasping of self and grasping of dharmas in the seventh and sixth consciousnesses which breaks with *bianji suozhi xing*. It can be then realized afterwards.

<sup>212</sup> Chinese original: 識最顯著的特徵就是具有認識分別的能力（見分），而分別會變現，建構境相（相分），而此自心變現的相分很具迷惑性，因為它呈現出很強的實在性，似乎就是獨立於識外的客觀境相，因而凡夫將此自心顯現、建構的對象（相分），頑固地執著為是脫離識的客觀存在（外境）。同時相應地將自我執著為與對象對立分離的主體（實我），這樣就將原本一體的二分執著為對立的二分，自我與存在由此分裂，我、法二執或二元論觀由此產生，這些虛妄顛倒的觀念是認識的內容，因與實相不符，屬於遍計所執性，客觀上並不存在 (Huiren, 233).



That is, because “the object which is derived out of one’s heart-mind” shows “very strong substantiality/reality,” “common people stubbornly insist/grasp that object” and see it as an “objective existence independent from consciousness.” In Yogācāra thought, people would see “the self” and “object” as opposing concepts and do not see the bigger unity behind them. (“The originally unified dichotomic insistence/grasping becomes the opposite dichotomy”). As a result, people are confined within this separated worldview. However, without seeing the bigger unity and the real heart behind the separation of *xiangfen* and *jianfen*, grasping onto the dichotomy of subject and object are “illusionary and inverted views.” In Yogācāra Buddhism, they belong to “confusions of the cognitive faculty and understanding/fabricated nature (*bianji suozhi*) and actually do not exist.” Huiyen’s argument further shows that in Yogācāra Buddhism, the nature of grasping is only “illusory and inverted views” which are “confusions” that “actually do not exist.” However, because of the inertia and blind belief of grasping, people “stubbornly insist/grasp that object” and take the illusory (grasping of self and object) as the “existence (in an ontological sense).”

Zhang connects his concept of “grasping” with Yogācāra Buddhism through two steps. First, Zhang establishes that “grasping” takes the illusory as the real substance. Second, Zhang establishes the real substance as the “ālaya consciousness.” In the first place, Zhang argues that grasping on objects, subjects and rules in the conventional world is to take the illusory as the real. For Zhang, objects in the conventional world such as “heaven and earth” “originally have no substance.” Also, “the myriad things do not arise.”

To argue in a broader sense, heaven and earth originally have no substance and the myriad things do not arise. If one thinks of them from the perspective of grasping the dharmas (*fazhi*, 法執, *dharma-grāha*), then the world (*qiankun*, 乾坤) does not perish. If one thinks from the perspective of grasping the self (*wozhi*, 我執, *ātma-grāha*), things flow into different forms. Both of these are errors of the intentional faculty's pervasive discriminations (which wrongly takes all myriad things as substance) (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 22).<sup>213</sup>

The world/the dharmas is a product of the ālaya consciousness, and it is not the absolute existence. However, if one grasps onto dharmas, one would still wrongly believe that the illusory representation can be “constant and does not perish.” Also, self is also a production of the ālaya consciousness. However, if one grasps onto the self, one will only perceive things flowing into different forms, without seeing the absolute existence behind all different things. Therefore, one only sees different representations of things without the core. As a result, the grasping of the dharma and the self are both “confusions of the cognitive faculty and the understanding/fabricated nature” (*bianji suozi*, 遍計所執) which wrongly takes “all myriad things” without substance as with “substance.” Both Zhang and Yogācāra Buddhism (in Huiyen's explanation) believe that grasping is sticking onto the illusory as the real substance. This is the first step in which Zhang establishes “grasping” in “Qiwu” philosophy in relationship to Yogācāra Buddhism.

Zhang further connects his “grasping” with Yogācāra Buddhism by establishing the “substance” as the ālaya consciousness. In Yogācāra Buddhism, graspings of objects/self are illusory

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<sup>213</sup> Chinese original: 廣輪則天地本無體，萬物皆不生，由法執而計之，則乾坤不毀，由我執而計之，故品物流形，此皆意根徧計之妄也 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 22).

phenomena of the ālaya consciousness, and the real entity lies in the storehouse/ālaya consciousness.

The Numinous Platform<sup>214</sup> holds things and ādāna consciousness (*atuona shi*, 阿陀那識, *ādāna-vijñāna*) holds all different seeds. We cannot know what it holds, because the most refined things cannot be known. ... Sentient beings grasp that “which cannot be grasped” as an internal self and this is a confused judgment. One who claims he grasps the “true reality” of consciousness-only/Yogācāra only grasps onto (attachment to) dharmas (*fazhi*, 法執) (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 58).<sup>215</sup>

Zhang Taiyan interprets Zhuangzi’s Numinous Platform as the ādāna consciousness/ālaya consciousness<sup>216</sup> in the ultimate world. Zhang argues that sentient beings in the conventional world make a mistake in that they try to grasp ‘which cannot be grasped,’ (ādāna

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<sup>214</sup> Here I quote Zhuangzi’s text which explains what Luminous Platform is:

學者，學其所不能學也？行者，行其所不能行也？辯者，辯其所不能辯也？知止乎其所不能知，至矣！若有不即是者，天鈞敗之。備物將以形，藏不虞以生心，敬中以達彼。若是而萬惡至者，皆天也，而非人也，不足以滑成，不可內于靈台。靈台者有持，而不知其所持而不可持者也。(莊子·雜篇·庚桑楚)

His learning is to learn what cannot be learned. His practice is to practice what cannot be practiced. What his arguments demonstrate is what admits of no argument. When his understanding stops at and rests on what it does not understand, his knowing on what it does not know, it has reached its perfection. If there is anything in him that deviates from This, it is winnowed away in [the turning of] Heaven the Potter’s Wheel. Let your body be moved only by the totality of things. Let your mind spring to life from its rootedness in the unthinking parts of yourself. Let your respect for what is most central within you extend through to reach others. Being thus, if evils still beset you, it is the doing of Heaven, not of man. Hence it will not be sufficient to undermine your completeness, it will not be able to gain entrance to your Numinous Platform. The Numinous Platform is that which is maintained without every knowing what is maintaining it and can never be deliberately maintained (Zhuangzi, Ziporyn, 188-189).

<sup>215</sup> Chinese original: 夫靈台者有持者，阿陀那識持一切種子也 ... 不可持者有情執此為自內我，即是妄計，若執唯識真實有者，亦是法執也 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 58).

<sup>216</sup> According to Wu Ruihan’s reading, Zhang equates Numinous Platform (*lingtai*, 靈台) with ālaya consciousness (Wu Ruihan, 50). According to Wu Ruihan, ādāna consciousness shares the same name with ālaya consciousness as the eighth consciousness. According to *Cheng weishi lun* (成唯識論), “第八識…或名阿陀那。持執種子及諸色根令不壞故…或名阿賴耶。攝藏一切雜染品法令不失故” (*Xuanzang*, 玄奘, *Cheng weishi lun*, 188). (The eighth consciousness ... it could either be called ādāna. It holds seeds and root of materials, preventing them from going bad. ... it could also be called ālaya. It governs and stores all dharmas of impurities and do not lose them) (Wu Ruihan, 51). Therefore, ālaya consciousness describes the nature of the eighth consciousness as the storage of seeds; ādāna consciousness describes the function of the eighth consciousness as holding seeds.

consciousness) thinking that they can “grasp the ‘true reality’ of consciousness-only/ Yogācāra.” (normal grasping) They think they can grasp existence of ādāna consciousness in the ultimate world, but they only grasp the concept of “an internal self,” a subject in the conventional world, also as the grasp of (attachment to) dharmas (*fazhi*, 法執). Grasping onto subjects and dharma is not the essence of ādāna consciousness/ālaya consciousness. Dharmas has two different meanings. It either refers to the underlying constitutes of the universe. All other things are derived out of it. Or, it refers to attachment to various rules which does not contain an ontological meaning. Even when one understands dharma as constitutes of the universe, the human conceptualization is still a result of ādāna consciousness/ālaya consciousness in the conventional world, but not the ādāna consciousness/ālaya consciousness itself in the ultimate world. In short, Zhang’s grasping can be seen as an illusory interpretation of the ālaya consciousness in a Buddhist term. Illusory nature of “grasping” is especially highlighted in “Qiwulunshi.” *MoE* does not clearly point out Diotima’s “sense of reality” as illusory. However, by contrasting it with Ulrich’s opinions which equally make sense, *MoE* also implies that Diotima’s “sense of reality” is only a limited personal view which is lack of a universalized basis.

Zhang further exemplifies this theory through the concept of time. Time is the grasping of an illusory idea created by heart/ālaya consciousness.

So that when the heart arises, then there is the separation in time; when the heart calms down again, then there is no separation in time. For example,

when one is sleeping without dreams, even is five periods of the night past,<sup>217</sup>  
it is no different from an instant (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 12).<sup>218</sup>

When a person is awake, then “the heart arises.” This person is therefore aware of “separation in time.” When this person “sleep[s] without dreams,” as a result, there would be no awareness of the “separation in time.” Even though there is the concept of time “five Gengs” during “a night,” a person “in deep sleep” would have no awareness of it. Zhang argues that “Sometimes the sixth consciousness does not rise, but the position in which arises (storehouse consciousness) revolves without stop” (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 12).<sup>219</sup> This means that the ālaya consciousness continuously gives birth to everything in the world without a stop.<sup>220</sup> “Awareness (the sixth consciousness),” as a result of ālaya consciousness, “sometimes does not rise” (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 12). For a human being, awareness of time only arises when “the heart arises,” meaning that only when the person is awake, he is aware of time. However, if the person “sleep[s] soundly,” then “there is no awareness,” and “no awareness of time.” Time is therefore a conditioned notion which “sometimes does not rise.” Therefore, conditioned awareness can only be a product of the incessant ālaya consciousness, but not the origin of it. Therefore, awareness of time is a result of the ālaya consciousness, but not the other way around. Time is an illusory representation of ālaya, but not the ālaya itself. Therefore, grasping

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<sup>217</sup> In China, time is measured by *geng* (更). There are twelve *gengs* in one day, and one *geng* contains two hours. In the night, there are 5 *gengs* (from 19 pm – 5 am).

<sup>218</sup> Chinese original: 是故心起即有時分，心寂即無時分。若睡眠無夢位，雖更五夜，不異剎那 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 12).

<sup>219</sup> Chinese original: 大抵藏識流轉不駐，意識有時不起 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 12).

<sup>220</sup> This is in line with Hui ren’s explanation for the concept of ālaya consciousness in Consciousness-Only Buddhism. The eighth consciousness gives birth to phenomena and activities of the other seven consciousnesses. Its movement is very subtle, and its nature is “恆轉 (*hengzhuān*, constant changing),” meaning that is consecutive like a fountain, but it also constantly arises and ceases, see footnote 1 (Hui ren, 21).

onto the concept of time creates an illusory representation of the substance (*ālaya*), but not the essence itself.

As can be seen in the example of “time,” time as a concept is a relative concept which is accepted as universal because of the heart of *dengliu*. Time therefore is a suitable example of the dynamics of grasping. People try to use time as a universal basis for values. Zhang destroys the belief in time as a universal truth step by step. First, within the realm of human awareness, there is no consensus on a standard of time, since different people have different understandings of time. The person with a hard life feels that time goes slowly, whereas a person with an enjoyable life feels that time goes fast. The morning mushroom which has a relatively short life take each instant of life very seriously, then a short span of life would mean a long time for them. On the contrary, Ming Ling has a long lifespan, but might not treasure the time. Compared to the morning mushroom, Ming Ling might experience a much shorter lifetime. Therefore, time is only a personal concept and cannot be a universally valid idea. Second, Zhang argues that time does not always exist. When people fall asleep and the awareness disappears, then the awareness of time disappears. Therefore, human subjectivity precedes time. Without subjectivity, there would not be time. Time is only a creation of human mind, which is furthermore only a product of the *ālaya* consciousness. Time is an illusory representation of *ālaya* which cannot be regarded as a universal truth. Time, an example of grasping, is only an illusory representation of the ultimate truth, the *ālaya* consciousness.

By merely grasping a thing, a person would neglect many other perspectives. In Zhuangzi's "Qiwulun,"

Lady Li was a daughter of the border guard of Ai. When she was first captured and brought to Qin, she wept until tears drenched her collar. But when she got to the palace, sharing the king's luxurious bed, and feasting on the finest meats, she regretted her tears. How do I know that the dead don't regret the way they used to cling to life? (Zhuangzi, 2020, 19-21) (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 52).<sup>221</sup>

Lady Li missed her life in the past before she started her new life. However, the time she starts to find joy in her new life, Lady Li feels regret for being confined with the perspective that the previous life was better. Similarly, "the dead," before they find joy in their afterlife, might shortly regret life and would "cling to life." However, as long as they gain pleasure in their afterlife, they would "regret the way they used to cling to life." Zhang comments on Zhuangzi's passage by saying that:

For example, if one calculates with the common language, one rejoices in life and hates death. How does one know that this is not confusion? Lady Li's (Li Ji, 驪姬) crying is a metaphor for this. This does not take death as a great place, and only to correct the idea of rejoicing in life (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 53).<sup>222</sup>

Zhang paraphrases Zhuangzi's argument and says that one might "rejoice in life and hate death," "if one calculates with the common language." However, seeing from Lady Li's example, one's previous grasping onto the idea of the goodness of life could be wrong, and death could

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<sup>221</sup> Chinese original: 麗之姬，艾封人之子也。晉國之始得之也，涕泣沾襟；及其至於王所，與王同筐牀，食芻豢，而後悔其泣也。子惡乎知夫死者不悔其始之蘄生乎！(Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 52).

<sup>222</sup> Chinese original: 如言而計，悅生惡死，寧知非禍，喻以麗姬涕泣。此非以死為得所，特矯悅生之義 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 53).

be a good place as well. If Lady Li would have always been committed to her previous grasping, she would have not been able to see the limitation of her own perception, and would have not experienced a luxurious life in the new country. Similarly, a person who “grasps the self” would embrace life and dislike death. However, if one uses Li Ji’s story as an example, one will know that one single perspective might be limited. As a result, “the idea of rejoicing in life” might be wrong: grasping onto the self would exclude death, which might be a new possibility and something enjoyable. Therefore, clinging to one idea as the only truth might limit one’s perspective. Other different possibilities are excluded. This argument is similar to Musil’s character of Diotima who sticks to her own ideal of self-love and fails to consider Ulrich’s suggestions which open to a new world.

Not only does grasping create narrowmindedness, but it even also results in the manipulation of a single set of values. Zhang describes it using the term of “the knowledge of sages tyrannized people through indoctrination/the calamity of sage wisdom (*shengzhi zhihuo*, 聖智之禍)” (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 3). Values represented by sages are also a form of grasping. By only sticking to values of sages, one might oppress other different thoughts and opinions. Zhang refers to Tianchengzi’s story, which Zhuangzi cited in his essay *Quqie* 胠篋. Tianchengzi (5 B.C.) killed the king and made the brother of the former king the new king. By becoming the biggest supporter for the new king, Tianchengzi then became the most respected duke, the sage, who represents the absolute value in the country. However, Tianchengzi is in essence a criminal. Zhuangzi thus argues that “Are not all the so-called perfect sages, who are really just



bodyguards for great thieves?” (Zhuangzi, 2020, 85).<sup>223</sup> If the sage is a criminal, then criminal actions would be justified social values, which would greatly suppress social justice. For this reason, Zhang comments that “[a sage ruling the land] by facing south could not prevent people from committing crimes” (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 3).<sup>224</sup> On the contrary, this sage suppresses justice which acts against crimes. From this example, we see that Zhang also challenges the domination of one single grasping, given that this grasping might be taken advantage of by bad intentions and furthermore suppresses other opinions.

Furthermore, suppression of opinions might even manifest in form of violence.

If one makes request to the spirits and worships them as the temples of their forefathers,<sup>225</sup> and follows the norms of the heaven attentively, although one can temporarily practice universal love, and even stop war for a while (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 5).<sup>226</sup>

As argued in the quote, “temporarily” and “for a while,” “the spirits” as “the temples of their forefathers” and “norms of the heaven” can be followed “attentively,” and wars can be stopped “for a while.” However, this would in the long-term result in oppression. Sages create moral conceptions as “rules and regulations” for people to follow. If a sage (“spiritual/religious

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<sup>223</sup> Chinese original: 所謂至聖者，有不為大盜守者乎？(Zhuangzi, 113)

<sup>224</sup> Chinese original: 南面不可以止盜 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 3).

<sup>225</sup> 彌, mi, refers to “the temples of the forefathers.” In Meng Zhuo’s annotation, the source for this translation can be seen in Zheng Xuan’s 鄭玄 (127-200 AD, Confucianist) annotation of 舍奠於祖廟，彌亦如之 (Performing sacrifice at the shrine of ancestors, so is the same at the temples of the forefathers) in “Official in Charge of Sacrificial Preys” in *Rites of Zhou (Zhouli Dianzhu, 周禮甸祝)*. In Zheng Xuan’s annotation, he notes that 彌, 父廟. (Mi, refers to the temples of the forefathers.) See Meng Zhuo’s annotation of “Qiwulunshi” (Meng Zhuo, annotation, 7).

<sup>226</sup> Chinese original: 夫託上神以為彌，順帝則以游心，愛且翫兼，兵亦苟偃 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 5).

leaders”) is regarded as “the rule force,” then everything would be “measured by the same standard.” Then the law of the sage would require conformity and obedience. As a result,

If people all have a mind, when they meet someone who violates their ideas, they will attack them. Even if one steps on corpses and blood by killing, one will say that one is grasping a heavenly campaign (an order to launch a punitive war) (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 5).<sup>227</sup>

When the words of the sage become the solely justified authority, words of a sage become “a heavenly dictate.” Other different thoughts are regarded as disobedience, as reproach against authority. “Another mind” therefore become reasons for killing and oppression. (The rulers) can claim that “one is grasping a heavenly dictate.” “A heavenly dictate” would justify the cruel action of “step[ping] on their corpses and blood by killing.”

Zhang therefore comes to the conclusion that

Laozi still said that, “when people have many implements for profit (power), the state will be in more calamities.” But when the sage regulates the state and the state has many implements for profit (power), [they can manipulate society with indoctrination], people will also increasingly suffer calamities”<sup>228</sup> (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 8).

Therefore, Zhang appeals that “if there is a sage, he/she sometimes helps thieves. Thus in general, Zhuangzi never establishes a sage” (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 8).<sup>229</sup>

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<sup>227</sup> Chinese original: 苟人各有心，拂其條教，雖踐屍喋血，猶曰秉之天討也 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 5).

<sup>228</sup> Chinese original: 老聃但說“民多利器，國家滋昏，”而猶未說聖人經國，復是天下利器，故國多利器，民亦滋昏也 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 8).

<sup>229</sup> Chinese original: 有聖或以利盜，故廓然未嘗立聖 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 8).

As can be seen in our analysis, “universal love is crueler than humaneness and righteousness, and humaneness and righteousness are more ruthless than law. This is clear” (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 5).<sup>230</sup> Mozi’s notion of “universal love” can be taken advantage of by rulers to justify their wars and indoctrinations. “Laws” can still regulate human actions and treat everyone equally. The core Confucian values of “humaneness and righteousness” are even worse, because they elevate certain moral codes and differentiate people. People who follow rules would be treated as sages, and people who disobey those rules would be massacred. Therefore, the notion of “humaneness and righteousness” is even “more ruthless.” Zhang thus says that “the theory of getting rid of weapons lies at the base of constructing weapons” (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 5),<sup>231</sup> which is to say that the reason to stop a war might still not satisfy a certain group of people, and this new conflict might become the new reason for “weapons” and violence. We already know that grasping takes relative and personal opinions as universal rules. “The knowledge of sages tyrannized people through indoctrination” is an example of grasping. It is clear to us in this example that grasping creates limited perspective and might become the reason for violence and oppression. Both *MoE* and “Qiwulunshi” see the limitation of sticking to a specific value. Compared to *MoE*, “Qiwulunshi” pushes this argument even further and showcases brutal consequences connected with “grasping.”

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<sup>230</sup> Chinese original: 兼愛酷於仁義，仁義憊於法律，較然明矣 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 5).

<sup>231</sup> Chinese original: 偃兵則造兵之本 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 5).

## COMPARING “A SENSE OF REALITY” IN *MOE* AND “GRASPING” IN “QIWULUNSHI”

Zhang’s grasping can be read as comparable to the sense of reality in his *MoE*. Both describe firm beliefs in a value; both reject the embracing of different perspectives and thus the suppressing of other opinions; both are relative and individual opinions without a universal basis. The illusory nature of “grasping” is specifically addressed in Zhang’s “Qiwulunshi.” This comparison demonstrates that both Zhang and *MoE* see the relativity and limitation of the phenomenal world and try to aspire for a higher basis for it.

However, reality and grasping have different connotations. Whereas *MoE*’s understanding of reality specifically refers to values and human thoughts, Zhang’s grasping refers to all of phenomena in the world. This dissertation refers to Milton Rokeach’s definition of values in his book *The Nature of Human Values* to attempt to understand the concept of reality in *MoE*.

According Rokeach,

a *value* is an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence (Rokeach, 5).

This definition defines a value as “an enduring belief” and it is “personally or socially preferable” in comparison to other “conduct or end-state of existence.” *MoE* develops the figure of Diotima to explain this understanding of reality through values.

In *MoE*, we see that different people represent different realities. For example, Ulrich’s father is born with a belief in the aristocratic order. Therefore, “it had been a natural instinct for him to

build a great career in this way" (Musil, MwQ, 9). Besides pursuing academic honors as "a professor and a member of academies," he also aspires for aristocratic titles, such as "a Knight, and then a Commander, the recipient of the Grand Cross of various orders" (Musil, MwQ, 9). For example, Moosbrugger, a serial killer, according to the narrator, has the predetermined nature of cruelty. "Every now and then the most powerful of instincts turned his inner being cruelly outward" (Musil, MwQ, 71). This nature prompts him to kill people and "gain by force a recognition of this sense of himself" (Musil, MwQ, 71). Furthermore, although Bonadea is "the wife of a prominent man and the fond mother of two handsome boys" (Musil, MwQ, 38), "she was sensual" and has a natural demand for sexual love. "It was something she had apparently been born with and could never do anything to curb" (Musil, MwQ, 39). Therefore, Bonadea is constantly lured to have affairs with Ulrich. From these examples, we can see that reality is a feature represented in an anthropocentric world. Reality refers to value systems within a human world.<sup>232</sup>

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<sup>232</sup> In Gerhard Bauer's article of „Die ‚Auflösung des anthropozentrischen Verhaltens‘ im modernen Roman. Dargestellt an Musils Mann ohne Eigenschaften,“ Bauer argues that in traditional novels, figures „denken über sich nach, erkennen ihre Besonderheiten, ihre Errungenschaften und ihre Fehler“. In the end, they "kennen sich selbst, sind sich mit Stolz oder Selbstironie ihrer Eigenarten bewusst und gehen in allem Tun und Reden von einem nur selten einmal infragegestellten Ichbewusstsein aus" (Bauer, 681-2).

Er überlässt sich dem, was kommt, ohne etwas Bestimmtes zu erwarten, und enthält sich im Extremfall jeden Versuchs, seine Vorstellungen zu ‚verwirklichen‘, also sich mit ihnen auf die immer unzureichende oder verfälschende Wirklichkeit einzulassen (Bauer, 679).

Musil is argued to have overcome anthropocentrism. However, we see that this non-anthropocentrism is a resignation of human beings towards the world. The hero allows nature to influence on him rather than deciding his own life direction. In Musil's *The Man without Qualities*, the protagonist Ulrich

hat es gleich nah und weit zu allein Eigenschaften, und sie sind ihm alle, ob sie nun die seinen geworden sind oder nicht, in einer sonderbaren Weise gleichgültig. ... Ebenso distanziert wie gegenüber seinen persönlichen Qualitäten verhält er sich gegenüber seiner Person insgesamt, seinem erlebenden und handelnden Ich (Bauer, 682).

From this quote, we can see that Ulrich distances himself from the world. Other people with certain engagement certain qualities are "Der gewöhnlich ungeprüft wirkende einheitliche Aufbau der Person erscheint ihm, ... fragwürdig oder nur noch komisch" (Bauer, 682). However, the problem is that in Bauer's understanding of Musil, Musil only dissolves anthropocentrism through "Entpersönlichung" (Bauer, 684), "Typ des verbogenen

Musil's non-human world is seen from the perspective of human.

He had now reached one of those green spaces bordered by trees, a break in the Ringstrasse, crossed it in a few strides, but the broad strip of sky above the trees made him turn aside and follow where it was leading, ... It's a kind of foreshortening of the mind's perspective, he thought, that creates the tranquil sense of the evening (Musil, MwQ, 707).

This is a description of the environment. In the first place, environment is perceived from the perspective of the protagonist. Nature itself is not the center of the picture. Because Ulrich himself has "reached one of those green spaces," this scenery comes into sight. In other words, environment features passive objects which waits for the subject to unveil them. The non-human world emerges with human intervention. Later on, the environment seems to have exerted an influence on Ulrich and "made him turn aside and follow where it was leading." However, in the next sentence, Ulrich interprets the scenery as "foreshortening of the mind's perspective." In other words, because the mind feels "the tranquil sense of the evening," it interprets the scenery of "green spaces bordered by trees" as a tranquil sense. As analyzed above, description of the non-human world in *MoE* presumes the existence of human beings. The non-human world depends on the human world to emerge and subsumes itself under the

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Menschen" (Bauer, 687), "Abdankung des persönlichen Ich als Zentrum" (Bauer, 688). Human beings therefore merge with the world. „Die Außenwelt, die anderen sowohl wie das Gegenständliche, ist kaum noch vom Ich zu trennen" (Bauer, 688-9). As a result, the outer world is no more a "unmittelbarer Widerstand", but a "Gegenstand der Reflexion und vor allem der Kritik" (Bauer, 690). "Das anthropozentrische Verhalten weicht einer kühleren, distanzierten, sachlich prüfenden oder überhaupt indifferenten Haltung gegenüber sich selbst und der Welt" (Bauer, 694). However, I would argue that when the world is an object of reflection and critique, then the world is still perceived from a human perspective. In this way, the world is still a passive object, but not a subject. In this description, human beings still in the center, and other non-human perspectives are not taken into consideration.

interpretation of the human perspective. Therefore, the discourse of reality in *MoE* does not allow for agency for non-human beings.

On the contrary, Zhang borrows the word “grasping” from Buddhism which not only includes insisting on human conceptual values, but also laws for non-human and even non-sentient beings in the conventional world. Grasping also refers to rules for non-human beings.

Depending on its own heart-mind and following transformation, this means “only an insect can be an insect,” and depending on the non-verification of the heart-mind of the self, this means bugs can abide by heaven/ “and it is only being an insect that it can succeed in being the Heavenly.” The sage rejoices in heaven also imitates this [insects] (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 49).<sup>233</sup>

“Only an insect can be an insect” means that if a thing has “the nature of insects,” it would “appear in the form of insects.” The belief in “the nature of insects” is also a form of “grasping.” Different from Musil’s reality which mainly focuses on value systems in a human world, the law of nature to form an insect is not observed from the perspective of values in the human world, but it is a dharma which functions in the world of the insect. Therefore, Zhang’s “grasping” is not only limited within the human world, but it also includes dharmas in the non-human world. Also, the dharma of being an insect also “can succeed in being the Heavenly” and abide by heaven. This shows that the dharma of an insect world also follows “the Heavenly” which even goes beyond human existence. This shows that grasping of dharma in the insect world directly connects to the ultimate truth and could be independent from values in the human world.

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<sup>233</sup> Chinese original: 委心任化，此謂唯蟲能蟲，心無勝解，此謂唯蟲能天，聖人樂天，亦效是而 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 49).

Further, even a sage would “rejoice in heaven” and emulate the way of “insects.” This quote shows that dharmas in the insect world even influence and determine the way the human world functions. In short, whereas reality in *MoE* mainly focuses on the human world, Zhang seriously considers the non-human world and expands his notion of grasping to this realm.

In addition, Zhang not only cares for the sentient world, but he also includes the non-sentient beings in the world. This can be seen in the following quote,

The third is the true understanding of seeing nominally posited self-nature as it is through examination. This means that with respect to examination of nominally posited self-natures, there are only nominally posited self-natures. In this way, one realizes that all nominally posited self-natures of the thoughts and things such as form (se) and so forth do not have their own self-nature, but yet appear to be the manifestation of their self-nature. One can also understand that the self-nature of these things is just like variations, images, sound, light and shade, water and the moon, fire and sparks, dream and illusions, which are all similar appearances without substances (Zhang, *Qiwulunshi*, 6).<sup>234</sup>

Every pursuit in the world is a pursuit of “nominally posited self-nature,” which is grasping. However, all self-posture things “are all similar appearances without substances.” At this point, Zhang is similar to *MoE* in that both challenge the justification of human perception. However, Zhang also extends this boundary of human perception to the non-human world. What Zhang refers to as “these things” such as “light and shade, water and the moon, fire and sparks,” are all entities outside of the human world. Therefore, we can see that different from *MoE* which

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<sup>234</sup> Chinese original: 三者自性假立尋思所引如實智，謂“於自性假立尋思，唯有自性假立已，如實通達了知色等想事中所有自性假立，非彼事自性而似彼事自性顯現，又能了知彼事自性，猶如變化影像響應，光影水月燄火夢幻，相似顯現而非彼體 (Zhang, *Qiwulunshi*, 6).



concentrates on reality in the human world, Zhang understands every phenomenon in the world as grasping.

#### SUMMARY

In this chapter, I focus on the world of the conventional truth and discuss the concept of grasping. I first argue that grasping sticks on to distinctions in the world of the conventional truth. Then, I work out two initial problems of grasping. First, I demonstrate that grasping is only an illusory representation of the world of the ultimate truth/*ālaya* consciousness without an essence. In addition, I argue that insistence on a certain grasping would result in limited perspective and even oppression.

After listing out the two problems of grasping it, in the next chapter I am still going to focus on the world of the conventional truth and try to find out a way to overcome the illusory nature and oppression of grasping. I will argue in the next chapter that the problem of oppression can be solved through treating different types of graspings equally. However, in a world of the conventional truth, one can still not give grasping an ontological essence. In order to further pursue this problem, Zhang Taiyan needs to seek a passage in the world of the conventional truth to approach the world of the ultimate truth.

## *Chapter 7 Treating Different Types of Graspings Equally*

### INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter explored how Zhang defined the concept of grasping and analyzed its problems. Drawing on Yogācāra thought, he concluded grasping creates oppression and has an illusory nature. There is the necessity to solve these aforementioned two problems – that of single-sided clinging that suppresses other possible modes of action – and argue that treating different types of graspings equally will overcome domination and oppression of a single grasping. Given that each individual perspective is justified under certain circumstances, one should therefore treat different perspectives equally. I will further use two examples to illustrate this point. In chapter 2 of “Qiwulunshi,” Zhang argues that regulations from the past cannot be deployed to dictate the present and future, so one should treat the past and the present equally, and not let the past dictate the present. In chapter 3 of “Qiwulunshi,” Zhang argues that cultures are equal, the goal of civilizing the “other” cannot be used as an excuse for conquering other cultures. Zhang argued that by acknowledging and equalizing different perspectives, limitations as a result of grasping can be overcome.

However, different perspectives fail to arrive at a universal basis for all different viewpoints. We still need to seek a higher unity as the ontology beyond all existing ideas in the conventional truth. This unity is the world of the mind/the ultimate truth. Therefore, in the next chapter, I

will focus on Zhang's answer to this question and try to describe his understanding of the process to achieve and the representation of the world of the ultimate truth.

#### TREATING DIFFERENT TYPES OF GRASPINGS EQUALLY

In the last chapter, we discussed the limitation created by grasping. Also, if one sticks to grasping, there might be violence and oppression. As argued by Chen Shaoming, Buddhism criticizes people in the conventional world when they take phenomena as the real. Chen names this criticism as “breaking grasping” (*pozhi*, 破執). One needs to break “grasping of self” and “grasping of dharma” (Chen Shaoming, 33). This dissertation, consistent with Chen's argumentation, argues in this chapter that Zhang tries to destroy a world dominated by grasping. The first step Zhang tries to “break grasping” is to demonstrate that grasping is only conditional in human cultures. Grasping only becomes valid under certain circumstances, and there should be no universal standard for right and wrong.

When we look at human beings' experience, we find that in ancient times, people liked to eat sauce made of moths and for Cantonese people grilled rats are a delicacy. With changes in time and place, even if their practices make one want to vomit, one should not say that they are barbarians and that one has culture, because there is originally no difference between culture and barbarians (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 51).<sup>235</sup>

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<sup>235</sup> Chinese original: 轉驗之人，蜚醢，古人以為至味，燔鼠，粵人以為上肴，易時異地，對之欲嘔，亦不應說彼是野人，我有文化，以本無文野故 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 51).

Further, “depending on what suits the palette, the sour and rotten<sup>236</sup> can be sweet; seeing through love, the ugly Momu [嫫母, an ugly woman in Chinese history] has delicate features” (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 51).<sup>237</sup> Seeing from these examples, we are aware that grasping should be respected as an individual and conditional concept. Different types of grasping should be respected rather than oppressed by a universal truth.

Given that each grasping is conditional, therefore, different types of graspings should not become a dominating belief. Instead, different types of graspings are treated individually and equally.

People are different from birds and animals with respect to feeling. ... In a crowd of common people, they hold different positions. So can one equalize positions with respect to humanity, righteousness and affirmation and negations? (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 51).<sup>238</sup>

Given that people and animals, feelings and functions are different, there can be no common rules. Zhang equally respects each individual rule of different people, animals, feelings and functions. Further, Zhang rejects a dominance of value, so that there would be no certain standard for “the idea of benevolence and righteousness” or the standard of right and wrong. Since grasping cannot become a universal rule and different thoughts and opinions are

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<sup>236</sup> Zhang Taiyan likes to eat fermented bean curd, so here “the sour and the rotten” could refer to the specific food of fermented bean curd.

<sup>237</sup> Chinese original: 口之所適，則酸腐皆甘旨也，愛之所結，雖嫫母亦清揚也 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 51).

<sup>238</sup> Chinese original: 人與飛走，情用或殊，轉驗之人。... 此皆稠處恒人，所執兩異，豈況仁義之端，是非之塗，而能有定齊哉 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 51).

acknowledged individually, there will not be a dominating belief of grasping which oppresses individual perspectives.

Zhang then uses two examples to illustrate “breaking grasping.” First, one should break beliefs in consistency of historical rules and treat history and the present differently. This is a widely discussed argument in Zhang’s scholarship. Wu Ruihan argues that sticking to established history and conventions is the grasping onto dharma/self. However, if one elevates historical conventions as self-claimed universal theorems, these rules could become a stubborn grasping of self and become restrictions for cultural development. Therefore, one should not blindly believe in established history and conventions (Wu Ruihan, 53). Wu interprets Zhang’s argument that history cannot be doctrines for future laws. Similarly, as argued by Liu Jihui, historical documents are only valid for the past, but not for today. Also, there are no constant laws across generations. Therefore, recent people do not need to follow ancient kings (Liu Jihui, 41). In addition, Wu Xiaofan argues: Zhang believes that historical laws cannot be used to guide social rules for today. Therefore, people should tolerantly treat ideological discussions and encourage their competitions (Wu Xiaofan, 60).

I agree with the scholarly discussion above and argue that rejecting the use of the past to dictate today is an example of breaking with the grasping of a certain convention. According to Zhang, rules in the past cannot be used to dictate today. A group of historians “who stick to old rules use the past to criticize the present, which is a view from the peephole” (Zhang,

Qiwulunshi, 19).<sup>239</sup> Those “who stick to those old rules” believe that laws from the past are constant. Therefore, they “stick to old rules use the past to criticize the present,” using history to dictate future. These historians take rules in the past as a universal rule (grasping) and try to use this grasping to dominate the contemporary world.

Indeed, the world and different cultures are too versatile to be captured by only one single law from the past.

But people’s customs are totally different and their politics and religions are also different. They argue with each other. These are only words which have gone beyond the forms of the word. Although we can name different geographical locations, examining their customs, we still cannot exhaust all different conventions (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 44).<sup>240</sup>

People might be able to name “different geographical locations” and “examin[e] different customs,” but there are endless aspects of “customs” which cannot be exhausted. If we use old rules to interpret the situation in the present, different possibilities might be left out.

Therefore, history in the past should not be applied to illuminate present and future.

Shenzi<sup>241</sup> says “The *Odes* (*shi*, 詩) are past aspirations; the *Documents* (*shu*, 書) are past pronouncements; the *Spring and Autumn Annals* are past affairs (*shi*, 事).” (Shenzi, translated by Harris, 128) Events of the past (*wangshi*, 往事) are the resolve of the Former Kings (Wenwang, Wuwang and Zhougong)

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<sup>239</sup> Chinese original: 守舊章者，以古非今，是亦一孔之見也 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 19).

<sup>240</sup> Chinese original: 其風紀萬殊，政教各異，彼此擬義，率皆形外之言，雖其地望可周，省俗終不悉也 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 44).

<sup>241</sup> Shenzi (慎子), also Shendao (慎到) (BC 390—BC 315), one of the founders of Legalism. In Eirik Lang Harris, *The Shenzi Fragments: A Philosophical Analysis and Translation*, He explains that this passage is from 馬總’s 意林, written around 787 AD.

and are clearly not the system and laws of the later kings (*houwang*, 後王) (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 44).<sup>242</sup>

In Zhang's opinion, as argued by Shenzi, the *Odes*, the *Documents* and the *Spring and Autumn Annals* only record "events of the past." They can be understood as "the resolve of the written admonition of ancient kings," it would be inappropriate to treat them as "laws of the later kings."

For example,

How can one know the changes of Ying (嬴, ruling family of the Qin dynasty) in the Qin (秦) dynasty (B.C. 221—B.C. 207) or Liu (劉, ruling family of the Han dynasty) in the Han (漢) dynasty (B.C. 202—A.D. 8; A.D. 8—220) from the perspective of the end of Zhou (周) dynasty (B.C. 1046—B.C. 771)? (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 45).<sup>243</sup>

Zhang believes that historical events in the end of Zhou dynasty cannot predict changes in Qin and Han dynasties. This evidence shows that presence and past should be treated individually and equally. Negation of the domination of the past is an example of breaking "grasping."

In the second example, Zhang further argues that all different types of grasping should be equal from a cultural perspective, therefore he qualifies the grasping onto the concept of civilization.

In a colonial context, industrialized powers see their cultural superiority as a grasping and oppress other cultures. For Zhang, separation of culture into civilization and barbarism is a

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<sup>242</sup> Chinese original: 慎子云：“《詩》，往志也，《書》，往誥也，《春秋》往事也。”往事，即先王之志，明非為後王制法也 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 44).

<sup>243</sup> Chinese original: 豈以姬周末世，而能忘臆嬴劉之變哉 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 45).

certain grasping. Zhang tries to break this grasping, in that he claims here to be no priority for civilization over barbarism. Therefore, “one should not say that they are barbarians and that one has culture, because there is originally no culture or barbarians” (Zhang, Qiwlunshi, 51).<sup>244</sup> In essence, “culture” and “barbarism,” as empty categories, should be equal. There should be “no difference between culture and barbarians.”

This is also an argument that has been theorized by many Zhang scholars. Civilization as grasping could impede the respect for multiculturalism. Cui Hailiang argues that civilization is a concept for prejudice. Using “civilization” to force “culture” onto “rural” areas is an excuse to “annex and encroach” upon “rural areas.” This is Zhang’s argument to criticize Western colonial powers (Cui Hailiang, 92). Shi Jinggang also argues that Zhang claims that people should not use the difference between civilization and barbarism as a justification for the strong to dominate the weak (Shi Jinggang, 109). Li Yu similarly claims that the pursuit of material civilization limits and abandons people and becomes Social Darwinism. Zhang’s equality of cultures argues against limitation created by civilization (Li Yu, 63). Zhang argues against the attitude to use “civilization,” “excellence,” and “progress” as a cover, to use power to destroy the country and to bully the weak (Li Zhifu, Wenye, 12). Wu Ruihan interprets collective cultural conventions as deeper grasping of the self. In order to achieve selflessness in ultimate truth, one should abandon grasping onto certain cultural conventions (Wu Ruihan, 53).

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<sup>244</sup> Chinese original: 亦不應說彼是野人，我有文化，本以無文野故 (Zhang, Qiwlunshi, 51).



Zhang's approach to equalize cultures is characterized by scholars as pluralism. According to Wang Yuhua, Zhang Deshun's and Yu Yanhong's readings, in stark contrast against monism, Zhang Taiyan argues for pluralism. Different cultural values are relative and equal. This means that each existence form of a culture has its inner justification (Wang, Zhang, 101) (Yu Yanhong, 34). Wang and Zhang also argue that cultures in different places and times are equal, which is deeply relativistic and pluralistic (Wang, Zhang, 102). As a result, different phenomena are equal in their value, and there should be no superiority. Different from Evolutionism, Zhang's theory is pluralistic (Wang, Zhang, 101). Li Zhifu argues that "Zhang reads 'to respect civilization and barbarism equally,' he therefore emphasizes that races, nations, cultures and countries should be equal and symbiotic. Differences should coexist, respect each other (Li Zhifu, Wenye, 12). As argued by Wu Xiaofan, Zhang tries to argue that in modern society, it is crucial to break stereotypes between civilization and barbarism and treat both of them equally. Wu Xiaofan asserts that the development of society is based on the full development of individual personality, and that theorem cannot be used to suppress human development. Wu also believes that Zhang's ultimate concern is the real independence and freedom of each social member. He further argues that both feudal indoctrinations and mechanism in capitalism suppress the development of individual freedom and personality. Only when all individuals reach their own freedom is when equality is achieved. This would be a tolerant and equal society (Wu Xiaofan, 60). A plural world, a tolerant world, a world which respects "different opinions and plural positions" (Yu Yanhong, 36).

Scholars tend to misread Zhang's claim for the equality of cultures as Chinese nationalism. For example, Li argues that Zhang's goal to talk about "respecting civilization and barbarism equally" aims at propagating Chinese nationalism in a colonialized era (Li Zhifu, Wenye, 12). Highlighting Chinese cultures above other cultures already goes against the previously raised principle to equalize civilization and barbarism, namely all different cultures. Wang also argues that Zhang aims at "justifying the dignity for Chinese culture" (Wang Xiaojie, 121). However, it is important to note that highlighting Chinese cultures does not aim for Chinese nationalism, in which Chinese cultures stay above or compete against other cultures. Instead, it suggests an attitude to understand Chinese culture also as a dignified, independent and respectful culture as every other culture in the world.

Zhang develops his example to demonstrate the equality of cultures. Zhang uses Mencius's example of Gebo's revenge for food to unveil the nature of civilization as a grasping used to oppress other cultures, in order to show the necessity to destroy grasping onto civilization.<sup>245</sup>

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<sup>245</sup> A story in *Mengzi, Teng Wen Gong Xia* 孟子滕文公下. Tang was a virtuous sovereign. When Tan lived in Bo, he was the neighbor of Ge. The ruler of Ge was Gebo, who grazed and did not offer sacrifices to gods or ancestors. Tang sent people to ask Gebo, "why didn't you make such sacrifice?" Ge said, "I did not have draught animals to sacrifice." Tang asked people to send them cattle and sheep. Gebo ate them, but still did not sacrifice. Tang sent people to ask them again: "why you still didn't make sacrifice?" Gebo said, "because I did not have millet placed in a sacrificial vessel." Tang sent people to go there and plough and sow for Gebo, asking the old and the weak to send them food. Gebo led his people, forcing people with wine, food and millet and rice, grabbing them of the good. If they did not give him the food, then Gebo would kill them. There was a child who sent Ge's people millet and meat. He was killed by Gebo, and his food was snatched away by Gebo. *Book* says: Gebo's revenge for food. Because Gebo killed this child, Tang conquered Gebo by force of arms. People in the world said: Tang did not seek the richness of the whole China under heaven, but just wish to revenge Gebo for ordinary men and women." Zhang argues: "Mencius argued that Gebo did not offer sacrifices to gods or ancestors, which was not related to Tang. Later on, Gebo replied Tang by saying that there was not enough millet. If there would not be enough millet, then how could the people within this empire eat? This must have been known by Tang. However, Tang used it as excuses, driving people within his territory, Bo, to farm for Gebo. Tang was already aware that they would kill and grab things of each other, Tang still used it as the excuse to invade Ge, and establishing his own empire. Even

Tang's cultures represent a so-called civilization. In order to cultivate Gebo, Tang initiates wars against Gebo and wins the victory. Mencius argues that "Tang's wars did not intend to conquer the world [and should be praised but not punished]" (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 46).<sup>246</sup> However, Zhang sees "Tang's wars" are attempts to civilize other cultures. Tang elevates a personal perspective (grasping on one's own cultivation) to be a universal truth, and further uses it as an excuse for oppression.

To examine the schemes of Chengtang and Yiyin,<sup>247</sup> Chengtang/ Yiyin's plan used religion to destroy other people's countries. Tang already knows that ox, sheep and rice are for the emperor's kitchen. If not offered by the emperor, this will be difficult to provide. To ask about whether a particular country grazes but does not perform sacrifices, is not a question asked by the neighboring country to compare, but rather to ridicule and satirize. King Tang waited for the wrong answer from his neighbor, so that he could send people to till the land and made the Earl of Ge suspicious and afraid. Once the boy from Tang's country was killed, King Tang could say that one could attack for revenge. ... Today those who attack countries and take cities are all like this. Even the great Confucian scholar, Mencius, was bewildered by Tang (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 67-8).<sup>248</sup>

Zhang argues that Chengtang's and Yiyin's deeds are "schemes." They aim at using their own beliefs to "destroy" another country. Although Tang is aware that "ox, sheep and rice are for the emperor's kitchen" would be difficult to be provided by Gebo, he still requires Gebo to

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Mencius said that 'Tang did not seek the richness of the whole China under heaven, but just wish to revenge Gebo for ordinary men and women'. If Tang had sincerity, then he would only kill Gebo, only one person. Killing the emperor and then left away. Why then adding military forces and killing innocent people, and even making the country without offspring. Ah! People such as Cheng Tang, Yi Yin, they confused people. Although they overthrew the ruling of Jie (a fatuous and self-indulgent ruler), their actions could not cover up their crimes. (Meng Zhuo, Qiwulunshi Shuzheng, 297).

<sup>246</sup> Chinese original: 非富天下 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 46).

<sup>247</sup> Yiyin (伊尹) was the prime minister of Chengtang.

<sup>248</sup> Chinese original: 尚考成湯伊尹之謀，蓋籍宗教以夷人國，誠知牛羊御米，非邦軍所難供，放而不祀，非比鄰所得問，故陳調諷，待其靈言，爾乃遣眾往耕，使之疑怖，童子已戮，得以復仇為名。... 今之伐國取邑者，所在皆是，以彼大儒，尚復蒙其眩惑 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 46-7).

provide the good. In Gebo's cultures, religious sacrifice is not a common thing. Instead, "grazing" is a normality there. However, Tang reprimands Gebo for not preparing for religious sacrifice. Therefore, Zhang understands that Tang does not ask this question in order to "compare with his neighbor," but rather to "ridicule and satirize" Gebo. Tang intentionally waits for Gebo to offer the "wrong answer" in order to arrange Tang's people to enter Gebo's land, thus further perplexes Gebo. After the child from Tang's land is killed, Tang whitewashes his schemes. Tang takes advantage of this killing as a just name for his invasive war against Gebo. Although Tang's culture seems to represent civilization, and Gebo's culture seems to represent barbarism, Tang's deeds are intentional schemes to replace Gebo's land through invasion. Although this invasion has a "great fame," which even bewilders Mencius, the essence of Tang's invasion is an oppression. This cultural oppression exterminates other cultures. It is clear that Zhang argues that people should equally respect both civilized and barbaric cultures as unique representations of cultures. One should not use "culture" as an excuse to oppress other cultures. From this example, we see that Zhang argues against a dominance of one single culture over other cultures, and wishes for an equal treatment to all different cultures.

Zhang's two examples of breaking with grasping and treating different types of grasping equally are comparable to Ulrich as a man with "a sense of possibility" in *MoE*. Ulrich is a person who is able to negate certain perspectives, and then develop a new perspective to see the same thing. This is similar to these two examples given in "Qiwulunshi." Zhang lists two dominating values in the world, using historical opinions to dominate the present and future, and seeing civilization as higher than barbarism. Zhang also negates the justification for both perspectives

and offers other ways to look at them. Zhang sees the values of creative development in current time and regards “barbaric” cultures as cultures with their valuable own national traits, thus developing different perspectives from the dominating graspings. Therefore, Zhang’s breaking with grasping can be seen as a similar approach as “a sense of possibility” in Musil’s *MoE*.

#### ZHANG’S EQUALITY

Treating different types of grasping equally leads to the state of equality. Zhang’s equality differs from equality in a common sense and has an abstract philosophical connotation. Equality in both Western and Chinese society have concrete connotations. Western society is connected to human society. As argued by Chen Xueyan, in the Western world, equality mainly refers to the equality of human beings in a political world. Chen Xueyan also argues that equality in a Western sense means the equality of laws and economics which is measurable through a certain standard (Chen Xueyan, 104). In the Chinese discourse, equality is more concerned with human beings. Wang Zhongjiang believes that in Confucianism, equality means the equality of human nature and human personality (Wang Zhongjiang, 281-282). Human natures and personalities should be treated equally and all humans have equal potentials to develop.

Different from concrete understandings of equality, Zhang’s equality has a more abstract connotation in a Buddhist sense. Major scholarly discourse on Zhang’s equality sees Zhang’s equality as negating and nihilating opposing values. Meng Zhuo argues that opposing values are

a result of confusions of the cognitive faculty and the understanding/fabricated nature (*bianji suozhi*, 遍計所執). Equality achieved through Zhang's "qiwu" means to break all opposing values of good and evil, right and wrong and establishes absolute equality. (Meng, Zhongguo shiyu) Li Zhifu's understanding of Zhang's equality is also to equalize opposing values, especially the most fundamental opposing values: subject and object. Li sees the necessity to achieve equality without the awareness of a self, namely "selflessness." In his opinion, "selflessness" is at core of Zhuangzi's philosophy and it leads to the breaking of opposing values. Only when there is no subject, there is no separation between subject and object, and a subject would not use one's self to invade, bully, overstep and exploit (傾軋, 欺凌, 僭越, 剝削) others/object. In other words, Zhang's equality is based on the elimination of "mutual dependence" (對待) in order to reach the status of "non-dependence" (無待) (Li Zhifu, Jindailiangzhong, 46).

Slightly different from the aforementioned scholars who see equality as negating values and pursuing nothingness, I see Zhang's equality in a more positive sense: to equally treat differences and to accept and allow different possibilities to prevail. This understanding is similar to Wang Xiaojie's opinion. Wang interprets Zhang's equality as the personal awareness of equality of all possible differences and ultimate freedom in the mental sphere (Wang Xiaojie, 121). Rather than an annihilation of possibilities, Zhang's equality respects and embraces possibilities. This interpretation can be seen in the following example when Zhang cites Zhuangzi's description of "an Utmost Person," the person who is capable of taking different graspings equally.

But aspirations to exile oneself into hiding and practices designed to cut oneself off from everything, alas, these are certainly not the doings of utmost wisdom and abundant intrinsic virtuosity. And yet those who engage in them are unable to turn back even if an avalanche descends; they pay no heed even if engulfed by fire. But even if one person is lord and another is servant, this is only a matter of the times; in another age, neither would be lower than the other. Hence it is said that an Utmost Person does not remain walking on any one road, does not stick to any one practice.” (Zhuangzi, 2020, 222) (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 19).<sup>249</sup>

Zhang uses Zhuangzi’s words to criticize common people who stick to certain value judgements as unequal treatment of opinions. These people who “know the truth and have good morality” prioritize a certain version of values and thus despise any other possible versions of “truth” and “morality.” They would stick to certain values and beliefs and “go after things like fire” “in the material world.” As a result, people who treat different opinions unequally get “lost” in pursuing only one single grasping and “cannot come back.”

However, Zhang then provides justification for equal treatment of possibilities. People who only chase “different positions of emperors and officials” prioritize social uprising over different other developmental opportunities. These people also favor unequal treatment of opinions. However, their attained social hierarchy might change with time. “If time changes, then they do not keep in this original hierarchy of the high and the low.” Their previous pursuits are transient “struggle[s] for a short period of time.” Other developmental possibilities could also be correct under different circumstances. This argument provides justification for equal treatment of different types of graspings as possibilities.

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<sup>249</sup> Chinese original: 夫流遁之志，決絕之行，噫，其非至知厚德之任與！覆墜而不反，火馳而不顧，雖相與為君臣，時也，易世而無以相賤，故曰至人不留行焉 (Zhuangzi, Waiwu, 345; Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 19).

Zhang then further explains how an “Utmost Person” treats different possibilities equally.

Zhang lists other developmental possibilities: people “who have the ambition to indulge oneself in the pleasure of the outer world,” or people who “get rid of the world” because of solitude.

Different from people who grasp only on one single idea and thus treat ideas unequally, “an Utmost Person does not remain walking on any one road, does not stick to any one practice.”

This person understands and could take all different paths. The Utmost Person does not insist on a grasping, because she/he acknowledges the justification of various possibilities and only sees everything as a contingent phenomenon which is transient. The ultimate wise person who knows the “real laws” would “not stick to only one way of action” and treat different possibilities (different types of grasping) equally.

Treating different possibilities equally also makes Musil’s *MoE* comparable to Zhang’s “Qiwulunshi.” It is important in *MoE* that Ulrich holds an indifferent attitude towards the world.

This means that Ulrich is able to keep equal distance from different perspectives without getting close to any one of them. This is what Zhang tries to argue – an equal treatment of difference.

COMPARING “A SENSE OF POSSIBILITY” IN *MOE* AND “TREADING DIFFERENT TYPES OF GRASPING EQUALLY” IN “QIWULUNSHI”



The urge to treat different graspings equally is comparable to the concept of a sense of possibility in Musil's *MoE*. Both Zhang and *MoE* see the limitation of sticking to only one single perspective and argue for embracing more possibilities and treating them individually and equally. These arguments overcome the stagnated world structure created by grasping and a sense of reality and speak to perspectivism and possibilities. However, the arguments of treating different graspings equally and a sense of possibility still only characterize the phenomenal world which fail to provide a universal basis for beings in all the phenomenal world in the noumenal world. Both Zhang and *MoE* still need to discuss the process to the ultimate world which unites everything in the conventional world. Both also talk about the representation of it.

However, *MoE* and "Qiwulunshi" treat the concepts of "a sense of possibility" and "treating graspings equally" from two different perspectives. Whereas Musil's narrator highlights the importance of human beings, Zhang does not only focus on humans. The sense of possibility from Musil's narrator still represents an anthropocentric perspective. For Musil's narrator, when reality which defines a human identity disappears and possibilities prevail, "a world of qualities without a man has arisen" (Musil, *MwQ*, 158).<sup>250</sup> We might argue that Musil's narrator takes a step towards the non-anthropocentric world, in that he also discusses "the dissolution of the anthropocentric point of view, which for such a long time considered man to be at the

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<sup>250</sup> German original: es ist eine Welt von Eigenschaften ohne Mann entstanden (Musil, *MoE*, 150).  
Musil: non-subjectivity (Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften, Eigenschaften ohne Mann) – Subject without Nation. Musil tries to negate a personality.

center of the universe but which has been fading away for centuries” (Musil, MwQ, 159).<sup>251</sup> However, this is not a thorough negation of anthropocentrism. Although reality and human identity have been negated, and there is a world of “experiences without the person who experiences them” (Musil, MwQ, 158),<sup>252</sup> it is clear that what is left are “experiences,” which are memories created by human beings. In other words, Musil’s narrator only negates human identity, but still preserves human “experiences.” Moreover, “the friendly burden of personal responsibility is to dissolve into a system of formulas of possible meanings” (Musil, MwQ, 159).<sup>253</sup> This quote shows that personality and “personal responsibility” dissolve into “a system of formulas of possible meanings.” “A system” and “formulas” are human-created concepts. Although human identities dissolve, identities dissolve into another mode of human concepts which is still a “system” with “formulas” with “meanings.” In short, Musil’s narrator negates human identity but preserves achievements from human society. He only negates the name of human, but further inherits and perpetuates the mode of thinking and experiences from the human society. Musil’s narrator has not yet stepped out of the human world and has not yet enabled a non-human logic.

Instead of only focusing on the human world, Zhang negates human personality through equalizing human beings with other creatures in the phenomenal world. Firstly, Zhang tries to

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<sup>251</sup> German original: Wahrscheinlich ist die Auflösung des anthropozentrischen Verhaltens, das den Menschen so lange Zeit für den Mittelpunkt des Weltalls gehalten hat, aber nun schon seit Jahrhunderten im Schwenden ist (Musil, MoE, 150).

<sup>252</sup> German original: von Erlebnissen ohne den, der sie erlebt (Musil, MoE, 150).

<sup>253</sup> German original: die freundliche Schwere der persönlichen Verantwortung sich in ein Formelsystem von möglichen Bedeutungen auflösen soll (Musil, MoE, 150).

find commonalities between sentient and non-sentient beings. Zhang focuses on proving that both sentient and non-sentient beings have consciousness. “Gold” has weight and can therefore attract other things. We can say that gold has “karmic consciousness (*yeshi*, 業識).” Gold also touches other things, meaning that it also has “transforming consciousness (*zhuanshi*, 轉識).” Gold can also “attract or reject” other things, so gold has “perceptual consciousness (*xianshi*, 現識).” Unlike Musil’s narrator who does not explore the relationship between sentient and non-sentient beings, Zhang’s proof shows that he sees consciousness as the united basis for both sentient and non-sentient beings.

Moreover, Zhang proves that sentient and non-sentient beings can change into each other. “Vegetables, fruits, rice and wheat” can become “human muscles” (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 41).<sup>254</sup> When “tigers, leopards, mosquitoes or gadflies” (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 41)<sup>255</sup> consume human blood, human blood become their muscles. Therefore, sentient beings can exchange within themselves. Also, non-sentient beings such as gold contain elements of the sunlight, so non-sentient beings also exchange within themselves. Human body contains minerals such as “mica or stalactite” (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 41).<sup>256</sup> Therefore, sentient beings and non-sentient beings also exchange. These proofs show that Zhang clearly sees an exchange between different things in the phenomenal world. Whereas Musil’s narrator mainly concentrates on a human-dominated world, Zhang tries to establish deep connections between the human and non-

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<sup>254</sup> Chinese original: 又食牛羊雞鶩肉者，此異性肉，亦化為人肌肉 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 41).

<sup>255</sup> Chinese original: 虎豹蚊虻 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 41).

<sup>256</sup> Chinese original: 雲母，鍾乳 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 41).

human world. Therefore, Zhang's idea of equality in Heavenly Transitions (*tianni*) can be applied to both the human-dominated world and the non-human world. Zhang's understanding of grasping is based on a unity of sentient and non-sentient beings, which includes every phenomenon in the world. This understanding of grasping goes beyond the human world in *MoE*.

This comparison indicates that both Musil's novel and Zhang open up to a world of various perspectives and they respect different perspectives. Musil's novel represents a more anthropocentric perspective, zooming in his scope of research within the realm of the human world. As a result, a sense of possibility in Musil's novel unveils possibilities of various human thought processes. Zhang unveils equality of grasping focuses on respecting different ways of being in the whole phenomenal world including all sentient and non-sentient beings. Musil negates the agency of a human subject, but he still relies on the logic and thought system of a subject. However, Zhang sees the limitation of a human subject, and concentrates on a harmonious relationship between the human world and the non-human world.

#### SUMMARY

In the previous chapter, I raise the problem of the limitation of grasping and the illusory nature of grasping. In this chapter, I try to solve the first problem by equally treating different types of graspings. I try to argue that different graspings are valid under certain conditions. This concept of grasping is exemplified by Zhang Taiyan in the following two examples. First, Zhang argues that the past and the present should be individually treated, and the past as a grasping cannot

dominate the present. Second, Zhang argues that both civilization and barbarianism are equal and people should not use culture as an excuse to invade other countries. These examples show how the equal treatment of different graspings overcomes the limitation of one single grasping. In addition, Zhang's equality refers to equal treatment of differences and the embracing of possibilities.

In this chapter and the previous chapter, I try to discuss a problem in the world of the conventional truth: how to overcome the limitation of grasping in the world of the conventional truth. In order to solve this problem, in chapter 6, I define the concept of grasping, showcase its limitation and argue that it is only an illusory representation of the ālaya consciousness in the world of the ultimate truth. In this chapter, I argue in the world of the conventional truth, different types of graspings should be treated equally, therefore one single grasping would not become the domination.

However, there remains a problem unsolved in Zhang's discussion about the world of the ultimate truth. Given that grasping is an illusory representation of the ālaya consciousness, it does not have essence. In order to give grasping a real meaning, one should discuss the universal basis for all graspings, thus explore the world of the ultimate truth. In the following chapter, I will discuss how Zhang establishes the world of the ultimate truth by answering the following questions: how can one approach the ultimate truth? What does it look like? What is the structure of the world of the ultimate truth in Zhang's understanding? The answer to these

questions will give us a better understanding of the discourse on ontology in Zhang's *qiwu* philosophy and further establish Zhang's "Qiwulunshi."

## Chapter 8 The World of the Ultimate Truth

### INTRODUCTION

In the previous two chapters, I discussed about the world of the conventional truth in Zhang's *qiwu* philosophy and established the necessity to explore the world of the ultimate truth as the basis for the world of the conventional truth. In chapter 8, I am going to further explore Zhang's understanding of the world of the ultimate truth through three perspectives: the method to approach the ultimate truth, the representation of the ultimate truth and the structure of the ultimate truth.

Zhang's understanding of the ultimate truth is based on a Yogācāra Buddhist tradition. As summarized in appendix A, Yogācāra is developed out of *Madhyamika* (*Zhonglun*, 中論) concerns. Whereas *Madhyamika* ends with nihilism, Yogācāra still aims at pursuing the ultimate truth. However, Yogācāra raises a question in capturing this ultimate truth – the ultimate truth precedes any kind of existence (including human awareness), therefore remains inconceivable. Therefore, the central question in Yogācāra is to find a way to obtain the inconceivable ultimate truth.

Zhang Taiyan's "Qiwulunshi" picks up both the debate between *Madhyamika* and Yogācāra and the dilemma within the Yogācāra itself. Zhang chooses Yogācāra rather than *Madhyamika* as one of his theoretical bases in his text. This is exactly because, rather than ending with nihilism

in Madhyamika, Zhang Taiyan wishes to pursue the ultimate truth. Second, Zhang Taiyan also sees the central question in Yogācāra: how to obtain the ultimate truth beyond human conception? In “Qiwulunshi,” Zhang also starts from the conventional world and carefully examines methods and possibilities to achieve the ultimate world. Then he moves his focus towards the ultimate world and understands the aforementioned “Tathagata's Supreme Cognition” as dependent arising from the *tathāgatagarbha*/matrix of the thus-come-one (*rulaizang yuanqi*, 如來藏緣起, *tathāgatagarbha pratītya-samutpāda*),<sup>257</sup> which means the process of becoming the Buddha. Zhang then explores the structure of the ultimate truth using dependent arising from the *tathāgatagarbha*/matrix of the thus-come-one, and he finds a connection between both the world of the ultimate truth and the world of the conventional truth. Therefore, Zhang finds representation of the world of the ultimate truth in the world of the conventional truth, and he provides a solution to the dilemma in the Yogācāra debate.

First, Zhang explores the methods to approach the ultimate world. He starts from the conventional world and explores possible methods of human perceptions to approach the ultimate world. In Buddhism, it is believed that human beings have three epistemological methods to approach the world: perception (*xianliang*, 現量, *pratyakṣa-pramāṇa*), reasoning

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<sup>257</sup> According to the Digital Dictionary of Buddhism, 如來藏 *rulaizang*, *tathāgata-garbha* refers to an embryo that should become a Buddha, or the ‘womb’ where the Buddha-to-be is carried. An expression that refers to sentient beings as the full embodiment of the Buddha’s capability for existence. At the same time, in concrete terms, it is in the condition of being temporarily defiled by non-inherent factors, thus it cannot be called an actualized ‘Buddha.’ Therefore the term refers to the capability for becoming a *tathāgata* that is present in the minds of unenlightened sentient beings. 如來藏緣起 *rulaizang yuanqi*, *dependent arising/co-origination from the tathāgata-garbha*. It can be understood as the dependent co-origination through which an embryo becomes the Buddha.



(*biliang*, 比量, *anumāna-pramāṇa*) and the sages' words (*shengjiao liang*, 聖教量, *āgama-pramāṇa*). These three epistemological methods are called "three meanings of cognition" (*sanliang*, 三量). In "Qiwulunshi," Zhang Taiyan also examines all three cognitive methods and explores whether it would be possible for them to obtain the ultimate truth.

*Xianliang* focuses on individual feelings without a universal basis, and many concepts are not able to be represented through *xianliang*. Similarly, *biliang* concentrates on universal logic. Because all sentient and non-sentient beings have consciousnesses, people can use the logical chain of *biliang* to make the conventional world become interconnected. However, *biliang* forms an endless logical circle without having a first reason. *Biliang* also only focuses on the conventional world and cannot give insight into the realm of the metaphysical basis in the ultimate world. The same is with *shengjiao liang*. A sage might have experienced the ultimate truth. However, the sage needs to convey this experience through language. In Zhang's philosophy of language, there are three methods to establish meanings: "one discusses the realm of meaning, the second deals with cause and effect and the third seeks substance" (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 27).<sup>258</sup> These three methods of creating meanings in language presume human awareness. However, the ultimate truth precedes human awareness. Therefore, one needs to approach the stage of selflessness, and human language fails to unveil anything in

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<sup>258</sup> Chinese original: 一說義界, 二責因緣, 三尋實質 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 27).

ultimate truth. In order to gain insight into the ultimate truth, one needs to get rid of words and let the ultimate truth emerge itself.<sup>259</sup>

Second, Zhang explores the representation of the ultimate truth. In the ultimate truth, no knowledge and language can penetrate into it. It is an encompassing unity without “towards each other” created by separation (*duidai*, 對待, *apekṣya*) It is ultimate clearness. Human beings who experience the ultimate truth are in a moment of *zuowang* 坐忘, or *zuochi* 坐馳, in which they have experiences of totality and absolute unity.

Third, I examine the structure of the ultimate truth as Zhang understood it. Zhang establishes dependent arising from the *tathāgatagarbha*/matrix of the thus-come-one (*rulaizang yuanqi*, 如來藏緣起, *tathagatagarbha pratītya-samutpāda*) as the nature of the ultimate truth. The theory of dependent arising from the *tathāgatagarbha*/matrix of the thus-come-one believes that the world of the ultimate truth is separated into amala consciousness as the consciousness of purity and ālaya consciousness as the consciousness of origin.<sup>260</sup> Whereas amala consciousness is clear from any movement, ālaya consciousness initiates movements in amala consciousness and forges them into images and appearances in the world of the conventional truth. As a result, ālaya consciousness bridges the absolute clearness in the amala consciousness and the world of the conventional truth. Because of this connection through

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<sup>259</sup> Meng Zhuo understands these arguments of Zhang as the epistemological discussion of Zhang’s *Qiwu* philosophy (Meng, *Zhongguo shiyu*).

<sup>260</sup> Meng Zhuo sees this as the ontological discussion of Zhang’s *Qiwu* philosophy (Meng, *Zhongguo shiyu*). Epistemological and ontological discussions form the basic framework of Zhang’s *qiwu* philosophy.

ālaya consciousness, the unrepresentable ultimate truth is connected with the representable world of the conventional truth. The representation of the world of the conventional truth is therefore an indirect representation of the world of the ultimate truth.<sup>261</sup>

In short, by establishing the dependent arising from the *tathāgatagarbha*/matrix of the thus-come-one as the ultimate truth, Zhang achieves two goals. On the one hand, because of the amala consciousness which is the absolute clearness, Zhang establishes the ultimate truth which precedes human perception; on the other hand, because ālaya consciousness connects the world of the ultimate truth and the world of the conventional truth, it enables the representation of the world of the ultimate truth through the world of the conventional truth. The discussion about the ultimate truth in Zhang's *qiwu* philosophy thus solves the Yogācāra dilemma: to represent the ultimate truth beyond human perception.

Whereas chapters 8 and 9 discuss Zhang's world of the conventional truth, chapter 10 analyzes Zhang's world of the ultimate truth. In the next chapter, I am going to explore Zhang's personal attitude towards both worlds. Is the world of the ultimate truth more important for Zhang, or is Zhang's focus more on the world of the conventional truth?

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<sup>261</sup> Compared to the inexhaustible conditioned arising (*wujin yuanqi*, 無盡緣起) which only circles in the world of the conventional truth, the dependent arising from the *tathāgatagarbha*/matrix of the thus-come-one (如来藏緣起) combines both the world of the conventional truth and the world of the ultimate truth and thus should be the real ultimate truth.

If all of different types of grasping, being empty, are equally valid, then would there be a basis which unites all different types of grasping? Zhang raises this question and tries to understand the essence behind individual grasping.

Thus he [Zhuangzi] asks the question about the correct place, correct taste and correct color. Because the ability to feel is different, the feeling of beings is not fixed. This is also to break the grasp of [attachment to] dharmas (Zhang, *Qiwulunshi*, 50-1).<sup>262</sup>

Given the individuality of grasping, we are already aware that “people who know things are different, and the things being felt are also not certain.” In “*Qiwulun*,” Zhuangzi asks about the “correctness” of place, taste, and color:

When humans sleep in a damp place, they wake up deathly ill and sore about the waist – but what about eels? If humans live in trees, they tremble with fear and worry – but how about monkeys? Of these three, which ‘knows’ what is the right place to live? Humans eat the flesh of their livestock, deer eat grass, snakes eat centipedes, hawks and eagles eat mice. Of these four, which ‘knows’ the right thing to eat? Monkeys take she-monkeys for mates, elks mount deer, male fish frolic with female fish, while humans regard Mao Qiang and Lady Li as great beauties – but when fish see them they dart into the depths, when birds see them they soar into the skies, when deer see them they bolt away without looking back. Which of these four ‘knows’ what is rightly alluring? (Zhuangzi, *Ziporyn*, 19).<sup>263</sup>

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<sup>262</sup> Chinese original: 故發正處正味正色之問。明能覺著既殊，則所覺著非定，次亦所以破法執也 (Zhang, *Qiwulunshi*, 50-1).

<sup>263</sup> Chinese original: 民濕寢則腰疾偏死，然乎哉？木處則惴慄恟懼，猿猴然乎哉？三者孰知正處？民食芻豢，麋鹿食薦，螂蛆甘帶，鴟鴞耆鼠，四者孰知正味？猿獮狙以為雌，麋與鹿交，與魚游。毛嬙麗姬，人之所美也，魚見之深入，鳥見之高飛，麋鹿見之決驟。四者孰知天下之正色哉？ (Zhuangzi, 30).

Zhang quotes Zhuangzi's perspective to raise the question of understanding the metaphysical basis for grasping, to understand "real position, real smell and the real color" behind the illusive and the relative.

Zhang further explores the possibility of human to achieve this metaphysical basis for grasping.

In Yogācāra thought, there are

three means of valid cognition according to the early school of Buddhist logic: (1) to perceive directly through the senses/intuition (*pratyakṣa-pramāṇa*) *xianliang* 現量; (2) to know by inference (*anumāna-pramāṇa*) *biliang* 比量; (3) to know by the authority of the scriptures/the sages words (*āgama-pramāṇa*) *shengjiao liang* 聖教量 (Digital Dictionary of Buddhism).

In Zhang Taiyan's "Qiwulunshi," Zhang deploys the Yogācāra concept of three means of valid cognition as three epistemological methods to approach the ultimate world. To begin with, Zhang discusses the two "measuring"/ or "parts of a syllogism" (二量) in Yogācāra Buddhism, namely appearance/intuition (*xianliang*, 現量) and inference (*biliang*, 比量).

Appearance/intuition refers to the original, instant and direct understanding of the knowing subject towards the known object (Huiyen, 177). Inference refers to the knowing of an object through reasoning, induction, analysis, which perceives the world through self-constructed division of images. Because inference is restricted by personal grasping, will and opinions, it is a rather negative method of measuring in Consciousness-Buddhism, namely "false discrimination" (*xuwang fenbie*, 虛妄分別, *vikalpa*) and "邪慧 the heretical wisdom" (Huiyen, 185). Zhang takes the understanding of *biliang* and *xianliang* from Yogācāra Buddhism. As argued by Zhang,

“Interface with the world (*jie*, 接)” is also called to perceive through encounter, what modern people call sensation (*ganjue*, 感覺). That “scheming (*mo*, 謨)” in terms of scale is thinking (as taking an image) (*xiang*, 想); “scheming (*mo*)” in terms of deliberation is to contemplate (*si*, 思). The Mo Jing says that contact (*jie*) is closeness (*qin*, 親), which is intuition (*xianliang*, *pratyaksam*). It says that planning (*mo*) is speaking, which is reasoning (*biliang*, *anumana*). (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 11)<sup>264</sup>

Lastly, *shengjiao liang* is the words passed on from the sage. Using *shengjiao liang* as a method to obtain the ultimate truth, one has to consider the problem of language – words and intentions of words are unstable. Zhuangzi also criticizes *shengjiao liang* by problematizing the idea of language in his writings. In “Heaven’s Course,” Zhuangzi tells the following story about the sage’s words:

Duke Huan was reading up in his pavilion, while Wheelwright Flatty was hewing a wheel below. Putting down his hammer and chisel, he ascended and asked Duke Huan, “Sir, may I ask what sort of words you are perusing?”

The Duke said, “The words of the sages.”

“Are those sages still alive?”

“They are dead,” said the duke.

“Then what you are perusing is no more than the dregs and dust of the ancients.”

Duke Huan said, “Does a Wheelwright dare pass judgment on what his ruler reads? If you can explain yourself, well and good. If not, you shall die.”

Wheelwright Flatty said, “I am looking at it from the point of view of my own profession. In hewing a wheel, if I spin slowly and make the hub too loose, it attaches easily to the crossbar but not firmly. If I spin quickly and make it too

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<sup>264</sup> Chinese original: 彼接亦謂觸受，並即近人所謂感覺；彼謨從規謨義，即是想；彼謨從謀慮義，即是思。《墨經》說接為親，是即現量；說謨為說，是即比量 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 11).

tight, I have to struggle to attach it, and it still never really gets all the way in. I have to make it not too loose and not too tight, my hand feeling it and my mind constantly responsive to it. I cannot explain this with my mouth, and yet there is a certain knack to the procedure. I cannot even get my own son to grasp it, so even he has no way to learn it from me. Thus I am already seventy years old and still here busily hewing wheels as an old man. The ancients died, and that which they could not transmit died along with them. So I say that what you, my lord, are perusing is just the dregs and dust of the ancients, nothing more!" (Zhuangzi, Ziporyn, 116).<sup>265</sup>

According to Wheelwright Flatty's words, the sage might have known the truth. However, with the death of the sage, knowledge and experiences which "they could not transmit died along with them." With the death of the sage, the only thing left from the sage is only their words. However, for real practical job such as hewing a wheel, practical experiences are required. If one spins "slowly and make the hub too loose, it attaches easily to the crossbar but not firmly"; if one spins "quickly and make it too tight," one has "to struggle to attach it, and it still never really gets all the way in." One has to tighten it at exactly the right degree. It is the cooperation between "hand feeling" and "mind." This nuanced technique is extremely intricate, and is almost impossible to be passed on. Wheelwright cannot explain this with his mouth, and he cannot even get his son to grasp it. Even his son cannot learn the knowledge and experiences his father wishes to transmit, not to say "the words of the sages" from dead people. This example shows that experiences and knowledge cannot be transmitted through words. Words cannot accurately capture contingent phenomena which requires adjustment and adaptability.

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<sup>265</sup> Chinese original: 桓公讀書於堂上，輪扁斲輪於堂下，釋椎鑿而上，問桓公曰：“敢問，公之所讀者何言邪？”公曰：“聖人之言也。”曰：“聖人在乎？”公曰：“已死矣。”曰：“然則君之所讀者，古人之糟粕已夫！”桓公曰：“寡人讀書，輪人安得議乎！有說則可，無說則死！”輪扁曰：“臣也以臣之事觀之。斲輪，徐則甘而不固，疾則苦而不入，不徐不疾，得之於手而應於心，口不能言，有數存焉於其間。臣不能以喻臣之子，臣之子亦不能受之於臣，是以行年七十而老斲輪。古之人與其不可傳也死矣，然則君之所讀者，古人之糟粕已夫！” (Zhuangzi, 158-159).

Given the complicated circumstances constantly in change, established words from the sage passed down on from the past could not suffice.

#### FAILURE OF *XIANLIANG*

While Zhang sees the need to pursue an ultimate world, he examines the “three meanings of cognition” (*sanliang*, 三量) – perception (*xianliang*, 現量, *pratyaksam*), reasoning (*biliang*, 比量, *anumana*) and the sages’ words (*shengjiao liang*, 聖教量) – one by one. The first method Zhang examines to get to the realm of the ultimate truth (*paramârtha-satya*) is through intuition (*xianliang*), the ability to feel things. However, *xianliang* only provides individual perspectives, but not a universal basis. The failure of *xianliang* can be seen in the following example. Zhang firstly raises the question about the correlation between individual perception and generalized perception described in words:

The capacity to feel and the object felt mutually depend on one another. Are the phenomena of green, yellow, sweet and bitter really green, yellow, sweet and bitter? (Zhang, *Qiwulunshi*, 54).<sup>266</sup>

“The capacity to feel” is a direct reference for *xianliang*. When talking about feelings, one thinks of the perception of “the five senses,” of the eyes (vision), ears (sound), tongue (taste), nose (smell), body (touch). The colors of “green and yellow” refer to the perception of eyes. “Sweet and bitter” as taste refer to the perception of tongue. They all belong to the perception of “the five senses” and are therefore (*xianliang*). The quote points to the concept of *xianliang* and

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<sup>266</sup> Chinese original: 能覺所覺，猶是更互相待。青黃甘苦諸相，果如是青黃甘苦否？(Zhang, *Qiwulunshi*, 54).



tries to ask the question: whether the individual perception of “green, yellow, sweet and bitter” really corresponds with the general meaning of “green, yellow, sweet and bitter” in everyone else’s understanding?

Zhang claims that individual feelings of “the five senses” do not correspond with a generalized described perception expressed through established language. Different people would have different feelings, therefore, “the ability to feel and things to be felt” are “not eternal.”

Different people would have different interpretation of “green and yellow, sweet and bitter.”

For example, “the people of this country have pure black eyes and the people of that country have eyes that are bright as if soaked in blue, will they see colors without difference?” (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 32).<sup>267</sup> If both Chinese people and Western people see the color of red at the same time, then Chinese people would see purple (增黑即紫, if one adds black, one gets purple”

(Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 32)) Western people would see navy blue (增藍即紺, if one adds blue, one gets navy blue. (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 32))<sup>268</sup> “The person with black eyes sees red as actually purple and the person with blue eyes sees red as actually navy blue” (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 44).

Although Zhang makes a scientific error<sup>269</sup> here, according to his logic, we can still say that people with different preconditions might have different feelings of a same object. Therefore,

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<sup>267</sup> Chinese original: 然此土人眼黑如純漆，彼土人眼瞳而漬藍，視色寧無差異 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 32).

<sup>268</sup> Chinese original: 此黑眼人所得赤色如實是紫，藍眼人所得赤色如實是紺 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 33).

<sup>269</sup> Meng Zhuo annotates that if one sees from the perspective of medical science, the difference between black eyes and blue eyes is that they have different irises. When people see things, light comes into the pupil and falls onto the retina. Therefore, the color people see has nothing to do with the color of the retina. Zhang makes a scientific mistake here (Meng, Annotation, 207).

intuition (*xianliang*) is not something which can form the “eternal” rule for every individual.

Perception through intuition cannot be a universal basis for grasping.

Further, sometimes, a person cannot even know whether a thing can be represented in *xianliang* or not. This can be seen in the example of the medium of light.

Some say that light travels based on a medium such as the air. If there is no air, then there would be ether which conducts the light. ...But people can all experience and know that the flow of light depends on energy [in the air]. Glass pushes out air, but light can pass through it. Speaking from this perspective, there is a subtle energy, ether, which can conduct light. But how can one prove that there is ether? Some say that in true emptiness there is energy, but like ether it cannot be proven<sup>270</sup> (Zhang, Qiwlunshi, 55).<sup>271</sup>

“Some say that light travels based on a medium such as the air,” so there has to be a medium through which light passes. However, it is clear that light can still penetrate space without air. As can be seen in the example that when “glass pushes out air, light can pass through it.” Therefore, air is not the medium for light. People then define the medium of “ether” as the medium for light. However, what is “ether”? Can it be felt or touched through intuition (*xianliang*)? We may say that there is energy “in true emptiness.” However, we can neither see nor feel this energy through *xianliang*. It would be “difficult to prove” that this energy should be “ether” using *xianliang*. Therefore, we cannot prove that ether exists through *xianliang*. This example shows that some created names might only exist on paper, but do not have a

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<sup>270</sup> The smaller font is Zhang Taiyan’s own annotation to his text.

<sup>271</sup> Chinese original: 亦云光所由傳，待諸游氣轉上氣盡，別有伊態爾者為之傳引。...然傳光待氣，世所證知，以頗黎瓶排令氣盡，光復得通，由此說言，復有精氣，名伊態爾，為能傳光，而彼伊態爾者，誰所證得？或說真空中有欵柰盧雞，其無證亦同此 (Zhang, Qiwlunshi, 55).

corresponding reality. *Xianliang* has its limitations and not everything can be represented through *xiangliang*.

The previous two arguments show the limitation of *xiangliang*: it is either individual or an object cannot be represented through *xiangliang*. Therefore, *xiangliang* cannot unveil the ultimate truth as a basis for everything.

FAILURE OF *BILIAN*G AND INEXHAUSTIBLE CONDITIONED ARISING (*WUJIN YUANQI*, 無盡緣起)

The second epistemological method of human beings is *biliang* (inference). Whereas *xianliang* conforms to individual feelings, *biliang* is based on a universal logic. *Biliang* refers to logical connections between different things, which deploys the rule of cause and effect. (According to inexhaustible conditioned arising (*wujin yuanqi*, 無盡緣起), everything is united into one. In this sense, every object and rule in the conventional world (*sudi/samvrti-satya*) forms an interconnected network.)

The common people all say that light depends on the rotation of the sun or that it depends on fire or electricity. Some say that light travels based on a medium such as the air. If there is no air, then there would be ether which conducts the light. In this case, the sun, fire, electricity and so on are the root causes and the rest are external causes. However, light, heat and electricity consecutively mutually produce each other without stop (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 55).<sup>272</sup>

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<sup>272</sup> Chinese original: 世人皆云光待日輪，或復待火，或復待電；亦云光所由傳，待諸油氣轉上氣盡，別有伊態爾者為之傳引。此則日火電等為其本因，餘悉外緣。然彼光熱電展轉相生，有無窮過 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 55).

Ether is an “outside reason” for light. Because when air does not exist, then we would depend on “ether” as a medium “which spreads the light.” “Sun,” “fire,” and “electricity” are “ultimate reasons” which give birth to light. Further, using the universal logic of *biliang*, we can prove that “light, heat and electricity consecutively mutually produce each other without stop.” Light would turn to heat, heat into electricity, and electricity back to light. This logical chain would be endless. *Biliang* forms a closing logical circle without reaching out to the ultimate truth that could go beyond this circle.

The previous example only shows that *biliang* functions within the circle of light, heat and electricity. The further question to answer is whether this logical reference of *biliang* can be inferred to every other being in the conventional world in a broader sense. The broader applicability of *biliang* presumes that all beings in the conventional world share a common basis. If one could establish this common basis, beings in the conventional world would have the potential to be transferred to each other. This transformation is then accomplished through *biliang*. Thus, a united basis of grasping can be perceived through *biliang*, which could then be the common basis for beings in the conventional world.

Zhang argues that this common basis which unites the world of both sentient being and non-sentient being is consciousness (*shi*, 識, *vijñāna*). As we know, sentient beings are able to be conscious of things. Therefore, all sentient beings have consciousness (here *manas* consciousness). Do non-sentient beings also have consciousness? Zhang, following the theories of *Mahāyāna Awakening of Faith* (*Dasheng qixin Lun*, 大乘起信論), argues that non-sentient

beings also have consciousness.<sup>273</sup> For example, he asserts that gold has consciousness.

“Although one names this yellow gold molecule as if it does not have life, it actually has life”

(Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 39).<sup>274</sup> It is to say that gold also has consciousness, and even awareness

(quote in endless genesis).

In the “The Whole World” Guan Yin says: “I do not dwell in a space and the myriad images of things naturally appear.”<sup>275</sup> “Not dwelling” is karmic consciousness (*yeshi*). “Images of things naturally appear” refers to the perceptual consciousness (*xianshi*) arising depending on the transforming consciousness (*zhuanshi*). Gold has weight and can attract things. This is karmic consciousness (*yeshi*). It can touch other things; this is transforming consciousness (*zhuanshi*). It can combine with and repel things; this is the perceptual consciousness (*xianshi*). Therefore gold also has consciousness and all non-living things are like this (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 39).<sup>276</sup>

With “weight,” gold can attract other things and therefore has “karmic consciousness (*yeshi*, 業

識).” Being able to “touch other things,” gold can have “functioning consciousness (*zhuanshi*, 轉

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<sup>273</sup> According to Wang Xiaojie’s reading, traditional Buddhist theories differentiate between sentient beings and non-sentient beings. (Wang Xiaojie, 102) Meng Zhuo also argues that “non-sentient beings have Buddha-nature” is the shared argument among Tiantai (天台), Huayan (華嚴), Zen Buddhism (禪宗). However, in traditional Consciousness-Only Buddhism, non-sentient beings do not contain Buddha-nature. (Meng, Zhongguoshiyu) However, Zhang makes a significant contribution to Consciousness-Only Buddhism in that he uses the logic of Consciousness-Only and proves that both sentient beings and non-sentient beings have consciousnesses, meaning that they share the traits. Zhang therefore unifies the world under consciousness, which paves way for his following discussion about the theory of inexhaustible conditioned arising (*wujin yuanqi*, 無盡緣起, *pratitya samuṭpada*) in Chinese Huayan School of Buddhism (華嚴宗) and Zhuangzi’s 萬物與我為一 (all things are one with me). Both of which claim interrelationship between all different beings in the world. This is one significant move in Zhang’s “Qiwu” (齊物) philosophy. As argued by Meng Zhuo, “proving that gold molecule also has consciousness is the step to prove that all non-sentient beings and small particles in the world have consciousness. This is the significant creation of Zhang’s Buddhism philosophy” (Meng, 241). This move shows how Zhang connects Zhuangzi, Consciousness-Only and Huayan Buddhism.

<sup>274</sup> Chinese original: 又此黃金分子，雖名無生，其實有生 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 39).

<sup>275</sup> Original translation: “Guan Yin said, ‘When nothing dwells within you, the forms of all things manifest in you naturally’” (Zhuangzi, 2020, 271).

<sup>276</sup> 《天下》篇引關尹曰：“在己無居，形物自箸。”無居即業識，形物自箸即依轉識所起現識。金有重性能引，此即業識；能處他物，此即轉識；或和或距，此即現識。是故金亦有識，諸無生者皆而 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 39).

識). Being able to “combine with and repel” other things shows that gold has “perceptual consciousness” (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 56).<sup>277</sup> In short, gold as a non-sentient being also has consciousness. Similar to gold, as long as an object is present, non-sentient beings also have consciousness. Given that both sentient and non-sentient beings have consciousness, they share similar bases, and connect to each other. All sentient and non-sentient beings in the conventional world are united through consciousness. Therefore, one can say that consciousness can become the basis of grasping which can be perceived through *biliang*.

To establish the common ground of consciousness between sentient and non-sentient beings can be seen as a significant move in Zhang’s “Qiwu” philosophy. Wang Xiaojie argues that in the Buddhist tradition, it is believed that non-sentient beings do not have lives and consciousnesses (Wang Xiaojie, 101-102). If non-sentient beings would not possess consciousness, then non-sentient beings and sentient beings are not inherently connected to each other. Non-sentient beings therefore cannot be transferred to sentient beings. There would be no basis which could unite both sentient and non-sentient beings and the whole world of conventional truth would not be interrelated or united. It would prove to be a failure to find a common foundation for all beings in the world of the conventional truth. From Zhang’s perspective, in order to solve this problem, one has to find a common ground for the sentient and non-sentient beings. Zhang achieves this by asserting that non-sentient beings also have consciousness. Consciousness

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<sup>277</sup> Chinese original: 細與心不相應 / 現識 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 39)

therefore becomes the common ground which bridges sentient and non-sentient beings.

Therefore, all things are interrelated and they exist in relationship with others.

United through consciousness, every being in the conventional world is interrelated. First, sentient beings contain each other.

Moreover, with respect to those who eat beef, mutton, chicken and duck meat, these various meats of different types also become part of human flesh. Vegetables, grain and fruits are also the same. When tigers, leopards, mosquitoes or gadflies eat or bite people, it also has this transformation (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 41).<sup>278</sup>

Zhang describes an endless connecting chain. Humans eat animals and transform animal muscles into human muscles. Similarly, human muscles are consumed by animals and further turned into animal muscles.

Transformation and interrelationship are not only confined within the transformation of muscles.

Not just blood, flesh, muscle and sinews are like this. Even sperm is transformed and assimilated from various food and drink. In this case, sperm is also an agglomeration of innumerable different types of life. It is easy to see how they are mutually seeds of one another (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 41).<sup>279</sup>

It is clear that “immeasurable lives of different natures” such as “different diets” can change into sperms, and vice versa.

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<sup>278</sup> Chinese original: 又食牛羊雞鶩肉者，此異性肉，亦化為人肌肉，菜果穀麥亦爾。虎豹蚊虻，食人嚼人，其化亦爾 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 41).

<sup>279</sup> Chinese original: 非直血肉筋腱各種果色為然，且如精子，亦由各種飲食展轉同化，如是精子亦緣無量異性生命集成，其更相為種益明 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 41).

Even non-sentient beings are connected to sentient beings. For example, “human body not only contains microorganism, but also contains minerals – some eat mica or eat stalactite. They can all penetrate the human body” (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 41).<sup>280</sup> This quote shows that “minerals” are connected to human body. When people eat “mica or stalactites,” they “all could become a part of human life.” From these examples, we see that sentient beings are connected to each other, and non-sentient beings are also connected to sentient beings.

Further, non-sentient beings, such as gold, are also connected to other non-sentient elements.

Moreover, this gold molecule contains an obstruction in its body. The color is yellow [and the body is obstruction]. ... According to common theory, the various colors depend on absorbing sun light, does the sun light penetrate things? If the sun light does not penetrate yellow, the color yellow cannot be formed; if the sun penetrates into yellow, then in gold, there is an element of the sun. So, gold is not pure gold, but a combination (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 39).<sup>281</sup>

People have proved that “colors come into being all because they have attracted sun light.” Given that “the gold has the yellow color,” the gold should have contained “elements of the sun.” If the sun light had not penetrated the gold, “then there would not be the color of yellow” on the gold. Therefore, we can further infer that the sun actually “penetrate into the gold.” This quote proves that gold is not pure gold, but also contains elements from the sun. Gold is the

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<sup>280</sup> Chinese original: 下逮金石，既亦含於人體，或啖云母，或餐鍾乳，悉可攝受為人身分 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 41).

<sup>281</sup> Chinese original: 又此黃金分子，體有質礙，色則是黃...世俗證言諸有色者攝日光故，然此日光為染不染？若不染者，黃則不成；若有染者，金中亦有日分。是故金費純金，唯是集合 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 39).



aggregate of different other elements. This means that one established non-sentient being is also connected to other non-sentient beings. Given that sentient beings and non-sentient beings are interrelated, we understand that each being gives birth to the other and becomes the reason for the other.

This theory which describes the interconnection of the world is called “inexhaustible conditioned arising” (*wujin yuanqi*, 無盡緣起). “Conditional arising/dependent origination” is an important Buddhist concept to explain the origination of the conventional world. According to the Nichiren Buddhism Library,

dependent origination/arising (緣起・因緣) (*pratīya-samutpāda*; Pali *paticca-samuppāda*; engi or innen), also dependent causation or conditioned co-arising, is a Buddhist doctrine expressing the interdependence of all things. It teaches that no beings or phenomena exist on their own; they exist or occur because of their relationship with other beings and phenomena. Everything in the world comes into existence in response to causes and conditions. That is, nothing can exist independent of other things or arise in isolation. The doctrine of the twelve-linked chain of causation is a well-known illustration of this idea.<sup>282</sup>

“inexhaustible conditioned arising (*wujin yuanqi*, 無盡緣起)” is an important form of “dependent origination.” According to Xiaojie Wang, the theory of inexhaustible conditioned arising (*wujin yuanqi*, 無盡緣起) comes from the Chinese Huayan School of Buddhism (*huayan zong*, 華嚴宗). It is also called *fajie yuanqi* 法界緣起 which is a central topic in Huayan School of Buddhism. Inexhaustible conditioned arising firstly appeared in Master Zhiyan’s (Zhiyan

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<sup>282</sup> See: <https://www.nichirenlibrary.org/en/dic/Content/D/29#para-0>

Fashi, 智儼法師) *Huayan yisheng shixuanmen* (華嚴一乘十玄門) in the Tang Dynasty which says “華嚴一部經宗，通明法界緣起。” (One classic of Huayan illuminates the inexhaustible conditioned arising *fajie yuanqi/wujin yuanqi*.) (Wang Xiaojie, 99) This means that all different beings in the universe are given birth to by the body of the myriad dharma (諸法之體性). This body of dharma is called “One True Dharma Realm” (*yizhen fajie*, 一真法界). The inexhaustible conditioned arising is based on “One True Dharma Realm,” and all beings are representations of this “One True Dharma Realm.” Therefore, in essence, different things merge into each other in an unimpeded harmony. One is everything and everything is one. Wang argues in Huayan Buddhism, inexhaustible conditioned arising (*wujin yuanqi*, 無盡緣起) is the most perfect theory of origination, because it is self-consistent and does not depend on an outer existence (Wang Xiaojie, 99).

Zhang Taiyan borrows the concept of “unlimited dependent co-origination” from Huayan Buddhism and connects it with consciousness in Yogācāra Buddhism. In Yogācāra, the basis of the world is consciousnesses in the world of the ultimate truth. Instead of seeing “One True Dharma Realm” in Huayan Buddhism as the basis which unites beings in the world of the conventional truth, Zhang tries to prove that consciousness in Yogācāra Buddhism unites both sentient and non-sentient beings. Sentient beings have consciousness. Zhang further proves that gold as an example of non-sentient beings also contains consciousness. Therefore, the world of the conventional truth is interconnected through the concept of consciousness. Based on the ubiquity of consciousness, one can demonstrate through *biliang* that different sentient beings can be transferred to each other. Sentient beings and non-sentient beings are also

interchangeable. In this way, Zhang reinterprets the concept of “unlimited dependent co-origination” in Huayan Buddhism through consciousness in Yogācāra Buddhism.

However, the inexhaustible conditioned arising still cannot represent the world of the ultimate truth, because it only depicts endless interconnections in the conventional world without a metaphysical foundation in the ultimate world.<sup>283</sup> In Zhang’s own words,

If one grasps the reality of *dependent co-origination* and analyzes, it tends towards endless amount, and has the problem of endlessness. Therefore, from the perspective of storehouse (*ālaya*) consciousness, one speaks of this atom as an illusion (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 42).<sup>284</sup>

“From the perspective of storehouse consciousness,” if we say that every individual thing, such as “it tends towards endless amount,” then there would be a chain of endless small molecules following each other. As I mentioned before, Zhang argues that “light, heat and electricity consecutively mutually produce each other without stop” (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 55).<sup>285</sup> If we consider the molecules of light, heat and electricity as an example, then we will see that light is the reason for heat, heat is the reason for electricity, and electricity further becomes the reason for light. This will be an endless chain of molecules without a start. “Thought is

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<sup>283</sup> The problem of inexhaustible conditioned arising (*wujin yuanqi*, 無盡緣起) argued by Zhang is an important topic in Zhang scholarship, given that inexhaustible conditioned arising only focuses on the material world/the conventional world without reaching the ontological world/the ultimate truth. For example, Liu Jihui 刘纪蕙 believes that inexhaustible conditioned arising (*wujin yuanqi*, 無盡緣起) does not have the first reason behind it, which fundamentally cancels the assumption of an ultimate origin (Liu Jihui, 40). Fang Dongmei 方东美 argues that inexhaustible conditioned arising is the degeneration of the spiritual world and the loss of meaning in life (Fang, 36-37). Wang Xiaojie also argues that it results in a lack of ultimate goal and ontology, and falls into the shallowness of materialism (Wang, 102).

<sup>284</sup> Chinese original: 此無盡緣起說，...若執是實，展轉分析，勢無盡量，有無窮過，是故要依藏識，說此為分，唯是幻有 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 42).

<sup>285</sup> Chinese original: 然彼光熱電展轉相生，有無窮過 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 55).

continuous like a wave of a chain of money” (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 15).<sup>286</sup> Zhang himself describes this process as “a wave of a chain of money” following each other. In this sense, inexhaustible conditioned arising only arrives at “endlessness,” which excludes a metaphysical foundation. (“there is no first cause”). Inexhaustible conditioned arising circulates within the realm of illusions in the world of the conventional truth, but it cannot not reveal the ultimate essence in the world of the ultimate truth.

In short, people might wish to use conceptual thinking to reach the world of the ultimate truth. Given that both sentient and non-sentient beings have consciousnesses, logic of conceptual thinking can be applied to all beings in the world. Therefore, Zhang argues that everything and One are interconnected. The world of the conventional truth can be explained through an endless logical chain. However, conceptual thinking cannot help to gain insight into the world of the ultimate truth. Therefore, besides discussing about the inexhaustible conditioned arising (*wujin yuanqi*, 無盡緣起), it is necessary to move out of the logical circle within a conventional truth and discusses the dependent arising from the *tathāgatagarbha*/matrix of the thus-come-one (*rulaizang yuanqi*, 如来藏緣起) which combines both the worlds of the conventional and the ultimate truth.

It is clear that both Musil’s *MoE* and Zhang’s “Qiwulunshi” aspire for a metaphysical realm. They both examine human capacity to perceive it. The previous discussion about *xianliang* and

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<sup>286</sup> Chinese original: 念念相續，如連錢波 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 15).

*biliang* describes possible ways to pursue the ultimate world based on logical analysis. Different from Zhang's "Qiwulunshi," Musil's *MoE* attempts to develop a story between two human beings with contrasting personalities – Ulrich and Agathe and use their "sense of possibility" as the springboard to jump to this realm. Whereas *MoE* does not give up further exploring human connections to the metaphysical world and constantly drafts different versions of engagement between Ulrich and Agathe with the aim to capture the transcendental world, Zhang uses his logic to fully negate the possibility of human epistemology to approach this realm. This difference results in two different approaches: whereas *MoE* constantly explores human possibilities to attain this metaphysical world, "Qiwulunshi" gives up human perception to approach this world and turns to the Yogācāra theory which attempts to directly establish the ultimate world beyond human awareness. *MoE* still places hope on human epistemology, but "Qiwulunshi" fully acknowledges the limitation of it. However, both *MoE* and "Qiwulunshi" agree that language is insufficient to represent metaphysics. Zhang's attitude towards language will be further analyzed in the following chapter.

#### FAILURE OF SHENGJIAO LIANG

The third different way which could cast insight into the ultimate world is words of the sages' teachings (*shengjiao liang*, 聖教量). A sage could have experienced the ultimate truth in the past. The teaching which conveys such transcendental experiences are *shengjiao liang*.

Even if one waits on a great sage, the great sage is able to seek evidence for himself, but does not have the language to give evidence for other people.

Since the great sage's words<sup>287</sup> also follows custom, his words do not exceed four sentences.<sup>288</sup> In this case, one can understand the subtle path of "He says nothing by saying something, and says something by saying nothing (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 54).<sup>289</sup>

We might still have the hope that a "great sage" who might have experienced the ultimate world could convey the meaning of it to us. However, although the sage could have "prove[d]" it himself, he "could not prove other things." The reason is that "the sage" has to "follow" the rules of the language, such as "the four sentences," to explain it. However, language only follows the logical form of the "four sentences." Logical form is a product of *biliang* in the conventional truth, so language is only used in the world of the conventional truth. As a result, what is in the ultimate truth cannot be explained through language.

The similar problem of language can be seen in Zhuangzi's "Qiwulun." In "Qiwulun," Zhuangzi argues that

Heaven and earth are born together with me, and ten thousand things and I are one. But if we are all one, can there be anything to say, anything to refer to? But since I have already declared that we are "one," can there be nothing to say, nothing to refer to? The one and the saying are already two, the two and the original unsaid one are three. Going on like this even a skilled

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<sup>287</sup> Here Zhang Taiyan talks about 大聖語 *dashengyu*, which can be seen as a reference to 聖教量 *shengjiao liang*, one of the "three meanings of cognition" *sanliang* mentioned before.

<sup>288</sup> According to Meng Zhuo's annotation, the four sentences refer to "一異，俱不俱，有非有，常無常" (one difference, complete and not complete, have and not have, constant and not constant) in *Da Cheng Ru Leng Qie Jing* (Meng Zhuo, Annotation, 339). It could also mean the four ways of explanation: it is A; it is not A; it is both A and B; it is neither A nor B (Meng Zhuo, Annotation, 338).

<sup>289</sup> Chinese original: 雖復待之大聖，大聖有自證之功，亦無證他之語，以大聖語亦隨俗，不離四句故。夫然，則有謂無謂無謂有謂之妙道，於是斷可識矣 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 54).

chronicler could not keep up with it, not to mention a lesser man (Zhuangzi, Ziporyn, 17).<sup>290</sup>

Zhuangzi holds a negative perspective towards “ten thousand things and I are one” by pointing towards the problem of language. Zhuangzi argues that if all things are one, then the “one” should be the ultimate unity which cannot be separated. Therefore, it is impossible to have a thing to be referred to or a thing to say, since one and the thing to be referred to or to say would be two. As Zhuangzi argues: “the one and the saying are already two, the two and the original unsaid one are three.” Therefore, the attempt to conceptualize “ten thousand things and I are one” already contains the concept of two: the one which is the unity of “ten thousand things and I” and the saying of “ten thousand things and I are one.” Therefore, by saying “ten thousand things and I are one,” Zhuangzi is actually negating the possibility of using language to describe the metaphysical truth.

However, most scholars misread Zhuangzi’s “ten thousand things and I are one.” They interpret this sentence as Zhuangzi’s affirmative reading of the possibility of a representable metaphysical unity, but not the negation of the representability of this unity. In a general scholarly discourse, “all things are one with me” (萬物與我為一) is understood as a metaphysical unity represented in an ethical way. According to Wang Xiaojie, in the Song Dynasty (960-1279) and the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), Chinese scholars also developed similar statements based on a Confucianist ethical perspective. For example, according to Wang

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<sup>290</sup> Chinese original: 天地與我共生，而萬物與我為一。既已為一矣，且得有言乎？既已謂之一矣，且得無言乎？一與言為二，二與一為三。自此以往，巧歷不能得，而況其凡乎！(Zhuangzi, 27).

Xiaojie's reading, before Zhang Taiyan, Zhang Zai (张载, 1020-1077) conveyed similar meaning of unity in his book of *Xi Ming* (西铭) but understood the unity as the basis for benevolence (仁). According to Chen Lai's reading, Confucianist Cheng Hao 程颢 (1032-1085) from the Northern Song Dynasty puts forward the statement: “仁者，以天地万物为一体，” (Benevolent people, they regard myriads of things in nature in the same body) (Cheng, 1517; Chen Lai). Modern scholar Xiong Shili (熊十力, 1885-1968) understands this unity in the framework of body and function (体用), arguing that body and function are unified (Xiong, 316-7). Wang Xiaojie then argues that Cheng's theory focuses on the ethical aspect (Wang Xiaojie, 98). I further extend Wang's observation and argue that there is a general discourse in Chinese tradition which sees the unity between self and objects in an ethical way.

There are also three ontological readings of Zhuangzi's “all things and I are one” (萬物與我為一) in Zhuangzi's scholarship. Two of them seek a representation of “ten thousand things and I are one.” They either wish to represent the metaphysical unity through a logical state in which differences are respected and personalities are manifested (郭庆藩 (1844-1896), 81); or as a method for eliminating differences (钟泰 (1888-1979), 47). The only reading which is similar to Zhuangzi's language critique is the following: to understand “all things and I are one” as a realm of forgetting oneself (王叔岷 (1914-2008), 72; 陈鼓应 (born 1935), 83). Given that language is a production of a person, “a realm of forgetting oneself” negates the existence of language and is therefore similar to Zhuangzi's understanding which believes that language cannot represent the metaphysical unity.



Similar to Zhuangzi, Zhang Taiyan also problematizes the function of language and further argues that it is impossible to represent the ultimate truth through language. According to Zhang, there are three methods one can use to establish meanings in language: “to define the borders of meanings,” to “search for reasons,” and to “know about the essence” (Zhang, *Qiwulunshi*, 23).<sup>291</sup> All of the three methods establish “meanings” in a language. However, all three methods cannot represent the ultimate truth.

The first method is to establish meanings. Establishing meanings through meanings ends with a circulation of meanings.

If one explains a word or seeks a meaning, it is like taking the half of two or doubling a half. If one wants to explain the word “two,” one says that it is doubling one. If one wants to explain the word “half,” one says that it is splitting one into two. Thus the explanation of two and a half, presuppose the idea of one. In this case, when we explain the term “one,” we still do not know the term “two” and a “half.” We used what is not yet interpreted to interpret other things. This is the same as not interpreting (Zhang, *Qiwulunshi*, 24).<sup>292</sup>

In this example, Zhang tries to define the word of “one” by defining its “boundary of meanings.” One can be explained as “the half of two,” or “the twice of half.” However, to understand “the half of two,” we need to firstly understand the meaning of “two.” “Two” can be defined as “twice of one.” In order to understand the meaning of “two,” we still have to firstly understand

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<sup>291</sup> Chinese original: 一說義界，二則因緣，三尋實質 (Zhang, *Qiwulunshi*, 23).

<sup>292</sup> Chinese original: 如說一字，若求義界，當云二之半也，或云半之倍也。逮至說二字時，又當云一之倍。說半字時，又當云一分為二。二與半必待一而后解，是則說一字時，猶未了解二字，半字之義。以其未解者為解，與解不同 (Zhang, *Qiwulunshi*, 24).

the meaning of “one.” Similarly, to understand “the twice of half,” we need to firstly understand the meaning of “half.” “Half” can be defined as “half of one.” In order to understand the meaning of “half,” we still have to firstly understand the meaning of “one.” However, the meaning of “one” is unknown at the very beginning. Talking “about one” will not give us further understandings of the “meaning of two and half.” Therefore, using “terms whose meanings are not clear” such as “two” or “half” to “explain things” such as “one,” “it is not so different from not explaining things.” As a result,

When one begins to discuss the meaning of the term “one,” if a person asks what is “two?” Or what is a “half?” And one again says that double “one” is two and splitting “one” into two is a half, is this not shifting terms around to explain each other? ... In this way, following to the end, one takes the former number for the realm of meaning of the last number. Why is this? ... This is because one cannot avoid using words to explain words and meaning to explain meaning. Numbers and words are finite, so they must mutually explain one another (Zhang, Qiwlunshi, 24).<sup>293</sup>

Using “two” and “half” to explain “one,” and at the same time using “one” to explain “two” and “half,” falls back to “circular explanation.” As a result, we will always “use the previous character as the meaning of the last character.” However, there is “a limited number of words.” In the end, all different words are used to explain each other. “We all explain meanings through meanings, using words to explain words” (Zhang, Qiwlunshi, 32). If all the words only exist to “explain each other,” and we cannot get the meaning of it somewhere else, then it is only “to

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<sup>293</sup> Chinese original: 若初說一字義界時，問者責言何者為二？何者為半？又當舉一倍以明二，舉一分為二以明半，斯非更互相訓耶...如是輾轉至盡，還即更取前字為最後字義界。何以故？...不能捨字解字，捨義解義故，字數有盡，不得不互相解故 (Zhang, Qiwlunshi, 24).

toss and turn its meanings and its characters, they explain themselves” (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 32).

We only get an assembly of explanations with no essence.

Second, establishing meanings in words through reason does not give us insight into words either.

However, one can get nothing from pursuing the reason. For example, if one says, every cell in human body moves. Why do cells move? One explains that all things move, and the cell belongs to one of the ten thousand things, so cells move. Why all things move? One explains that they contain power which moves. Why does power move? One explains that power naturally initiates movements. At this point, language ends and one has nothing more to say. Also, the one who asks why cells move, does he expect the answer that cells just move naturally? Now one already interrogates this far. The final reason is that cell moves naturally. This means that the reason for movement is still movement, and there is no other reason (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 24).<sup>294</sup>

The question of “why cells move?” therefore turns into the question of “why power moves?”

People might argue that “power naturally initiates movement.” Ascribing all of the question to a natural phenomenon ultimately means that the reason “cells move” is that “it just moves naturally.” The reason for its “movement” is still “movement.” Therefore, this reason cannot be an ultimate reason for cells’ movement. It only moves in a circle and finally arrives at its beginning.

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<sup>294</sup> Chinese original: 然責因實不可得，如有人言身中細胞皆動，問細胞何故動？即云萬物皆動，細胞是萬物中一分，故細胞動。問萬物何故皆動？即云皆含動力故。問動力何故動？即云動力自然動。自爾語盡，無可復詰。且本所以問細胞何故動者，豈欲知其自然動邪？今追尋至竟，以自然動為究極，是則動之依據，還即在動，非有因也 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 24).

We also cannot gain meanings through exploring the essence. People might try to regard space which can be split infinitely (*youfangfen*, 有方分), a dividable amount, as the essence and the origin. However, *youfangfen* are objects which “can be analyzed and divided into endless.” As long as a thing can be further divided, the thing is an aggregation of smaller and more fundamental things. This thing/space which can be split infinitely (*youfangfen*) then cannot be the “seed or the origin” (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 33). The dividable *youfangfen* cannot be the origin. When people wish to determine one amount of it as the “seed or the origin,” it turns out that *youfangfen* should be divided into endless small particles which are so small that they can neither occupy space nor be further divided. No space (*wufangfen*, 无方分)<sup>295</sup> is therefore introduced. “So another saying again says that there are *wufangfen*” (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 33). *Wufangfen* is regarded as the most “minute unit” of *youfangfen* (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 34). However,

That which has no space, cannot be perceived and thus has no color, sound, smell or taste. Moreover, one cannot touch it. Because it is not perceivable, one cannot reason about it either. (Any reasoning cannot be formed purely without perception. If there is something perceived, one can reason and think of other examples based on the thing perceived. Now, in the case of non-spatial things, even if one seeks one piece of perception, one cannot attain it. Thus there is no way to reason) (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 26).<sup>296</sup>

Zhang, that is, argues that that which has no space (*wufangfen*) cannot be perceived through sensuous organs (“has no color, sound, smell or taste. Moreover, one cannot touch it”).

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<sup>295</sup> *Wufangfen* means minute things which do not have the four positions or volume.

<sup>296</sup> Chinese original: 若依無方分物質言，唯是非量以無方分者無現量非色非聲非香非味且非是觸無現量，故亦無由成比量，（凡成比量者，彼不能純無現量。若得一分現量，由可推以例他。今此無方分之物質，雖求一分現量，亦不可得，則無成比量法）(Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 26).

Therefore, *wufangfen* cannot be perceived through *xianliang*. Further, in order to “refer” “to other things,” we need at least “a portion of *xianliang*” as the basis of this logical reference. Without getting any “portion of *xianliang*,” it is “impossible to get to *biliang*.” This means that logical inference in *biliang* requires a basis of *xianliang*. (“Everything which becomes *biliang*, cannot contain nothing of *xianliang*”). Therefore, without *xianliang*, it is impossible to make sense of *wufangfen*. Although “people wish to pursue” the “essence” of meaning through *wufangfen*, *wufangfen* is unable to be perceived through both *xianliang* and *biliang*. People ultimately fail to make sense of *wufangfen*, and therefore cannot gain the essence of language.

In all three methods to establish meanings, one fails to establish meanings for language.

As I have discussed above, one explains the realm of meaning, the second deals with cause and effect and the third seeks substance. All of these rely on the language of analysis to form meaning. But when things are formed they are also destroyed. ... Destruction and formation happen at the same time and combine as one. Thus “the man of far-reaching vision does not use them (ultimate truth) and already uses all of them (conventional truth),” because, in the end, one cannot know the ultimate basis of language (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 27).<sup>297</sup>

Through “defining borders,” we fall back into “circulating explanation” within a limited option of words. Through “searching for reasons,” we end up with answering the question with the same question. Through exploring “the essence,” our perception and awareness limit us from unveiling *wufangfen*. We thus fail to establish any meaning through the establishment of words.

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<sup>297</sup> Chinese original: 如上所論，一說義界，二責因緣，三尋實質，皆依分析之言成立自義。然當其成立時，亦即其毀破時...成毀同時，復通唯一，故達者不用而寓諸庸，以終不能知其由然故 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 27).

Because one cannot establish accountable meanings of language and words, the time meanings “are established, is the time they are destroyed.” Both “establishment and destruction happen simultaneously.” This is called temporality (*huanmie xing*, 還滅性)<sup>298</sup> of language. With temporality, language is contingent, and it loses its meaning once its meaning is established. The establishment of language ends in its destruction, and the destruction of language starts its new establishment. The establishment and the destruction of language are actually the same. Both of them “are linked up with each other uniting in one.” For a wise person, therefore, “to give up” language means to “use the language,” and to “use the language” means “to give up” the language. *Huanmie xing* of language can be further described as “language does not have its own essence (*mingyan wuzixing*, 名言無自性).” It means that. It is only a fraction in the chain of inexhaustible conditioned arising (*wujin yuanqi*, 無盡緣起), an illusion in the world of conventional truth. As commented by Yu Yanhong: “language only circulates within its own world and one cannot find the real existence. The real existence is there by itself which cannot be expressed through language” (Yu Yanhong, 29). Therefore, language can only be understood as a phenomenon in the world of conventional truth which cannot unveil the truth in the ultimate world. Therefore, people can never know the “ultimate reasons” in ultimate truth through language. *Shengjiao liang* cannot convey experiences in the ultimate truth either. The failure of *biliang*, *xianliang* and *shengjiao liang* shows that human epistemology cannot achieve

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<sup>298</sup> “Words have the nature of *huanmie*” (Zhang, Qiwulunshi 7) (*Huanmie*, 還滅, the opposite to *Liuzhuan* (流轉). *Liuzhuan* means consistency which does not stop; *Huanmie* means temporality, which stops and disappears instantly. *Huanmie* is an important concept for Zhang’s language philosophy.)

the metaphysical ontology which serves as the foundation (both on the levels of the conventional world and ultimate world) for all graspings.

At the point of language critique, Musil's *MoE* and Zhang's "Qiwulunshi" have similar understandings. Both believe that language definitely fails to capture the metaphysical realm. Whereas Musil practices describing this realm through different representations of language and finds inefficiency of each one of them, Zhang Taiyan analyses the nature of language and attacks the inefficiency of it on a theoretical level.

#### FINAL STEPS TO THE ULTIMATE: SELFLESSNESS AND NEGATION OF LANGUAGE

Zhang argues from his previous proofs that we cannot prove the ultimate truth as the basis for fundamental values through *xianliang*, *biliang* and *shengjiao liang*. This shows that Zhang's ultimate truth as he formulates it goes beyond human perception. He concludes that in order to approach the ultimate truth, one needs to get rid of subject/object and achieve the state of selflessness.

For Zhang, selflessness means getting rid of the grasping of dharmas and the grasping of the self. The discussion about "selflessness" is an important discourse in Zhang's "Qiwu" philosophy. Chen Shaoming believes that the core of Zhang's Qiwu philosophy lies in getting rid of the "self." In his understanding, the reason human beings stick to concepts and things (pursue grasping) is because that they insist on their "self." Only when there is no "self" anymore, there would then be no name, no image. In this way, grasping on name and image

could be “emptied” and the ultimate truth would emerge (Chen Shaoming, 33). Yu Yanhong similarly argues that the realization of utopia by Zhang Taiyan is an almost nihilistic self-liberation. Only when a person finds that the world and one’s self is only illusory, it is the time when the Great Unity (*datong*, 大同) comes (Yu Yanhong, 33).

Approaching selflessness through abandoning grasping can be understood as an approach against the Enlightenment tradition.

Whereas Western modern Utopia and the traditional Chinese society of the Great Unity imply teleology, optimism, determinism and rationalism, the new world depicted in Zhang’s ‘Qiwulunshi’ is non-ideological, non-optimistic and irrational (Yu Yanhong, 35).

Shi Jinggang (石井剛) argues that Zhang constantly claims to argue against the Hegelian historical teleology (Shi Jinggang, 108). For Wu Ruihan, human perfection in Enlightenment is strictly human-centered. Zhang’s pursuit of the ultimate truth achieves the stage of selflessness (*sangwo*, 喪我) as a stark contrast to the perfection of a self.

No matter Descartes’ abstract subjectivity, Kant’s absolute self-awareness, or the Hegelian Absolute Spirit, even post-modern thinkers who criticize and reconstruct subjectivity, all of them aim at constantly discovering and struggling to break away from restrictions for human beings, in order to achieve human freedom to the greatest extent. ... In contrast, for Zhang, it is not the gaining of the “self” as subject, but the loss of the “self” has the ultimate meaning (Wu Ruihan, 52).

According to Wu’s argument, the Enlightenment pursuit of the “self” is only the pursuit of “attachment to a self by discrimination” (*fenbie wozhi*, 分別我執) in the world of the conventional truth. In comparison to the “selfless” in the ultimate truth, this “self” in the world



of conventional truth is illusory. It is only a representation of the ultimate truth in conventional truth, but not the ultimate truth itself.

From the perspective of human language, the negation of *shengjiao liang*, also as the negation of language, paves way for unveiling the ultimate truth beyond words. One could only expect that the ultimate emerge itself in a way which cannot be described through words. Zhang regards this method as the ultimate passage to the ultimate truth.

Following conventional truth, “things all have a so and things all have a particular possibility.” Relying on ultimate truth, the three aspects of interpretation cannot attain meaning. No meaning becomes meaning. Thus, “nothing is not so and nothing is not possible” (Zhuangzi, Ziporyn, 15). It is possible (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 27).<sup>299</sup>

The three methods of creating meanings only function in the conventional world. However, in the realm of the ultimate truth (also *shengdi*, 勝諦), the three methods which try to establish meaning through words fail. The ultimate truth requires one to get rid of meanings in the conventional truth. However, getting rid of words is not an ultimate failure, since it shows what is impossible to unveil the essence in the ultimate truth, so the only way left to unveil the ultimate truth is to get rid of words, to get rid of language “Even if one waits for the great sage, one can still not know the emptiness of living things, ... one can only prove this for oneself” (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 54).<sup>300</sup> This quote negates “a sage” who “prove[s] Sheng Kong”/the ultimate truth through *shengjiao liang*.

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<sup>299</sup> Chinese original: 隨俗諦說，物固有所然，物固有所可；依勝義說，訓示三端不可得義，無義成義，則雖無物不然，無物不可可也 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 27).

<sup>300</sup> Chinese original: 雖俟大聖，亦不可定生空義...故惟有自證也 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 54).

However, it suggests that people might gain insight into the ultimate truth by waiting for it to emerge by itself (“to prove it by itself”).<sup>301</sup> This argument shows that Zhang Taiyan’s argument does not differ from the Yogācāra Buddhism but is an appropriation of Yogācāra. As the *Yogācārabhūmi-sastra* explains, one should “remove any ideation conducive to the proliferation directed at all phenomena” and “should consistently dwell on the thing-in-itself by a non-conceptualizing mental state which is focused on grasping only the object perceived without any characteristics.” What “ideation” grasps is “phenomena” in the world of the conventional truth. However, the ultimate truth is a “non-conceptualizable” realm which cannot be captured by any “ideation.” Although it cannot conceptualize it, it is believed that the ultimate truth is there. Zhang thus says that it is to “get away from language and let the truth prove itself” (Zhang, Qiwlunshi, 53).<sup>302</sup> “This principle should be in the realm of no-language not in the midst of thought and argumentation.” The theory which leads us to the world of the ultimate truth “should be in the realm of no-language,” and it is “not in the midst of thought and argumentation.”

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<sup>301</sup> This “emerge itself” will be further illustrated in the following section on “the matrix of the thus-come-in-one” and “*tianni*/Heavenly Transitions.”

<sup>302</sup> Chinese original: 此理本在忘言之域，非及思議之間 (Zhang, Qiwlunshi, 53).

## THE ULTIMATE TRUTH

If Zhang argues that the ultimate truth would appear beyond selfness and language, then, what does the ultimate truth look like in Zhang's understanding? First, no law and knowledge can penetrate this realm.

What is proved is the state of nothingness. As the Hua Yan Sutra says "There is no dharma [dao] from where wisdom [awareness] enters and there is no wisdom [awareness] that enters dharma [dao]." So although according with convention one speaks of "following (*yuan*, 緣) [dao]," there is actually no following (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 52).<sup>303</sup>

From this quote, we see that the ultimate truth, the state of the ultimate truth (*zhenru*, 真如), is the status of a nothingness to which the word "nothingness" does not apply. This realm does not contain any existence. Wisdom which represents awareness in the conventional world cannot penetrate the realm of the ultimate truth/dharma/Dao. Also, no wisdom which represents awareness in the conventional world can enter dharma/Dao in the ultimate truth. This means that knowledge and awareness in the conventional world cannot penetrate into the realm of the ultimate truth. Language is regarded as "conventions," which belong to the realm of "wisdom" in the conventional world. Therefore, although language tries to describe "following" in the ultimate world, it actually only depicts the concept of "following" in the conventional world, not its meaning in an ultimate sense.

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<sup>303</sup> Chinese original: 所證無有境界，若《華嚴經》說“無有少法為智所入，亦無少智而入於法”，故雖隨俗言緣，其實不緣也 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 52).

Within the realm of the ultimate truth, all the separations (*duidai*, 對待) disappear. The ultimate truth forms an encompassing unity.

“Forgetting each year” (Zhuangzi, 2020, 21) means equalizing life and death. Forgetting meaning/ “Forgetting what should or should not be”<sup>304</sup> (Zhuangzi, 2020, 21) implies sending right and wrong away. Right and wrong and life and death should be wiped out and made into one. The ultimate principle expresses the unlimited. Thus one who lodges in it is never exhausted. (This is the original meaning of Guo) (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 55).<sup>305</sup>

“Life and death,” “right and wrong” are *duidai* which divide the world of ultimate truth into different phenomena in the conventional truth. In the world of the ultimate truth, all of the separations should be suspended: “equaliz[ing] life and death,” “get[ting] rid of right and wrong.” After “clearing away the separation of “right and wrong, life and death,” then it will arrive at the final “unity.” This “unity” is the “ultimate rule” which is “uninhibited.” It “reaches to the endlessness.” People who believe in it would not “have an end” either. Ultimate truth destroys every difference and presents a unity which encompasses everything.

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<sup>304</sup> This argument is based on Zhuangzi’s original text in “Qiwulun.”

“何谓和之以天倪？”曰：“是不是，然不然。是若果是也，则是之异乎不是也亦无辩；然若果然也，则然之异乎不然也亦无辩。化声之相待，若其不相待。和之以天倪，因之以曼衍，所以穷年也。忘年忘义，振于无竟，故寓诸无竟” (Zhuangzi, 34).

What is meant by harmonizing with them by means of their Heavenly Transitions? It means “right” is also “not right,” and “so” is also “not so.” If right were ultimately right, its differentiation from not-right would admit of no debate. If so were ultimately so, its differentiation from not-so would admit of no debate. Thus even though the transforming voices may depend on something, it is tantamount to not depending on anything at all. “Harmonize with them all by means of their Heavenly Transitions, follow along with them in their limitless overflowings, and you will be able to fully live out your years – by forgetting each year, by forgetting what should or should not be, letting yourself be jostled and shaken by the boundlessness! For that is precisely how to lodge yourself securely in the boundlessness” (Zhuangzi, Ziporyn, 21).

<sup>305</sup> Chinese original: 忘年謂齊死生，忘義謂遣是非，是非生死，蕩而為一，至理暢乎無極，故寄之者不得有窮 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 55).

The state of the ultimate truth is ultimate clearness.

But this most pure and quiet heart-mind is originally there and is not an image which one can cultivate. One cannot create its image; in the end one cannot obtain it. Hence one says, “its genuineness would have to be of some kind that is the same whether any definite reality could ever be found for it or not” (Zhuangzi, 2020, 12-3)<sup>306</sup> (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 15).<sup>307</sup>

Zhang cites Zhuangzi to describe the feeling of this experience as a moment of *zuowang* 坐忘, or *zuochi* 坐馳. In the state of *zuochi*, all the logical chains of cause and effect are eliminated, and a person forgets all the separations in the world and feels the unity of all the separations into one.

You have learned how to fly with wings, but not yet how to fly without wings. You have learned the know-how of knowing, but not the know-how of not-knowing. Consider the gaps and cracks and hollows in things (*que*, 闕): it is in the empty chambers that light appears. Sima notes that *que* means empty and that *shi* (室, chamber) refers to the heart-mind. If the heart-mind can be empty, then only pure brightness will emerge. And all auspicious things come to roost only where there is stillness. Whenever you fail to find such stillness for even a moment, you’re just galloping around even while sitting (*zuochi*, 坐馳) (Zhuangzi, Ziporyn, 37-

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<sup>306</sup> This argument is based on Zhuangzi’s original text in “Qiwulun.”

百骸、九竅、六藏、賅而存焉，吾誰與為親？汝皆說之乎？其有私焉？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 (Zhuangzi, 19).

“The hundred bones, the nine openings, the six internal organs are all present here as my body. Which one is most dear to me? Do you delight in all equally, or do you have some favorites among them? Or are they all mere servants and concubines? Are these servants and concubines unable to govern one another? Or do they take turns as master and servant? If there is a genuine ruler among them, its genuineness would have to be of some kind that is the same whether any definite reality could ever be found for it or not (Zhuangzi, Ziporyn, 12-13).

<sup>307</sup> Chinese original: 而此最清淨心，本來自爾，非可修相，非可作相，畢竟無得，故曰求得其情與不得，無益損乎其真 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 15).

8) (Zhuangzi, 48; Zhang, 53: the text in parenthesis is Zhang's argumentations).<sup>308</sup>

In the state of *zuochi*, there would be no limitations set up by grasping anymore. Everything becomes possible: “walk[ing]” can happen “without stepping onto the ground”; “fly[ing]” can happen “without having wings.” In this broad and empty room, “light appears,” and “auspicious things come to roost” and melts into the glory light. In Meng Zhuo's annotation of “Qiwulunshi,” he argues that “all auspicious things come to roost,” which is the same as the “sunlight” shines and “illuminates everything” (Meng Zhuo, *Qiwulunshi shuzheng*, 366). Human awareness cannot make sense of it anymore. Everything unites under an illuminating glory light. This is called *zuochi* “galloping around even while sitting.”

At this point, “Qiwulunshi” and *MoE* come up with similar description of metaphysics, encompassing, illuminating, but yet it is complete emptiness, and is impenetrable. This further crystalizes the problem that it seems to be impossible to gain access to this metaphysical realm from the human perspective. Then how can one conceive the unconceivable?

To sum it up, in this section, we consider three epistemological methods: *xianliang*, *biliang* and *shengjiao liang* that Zhang explored to find an encompassing basis for grasping. However, he found that *xianliang* is either individual or inapproachable. Similarly, he argued that *biliang* falls

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<sup>308</sup> Chinese original: 聞以有翼飛者矣，未聞以無翼飛者也；聞以有知知者矣，未聞以無知知者也。(司馬云：闕，空也。室比喻心，心能空虛，則純白獨生也。) 瞻彼闕者，虛室生白，吉祥止止。夫且不止，是之謂坐馳 (Zhuangzi, 48; Zhang, 53: the text in parenthesis is Zhang's argumentations).

into the problem of inexhaustible conditioned arising and ends in circular logic. It fails to arrive at a “first reason.” Finally, he proposed that *shengjiao liang* requires language to convey experiences but that language is a contingent system born out of human awareness. Language cannot go beyond awareness and reach the ultimate truth. Therefore, Zhang argued, epistemological methods fail to make sense of the ultimate truth. The ultimate truth is a realm of “clearness” and “nothingness” without laws and knowledge in the conventional truth. Humans must forget their awareness and arrive at a state without self to gain an insight into this realm.

Human beings cannot reach an encompassing basis which unites all the values in the conventional truth. But at the same time, Zhang was eager to find a universal basis for all graspings in the ultimate world. How could he solve this dilemma? In the next section, I am going to introduce that Zhang creatively equalizes the ālaya co-origination and the thus-come-in-one dependent co-origination (*rulaizang yuanqi*, 如来藏緣起) and separates the ultimate truth into amala consciousness (*jingshi*, 淨識, *anāsrava*, untainted consciousness) and ālaya consciousness (*luanshi*, 亂識, *bhrānti-vijñāna*, disturbed consciousness), therefore he creates a passage between the ultimate truth and the conventional truth. Therefore, each grasping in the conventional truth would contain an element in the ultimate truth.

DEPENDENT ARISING FROM THE *TATHĀGATAGARBHA*/MATRIX OF THE THUS-COME-ONE (如來藏緣起)

Given that human perception cannot approach the ultimate unity in ultimate truth as the basis for the phenomenal world, Zhang tries to create another passage using theories of Yogācāra Buddhism to connect both worlds, so that even human perception in the conventional world could be attached to the ultimate world. Zhang therefore introduces dependent arising/co-origination from the *tathāgatagarbha*/matrix of the thus-come-one (*rulaizang yuanqi*, 如來藏緣起). He replaces inexhaustible conditioned arising (*wujin yuanqi*, 無盡緣起) with the dependent arising from the *tathāgatagarbha*/matrix of the thus-come-one. In the final edition of Zhang's text,<sup>309</sup> Zhang establishes his own understanding of ultimate truth, which is that: dependent arising from the *tathāgatagarbha*/matrix of the thus-come-one, the ultimate truth is separated into the combination of amala consciousness and ālaya consciousness.

In order to understand how Zhang's theory of dependent arising (*yuanqi*, 緣起), we first take a look at ontology in the Yogācāra tradition. In Yogācāra, there are two concepts in the discussion about the metaphysical truth: amala consciousness as the consciousness of purity and ālaya consciousness as the consciousness of origin. In Digital Dictionary of Buddhism, amala consciousness means

pure; spotless, unstained; the permanent and unchanging in contrast with the changing; the pure and unsullied, e.g. saintliness; the true nirvāṇa. Also 菴摩羅; 阿末羅. Cf. 阿摩羅識 (Digital Dictionary of Buddhism).

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<sup>309</sup> According to Li Zhifu (李智福)'s 《章太炎<齐物论释>“初本”“定本”版本源流考》, Zhang Taiyan wrote the first version of this text from 1908-1910, and he finished the revision of the final version of this text from 1915-1917.



It is also regarded as the ninth consciousness in the Chinese tradition. (Digital Dictionary of Buddhism) Wu Ruihan also adds that amala consciousness (*anmoluo shi*, 菴摩羅識) is also called “consciousness of purity” (*qingjing shi*, 清淨識), “spotless consciousness” (*wugou shi*, 無垢識), “consciousness of *tathāgata-garbha*, matrix of the thus-come-one” (*rulaizang shi*, 如來藏識), the ultimate consciousness (*genben shi*, 根本識) (Wu Ruihan, 51).

Ālaya consciousness, also *ālayavijñāna*,

Denote[s] the mental processes that underlie each and every moment of the traditional six forms of manifest cognitive awareness 六識 (*pravṛtti-vijñāna*; 'jug pa'i rnam par shes pa)—a term coined to distinguish it from the continuous yet subliminal ālaya 阿賴耶 or ‘home’ awareness. ... Moreover, the ālaya awareness is said to ‘grow, develop, and increase.’

In the Chinese tradition, *ālayavijñāna* is considered as the eighth consciousness (*diba shi*, 第八識), or the root consciousness (*benshi*, 本識, *mūla-vijñāna*), the ‘consciousness with all the seeds’ (*yiqie zhongzi shi*, 一切種子識, *sarvabījaka-citta*), and the appropriating consciousness (*atuona shi*, 阿陀那識, *ādāna-vijñāna*) (Digital Dictionary of Buddhism).

The definitions show that both amala consciousness and ālaya consciousness can be considered as the ultimate truth. Amala consciousness is “the true nirvāṇa” which is “unchanging.” Ālaya consciousness is also the underlying mental process, the root consciousness and the consciousness with all seeds. The question then comes, if both belong to the ultimate truth, then what is the relationship between amala consciousness and ālaya consciousness? Are they

two separate levels of consciousnesses, or are they the same? What does the ultimate truth look like?

The relationship between amala consciousness and ālaya consciousness has always been a huge discussion in Buddhism. Wu Ruihan summarizes two perspectives of this discussion. The first perspective believes that amala consciousness and ālaya consciousness are fundamentally different, and they are two separate levels of consciousness. Wu Ruihan quotes the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra* (*Lengqiejing*, 楞伽經) which sees amala consciousness as different from ālaya consciousness, the independent ninth consciousness.

如來藏識 (consciousness of *tathāgata-garbha*/amala consciousness) is not within the ālaya consciousness. Therefore, the seven consciousnesses have their birth and death, but the consciousness of *tathāgata-garbha* is not born or dead (Bodhiruci, *putiliuzhi* 菩提流支, ?-527) (my own translation).<sup>310</sup>

According to Wu's reading, this quote shows that the ālaya consciousness is not the constant body/noumenon/ontology. Instead, because it gives birth to endless beings, ālaya consciousness contains separation and annoyance, and is therefore not absolutely pure or

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<sup>310</sup> Bodhiruci (?-527AD) is a Buddhist scholar-monk, one of the most prolific translator of Sanskrit Buddhist texts into Chinese. He was originally from northern India, and after settling down in the Northern Wei capital of Loyang, completed the translation of over thirty Mahāyāna sūtras and treatises. Most of these were reflective of the latest developments in Indian Mahāyāna, most importantly Yogācāra-related works, and these translations ended up having a major impact on East Asian Buddhism from this time. Among the most important of these were the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra* 楞伽經, the *Diamond Sutra* 金剛般若經, the *Foming jing* 佛名經, *Faji jing* 法集經, *Samḍhinirmocana-sūtra* 深密解脫經, *Dabao jijing lun* 大寶積經論, *Fahuajing lun* 法華經論, and the *Wuliang shoujing lun* (*Treatise on the Sutra of Immeasurable Life*) 無量壽經論. The northern branch of the *Ten Stages school* 地論宗 was formed based on his translation and studies of the *Treatise on the Book of the Ten Stages* 十地經論 (cited from Digital Dictionary of Buddhism).

constant. In contrast, after eliminating all concrete awareness and grasping, amala consciousness is the clean and constant body/noumenon. In this perspective, ālaya consciousness is the eighth consciousness and amala consciousness is the ninth consciousness. They do not share the same body.

Wu further argues that the second perspective sees that ālaya consciousness and amala consciousness share the same body. Amala consciousness is the transformative result of ālaya consciousness. Within this perspective, there are also two sub-perspectives: either both of them belong to the eighth consciousness, or both belong to the body of matrix of the thus-come-one (*rulaizang shi*, 如來藏識).

Wu Ruihan quotes *Discourse on the Theory of Consciousness-Only/Yogācāra* (*Cheng weishi lun* 成唯識論) which believes that both amala consciousness and ālaya consciousness belong to the eighth consciousness.

it (the eighth consciousness) could be named as spotless consciousness (*wugoushi*, 無垢識). It is extreme clean, and all dharmas of purity (*wuloufa*, 無漏法) depend on it. ... Bodhisattvas who are still with dharmas of passions and lower transmigration have not yet perfected and purified the eighth consciousness (Xuanzang, *Cheng weishi lun*, 188) (My own translation).

In this quote, “Bodhisattvas who are still with dharmas of passions and lower transmigration have not yet perfected and purified the eighth consciousness” refers to ālaya consciousness, and “spotless consciousness (*wugoushi*, 無垢識)” which is “extreme clean” and is the basis for “all dharmas of purity (*wuloufa*, 無漏法)” refers to amala consciousness. The perfection and

purified eighth consciousness is the amala consciousness. Therefore, amala consciousness (spotless consciousness, *wugoushi*, 無垢識) also belongs to the eighth consciousness. This means that both amala consciousness and ālaya consciousness are two aspects in the same entity of the eighth consciousness.

The second sub-perspective believe that both amala consciousness and ālaya consciousness belong to the body of matrix of the thus-come-one/*tathāgatagarbha*. Meng Zhuo argues that Zhang's ālaya consciousness is the eighth consciousness, and amala consciousness is the ninth consciousness. Meng argues that Zhang uses theories from *Awakening of Mahāyāna Faith* (*Dasheng qixin lun*, 大乘起信論) to argue that the same body both ālaya and amala consciousnesses share is the body of consciousness of *tathāgatagarbha*/matrix of the thus-come-one (*rulaizang shi*, 如來藏識). Consciousness of *tathāgatagarbha*/matrix of the thus-come-one (*rulaizang shi*, 如來藏識) contains both the eighth consciousness (ālaya consciousness) and the ninth consciousness (amala consciousness). The ninth consciousness/amala consciousness is regarded as the absolute basis (Meng, *Zhongguo shiyu*).

According to Wu's reading, Zhang's perspective is closer to the second perspective which believes that the amala consciousness and the ālaya consciousness share the same body and both form the ontological ground. This dissertation agrees with Wu's reading and also sees that in Zhang's understanding, amala consciousness and the ālaya consciousness share the same body. However, instead of arguing that both belong to the eighth consciousness (the first sub-

perspective), this dissertation follows Meng Zhuo's argument and believes that in Zhang's opinion, both belong to the body of "matrix of the thus-come-one."

I will first demonstrate that both amala consciousness and ālaya consciousness belong to the same body in ultimate truth in Zhang's reading. It seems that Zhang makes contradictory comments to this question. On the one hand, Zhang argues that both ālaya consciousness and amala consciousness have different functions. As argued by Zhang,

The heart-mind is *atuona*/ālaya consciousness,<sup>311</sup> the constant heart-mind is amala consciousness. The so-called constant heart, is the true master (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 85).<sup>312</sup>

This quote shows different functions of ālaya consciousness and amala consciousness. Whereas ālaya consciousness is the "heart," amala consciousness is the "constant heart." Zhang defines the unchanging body as the "amala consciousness." "The real name for the body of no birth-death is also called amala consciousness" (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 91).<sup>313</sup> The changing part is then defined as ālaya consciousness.

The matrix of the thus-come-one which rises and dies following causalities can be transformed into the ālaya consciousness (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 86).<sup>314</sup>

As we know from Yogācāra Buddhism, ālaya consciousness gives birth to life and death. So the ālaya consciousness, "rises and dies following causalities" and is constantly in change.

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<sup>311</sup> According to Huiyen, in *Consciousness-Only/Yogācāra Buddhism*, Xuanzang understands "*atuona* consciousness" as the other name for ālaya consciousness (Huiyen, 40).

<sup>312</sup> Chinese original: 心即阿陀那識，常心即菴摩羅識。彼言常心，此乃謂之真君 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 85).

<sup>313</sup> Chinese original: 正言不生滅體，亦云菴摩羅識 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 91).

<sup>314</sup> Chinese original: 既隨緣生滅，即此如來藏，轉名阿羅耶 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 86).

Zhang also uses a metaphor to illustrate these different functions:

The prime minister (*Zhongzai*, 冢宰) changes and is inconstant, which analogizes *atuona* consciousness which is in constant change. The Great King (*dajun*, 大君) cannot be abandoned, which analogizes *amala* consciousness which is constant (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 85).<sup>315</sup>

This quote clearly states that *ālaya* /*atuona* consciousness is like the prime minister who has a central position to manage the country's ups and downs, so it is a central consciousness and which constantly initiates changes. *Amala* consciousness is like the Great King, the real emperor of a country. It is the constant body which does not change and which cannot be replaced. The Great King (*amala* consciousness) has the power to determine the prime minister (*ālaya* consciousness). In other words, *amala* consciousness is the ontological ground, whereas *ālaya* consciousness describes the origin, which modifies the ontology of *amala* consciousness and changes it to the conventional world.

On the other hand, Zhang also has clear statements which show that both share the same body.

For example, Zhang argues that

Heart of *ālaya* and the constant heart of *amala* have the same body but different activities/karmas. The true Almighty (*zhenzai*, 真宰, *atuona* / *ālaya* consciousness) and true master (*zhenjun*, 真君, *amala* consciousness) are not different (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 85).<sup>316</sup>

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<sup>315</sup> Chinese original: 冢宰更代無常，喻阿陀那恒轉者；大君不可廢置，喻菴摩羅不變者 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 85).

<sup>316</sup> Chinese original: 心與常心，業相有別，自體無異。此中真宰真君，亦彼別說 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 85).

This quote also explicitly states that both “heart of ālaya and the constant heart of amala” have the same body. They could be understood as the true Almighty (*zhenzai*, 真宰, *atuna/ālaya* consciousness) and true master (*zhenjun*, 真君, *amala* consciousness) which are “not different.”

The question then goes: do both ālaya consciousness and amala consciousness belong to the same body or they are inherently different? In order to solve this problem, we need to look at Zhang’s third argument – ālaya consciousness can be transferred to amala consciousness.

Zhang writes:

The matrix of the thus-come-one which rises and dies following causalities can be transformed into the ālaya consciousness (Zhang, *Qiwulunshi*, 86).<sup>317</sup>

His quote not only shows that the ālaya consciousness is a part of the matrix of the thus-come-one, but it also shows that the name of the ālaya consciousness can be a name transformed from the name of the matrix of the thus-come-one. Given that amala consciousness also belongs to the “matrix of the thus-come-one,” (which will be demonstrated below) and “matrix of the thus-come-one” can be transformed into ālaya consciousness, amala consciousness as a part of the “matrix of the thus-come-one” can also be transformed into ālaya consciousness.

Ālaya consciousness and amala consciousness have a transferrable relationship.

Also, as quoted by Wu Ruihan, Zhang argues in his “Establishing Religious Theory” (*Jianli zongjiao lun*, 建立宗教論) that

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<sup>317</sup> Chinese original: 既隨緣生滅，即此如來藏，轉名阿羅邪 (Zhang, *Qiwulunshi*, 86).

When all dharmas of passions and lower transmigrations are perfected and purified, it proves the two voids (二空: the non-reality of the person and things). At this point, the seeds cease (斷, *uccheda*, to cut off), then where is this consciousness? Amala can be translated as spotless (無垢). Amala is the name gained when ālaya consciousness eternally leaves taint of earthly things/illusions (垢染) (Zhang, *Jianlizongjiao*, 435).<sup>318</sup>

This quote shows that when ālaya consciousness returns to nirvana (還滅) and achieves its initial tranquility, ālaya consciousness transforms into amala consciousness. Therefore, they are different representations of the same body. Thus, Zhang believes that both amala consciousness and ālaya consciousness share the same body. Although Zhang also introduces that both have different functions, because they are transferrable, we can still see that Zhang believes that both share the same body.

Second, I demonstrate that in Zhang's opinion, both ālaya consciousness and amala consciousness belong to the body of matrix of the thus-come-one. Although Wu Ruihan argues that both Zhang's ālaya consciousness and amala consciousness belong to the eighth consciousness, and Meng Zhuo argues that Zhang's ālaya consciousness is the eighth consciousness, and Zhang's amala consciousness is the ninth consciousness, this dissertation argues that Zhang does not explicitly use the term of the eighth consciousness or the ninth consciousness to describe both ālaya consciousness and amala consciousness. Instead, both ālaya consciousness and amala consciousness belong to the body of "matrix of the thus-come-one." Because as argued by Zhang,

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<sup>318</sup> Chinese original: 諸漏既盡，證得二空。是時種子既斷，此識復何所在？庵摩羅者，譯言無垢，即此阿賴耶識永離垢染，而得此名 (Zhang, *Jianlizongjiao*, 435).



The body is the combination of no birth-death and changing into birth and death based on causality. This is called matrix of the thus-come-one in Buddhist canon (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 91).<sup>319</sup>

Zhang's words show that the body of matrix of the thus-come-one contains two parts: "the constant body with no death-birth" (*bushengmie*, 不生滅, amala consciousness) and "the body changing into birth and death based on causality" (*suiyuan shengmie*, 隨緣生滅, ālaya consciousness). This quote shows that in Zhang's understanding, both amala consciousness and ālaya consciousness belong to the body of the matrix of the thus-come-one.

By sharing the body with amala consciousness in the ultimate world and giving rise to things in the conventional world, ālaya consciousness bridges the ultimate world and the conventional world. As argued in the previous paragraphs, amala consciousness and ālaya consciousness have a transferable relationship with each other. Amala consciousness shares the same body with ālaya consciousness and can be transferred to ālaya consciousness. As quoted by Meng Zhuo, in Zhang's *The Study of Chinese Cultural Heritage, Distinguishing Nature* (*Guogulunheng, bianxing*, 國故論衡. 辨性), Zhang argues that

One has eight consciousnesses, and the master of them is called the matrix of the thus-come-one. Seeing from the perspective of the matrix of the thus-come-one, a person suddenly does not know about itself and this person sees all different things as dazzling as if they come from remote nations. Things are separated from each other and have their own graspings. This is called ālaya consciousness. The so-called ālaya consciousness holds seeds for all different things. Separations rise from the manas consciousness. The manas consciousness is also called *yigen*. *Yigen* (manas consciousness) constantly grasps the ālaya consciousness as the self. Both ālaya consciousness and

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<sup>319</sup> Chinese original: 其體不生滅而隨緣生滅者，佛典稱如來藏 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 91).

manas consciousness depend one each other to establish, and therefore self-love and self-arrogance arise (Meng, Qiwulunshi Shuzheng, 80).<sup>320</sup>

Arising from the amala consciousness, *atvāna/ālaya* consciousness “holds seeds” and realizes the potential of creating “all different dazzling” things which have their own graspings. In short, amala consciousness “observe[s]” and turns into *ālaya* consciousness. *Ālaya* consciousness “holds seeds” which are necessary conditions for the conventional truth. *Ālaya* consciousness functions as the heart which “holds seeds for different things” and incessantly gives birth to things with “their own graspings” in the world of the conventional truth. Because of *ālaya* consciousness, further consciousnesses are born, such as the manas consciousness (*yigen*) as the awareness of the self, and so on.

On the one hand, *ālaya* and amala consciousnesses share the same body of the matrix of the thus-come-one and unite in the ultimate truth. On the other hand, *ālaya* consciousness gives birth to phenomena in the conventional truth. Therefore, *ālaya* consciousness in the ultimate truth becomes the bridge which connects the ultimate cleanness of amala consciousness in the world of the ultimate truth and the phenomenal world of the conventional truth. *Ālaya* consciousness bridges the world of the ultimate truth (by sharing the same body with the amala consciousness) and the world of the conventional truth (by giving birth to the conventional world). Mediated through the bridge of *ālaya* consciousness, the transcendental body of the cleanness and nothingness in amala consciousness is transformed into the world of the

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<sup>320</sup> Chinese original: 人有八識，其宗曰如來藏。以如來藏無所對，奄忽不自知，視若胡越，則眩有萬物。物各有其分執，是之謂阿羅邪。阿羅邪者，藏萬有，既分即起末那。末那者，此言意根，意根常執阿羅邪以為我，二者如束蘆，相依以立，我愛我慢由之起 (Meng, Qiwulunshi Shuzheng, 80).

conventional truth. To see it from the other way around, every grasping created in the conventional truth correlates with the amala consciousness in the ultimate truth. The nothingness and cleanness in amala consciousness in the ultimate truth, mediated through ālaya consciousness, can therefore be represented through different graspings in the conventional truth. Also, each representation in the world of the conventional truth is a representation of the ontological amala consciousness in the world of the ultimate truth.

Because ālaya consciousness connects both the world of the ultimate truth and the world of the conventional truth, in Buddhist terms, Zhang further argues that the dependent co-origination of the inexhaustible conditioned arising (*wujin yuanqi*, 無盡緣起) should be subsumed under dependent arising from the *tathāgatagarbha*/matrix of the thus-come-one (*rulaizang yuanqi*, 如來藏緣起).

inexhaustible conditioned arising (*wujin yuanqi*, 無盡緣起) is still based on the dependent arising from the *tathāgatagarbha*/matrix of the thus-come-one (*rulaizang yuanqi*, 如來藏緣起) and only stays at the second place<sup>321</sup> (Zhang, Qiwlunshi, 42).

Therefore,

The ignorant Buddhist monks see the inexhaustible conditioned arising as more superior than dependent arising from the *tathāgatagarbha*/matrix of the thus-come-one. This turns the heart and matter upside down and they do not understand the problem of the infinite (Zhang, Qiwlunshi, 42).<sup>322</sup>

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<sup>321</sup> Chinese original: 此無盡緣起說，唯依如來藏緣起說作第二位 (Zhang, Qiwlunshi, 42).

<sup>322</sup> Chinese original: 沙門愚者謂無盡緣起說，視如來藏緣起說為勝，此既顛倒心色，又不悟有無窮過 (Zhang, Qiwlunshi, 42).

“Ignorant Buddhist monks” believe that “the inexhaustible conditioned arising (*wujin yuanqi*, 無盡緣起) is better than dependent arising from the *tathāgatagarbha*/matrix of the thus-come-one (*rulaizang yuanqi*, 如来藏緣起).”<sup>323</sup> This theory “turns the heart and matter upside down.” The dependent arising from the *tathāgatagarbha*/matrix of the thus-come-one (*rulaizang yuanqi*, 如来藏緣起) resembles “the heart,” and the inexhaustible conditioned arising (*wujin yuanqi*, 無盡緣起) resembles “the matter.” “The heart” should be more fundamental than “the matter,” so that the dependent arising from the *tathāgatagarbha*/matrix of the thus-come-one should be more fundamental than the unlimited dependent co-origination.

The reason is as following: Zhang believes that “ignorant Buddhist monks” cannot “understand the problem of the infinite (inexhaustible conditioned arising (*wujin yuanqi*, 無盡緣起))” because the inexhaustible conditioned arising would only circle endlessly in the realm of the conventional world and would not have access to the ultimate world. Therefore, the inexhaustible conditioned arising cannot justify the basis of different grasping in the ultimate world. In contrast, in the dependent arising from the *tathāgatagarbha*/matrix of the thus-

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<sup>323</sup> In Meng Zhuo’s annotation, according to the theory of a sector of the 華嚴 *huayan* Buddhism, 判教 (*panjiao*), Hinayana Buddhism believes in the co-origination of *yegan* (*yegan yuanqi*, 業感緣起), 始教 (*shijiao*) believes in the co-origination of ālaya consciousness (*alaiye yuanqi*, 阿赖耶緣起), 终教 (*zhongjiao*) believes in dependent arising from the *tathāgatagarbha*/matrix of the thus-come-one (*rulaizang yuanqi*, 如来藏緣起), and 圓教 (*yuanjiao*) believes in the inexhaustible conditioned arising (*wujin yuanqi*, 無盡緣起) (Meng Zhuo, Shuzheng, 264). Because 圓教 (*yuanjiao*) is the best Buddhist teaching in 華嚴 *huayan* Buddhism, so *huayan*/Avatamsaka believers think that the true co-origination (*yuanqi*, 緣起) should be the inexhaustible conditioned arising (*wujin yuanqi*, 無盡緣起). Zhang Taiyan argues against this theory of co-origination in 華嚴 *huayan* Buddhism by elevating the dependent arising from the *tathāgatagarbha*/matrix of the thus-come-one (*rulaizang yuanqi*, 如来藏緣起) to the true theory of co-origination (Meng, Qiwulunshi Shuzheng, 264).

come-one, ālaya consciousness unites with amala consciousness in the ultimate world, and it also gives birth to the conventional world. Whereas the inexhaustible conditioned arising only unveils the origination of things in the conventional world, the dependent arising from the *tathāgatagarbha*/matrix of the thus-come-one explains connections between and originations of the conventional world and the ultimate world. The dependent arising from the *tathāgatagarbha*/matrix of the thus-come-one is a more fundamental origination than the unlimited dependent co-origination. Therefore, inexhaustible conditioned arising should be replaced by the dependent arising from the *tathāgatagarbha*/matrix of the thus-come-one.

Zhang successfully unites the world of the ultimate truth and the world of the conventional truth through his interpretation of the dependent arising from the *tathāgatagarbha*/matrix of the thus-come-one (*rulaizang yuanqi*, 如来藏緣起). As argued by Zhang, starting from the perspective of the conventional truth, human perception cannot achieve the matrix of the thus-come-one as the ultimate truth through *xiliang*, *biliang* and *shengjiao liang*. However, Zhang starts from the perspective of the ultimate truth and separates the matrix of the thus-come-one into amala consciousness and ālaya consciousness. Zhang deploys the theory of Yogācāra Buddhism and successfully establishes the ālaya consciousness as a bridge between the ultimate world and the conventional world. Therefore, Zhang successfully arrives at the conclusion that everything in the conventional world, as a product of the ālaya consciousness, represents and carries the spirit of the ultimate unity. Everything in the conventional world can be seen as the universal basis for all grasping (subjects and objects). Each part in the conventional truth contains the ultimate truth/unity in the ultimate truth. The ultimate truth

can be represented through the conventional truth. This conclusion unites monism in ultimate truth and pluralism in the conventional truth and establishes a theory that forges the ultimate truth and the conventional truth into a united whole.

#### COMPARING “DER ANDERE ZUSTAND” IN *MOE* WITH “THE ULTIMATE TRUTH” IN “QIWULUNSHI”

Comparing Zhang’s “Qiwulunshi” and Musil’s *MoE*, one can argue that both of them are concerned with the ultimate world. They both examine the possibility to negate subjectivity, in order to achieve this absolute ontology. They also both characterize this ontology as nothingness and clearness, an absolute unity. In addition, they both see the problem of representing the ultimate truth through human language, given that the ultimate truth precedes human language. These similarities show that similar to Musil’s *MoE*, Zhang’s “Qiwulunshi” also builds on the discourse of pursuing an ultimate world. This builds up another step which prepares us for our understanding of a dual-structure – a structure which combines plurality and unity – in Musil’s *MoE* and Zhang’s “Qiwulunshi.”

Although both *MoE*’s and Zhang’s mystical unities lie beyond the realm of human perception, *MoE* represents a strong anthropocentric perspective which never stops believing in the possibility of humankind to approach to this stage. According to Ulrich, “we therefore may assume the existence of a certain alternative and uncommon condition of great importance, which man is capable of achieving and which has deeper origins than religions” (Musil, *MwQ*,

831-2).<sup>324</sup> This quote shows that “man is capable of achieving” this deeper origin which “has deeper origins than religions.” It shows strong confidence in human capacity, as can be seen in attempts such as approaching “der andere Zustand” through human contact (bondless self-giving and bonding) and language (the sages’ words). The following two paragraphs give examples of this strong belief in humanity.

*MoE* attempts to describe the process towards a mystical unity through human interaction.

Ulrich and Agathe cross their borders to reach “der andere Zustand.” Ulrich and Agathe have contrasting characteristics. On the one hand, Ulrich is “accurate, skeptical, lucid (genau, skeptisch, luzid);” on the other hand, Agathe is “passionate, impatient, intense (leidenschaftlich, ungeduldig, intensive)” (Albertsen, 107). They both have the sense of possibility, and they try to merge with each other through lifting bounds.

That miraculous feeling of the lifting of all bounds, the boundlessness of the outer and inner that love and mysticism have in common (Musil, *MwQ*, 830) ... thus in the head no less than in the heart the delight of self-possession is replaced by a boundless self-giving and bonding (Musil, *MwQ*, 831).<sup>325</sup>

“All of a sudden Ulrich was in Agathe or she in him” (Musil, *GW MoE*, 1448).<sup>326</sup> It seems that they have switched their bodies. “We were outside of ourselves. We switched bodies” (Musil,

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<sup>324</sup> German original: wir dürfen also einen bestimmten zweiten und ungewöhnlichen Zustand von großer Wichtigkeit voraussetzen, dessen der Mensch fähig ist und der ursprünglicher ist als die Religionen (Musil, *MoE*, 766).

<sup>325</sup> German original: Dieses wunderbare Gefühl der Entgrenzung und Grenzenlosigkeit des Äußeren wie des Inneren, das der Liebe und der Mystik gemeinsam ist! (Musil, *MoE*, 765) ... wodurch ein im Kopf nicht minder als im Herz der Genuß am Besitz einer selbst durch ein grenzenloses sich Verschenken und Verschränken ersetzt werde (Musil, *MoE*, 765).

<sup>326</sup> German original: Ulrich war mit einemal in Agathe oder sie in ihm (Musil, *GW MoE*, 1448).

MoE, 1084).<sup>327</sup> As a result, each person devotes to each other. There would be a world „consisting of appreciation, devotion, friendship, and selflessness!“ (Musil, MwQ, 831).<sup>328</sup> In the end, personal insistence on “reality/Wirklichkeit” such as rationality and emotion loosen and there would be a synthesis of the world.

*MoE* conveys an assumption that “der andere Zustand” can be conveyed through language.

Ulrich refers to the sages’ words (Zhang’s *shengjiao liang*) to describe the mystical unity.

This is how the saints describe it. ... I had transcended all my faculties and reached the obscure power. There I heard without sound, there I saw without light. And my heart became bottomless, my spirit formless, and my nature immaterial (Musil, MwQ, 816).<sup>329</sup>

The state of a person who reaches “the obscure power.” The person “hear[s] without sound,” “s[ees] without light.” The heart becomes “bottomless,” the spirit becomes “formless,” and nature becomes “immaterial.” In the end, the sage merges into a realm of nothingness, in which nothing exists. Ulrich and Agathe seem to identify with this description.

It seemed to them both that this description resembled the restlessness with which they themselves had been driven through house and garden (Musil, MwQ, 816).<sup>330</sup>

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<sup>327</sup> German original: Wir waren außer uns. Wir hatten unsere Körper vertauscht (Musil, MoE, 1084).

<sup>328</sup> German original: aus Anerkennung, Hingabe, Freundschaft und Selbstlosigkeit besteht! (Musil, MoE, 765).

<sup>329</sup> German original: Die Heiligen beschreiben es so ... ich hatte alle meine Vermögen überstiegen bis an die dunkle Kraft. Da hörte ich ohne Laut, da sah ich ohne Licht. Da wurde mein Herz grundlos, mein Geist formlos und meine Natur wesenslos (Musil, MoE, 752).

<sup>330</sup> German original: Es kam ihnen beiden vor, dass diese Worte Ähnlichkeit mit der Unruhe hätten, von der sie selbst durch Haus und Garten getrieben wurden (Musil, MoE, 752).



This shows that both protagonists presume that language could convey experiences in a mystical state. The experiences of “der andere Zustand” can be transferred to an explicable experience.<sup>331</sup>

*MoE*'s anthropocentric approach has its innate tension. On the one hand, it has a strong belief in human capacity to understand and pursue a sphere unknown to human beings. On the other hand, it also has to acknowledge that “der andere Zustand” is unspeakable and is beyond human perception. It is therefore impossible to jump from human language and human logic directly to the metaphysical realm beyond human beings. This is exactly what Zhang points out as the problem of inexhaustible conditioned arising (*wujin yuanqi*, 無盡緣起). Every anthropocentric approach which tries to understand the noumenal world is confined within the realm of the human world and can never reach the metaphysical world beyond. In order to reconcile the tension in *MoE*, one has to acknowledge a direct connection between human awareness and the metaphysical world. In other words, one approaches the noumenal world through logical discussions, sequential and successive explanation, and gives the metaphysical world an anthropocentric basis. Unfortunately, *MoE* fails to achieve this reconciliation.

Although the novel develops a hermaphrodite love relationship between brother and sister to

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<sup>331</sup> Harvard dissertation argues that “die Liebesbeziehung der Geschwister nicht als psychologisch interessanter Einzelfall verstanden werden darf” (Burckhardt, 76). However, I would argue against this thesis. I see that there might be symbolic meanings. However, would single examples unveil symbolic meanings? Single examples are single examples, single examples cannot unveil symbolic meanings. In Musil's negation of Diotima and using a reality to negate possibilities, I believe that Musil rejects symbolic representations.

approach the metaphysical world, the transition from the human-relationship to epiphany still remains unclear.

Different from *MoE*, Zhang has a negative perspective towards human capacity. Zhang clearly declares the limitation of human awareness and negates a subjective method to reach out to metaphysics. “For Zhang, it is not the gaining of the subjectivity of the ‘self’, but the loss of the ‘self’ which has the ultimate meaning (Wu Ruihan, 52).<sup>332</sup> Zhang argues that there are three different methods of human perception, *xianliang*, *biliang* and *shengjiao liang*. Zhang negate all of them as an approach to achieve metaphysics. *Xianliang* presumes human awareness and cannot make sense of the world beyond human beings. Therefore, *xianliang* is limited. *MoE* deploys human feelings and experiences (*xianliang*), such as the relationship between Ulrich and Agathe. In contrast, Zhang would argue that *xianliang* as personal experiences is individual and cannot be generalized as a universal basis. What Ulrich and Agathe finally achieve in their attempt of “*der andere Zustand*” is their experience of their own personal borders. It cannot represent the metaphysical unity for all beings in the phenomenal world.

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<sup>332</sup> Wu Ruihan’s original words in Chinese:

無論是笛卡爾的抽象主體性、康德絕對的自我意識，還是黑格爾的絕對精神，甚至是後現代思想家對主體性的批判和重構，都是在不斷發現並極力掙脫對人的層層束縛，以期實現最大限度的自由。即便是揭露主體性話語的權力結構的福柯、稱主體為“運行於能指鏈下的漸然退隱之物”的拉康等人，也始終籠罩在西西弗斯般的悲劇性之中。與此相反，對章太炎而言，不是作為主體的“我”的獲得，而是“我”的喪失具有終極意義。終極的“無我”對俗世的“我”的指導意義在於，真俗兩行，通過隨順依他，將主體的規定性分散到與之關聯的外物上。

*Biliang* describes logical chains developed by human logic. The problem of *biliang* is that it ends in endless logical circles. However, one cannot make sense of a beginning as the basis of this circle. Therefore, *biliang* is a circulation of logic within the phenomenal world. It cannot break the logical chain and approach the ultimate truth. This is the problem of inexhaustible conditioned arising (*wujin yuanqi*, 無盡緣起) which Zhang criticizes. *MoE* believes that the combination of contrasting realities would gain unity. However, for Zhang, “combining separation will arrive at unity” belongs to the realm of human logic. In other words, it is a thinking method of *biliang*. This logic reduces metaphysics to a comprehensible human phenomenon and cannot unveil the real metaphysics.

As argued before, *shengjiao liang* deploys language. Language is a human creation and cannot overcome human awareness. Therefore, *shengjiao liang* also cannot achieve metaphysics. Zhang fully negates the possibility of human beings to achieve the ultimate truth. This analysis shows that different from *MoE*, Zhang sets clear limits for human capacity and negates their possibility to achieve the metaphysical unity.

Instead of deploying a subjective method, Zhang develops an objective theory of Yogācāra Buddhism whose ontology excludes human beings and language in the dependent arising from the *tathāgatagarbha*/matrix of the thus-come-one (*rulaizang yuanqi*, 如来藏緣起). The matrix of the thus-come-one/ultimate world/metaphysics contains two parts, amala consciousness and ālaya consciousness. Both amala consciousness and ālaya consciousness share the same body of the matrix of the thus-come-one. Both of them belong to the world of the ultimate

truth (*zhendi*, 真諦) and precede human beings. However, amala consciousness and ālaya consciousness have different functions. Whereas amala consciousness is the part “with no birth-death” (totally nothingness and silence), ālaya consciousness is constantly in movement and it gives birth to the conventional world, such as human beings and languages. Therefore, ālaya consciousness connects both the ultimate world and the conventional world, in that it belongs to the matrix of the thus-come-one in the ultimate world and descends into the conventional world creates it. Different from *MoE* which constantly pursues this connection through subjective approaches with no success, Zhang simply borrows theories of Yogācāra Buddhism and justifies the ālaya consciousness as the connection.

*MoE*'s and Zhang's different approaches result in their different conclusions. *MoE* understands the unity in a conceptual world as the ultimate unity. It tries to approach it from the perspective of brother-sister love. However, metaphysics in *MoE* is the realm of universal unity beyond human perception. *MoE* presents the perspective to overcome subjectivity, in that the protagonists (Ulrich and Agathe) cross their borders and merge with each other. However, the method to eliminate subjectivity (having two subjects interact) involves subjectivity. This means that the method in *MoE* to overcome human limitation is examined and explored through human perception (the experiences of Ulrich and Agathe). Therefore, the attempt in *MoE* fails. Nevertheless, the positive confidence in human capacity to achieve metaphysics is still obvious in the novel. In contrast, Zhang has proved in advance that human beings cannot approach the noumenal world. He then establishes the connection between the metaphysical world and the phenomenal world through establishing an objective ontology of dependent arising from the

*tathāgatagarbha*/matrix of the thus-come-one (*rulaizang yuanqi*, 如来藏緣起) in Yogācāra Buddhism, which excludes human beings and language in the ontology. Whereas the book project of *MoE* constantly aspires for the metaphysics from a phenomenal perspective, and constantly seeks connections between metaphysical and conventional worlds, Zhang simply establishes metaphysics using the theory of Yogācāra Buddhism, connects the metaphysical and the conventional worlds, and then mainly concentrates on the phenomenal/conventional world.

#### SUMMARY

Whereas the previous two chapters discuss Zhang's understanding of the world of the conventional truth, this chapter analyzes how Zhang portrays the world of the ultimate truth. In this chapter, Zhang firstly negates the possibility of human epistemology to approach the ultimate truth and therefore sees it as the world of ultimate clearness without human awareness. The question then goes: would it be possible to represent the ultimate world beyond human perception? In order to solve this problem, Zhang establishes dependent arising from the *tathāgatagarbha*/matrix of the thus-come-one (*rulaizang yuanqi*, 如来藏緣起) as the ultimate truth, separating it into amala consciousness and ālaya consciousness. Whereas amala consciousness represents the absolute clearness and unity, ālaya consciousness gives birth to the conventional world and therefore connects the world of the conventional truth and the world of the ultimate truth. As a result, the representation of the world of the conventional truth implies the representation of the world of the ultimate truth.

After establishing the world of the conventional truth in chapters 6 and 7 and portraying the world of the ultimate truth in chapter 8, Zhang provides two perspectives to treat the world. The question then goes, what is the relationship between these two worlds? Does one world have to subsume under another one, or do both worlds stay parallel with each other? If both worlds are equally important to Zhang, then what does the representation of both worlds at the same time look like? These questions will be answered in the next chapter. I will argue that both the world of the ultimate truth and the world of the conventional truth are of equal importance to Zhang, and he wishes to strike a balance between them. This is called going “the two ways.” Further, I will argue in the next chapter that the representation of both worlds simultaneously is Heavenly Transitions (*tianni*, 天倪).

## Chapter 9 The Two Ways and Its Representation

### INTRODUCTION

In chapter 6 and 7, I discuss Zhang's introduction of the world of the conventional truth through the concept of grasping and "breaking grasping." In chapter 8, I explore Zhang's discussion of the world of the ultimate truth as dependent arising from the *tathāgatagarbha*/matrix of the thus-come-one (*rulaizang yuanqi*, 如来藏緣起). The question then goes, which world is then more important to Zhang? Or are they of equal importance? If they are equally important, then how can one represent both worlds at the same time?

In this chapter, I argue that both the world of the conventional truth and the world of the ultimate truth are of equal importance to Zhang. Appropriating the terms of Zhuangzi, he calls this approach "the two ways," or "letting both alternatives proceed." Zhang also uses the example of the bodhisattva as Icchantika to show the importance to equally treat both the world of the ultimate truth and the world of the conventional truth. Given that on the one hand, the bodhisattva approaches the stage of nirvana (ultimate world); on the other hand, it reincarnates itself and comes to the world of the human beings to care for people (conventional world).

Finally, I argue that Zhang's term for the representation of both ways is called Heavenly Transition (*tianni*), a phrase from the "Qiwulun." *Tianni* has two features. First, it

simultaneously represents both the world of the conventional truth and the world of the ultimate truth. Second, the representation of the conventional truth in *tianni* features individuality, change and equality, so it this representation does not fall into a stagnated world structure dominated by grasping.

Zhang's dual perspective of the world combines two discourses. On the one hand, it negates human capacity to achieve the ultimate world and embraces equal possibilities in the world of the conventional truth; on the other hand, it believes in the existence of the ultimate truth and does not neglect this aspect. Zhang tries to achieve a simultaneous representation of both the world of the conventional truth and the world of the ultimate truth. Similar to Zhang, Musil's *MoE*, as a masterpiece, also represents the dual worldview and tries to find a representation of both worldviews. This similarity shows that both Musil and Zhang have similar approaches in understanding the world.

#### THE TWO WAYS (*LIANGHANG*, 兩行)

After discussing both worlds of the conventional truth and the world of the ultimate truth, the question then goes: which world is then more important in Zhang's eyes? Scholars discuss the necessity of considering both the ultimate truth and the conventional truth at the same time. Wang Xiaojie argues that only by combining the conventional and the ultimate truths can one achieve appropriate argumentation (Wang Xiaojie, 103). On the one hand, as we have argued before, the world of conventional truth would be illusions and limited grasping. Therefore, there is a need to explore the ultimate world. On the other hand, Meng Zhuo argues that if one



overemphasizes the absoluteness of the real (*zhenru*, 真如) in the world of ultimate truth, then “the absolute real” could become the new cultural arrogance and political power of a “superman” (Meng, *Zhongguoshiyu*),<sup>333</sup> a new grasping which could create oppression. Also, ālaya consciousness in the world of the ultimate truth gives birth to all beings in the conventional world. Thus, the discussion of the ultimate truth (one “spiritual self”) already implies the discussion about the world of conventional truth. Nevertheless, some scholars neglect either the conventional truth or the ultimate truth when they discuss Zhang’s text. For example, Cui Hailiang argues that Zhang simply has his multicultural perspective and thus tolerates different cultures and trends. However, this perspective neglects Zhang’s ontological view and his discussion about the ultimate truth (Cui Hailiang, 92).

This dissertation argues that Zhang’s perspective combines both the world of the ultimate truth and the world of the conventional truth. As Zhang writes, “if I evaluate my own research, at the beginning, it turns from the vulgar to the truth, and in the end, it returns from the truth back to the vulgar” (Zhang, Daohan, 961).<sup>334</sup> This sentence shows that for his whole life, Zhang takes both the world of the conventional truth (the vulgar) and the world of the ultimate truth (the truth) into consideration. He not only pursues the world of the ultimate truth from the world of the conventional truth, but also returns to the world of the conventional truth from the world of the ultimate truth. This quote implies that both the ultimate world and the conventional world are equally important for Zhang. Zhang only has different focuses at different phases of

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<sup>333</sup> See: the theory of the spiritual self (神我, *purusa*, I as God) (Meng, *Zhongguoshiyu*).

<sup>334</sup> Chinese original: 自揣平生學術，始則轉俗成真，終乃回真向俗 (Zhang, Daohan, 961).

his life. Zhang also reiterates this perspective in his speech. Zhang acknowledges that “there is initially the ultimate truth and conventional truth in Buddhist dharmas.” On the one hand, “it is impossible to talk about the ultimate truth without talking about the conventional truth,” which focuses on the conventional truth. On the other hand, “the rule of Mahayana Buddhism is nothing but ‘all dharmas come from the heart-mind’,” which focuses on the unity of all dharmas in the heart-mind in ultimate truth (Zhang, Yanjiangji, 152-3).

Considering both alternatives is understood in “Qiwu” philosophy as the idea of two ways (*lianghang*, 兩行). The phrase comes from a well-known story in the “Qiwulun”:

Once a monkey trainer was distributing chestnuts. He said, “I’ll give you three in the morning and four in the evening.” The monkeys were furious. “Well, then,” he said, “I’ll give you four in the morning and three in the evening.” The monkeys were delighted. This change brought them no loss either in name or in fact, but in one case it brought anger and in another delight. He just went along with the “thisness,” relying on the rightness of the present “this.” Thus the Sage uses various rights and wrongs to harmonize with others, and yet remains at rest in the middle of Heaven the Potter’s Wheel. This is called Walking Two Roads” (Zhuangzi, Ziporyn, 16).<sup>335</sup>

In Zhuangzi’s text, *lianghang* refers to two alternatives which has the same essence. Although giving monkeys three chestnuts in the morning and four in the evening, or four in the morning and three in the evening are two different strategies and they seem different to monkeys, actually, “this change brought them no loss either in name or in fact.” Monkeys fail to see the nature of these two different arrangements and are only aware of “the rightness of the present

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<sup>335</sup> Chinese original: 狙公賦茅，曰“朝三而暮四。”眾狙皆怒。曰：“然則朝四而暮三。”眾狙皆悅。名實未虧而喜怒為用，亦因是也。是以聖人和之以是非而休乎天鈞，是之謂兩行 (Zhuangzi, 24).

‘this’.” Different from the monkeys, the sage sees different possibilities. In the sage’s eyes, both “three in the morning and four in the evening” and “four in the morning and three in the evening” have different rights and wrongs, and their rights and wrongs can harmonize with each other. The sage, in this way, is the person who stands in the middle and sees different possibilities, embracing all of them without making any judgements.

Based on Zhuangzi’s original text, Zhang Taiyan extends the meaning of Zhuangzi’s *lianghang* and interprets it as the consideration of both conventional and ultimate worlds. In Zhang’s scholarship, there are two understandings of the import of *lianghang*: either as a dialectical pair in the world of the conventional truth, or the parallelization of the conventional truth and the ultimate truth. Wang Yuhua and Zhang Deshun believe that *lianghang* refers to two sides of a dialectic pair in constant change (Wang, Zhang, 102). This understanding is similar to Zhuangzi’s original meaning which focuses on different possibilities in the world of the conventional truth. This interpretation only sees that the sage tries to harmonize “rights and wrongs” in the world of the conventional truth, but it fails to incorporate the aspect that the sage “remains at rest in the middle of Heaven the Potter’s Wheel” which is a transcendent realm.

*Lianghang* in this dissertation refers to the consideration of both the ultimate and the conventional worlds. If one is to observe a thing or a phenomenon, there are always two perspectives to consider: from the perspective of the ultimate truth and from the perspective of the conventional truth. Both Wu Ruihan and Shen Ting agree with this definition. Wu Ruihan see *lianghang* as the world of the ultimate truth and the world of the conventional truth. She

argues that the ultimate truth is a world of selflessness. One achieves this selflessness through breaking grasping of self/dharma, including “attachment to a self by discrimination” (*fenbie wozhi*, 分別我執) and “inborn attachment to self” (*jusheng wozhi*, 俱生我執). In conventional truth, the world should also be perceived from a selfless perspective, from which individual and nations are regarded only as limited concepts with borders and boundaries. So that each individuality is equally respected. (Wu Ruihan, 54) Shen Ting also sees that *lianghang* embodies both worlds. On the one hand, in the conventional world, all things and opinions are non-ontology; on the other hand, Zhang tries to establish an accountable ontology (Shen Ting, 53). Using Wu Xiaofan’s words, Zhang argues both for “understanding the ultimate truth” (*mingzhen*, 明真) and “striking through the conventional truth” (*tongsu*, 通俗). ... The equality discussed in Zhang’s philosophy has two aspects: on the philosophical and socio-political levels (Wu Xiaofan, 60).

Zhang’s “Qiwulunshi” text confirms Wu Ruihan’s and Shen Ting’s observations through Zhang’s text. In “Qiwulunshi,” Zhang writes:

The sage knows that this is contradictory on the inside, but follows the world on the outside. Laozi says “constantly not having (not having names), one wants to see the mysteries, constantly having (having names), one wants to see the boundaries.” This is what is meant by “letting both alternatives proceed” (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 27).<sup>336</sup>

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<sup>336</sup> Chinese original: 聖人內知其違，而外還順世。《老子》云：“常無（謂無名）。欲以觀其妙，常有（謂有名）。欲以觀其徼，此之謂兩行也” (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 27).

“Constantly not having” refers to the world of the ultimate truth. In this realm, the sage can observe the mysteries. “The world on the outside” which is “constantly having” refers to the world of conventional truth, in which everything establishes itself and forms certain grasping. In the conventional truth, one is aware that each grasping has certain borders, one is able to “see the boundaries.” *Lianghang* (two ways) mean the ability to cope with both the conventional truth and the ultimate truth. A sage is aware of both the essence of the ultimate truth and the limitation of the conventional truth, and he or she decides to take both of them into consideration without neglecting any aspect. On the inside, the sage stays in the realm of the ultimate world and is well aware of “contradictory” natures of both worlds – The world of the ultimate truth is borderless unity which is tranquil, while the world of the conventional truth takes actions to grasp on different values which are limited. On the outside, the sage engages with various activities in the world of the conventional truth and follow conventions. Zhang’s sage lets “both alternatives proceed.” This perspective can be seen as similar to the attitude represented in Musil’s *MoE*, in which the protagonist Ulrich caters to both the process of pursuing the metaphysics and the engagement with the conventional world.

The following example of nirvana and reincarnation in chapter seven showcases that Zhang tries to strike a balance between the ultimate truth and the conventional truth. In chapter seven, Zhang derives out of Zhuangzi’s butterfly story the concept of reincarnation.

Once Zhuang Zhou [Zhuangzi] dreamt he was a butterfly, fluttering about joyfully just as a butterfly would. He followed his whims exactly as he liked and knew nothing about Zhuang Zhou. Suddenly he awoke and there he was, the startled Zhuang Zhou in a flesh. He did not know if Zhou had been dreaming he was a butterfly, or if a butterfly was now dreaming it was Zhou.

Now surely Zhou and a butterfly count as two distinct identities, as two quite different beings! And just this is what is meant when we speak of transformation of any one being into another – of the transformation of all things (Zhuangzi, Ziporyn, 21).<sup>337</sup>

In Zhuangzi's story, Zhuangzi dreams that he becomes a butterfly. When he is awake, he becomes Zhuangzi in a flesh again. Zhuangzi describes this experience as "transformation." Although Zhuangzi and a butterfly have "two distinct identities" and are "two quite different beings," through dreaming, Zhuangzi can be transformed into a butterfly, and a butterfly can be transformed into Zhuangzi. In Zhuangzi's understanding, no matter how distinct different categories are, there is the possibility that one thing can be transformed into another.

Zhang extends Zhuangzi's concept of transformation to reincarnation in a Buddhist sense. Whereas Zhuangzi is concerned with one object's changing into another one, Zhang argues that human in an afterlife has the possibility to reincarnate into another life.

Leaving the idea of the eternalistic [there is spirit after death] and the nihilistic [there is no spirit after death], then one has to talk about the idea of reincarnation (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 64).<sup>338</sup>

Here we see that reincarnation presumes a belief in the eternalistic (*changjian*, 常見) which believes in an afterlife. In an afterlife, the dead would have two choices. It can either choose to go to nirvana and do not have to suffer from pain and sorrow in life again; or it can reject nirvana and return to life, therefore suffer from pain and sorrow again and again through

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<sup>337</sup> Chinese original: 昔者莊周夢為蝴蝶，栩栩然胡蝶也，自喻適志與！不知周也。俄然覺，則蘧蘧然周也。不知周之夢為蝴蝶與？胡蝶之夢為周與？周與蝴蝶，則必有分矣。此之謂物化 (Zhuangzi, 36).

<sup>338</sup> Chinese original: 離斷常見，則必議即輪回 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 64).

reincarnation. Reincarnation<sup>339</sup> is the choice to return to life after death and not free oneself from sorrows in nirvana. According to Zhang, “Buddhism understands reincarnation as affliction, but Zhuangzi sees reincarnation as dispelling sorrows” (Zhang, Qiwlunshi, 65).<sup>340</sup> For Hinayana Buddhism, the highest goal is to get to nirvana after death, which is to get to the ultimate truth. Therefore, returning to the real life is regarded as “affliction.” Even Zhang and Zhuangzi attempt to reach out to the ultimate truth. In the previous analysis, we have already analyzed that Zhang interprets Zhuangzi’s project as destroying grasping in the conventional truth and reaching out for the ultimate truth. However, Zhang further interprets that for Zhuangzi, mediation/nirvana is not the optimal choice. According to Zhang, “looking at Zhuangzi’s meaning, he actually does not appreciate nirvana” (Zhang, Qiwlunshi, 65).<sup>341</sup> Instead, in Zhang’s reading, Zhuangzi requires reincarnation. Returning to life again is the right way to “dispel sorrows.” Therefore, Zhang and Zhang’s interpretation of Zhuangzi wish to find a middle way between nirvana and reincarnation.

Besides interpreting Zhuangzi’s argument, Zhang also uses the example of the bodhisattva as *icchantika*<sup>342</sup> in Mahayana Buddhism to illustrate his argument of the middle way, because the bodhisattva as *icchantika* also chooses the middle way between nirvana and reincarnation.

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<sup>339</sup> Reincarnation does not have to be in the form of human beings, and it can also be in the form of any other living creatures. In Zhuangzi, it is said that: “the human body is only one possibility of incarnation, only one of the endless different types of incarnations” (Zhang, Qiwlunshi, 99). “Human body is only one possibility of incarnation.” Beyond human bodies, there would be “endless different types of incarnations.”

<sup>340</sup> Chinese original: 佛法以輪回為煩惱，莊生乃以輪回遣憂，何哉？ (Zhang, Qiwlunshi, 65)

<sup>341</sup> Chinese original: 觀莊生意，實無欣羨寂滅之情 (Zhang, Qiwlunshi, 65).

<sup>342</sup> The DDB explains the term: In the sense that bodhisattvas are said to be committed to remaining in cyclic existence to save sentient beings, they are equivalent to *icchantikas* 一闍提, who are said to be incapable of salvation due to the depth of their evil.

*Awakening of Mahāyāna Faith (Dasheng qixinlun, 大乘起信論)* states: “leaving illusions, not staying in life and death, governing and transforming living things, not staying in nirvana.” In *Lañkāvatāra-sūtra (Dasheng rulengqie jing, 大乘入楞伽經)*, this is the bodhisattva Icchantika (*Yichanti, 一闍提*): “knowing all laws are originally nirvana, the bodhisattva as Icchantika does not go into nirvana, because he cannot abandon good roots/almsgiving/mercy and wisdom (*shangen, 善根, kuśala-mūla*)” (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 65).<sup>343</sup>

“Leaving illusions, not staying in life and death” refers to “nirvana,”<sup>344</sup> which is the ultimate world. “Illusions” refer to the world of “life and death/the changeable,” which is the conventional world. *Dasheng qixinlun* argues that on the one hand, the bodhisattva as Icchantika is “leaving illusions, not staying in life and death.” He or she aspires for the world of the ultimate truth and becomes a Buddha and stays within the realm of the ultimate truth. On the other hand, the bodhisattva as Icchantika also cares for the conventional world and would like to “govern and transform living things, not staying in nirvana.” Therefore, “the bodhisattva as Icchantika<sup>345</sup> does not go into nirvana, because he cannot abandon good roots (almsgiving, mercy and wisdom).” He or she can only find a middle way between being involved with situations in the conventional world and having a sense of the situation towards the essence of the absolute real/thusness (*zhenru, 真如, tathatā*) in the ultimate world. From the example of Icchantika and the discussion about reincarnation, it is clear that Zhang not only concentrates

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<sup>343</sup> Chinese original: 《起信論》所謂“離於妄見，不住生死”；“攝化眾生，不住涅槃”。《大乘入楞伽經》謂此為“菩薩一闍提，云知一切法，本來涅槃，畢竟不入，非舍善根” (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 65).

<sup>344</sup> Which is the highest realm of Hinayana Buddhism, which is only concerned with the self, not other living creatures.

<sup>345</sup> As argued by Meng Zhuo, bodhisattva as Icchantika are people such as 文殊 (*Wenshu/manjuist*), 普賢 (*Puxian/samantabhadra*), 維摩詰 (*Weimojie/Vimalakirti*) in India, Laozi (B.C. 571-B.C. 471) and Zhuangzi (B.C. 369-B.C. 286) in China (Meng Zhuo, Annotation, 431).



on the ultimate truth, but he also emphasizes the importance of possibilities and grasping in the conventional truth.

At the end of this section, I would like to look into two discussions regarding Zhang's concept of *lianghang*. Between the world of the conventional truth and the world of the ultimate truth, Zhang scholars tend to highlight the world of the conventional truth. The reason is as following: traditional Buddhism (represented by Hinayana Buddhism) aspires for the stage of nirvana in the world of the ultimate truth.<sup>346</sup> Zhang's *lianghang* concentrates both on the world of the conventional truth and the world of the ultimate truth, thus differentiates itself from traditional Buddhism. Zhang's Buddhism is not a passive retreat to nirvana, but rather an active engagement with the world.

Although most scholars tend to highlight the world of the conventional truth, *lianghang* still refers to the parallelization of both the world of the conventional truth and the world of the ultimate truth. Zhu Lei's reading notes this balance. For Zhu, ultimate world can be understood as the world of Buddhism, and the conventional world can be understood as the world of Confucianism. Daoism represented by Zhuangzi is between the ultimate world and the

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<sup>346</sup> As argued by Chen Shaoming, although Zhang Taiyan is fascinated with Buddhism, Zhang's Buddhism does not lead him to escape from the real world and return to nirvana. Although it seems that Zhang is retreating, he actually moves forward, in that he uses Buddhism to return to the world in order to save the world (Chen Shaoming, 34). According to Liu Jihui, Zhang's "losing oneself (喪我)" and "selflessness (無我)" do not mean stillness or absolute freedom, but also refers to the returning to society and achieving absolute equality in the conventional world (Liu Jihui, 41). Li Yu also believes that Zhang Taiyan wishes to engage with the conventional world. Instead of drowning in nirvana in Hinayana Buddhism, Zhang cares about delivering all living creatures from torment in Mahayana Buddhism (Li Yu, 64).

conventional world, in that it contains both elements beyond the phenomenal world and elements within the phenomenal world (Zhu Lei, 91). The literal translation of *lianghang* is also two alternatives. Although Zhang himself argues that he “returns from the truth back to the vulgar” (Zhang, Daohan, 961),<sup>347</sup> Zhang devotes a lot of space in his “Qiwulunshi” to explore methods to approach the world of the ultimate truth and even have paragraphs which describe the ultimate truth.<sup>348</sup> Therefore, when considering Zhang’s *lianghang*, besides seeing Zhang’s concern for the world of the conventional truth, one should also notice the importance of the ultimate world in Zhang’s “Qiwu” philosophy.

Second, Shen Ting interprets the unity of the ultimate truth of monism and the conventional truth of pluralism as the inner conflict of Zhang’s philosophy. According to Shen’s understanding, on the one hand, Zhang’s philosophical understanding of the world is non-ontological which emphasizes change and variability. Here, Zhang embraces “cultural pluralism” and destroys absolutism (Shen Ting, 54). On the other hand, Zhang’s philosophy also aims at establishing the ontological ground of the world, and believes that “besides words (*mingyan*, 名言) which are confusions of the cognitive faculty and the understanding/fabricated nature (*bianji suozhi*, 遍計所執), there is actually one’s own nature” (Shen Ting, 54).<sup>349</sup> From the perspective of this metaphysical ontology, the real truth is united without division, and the

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<sup>347</sup> Chinese original: 终乃回真向俗 (Zhang, Daohan, 961).

<sup>348</sup> See chapter 8, “the World of the Ultimate Truth,” section “Approaches to the World of the Ultimate Truth,” “Failure of *Xiangliang*,” “Failure of *Biliang* and Unlimited Dependent Co-origination,” “Failure of *Shengjiao liang*,” “Final Steps to the Ultimate: Selflessness and Negation of Language,” “The Ultimate Truth.”

<sup>349</sup> Chinese original: 離遍計所執之名言之外, 實有自性 (Shen Ting, 54).

whole conventional world is illusory without real nature. According to Shen, Zhang also believes in a monistic nihilism (Shen Ting, 55). Shen Ting believes that pluralism in the conventional truth and monism in the ultimate truth are conflicting entities.

However, this dissertation proposes that these two worlds are in essence the same. As argued before, ālaya consciousness connects both the world of the conventional truth and the world of the ultimate truth. The world of the ultimate truth contains ālaya consciousness which gives birth to the world of the conventional truth, thus the world of the ultimate truth connects with a part of the world of the conventional truth. Similarly, the world of the conventional truth is a result of ālaya consciousness in the world of the ultimate truth. Therefore, the world of the conventional truth connects to the world of the ultimate truth. Both seemingly contradictory worlds are actually interconnected. These interconnections justify that instead of separating both worlds as contrasting entities, Zhang brings both worlds together and tries to synthesize them into one complete unity.

In short, Zhuangzi suggests a middle way between feeling empathy for the human world and understanding the ultimate truth. Zhang supports Zhuangzi and wishes for a middle way between nirvana in the ultimate truth and reincarnation in the world of the conventional truth as well. Reincarnation is an attempt to represent and experience the ultimate truth in the conventional truth. Nirvana provides the universal basis for every phenomenon in conventional truth. Zhang aims at achieving an absolute unity in the ultimate truth, but he also returns to the

phenomenal world and tries to realize an understanding of the ultimate truth from the perspective of the conventional truth.

#### HEAVENLY TRANSITION (TIANNI, 天倪) AS REPRESENTATION OF THE TWO WAYS

The previous section argued that any beings in the world of conventional truth are connected to the world of ultimate truth and can be regarded as a representation of ultimate truth. What does this representation look like? Does it have to follow certain rules? This section discusses these questions by saying that this representation of the ultimate truth through conventional truth follows the rule of Heavenly Transition (*tianni*, 天倪). In “Qiwulun,” *tianni* serves as a way to resolve an otherwise irresolvable debate:

“What is meant by harmonizing with them by means of their Heavenly Transitions? It means ‘right’ is also ‘not right,’ and ‘so’ is also ‘not so.’ If right were ultimately right, its differentiation from not-right would admit of no debate. If so were ultimately so, its differentiation from not-so would admit of no debate. Thus even though the transforming voices may depend on something, it is tantamount to not depending on anything at all.

“Harmonize with them all by means of their Heavenly Transitions, follow along with them in their limitless overflowing, and you will be able to fully live out your years – by forgetting each year, by forgetting what should or should not be, letting yourself be jostled and shaken by the boundlessness! For that is precisely how to lodge yourself securely in the boundlessness” (Zhuangzi, 2020, 19-21).<sup>350</sup>

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<sup>350</sup> Chinese original: 何謂和之以天倪? ”曰: “是不是, 然不然。是若果是也, 則是之異乎不是也亦無辯: 然若果然也, 則然之異乎不然也亦無辯。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, 振于無竟, 故寓諸無竟” (Zhuangzi, 34).

Zhuangzi believes that there is initially no “right” or “not right,” “so” and “not so.” Therefore, there are constant “debates” about what is “right” and “not right,” “so” and “not so.” Changing voices about what is “right” and “so” are a result of distinctions, a result of having “this” and “that” as oppositions. “Harmonizing” oppositions through “Heavenly Transitions” means that rules of nature reconcile oppositions. One thus forgets all humanly divided categories, such as “each year,” “what should or should not be.” One thus lodges in the realm of “boundlessness.” This analysis shows that on the one hand, Zhuangzi understands Heavenly Transitions as destroying established categorization in the conventional world. On the other hand, Zhuangzi also mentions its transcendent meaning by describing Heavenly Transitions as a realm of “boundlessness,” in which one forgets everything – “each year,” “what should or should not be” – a realm in which one can let oneself be “jostled and shaken by the boundlessness.”

Zhuangzi returns to the term of *tianni* in “Words Lodged Elsewhere” (*yuyan*, 寓言),

Nine-tenth of the words are allegorical words, seven-tenth of the words are citations from weighty ancient authorities. Spillover-goblet words come out every day. They give forth [new meanings] constantly, harmonizing them all through their Heavenly Transitions (my own translation by modifying Ziporyn’s translation).

The nine-tenths or so [are allegorical words] which can be attributed to others discuss a topic by borrowing an outside viewpoint. A father does not serve as matchmaker for his own son, for praises from the father are not as effective as those from the mouth of another – and the blame, too, then goes not to me, but to someone else! In any case, those who agree will be responsive, while those who do not will object. For people call right whatever agrees with themselves and call wrong whatever differs from themselves.

The seven-tenths or so that are presented as citations from weighty ancient authorities are meant to defuse garrulous fault-finding, eliciting agreement with the words of these “venerable elders” instead. But in fact some of those

who come before us in years, if they have not gone through the warp and the woof of things in a way befitting their age, from the root to the tip, do not have any real priority over us. A man [of advanced years] with nothing to give him priority over others has not fulfilled the course of a human being, and a human being devoid of the course of human being should really just be called a stale, obsolete oldster.

These spillover-goblet words give forth [new meanings] constantly, so that all are harmonized through their Heavenly Transitions. They extend on and on without break and thus can remain in force to the end of one's years. ... Thus it is that I speak only nonspeech. When you speak nonspeech, you can talk all your life without ever having said a word, or never utter a word without ever failing to say something. There is some place from which each saying is acceptable, and some place from which it is unacceptable. There is some place from which it is so, and some place from which it is unacceptable. There is some place from which it is so, and some place from which it is not so. Whence so? From being affirmed as so. Whence not so? From being denied to be so. Whence acceptable? From someone's accepting of it. Whence unacceptable? From someone's nonacceptance of it. There is necessarily some perspective from which each thing is right and acceptable. Thus all things are right, all things are acceptable. So what words other than spillover-goblet words, harmonizing through their Heavenly Transitions, could remain in force for very long? All beings are seeds of one another, yielding back and forth their different forms, beginning and ending like a circle, so that no fixed groupings apply. This is called the Heavenly Equality, the turning of the Heavenly Potter's Wheel. It is this equality of the turning of the Heavenly Potter's Wheel that we see in their Heavenly Transitions (Zhuangzi, Ziporyn, 225-6).<sup>351</sup>

In this quote, Zhuangzi tries to differentiate three types of "words": allegorical words, words as citations from authorities and spillover-goblet words. *Tianni* can be explained through spillover-

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<sup>351</sup> Chinese original: 寓言十九，重言十七，卮言日出，和以天倪。寓言十九，藉外論之。親父不為其子媒。親父譽之，不若非其父者也。非吾罪也，人之罪也。與己同則應，不與己同則反。同于己為是之，異于己為非之。重言十七，所以己言也。是為耆艾，年先矣，而無經緯本末以期年耆者，是非先也。人而無以先人，無人道也。人而無人道，是之謂陳人。卮言日出，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：“言無言。”... 有自也而可，有自也而不可：有自也而然，有自也而不然。惡乎然？然于然：惡乎不然？不然于不然。惡乎可？可于可：惡乎不可？不可于不可。物固有所然，物固有所可。無物不然，無物不可。非卮言日出，和以天倪，孰得其久！萬物皆種也，以不同形相禪，始卒若環，莫得其倫，是謂天均。天均者，天倪也 (Zhuangzi, 349).

goblet words. Spillover-goblet words is *zhiyan* 卮言 in Chinese. *Zhi* 卮 refers to goblets holding wine in ancient times. When goblets are full, then wine naturally spills over the vessel.

Therefore, spillover-goblet words *zhiyan* can be understood as casual and unintentional words which naturally follow out of the vessels, just like the wine which spills over goblets. Therefore, spillover-goblet words represent words which naturally come out of people's mouths. Spillover-goblet words "give forth [new meanings] constantly" without being consolidated as a "speech" with an established perspective. This constantly giving forth new meanings is an incessant process which can "extend on and on without break and thus can remain in force to the end of one's years."

Spillover-goblet words have two characteristics. First, they embrace contingent possibilities without establishing a consolidated category. If one picks up a perspective, then there would be judgements about why "each thing is right and acceptable." There would also be categories of what is "acceptable," what is "unacceptable," what is "so," what is "not so." However, giving forth to new meanings constantly avoids establishing the aforementioned categories and embraces all possibilities, therefore "all things are right, all things are acceptable." "All beings are seeds of one another, yielding back and forth their different forms, beginning and ending like a circle, so that no fixed groupings apply." No established category can pertain, and only spillover-goblet words which spill out of mouth naturally "could remain in force for very long." This constant producing of different possibilities according to natural rules without subsuming under an established category can be called "harmonizing through their Heavenly Transitions

(*tianni*).” Heavenly Transitions *tianni* therefore refer to countless emerging but never established phenomena in natural divisions.

Second, spillover-goblet words and Heavenly Transitions (*tianni*) also contain a metaphysical meaning for the flow of countless possibilities which spill out. In Heavenly Transitions, one can see the “equality of the turning of the Heavenly Potter’s Wheel” and “Heavenly Equality.” Treating countless possibilities flowing out of the spillover-goblet words equally implies a position which looks down on different possibilities from above. In Heavenly Transitions, there is a position which does not devote to any of the phenomena and only sees them as different representations of the transcendent. This shows that Heavenly Transitions also imply an ultimate world.

Zhang follows Zhuangzi’s understanding of *tianni* as a representation of both the conventional world and the ultimate world and further develops this concept. Zhang makes the following argument: Towards the end, the passage discusses “harmonizing with them by means of their Heavenly Transitions (*tianni*, 天倪)” (Zhuangzi, 2020, 21). This means that the sage cannot give evidence for the emptiness of living things, one can only prove this for oneself. With respect to the whetstone of heaven, Guo Xiang says “it is the division of nature.” How can one know it? One knows it by leaving thought and argumentation (conceptual thinking); and understands it by oneself (perception). In this way, one knows the divisions of nature. For example, one drinks from the well and can know whether the water is salty or bland. One cannot change this perception by relying on arguments about words. Thus the differentiation between right and



not-right, the differentiation between so and not-so (Zhuangzi, 2020, 21) are capricious claims. Is it still necessary to bother to use language to determine things?

Based on Zhang's general argument, this dissertation believes that *tianni* has two characteristics. First, it combines the ultimate world and the conventional world, which can be further illustrated as the two ways (*lianghang*, 兩行). Second, *tianni* enables the representation of the ultimate world through the conventional world. In doing that, *tianni* avoids falling into grasping.

I will firstly demonstrate that in Zhang's understanding, *tianni* refers to representation of beings in the world of the conventional truth, but which also contains spirit in the world of the ultimate truth. According to Wu Ruihan, *tianjun* (天均) and *tianni* (天倪) are the same as ālaya consciousness (*alaiye shi*, 阿賴耶識), meaning that it belongs to the world of the ultimate truth which does not contain self-nature (Wu Ruihan, 52). However, Wu's argument fails to see that ālaya consciousness connects both the world of the ultimate truth and the world of the conventional truth. Wang Youxin's arguments backs up the perspective in this dissertation. Wang argues that Zhang understands *tianni* as the emptiness of person (*shengkong*, 生空) and the emptiness of dharmas (*fakong*, 法空). On the one hand, *tianni* is a representation of "ego/birth" and "things" in the world of the conventional truth. On the other hand, as argued in the previous chapter, because of the mediation of ālaya consciousness, representation of things in the conventional world can also be seen as a representation of the ultimate world. Therefore, *tianni* also contains the spirit of the ultimate world. It transcends "ego/birth" and "things" in

the conventional world, seeing them as “the void” with “illusory nature.” “Ego/birth” and “things” reconvene in the world of the ultimate truth. Therefore, they share the common ground – the spirit of the ultimate world. As argued by Wang Youxin, “things and dharmas do not hinder each other, and different things do not hinder each other” in *Huayan* (Wang Youxin, 77).<sup>352</sup>

The second aspect of Heavenly Transition (*tianni*), as can be seen in Zhang’s argument, is that while enabling the representation of the two paths (*lianghang*) (the world of the ultimate truth and the world of the conventional truth), this representation of *tianni* avoids falling into grasping in the conventional world. The first step to avoid falling into grasping is to enable the development of individuality. As written by Zhang, *tianni* features individuality in the world of the conventional truth. “With respect to the whetstone of heaven (*tianni*), Guo Xiang says “it is the division of nature” (Zhang, Qiwlunshi, 54).<sup>353</sup> This quote shows that *tianni* enables individual beings to appear themselves naturally in the world of the conventional truth. Things appear in their most natural forms and express their most individualized nature.

Focusing on individuality rather than generalized language concepts avoids the oppression of grasping. *Tianni* is *xianliang* which is directly connected to individual feelings and perceptions. It cannot be influenced through logical language. Zhang stresses that for example, “one drinks from the well and can know whether the water is salty or pure” (Zhang, Qiwlunshi, 54).<sup>354</sup>

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<sup>352</sup> Chinese original: 事理無礙，事事無礙。

<sup>353</sup> Chinese original: 天倪者，郭雲：“自然之分” (Zhang, Qiwlunshi, 54).

<sup>354</sup> Chinese original: 如飲井者知其鹹淡 (Zhang, Qiwlunshi, 54).

*Tianni* refers to the natural state of things, “Heavenly Transition.” To “know about Heavenly Transition,” we need to resort to direct and unmediated experience. When a person “drink[s] from the well,” only the person who drinks the water knows about “the degree of saltiness.” Although other people might wish to use other experiences (“relying on arguments about words”) to gain an indirect perspective, this individual feeling of saltiness cannot be conveyed through indirect knowledge, nor through any form of “thought and argumentation.”

As argued in chapter 6, in a world of grasping, there tends to be established categories as guidance for understanding. People would subsume immediate feelings and perceptions under those established categories (such as how “water should taste”) thus they tend to neglect individual and unmediated feelings for the real taste of water. As a result, free individual unfolding (such as to express one’s true feeling for the flavor of the water) could be oppressed. In the world of *tianni*, people do not attach to certain social categories, so there will not be standard principles as points of reference. No one has to obey certain rules to describe the taste of water. Individuals can simply develop their unmediated feelings to the utmost extent. In our example, it means that a person can freely express his/her experiential impression of the water. Being able to realize one’s natural self implies that the world of the conventional truth represented through *tianni* is a free world without stagnated categories. Each being can freely unfold itself in the way that fits itself. In this world, individuality and individual presence are highly respected. In Yu Yanhong’s words, Zhang gives each individual the freedom to determine its way of life (Yu Yanhong, 35).

After establishing the uniqueness of individuality, Zhang further argues that even individuality cannot be a constant entity to hold on to, and it has to undergo continuous changes. For example, even though one claims the water to be salty, the flavor of the water might change with time. In other words, *tianni* features lawless and continuous changes.

These spillover-goblet words give forth [new meanings] constantly, so that all are harmonized through their Heavenly Transition. They extend on and on without break and thus can remain in force to the end of one's years (Zhuangzi, 2020, 225) (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 54).<sup>355</sup>

Instead of conforming to certain prescribed laws, *tianni* is endless changes without any pattern. "Spillover-goblet words" are not conventions, and they "extend on and on without break." *Tianni* does not imply an eternal truth, in contrast, it features endless changes and continuous development and will "give forth [new meanings] constantly." There are no rules which need to be obeyed, and not even a constant entity. Therefore, the changes "remain in force to the end of one's years." Human beings should then conform to the separation of nature and follow infinite changes until the end of one's life.

After enabling individuality to thrive and engaging with changes, Zhang further argues that *tianni* treats each individuality equally. The time each unique characteristic of things/nature in the conventional world is realized, each individual is satisfied with their own reality. Respecting unique nature/reality of things in the conventional world is called equality in Zhang's words.

Finally, let us take the distinctions and oppositions in society. In society there are "city-people" and the "rustic." If the "rustics" are happy in their lowness

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<sup>355</sup> Chinese original: 卮言日出，和以天倪，因以蔓延，所以窮年 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 54).

and the “city-people” are content with their culture and the two do not hurt one another, this is equality (Zhang, Qiwlunshi, 8).<sup>356</sup>

It is acknowledged in this quote that in the world of conventional truth, there are “distinctions and oppositions in society.” For example, the difference between “city-people” and the “rustic.” Judging “the rustic” as “lowness” and the “city-people” as “culture” implies the belief in a hierarchy of ideas which is a kind of grasping. However, *tianni* respects natural development of individuality, as long as their ways of life “do not hurt one another.” As long as both “the rustic” and “city-people” are satisfied with their respective lives and they do not hurt each other, forcing the other to believe one’s own beliefs, both of them should be able to realize living styles which suit their nature. Both individual ways should be equally valued. This is Zhang’s understanding of “equality.” In other words, equality in *tianni* rejects normative principles and enables equal treatment of individuality. No thought is superior to the other or judged to be “right or wrong” (Zhang, Qiwlunshi, 79). Although the ways of being are different, all of these individual beings are justified and equally respected.

As can be seen in the previous analysis, the second feature of *tianni* gets rid of grasping of self and grasping of dharma. As the representation of the ultimate truth in the conventional truth, *tianni* tries to overcome the oppression of grasping. *Tianni* follows the rules of individuality, lawless and continuous changes and equality. It rejects a generalized idea oppressing individual voices, and therefore highlights individuality. It rejects itself to be pinned down to one grasping

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<sup>356</sup> Chinese original: 終舉世法差違，俗有都野，野者自安其陋，都者得意于嫻，兩不相傷，乃為平等 (Zhang, Qiwlunshi, 8).

and constantly makes changes. It avoids insistence on one thing to become authority, so that it emphasizes the equality of different perspectives. *Tianni*, as the representation of the ultimate truth in the conventional truth, thus overcomes the limitation of grasping in the conventional truth by respecting each individual perspective and constantly initiating endless changes.

Enabling plural individualities to prevail in the world of the conventional truth echoes with the discourse of perspectivism. As we have argued, the exploration of the phenomenal world represented by Nietzsche features perspectivism and pluralism which rejects dominating values. According to Meng Zhuo,

Zhang is highly sensitive to the phenomenon of a group which suppresses the individual. Zhang also negates theorems and believes that “people who talk about theorems often use power in society to suppress individual.” (Zhang Taiyan, *sihuolun*)<sup>357</sup> Zhang negates the necessity of country, government and social groups, and believes that they are hindrance for ultimate equality. Behind this almost anarchist political attitude is the absolute emphasis on the freedom and equality of individual. (Meng, *Zhongguo shiyu*)

“Theorems,” “country, government and social groups” aim at establishing totality within the phenomenal world in order to hinder the development of different perspectives. By abandoning all established concepts, one achieves an almost “anarchist” attitude which defies all authorities. This is exactly the attitude which respects possibilities.

Similar to Meng Zhuo, Yu Yanhong argues that Zhang establishes his Utopia which is not the monolithic “universal brotherhood,” instead, plurality is the feature of this utopia. ... Each

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<sup>357</sup> Chinese original: 言公理者，以社会常存之力抑制个人。言公理者，以社會常存之力抑制個人。

individual is responsible for this utopic view. Different subjects might have different utopian images, and there are no judgements for high and low, advance and backwardness (Yu Yanhong, 32). Summarizing both scholarly perspectives, I argue that Zhang's ideal for the world of the conventional truth should be a world which allows possibilities to thrive. Instead of discriminating any single idea, equal respect for each individual perspective is required. Zhang's negation of all established discourses fundamentally challenges the assumption of a universalism.

When depicting the phenomenal world through essayism/*Heavenly Transitions*, both Musil's *MoE* and Zhang's "Qiwulunshi" focus on representing individual perspectives. Therefore, both avoid falling back to a sense of reality/grasping. Musil's protagonist Ulrich decorates his own castle in an essayistic way. When he performs this action, Ulrich neither forges any consolidated opinion nor pushes through any concrete plan, but rather enables different styles to prevail. Instead of sticking to one established plan, Zhang accentuates concepts such as "spillover-goblet words" which constantly give birth to new meanings. He also attaches importance to distinguishing individual perceptions and equally respects them.

In short, Zhang deploys the term of *tianni* to establish two crucial arguments. First, both the ultimate world and the conventional world are interconnected, and both of them should be taken into consideration. Second, in representing the ultimate world through the conventional world, *tianni* avoids falling back to grasping, in that it highlights individuality, change and equality, thus echoes with perspectivism.

#### COMPARING “ESSAYISM” IN *MoE* WITH “HEAVENLY TRANSITIONS” IN “QIWULUNSHI”

Comparing both Zhang’s “Qiwulunshi” and Musil’s *MoE*, it is obvious that both of them have a dual worldview. Both of them emphasize both the phenomenal world and the metaphysical world equally. Both try to find a representation to combine these two worldviews together. For Zhang’s “Qiwulunshi,” it is *tianni*, and for Musil’s *MoE*, this representation is essayism. In representing the conventional world, both texts avoid stigmatization of grasping or reality through focusing on individuality and change. Reestablishing metaphysics and challenging a stigmatized phenomenal world are central topics both Musil and Zhang actively engage with. They also come up with astonishingly similar answers to these questions.

Both essayism in *MoE* and Heavenly Transitions in “Qiwulunshi” enable the representation of both the metaphysical world and the phenomenal world. However, difference can be perceived in both representations. Whereas *MoE* starts from the human world (phenomenal) to approach the world beyond human (metaphysical), “Qiwulunshi” clearly defines the metaphysical realm through the matrix of the thus-come-one and descends to the phenomenal world for its representation. Musil’s *MoE* does not give up exploring possible passages to this realm through human interactions, Zhang’s “Qiwulunshi” acknowledges the limitation of human capacity and tries to find a theory to explain the metaphysical realm without resorting to human awareness.



As a result, when they seek representation for the metaphysical world, both have different approaches. *MoE* never successfully represents this metaphysical world through human language. The novel never gives up this pursuit but cannot provide satisfying answers to characterize the metaphysical realm. Therefore, when *MoE* tries to represent the metaphysical world, it avoids direct description of the topic and only alludes to it by understanding each description as a non-encompassing opening.

In the previous chapter, I have demonstrated that Zhang deploys the theory of the matrix of the thus-come-one to characterize the metaphysical world, thus has a certain answer to the image of the metaphysical. Therefore, he does not continue pursuing this realm and only creates a theoretical connection between both the world of the ultimate truth and the world of the conventional truth. Whereas *MoE* ascends to the metaphysical world through the phenomenal world, “*Qiwulunshi*” descends to the phenomenal world and creates the representation of the metaphysical world through the phenomenal world.

#### SUMMARY

In this chapter, I try to answer two questions: what is the relationship between Zhang’s world of the ultimate truth and world of the conventional truth? What is Zhang’s representation of both worlds? This chapter argues that Zhang equally values both the world of the conventional truth and the world of the ultimate truth. He believes that both perspectives should be pursued. Besides the world of the conventional truth, one should not stop believing in a world of the ultimate truth. In addition, while looking up at the world of the ultimate truth, it is crucial

that one engages with the world of the conventional truth and show solicitude for individual beings.

Zhang further describes the representation of both the world of the ultimate truth and the world of the conventional truth as *tianni* (Heavenly Transition). *Tianni* is natural representation of beings in the world of the conventional truth. Also, because *ālaya* consciousness connects the world of the ultimate truth and the world of the conventional truth, the representation of *tianni* also contains the spirit of the world of the ultimate truth. In addition, when *tianni* represents the world of the conventional truth, it is not trapped in grasping, in that *tianni* focuses on equal treatment of individuality and considers changes.

In short, Zhang creates his own *qiwu* philosophy based on Zhuangzi's "Equalizing Assessments of Things" (Qiwulun, 齊物論) and Yogācāra Buddhist theory. On the one hand, the world is stigmatized by grasping in the conventional truth and people need to aspire for an encompassing unity as ontology in the ultimate truth. On the other hand, Zhang also sees the necessity for returning to the conventional truth and attentively cares for the equality of different individual existence. Zhang is aware that human beings cannot reach the realm of the ultimate truth, but he nevertheless seeks a unified metaphysics in dependent arising from the *tathāgatagarbha*/matrix of the thus-come-one. At the same time, Zhang also cares for real-life concerns and highlights the equality of each individual. This dual structure of Zhang's *qiwu* philosophy makes a unique contribution to Chinese scholarly discourse. It not only gives it an ontological basis, but it also tries to create equality and freedom in the human world.

## Chapter 10 Comparison and Conclusion

### *Introduction to conclusion*

In the previous chapters, we have proved that Musil's *MoE* and Zhang's "Qiwulunshi" pursue similar projects regarding describing realities, exploring possibilities, reestablishing metaphysics and representing both the phenomenal and the metaphysical. In this concluding chapter, I summarize similarities and differences in Musil's *MoE* and Zhang's "Qiwulunshi" and unveil their significance. I argue that both Musil's *MoE* and Zhang's "Qiwulunshi" pursue the same project: reconciling the tension between plurality and the (inconceivable) unity.

In the realm of the phenomenal world, both firstly criticize a unified discourse for the phenomenal world and establish plurality as the foundation of the phenomenal world. In *MoE*, the unified discourse can be seen as "a sense of reality;" in "Qiwulunshi," it is characterized through the concept of "grasping." In *MoE*, the plurality is portrayed in form of "a sense of possibility," whereas in "Qiwulunshi," it is "treating different types of grasping equally." Then, both identify the metaphysical world as an inconceivable unity. Because this realm contains nothing, human consciousness is too limited to conceive it. *MoE* achieves it through interaction between Ulrich and Agathe in "der andere Zustand," and "Qiwulunshi" deploys the Yogācāra theory and describes it through "dependent arising from the *tathāgatagarbha*/matrix of the thus-come-one." The two perspectives examining both the phenomenal world and the metaphysical world contain a conflict: it seems that the pluralized phenomenal world and the

unified metaphysical world fail to coexist, given that plurality and unity repel one another. Facing this problem, both *MoE* and “Qiwulunshi” attempt to reconcile this tension through a representation which enables a co-existence of both plurality and unity. This pluralized-unified world structure is presented as essayism in *MoE* and Heavenly Transitions (*tianni*, 天倪) in “Qiwulunshi.”

Despite their similarities, nuanced differences can be observed between Musil’s *MoE* and Zhang’s “Qiwulunshi.” Two major differences can be perceived in both texts. Firstly, whereas Zhang generally negates a human-centered perspective, Musil mainly focuses on the exploration of a human world. For example, *MoE* merely holds an anthropocentric perspective and focuses on thought experiments in a human world. However, Zhang is equally focused on a non-human perspective and a unity of both human and other sentient and non-sentient beings. Also, whereas *MoE* still believes in human capacity to approach metaphysics, Zhang fully negates human awareness in approaching the noumenal world. Compared to Musil’s worldview, Zhang’s worldview is a more thorough negation of human awareness.

The first difference with different focuses also explains the second difference pointed out early in the introduction: whereas *MoE* is a fictional text, “Qiwulunshi” is an argumentative essay. In Musil’s novel, he portrays different ways of interaction among human beings in the phenomenal world. When exploring the metaphysical world, Musil’s *MoE* follows the same line and further examines various possibilities of human interactions in order to approach the highest unity. Although it seems that this attempt fails in different aspects, *MoE* does not give

up such attempts. Agathe and Ulrich continue their secret journey to “der andere Zustand” even in the final drafts of the novel. However, for Zhang Taiyan, he already negates human epistemology at the very beginning of his exploration for the metaphysical world. In other words, human interactions are confined within the phenomenal circles and can never approach the absolute truth. Zhang therefore does not need to write a novel which examines different possible human potentials, but only needs to state the limitation and futility of human capacity in an argument, and then turning to other possible ways beyond human interactions. This could explain why Zhang does not choose the genre of novel to embody his thoughts.

### *Similarities*

Both Robert Musil’s *MoE* and Zhang Taiyan’s “Qiwulunshi” attempt to reconcile the tension between plurality in the phenomenal world and the inconceivable unity in the metaphysical realm, so as to achieve a perfect representation for a plural-unified world structure. To achieve this goal, they both negate the domination of only one single discourse. This will be introduced in the subsection “Sense of Reality and Grasping.” Further, both identify that the phenomenal world should not be rendered as unity, and it must be plurality. This similarity will be further elaborated in the section “Sense of Possibility and Treating Different Types of Graspings as Equal.”

In contrast to a pluralized phenomenal world, the metaphysical realm for both texts is a foundation which unites plurality. This means that this world should be nothingness and is

beyond human perception. Therefore, human perceptions fail to gain access to it, and it remains an inconceivable realm. Both *MoE* and “Qiwulunshi” theorize this problem and seek possibilities to approach and represent this realm. This similarity will be further discussed in section “Mystical unity and the Ultimate Truth (*zhendi*, 真諦).”

There is then a dilemma of reconciling the pluralized phenomenal world and the unified metaphysical world. Whereas the phenomenal world is a part of the world, the metaphysical world also belongs to a part of the world. However, what is the nature of this World? Is it a pluralized world just like the phenomenal world or a united world similar to the metaphysical world? When a world is plural, how would it be united as the same time? If a world is united, then how could it be plural? To satisfy both criteria, one needs to reconcile plurality and unity. Both *MoE* and “Qiwulunshi” take up this project and attempt to achieve a representation of this reconciled world-structure which contains both unity and plurality. This will be discussed in the section of “Essayism and Heavenly Transitions.”

#### SENSE OF REALITY AND GRASPING

Both the concepts of “a sense of reality” in *MoE* and grasping in Zhang’s “Qiwulunshi” show insistence on certain values. Musil’s figure, Diotima, was the “eldest of three daughters of a secondary-school teacher without private means. ... In her girlhood she had had nothing but

her pride” (Musil, MwQ, 99).<sup>358</sup> With the rise of her husband Tuzzi, Diotima gains social importance and even Court Leinsdorf regards her as the “loveliest and cleverest woman,” “an ideal woman” (Musil, MwQ, 93).<sup>359</sup> Diotima’s childhood pride has finally been satisfied. Diotima thus sticks to her pursuit of the value of self-importance. Even though she has strong desire for the capitalist Arnheim (Musil, MoE, 423; Musil, MwQ, 460) and even experiences sleepless nights yearning for him (Musil, MoE, 476; Musil, MwQ, 519), in order to secure her social position guaranteed by her marriage, Diotima has never taken any action which might damage her own reputation to pursue her romantic love. Even though her cousin Ulrich constantly tries to persuade her to reveal her genuine feeling towards him without considering her own self-image, Diotima never takes his opinions seriously and only sees them as Ulrich’s “amusing and irritating chatter” (Musil, MwQ, 313).<sup>360</sup> These examples show that Diotima firmly holds on to her reality of self-importance.

Similarly, Zhang also understands grasping as strong self-conviction. Zhang signifies two kinds of graspings, grasping the dharmas (*fazhi*, 法執) and grasping the self (*wozhi*, 我執). The state of grasping is to be obsessed with a certain set of mind. In the previous chapter, we have analyzed that this state is similar to the condition of the heart of *dengliu*, which is settled, peaceful, like an old person who rejects all changes and seeks to take a rest.

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<sup>358</sup> German original: Sie war die älteste von den drei Töchtern eines Mittelschullehrers gewesen, der kein Vermögen besaß... In ihrer Mädchenzeit nichts gehabt als ihren Stolz (Musil, MoE, 97).

<sup>359</sup> German original: schönste und gescheiteste Frau. ... eine ideale Frau! (Musil, MoE, 92).

<sup>360</sup> German original: Unterhaltung und Ärgernis schwankende Gerede (Musil, MoE, 290).

Both reality in *MoE* and Zhang's grasping insist on certain rules. According to *MoE*, a sense of reality refers to an insistence on a certain value and judgement of other values according to it. For example, Diotima picks up a reality. She devotes to this reality and sticks to it. Diotima is convinced of her self-importance. As a result, although she has a strong personal love towards Arnheim, she does not give up her marriage and social status to seek pure romantic love. From this example, we can see that *MoE* sees reality as committing to self-convinced rules. Similarly, Zhang also understands grasping as self-conviction. For example, although time is not a universal and determined concept, because people experience it "from morning to afternoon," they hold on to the idea of time as real. "Because we all have conventional nature following certain conventions (*zhongtongfen*), we all have such a concept (such as time), so that people take this as real" (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 12).<sup>361</sup>

Both *MoE* and Zhang see the limitation of reality and grasping. For example, Diotima does not tolerate Ulrich's different understanding of the world and constantly wishes to show contempt against him. Instead of taking his perspectives seriously, Diotima evaluates Ulrich's perspective by comparing it to her own reality. Ulrich encourages her to show her natural emotions instead of filtering her feelings through her own self-image. However, in order to hold on to her self-love, Diotima defends her self-image and therefore understands Ulrich's suggestion as a challenge to get herself out of her own track. She takes a protective gesture and fails to accept a different perspective. In Zhang's example, Lady Li believes that a life in a home country could

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<sup>361</sup> Chinese original: 但以眾同分心，悉有此相，世遂執著為實 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 12).



be much better than the life in a visiting country. Therefore, she cried a lot when she was brought to other countries. However, her original belief in her own country is only an illusion, since she enjoys her life in the new country more than her life in her home country. This example shows that Lady Li has a limited perspective. Lady Li's grasping limits her from seeing other possibilities. In other words, sticking to one grasping prevents people from understanding more perspectives. Therefore, for Zhang, grasping is not a universal truth but only a specific perspective. Further, according to Zhang, grasping on universal ideas such as "universal love" could be taken advantage of by rulers. In the name of implementing "universal love," dissidents could be ruthlessly massacred. Therefore, grasping onto one single opinion might create violence and oppression.

From this analysis, we can see that both Musil's and Zhang's texts challenge existing value systems by showing the limitation of reality and grasping. Similar to Nietzsche, both of them negate only one single discourse and embrace plurality.

#### SENSE OF POSSIBILITY AND TREATING DIFFERENT TYPES OF GRASPINGS AS EQUAL

Both a sense of possibility and the equality of grasping wish to get rid of the insistence on a certain value through understanding its limitation. The character of Ulrich in *MoE* is a man with a sense of possibility. First, Ulrich is able to constantly negate realities. For example, although committed to measuring traffic, after a while, Ulrich gives up his attempt to and sees what he has done as "nonsense" (Musil, *MwQ*, 6-7). (*Unsinn* (Musil, *MoE*, 12)). This shows that Ulrich is not limited within the measurement of the world in a mathematical way. Further, Ulrich can

create new possibilities. For example, although it is commonly believed that the power to hold up the world is huge, it is calculable. However, the everyday movement of a person, adding up “all those leaps of attention, flexing of eye muscles, fluctuations of the psyche” (Musil, MwQ, 7)<sup>362</sup> is too much to be calculated. Therefore, huge power to hold up the world which can be calculable “would [even] surely dwarf” (Musil, MwQ, 7) the everyday movement of a normal person. This example shows that Ulrich can switch his perspective and create another possible way to approach the world. Ulrich with his sense of possibility therefore opens the rigid world perceived through a sense of reality.

Besides negating realities and creating possibilities, Ulrich also treats different possibilities equally without devoting to anyone of them. For example, on the one hand, Ulrich understands Diotima’s value of self-love and claims that Diotima is unable to madly fall in love with Arnheim; on the other hand, Ulrich tries to show Diotima the possibility of freely expressing one’s selfless love towards another person and be genuine to himself and Arnheim. On the one hand, Ulrich is aware of the criminal justice system represented by the judge which aims at protecting fighting against cruelty; on the other hand, Ulrich also understands Moosbrugger’s incapability of making sense of the criminal law system and Moosbrugger’s urge to resort to cruelty to solve problems. Without either devoting to Diotima’s self-love or selfless devotion; either justice or injustice, Ulrich preserves an analytical and objective perspective and tries to understand every different position without devoting to any of them. As a result, Ulrich does not cling to any

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<sup>362</sup> German original: die Sprünge der Aufmerksamkeit, die Leistungen der Augenmuskeln, die Pendelbewegungen der Seele (Musil, MoE, 12).

specific value system and preserves all possible interpretations for the world. Although realities of self-love, selflessness separate the world, by preserving both contrasting perspectives, Ulrich overcomes this separation in his mind and can experience a united stage before the world is separated into beliefs of self-love and selflessness.

Similarly, Zhang also shows the limitation of conventional grasping. He is also able to understand different graspings and equally treat different graspings without devoting to any of them. For example, on the one hand, Zhang understands that people have the grasping of time as a universal concept. “Because we all have common nature following commonality of sentient beings (*zhongtongfen*, 眾同分), we all have such a concept (such as time), so that people take this as real” (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 12).<sup>363</sup> On the other hand, Zhang clearly points out that the belief in the universality of time is only a grasping of dharmas, which can be “confusions of the cognitive faculty and the understanding/fabricated nature” (*bianji suozhi*, 遍計所執) (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 22), given that time also can be a conditional concept. According to Zhang, when people sleep soundly, then there would be no awareness of time. Also, because they still have a lot of time ahead, children feel that time goes slowly; because the old do not have too much time left, the old feels that time goes fast. Therefore, similar to Diotima’s reality, according to Zhang, universality of time as grasping also only shows a limited perspective. Similar to Musil’s protagonist, Ulrich, Zhang does not commit to only one type of grasping, thus regarding time as a universally valid concept, instead, he also accepts the understanding that time is a conditional

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<sup>363</sup> Chinese original: 但以眾同分心，悉有此相，世遂執著為實 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 12).

conception. Zhang sees the universality and conditionality of time as two different graspings. He treats them equally without devoting to anyone of them and overcomes the limitation of grasping of time.

#### MYSTICAL UNITY AND THE ULTIMATE TRUTH (ZHENDI, 真諦)

Both Musil's novel and Zhang's text identify that reality, possibility and grasping cannot be the bases for the phenomenal world. They both seek a metaphysical basis for the conventional world. *MoE* does not let Ulrich continue his exploration in the world of reality and possibility in the world in which "pseudoreality prevails."

Here you have testimony, Christian, Judaic, Indian, Chinese, some separated by more than a thousand years. Yet one recognizes in all of them the same uniform structure of inner movement, divergent from the ordinary. ... We therefore may assume the existence of a certain alternative and uncommon condition of great importance, which man is capable of achieving and which has deeper origins than religions (Musil, *MwQ*, 831-2).<sup>364</sup>

In this quote, different religions represent different possibilities. However, in all these possibilities, we can recognize "the same uniform structure of inner movement." This belief is a "condition of great importance" "which has deeper origins than religions." It presumes a much deeper structure as the basis for different religions (possibilities) which points towards a higher and deeper unity. In other words, religions are representations of the mystic unity which imply

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<sup>364</sup> German original: Das sind christliche, jüdische, indische und chinesische Zeugnisse; zwischen einzelnen von ihnen liegt mehr als ein Jahrtausend. Trotzdem erkennt man in allen den gleichen vom gewöhnlichen abweichenden, aber in sich einheitlichen Aufbau der inneren Bewegung. ... Wir dürfen also einen bestimmten zweiten und ungewöhnlichen Zustand von großer Wichtigkeit voraussetzen, dessen der Mensch fähig ist und der ursprünglicher ist als die Religionen (Musil, *MoE*, 766).

a higher unity behind them. In order to seek this unity, Ulrich marches into the Millennium, a world in which he and his sister Agathe experience “der andere Zustand” and achieve an experience of the mystic unity.

Similarly, Zhang also negates grasping as the basis for value systems. Grasping is only an illusion of ālaya consciousness. “Sometimes the sixth consciousness does not rise, but the position in which arises (storehouse consciousness) revolves without stop” (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 12).<sup>365</sup> This quote shows that for Zhang, ālaya consciousness/storehouse consciousness is incessant, “revolves without stop,” and works as the ultimate unity/producer for all grasping. Whereas grasping/the sixth consciousness/awareness is only one of the representations for ālaya consciousness, which “does not rise.” “To argue in a broader sense, heaven and earth originally have no substance.”<sup>366</sup> They are merely representations of an “substance” which is the ālaya consciousness, but they themselves are illusory representations of this “substance.” “Grasping objects, so there are lustrous and dazzling illusions” (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 42).<sup>367</sup> Although grasping enables the understanding of objects, these objects are “lustrous and dazzling illusions” without substance. Zhang then further pursues the higher existence, the ālaya consciousness, which can be seen as the origin of graspings.

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<sup>365</sup> Chinese original: 大抵藏識流轉不駐，意識有時不起 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 12).

<sup>366</sup> Chinese original: 廣輪則天地本無體 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 22).

<sup>367</sup> Chinese original: 故觸礙幻生，...，故光采假見 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 42).

Also, both Musil's and Zhang's versions of metaphysics features complete nothingness. Musil's novel characterizes it as a mystical unity, and Zhang names it as the ultimate truth (*zhendi*)/matrix of the thus-come-one (*rulaizang*). The mystical unity and the ultimate truth are similar. In Musil's novel, the mystical unity, also "der andere Zustand," refers to the unity of the primal separations." In "der andere Zustand," nothing becomes solid anymore. Instead, all of differences created in the world merge into "breast," "dark," "arms of mother" (Musil, MoE, 1084). "One holds on to nothing, one is not held by anything" (Musil, MwQ, 828).<sup>368</sup> "Every thought emerges from this ultimate unity" (Musil, MoE, 1084).<sup>369</sup> Similarly, for Zhang, in the ultimate truth, all the *duidai* (distinction) disappears. "Right and wrong and life and death should be wiped out and made into one" (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 55),<sup>370</sup> the uninhibited and ultimate unity. This is a status of "nothingness" and "clearness." Both Musil's novel and Zhang understand the unity as a state of nothingness which eliminates all different separation and difference. It is a state of absolute clearness and nirvana.

Also, both *MoE* and Zhang fail to represent this metaphysical basis/unity through language. According to *MoE*, human beings can use language to describe the phenomena they observe. For example, they can see cows grazing on the grassland. However, when humans move to the state of "der andere Zustand," the meaning of the word such as "grazing" (Musil, MwQ, 827) (*grasen* (Musil, MoE, 762)) suddenly loses its meaning. People might change into the pictorial

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<sup>368</sup> German original: Man hält nichts mehr fest, man wird von nichts festgehalten (Musil, MoE, 763).

<sup>369</sup> German original: die unvergleichliche Geburt des Geistes (Musil, MoE, 1084).

<sup>370</sup> Chinese original: 是非生死，蕩而為一 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 55).

language and describe the scene of “grazing” as “an ocean swell of sensations that rises and falls, breathes and shimmers” (Musil, *MwQ*, 827).<sup>371</sup> This pictorial description still presumes human sensations and perception in the first place. The further stage of the mystical unity is a stage of “selflessness.” In this unity, everything merges and unites in the darkness. The concept of human beings is not born yet. Language has not yet been created from the human beings, and it is the *Urzustand* before the birth of language. Thus, it is impossible to use any form of human language to describe this experience. Therefore, language cannot be deployed to describe this mystical unity.

Zhang sees the boundary of human language as confined within the human world. According to Zhang, there are three different ways of establishing meanings through language, “one discusses the realm of meaning, the second deals with cause and effect and the third seeks substance” (Zhang, *Qiwulunshi*, 27).<sup>372</sup> Zhang has proved that first, establishing meanings through the realm of meaning ends with a circulation of meanings, since no initial definition of meaning can be established. Second, establishing meanings through cause and effect ends with a chain of logical questions. Third, exploring the essence might end with *wufangfen* (particles which are endlessly small and can neither be seen nor felt through human awareness). Language is either an endless circle of logic, or it fails to represent concepts such as *wufangfen* which are beyond human perception. However, according to dependent arising from the

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<sup>371</sup> German original: ein Gewoge von Empfindungen nennen, dass sich hebt und senkt oder atmet und gleißt (MoE, Musil, 762).

<sup>372</sup> Chinese original: 一說義界，二責因緣，三尋實質 (Zhang, *Qiwulunshi*, 27).

*tathāgatagarbha*/matrix of the thus-come-one (*rulaizang yuanqi*, 如来藏緣起), the ultimate truth (the amala and ālaya consciousness) gives birth to human awareness (manas consciousness), so that human language cannot unveil the truth which precedes human perception. Even though a sage might have experienced the ultimate truth, he or she cannot use language to convey this experience. This is the failure of the sages' words (*shengjiao liang*).

As can be seen, both *MoE* and Zhang understand the mystical unity or the ultimate truth as an existence before the origin of language. Therefore, it is impossible to use language to represent this metaphysical truth. Both are aware that human beings have their limitations and cannot achieve the ultimate unity. Also, different from Nietzsche who rejects metaphysics and falls into relativism, both *MoE* and "Qiwulunshi" reconstruct a unity through establishing the metaphysics of nothingness.

#### ESSAYISM AND HEAVENLY TRANSITIONS

As I have argued before, both *MoE* and Zhang discuss about two attitudes in the phenomenal world: negation of one single value (reality and grasping) and embracing of different values (possibility and treating different graspings equally). Further, both *MoE* and Zhang distinguish between the phenomenal world and the metaphysical world. In *MoE*, it is the everyday world and the world of the mystical unity. In Zhang's text, it is the world of the conventional truth and the world of the ultimate truth. In this part, I will further argue that both *MoE* and Zhang emphasize a unity of the phenomenal (reality/grasping and possibility/equally treating all



graspings) and the metaphysical worlds. *MoE* describes this unity through essayism and Zhang characterizes it through Heavenly Transitions (*tianni*, 天倪).

Essayism in *MoE* combines both a determined representation of the phenomenal world and an uncertain opening towards the metaphysical world. On the one hand, Musil's narrator defines essayism as "rather the unique and unalterable form assumed by a man's inner life in a decisive thought" (Musil, MwQ, 273).<sup>373</sup> This quote shows that although there are different possibilities of representations, an essay makes a choice and only presents one decisive perspective, the unique representation of "a man's inner life." This uniqueness is comparable to a unique version of reality represented by a certain figure, such as Diotima. On the other hand,

An essay, ... explores a thing from many sides without wholly encompassing it – for a thing wholly encompassed suddenly loses its scope and melts down to a concept (Musil, MwQ, 270).<sup>374</sup>

This definition shows that instead of making a decision without concluding it, an essay also includes various perspectives and explores a thing "from many sides without wholly encompassing it." Further, "without wholly encompassing" implies that there is always an unspeakable element in an essay which can be read as an opening which correlates with a mystical unity. It means that an essay always contains an awareness of the metaphysical and

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<sup>373</sup> German original: die einmalige und unabänderliche Gestalt, die das innere Leben eines Menschen in einem entscheidenden Gedanken annimmt (Musil, MoE, 253).

<sup>374</sup> German original: Ungefähr wie ein Essay in der Folge seiner Abschnitte ein Ding von vielen Seiten nimmt, ohne es ganz zu erfassen, -- denn ein ganz erfasstes Ding verliert mit einem Male seinen Umfang und schmilzt zu einem Begriff ein (Musil, MoE, 250).

mystical world and makes room for it. The awareness of the unspeakable is exactly the linkage between the noumenal and the phenomenal world.

Similar to *MoE*, Zhang also simultaneously embraces the conventional world and the ultimate world through Heavenly Transitions (*tianni*, 天倪). Heavenly Transitions also have two meanings. In Zhang's words, it is also called letting both alternatives proceed/walking on both paths (*lianghang*, 兩行). On the one hand, it describes one's natural inclination. Zhang argues that Heavenly Transitions are "divisions of nature." "For example, one drinks from the well and can know whether the water is salty or bland" (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 54).<sup>375</sup> As a result of this perception, this person grasps the water as "salty or bland." In the context of *MoE*, it would be that Diotima grasps her self-significance as her reality. In this way, Heavenly Transitions imply the reality an individual grasps onto. On the other hand, as argued before, *ālaya* consciousness in the dependent arising from the *tathāgatagarbha*/matrix of the thus-come-one (*rulaizang yuanqi*, 如来藏緣起) connects the phenomenal and the metaphysical worlds. Therefore, phenomena in the conventional world represented through Heavenly Transitions also contain elements which are indirectly connected to the ultimate world.

Therefore, both *MoE* and Zhang represent both the metaphysical world and the phenomenal world through essayism and Heavenly Transitions respectively. It is notable that when both reinterpret the phenomenal world, they try to avoid falling back to confinement of

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<sup>375</sup> Chinese original: 如飲井者知其鹹淡 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 54).

reality/grasping again, thus avoid forging consolidated opinions. Essayism in *MoE* tries to capture a unique experience without reducing it to a generally accepted concept. An essay includes various perspectives and explores a thing “from many sides without wholly encompassing it.” This definition shows that in contrast to making a decision, an essay also takes various perspectives into consideration and explores a thing “from many sides.” In other words, it is not limited within one reality and appeals for different possibilities to engage. Instead of conforming to generally acknowledged terms such as “truth,” “error,” “false,” “wise” and “unwise,” an essay sees each experience it captures as “unique” and “unalterable,” thus rejects moral judgement towards any descriptions, keeps a sense of possibility and does not fall back into a sense of reality. Also, essayism is arbitrary and constantly in change. When Ulrich was decorating his house, he is “free to follow any principle.” Ulrich simply realizes anything that comes to his mind without following any rules. Therefore, people cannot commit to any of such unique experiences. Uniqueness of essayism guarantees that essayism does not fully fall back into a sense of reality.

Zhang’s Heavenly Transitions also do not fall back to grasping. “What is meant by harmonizing with them by means of their Heavenly Transitions? It means ‘right’ is also ‘not right,’ and ‘so’ is also ‘not so’” (Zhuangzi, Ziporyn, 21; Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 52).<sup>376</sup> Deeming one value as “right” is sticking to one grasping, such as Diotima sees her social importance as “right.” However, “right” is also “not right.” Just like Ulrich who not only understands the justification of Diotima’s self-

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<sup>376</sup> Chinese original: 何謂和之以天倪? 曰: 是不是, 然不然 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 52).

love (“right”), but he also sees the limitation and insufficiency of her self-love by raising the counterpart of it, a selfless attitude, thus Ulrich is able to see the “right” as “not right.” Therefore, Heavenly Transitions also imply an understanding of possibilities and different forms of graspings. Also, *tianni* is lawless and in a continuous change. *Tianni* does not imply an eternal truth, in contrast, it features “endless changes and continuous development.” There are no rules which need to be obeyed. Human beings should then “conform to the separation of nature” and “follow infinite changes” until the end of one’s life (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 79). “For example, one drinks from the well and can know whether the water is salty or bland” (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 54).<sup>377</sup> When people drink from the well, they would have different feelings about the degree of saltiness of the water at different times. The individual feeling of saltiness has to be a unique feeling which only suits this person at a certain situation, but one cannot cling to it as if it becomes a generalized and consolidated reality. This means, individual feelings in Heavenly Transitions are constantly in change, thus there is no solid value (a grasping) which can dominate a person, and a person fails to commit to a reality or grasp a concept and sees it as eternal.

In short, both essayism and Heavenly Transitions consider two paths: the united metaphysical world and the pluralized phenomenal world. Essayism, with its decisive part and the unspeakable opening, connects both the phenomenal and the noumenal worlds. As for Heavenly Transitions, on the one hand, it represents “division of nature” in the conventional

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<sup>377</sup> Chinese original: 如飲井者知其鹹淡 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 54).

world. On the other hand, through ālaya consciousness, it connects with the ultimate world. When essayism and Heavenly Transitions try to describe the phenomenal world, both do not fall back to a world dominated by reality or grasping, in which people commit to one single belief. Instead, they both concentrate on the uniqueness and individual experience without making it a belief. Because there is no established belief, an individual cannot commit to any reality or grasping. Further, essayism and Heavenly Transitions follow no rules and are in a continuous change. Therefore, they would not form a consolidated reality or grasping.

Through essayism and Heavenly Transitions, both *MoE* and “Qiwulunshi” achieve a representation of a dual world structure which contains both the plural phenomenal world and the unified metaphysical world. This is a unique contribution of both texts which synthesizes contradictory representations of the world in a whole.

### *Differences*

Despite similarities between the two projects, *MoE* and “Qiwulunshi” have two major differences. First, both texts belong to similar genres. Whereas *MoE* is a fictional text which explores human interactions in different forms without presenting a definite argument, “Qiwulunshi” is an argumentative text which presents logical arguments without showcasing stories of human engagement. Second, whereas *MoE* examines possibilities mainly focused on the human world, “Qiwulunshi” tries to go beyond human society and theorize the non-human

and beyond-human realms. The second difference can be separated into four parts which will be illustrated in the following text one by one: “human in the phenomenal world,” “function of human in plurality,” “approaching the metaphysical realm,” and “dual representation of the world.”

#### HUMAN IN THE PHENOMENAL WORLD

First, in general, the story in *MoE* revolves around a group of people in Austria preparing for the Parallel Campaign. The focus is the human world. Even the non-human world is seen from the perspective of human. However, in “Qiwulunshi,” the human world is regarded as a part of the whole phenomenal world. In addition to human, there are also non-human and even non-sentient beings which are discussed. Zhang’s realm of discussion goes beyond the human world.

#### FUNCTION OF HUMAN IN PLURALITY

There is an existing argument that when discussing plurality, *MoE* steps out of the anthropocentric realm and embraces a non-anthropocentric world. However, I have demonstrated that when embracing possibilities, only human identity/the name of human has been negated, meaning that human as a personified figure is negated. However, modes of thinking and experiences from the human society are preserved. Therefore, even when dealing with plurality, human creations are never out of the picture.

However, Zhang Taiyan negates human personality in a deeper way. Whereas *MoE* constantly pushes forward a humanized way of thinking which should be adapted to explain other phenomena in the world, “Qiwulunshi” seeks a law that could become a united basis for both sentient and non-sentient beings. It even further emphasizes that sentient and non-sentient beings can be changed into each other, and they form a united whole.

#### APPROACHING THE METAPHYSICAL REALM

Third, when representing the metaphysical world, whereas *MoE* does not give up hope in human capacity and constantly experiments limitation of human beings through Ulrich’s and Agathe’s travel into the millennium, “Qiwulunshi” sees the limitation of human beings to approach the metaphysical world and thus deploys a Buddhist theory to explain it. *MoE*’s method to approach the metaphysical world is through interaction between the siblings of Ulrich and Agathe. *MoE* identifies contrasting personalities/subjectivities between Ulrich and Agathe. Because both of them have a sense of possibility, they intend to cross over their borders and merge within the realm of each other. In the end stage, in an incestuous relationship, their contrasting personalities merge with their complementary parts and form a unity. In this way, the metaphysical realm which signifies unity is gradually approached.

Different from *MoE* which merges differences as the start of the process to approach metaphysics, “Qiwulunshi” starts the process through examining human epistemology. In Zhang’s account, there are three methods of human epistemology, perception (*xianliang*), reasoning (*biliang*) and the sages’ words (*shengjiao liang*). According to Zhang, the method

deployed in *MoE* that Ulrich and Agathe interact belongs to the category of perception. Perception belongs to the realm of individual feelings and is not comparable to the metaphysics which can be regarded as the basis for the world. According to Zhang's logic, reasoning ends with the problem of inexhaustible conditioned arising (*wujin yuanqi*, 無盡緣起), an endless logic chain which remains in the realm of the phenomenal world. Even *shengjiao liang* fails to be the metaphysical truth, given that the sages' words require language. Language is a result of the noumenal world, thus it cannot unveil its own origin – the metaphysical realm.

After negating human capability, Zhang then changes his perspective to the Yogācāra Buddhism theory, claiming that the metaphysical realm should be the matrix of the thus-come-one (*rulaizang*, 如来藏). In this way, different from *MoE* which fails to characterize the metaphysical realm, Zhang is capable of defining it. In addition, Zhang works out a passage from the ultimate world to the conventional world, ālaya consciousness, therefore transfers the discussion about the metaphysical realm to the discussion about the phenomenal world.

For this reason, one can say that when approaching metaphysics, *MoE* focuses on humans in the phenomenal realm, thus ascending to the metaphysical realm from a phenomenal perspective. In contrast, “Qiwulunshi” negates human capacity, thus it approaches the metaphysical through descending to the phenomenal realm from the metaphysical realm.



## DUAL REPRESENTATION OF THE WORLD

Fourth, when both *MoE* and “Qiwulunshi” represent the plural phenomenal world and the united metaphysical world, *MoE* ascends to the metaphysical world from the phenomenal world, but “Qiwulunshi” descends to the phenomenal world from the metaphysical world. *MoE* never gives up confidence in human society and human potentials. Therefore, it still seeks the connection between two worlds starting from a human perspective in the phenomenal world to approach the metaphysical world. Because the metaphysical realm in essence goes beyond human beings, *MoE* fails to provide a satisfying representation for the metaphysical world. When representing the metaphysics through essayism, *MoE* tries to avoid a direct description of it, but only recognizes its existence and alludes to it, and name it as the openness.

In contrast, “Qiwulunshi” chooses to descend from the metaphysical world to the phenomenal world. Based on the negation of human capability, in Zhang’s opinion, it is impossible for human beings to gain access to the metaphysical world. Therefore, Zhang simply deploys a theory which aims at conceiving the inconceivable – the theory of the matrix of the thus-come-one in Yogācāra Buddhism and sees the ultimate unity as the matrix of the thus-come-one. Also, he demonstrates innate connections between both the phenomenal and the metaphysical worlds, therefore transfers the representation of the metaphysical world to the representation of the phenomenal world. Therefore, different from *MoE* which ascends from the phenomenal to the metaphysical, “Qiwulunshi” descends from the metaphysical to the phenomenal.

#### DIFFERENCE IN CONTENT LEADS TO DIFFERENCE IN GENRES

Summarizing the previous four arguments, one can conclude that whereas *MoE* values human capacities more, Zhang sees human only as one of the species in the world with limited potentials. For this reason, *MoE* is mainly concentrated on the human society, but Zhang never wishes to elevate human beings and even negates the power of humans from different aspects. As a result, the genre of novel fits well with *MoE*, since it explores human interactions in different contexts on different levels and seeks a thorough exploration and full realization of human capability. At the same time, an argumentative text is also the suitable genre for Zhang's "Qiwulunshi." Zhang sees human beings as one of the many species among all sentient and non-sentient beings which is hardly special. Also, in Zhang's perspective, human interactions are only a form of perception (*xianliang*, 現量) which represents a particular form of individuality which is neither representative nor fundamental. Therefore, endless possibilities in human society remain within the realm of the phenomenal world and can never be used as a tool to approach the absolute truth in the metaphysical realm.

#### CONCLUSION

This dissertation examines two texts from the German-Austrian and the Chinese background respectively, Robert Musil's *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften* and Zhang Taiyan's "Qiwulunshi." I argue that both texts share the similarity that they pursue a similar project: to reconcile the tension between plurality in the phenomenal world and unity in the inconceivable metaphysical world. However, a major difference can be perceived: whereas Robert Musil's *MoE* values human society, Zhang Taiyan's "Qiwulunshi" holds a slightly negative perspective towards

humans. The affirmation of the human is the justification that *MoE* deploys the genre of novel, in which human interactions are carefully examined. The denial of human capacity shown in “*Qiwulunshi*” makes it meaningless to further explore human potentials in form of a novel.

When both texts work out the problem of the tension between plurality and unity, they firstly identify plurality as embracing plurality within the realm of the phenomenal world. In both *MoE* and “*Qiwulunshi*,” it is crucial that the phenomenal world should not be rendered as a unity, but it must be plurality. Both novels then identify the metaphysical realm as a world of unity which unites the pluralized phenomenal world, and which needs to be aspired for. However, this realm contains nothing, and this world precedes human perceptions. As a result, human beings are incapable of conceiving this realm. Given that the plural phenomenal and the united metaphysical form a contradiction, both texts explore a method to combine both aspects of the world. Both texts achieve a method to reconcile the tension between plurality and (inconceivable) unity by showing that both realms of the world are indeed inseparable from each other, thus achieving a representation of a pluralized unified world structure.

Besides similarities, main differences can be perceived in both texts. Whereas *MoE* focuses more on the human world, “*Qiwulunshi*” does not elevate it. When discussing the phenomenal realm, *MoE* takes human society as the object of description and sees the non-human world through a human perspective. Even when the novel tries to negate human identity when it discusses possibilities, it still follows human rules to evaluate all different possibilities. In contrast, Zhang argues that human should be only seen as one species among endless other

sentient and non-sentient beings. Also, he seeks a law which is not only defined by human consciousness but is also applicable for other beings.

While the metaphysical realm seems so unapproachable, both texts explore methods which could form a bridge to the “impossible world.” The method provided by *MoE* is to explore a unity created through merging of differences in two human figures – Ulrich and Agathe. *MoE* tries to attain unity through merging plurality. “*Qiwulunshi*” simply negates possible access to this realm through human interactions of any kind. Zhang directly deploys the matrix of the thus-come-one in Buddhism to define this metaphysical realm and then connects this realm with the approachable phenomenal realm, therefore merging unity with plurality.

Different evaluations of the human in both texts could explain why different genres are suitable for each one of them. Whereas *MoE* takes the form of a novel, “*Qiwulunshi*” is an argumentative text. A novel unfolds human potentials through exploring human engagement in different forms and it is in line with the anthropocentric focus of the *MoE*. “*Qiwulunshi*” does not merely focus on the human world but explores other possibilities beyond humans. Therefore, an argumentative text which does not need to contextualize a human world in detail is more suitable.

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## Appendix A Yogācāra Buddhism<sup>378</sup> in Modern China and Zhang

### Taiyan's Work

#### BUDDHISM AND YOGĀCĀRA

According to Makeham, “the Chinese culture has been historically most profoundly influenced by disciplinary-based Western thought and Indian Buddhist thought” (Makeham, 1). Buddhism has its flourishing at the end of the Qing dynasty.<sup>379</sup> According to Liang Qichao (梁啟超, 1873—1929), Buddhism is one “hidden trend” (*fuliu*, 伏流) in late Qing history of thought.<sup>380</sup>

Literalists also studied Buddhism: therefore, all so-called late Qing scholars who conducted new studies, none of them had no relationship with Buddhism (Liang Qichao, Qindai, 99).<sup>381</sup>

Whereas Western influence on Chinese modernism has been well documented, the influence of Buddhism on China has been “far less well understood and still largely overlooked” (Makeham,

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<sup>378</sup> The Yogācāra school, (Vijnānavāda; Yui-shiki-ha): Also known as the Consciousness-Only Buddhism,

“one of the two major Mahayana schools in India, the other being the Mādhyamika school. Maitreya-nātha (ca. 270-350 CE) who is thought to have lived around 270–350 (350–430 according to another account), is often regarded as the founder of the Consciousness-Only school. He is attributed with composing *The Treatise on the Stages of Yoga Practice*, which explains the Consciousness-Only doctrine, and passing it on to Asanga. Thereafter the Consciousness-Only doctrine was further developed by Asanga and by Vasubandhu in the first half of the fifth century. This school upholds the concept that all phenomena arise from the *vijnāna*, or consciousness, and that the basis of all functions of consciousness is the *ālaya*-consciousness. The Consciousness-Only doctrine was a major subject of Buddhist studies in Nālandā Monastery. Dharmapāla and his disciple Shīlabhadra further developed the doctrine in the latter half of the sixth century. Shīlabhadra taught the Consciousness-Only doctrine to Xuanzang, who brought it back to China. Gunamati and his disciple Sthiramati were also well-known scholars of the Consciousness-Only doctrine. The Dharma Characteristics (Chin Fa-hsiang; 法相宗 Hossō) school in both China and Japan carried on the philosophy of the Consciousness-Only school.” (Nichiren Buddhism Library: <https://www.nichirenlibrary.org/en/dic/Content/C/106>)

<sup>379</sup> The Qing Dynasty (Qingchao, 清朝) is from 1636 to 1912.

<sup>380</sup> Chinese original: 晚清思想家有一伏流，曰佛學。

<sup>381</sup> Chinese original: 故晚清所謂新學者，殆無一不與佛學有關係。

1). I will provide a detailed account of the influence of Buddhism on Chinese modernism using the example of Yogācāra Buddhism.

The flourishing of Buddhism can be seen as a reaction against Western invasion. According to Wang Xiaojie, in modern China, with the invasion of Western powers, China was defeated in wars and suffered immensely. In this background, traditional Chinese Confucianism has been gradually disintegrated (Wang Xiaojie, 93). Scholars searched for ideas that could rescue China from its weakness. Late-Qing intellectuals were able to observe the survival of Buddhism in a rapidly developing Japan (Jorgensen, 75). Modern Chinese scholars wish to establish their own thought systems in order to counteract Christianity and the invasion of Western powers.

Buddhism can be seen as an neglected source which suited China (Wang Xiaojie, 93). According to Jorgensen, Buddhism “could be used to criticize the social inequality and self-serving interests in Chinese society.” Also, it could be used to “champion equality, people’s rights, the salvation of all beings from suffering, and even evolution” (Jorgensen, 75).

The corpus of Yogācāra writings attracted unparalleled attention among all of the writings which try to renew Chinese traditional philosophy (Makeham, 2).<sup>382</sup> The revival of Yogācāra – specifically the Nothing but Consciousness/Consciousness-Only/Yogācāra (*weishi*, 唯識, *vijñapti-mātratā*) School – from the late 1890s to the 1930s in China decisively shapes the

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<sup>382</sup> According to Makeham, even though Yogācāra had its roots in Indian thought, it was still considered a “Chinese” tradition, because “for early twentieth-century Chinese intellectuals its most influential historical interpreters were Chinese commentators, extending back to early Tang times. (And as noted above, even in the late-Ming Period, it was employed as an aid in critiquing the foreign religion of Christianity)” (Makeham, 26).

intellectual discourse in Chinese modernism (Makeham, 1). In a common view, intellectuals of the time regarded Yogācāra as a

sophisticated knowledge system that could serve as an authoritative alternative to the knowledge systems being introduced from the West; that it was an “indigenized” intellectual resource that could be co-opted to counter the challenges posed by the logic, philosophy, psychology, and science of the West (Makeham, 26).

Yogācāra was developed in the fourth century by Indian thinkers Asaṅga (Wuzhu, 无著) and Vasubandhu (Shiqin, 世親). These thoughts almost immediately appeared in China (Makeham, 4). Especially excerpts from the important Mahāyāna classics, *Yogācārabhūmi-Śāstra* (*Yuqie shidi lun*, 瑜伽師地論); Discourse on the Stages of Concentration Practice; alt. Treatise on Grounds for Disciplined Practice) are received in China. These texts show that Yogācāra is not only a doctrinal theory, but also a monastic practice. Another Buddhist classic at this time is the Sutra on [the Buddha’s] Entering [the Country of] Lanka (*Lengqie jing*, 楞伽經, *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*) (Makeham, 5).

According to Makeham, from the fifth to eighth centuries, there are three major waves for Yogācāra in China. In the first major wave, there are two competing interpretations for Yogācāra, the disputes between two translators: Bodhiruci (Putiliuzhi, 菩提流支) and Ratnamati (Lenamoti, 勒那摩提). In 508 AD, both tried to jointly translate Vasubandhu’s Commentary on the Discourse on the Ten Stages [of the Bodhisattva Path] (*Shidi jing lun* 十地經論, *Daśabhūmivyākhyāna*) or Stages Treatise (*dilun*, 地論) for short. Bodhiruci and Ratnamati

competed bitterly against each other in terms of interpretation for the text. These controversies were even carried on later which form the schools of Southern Dilun and Northern Dilun, respectively (Makeham, 6).

In the second major wave, Paramārtha (Zhendi, 真諦, (499-569)) from Ujjain the western India traveled to China and translated numerous foundational Yogācāra texts, including the partial translation of the *Yogācārabhūmi-Śāstra* called Compendium of Ascertainments (*Juedingzang lun* 決定藏論, *Viniścayasamgrahaṇī*). This text introduces the concept of an *amalavijñāna* (*amoluo shi*, 阿摩羅識), which is the “pure consciousness.” His followers names it as the ninth consciousness which precedes the *ālayavijñāna*. (Makeham, 6) During this time, another apocryphal text – *Mahāyāna Awakening of Faith* (*Dasheng qixin lun*, 大乘起信論, *Mahāyāna śraddhotpāda śāstra*) – purported to be the work of a well-known second century Indian monk, Aśvagoṣa, was written in China. It is said that this text has been translated by Paramārtha. This text immediately gained a central role in the thinking among East Asian Buddhists (Makeham, 7).

The third major move was led by two scholar-monks, Prabhākaramitra (Boluojiapomiduoluo; 564-633) and Xuanzang. Prabhākaramitra is a translator who arrived in the Chinese capital, Chang’an, in 627 from Magadhā in central India and promoted both Madhyamaka and Yogācāra texts (Makeham, 7). At the same time Prabhākaramitra was working in China, Xuanzang (602-664) went on a pilgrimage for Buddhist scriptures in India in 629. In order to resolve the disputes between the two Dilun schools and Paramārtha’s school, Xuanzang brought back to

China the complete version *Yogācārabhūmi-Śāstra*. He then accomplished a complete translation of this text and help Chinese monks to properly understand Yogācāra thought and practice. Aside from the travelogue of his journey through Central Asia and India, *Record of Western Lands*, ([*Da Tang*] *Xiyu ji*, [大唐]西域记) and *Discourse on the Theory of Consciousness-Only/Yogācāra* (*Cheng weishi lun*, 成唯識論, *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi-śāstra*): which is a composite of commentaries on on Vasubandhu's *Thirty Verses on the Vijñapti-mātra Treatise* (*Weishi sanshi lun song*, 唯識三十論頌, *Triṃśikā*), all Xuanzang's works were faithful translations of original Indic classics (Makeham, 8).

However, after the Tang dynasty, Yogācāra texts experienced a long-term decline. According to Makeham, after the death of the doctrinal synthesizer Yongming Yanshou (永明延壽, 904-975), many key Yogācāra texts were lost. As can be known from the remaining Japanese and Korean catalogues in the tenth and eleventh centuries, Yogācāra texts, especially those on logic, have not survived in China (Makeham, 10). "Major Yogācāra commentaries were lost in the Northern Song period (960-1127). ... Access to, and the ability to read, Sanskrit texts had of course long ceased" (Makeham, 11).

The Yogācāra started to revive in the late-Ming period. In the sixteenth century, Christian missionaries arrive in China. Whereas Western thoughts are generally "more systematic, logical and critical," Chinese thought tends to be more "intuitive and essence/nature-oriented" (Jorgensen, 64). Therefore, Western missionaries initiated conflicts between traditional Chinese cultures and Western thoughts. For example, the Jesuit missionary Matteo Ricci (1552-1610)



brought Christianity to the Chinese people and even tried to attack Chinese Buddhism. In reaction to this challenge, Jiang Wu has shown how Chan master Feiyin Tongrong (費隱通容, 1593-1661) uses Buddhism to counter Ricci and other missionaries (Makeham, 12). This example shows that Buddhism was developed as a native school of thought to defend the Chinese traditional values against Western invasion (Makeham, 13).

This revival of the Yogācāra in the late-Ming period foreshadows the resurrection of Yogācāra studies in the Qing Dynasty and Republic China (Makeham, 11). However, due to the loss of Yogācāra classic texts, Chinese scholars had to retrieve lost Yogācāra texts and look to experiences for Buddhist modernization from Japan (Jorgensen, 65). Most central Yogācāra texts were well preserved in Japan due to institutional and historical reasons. First, the eminent families supported the Hossō School<sup>383</sup> and there was an abundance of resources. In addition, Japan did not have established Buddhist values when Hossō entered into Japan. Therefore, unlike Xuanzang's Yogācāra in Tang-Dynasty China, the Hossō School did not encounter strong opposition in society (Jorgensen, 65-66). The friendship between the Japanese lay Buddhist scholar Nanjō Bun'yū (南條文雄, 1894-1927) and the Chinese lay Buddhist scholar Yang Wenhui (楊文會, 1837-1911) was crucial to the revival of Yogācāra in China. Between 1891 and 1896, Nanjō sent a total of 235 Buddhist texts to Yang, including thirty Yogācāra texts which has been long lost in China (Makeham, 2; Jorgensen, 65).<sup>384</sup> After a few years, Yogācāra, with its

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<sup>383</sup> Yogācāra in Japanese.

<sup>384</sup> According to Jorgensen's research,

The influences of Japan on Faxiang and its proponents were varied and complex, as can be seen in the case of the Chinese intellectual and revolutionary Zhang Taiyan (章太炎, 1869-1936). Zhang had personal connections with

systematized logic and cognitive epistemological process, became a strong rival used against Western thought (Makeham, 2-3).

In the Qing period, many Chinese intellectuals were interested in Yogācāra. For example, Wang Fuzhi (王夫之, 1619-1692),<sup>385</sup> Gong Zizhen (龔自珍, 1793-1842),<sup>386</sup> Taixu (太虛, 1890-1947)<sup>387</sup> and Tan Sitong (譚嗣同, 1865-1898) have all deployed approaches from Yogācāra. However, their voices were isolated and their ideas had not been fully developed (Jorgensen, 76).

Nevertheless, in his major work of *An Exposition of Benevolence (Renxu, 仁學)*, Tan Sitong tries to link the cognitive architecture in Yogācāra to the brain's physiology, and Pacey understands it as a "precursor to contemporary neuroscientific studies of Buddhist meditation." Also, along with these other views, Yogācāra was central to Tan's utopian social project (Pacey, 104). Taixu and the Wuchang School<sup>388</sup> put forward the concept of "Pure Land in the human world" (*renjian jingtu, 人間淨土*): the vision of a society guided by Buddhism (Pacey, 122). Zhang Taiyan provides one of the most comprehensive and thought-provoking analysis of Yogācāra in his "Qiwulunshi" and saw Yogācāra as the most suitable form of Buddhism which achieves equality. As argued by Jorgensen, Zhang believes that Yogācāra enables a philosophy of equality

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people influenced in many ways by Yogācāra or Hossō (the Japanese pronunciation of Faxiang) thought, and in turn Zhang was indirectly influenced through reading Japanese works on Yogācāra and allied or rival systems of thought (Jorgensen, 65).

<sup>385</sup> Wang Fuzhi, Chinese Confucianist.

<sup>386</sup> Gong Zizhen, Chinese thinker, poet, writer and pioneer of reformism.

<sup>387</sup> Taixu, important modern monk who advocates for "Buddhism of Life" 人生佛教, which aims at deploying the spirit of "sacrificing oneself and benefiting others" 舍己利人 and "benefiting sentient beings" 饶益有情 in Mahayana Buddhism to establish a perfect personality and sangha.

<sup>388</sup> Buddhists affiliated with the Wuchang Buddhist Seminary (Wuchang Foxue Yuan 武昌佛學院), the first modern Buddhist seminary, a seminary closely associated with Taixu (Hammerstrom, 171).

through “wisdom of equality” (*pingdengxingzhi*, 平等性智, *samatā-jñāna*) which turns the self-centered *vijñāna* (consciousness) into a wisdom without attachment to an ego and therefore arrives at the true equality (Jorgensen, 76).

#### ZHANG TAIYAN’S UNDERSTANDING OF YOGĀCĀRA IN “QIWULUNSHI”

In the following text, I will introduce the basic structure of of Yogācāra and Zhang Taiyan’s appropriation of basic Yogācāra ideas. Yogācāra is the school of meditative practice which developed out of the Madhyamika *Zhong Lun* 中論 concerns of negativity. According to Digital Dictionary of Buddhism, Madhyamika is

one of the major streams of Indian Mahāyāna Buddhism which was to have a profound impact on all subsequent forms of Buddhism that arose in East Asia and Tibet. Based chiefly in the 'middle way' 中論 philosophy of Nāgārjuna 龍樹, the Mādhyamika thinkers sought to investigate a middle ground between the two extremes of existence 有 and nonexistence 無 of things. The Mādhyamika claim is that the dependent arising 緣起 of all things amounts to their lacking, or being 'empty' 空, of any independent essence 自性. That is to say, the characteristically Mādhyamika emphasis on 'emptiness' represents what Madhyamakas take to be a more thoroughgoing expression of the basic Buddhist idea of dependent arising.

This quote shows that the concept of “being empty” and “emptiness” is at core of the Madhyamika which can be taken as the nihilism of Madhyamika.

However, there has long been the unhappiness with the nihilism of Madhyamika. Yogācāra is specifically a school of practice with a conceptual framework to allow the adherent to move

away from illusion with a focus on attaining an inconceivable truth once the rest is stripped away. As the *Yogācārabhūmi-sastra* explains:

The path of practice shall be correctly followed in order to eliminate that ideation. Through understanding, thoroughly exercised upon all objects of knowledge, [and] by keeping in mind only the ideation that the ideations of all phenomena [are nothing but] adventitious, you should thus repeatedly remove any ideation conducive to the proliferation directed at all phenomena and should consistently dwell on the thing-in-itself by a non-conceptualizing mental state which is focused on grasping only the object perceived without any characteristics. Thus you will obtain the concentration stemming from the lineage of those practicing the pure contemplation of the Tathagata's Supreme Cognition. Even when you practice the meditation on the impurity, you should not relinquish this mental orientation. Likewise when you practice the meditation on friendliness, dependent origination, analysis of elements, mindfulness of breathing, the first absorption and so on up to the station of neither ideation nor non-ideation as well as the bodhisattva's countless meditations, supernatural faculties, contemplations, and attainments, you should not relinquish precisely this mental orientation.

Different from Madhyamika which ends with nothingness, Yogācāra tries to achieve the ultimate truth through Yogācāra practice. This passage shows the process of approaching the ultimate truth through Yogācāra practice. One starts with “practicing the meditation” on things. It is called the “meditation on the impurity,” because things as phenomenal beings are “impure” compared to the ultimate truth. To grasp on these things can be understood as “mental orientation.” For example, one focuses on “friendliness, dependent origination, analysis of elements, mindfulness of breathing, the first absorption and so on.” The person then moves up to the higher stage of “of neither ideation nor non-ideation as well as the bodhisattva's countless meditations, supernatural faculties, contemplations, and attainments.”

The Yogācāra practice of meditation described above contains a huge dilemma: obtaining the non-representable. The Yogācāra path of practice is concerned with human “mental orientation” and “ideation.” It always has to be a conception. However, the ultimate truth as “thing-in-itself” and the “non-conceptualizing mental state” is nothingness. It would be “the object perceived without any characteristics,” which cannot be perceived or represented by “ideation” or “mental orientation.” If one conceives of the ultimate, then it is no more the ultimate as “thing-in-itself,” but a conceived ideation of the ultimate. Therefore, “the path of practice shall be correctly followed in order to eliminate that ideation.” However, without human conception, how would it be possible to obtain the ultimate truth? The final question then goes, how could one obtain from “the lineage of those practicing” the true ultimate, which is the “pure contemplation of the Tathagata's Supreme Cognition.”

Yogācāra Buddhism considers two different types of world, *zhendi* and *sudi*. According to Hui ren 慧仁, from early Buddhism till the Mādhyamika school in Mahayana Buddhism (including Yogācāra Buddhism), there are expressions related to *zhendi* 真諦 (*paramartha-satya*, world of the ultimate truth) and *sudi* 俗諦 (*saṃvṛti-satya*, world of the conventional truth). *Di* 諦 refers to real rules. *Zhendi* 真諦 means the correct dogma or averment of the enlightened. Another definition is *wangfa* 王法 and *fofa* 佛法, royal law and Buddha law. It is the correct knowledge of the nature of existence. *Sudi* 俗諦 means common or ordinary statement, as if phenomena were real. It is the knowledge on the level of the conventional

world, which belongs to the realm of awareness of the ordinary people (Buddhist dictionary, Huiren, 248).<sup>389</sup>

Similar to the Yogācāra theory, Zhang's *qiwu* philosophy also argues that there are two ways of understanding the world, through the world of the conventional truth and the world of the ultimate truth (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 9).<sup>390</sup> "The equalization of things is based on examining how names and appearances are gathered in the mind." In this quote, we see that when Zhang interprets Zhuangzi's "equalization of things, 齊物," he considers two different worlds. The first one is the world which contains "names and appearances, 名相," the second one is the world of "一心 (the mind)." Zhang also explains the relationship between the two worlds. The world of "names and appearances" should be observed and subsumed under "the mind." The world of "the mind" should summarize the world of "names and appearances." As a result, the mind in the ultimate world unifies endless manifestations of "names and appearances" in a conventional world.

In "Qiwulunshi," Zhang uses examples of *tianlai* and *dilai* to represent both worlds.

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<sup>389</sup> Huiren (1973- ) is a Chinese Buddhist scholar. He is currently the supervisor of Hangzhou Chaoyin Buddhist Temple, the vice president of Hangzhou Buddhist College, director of Yogācāra Buddhism research office, and the executive editor of *Weishiyanjia* (唯识研究, *Vijnapti-matra Studies*), the only international academic journal in the field of Chinese Yogācāra Buddhism research. Huiren's *Weishiyalun* (cited in my dissertation) is listed among the textbooks of Hangzhou Buddhist College and Chinese universities that teach Yogācāra Buddhism. It provides a clear and systematic overview of the basics of Yogācāra Buddhism.

<sup>390</sup> Chinese original: 《齊物》本以觀察名相，會之一心 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 9).

For this reason, he begins with piping of the earth (*dilai*).<sup>391</sup> Wind refers to distinctions in mind.<sup>392</sup> “Raging cries emerge from all the ten thousand hollows” (Zhuangzi, 2020, 11) which are all different is a metaphor for different countries having different concepts and languages. One then has the various sounds of those of domestic chickens and wild finches. All have different voices, and each expresses their own meaning<sup>393 394</sup>(Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 9).<sup>395</sup>

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<sup>391</sup> Chen Guying (陈鼓应) has the most literal understanding. Based on Chen Guying’s interpretation (Chen’s annotation represents one of the most standardized interpretation of Zhuangzi), piping of the earth (Dilai) is a result of piping of heaven (Tianlai). Di, earth. Lai, a traditional Chinese instrument, similar to a flute. The sound is created sounds by blowing wind into the instrument. Dilai are sounds produced by wind blowing into different holes (Chen Guying, 36). Shi Jinggang further extends Chen’s literal interpretation and understands “Dilai” as the diverse world in which each thing determines itself and things do not press on each other (Shi Jinggang, 109). Meng Zhuo extends this meaning, connects “Dilai” with Yogācāra Buddhism and understands “Dilai” as endless dharmas which are derived out of consciousness, also results of Tianlai (Meng, Zhongguo shiyu). This dissertation takes the second (Shi Jinggang’s) interpretation.

<sup>392</sup> Yi, 意, mind, refers to the faculty of intention, singling out intentional objects.

<sup>393</sup> Yi, 意, meaning, refers to the faculty of intention, singling out intentional objects.

<sup>394</sup> Chinese original: 故以地籟發端，風喻意想分別，萬竅怒號，各不相似，喻世界名言各異，乃至家雞野鶻，各有殊音，自抒其意 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 9).

<sup>395</sup> Zhuangzi’s text as the context of this argument:

南郭子綦隱機而坐，仰天而噓，荅焉似喪其耦。顏成子遊立侍乎前，曰：“何居乎？形固可使如槁木，而心固可使如死灰乎？今之隱機者，非昔之隱機者也？”子綦曰：“偃，不亦善乎，而問之也！今者吾喪我，汝知之乎？女聞人籟而未聞地籟，女聞地籟而不聞天籟夫！”

子遊曰：“敢問其方。”子綦曰：“夫大塊噫氣，其名爲風。是唯無作，作則萬竅怒呿。而獨不聞之寥寥乎？山陵之畏佳，大木百圍之竅穴，似鼻，似口，似耳，似枅，似圈，似臼，似窪者，似污者。激者、謔者、叱者、吸者、叫者、譟者、突者，咬者，前者唱於而隨者唱喁，冷風則小和，飄風則大和，厲風濟則眾竅爲虛。而獨不見之調調之刁刁乎？”

子遊曰：“地籟則眾竅是已，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？” (Zhuangzi, 14)

Sir Shoestrap of Southwall was leaning against his armrest on the ground, gazing upward and releasing his breath into the heavens above – all in a scatter there, as if loosed from a partner.

Sir Swimmy Faceformed stood in attendance before him. “Who or what is this here?” he asked. “Can the body really be made like withered tree, the mind like dead ashes? What leans against this armrest now is not what leaned against it before.”

Sir Shoestrap of Southwall said, “How good it is that you question this, Yan! What’s here now is this: I have lost me. But could you know who or what that is? You hear the piping of man without yet hearing the piping of earth; you hear the piping of earth without yet hearing the piping of Heaven.” Sir Swimmy Faceformed said, “Please tell me more.”

Sir Shoesrap of Southwall replied, “When the Great Clump belches forth its vital breath, we call it the wind. As soon as it begins, raging cries emerge from all the ten thousand hollows, and surely you cannot have missed the rustle and bustle that then goes on. The buldges and drops of the mountain forest, the indentations and holes riddling its massive towering trees, are like noses, mouths, ears; like sockets, enclosures, mortars; like ponds, like puddles! Roarers and whizzers, scolders and sighers, shouters, wailers,

The world which contains “names and appearances” can be understood as “piping of the earth (*dilai*, 地籟).” “Piping of the earth” means that the wind blows in different holes in a flute and different “holes (*xiao*, 竅)” roam in “ten thousand hollows (*wanxiao*, 萬竅).” This refers to endless phenomena in a world. For example, “different countries having different concepts and languages 世界名言各異,” “the various sounds of those of domestic chickens and wild finches 乃至家雞野鶻, 各有殊音.” “Different voices 殊音” and “their own meaning 自抒其意” from each individual living thing. This world of differences is called the world of the conventional truth (*sudi*, 俗諦).

After introducing both the world of the ultimate truth and the world of the conventional truth, I am going to further introduce how Yogācāra the world of the conventional truth is created through the world of the ultimate truth. In Yogācāra, the storehouse consciousness/*ālaya* consciousness belongs to the world of the ultimate truth. The storehouse consciousness contains seeds which give birth to the world of conventional truth. The seeds contained within the storehouse consciousness/produced by the *ālaya* consciousness are seven different consciousnesses: the manas consciousness and other six different consciousnesses. As introduced by Huiyen,

The philosophy of eight consciousnesses is the basis for Consciousness-Only/  
Yogācāra Buddhism. The eight consciousnesses can be separated into three

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boomers, growlers! One leads with a “yeee!,” another answers with a “yuuu!” A light breeze brings a small harmony, while a powerful gale makes for a harmony vast and grand. And once the harp wind has passed, all these holes return to their silent vacuity. Have you never seen all their tempered attunements, all their cunning contentions?” (Zhuangzi, Ziporyn, 11-12).



categories: “心 (heart), 意 (intentional awareness), 識 (consciousness).” 心 (heart) refers to the eighth consciousness, which is the source of other seven consciousnesses. It is the body of life. The eighth consciousness gives birth to phenomena and activities of the other seven consciousnesses. Its movement is very subtle, and its nature is “恆轉 (*hengzhuan*, constant changing),” meaning that is consecutive like a fountain, but it also constantly arises and ceases. 意 (intentional awareness) refers to the seventh consciousness, the manas consciousness. The function of the seventh consciousness is minute and single, which is to contemplate about the eighth consciousness, and therefore has its grasping of the self. It is the natural and deep-rooted complex of self-centrism, selfishness. 識 (consciousness) refers to the first six consciousnesses whose functions are to understand differences. The sixth consciousness tries to understand psychological movements including awareness, emotions, willpowers etc. The first five consciousnesses are rather unitary and centralized: perceptions or cognitions of form-and-color, sound, smell, taste, and touch arising from the five senses (consciousnesses of eye, ear, nose, tongue and body) (Huiren, 21-23).

Zhang also recapitulates the process in which the world of the ultimate truth gives birth to the world of the conventional truth. Zhang interprets Zhuangzi’s “the piping of heaven”<sup>396</sup> as the world of “the mind,” which is the world of the ultimate truth.

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<sup>396</sup> According to Chen Guyin, piping of heaven, things produce sound based on their own potentials (Chen Guyin, 36). Shi Jinggang interprets Zhang Taiyan’s “*Tianlai*” (piping of heaven) as Zhang’s “archetypical concept” (*yuannxing guannian*, 原型觀念). According to Shi, instead of following the general literal interpretation, Zhang Taiyan creatively connects piping of the heaven and piping of the earth with Yogācāra Buddhism and sets his own tone for interpreting Zhuangzi through this School of Buddhism. Zhang argues that piping of heaven refers to seeds in storehouse consciousness (Shi Jinggang, 110). Meng Zhuo extends Zhang’s original expression and understands *Tianlai* the absolute real body (*bhūtatathatā*, 真如) (Meng, *Zhongguo shiyu*). Recently, Wu Ruihan further interprets Zhang’s Buddhist reading of piping of the heaven and piping of the earth by analyzing their respective structures. According to Wu, in piping of the earth, Zhang understands 風 (wind) as the subject to perceive (“I”), which is the function of the heart-mind to perceive objects; 萬竅 (ten thousand hollows) refers to objects, which are things to be perceived. As a result, both subject and object are independent from each other. This is called 分別我執 (*fenbie wozhi*, independent grasping of self). In the structure of piping of heaven, however, both subject and object come out of ālaya consciousness, so that object is dependent on subject. This is called 俱生我執 (*jusheng wozhi*, inborn attachment to self). Wu further connects “dependent grasping of self” in piping of heaven with dependent arising from the *tathāgatagarbha*/matrix of the thus-come-one (如来藏緣起). As illustrated later in the text, dependent arising from the *tathāgatagarbha*/matrix of the thus-come-one (如来藏緣起) contains two

The piping of heaven is a metaphor for the seeds in the storehouse consciousness. In a later time, people call these seeds archetypal concepts. These seeds do not just envelop a particular language, but the essence of images. Therefore, “gusting through all the ten thousand differences” (Zhuangzi, 2020, 12) so that each can be itself – each takes what it wants refers to depending on the storehouse consciousness; it is the root of mind (manas consciousness). It grasps the storehouse consciousness and makes it a “self” (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 9).<sup>397</sup>

The world of “the piping of heaven (*tianlai*, 天籟)” contains “the storehouse consciousness (*cangshi*, 藏識).” These seeds are called consciousnesses which are “archetypal concepts, 原型觀念.” They preserve different possibilities to create a world of the conventional truth. As can be learned from this quote, we see that the mind/the piping of heaven/the storehouse consciousness/*ālaya* consciousness<sup>398</sup> preserves the possibility to create the world of the conventional truth, “particular languages, 名言” and “images, 相” of “all the ten thousand differences, 故曰吹萬不同.” Further, “The mind only grasps the mind itself and hence there is no outer world” (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 10).<sup>399</sup> Zhang argues that “the mind, 自心” only “grasps the mind itself, 取自心” and forms a world within itself. The world created by “the mind, 自心” is “no outer world, 非有外界.” The world of “the mind, 自心” is called the world of the ultimate truth (*zhendi*).

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dependent parts: *ālaya* consciousness which gives birth to the world (*xin*, 心, heart-mind) and amala consciousness (*changxin* 常心, the constant heart-mind) which remains clear and undisturbed (Wu Ruihan, 49-50).

<sup>397</sup> Chinese original: 天籟喻藏識中種子，晚世或名原型觀念，非獨籠罩名言，亦是相之本質，故曰吹萬不同。使其自己者，謂依止藏識，乃有意根，自執藏識而我之也 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 9).

<sup>398</sup> According to Huiren, in Consciousness-Only Buddhism, *ālaya* (阿賴耶) which is the transliteration into Chinese from Sanskrit. It’s original meaning is accumulation, realm, palace (積，域，宮殿). Therefore, later on, people translate it into storehouse consciousness. Therefore, *ālaya* consciousness refers to the storehouse consciousness (Huiren, 36).

<sup>399</sup> Chinese original: 自心還取自心，非有外界知其爾者 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 10).

As can be seen from the quote above, the world of ultimate truth contains “seeds, 種子” which “give birth to the world of the conventional truth. The world of the conventional truth enables the “gusting through all the ten thousand differences so that each can be itself” (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 9).<sup>400</sup> This sentence is a metaphorical description which shows that the seeds in the ultimate world are blown and then they give rise to differences in the conventional world. The first step of this genesis is the separation of “manas consciousness” from the “storehouse consciousness.”<sup>401</sup>

So that each can be itself – each takes what it wants refers to depending on the storehouse consciousness; it is the root of mind<sup>402</sup> (manas consciousness). It grasps the storehouse consciousness and makes it a ‘self’” (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 9).<sup>403</sup>

In this quote, we understand that for each to “be itself,” it has to depend on “the storehouse consciousness.” A thing needs to “make it a ‘self’” by grasping elements in “the storehouse consciousness.” Therefore, the unity in the storehouse consciousness has to be “called to stop” and separate into the “manas consciousness.” Separating from the storehouse consciousness, the “manas consciousness” is the “self,” the subjectivity, which “depends on the storehouse consciousness.”

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<sup>400</sup> Chinese original: 故曰吹萬不同，使其自己者 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 9).

<sup>401</sup> Here, Zhang fully borrows the theory of Consciousness-Only Buddhism. According to Hui ren (慧仁), the full structure of consciousness of the mind consists of eight different consciousnesses. The eighth one is ālaya consciousness, which is the real body of the consciousness of heart. It’s main function is to collect and hold seeds (Hui ren, 18). It also gives birth to other consciousnesses (Hui ren, 21). According to the reading of Wang Yuhua and Zhang Deshun (王玉华, 张德顺), the seventh consciousness and the eighth consciousness give rise to different names, images and differences. All phenomena in the world is a result of “human heart-mind” (Wang, Zhang, 101).

<sup>402</sup> Yi, 意, mind, refers to the faculty of intention, singling out intentional objects.

<sup>403</sup> Chinese original: 使其自己者，謂依止藏識，乃有意根，自執藏識而我之也 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 9).

The time manas consciousness is separated from the storehouse consciousness in the ultimate world, a subject which is able to pick out objects is created in the conventional world. The ability to pick out objects is called *jianfen*, 見分. In contrast to subject, objects perceived are called *xiangfen*, 相分. Subject/the ability to perceive objects refers to the cognitive function of the consciousness of mind. It is the active side for cognitive action. In contrast, object refers to the things being recognized. It is the content for cognitive action. According to Hui ren, in Consciousness-Buddhism, the separation and the binary opposition between subject and object is the most common but the most severe grasping of dharmas (Hui ren, 205).

Here, Zhang borrows the Yogācāra theory of the division between subject (見分) and object (相分). Zhang argues that “in Wuxing’s<sup>404</sup> interpretation of the *Compendium of the Great Vehicle* (*She dasheng lun*, 攝大乘論, *Mahāyāna-saṃgraha-sāstra*).<sup>405</sup> In one consciousness, there are objects (to be known) and subjects (to know things)” (Zhang, Qi wulunshi, 10).<sup>406</sup> This quote shows that the “one consciousness,” which is the storehouse consciousness, separates itself into objects and subjects/the ability to pick out objects. “In one consciousness, one part changes and appears as the image/object grasped; another part changes and appears as the ability to conceptualize the image/object” (Zhang, Qi wulunshi, 10).<sup>407</sup> The storehouse

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<sup>404</sup> Wu Xing (無性), one of the interpreters of *She Da Cheng Lun*.

<sup>405</sup> One of the most important classics of the perturbation theory.

<sup>406</sup> Chinese original: 《攝大乘論》無性釋曰：“於一識中，有相有見，二分俱轉 (Zhang, Qi wulunshi, 10).

<sup>407</sup> Chinese original: 於一識中，一分變異，似所取相，似（所）【能】取（相）【見】 (Zhang, Qi wulunshi, 10).

consciousness changes itself and separates itself again into *xiangfen*, “objects which can be taken,” and *jianfen*, “the ability to observe things.”

Zhang further deploys the Yogācāra Buddhism theory and argues that not only does ālaya consciousness give birth to the manas consciousness, it also produces the other six consciousnesses in the world of the ultimate truth. Whereas the manas consciousness produces the subject in the conventional world, other six consciousnesses produce objects in the conventional world.

The seventh consciousness is the ability to think (*yigen*, 意根, *manêndriya*) and has the consciousness of the self (grasping the self and grasping dharmas) from the beginning.<sup>408</sup> The other sections and variations all arise through these six seeds (consciousness of time, space, phenomena, number, cause and effect, self).<sup>409</sup> “Completed mind (*chengxin*, 成心) are these seeds. If the six senses of the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, touch and the mind<sup>410</sup> are not aroused, they lay dormant in the root of the ability to think (*yigen*). If the six consciousnesses are aroused, they appear according to the time, without waiting to be called. This is the meaning of “we just follow whatever completed form of our minds has so far taken shape, making that our master and teacher” (Zhuangzi, 2020, 13) (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 17).<sup>411</sup>

“The seventh consciousness” represents “the self,” which is a result of the manas consciousness. The objective world as a result of “other sections and variations” is a result of other six consciousnesses (“these six seeds”), the consciousnesses of “eyes, ears, nose, tongue,

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<sup>408</sup> This corresponds with Consciousness-Only Buddhism. See: the second consciousness is the manas consciousness. It mainly produces the grasping of the self (Huiyen, 18).

<sup>409</sup> This corresponds with Consciousness-Only Buddhism. See: the third category of consciousness consists of the first six consciousnesses, which are movements of the consciousness of mind one could experience (Huiyen, 18).

<sup>410</sup> Yi, 意, mind, refers to the faculty of intention, singling out intentional objects.

<sup>411</sup> Chinese original: 第七意根本有我識（人我執，法我執）。其他支分變復，悉由此六種子生。成心即是種子，眼耳鼻舌身意六識未動，潛處意根之中，六識既動，應時顯現，不待告教，所謂隨其成心而師之也 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 17).

touch and the mind.” The consciousness of the mind is “the root of the ability to think,” the sixth consciousness. It contains the other consciousnesses of “eyes, ears, nose, tongue and touch” These six consciousnesses initially “lay dormant.” “According to the time,” the six consciousnesses start to “appear,” and “are aroused,” therefore creating a world with “distinctions with images,” and with “language and concepts and thoughts emerge.”

In the previous analysis, we understand that the ālaya consciousness separates into manas consciousness and other six consciousnesses in the world of the ultimate truth, thus creating subject and objects and the world. In this created conventional world, subject and object are contrasting elements. *Jianfen*/subject and *xiangfen*/object create the Buddhist term of “*duidai*” *apekṣya* 對待 (a contrasting pair of “subjectivity” and “objectivity”). *Dui* means to face each other, and *dai* refers to treat each other. *Duidai* is to treat by facing each other. According to Liu Jihui’s reading, “self” and “other” are reasons for each other and they are in a dialectical relationship, which is in movement and not become rigid (Liu Jihui, 41). This mutual relationship forms the basis for inexhaustible conditioned arising (*wujin yuanqi*, 無盡緣起), but also shows that this relationship does not presume ontology.

Zhang appropriates the concept of *duidai* in his “*Qiwulunshi*” and argues that “objects and subjects are neither together nor separate” (Zhang, *Qiwulunshi*, 10).<sup>412</sup> From this quote, we understand that because they have opposite definitions, subjects and objects are not

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<sup>412</sup> Chinese original: 相見二分，不即不離 (Zhang, *Qiwulunshi*, 10).

“together.” Also, the time subjects are separated from the storehouse consciousness, the opposite to subjects becomes objects as “objects which can be taken” by subjects. Therefore, subjects and objects are not “separate.” They are two opposite parts separated from the united whole of storehouse consciousness.

Zhang’s final aim is to invalidate *duidai* and achieves the realm of *wudai*.<sup>413</sup>

If there were originally no self, even if there were an image of the other, who could pick it out? Since there is no one to perceive, there is nothing to perceive. Thus “yet without me there is nothing picked out from it.” (Zhuangzi, 2020, 12) Speaking from this perspective, the feeling of self and other mutually cause one another, and there is no priority, so one can know that the self and other are both empty (Zhang, chapter 1 section 2)<sup>414</sup> (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 14).

If we get rid of this separation, then there would be no contrast of subject and object. There “would be no one to perceive,” no *jianfen*. Even though the object, “the image of the other,” might still exist. If the subject does not exist anymore, then there would be no subject “who could perceive it,” the object. Therefore, with the diminishing of the self, “there is nothing to perceive,” no *xiangfen*. This relationship also works the other way around and “there is no priority,” because “the feeling of self and other mutually cause one another.” Given that there is a subject, there would be objects opposing to it and being observed by this subject. Similarly, given that there are objects, there would be a subject taking them into consideration. When we get rid of the object, then the meaning of a subject would not exist anymore. This is to say that

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<sup>413</sup> 無待 (Wu Dai). Wu: nonexistence. Dai: to treat each other. Wudai: the nonexistence of treating each other.

<sup>414</sup> Chinese original: 若本無我，雖有彼相，誰為能取，既無能取，即無所取，故曰非我無所取。由斯以談，彼我二覺，互為因果，曾無先後，足知彼我皆空 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 14).

the contrasting parts have equal positions. Their existence based on the establishment of one of them. By invalidating one established element in this pair, then the other element would be invalid as well.

Therefore, in the second phase, to reunite in the ultimate unity, people need to invalidate *duidai*. “If the self cuts off separations and nullifies oppositions, it could not get to the self existed” (Zhang, *qiwulunshi*, 14).<sup>415</sup> Given that there is separation between self and other, one should get rid of the separation between “the self” and “an other.” Then, “there is no other and no self.” If one invalidates each *duidai*, then there would be “no contrast,” which is the realm of *wudai* in Zhang’s term. Finally, one will reach the realm of “the true heart-mind and the heart-mind that rises and falls.” “The true heart-mind” refers to *ālaya* consciousness (or *rulaizang/tathāgatagarbha* which will be explained in later chapters) in the world of the ultimate truth. It is the origin of all the separation (“the heart-mind that rises and falls”). After getting rid of all the separations, one reaches the nonseparated unity in the ultimate truth.

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<sup>415</sup> Chinese original: 絕待無對，則不得自知有我 (Zhang, *Qiwulunshi*, 14).



## Appendix B Zhang Taiyan's Study of Pre-Qin Scholars<sup>416</sup> Represented by Zhuangzi

As argued by scholars represented by Guo Zhili and Zhang Fen, at the end of the Qing Dynasty, the study of Pre-Qin scholars started to flourish (Guo Zhili, 77; Zhang Fen, 26). It is still hard to completely explain why the study of pre-Qin scholars suddenly started to flourish. One of the scholarly explanations is that the revival of the study of pre-Qin scholars at the end of the Qing dynasty can also be seen as a reaction against Western thought pouring into China. The study of pre-Qin classics were used to help the study of Confucianism (Wang Fansen, 26). However, with the Western discourse of modernity permeating the Chinese discourse, Chinese scholars wish to establish a Chinese cultural system to counterbalance the Western thought system. As a result, Chinese scholars try to rediscover different schools of thought in the traditional Chinese cultural system (Wang Xiaojie, Wenben, 93). The meaning and significance of pre-Qin classics are reevaluated (Wang Fansen, 26).

Zhang's background differs from other contemporaneous pre-Qin scholars. While others focus on textual criticism research (*kaojuxue*, 考據學), Zhang highlights the logical and theoretical structures of their texts. Starting from the Song dynasty (960-1279), Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucianism (*chengzhu lixue*, 程朱理學) started to rule the Chinese philosophical discourse. At the end of Qing Dynasty, Chinese intellectuals try to counter the Neo-Confucianism which has

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<sup>416</sup> "Pre-Qin scholars" refers to the Warring States philosophers. The Eastern Zhou (770-255 BCE) is divided into the Spring and Autumn period (770-403 BCE) and the Warring States (403-255 BCE).

dominated for centuries, they develop the method of textual criticism/taxology (*kaojuxue*, 考據學) to find evidence against Neo-Confucianism in texts from the period of the Han Dynasty.<sup>417</sup> The method of textual criticism collates, annotates and edits ancient texts based on the values of “seeking truth from facts (*shishi qiushi*, 實事求是),” and “do not believe without proof (*wuzheng buxin*, 無證不信).” Zhang Taiyan is unsatisfied with this trend of pre-Qin classics-study which only focuses on textual research, and Zhang concentrates more on the theoretic background behind it (Chen Shaoming, 31). As Zhang himself argues in his *On the Study of Pre-Qin Scholars* (*zhuzixue lveshuo*, 朱子學略說),

The study of Confucianism, the so-called textual research merely seeks evidence for laws, regulations, and deeds. ... but it does not focus on argumentation.<sup>418</sup> ... The study of Confucianism is only an objective study. The study of Pre-Qin scholars are different. This study is a subjective study which aims at pursuing logical argumentation but not at proving similarities and differences (Zhang Taiyan, *Zhuzixue*, 3-4).<sup>419</sup>

In his study of pre-Qin scholars, Zhang has a special passion for Zhuangzi. Zhuangzi (late 4<sup>th</sup> century BC) is a pivotal representative of Chinese philosophical Daoism. Zhuangzi lives at the time of the Warring States Period, in which different municipalities initiated wars of invasion against each other and cruelly annexed weak countries. Zhuangzi was originally born in the country of Song. Zhuangzi’s major text is the book of *Zhuangzi*. *Zhuangzi* contains 33 chapters. *Zhuangzi* is said to be separated into three parts: 7 Inner Chapters, 15 Outer Chapters and 11

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<sup>417</sup> Han Dynasty, B.C. 202 – A.D. 220.

<sup>418</sup> Whereas *yili* 义理 is an old Neo-Confucian term which refers to “moral principle,” the modern usage of this term refers to “logical argumentation,” which can be seen in Zhang Taiyan’s *On the Study of Pre-Qin Scholars* (*Zhuzixue Lve Shuo* 朱子學略說).

<sup>419</sup> Chinese original: 說經之學，所謂疏證，惟是考其典章制度與其事蹟而已...而不在尋求義理...其學惟客觀之學。若諸子則不然。彼所學者，主觀之學，要在尋求義理，不在考跡異同 (Zhang Taiyan, *Zhuzixue*, 3-4).

Miscellaneous Chapters. Inner Chapters are said to be chapters directed written by Zhuangzi himself, whereas the Outer Chapters and Miscellaneous Chapters are said to be written by Zhuangzi's students and later Daoist scholars as followers of Zhuangzi. According to Cheng Xuanying's (608-669)<sup>420</sup> comment:

The Inner Chapters clarify principles; the Outer Chapters explains his deed; and the Miscellaneous Chapters illuminates ways to handle things. Although the Inner Chapters clarify principles, it is not without deeds; Although the Outer Chapters explain deeds, it also contains subtle principles.<sup>421</sup>

Therefore, instead of separating *Zhuangzi* into different parts, *Zhuangzi* can be seen as a united whole.

Zhuangzi is a scholar who despises the dignitaries of etiquette and law and advocates freedom.

As argued by Graham, Chuang-tzu<sup>422</sup> is

the one ancient collection of writings of and for outsiders who preferred private life to office, while *Lao-tzu*,<sup>423</sup> although attractive to the same readership, presents itself as another guide to the art of rulership (Graham, 170).

At this point, Zhuangzi transcends all his contemporaneous and previous scholars. He advocated freedom and therefore rejected the hiring by King Wei of Chu (*Chu weiwang*, 楚威王). Zhuangzi's contemporaneous philosophers such as Confucius, Mencius and Mohist pursued

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<sup>420</sup> Cheng Xuanying is an important Chinese Daoist scholar who annotates on Zhuangzi.

<sup>421</sup> Chinese original: 内篇明于理本，外篇语其事迹，杂篇明于理事。内篇虽明理本，不无事迹；外篇虽明事迹，甚有妙理。

<sup>422</sup> Chuang-tzu is another way of writing *Zhuangzi*.

<sup>423</sup> *Lao-tzu* is another way of writing *Laozi*.

high positions in different governments. For example, “in Qi, there was a school of more than 3000 prominent sophists, the Jixia School.<sup>424</sup> Mencius, Sunqing, Shendao and Yinwen<sup>425</sup> were all there, but Zhuangzi never came by or asked about it” (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 3).<sup>426</sup> In his whole life, Zhuangzi only served as a lacquer garden official in the country of Song.

Zhuangzi is also not only a follower of his predecessor, Laozi. Both Laozi and Zhuangzi are regarded as representatives for Chinese Daoism. According to Hansen’s argument, traditional orthodoxy understands Zhuangzi as “anti-rational, credulous follower of a mystical Laozi.” (Hansen, Stanford Encyclopedia) However, as can be seen in Ziporyn’s reading, Laozi’s *Daodejing* is never quoted or directly alluded to in the Inner Chapters of *Zhuangzi* (chapters written by Zhuangzi himself) (Zhuangzi, Ziporyn, XXV). This evidence shows that Zhuangzi departs from Laozi’s philosophy and develops his own arguments free from Laozi’s influence.

According to Guo Zhili, Zhang and Zhuangzi have two similarities. First, both Zhang and Zhuangzi lived in turbulent times (Guo Zhili, 82). Zhuangzi lives in the Warring States period, in which each municipality acted in its own way and scuffled with each other. Inside and outside the municipalities were turbulent and the society was very unstable. At Zhang’s time, the end

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<sup>424</sup> In the regional power of Qi (齊), sophists of different schools were gathered in Jixia (稷下) and they served as the king’s consultant team.

<sup>425</sup> Representatives of different schools of thoughts in the Warring States Period. Mencius (孟子, B.C. 372- B.C. 289), representative of Confucianism. Sun Qing (荀子, B.C. 313-B.C. 218), representative of Confucianism. Shen Dao (慎到, B.C. 390-B.C. 315), representative of the Legalism. Yin Wen (尹文, B.C. 360-B.C.280), representative of the Logicians.

<sup>426</sup> Chinese original: 其唯莊生，覽聖知之禍，抗浮雲之情，蓋齊稷下先生三千餘人，孟子、孫卿、慎到、尹文皆在，而莊生不過焉。(Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 3)

of the Qing dynasty and Republic China, Western powers invaded China. With anti-Manchu uprisings, revolutions to overthrow the feudal monarchy, and warfare among warlords, it is a time of social turbulence and turmoil.

Second, both Zhang and Zhuangzi care for their respective times (Guo Zhili, 83). In Zhang's understanding, Zhuangzi is concerned with the world. As Zhang notes in his "Qiwulunshi": "Buddhism understands reincarnation as affliction,<sup>427</sup> but Zhuangzi sees reincarnation as dispelling sorrows. Why so? I answer: looking at Zhuangzi's meaning, he actually does not appreciate nirvana" (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 65).<sup>428</sup> This quote shows that Zhuangzi is not a sage who is secluded in a metaphysical world of nothingness, but he rather returns to the world. "Zhuangzi sympathizes with helpless people and worries about harsh and cruel punishments" (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 66).<sup>429</sup> Similarly, Zhang once argued that "take a look at our diverse and confused world, people suffer from great affliction. Without a kind of public opinion, one cannot save the world" (Wang Xiaojie, Wenbenchengyin, 95; Yao, Dong, 183).<sup>430</sup> This quote

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<sup>427</sup> Affliction (*fannaο* 煩惱) is a Buddhist term. As explicated in Chinese Buddhist dictionary:

*kleśa*, 'pain, affliction, distress,' 'care, trouble' (M.W.). The Chinese tr. is similar, distress, worry, trouble, and whatever causes them. Keith interprets *kleśa* by 'infection', 'contamination', 'defilement'. The Chinese intp. is the delusions, trials, or temptations of the passions and of ignorance which disturb and distress the mind; also in brief as the three poisons desire, detestation, and delusion (貪瞋痴). There is a division into the six fundamental 煩惱, or afflictions, v. below, and the twenty which result or follow them and there are other dual divisions. The six are: desire, detestation, delusion, pride, doubt, and evil views, which last are the false views of a permanent ego (貪瞋痴慢疑, 惡見), etc. The ten afflictions are the first five, and the sixth subdivided into five. Afflictions, like *kleśa*, implies moral affliction or distress, trial, temptation, tempting, sin. Cf. 使.

<https://mahajana.net/texts/soothill-hodous.html>

<sup>428</sup> Chinese original: 佛法以輪回為煩惱，莊生乃以輪回遣憂，何哉？答曰：觀莊生義，實無欣羨寂滅之情。

<sup>429</sup> Chinese original: 哀生民之無拯，念刑政之苟殘。

<sup>430</sup> Chinese original: 兄弟看近來世事紛紜，人民塗炭。不造成一種輿論，到底不能拯救世人。

shows that Zhang is not content with paying attention to his own moral uplift without thought of others, but he also wishes to find a “public opinion” to “save the world” and people “from great affliction.” In Zhang Taiyan’s reading, Zhuangzi could be “the public opinion” which cares about and saves the world.

To argue that Zhuangzi is a scholar which cares for society is Zhang Taiyan’s tendentious argument which is against a long tradition of reading. In *Disputers of the Dao*, Graham argues that the other tradition about Zhuangzi believes that the Chinese philosophical Daoism which Zhuangzi represents is secluded from society, in contrast to Confucianism which engages with society.

Beyond the generalization that since the victory about 100 B.C. of Confucianism, which is public, respectable, conventional and practical, that other side of Chinese culture which is private, disreputable, magical, spontaneous, poetic, has tended to cohere around the name of Lao-tzu, it would be pointless to look for features common to everything called Taoism (Graham, 171-172).

Zhuangzi, as a representative of philosophical Daoism, should also rather be a private figure.

Lai Yijing follows with Graham’s discussion Wang Xianqian and further explains that Zhuangzi is a secluded person. In the chapter of “In the Human World (*Renjianshi*, 人间世)” in *Zhuangzi*,

In the expiation ceremony, cows with white spots, pigs with upturned snouts, and humans with hemorrhoids are considered unfit to be offered as sacrifices to the river god. All shamans know this, and thus they regard these are

creatures of bad fortune. But this is exactly why the Spiritlike Person regards them as creatures of very good fortune indeed! (Zhuangzi, Ziporyn, 42).<sup>431</sup>

Lai Yijing interprets this story and says that things which are regarded as „unfortunate” in the secular world can sometimes be “fortunate,” since it avoids harm coming from the secular world. Lai believes that Zhuangzi coldly observes the world and realizes that jealousy of virtue and competence, intolerance of talents, darkness of politics and sinister officialdom are common diseases of the world. Therefore, Zhuangzi reminds people that when they are in a dark and dangerous social environment, they should no longer appear with the appearance of being useful, but should hide their talents and intentions, hide their sharp points and contain their awn, and even label themselves with a "useless" label of "white spots" and "upturned noses,” so as to avoid disasters and harm, and protect their lives. In Lai’s interpretation, Zhuangzi’s intention is to persuade people to hide their intentions and appear useless and secluded. This is the only way of self-protection. Zhang Taiyan’s interpretation of Zhuangzi as actively engaging with and seriously caring for society is in contrast to this other interpretation.

Guo further argues that Zhang sees Zhuangzi as the peak of Chinese philosophical Daoism (*daoia*, 道家),<sup>432</sup> “the sage which guides the world” (*mingshizheren*, 命世哲人).

Such as different trends and numerous meetings, each has its own party.  
Among the philosopher of the world, none can compare with Zhuangzi.  
*Xiaoyao* (逍遙, free and unfettered) so as to let all things be at their own

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<sup>431</sup> Chinese original: 故解之以牛之白顙者與豚之亢鼻者, 與人有痔病者不可以適河。此皆巫祝以知矣, 所以為不祥也。此乃神人之所以為大祥也 (Zhuangzi, 57).

<sup>432</sup> Daoism either refers to a school of philosophical thought (道家, *daoia*) or to a religion (道教, *daoiao*). Representatives of *Daoia* as a school of philosophical thought are Laozi and Zhuangzi, which is translated as Chinese philosophical Daoism.

ease, *qiwu* (齊物, equalization of all things) and thus get the core of all things. Using it to see Confucius and Mozi, both schools are like dust and dirt. Yet more so people like Lu Jiuyuan and Wang Shouren who try to use one theory to govern all the beings (Zhang Taiyan, *Zhuangzijiugu*, 149).<sup>433</sup>

This quote shows that Zhang places Zhuangzi at an incomparable position in the Chinese traditional philosophical history. Among all “different trends and numerous meetings,” Zhuangzi is the one who can represent all. Especially Zhuangzi’s theories of “*xiaoyao*” and “*qiwu*” are way above the theories of Confucianism, Mohism and theories of the mind represented by Lu Jiuyuan (1139-1193) and Wang Shouren (1472-1529).

The unrivalled position of Zhuangzi can also be seen in the following quote.

Only Zhuangzi saw that the knowledge of sages tyrannized people through indoctrination resulted in calamity. He opposed ephemeral attachments.<sup>434</sup> In Qi, there was a school of more than 3000 prominent sophists, the Jixia School.<sup>435</sup> Mencius, Sunqing, Shendao and Yinwen<sup>436</sup> were all there, but Zhuangzi never came by or asked about it. Zhuangzi believed that if one retreats into seclusion, one cannot benefit the world. As a result, he picked up a humble profession as a porter. A sage facing south to rule the land could not prevent people from committing crimes. For this reason, Zhuangzi refused the offer to be the Prime Minister of the land of Chu.<sup>437</sup> Limitations of knowledge

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<sup>433</sup> Chinese original: 若夫九流繁会，各于其党，命世哲人，莫若庄氏，消摇任万物之各适，齐物得彼是之环枢，以视孔墨，犹尘垢也；又况九渊、守仁之流，牵一理以宰万类者哉 (Zhang Taiyan, *Zhuangzijiugu*, 149).

<sup>434</sup> Content in parenthesis refers to notes translator add to the original text for understanding.

<sup>435</sup> In the regional power of Qi (齐), sophists of different schools were gathered in Jixia (稷下) and they served as the king’s consultant team.

<sup>436</sup> Representatives of different schools of thoughts in the Warring States Period. Mencius (孟子) (B.C. 372- B.C. 289), representative of Confucianism. Sun Qing (荀子)(B.C. 313-B.C. 218), representative of Confucianism. Shen Dao (慎到) (B.C. 390-B.C. 315), representative of the Legalism. Yin Wen (尹文), (B.C. 360-B.C.280), representative of the Logicians.

<sup>437</sup> Chu (楚), a regional power in the Eastern Zhou Dynasty. The story can be seen in “Autumn Waters” in *Zhuangzi*.

莊子釣於濮水，楚王使大夫二人往先焉，曰：“願以境內累矣！”莊子持竿不顧，曰：“吾聞楚有神龜，死已三千歲矣，王以巾笥而藏之廟堂之上。此龜者，寧其死為留骨而貴乎？寧其生而曳尾於塗中乎？”二大夫曰：“寧生而曳尾塗中。”莊子曰：“往矣！吾將曳尾於塗中 (Zhuangzi, 196).



restricts absolute freedom. Therefore, Zhuangzi erases the distinction between life and death. Zhuangzi thinks Mozi's<sup>438</sup> idea of "universal love" is not appropriate for common people.<sup>439</sup> Hence, he established the argument that everything should develop according to its own nature and up to its own potential. The way that does not change cannot go far. Hence he establishes the idea of discussing something subtle (Zhang Taiyan, *Qiwulunshi*, 3).<sup>440</sup>

Zhang explains in this quote the uniqueness of Zhuangzi comparing to other contemporaneous thinkers. Whereas Mencius, Sunqing, Shendao, Yinwen and Mozi are all interested in creating theories and knowledge, Zhuangzi sees the superfluity of such attempt, because knowledge could create indoctrination and restrict freedom. Therefore, Zhuangzi is the only one who discards knowledge and separations, such as life and death, rank and salary. Instead of devoting to a certain ideology, Zhuangzi is the only one who respects individual development and individual freedom. Therefore, Zhuangzi is the only person who overcomes the limitation generalized discourses created by his contemporaneous thinkers and thus provides profound insights "which guides the world." These might be the reasons why Zhang chooses to interpret Zhuangzi and illustrate his own philosophical view.

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Zhuangzi was once fishing beside the Pu River when two emissaries brought him a message from the King of Chu: "The King would like to trouble you with the control of his realm." Zhuangzi, holding fast to his fishing pole, without so much as turning his head, said, "I have heard there is a sacred turtle in Chu, already dead for three thousand years, which the king keeps in a bamboo chest high in his shrine. Do you think this turtle would prefer to be dead and having his carcass exalted, or alive and dragging his tail through the mud?" The emissaries said, "Alive and dragging his tail through the mud." Zhuangzi said, "Away with you then! I too will drag my tail through the mud!" (Zhuangzi, Ziporyn, 141).

<sup>438</sup> Mozi (墨子) (B.C. 376-B.C. 390), representative of Mohism.

<sup>439</sup> Xunzi (荀子) (B.C. 313-B.C. 238) is a philosopher, who proposes religious ideas arguing that people should love each other.

<sup>440</sup> Chinese original: 其唯莊生，覽聖知之禍，抗浮雲之情，蓋齊稷下先生三千餘人，孟子、孫卿、慎到、尹文皆在，而莊生不過焉。以為隱居不可以利物，故託抱關之賤；南面不可以止盜，故辭楚相之祿；止足不可以無待，故泯生死之分；兼愛不可以宜眾，故建自取之辯；常道不可以致遠，故存造微之談 (Zhang, *Qiwulunshi*, 3).

In all of Zhuangzi's writings, "Qiwulun" has its special meaning. Zhang writes in his "Daohan weiyen" (蒞汉微言) that Zhuangzi's "Qiwulun"

is internally used to observe all things in a sparse manner, to maintain and read the public, and to break the grasping of the name and the image. It is to equalize the sour and the salty. Externally it is used to reign the land and protect the people without establishing a morality, to discuss without winning or losing, to harmonize without provocation due to differences. People have no foolishness and wisdom. Deploying them impartially and nourishing all things without having a master. ... Theory which differentiates this and that, a party which differentiates between me and the others, using the positive and the negative, balancing destroying and accomplishing. Be benevolent to the people and peace reigns over the land. Therefore, the "Qiwulun" is a treasure inside and outside (Zhang Taiyan, Daohan, 26).<sup>441</sup>

In Zhang's opinion, "Qiwulun" is Zhuangzi's masterpiece, in that it breaks insistence on differences and sticks to separations. In Zhang's interpretation, "Qiwulun" aims at treating different aspects of separation and difference equally, so that hierarchy, indoctrination and subjugation can be diminished. One reaches the absolute equality.

Also, Zhang's interpretation of "Qiwulun," "Qiwulunshi," is not only a unique chapter in *Zhuangzi*, but it also contains the central meanings of all of Zhuangzi's writings. According to Wang Xiaojie's reading, for Zhang Taiyan, "Equalizing Assessments of Things" (Qiwulun) is a central chapter in *Zhuangzi*. "Qiwulun" unveils Zhuangzi's inner transcendence and gets rid of

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<sup>441</sup> Chinese original: 《齊物》一篇，內以疏觀萬物，持閱眾甫，破名相之封執，等酸鹹於一味；外以治國保民，不立中德，論有正負，無異門之覺，人無愚智盡，一曲之用，所謂衣養萬物而不為主者也。... 彼是之論，異同之黨，正乏為用，撻寧而相成，雲行雨施而天下平。故《齊物論》者，內外之鴻寶也 (Zhang Taiyan, Daohan, 26).

people's grasping of/insistence on heaven and earth, subject and object, name and speech. In addition, it also enables equal treatment towards the outer world, so as to settle various disputes in the world. Zhuangzi's thought of "sageliness within and kingliness without (being an inner sage so as to rule the outer world)" (*neisheng waiwang*, 內聖外王) is centrally exemplified in this chapter (Wang Xiaojie, *Wenbenchengyin*, 95). Li Yu similarly argues that although Zhang only interprets the chapter of "Qiwulun" in Zhuangzi, "Qiwulunshi" can also be seen as the thorough interpretation of all 33 chapters in *Zhuangzi* (Li Yu, 58). As written by Zhang Taiyan,

I have not separated to 33 chapters of Zhuangzi. Little talent can only see this text as analyzing a part of the whole text. Words which defend those who belong to one's own fraction and attack those who don't pick faults and criticize. Now I seek deep and subtle intent, see that paths begin to open up. It has endless treasure which I can pass on to later generations (Zhang, *Qiwulunshi*, 143).<sup>442</sup>

This quote shows that Zhang believes that his "Qiwulun" is not only a part of the whole text. Instead, it has deeper meanings and opens up new possibilities to connect all Zhuangzi's texts. In other words, it is a central text in all of Zhuangzi's writings which commands and connects other texts and makes Zhuangzi's corpus of work a united and interconnected whole. "Qiwulun" contains endless treasure which can be passed on to later generations. These can be reasons why Zhang picks Zhuangzi's "Qiwulun" as the object of his interpretation.

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<sup>442</sup> Chinese original: 莊生所著三十三篇，自昔未曾科判，輕材之士，見其一隅。黨伐之言，依以彈射。今者尋繹微旨，阡陌始通，寶藏無盡。以詒後生也 (Zhang, *Qiwulunshi*, 143).

## Appendix C Using Buddhism to Illustrate Daoism

Within the tradition of the study of Buddhism and pre-Qin scholars, there has long been a Chinese tradition of using Buddhism to illustrate Daoism. According to Zhang Fen, when Buddhism came to China from India at the end of the Han Dynasty, Chinese thinkers and philosophers were trying to use their familiar philosophical frameworks to interpret and integrate Buddhism, especially through Chinese philosophical Daoism (Zhang Fen, 27).

Therefore, with Buddhism's spreading in China, traditional Confucianist and Daoist thoughts penetrated into Buddhism. Sayings about "Zhuangzi and Buddhism in one," "Confucianism and Buddhism in one," "three schools (Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism) in one" also became popular (Huang Huazhen, 39).

The reason scholars use Buddhism to interpret Daoism is because of their affinities. As argued by Wang Youxin, Buddhism's and Zhuangzi's epistemologies have similarities to a certain degree. The main point is that both Zhuangzi and Buddhism try to see the world through the perspective which goes beyond individual. Both of them wish to achieve the perspective of totality and merging into the whole. Both aim at overcoming the individual and understanding that the nature is emptiness, so that it is to get rid of the individual subject, therefore lower and even get rid of personal desire, to alleviate the lack of social living resources and the competition between people. Both Zhuangzi and Buddhism try to break the separation between different objects and subjects through language and image. Both of them are fully aware of the multidimensionality, uncertainty and unreality of understanding and language.

Their ultimate pursuits (Zhuangzi: the body of Dao (Way) 体道, and Buddhism: nirvana (涅槃)) are also similar (Wang Youxin, 70).

Wang Xiaojie summarizes a brief history of using Chinese philosophical Daoism to interpret Buddhism. In the Eastern Jin Dynasty (317-420), Zhidun (之遁, 314-366 AD) uses the theory of Śūnya sects (*kongzong*, 空宗, those which make the unreality of the ego and things their fundamental tenet) to explain Zhuangzi's "Wandering Far and Unfettered" (*Xiaoyaoyou*, 逍遥遊). According to Wang's comments, Zhi Dun's understanding of "Kong (Emptiness)" is not yet comprehensive, but it starts the tradition which uses Buddhism to interpret Zhuangzi. This interpretation had huge social impact at that time. The next prominent figure after Zhi Dun, Daoist priest Cheng Xuanying (成玄英, 608—669) wrote the "Notes to Zhuangzi" (莊子疏), which was influenced by parallelism between Buddhism and Daoism. Cheng used the theory of "The Middle Way" (*Zhongdao*, 中道, *madhyama-pratipad*)<sup>443</sup> to understand "Yao's understanding four moralities" (*yaojiansizi*, 堯見四子): "Four people, are the four moralities: the first one is the fundamental, the second is the trace, the third is neither the fundamental nor the trace, the fourth is the negation of neither the fundamental nor the trace" (Zhuzijicheng, 334, cited by Wang, 94).<sup>444</sup> This double negation is exactly what Nagarjuna wrote in the *Mūlamadhyamikākarikā*, translated by Kumarajiva (344-413) as the *Zhong Lun* (中論):

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<sup>443</sup> The Mādhyamika school: this is variation on the tetralemma.

<sup>444</sup> Chinese original: 四子者，四德也：一本，二跡，三非本非跡，四非非本跡也 (Zhuzijicheng, 334, cited by Wang, 94).

“Dharmas as a result of causalities. What I say is emptiness, name is also a pseudonym. This is also the meaning of the Middle Way” (cited by Wang, 94).<sup>445</sup> Both of the quotes show that getting rid of the two sides and one gains the middle way as the true dharma.

In the Song Dynasty, Lin Xiyi (林希逸, 1193—1271) (Lin, 9), and then Lu Xixing (陸西星, 1520—1606) (Lu, 18) in the Ming use idealist Neo-Confucian philosophy of the Song and Ming dynasties and Buddhist theories to interpret Zhuangzi’s “Equalizing Assessments of Things” (齊物論). Buddhist monk Hanshan Deqing (憨山德清, 1546-1623) argues for the integration of the three schools of thoughts: Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism, saying that

if one learns about Buddhism and does not know about other people’s theories, then not only does this person not understand Buddhism, but this person also does not understand Buddhist dharmas. To interpret Zhuangzi and say that one has read through Buddhist texts, not only does this person not know Buddhism, this person also does not know Zhuangzi. ... Without knowing *Spring and Autumn* (the Confucianist classics), the person cannot engage with the world; without knowing Laozi and Zhuangzi (Daoism), this person cannot forget the world; without knowing Buddhism, this person cannot be above worldly considerations. Only when the person knows them, one can say that the person learns (Hanshan Deqing, cited by Wang, Wenbenchengyin, 94).<sup>446</sup>

Wang sees that Hanshan Deqing’s reading of Zhuangzi is based on the Buddhist perspective, his integration of three schools of thought is to integrate Daoism and Confucianism into the system

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<sup>445</sup> Chinese original: 因緣所生法，我說即是空，亦名是假名，亦是中道義 (cited by Wang, 94).

<sup>446</sup> Chinese original: 學佛而不通百氏，不但不知世法，而亦不知佛法。解莊而謂盡佛經，不但不知佛意，而亦不知莊意。此其所以難明也。故曰：自大視細者不盡，自細視大者不明。余嘗以三事自勗曰：不知《春秋》，不能涉世。不知老莊，不能忘世。不參禪，不能出世。知此，可與言學矣 (Hanshan Deqing, cited by Wang, Wenbenchengyin, 94).

of Buddhism. Hanshan Deqing aims at spreading Buddhism with the help of the local culture of Daoism (Wang Xiaojie, Wenbenchengyin, 94).

In the late Qing Dynasty, Yang Wenhui (楊文會) chose 12 different articles from *Zhuangzi's* miscellaneous chapters and interpret them through Buddhism. Instead of annotating the chapters, Yang chose certain concepts from it to examine their meanings. For example, he interprets 北冥 (the Northern Oblivion) (*Zhuangzi*, Ziporyn, 3)<sup>447</sup> as “primal ignorance, the condition before discernment and differentiation” (*genben wuming*, 根本無名), chaos/Chaotic Blob (*hundun*, 渾沌)<sup>448</sup> as “the period of unenlightenment or ignorance without beginning” (*wushi wuming*, 无始无明). Yang corresponds with Zhang, which could indirectly arouse his interest in Buddhism (Wang Xiaojie, Wenbenchengyin, 95). Zhang’s interpretation of *Zhuangzi*

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<sup>447</sup> Source passage in “Wandering Far and Unfettered” 逍遙遊 in *Zhuangzi*:

北冥有魚，其名為鯤。鯤之大，不知其幾千里也。化而為鳥，其名為鵬。鵬之背，不知其幾千里也，怒而飛，其翼若垂天之雲。是鳥也，海運則將徙於南冥。南冥者，天池也 (*Zhuangzi*, 2).

There is a fish in the Northern Oblivion named Kun, and this Kun is quite huge, spanning who knows how many thousands of miles. He transforms into a bird named Peng, and this Peng has quite a back on him, stretching who knows how many thousands of miles. When he rouses himself and soars into the air, his wings are like clouds draped across the heavens. The oceans start to churn, and this bird begins his journey toward the Southern Oblivion. The Southern Oblivion – that is the Pool of Heaven (*Zhuangzi*, Ziporyn, 3).

<sup>448</sup> Source passage in “Sovereign Responses for Ruling Powers” 應帝王 in *Zhuangzi*:

南海之帝為倏，北海之帝為忽，中央之帝為混沌。倏與忽時相與遇於渾沌之地，混沌待之甚善。倏與忽謀報混沌之德，曰：“人皆有七竅以正視聽食，此獨無有，嘗試鑿之。”日鑿一竅，七日而混沌死 (*Zhuangzi*, 98).

The emperor of the southern sea was called Swoosh. The emperor of the northern sea was called Oblivion. The emperor of the middle was called Chaotic Blob. Swoosh and Oblivion would sometimes meet in the territory of Chaotic Blob, who always waited on them quite well. They decided to repay Chaotic Blob for such bounteous virtue. “All men have seven holes in them, by means of which they see, hear, eat, and breathe,” they said. “But this one along has none. Let’s drill him some.” So every day they drilled another hole. Seven days later, Chaotic Blob was dead (*Zhuangzi*, Ziporyn, 72).

through Buddhism is a continuation of this tradition. Because of Western influence, Zhang's interpretation of Zhuangzi has richer content (Wang Xiaojie, Wenbenchengyin, 95).

Not all scholars agree with the justifications to connect Daoism and Buddhism. For example, Wang Youxin argues that Buddhism has developed the complicated way of knowing, speculating and saying, whereas the Daoist representative, Zhuangzi's epistemology is rather straightforward and simple (Wang Youxin, 70). Wang Youxin argues that instead of seeing everything as illusory in Buddhism, Zhuangzi confirms the nature of things and their justifications. Wang thus further argues that Zhang misreads Zhuangzi by using Buddhist texts to interpret him (Wang Youxin, 71). However, I think Wang has a misunderstanding here. Firstly, it is exactly because Zhuangzi's language is short and thus obscure, it is justified for Zhang to quote other sources to interpret Zhuangzi. Buddhism is a valuable attempt. Second, Zhang's interpretation of Zhuangzi through Buddhism, especially Yogācāra, does not misread Zhuangzi using Buddhist theories. Instead, Zhang differentiates between both theories. Zhang clearly states in the final part of his interpretation that different from Buddhism which aspires for an ultimate world in nirvana, Zhuangzi tries to care for human sufferings. This means that rather than a believer of Yogācāra and Zhuangzi, Zhang's interpretation of Zhuangzi is a modernist appropriation of Yogācāra which critically reflects both traditions.



## Appendix D Zhang Taiyan and “Qiwulunshi”

### PERSONAL BACKGROUND OF “QIWULUNSHI”

After discussing the social background of “Qiwulunshi,” I will move on to talk about the personal story which leads Zhang Taiyan to the writing of “Qiwulunshi” which can be traced back to Zhang’s imprisonment due to the “Su Bao case” (*subao an*, 蘇報案) from July 1903 to June 1906. At the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, China was invaded by different colonial powers and suffered severe defeats in wars. As a result, different political trends were developed in China to empower the country. Two of the most significant trends were reformists and revolutionists. Reformists tried to advance constitutional monarchy in China by reforming the Qing royal family. Representatives of the reformists are Kang Youwei, Liang Qichao, Tan Sitong etc. Different from reformists, revolutionists wishes to overthrow the Qing government and replace the feudal monarchy with a representative government. Representatives of revolutionists are Sun Yat-sen (孫中山, 1866-1925), Zhang Taiyan, Zou Rong (鄒容, 1885-1905)<sup>449</sup> etc.

*Subao* 蘇報 was initially a newspaper run by Japanese Chinese issued in 1896. Starting from the reform in 1903, *Subao* became a revolutionized newspaper which vigorously supports Chinese revolution. In the same year, two important articles were published on the newspaper: Zou

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<sup>449</sup> 鄒容 (1885-1905), The propagandist of the bourgeois revolutionists in the late Qing Dynasty who was killed in the Su Bao case.

Rong's "Revolutionary Army" (*gemingjun*, 革命軍) and Zhang Taiyan's "Refuting Kang Youwei's Theory of Revolution" (*bo Kangyouwei lun gemingshu*, 駁康有為輪革命書). Both texts vehemently criticized the reformists such as Kang Youwei who aimed at reforming the Qing royal family and trying to establish constitutional monarchy in China. Intense criticism alerted the royal court. Both Zhang and Zou were repressed by the Qing government with coercion. The *Subao* was also blocked, and Zhang and Zou were imprisoned. Whereas Zou died in prison, Zhang was released after three years.

In these three years, Zhang's active political engagement was forced to stop and he must stay silent. During the three years Zhang was in prison, he actively engaged himself with Buddhist classic works, especially Yogācāra Buddhism (Zhang Zhiqiang, 110). Zhang read Buddhist classics such as *Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra* (*Yuqie shidi lun*, 瑜伽師地論) and the *Jinling* (金陵) block-printed edition of the *Discourse on the Perfection of Consciousness-Only/Yogācāra* (*Chen weishi lun*, 成唯識論) bought from Japan (Zhang Fen, 26). Many scholars argue that Zhang's thoughts have experienced huge changes after these three years (Zhang Zhiqiang, 110). As summarized by Yu Yanhong, during 1906 and 1908, Zhang wrote a series of articles on Buddhism, such as "Dichotomous Evolutionism" 俱分進化論 (1906), "Revolutionary Morality" 革命之道德 (1906), "Establishing Religious Theory" 建立宗教論 (1906); "State Theory" 國家論 (1907) "No-Self Theory" 人無我論 (1907) "Five Regardlessness" 五無論 (1907); "Four Doubts" 四惑論 (1908) "Refuting the Constitutional Theory of God" 駁神我憲政說 (1908) "Answering Meng'an" 答夢庵 (1908). Yu further argues, the main themes of them are almost all the same, namely using

the Yogācāra philosophical theoretical system to completely deconstruct major theories in Western modernity, ranging from the principle of subjectivity (*zhutixing*, 主體性), optimism in epistemology (*renshishangde leguanzhuyi*, 認識上的樂觀主義), rationalism in epistemology (*zhishilun shangde lixingzhuyi* 知識論上的理性主義), progressivism in the view of history (*lishiguanshangde jinbuzhuyi* 歷史觀上的進步主義) (Yu Yanhong, 25).

Besides intensive engagement with Buddhism, Zhang also continuously pursues his interest in Zhuangzi and even attempts to make connections between both theories. In 1909, Zhang published his “Explanatory Notes for Zhuangzi in Modern Language” (*Zhuangzi Jiegu*, 莊子解詁), exploring meanings in *Zhuangzi* (Huang Huazhen, 34). This preparation became the foundation for Zhang’s “Qiwulunshi” which uses the Yogācāra Buddhist theory to explain Chinese philosophical Daoism/Zhuangzi. Zhang later explains his motivation to write “Qiwulunshi” in his “Self-account of Academic Order” (*zishu xueshu cidi*, 自述學術次第),

Although as a youth, I really liked different schools of thoughts in the Zhou and Qin periods, I have not got the essentials of Laozi and Zhuangzi. Finally, I read “Qiwulun” every day and know that it is connected to Dharmalakṣaṇa school (*faxiang*, 法相). Also, Guoxiang’s and Cheng Xuanying’s annotation to Zhuangzi contain confusing, false and redundant words. Therefore I wrote “Qiwulunshi” and enable Zhuangzi’s 5000 words to be explained. Even Japanese monks all aspire for this (Zhang Taiyan, Zishu, 643).<sup>450</sup>

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<sup>450</sup> Chinese original: 少雖好周秦諸子，於老莊未得統要，最後終日讀《齊物論》，知與法相相涉，而郭象、成玄英諸家悉含胡虛冗之言也。既為《齊物論釋》，使莊生五千言，字字可解，日本諸沙門亦多慕之 (Zhang Taiyan, Zishu, 643).

In this quote, Zhang confirms his interest in the study of pre-Qin scholars. He also acknowledges the difficulty and hard work he puts into the reading of “Qiwulun.” After gaining a better understanding of the Dharmalakṣaṇa school and “Qiwulun,” Zhang discovers a new interpretation of the text which transcends all other interpreters and thus notes down his discovery in the text of “Qiwulunshi.” As noted by Huang Huazhen, “Qiwulunshi” is then published in 1910 on *The Journal of Chinese Essence* (*guocui xuebao*, 國粹學報) (Huang Huazhen, 33).

While combining Buddhism and Chinese philosophical Daoism, Zhang has his unique concern. Wang Xiaojie argues that Zhang believes the best way to save the world is to combine Buddhism with Chinese philosophical Daoism. Whereas Buddhism motivates people in an abstract way which goes beyond worldly laws, Zhuangzi incorporates worldly laws (Wang Xiaojie, 2016, 95). Buddhism develops people’s courage. As quoted by Wang Xiaojie, Zhang writes

all the forms and images, formless mental perception,<sup>451</sup> they are all illusory sight and thoughts, but are not the real. ... Only with this kind of belief can

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<sup>451</sup> Mental perception (*fachen*, 法塵). 六塵 (*liuchen*), the six *guṇas*, qualities/realms produced by the objects and organs of sense, i. e. sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, and idea. (<https://mahajana.net/texts/soothill-hodous.html>). 法塵 (*fachen*/mental perception) refers to the realm produced by idea/*manas* consciousness/awareness. It is the impressions of the shadows of other five *guṇas*. For example, after seeing pretty sunrise (*guna* of sight), the scenery still remains in our shadow. This shadow refers to *fachen*/mental perception; after hearing a song (*guna* of sound), one might get an earworm. The earworm as the shadow of the song is *fachen*/mental perception; after tasting delicious food (*guna* of taste), a person still remembers the taste of this food. This shadow of food is called *fachen*/mental perception (宏圓).

person be courageous, can people unite like a fortress, and people can achieve things (Zhang Taiyan, *Zhenglunwenxuanji*, 274).<sup>452</sup>

Wang further analyzes: because Buddhism emphasizes the function of heart-mind and sees the conventional world as illusions, it therefore doubts the reality of world. If the world is illusory, then death is meaningless. People would then not be afraid of death. Buddhism is thus able to summon up people's courage for revolution (Che Xueyan, 103). However, Buddhism is too abstract for social implication. Wang argues that therefore, Zhang Taiyan also introduces Zhuangzi whose theories share common ground with Buddhism but has social implications. Further, compared to Buddhism, Zhuangzi accords more with the mental structure of the Chinese and is more approachable. Whereas Buddhism gives Zhuangzi ontology, Zhuangzi gives Buddhism concrete implications (Wang Xiaojie, *Wenbenchengyin*, 95).

#### SIGNIFICANCE OF "QIWULUNSHI" – A SIGNIFICANT LOST PIECE

Zhang Taiyan was extremely proud of his "Qiwulunshi." As said by Zhang in his "Self-described Academic Order" (*Zishu xueshu cidi*, 自述學術次第), "in such writings as books of 'Qiwulunshi' and 'Wenshi,' a single word is worth a thousand pieces of gold."<sup>453</sup> "There is no equivalence of it in the last thousand/hundred years" (Zhang Taiyan, *zishu xueshu*, 642).<sup>454</sup> In Murthy's words, Zhang believed he had analyzed passages in the second Inner Chapter of *Zhuangzi* that had befuddled interpreters ever since the time of Zhuangzi (*ca.* 300 BC) (Murthy, 123).

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<sup>452</sup> Chinese original: 一切有形的色相，無形的法塵，總是幻見幻想，並非實在真有.....要有這種信仰，才得勇猛無畏，眾志成城，方可干得事來 (Zhang Taiyan, *Zhenglunwenxuanji*, 274).

<sup>453</sup> Chinese original: 若《齊物論釋》《文始》諸書，可謂一字千金矣。

<sup>454</sup> Chinese original: 千百年來未有等匹。

The significance of “Qiwulunshi” is also confirmed by Zhang’s contemporaneous scholars. Liang Qichao says that “Zhang Taiyan’s ‘Qiwulunshi’ is a work written with the greatest care in his life. It exclusively cites the Buddhist *Faxiang* theory and compares it with Zhuangzi, which can be said to be groundbreaking” (Liang Qichao, *Zhongguo*, 263).<sup>455</sup> Although Liang is critical of the accuracy of Zhang’s explication, believing that it might not reflect Zhuangzi’s original meanings, Liang still acknowledges that Zhang’s interpretations bring some innovative ideas. “As for whether it is the original meaning of Zhuangzi, we have to rely on each person’s own understanding” (Liang Qichao, *Zhongguo*, 263).<sup>456</sup> In *Qingdai xueshu gailun*, Liang argues that “Binglin (Taiyan)’s interpretation of Laozi and Zhuangzi with Buddhism is extremely reasonable. The ‘Qiwulunshi’ he wrote, although some of his commentary establishes far-fetched connections, it can indeed open up a new territory for the study of Zhuangzi’s philosophy” (Liang Qichao, *qingdai*, 95).<sup>457</sup>

Hushi also highly commends on this book and believes that “Qiwulunshi,” along with Zhang’s “restoring name” (*yuanming*, 原名) “Explaining understanding (*mingjian*, 明见),” are all refined (*jingdao*, 精到) and unprecedented (*kongqian*, 空前) works (Hu Shi, *zhongguo*, 21).

Wumushan Seng (Huang Zongyang) even predicts that the book will serve to “break the

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<sup>455</sup> Chinese original: 章太炎的《齊物論釋》，是他生平極用心的著作，專引佛家法相宗學說比附莊旨，可謂石破天驚。

<sup>456</sup> Chinese original: 至於是否即《莊子》原意，只好憑各人領會罷。

<sup>457</sup> Chinese original: 炳麟用佛學解老莊，極有理致，所著《齊物論釋》，雖間有牽合處，然確能為研究莊子哲學者開一新國土 (Liang Qichao, *qingdai*, 95).

situation of sealing and grasping of in Confucianism, Monism and other schools of thought for two thousand years and lead the future” (Huang Zongyang, 69).<sup>458</sup>

However, according to Guo Zhili’s research, “in the history of nearly 100 years, ‘Qiwulunshi’ has not produced widespread influence” (Guo Zhili, 83). Guo argues that although Zhang’s explication for Zhuangzi’s “Qiwulun” is unprecedented, it is a philosophical classic which does not produce influence commensurate with its status. Scholars believe that there are two general reasons for this disparity. The first reason is that scholars at Zhang’s time wished to use practical ways to save China from social crisis. However, by destroying subject and object, Zhang cannot provide concrete strategies for the Chinese elite class. This could be a reason why this text was not well received by scholars at that time (Yu Yanhong, 36).

The second reason is that Zhang fails to connect to general social discourses. As argued by the historian Hou Wailu (侯外廬, 1903-1987), “there was a huge gap between [Zhang’s] insights and their own reality” (Hou, 143). There are two realities which Zhang disconnects with. First, lack of a philosophical atmosphere. Whereas “Qiwulunshi” is highly philosophical, Jiang Yihua argues that “at that time, the atmosphere of the whole country and society is lack of philosophy” (Jiang Yihua, 299).<sup>459</sup> Although Zhang attempts to revolutionize the social discourse and philosophize it, “it ... failed to generate a zeitgeist, and could not be recognized from

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<sup>458</sup> Chinese original: 今太炎之書見世，將為二千年來儒墨九流破封執之局，引未來之的 (Huang Zongyang, 69).

<sup>459</sup> Chinese original: 當時整個國家與社會的氣氛，就缺乏哲學味道 (Jiang Yihua, 299).

generation to generation” (Guo Zhili, 77). “Zhang’s philosophical revolution is a ‘premature’ revolution that was not accepted by the times and did not form a consensus” (Jiang Yihua, 299).

Additionally, concepts such as absolute “equality” and breaking with grasping on a certain reality represented in “Qiwulunshi” are against the general discourse of modernity. Chen Shaoming sees that the representative work of Zhang has been neglected for a long time, because “it’s values and beliefs are increasingly out of touch with the 20<sup>th</sup> century ideological pulse, which is development and progress” (Chen Shaoming, 172). As argued in the introduction, a commonly accepted belief was that Chinese modernism is a replication of the Western modernity. This means that at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the main task of Chinese intellectuals were to import progressive Western thought to reform China, so that China could catch up with the more developed Western cultures. However, “Qiwulunshi” argues for the equality of civilization and barbarism. Instead of moving forward, Zhang criticizes the progressive movement which could oppress individuality and acclaims perspectivism and respect for differences. Zhang’s opinion clearly contradicts with the progressive tone in modernity and was therefore neglected.

Even Lu Xun (魯迅, 1881-1936)<sup>460</sup> sees Zhang’s stance which respects equality without active pursuit of progress as decadent. In Lu Xun’s opinion, Zhang was a very active political figure and

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<sup>460</sup> Lu Xun, whose real name is Zhou Shuren 周樹人, Lu Zun is his pen name. Lu Xun was a Chinese writer, translator, essayist, poet and literary critic. He was a leading figure of modern Chinese literature, writing in both vernacular and classical Chinese.



“appeared as a revolutionist.” After believing in Buddhism, Zhang “is not only separated from the people, but he also gradually becomes decadent.” He “retreated to a quiet scholar.” “Using the walls built by himself and the help of others,” Zhang “isolated [himself] from the times” (Lu Xun, 546-550). Lu Xun’s comments further confirms that Zhang was neither understood nor accepted in his time. Lu Xun, similar to other intellectuals, believe that revolutionary actions that constantly move forward represents modern, progressive and worth to be pursued. Lu Xun does not understand that Zhang also cares for society, but with a different approach. Lu Xun and other scholars see the world with Manchu indoctrinations which need to be abolished. After abolishing old rituals, Lu Xun’s revolutionists wish to establish a new form of indoctrination in form of Enlightenment. In other words, they wish to find a more progressive indoctrination to replace the older one. However, Zhang’s work must be understood “in relation to a larger global problematic of equality and also in relation to a trend toward criticizing modernity” (Murthy, 124). Zhang argues that as long as there is indoctrination, there would be oppression. The only way is to overcome any domination and ideology in all forms. Zhang’s “retreat” is actually a more fundamental way to destroy all hierarchy and achieve a society without any oppression. His approach is against the major discourse of modernity at the time and is therefore neglected.

#### SIGNIFICANCE OF “QIWULUNSHI” – A REDISCOVERED PIECE

Since the 1980s, with the development of academic thought “unfrozen,” Zhang Taiyan and his “Qiwulunshi” re-entered people's field of vision. However, in Guo Zhili’s opinion, not many studies have been done for “Qiwulunshi,” and the methods used in those studies still have the

shadow of the academic style of the old era, such as the use of stereotyped class term; using various so-called "isms" to characterize its philosophical points. Sometimes it is not possible to return to the purity of the academic itself, and scholars use political ideological criteria to measure and judge historical figures and so on (Guo Zhili, 77).

Starting from 21<sup>st</sup>, more and more scholarly research on "Qiwulunshi" confirms the significance of "Qiwulunshi According to Guo Zhili, Zhang's explication for Zhuangzi's "Qiwulun" is unprecedented (Guo Zhili, 77). Wang Xiaojie argues that "Qiwulunshi" is the peak of Zhang Taiyan's thought" (Wang Xiaojie, Wenbenchengyin, 93). Chen Shaoming argues that "in terms of combining techniques of explanation and depth of thoughts, it would be difficult to find a more accomplished one in comparison to other philosophical works which explain classics" (Chen Shaoming, 31).

Compared to other scholars who annotated Zhuangzi and who interpreted Zhuangzi using Buddhism in this tradition, Zhang brings five new elements to this discourse. As argued by Wang Xiaojie: first, former scholars conduct such research in order to spread Buddhism or Confucianism. For example, Lin Xiyi (林希逸, 1193—1271) uses Chan Buddhist sect to interpret Zhuangzi, but borrows a lot of language from early Neo Confucianism (a Confucian school of idealist philosophy of the Song and Ming Dynasties), and Hanshan Deqing (憨山德清, 1546-1623) interprets Zhuangzi in order to spread Buddhism. Different from them, Zhang's interpretation of Zhuangzi is neither partial to Buddhism nor Zhuangzi, but only explains his

opinion towards the universe and his idea to rescue the nation-state. Wang argues that Zhang's goal is not to highlight a certain school of thought, but to care for the country.

Second, Zhang provides one of the first comprehensive interpretation of Zhuangzi through Yogācāra Buddhism. According to Wang Xiaojie, previous scholars who interpret Zhuangzi through Buddhism mostly interpret Zhuangzi through the sect of Kong (*kongzong*, 空宗, The śūnya sects, i.e. those which make the unreality of the ego and things their fundamental tenet). Wang further argues, in the Republic of China era, although Yang Wenhui tried to interpret Zhuangzi using Yogācāra Buddhism, his interpretation is not detailed and rich. Wang says, in Zhang's "Qiwulunshi," he is not only able to thoroughly use Yogācāra theory to interpret Zhuangzi's "Equal Assessments of things," but he is also able to explain each single concept in detail. Compared to Yang Wenhui, Zhang Taiyan's reading is systematic and deep. Also, previous interpretation of Zhuangzi through Buddhism only has single sources. However, Zhang's interpretation not only deploys Yogācāra Buddhism, but also Huayan Buddhism, Perfection of Wisdom Buddhism (*bore zong*, 般若宗, the sect of *prajñā/wisdom*, *prajñāpāramitā*), various concepts in Western philosophy and Zhuangzi's own logic. This is a great breakthrough in Zhang's interpretation of Zhuangzi (Wang Xiaojie, 2016, 99).

Third, according to Huang Huazhen's analysis, traditional scholars sought for spiritual sustenance in Zhuangzi when they failed in their public engagement. These scholars focused on passive connotations in Zhuangzi and used Zhuangzi as a way to escape from the secular world. However, Zhang systematically conceives his project of using Buddhism to explain Zhuangzi, in

order to engage with current social movements. Many scholars confirm this point. Huang Huazhen argues that Zhang's reading of Zhuangzi and Buddhism aims at engaging with the world (Huang Huazhen, 39).<sup>461</sup> Also, as argued by Wang Xiaojie, by interpreting Zhuangzi through Buddhism, Zhang supports national pre-Qin schools of thought in order to face challenges from the outside. As argued by Li Zhifu (Li, wenye, 7), besides proving that Buddhism and Daoism are the same (*zhuangshi xuanton*, 莊釋玄同), Zhang also argues that Chinese and Indian [cultures] are inherently different (*huafan guyi*, 華梵固異). This is where he overcomes traditional scholars who "use Buddhism to interpret Zhuangzi." Li further argues that according to Zhang, the quintessence of Buddhism is one's personal nirvana, but Zhuangzi does not mean the individual nirvana at all; Buddhism places hope on freeing oneself from worldly life, but Zhuangzi still pursues freedom in a worldly life. Therefore, as argued by Li, Zhang's final goal is to drastically criticize Great-Nation-Chauvinism, Social Darwinism, Hegelianism, Cultural Imperialism based on multiculturalism (Li Zhifu, Wenye, 7).

The aforementioned scholarly perspective can be well confirmed in Zhang's texts. Zhang uses the example of bodhisattva Icchantika (Yichanti, 一闍提) to illustrate his public engagement.

Bodhisattva Icchantikas are hopeless beings who are "not capable of attaining the Buddhist goal

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<sup>461</sup> Although Huang sees Zhang's "Qiwulunshi" as a political declaration which mainly highlights the conventional truth, it ignores the ultimate truth, thus narrows down the scope and depth of Zhang's argument and fails to understand its metaphysical and ontological significance. In contrast, as argued by Gao Ruiquan, he is afraid that if human beings get rid of illusions in the conventional world, as argued by Zhang Taiyan, people might end in an unreal world which negates reality (Gao Ruiquan, 辛亥革命, 44). This argument also fails to see Zhang's discussion about returning to the conventional world and only sees the aspect of the ultimate world which is an inadequate reading of Zhang Taiyan. This dissertation combines both perspectives and try to unveil both the transcendental and phenomenal discussions of Zhang Taiyan.

of enlightenment” (Buddhism dictionary), given that they are have too many bad roots and are lacking in faith 信不具足” (Buddhist dictionary). It has a negative connotation in Buddhism. However, Zhang Taiyan elevates bodhisattva Icchantika who returns to the conventional world over Buddha who already achieves the highest stage of nirvana. Zhang argues that “knowing all dharmas are originally nirvana, the bodhisattva of Icchantika does not go into nirvana, because he cannot abandon good roots (almsgiving, mercy and wisdom)” (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 65).<sup>462</sup> In Zhang’s understanding, bodhisattva Icchantika could originally go to nirvana. However, he gives up his chance to “go into nirvana,” because he cares for the society and cannot gives up “almsgiving, mercy and wisdom.” In Zhang’s understanding, only the bodhisattva Icchantika who balance both the world of the conventional truth and the world of the ultimate truth is his real aspiration.

In Zhang’s opinion, Zhuangzi, just like the bodhisattva Icchantika, belongs to the real sages. “In terms of reincarnation, Zhuangzi, Sakyamuni and Plato and the same. Buddhism understands reincarnation as irritation, but Zhuangzi sees reincarnation as dispelling sorrows” (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 65).<sup>463</sup> These quotes show that Zhang Taiyan interprets Zhuangzi as a sage with worldly concern. Also, Zhang argues about “the knowledge of sages tyrannized people through indoctrination resulted in calamity” (*shengzhi zhihuo*, 聖智之禍) (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 3).

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<sup>462</sup> Chinese original: 菩薩一闍提，云知一切法，本來涅槃，畢竟不入，非舍善根 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 65).

<sup>463</sup> Chinese original: 輪回之義，莊生，釋迦，伯刺圖所同，佛法以輪回為煩惱，莊生乃以輪回遺憂 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 65).

“Hence, universal love is unrealistic talk.<sup>464</sup> The theory of getting rid of weapons lies at the base of constructing weapons” (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 5).<sup>465</sup> These lines all point towards Zhang’s active engagement with current Chinese political situations while annotating Zhuangzi.

Fourth, scholars further argues that Zhang provides more substantial analysis for Zhuangzi comparing to other contemporaneous scholars. Although Zhang’s contemporaneous scholars, such as Liang Qichao (梁啟超), also interprets Buddhism and Zhuangzi under Zhang’s influence, Liang is not systematic and deep enough in comparison to Zhang Taiyan (Wang Xiaojie, Wenben chengyin, 99). As argued by Li Xiangping,

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<sup>464</sup> Argued by Huang Yuhua and Zhang Deshun, in Chinese modernism, introduced by Yan Fu (嚴復), Evolutionism spreads around in modern Chinese intellectual life. Yan Fu argues that This study believes that “rules of society must improve, and what comes latter is better than today” (世道必進, 後勝於今). Yan Fu argues for the evolutionary model of “圖騰社會(Totemistic Society) – 宗法社會 (Patriarchal Society) – 軍國社會 (military or modern political society (also country society)),” and Kang Youwei argues for the evolutionary model of “据乱世 (troubled times) – 升平世 (arising to the peaceful world) – 太平世 (peaceful world)” (Wang Yuhua, Zhang Deshun, 100). Both of them feature monism. In contrast to both of Yan Fu and Kang Youwei, Zhang is vehemently against Evolutionism. According to Li Zhifu, this is where Zhang argues against the Enlightenment discourse. Firstly, the idea of “Democracy, Freedom, Equality and Universal Love” is based on “individualism.” However, all individualists grasp on the idea of the “self,” so that everyone focuses on one’s private ownership. As long as everyone is self-centered, there would have to be competition. As a result, democracy would lead to tyranny, equality would turn to inequality, and universal love would turn into exploitation. Secondly, Western countries which feature democracy, freedom and equality become imperialism which crush weak countries and encroach on the East. Thirdly, Spencer’s “Evolutionism” does not bring people real happiness and real civilization. Zhang believes that evolution does not happen linearly. Whereas kindness evolves, evilness also evolves (Li, Jindailiangzhong, 46). According to Li Zhifu’s reading, in response to the Western Enlightenment discourse, Zhang raises his own understanding of freedom. First, Zhang believes that real freedom cannot be achieved with “individualism.” Real society of freedom and equality is based on “non-self.” Second, “social Darwinism” is to use civilization as excuse to destroy countries. Therefore, Zhang acts against evolution and believes that “civilized nations” and “barbaric nations” have equal values. Civilization cannot be a reason for “civilized nations” to conquer “barbaric nations” (Li, Jindailiangzhong, 46). As argued by Zhu Lei, Zhang wishes to criticize Western powers which invade China and destroy the theoretical basis for their invasion (Zhu Lei, 94). Meng Zhuo argues that Zhang argues against Enlightenment in that Zhang wishes to get rid of rationality, so that Zhang argues against evolution, teleology and theory of civilization (Meng, Zhongguo shiyu). Zhu Lei argues that Zhang criticizes and wishes to get rid of theorem (Zhu Lei, 92). Wang Yuhua and Zhang Deshun argue that Enlightenment has an extreme blind belief in Rationalism which wishes to use rationality to establish new world order which destroys the plurality of world cultures (Wang, Zhang, 104).

<sup>465</sup> Chinese original: 兼愛為大迂之談，偃兵則造兵之本，豈虛言耶！ (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 5).

where Zhang Taiyan excels others is that not only does he rationally criticize Buddhist thoughts of Kang Youwei (康有為, 1858—1927) and Tan Sitong (譚嗣同, 1865—1898), but his rational self-consciousness is far better than that of Liang Qichao (梁啟超). Therefore, the task of using Buddhist thoughts to construct modern Chinese philosophical system and system of value beliefs started by Tan Sitong, inherited by Liang Qichao and is finally accomplished by Zhang Taiyan (Li Xiangping, 103).<sup>466</sup>

Fifth, Zhang's interpretation of Zhuangzi combines both the scientific discourse and the philosophical discourse. As introduced by Wang Xiaojie, Zhang's contemporaneous scholars such as Kang Youwei tried to explain Zhuangzi's thought of Qiwu through science. Microscopes enable people to see a louse as big as an elephant. This could be an explanation for "equality of things" (*qiwu*, 齊物). In Kang's interpretation, Zhuangzi becomes a scientific object (Wang Xiaojie, *Wenben chengyin*, 94). According to Wu Xiaofan's research, interpretations of Zhuangzi before Zhang Taiyan mostly come from a metaphysical or a Buddhist perspective (Wu Xiaofan, 61). Zhang's interpretation of "Qiwulun" not only brings the Western scientific perspective, but he also integrates traditional metaphysical and Buddhist perspectives to explain Zhuangzi. Zhang is also the first person who interprets Zhuangzi from the modern perspective of "equality" (Wu Xiaofan, 61).

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<sup>466</sup> Chinese original: 章的過人之處是，不但對康、譚的佛教思想進行理性批判，而且其理性上的自覺也大大高於梁啟超。所以，運用佛教思想來構築近代中國哲學體系以及價值信仰體系的使命，由譚發軔，經梁承繼，而最終由章來完成 (Li Xiangping, 103).

## Appendix E Zhuangzi's "Qiwulun" and the Structure of "Qiwulunshi"

Given that Zhang Taiyan explicates Zhuangzi's "Qiwulun," it is necessary for us to give a review of Zhuangzi's text. "Qiwulun" is a short text (the content of it will be summarized as below) as the second chapter of Zhuangzi's *Zhuangzi*, and one of the central chapters of the whole book. It tries to use fables and philosophical proverbs to showcase the relativity of things and opinions in the physical world. It focuses on the interrelationship among things and argues for the equality of sentient and non-sentient beings, values and opinions. Zhuangzi furthermore unveils a higher united origin as the metaphysics behind the equality.

I now am going to introduce the basic structure of Zhang's text, "Qiwulunshi." "Qiwulun" is a Chinese classical text of Chinese philosophical Daoism. It is the second chapter in *Zhuangzi*. "Shi" (釋) means explication in Chinese. Therefore, "Qiwulunshi" serves as the explication of Zhuangzi's "Qiwulun." At the beginning of "Qiwulunshi," Zhang adds a preface to his explication and introduces the problem, thesis and method he is using in the text. Following the preface is the section in which Zhang interprets the title of "Qiwulun." Zhang Taiyan then separates Zhuangzi's "Qiwulun" into seven big parts. The first part is further subdivided into six chunks. Zhang therefore separates Zhuangzi's "Qiwulun" into 12 parts. He quotes each part of Zhuangzi's "Qiwulun" according to the original order of the text, then he develops his own comments following his quote. Therefore, there are seven big chapters in Zhang Taiyan's "Qiwulunshi," with the first chapter being separated into six subsections. I now use the structure of "Qiwulunshi" as the guideline to explain both the structures of Zhuangzi's "Qiwulun" and Zhang Taiyan's "Qiwulunshi." I will briefly introduce the main content of each 12



section of Zhuangzi's "Qiwulun." After introducing Zhuangzi's original text, I will then try to recapitulate how Zhang is inspired by the chosen excerpt from Zhuangzi and what kind of arguments he develops based on the original Zhuangzi's text.

### *Preface and Interpretation of the Title*

Zhang's preface sets up the foundation for this text in three aspects. First, Zhang situates Zhuangzi in his time (the Warring States Period (BC 476-BC 221)) and describes the problem Zhuangzi argues against: the domination of a single discourse results in oppression of individual perspectives. Second, Zhang tries to provide one of his overarching theses that Zhuangzi provides the solution to the aforementioned problem. Zhuangzi's understandings about freedom and equality represented in his "Qiwulun" overcome a dominating authority and are thus superior to other schools of thoughts at that time. Third, Zhang introduces the methodology he is using in his explication. Because Zhuangzi and Buddhism have similarities, Zhang thus deploys Buddhism to interpret Zhuangzi.

In the "Interpretation of the Title" (*shipianti*, 釋篇題), Zhang tries to explain the meaning of "Qiwu" as to break the grasping on a certain belief and see different things equally. According to Zhang, grasping on only one single belief is illusory, and this could result in the spreading of oppressive ideology. Zhang then explains that the meaning of Zhuangzi's equality which is to respect various perspectives is profound and penetrating.

## Chapter 1 Section 1

The first part of the “Qiwulunshi” is further divided into six sections. Zhang’s first section derives out of the first story in “Qiwulun.” Sir Shoestrap of Southwall (*nanguo ziqi*, 南郭子綦) was “leaning against armrest on the ground, gazing upward and releasing his breath into the heavens above” (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 9; Zhuangzi, Ziporyn, 11).<sup>467</sup> Sir Swimmy Faceformed 顏成子遊 “stood in attendance before him” 立侍乎前 and asked Sir Shoestrap of Southwall a question: “Can the body really be made like a withered tree, the mind like dead ashes? What leans against this armrest now is not what leaned against it before” (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 9; Zhuangzi, Ziporyn, 11).<sup>468</sup> Sir Shoestrap of Southwall confirms that this is a good question, and answers that he has already lost himself, but the Sir Swimmy Faceformed does not know “who or that is,” because he only hear “the piping of man” (*renlai*, 人籟) without “the piping of earth” (*dilai*, 地籟) not to say “the piping of Heaven” (*tianlai*, 天籟) (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 9; Zhuangzi, Ziporyn, 11). Sir Shoestrap of Southwall then further explains that “the piping of the earth” could be the cries of rustle and bustle from ten thousand hollows initiated by wind (地籟則眾竅是已). Sir Swimmy Faceformed then follows that the piping of man should be “the sound of bamboo panpipes” (Zhuangzi, Ziporyn, 12) (人籟則比竹是已 (Zhuangzi, 14)). The piping of Heaven, then, as said by Sir Shoestrap, are natural identities of things which produce different sounds. Zhuangzi then lists phenomena of all different kinds in the world and also

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<sup>467</sup> Chinese original: 南郭子綦隱機而坐，仰天而噓 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 9; Zhuangzi, Ziporyn, 11).

<sup>468</sup> Chinese original: 形故可使如槁木，而心故可使如死灰乎？今之隱機者，非昔之隱機者也 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 9; Zhuangzi, Ziporyn, 11).

mentions an interpretation of time. For example, “day and night they alternate before our eyes, yet no one knows whence they sprout” (Zhuangzi, Ziporyn, 12).<sup>469</sup>

Zhang connects Zhuangzi’s concepts of *tianlai* (天籟) with ālaya consciousness in Yogācāra Buddhism (ultimate truth), and then connects *dilai* (地籟) with the five groups of the hundred modes of all mental qualities and their agents (*wuwei baifa*, 五位百法) (conventional truth).<sup>470</sup> Zhang lays out the two worlds contained within the concepts of *tianlai* and *dilai*: *sudi* (俗諦, the world of the conventional truth, *saṃvṛti-satya*) and *zhendi* (真諦, the world of ultimate truth, *paramārtha-satya*). Through these two parallels, Zhang tries to argue that Zhuangzi’s thought is in accordance with Yogācāra Buddhism in that it believes that the ālaya consciousness (*alaiye shi*, 阿賴耶識, *ālāyavijñāna*) gives birth to all different laws in the world. Then Zhang uses the example of time to argue that the concept of time is a result of ālaya consciousness which does not contain the real body. It is an illusory grasping with and one should break away with it.

### Chapter 1 Section 2

Following the story about *tianlai* and *dilai*, “Qiwulun” moves to the discussion about the “genuine ruler” of separations. For example, among “the hundred bones, the nine openings,

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<sup>469</sup> Chinese original: 日夜代乎前，而莫知其所萌 (Zhuangzi, 17).

<sup>470</sup> 五位百法 five groups of the 100 modes or 'things': (1) 心法 the eight 識 perceptions, or forms of consciousness; (2) 心所有法 the fifty-one mental ideas; (3) 色法 the five physical organs and their six modes of sense, e. g. ear and sound; (4) 不相應行 twenty-four indefinites, or unconditioned elements; (5) 無為 six inactive or metaphysical concepts. See: <https://mahajana.net/texts/soothill-hodous.html>

the six internal organs,” which one “is most dear to me?” (Zhuangzi, Ziporyn, 12)<sup>471</sup> Would there be an equality of treatment of all body parts, or would there be a favorite among them? Following this discussion in “Qiwulun,” in the second section of the first part, Zhang establishes the first focus in his “Qiwu” philosophy, namely the body of the real in the world of the ultimate truth. Whereas the first edition of “Qiwulunshi” establishes ālāya consciousness as the real body, the revised edition of the text understands the amala consciousness as the real body which precedes the ālāya consciousness.

### *Chapter 1 Section 3*

Starting from the third section until the beginning of the sixth section in the first part, Zhang provides detailed account for the world of the conventional truth. In the third section of the first part, Zhang refers to the next section in Zhuangzi’s “Qiwulun.” In this part, Zhuangzi argues that “there is no thing that is not a ‘that.’ There is no thing that is not a ‘this’” (Zhuangzi, Ziporyn, 14).<sup>472</sup> “‘Thatness’ emerges from ‘thisness,’ and ‘thisness’ follows from ‘thatness’”<sup>473</sup> (Zhuangzi, Ziporyn, 14). This shows that there is no constant understanding of a thing. Instead, the meaning of a thing is understood only from a special perspective. There are “an endless supply of ‘rights,’ and an endless supply of ‘wrongs’” (Zhuangzi, Ziporyn, 14).<sup>474</sup> Based on Zhuangzi’s understanding of relativity of nature, Zhang develops his understanding of possibilities in a world of the conventional truth. The world of the conventional truth can be

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<sup>471</sup> Chinese original: 百骸，九竅，六藏，...吾誰與為親? (Zhuangzi, 19)

<sup>472</sup> Chinese original: 物無非比，物無非是 (Zhuangzi, 22).

<sup>473</sup> Chinese original: 彼出於是，是亦因彼 (Zhuangzi, 22).

<sup>474</sup> Chinese original: 是亦一無窮，非亦一無窮也 (Zhuangzi, 22).

seen as the second focus in his “Qiwu” philosophy. Deploying theories of Yogācāra Buddhism, the world of the conventional truth is created through seeds contained within the ālaya consciousness. In this part, Zhang tries to further illustrate the illusory nature of the world of the conventional truth, the danger of grasping on to only one single opinion, and the justification for all different phenomena in the world of the conventional truth which is comparable to the Nietzschean perspectivism.

#### *Chapter 1 Section 4*

In the fourth section of chapter 1, Zhang Taiyan cites Zhuangzi’s text which discusses about the possibility of a general basis. Zhuangzi assumes that “each thing necessarily has someplace from which it can be affirmed as thus and so, and someplace from which it can be affirmed as acceptable” (Zhuangzi, Ziporyn, 15).<sup>475</sup> This “someplace” can be understood as an ultimate origin which provides justifications for phenomena in the conventional world. Zhuangzi further argues that

for whatever we may define as a beam as opposed to a pillar, as a leper as opposed to the great beauty Xishi, or whatever might be from some perspective strange, grotesque, uncanny, or deceptive, there is a course that opens them into one another, connecting them to form a oneness (Zhuangzi, Ziporyn, 15).<sup>476</sup>

This quote from Zhuangzi presents a possibility that the unity of “a oneness” of things from various categories. This furthermore confirms the possibility of an all-encompassing

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<sup>475</sup> Chinese original: 物故有所然，物固有所可 (Zhuangzi, 23).

<sup>476</sup> Chinese original: 故為是舉莛與楹，厲與西施，恢恠憭怪，道通為一 (Zhuangzi, 23).

metaphysics. Additionally, Zhuangzi puts forwards the concept of *lianghang* (Walking Two Roads), referring to the Sage who “balances various rights and wrongs to harmonize with others, and yet remains in the middle of Heaven the Potter’s Wheel” (Zhuangzi, Ziporyn, 16).<sup>477</sup> This quote shows that *lianghang* is the combination of a harmonious phenomenal world and a united metaphysical world. The metaphysical world is described as “the middle of Heaven the Potter’s Wheel” (*tianjun*, 天均) (Zhuangzi, 24).

While commenting this section, Zhang pursues a similar project as Zhuangzi which believes in a metaphysics and thus recapitulates the movement from the world of the conventional truth to the world of the ultimate truth. Zhang’s attempt can be seen through human language. He lists three ways to establish the meaning of language: defining the realm of meaning, pursuing cause and effect and seeking substance (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 27).<sup>478</sup> Through his analysis, Zhang disapproves the possibility for all three methods to approach the ultimate truth. Zhang thus further discusses the possibility to combine the world of the ultimate truth and the world of the conventional truth, which is called “letting two alternatives proceed.” (*lianghang*, 兩行) In the end, Zhang discusses the concept of empty dependent co-origination (*kong yuansheng*, 空緣生) which is a unity of all different things in the realm of the conventional truth. However, this empty dependent co-origination is only confined within realm of the conventional truth which fails to reach the ultimate truth.

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<sup>477</sup> Chinese original: 和之以是非而休乎天均 (Zhuangzi, 24).

<sup>478</sup> Chinese original: 說義界，責因緣，尋實質 (Zhang, Qiwulunshi, 27).

## Chapter 1 Section 5

In this section, Zhuangzi discusses about the concept of earthly success. Zhuangzi lists several masters, for example, Zhao Wen who strums his zither, Master Kuang who taps out the time, Huizi who leans on his desk to argue with others. These masters delighted in what they flourish in, and thus pursued “these arts to the end of their days” (Zhuangzi, Ziporyn, 16).<sup>479</sup> “They wanted to shine its light and make it obvious to others” (Zhuangzi, Ziporyn, 16).<sup>480</sup> In the end, Zhuangzi reflects on these masters’ pursuit of fame and fortune.

Can this be called success, being fully accomplished at something? In that case, even I am fully accomplished. Can this be called failure, lacking the full accomplishment of something? If so, neither I nor anything else can be considered fully accomplished (Zhuangzi, Ziporyn, 16).<sup>481</sup>

In Zhuangzi’s true opinion, to whether be accomplished at something or not cannot determine a person’s success and failure. All the accomplishments can never “be considered fully accomplished” and need to be reconsidered. “Thus the Radiance of Drift and Doubt is the sage’s only map. He deploys no single definition of what is right” (Zhuangzi, Ziporyn, 16).<sup>482</sup> According to the understanding of a sage, nothing is right or wrong. Earthly success cannot be seen as a real accomplishment.

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<sup>479</sup> Chinese original: 故載之末年 (Zhuangzi, 25).

<sup>480</sup> Chinese original: 其好之也，欲以明之 (Zhuangzi, 25).

<sup>481</sup> Chinese original: 若是而可謂成乎？雖我無成，亦可謂成矣。若是而不可謂成乎？物與我無成也 (Zhuangzi, 25).

<sup>482</sup> Chinese original: 聖人之所圖也，唯是不用 (Zhuangzi, 25).

Following Zhuangzi's text, Zhang argues in the fifth section in chapter one that grasping onto an idea illustrates a phenomenon in the world of the conventional truth. But this grasping is lack of self-nature, because the grasping is itself empty, since the self that grasps and the objects it grasps onto are empty. This means that grasping only reflects but does not contain the real body in the world of the ultimate truth.

### *Chapter 1 Section 6*

In this section, Zhang Taiyan establishes two versions of metaphysics, inexhaustible conditioned arising (*wujin yuanqi*, 無盡緣起, *pratitya samutpada*) and the thus-come-in-one dependent co-origination (*rulaizang yuanqi*, 如來藏緣起). He explicates the first half of Zhuangzi's text for this section to illustrate the unlimited dependent co-origination, and the second half of Zhuangzi's text for this section to establish the thus-come-in-one dependent co-origination.

In the first half of the Zhuangzi's text, Zhuangzi argues that "now there is a name like this, but I don't know whether the name and the real meaning of the same belongs to the same category or not" (my own translation) (Zhuangzi, 26).<sup>483</sup> Zhang picks up with this question and tries to discuss about the relationship about meaning and names. At the beginning sixth section, Zhang uses different examples to demonstrate that meaning and names do not correlate. In addition, all established names do not contain self-nature. This means that all established names do not

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<sup>483</sup> Chinese original: 今且有言於此，不知其與是類乎？(Zhuangzi, 26).



correlate with the ultimate world. Similar to names, all beings in the world of the conventional truth are also illusory and do not have essence.

Zhuangzi further argues that “Heaven and earth are born together with me, and the ten thousand things and I are one” (Zhuangzi, Ziporyn, 17).<sup>484</sup> Inferring from this logic, there is no reference point to argue for comparison. In this sense, “nothing in this world is larger than the tip of a hair in autumn, and Mt. Tai is small. No one lives longer than a dead child, and old Pengzu died an early death” (Zhuangzi, Ziporyn, 17).<sup>485</sup> Based on Zhuangzi’s argument, Zhang Taiyan further argues that beings in the world are interrelated and could be transferred to each other. This theory is called the inexhaustible conditioned arising (*wujin yuanqi*, 無盡緣起, *pratitya samutpada*). However, the problem of the inexhaustible conditioned arising is that it only functions within the world of the conventional truth and cannot reach the world of the ultimate truth.

In the second half of Zhuangzi’s text, Zhuangzi further argues that “if we are all one, can there be anything to say, anything to refer to?” (Zhuangzi, Ziporyn, 17).<sup>486</sup> This sentence shows that although the whole conventional world is united into a whole, would there still be a point of reference for the world above the conventional world? Zhang Taiyan tries to speak to this question in the second half of the sixth section in part one. Zhang overcomes the limitation of

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<sup>484</sup> Chinese original: 天地與我並生，而萬物與我為一 (Zhuangzi, 27).

<sup>485</sup> Chinese original: 天下莫大於秋毫之末，而大山為小；莫壽於殤子，而彭祖為夭 (Zhuangzi, 27).

<sup>486</sup> Chinese original: 既已為一矣，且得有言乎? (Zhuangzi, 27)

the inexhaustible conditioned arising and establishes the world of the ultimate truth through the thus-come-in-one dependent co-origination (*rulaizang yuanqi*, 如来藏緣起).

### *Chapter 2 and Chapter 3*

In chapter 2 and 3, Zhang gives two examples to illustrate his attitude towards the world of the conventional truth – equally respecting particularity and uniqueness. In Zhuangzi's text that Zhang Taiyan uses to elaborate his second chapter, Zhuangzi argues that "courses have never had sealed boundaries between them, and words have never had any constant range. It is by establishing definitions of what is 'this,' what is 'right,' that boundaries are made" (Zhuangzi, Ziporyn, 17).<sup>487</sup> This quote shows Zhuangzi's belief that things are initially united. Therefore, courses and words do not have boundaries. However, by establishing definitions, things are separated from each other. However, historical rules are only human-made definitions, which initially do not exist. Therefore, "as for historical events," a sage "will give an opinion but not debate it" (Zhuangzi, Ziporyn, 17).<sup>488</sup> This means that a sage will only make observatory comments about a thing without giving a decisive opinion for historical events. In chapter 2, Zhang criticizes a historical perspective that a historians tend to use old historical conventions as rules for the present time. Zhang thus argues that one should treat the past and the present equally, but not use laws in the past to dictate the present.

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<sup>487</sup> Chinese original: 夫道未始有分，言未始有常，唯是而有畛也 (Zhuangzi, 28).

<sup>488</sup> Chinese original: 春秋經事先王之治 (Zhuangzi, 28).

Zhuangzi's text which Zhang elaborates into the third chapter is the discussion about culture and barbarism. Zhuangzi uses a historical story to illustrate his point. Zhuangzi uses the examples of two ancient emperors who are regarded as Chinese Sages, Yao and Shun. "In ancient times Yao 堯 asked Shun 舜, 'I want to attack Zong, Kuai, and Xu'ao. For though I sit facing south on the throne, still I am not at ease. Why is this?'" (Zhuangzi, Ziporyn, 18).<sup>489</sup> Shun supports Yao's opinion and argues that "though these three may continue to dwell out among the bushes and grasses, why should this make you ill at ease?" (Zhuangzi, Ziporyn, 18)<sup>490</sup> Shun's opinion shows that because these three countries are barbaric cultures which "dwell out among the bushes and grasses," it is urgent for Yao to conquer these three barbaric countries and bring them to civilization. The excuse Shun finds for this argument is that "once upon a time ten suns rose in the sky at once, and the ten thousand things were all simultaneously illuminated" (Zhuangzi, Ziporyn, 18).<sup>491</sup> Shun then follows and argues that conquering wars are actually "multiple virtuosities than multiples suns" and has more powerful positive effects (Zhuangzi, Ziporyn, 18).<sup>492</sup>

In chapter 3, Zhang vehemently criticizes Yao and Shun in Zhuangzi's story, because he uses the discourse of culture and barbarism and morality as powerful excuses to invade other countries. This is similar to the cultural chauvinism. In Zhang's perspective, one should treat barbarism and civilization equally. By differentiating culture and barbarism, one is propagating invasion

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<sup>489</sup> Chinese original: 我欲闕宗膾胥敖，南面而不釋然。其故何也？(Zhuangzi, 29).

<sup>490</sup> Chinese original: 夫三子者，猶存乎蓬艾之間。若不釋然，何哉？(Zhuangzi, 29).

<sup>491</sup> Chinese original: 昔者十日並出，萬物皆照 (Zhuangzi, 29).

<sup>492</sup> Chinese original: 而況德之進乎日者乎 (Zhuangzi, 29).

and progression under the disguise of a moralized excuse. Zhang argues that by criticizing ancient emperors, Zhuangzi makes an insightful argument with far-reaching influence.

#### Chapter 4

In the Zhuangzi text Zhang cites for chapter 4, Zhuangzi introduces another fable, a story between Gnawgap 嚙缺 *nieque* and Baby Sovereign 王倪 *wangni*. In this fable, two points are discussed. First, there are three questions Gnawgap asks Baby Sovereign: “Do you know what all things agree in considering right? ... Do you know that you don’t know? ... Then are all things devoid of knowledge?” (Zhuangzi, Ziporyn, 18).<sup>493</sup> The answers to all three aforementioned questions are no. Also, there is no single standard to evaluate things around. For example,

when humans sleep in a damp place, they wake up healthy ill and sore about the waist – but what about eels? If humans live in trees, they tremble with fear and worry – but how about monkeys? Of these three, which ‘knows’ what is the right place to live? (Zhuangzi, Ziporyn, 18-19)<sup>494</sup>

Following this text, Zhang Taiyan argues that when one observes the world of the conventional truth, there is no generally accepted rule. Instead, rules change according to different situations.

The second topic being discussed in Zhuangzi’s fable is the concept of “the Utmost Person.” “The Utmost Person” (*zhiren*, 至人) is miraculous and beyond understanding, therefore, “the Utmost Person” does not need to “distinguish between benefit and harm” (Zhuangzi, Ziporyn,

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<sup>493</sup> Chinese original: 子知物之所同是乎？子知子知所不知邪？然則物無知邪？(Zhuangzi, 30)

<sup>494</sup> Chinese original: 民濕寢則腰疾偏死，鱗然乎哉？木處則惴慄。懼，猿猴然乎焉？(Zhuangzi, 30)

19).<sup>495</sup> Zhang argues that “the Utmost Person” tries to establish both the world of the ultimate truth with the world of the conventional truth together and call this attempt as “letting both alternatives proceed.”

### Chapter 5

In the next session, the Zhuangzi’s text points to the philosophy of language and the concept of Heavenly Transitions (*tianni*, 天倪). Zhuangzi first introduces the conversation between Master Jittery Magpie (*zhai que zi*, 翟鵲子) and Master Longtall Lumbertree (*chang wu zi*, 長梧子). Master Jittery Magpie asks Master Longtall Lumbertree that he heard about that “the sage ... says something by saying nothing, and says nothing by saying something, and thus he wander, beyond the dust and grime” (Zhuangzi, Ziporyn, 19).<sup>496</sup> This quote shows that the sage can wander into the realm of the ultimate truth, which is the realm “beyond the dust and grime.” In addition, Zhuangzi has a discussion about the sage’s words. The only way for the sage to convey is not to say something, but say nothing. Therefore, communication about the ultimate truth could only happen beyond words.

Later on, Zhuangzi talks about the concept of Heavenly Transitions (*tianni*, 天倪). “Harmonizing with them by means of their Heavenly Transitions” (和之以天倪) means that one follows the rule of nature and does not use value judgements such as “right” and “not right” to evaluate

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<sup>495</sup> Chinese original: 至人不知利害 (Zhuangzi, 30).

<sup>496</sup> Chinese original: 聖人無謂有謂，有謂無謂，而游乎塵垢之外 (Zhuangzi, 31).

things (Zhuangzi, Ziporyn, 21).<sup>497</sup> Therefore, one reaches the realm when the person can forget “each year” and “what should or should not be” (Zhuangzi, Ziporyn, 21).<sup>498</sup>

In chapter 5, Zhang discusses the representation of both the world of the ultimate truth and the world of the conventional truth. Given that all beings in the world do not have self-nature (the emptiness of living things (*shengkong*, 生空)), common human beings could not make sense of this emptiness. Zhang further argues that it might be possible for a sage to apprehend this state of emptiness. However, the sages’ words (*shengjiao liang*, 勝教量) are dependent on human language. The state of emptiness in the ultimate world precedes human language. Therefore, human languages are insufficient to represent the more primitive ultimate world. The sages’ words also cannot unveil the ultimate truth. One needs to wait for the truth to appear by itself according to division of nature, which is called Heavenly Transitions (*tianni*, 天倪).

## Chapter 6

In Zhuangzi’s text, he tells a story about the penumbra (*wangliang*, 罔兩) and the shadow (*ying*, 景). In traditional Chinese, penumbra is the shadow of the shadow. Penumbra criticizes the shadow that it cannot decide even one “single course of action” (Zhuangzi, Ziporyn, 21)<sup>499</sup> The shadow answers that the thing it depends on “depend on something else” and it could not

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<sup>497</sup> Chinese original: 是不是，然不然 (Zhuangzi, 34).

<sup>498</sup> Chinese original: 忘年忘義 (Zhuangzi, 34).

<sup>499</sup> Chinese original: 何其無特操與 (Zhuangzi, 35).

know why it is “so or not so” (Zhuangzi, Ziporyn, 21).<sup>500</sup> Zhang’s interpretation directly speaks to the unreliability about causality. Chapter 6 breaks down the rule of dependent arising (*yuansheng*, 緣生) and explains the illusory nature of cause and effects. Zhang therefore supports the doctrine of non-causality (*wuyin zhilun*, 無因之論, *asat-kārya-vāda*) and argues that the world of the ultimate truth should be the constant which does not follow changings in a logical cause.

### Chapter 7

The final chapter is an explication of Zhuangzi’s famous butterfly story. Once Zhuangzi “dreamt he was a butterfly, fluttering about joyfully just as a butterfly would” (Zhuangzi, Ziporyn, 21).<sup>501</sup> “Suddenly he awoke and there he was, the startled Zhuang Zhou (Zhuangzi) in the flesh” (Zhuangzi, Ziporyn, 21).<sup>502</sup> Zhuangzi then has the confusion of “if Zhou had been dreaming he was a butterfly, or if a butterfly was now dreaming it was Zhou” (Zhuangzi, Ziporyn, 21).<sup>503</sup> The dream of butterfly and Zhuangzi in the flesh can be seen as “the transformation of any one being into another” (Zhuangzi, Ziporyn, 21).<sup>504</sup>

In chapter 7, following the transformation between Zhuangzi and butterfly, Zhang uses the example of reincarnation to illustrate his ultimate concern which is to balance both the world of

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<sup>500</sup> Chinese original: 所以然，所以不然 (Zhuangzi, 35).

<sup>501</sup> Chinese original: 昔者莊周夢為蝴蝶，栩栩然蝴蝶也 (Zhuangzi, 36).

<sup>502</sup> Chinese original: 俄然覺，則遽遽然周邪 (Zhuangzi, 36).

<sup>503</sup> Chinese original: 不知周之夢為蝴蝶與，蝴蝶之夢為周與 (Zhuangzi, 36).

<sup>504</sup> Chinese original: 此之為物化 (Zhuangzi, 36).

the ultimate truth and the world of the conventional truth, in that he appeals for the Buddhist nirvana and wishes to reincarnate himself to the human world in order to savage it. Bodhisattva Icchantika who is on his way to pursue nirvana but cannot stop concerning for the human world and can therefore never achieve the state of nirvana. Similar to bodhisattva Icchantika, in Zhang's understanding, Zhuangzi also does not forget the conventional world on his way to pursue the ultimate and therefore balances the way to a sage and helping the world.