EMOTIONS IN THE ZHUANGZI

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Emotions in the *Zhuangzi*

by

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Abstract

Emotions in the Zhuangzi

The primary purpose of my thesis is to address the lack of critical scholarship concerning emotions in classical Chinese texts. I do this by examining emotions in three texts: the *Zhuangzi*, the *Mencius*, and the *Xunzi*. I use the *Zhuangzi* as my primary text and the others for comparison.

There are four sections. The first section describes the character *qing* and its use as an "umbrella" term for emotions in Warring States texts.

The second section reveals that there are certain, implied, assumptions regarding the nature of emotions shared in the *Zhuangzi*, the *Mencius*, and the *Xunzi*. Judgements, desires, actions, and physical states are related to emotions in these texts.

The third section examines in detail Zhuangzi's attitude toward emotion. It also looks at how his view of emotions relates to his concepts of *xing*, nature, and *xin*, mind\heart. Emotions, he argues, have no place in the natural world, they are characteristics of the imperfect, ordinary person rather than the natural, perfected one. Emotions are aspects that are externally imposed rather than the initial conditions defining us at birth. Zhuangzi's view of emotions is also compared to Mencius' and Xunzi's view of emotions and to their ideas of human nature. Emotions, in Mencius, are innate characteristics

that can motivate people to be moral. Emotions, in Xunzi, are also innate, but motivate people to behave in a selfish manner.

Finally, the fourth section examines how Zhuangzi's criticism of emotion fits into his philosophical positions. These positions suggest that the natural human being has no individuality. The final discussion examines the question of whether or not such a position is tenable.

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Chapter One: Introduction

In Western thought, when we discuss the concept of self we include the emotions. Although we often view emotions as irrational and as something to be controlled, we nevertheless see them as necessary to one's personality. Words like sadness, happiness, joy, and so on are used to describe our inner self, our thoughts, values and goals. In complete contrast to this is Zhuangzi's concept of the self. The natural human being, he says, is one who has no emotion. The questions, then, that I will endeavour to answer are: what is Zhuangzi's attitude toward emotions and what does this suggest about his concept of self.

In order to arrive at a complete picture of Zhuangzi's view of emotions, I will begin by trying to determine what he means by emotions. A large part of my thesis will focus on how emotions are portrayed in the *Zhuangzi,* and how they correlate with other concepts such as human nature and the mind-heart. In order to highlight Zhuangzi's atypical viewpoint in relation to other Warring States philosophers, I will compare it with those in the *Mencius* and the *Xunzi*. I will then follow up Zhuangzi's view of emotions with a discussion of whether or not this view is reasonable.

It is possible to see how emotions are portrayed in the *Zhuangzi* by looking at passages where emotions, like joy and grief, are addressed. This can be enhanced by examining how the character *qing*, emotions, is used.

Throughout the *Mencius*, the *Zhuangzi*, and the *Xunzi*, *qing* is found in many passages that deal with emotions. *Qing*, I find, is used as an "umbrella" term for a variety of emotions like sadness, compassion, joy, and anger. Therefore, any description of how emotions are portrayed in these Warring States texts needs to include passages that talk about particular emotions and passages where *qing* is used.

By looking at passages where *qing* and emotions are addressed two things become apparent: while Zhuangzi, Mencius, and Xunzi have similar views regarding what an emotion is, their attitudes toward emotions and the way they perceive emotions in relation to human beings varies considerably. The *Zhuangzi*, the *Mencius*, and the *Xunzi* understand emotions to include desires, evaluations, behaviour and physical expressions; these features, however, are often implicit assumptions embedded in other discussions. Although Zhuangzi, Mencius, and Xunzi have coinciding views regarding what is involved in emotions, Zhuangzi, nevertheless, talks about emotions as the source of one's entanglement in an artificial world; the ideal person is depicted as one who is unaffected by emotions. In the *Mencius*, emotions are portrayed as a source of morality and they are seen as innate qualities in all human beings. Emotions, in the Xunzi, are also innate, but they are seen as dangerous and irrational. They are characteristic of the sage, who through the rites and music,

tempers them to achieve proper expression. Emotions, in Confucian texts, are constituents of both the average person and the sage; in the *Zhuangzi*, they are part of the make-up of the ordinary or artificial person, but not of the ideal person who is, at the same time, the truly natural human being.

Is a person who has lacks emotion someone we would consider truly human? Is Zhuangzi's concept of the sage possible? Why would he develop this seemingly absurd idea? In order to answer these questions we have to look at Zhuangzi's concept of a self from three perspectives: within his system, outside his system, and why he says what he does. We will see that the idea of a person who is unaffected by emotion fits in quite well with Zhuangzi's overall philosophy. Human nature and the mind in their natural states are plain and unadorned; the individual, who returns to his natural state of being, is portrayed as objective and unaffected by his environment. Yet, when we speak of human beings as unemotional we tend to view them as less than human. Both Mencius and Xunzi, for example, say that to have emotions is to be human. However, because emotions include judgements, desires, and actions, all these things, according to Zhuangzi, lead to ego-action; this in turn creates disorder and chaos. The Daoist sage is not dependant on emotion to tell her how she should respond to a situation, she does so simply by inaction, *wu-wei*.

There are very few secondary sources that directly

discuss the issue of emotions in classical Chinese thought. One of the few articles is David Wong's "Is There a Distinction Between Reason and Emotions in *Mencius*?" Wong describes the four innate tendencies in human nature as the "primitive beginnings of an emotion."[1] He argues that emotions such as compassion are both affective and cognitive: they are cognitive in that they identify the salient features that compel one to action. He writes:

> ...not only does the emotion of compassion help solve the frame problem through influence on salience, but the relevant salient features are identified as a reason to act in ways characteristic of the compassionate person.[2]

For example, in Mencius' anecdote of the child who almost fell in the well, the possible suffering of the child is depicted as the object of compassion, as a reason to act in a helping way. Emotions in Mencius, according to Wong, involve rational thought. In a response to this article, Craig Ihara argues Wong's proposal might be better applied to a subset of moral emotions because other emotions, such as envy, are often irrational and do not justify reasons for action.

Virtually nothing has been written on emotions in the *Zhuangzi*. One exception is the discussion on emotions in Wu

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[1] David B. Wong, "Is There a Distinction Between Emotion and Reason in Mencius? *Philosophy East and West* 41.1 (1991), p. 31.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 36.

Kuang-ming's *Chuang Tzu: World Philosopher at Play*. Here, he discusses emotion in relation to the concept of non-being. Wu says that non-being is embodied in human beings. The perfect person is one who has become non-being, that is non-feeling, non-knowing, non-worrying and so forth. Emotions must be fasted off: one must be free of the sway of feeling and passions to achieve inner unity. Emotions like happiness are described as somewhere in between being and non-being.

> Happiness is just such a unity between what cannot--be--helped and what one-cannot-help-but-be. And one somehow knows it when one comes to that situation--where one is disturbed neither by sorrow nor by joy, but is just as one is, in sorrow or in joy.[3]

Emotions, says Wu, may exist but they should not be allowed to affect one's tranquillity. Emotions are secondary in Wu's view and are only used to explain the full significance of what is meant by non-being.

Although very little has been written about emotions in classical Chinese thought there are texts and articles that have been written about *xing*, human nature, and *xin*, mind-heart, in both Daoist and Confucian texts. Donald Munro, in his *Concept of Man in Early China*, for example, examines the etymology of the characters *xing* and *xin*. He argues that the meaning of *xing*, in Warring States texts, is dependant on *xin*.

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[3] Wu Kuang-ming, *Chuang Tzu: World Philosopher at Play*, (New York: Crossroads, 1982), p. 69.

The function of the mind-heart, he says, is to guide one's innate social tendencies. Roger Ames and A. C. Graham argue that human nature, in *Mencius* and *Xunzi*, is dynamic. This concept of *xing* differs from many traditional translations and definitions of it. *Xing* is not just what is innate or what is *a priori*, it is also open to change that is ultimately beneficial to the person and society. In Ames' words "it is the embodiment of personal development."[4] Lee Yearly, in his "The Perfected Person in the Radical Chuang Tzu," shows how the mind of the perfect person is impartial like the Dao by drawing on symbols of the hinge and mirror. Unfortunately, many of the articles on Daoism tend to focus on how the perfected person is like the Dao. However, these articles are helpful because they examine how terms like *xing* are interpreted in the primary texts we are concerned with. Understanding how *xing* and *xin* are employed in various texts helps one to account for the different views of emotion in the *Mencius*, *Xunzi* and the *Zhuangzi*.

A little has been written on the etymology of *qing*. A. C. Graham and Donald Munro discuss it briefly in footnotes. Both agree that *qing* refers to "what something is really like." Graham, in "The Background of the Mencian Theory of Human

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[4] Roger T. Ames, "The Mencian Concept of *Ren Xing*: Does it Mean 'Human Nature'?" in Henry Rosemont, Jr., ed., *Chinese Text and Philosophical Contexts* (Illinois, Open Court), p. 152.

Nature," also argues that it never means "passions" in pre-Han texts.[5] Xu Fuguan, in his *History of Chinese Theories of Human Nature*, addresses the meaning of *qing* in the Zhuangzi. He says it may have the same meaning as *xing* or that it may refer to the emotions.[6] The etymology and use of *qing* is important because *qing* often means "emotions."

Although there has been little written about emotion in classical Chinese thought, there are many Western philosophers who discuss the nature of emotion. Generally, they discuss what an emotion is. Some scholars, such as Robert Solomon and Stephen Leighton, argue that judgements are necessary in order for an emotion to be evoked. Others, such as Jenefer Robinson, argue that desires are essential and cause particular judgements. Other writers, such as Catherine Lutz, look at the meaning and value of emotion in culture. Lutz, in her *Unnatural Emotions*, shows how emotion plays a central role in our view of the world. Words like "envy" and "fear" are used to speak about the self, about the private and ineffable, they also are used to talk about the irrational, the uncontrollable and the vulnerable. Emotions, she argues, encompass two

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[5] A.C. Graham, "The background of the Mencian Theory of Human Nature," in *Studies in Chinese Philosophy and Philosophical Literature* (Singapore: Institute of East Asian Philosophies, 1986).

[6] Xu Fuguan, *Zhungguo Ren Xing Lun Shi* (A History of Chinese Theories of Human Nature) (Taipei: Commercial Press, 1969).

contradictory ideas, they are viewed as opposing the positively evaluated process of thought and opposing the negatively evaluated estrangement from the world.[7] Because they are crucial in the definition of interpersonal relations, they are seen as a product of social life. By comparing these theories of emotion with classical Chinese texts we can ask questions about whether or not emotions are contrasted with reason and if they are viewed as belonging to the domain of the self.

The *Zhuangzi* will be the primary text used for this project. Although the Inner Chapters (Chapters One to Seven) are considered by most scholars to be the work of Zhuangzi, I will use the entire text for my research. I am interested in what the entire text says about emotions. It is not just the work of the author of the Inner Chapters that is of concern, but Daoist thought in general from the fourth to the second centuries B. C. E. as it is reflected in the entire text. The *Dao De Jing* and the *Liezi* will be used to illustrate further Daoist thought concerning the emotions. I will not deal with emotions in these texts individually; since they interpret emotions in much the same way as the *Zhuangzi*, but I will use some passages from these texts to supplement the material in

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[7] Catherine Lutz, *Unnatural Emotion: Everyday Sentiments on a Micronesian Atoll and Their Challenge to Western Theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), p.3.

the *Zhuangzi*. As well, roughly contemporary texts, such as the *Mencius* and the *Xunzi* will be used to show how Zhuangzi's view of emotions differs from the prevalent thought of the time.

A great deal of my thesis will be descriptive because I will draw largely from the primary texts cited to portray how emotions were conceived by the author. This is necessary since very little scholarship has focused on the role of emotions in these texts. This will include some etymological research on the term *qing* and a comparison of the perception and interpretation of this term.

The final section of my thesis is largely philosophical. Having shown that emotions are not part of the natural human being in the *Zhuangzi*, I am interested in examining the logic of Zhuangzi's thought. What notions underlie his view of emotions? Is the idea of an individual who has no emotion a reasonable concept or simply an impossible goal?

Discussions concerning emotions have taken place in the West and East for the past 2,000 years, yet there is almost a total absence of critical evaluation of how emotions have been perceived in Chinese philosophy. As I have shown above, emotion has never been fully discussed by either traditional or modern scholarship. In fact, modern scholars have generally taken the Daoist sage at face value. For this reason alone examining the concept of emotions in Chinese philosophy is a useful project. Why study emotions? Because Chinese

philosophy, like many Western philosophies, ask questions concerning human nature and how one should live, any answer to these questions must in some way involve emotion. Thus, by examining what emotions are and what place they have in the "good life," in Chinese philosophical texts, the reader is provided with a better understanding of Zhuangzi's view of the ideal human being.

Chapter Two: Qing as an "Umbrella" Term For Emotions

There is no clearly set out argument about emotions in the *Zhuangzi*. It is only by looking at what Zhuangzi says about things like happiness, sadness, grief, and so on, that we can infer his views. When Zhuangzi, for example, equates being unaffected by joy and grief as "being free from the bonds of God,"[8] we can see that he perceives emotion as shackles and the cause of unnecessary suffering. Yet, when we look at the passages where emotion words are used, we often find that *qing* is used. It seems to be used as an "umbrella" term for a wide range of emotions. Oddly, this is not reflected in English translations of Chinese texts from the Warring States period or in Western scholarship dealing with these texts. Graham, for example, argues that *qing* refers to what is "essential" and "genuine" in human beings while other translators, such as Watson and Munro, remark that it can have other meanings such as "truth" and "sentiments." If we examine passages where *qing* is used it will become obvious that it has several meanings, yet we will see that it is often used as a general term for emotions.

In Warring States texts, the question of what role emotions played in the make-up of human beings was secondary to questions of whether or not human nature was good, neutral, or bad. Many passages, therefore, that specifically discuss

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[8] Burton Watson, *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), p. 53.

qing and its relation to things like joy, anger and grief are obscure. There are, nevertheless, a few obvious examples where *qing* is used as a broad term that includes various emotions. A later text, the *Li Ji* says:

> What are human *qing*? Liking, hatred, joy, anger, sadness, fear, love, evil, and desire, these seven are natural capacities and they are not learned.[9]

Here, emotions like joy, anger, love, hate, as well as things like evil and desire are grouped together to define the term *qing*. A similar passage, where things like anger are classified as *qing*, can be found in the *Xunzi*.

> The *xing's* liking, hatred, joy, anger, sadness and delight are called *qing*.[10]

Emotions like hatred, joy, anger, sadness and delight, which are part of our nature, *xing*, are grouped together under the term *qing*. *Qing*, in both the *Li Ji* and the *Xunzi*, is defined by a wide range of emotions. *Qing* often seems to be used in much the same way as the English word "emotion" because, like emotion, it is used as a general term that includes different emotions like happiness and joy.

Although *qing* can be used as an "umbrella" term for a

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[9] *Li Ji*, "Li Yun," cf. James Legge, trans., *Li Ki: Book of Rites*, Vol. 27-28 of *The Sacred Books of the East* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1885; repr., New York: University Books, 1967) Vol.1, p. 379.

[10] *Xunzi*, "Rectifying Names," cf. Burton Watson, trans., *Hsun Tzu: Basic Writings* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963), p. 139.

variety of emotions in the *Xunzi* and the *Li Ji*, what it means and how it was used may vary from text to text. In order to understand the facets of *qing* we must examine how it was used in Warring States texts especially in the *Mencius*, the *Zhuangzi* and the *Xunzi*.[11]

Many scholars recognize that *qing* has several meanings. Many, nevertheless, stress that it primarily refers to "the nature of a thing." Munro argues that *qing* is often used to mean "reality" or "real nature."[12] *Qing*, he says, describes "what something is really like" or "the way something is," yet, it differs from *xing*, nature, in that it is static. *Qing* is what you are born with, whereas *xing*, according to Munro, is dynamic because it can be moulded by one's environment.[13]

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[11] There are no records of *qing* in the oracle bones, from the Shang or in the early Zhou graphs. We first see *qing* used in Warring States texts such as the *Mencius* and the *Zhuangzi*. While the dates for the authorship of these texts remains disputed, most authorities agree that the *Mencius* was written around 372-289 B.C. E., the *Xunzi* ca. 300 B.C.E., and the *Zhuangzi* between 400 B.C.E. and 200 A.C.

[12] From the *Mencius*, Munro cites the following passages to illustrate the use of *qing* as "nature:" "Can this be the *hsing* [*xing*] of the mountain?" and "Can this be the *ch'ing* [*qing*] of man?" *Mencius* 4.A.8.1. From the *Xunzi*, he cites the following passage: "Therefore, if a person neglects what men can do and seeks what Heaven does, he fails to understand the nature (*ch'ing*) *[qing]*." Dubs, *Hsun Tzu*, p.183. From the *Zhuangzi*, Munro quotes: "Life and death are by decree...men cannot do anything about them. Without exception this is the *ch'ing* [*qing*] of things." Donald Munro, *The Concept of Man in Early China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969), pp. 212-213.

[13] *Ibid.*, p. 213.

Qing, he says, can also mean "true" and that "it can also carry the sense of sentiments, of something relevant to the constitution of man."[14] Watson, like Munro, in his translations of the *Zhuangzi* and the *Xunzi*, translates *qing* in relation to "what something is really like;" he uses words or phrases such as "original nature," "identity," and "true state of affairs." He also translates *qing* as "emotion" or "feeling:"

> ...though something may alarm the house [his spirit lives in], his emotions [*qing*] will suffer no death.[15]
>
> He is born with feelings [*qing*] of envy and hate, and if he indulges in these they will lead him into violence and crime.[16]

Munro and Watson translate *qing* as "nature," "real," "true," "emotions" and "sentiments." Nature, real, and true are approximate synonyms. Each of these words tell us what something is really like. Similarly, emotions, sentiments, and feeling are roughly synonymous, each being characterized by things like sadness, love and hate. *Qing*, then, has two basic uses: it is used to describe the nature of a thing and it is

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[14] Using a passage from the *Zhuangzi*, Munro suggests that *qing* may mean "true." "He has a temporary abode but no true (*ch'ing*) [*qing*] death." Using the *Analects*, he shows that it can also refer to "sentiments," "[I]f the superior loves trustworthiness, the people won't dare hide their true feelings (*ch'ing*) [*qing*]." *Analects* xiii.4.3. *Ibid.*, p.213.

[15] Watson, *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu*, p. 88.

[16] Watson, *Hsun Tzu: Basic Writings*, p. 157.

a term used to group together emotions like happiness and grief.

Qing has two principal meanings: nature and emotion. This, according to Xu Fuguan, can also be found in the *Zhuangzi*. *Qing*, he says, does not have one independent meaning. It may have the same meaning as *xing*, nature, or it may refer to emotions, particularly emotions that are caused by desires.[17] Graham argues, however, that in pre-Han texts *qing* almost never means "passions,"[18] even in the *Xunzi*. In Chinese philosophy it is used to describe things, "the *qing* of X is what is genuinely X in it."[19] What is genuine in X is often contrasted with *xing*, shape, or *mao*, guise. *Qing*, according to Graham, describes what is essential to a thing, it means what is necessary to human beings. *Qing*, he says, is equivalent to the Aristotelian "essence."[20] The definition of

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[17] Xu Fuguan, *Zhungguo Ren Xing Lun Shi*, p. 370.

[18] Passions are frequently synonymous with emotions since they are defined by strong feelings like love and hate.

[19] Graham, using a passage from the *Zhuangzi*, argues that *qing* refers to what is essential in a thing. "By what is the Tao hidden that there can be genuine or false? It can be credited with *ch'ing [qing]* ('what it essentially is')." Graham, "The Background of the Mencian Theory of Human Nature," pp. 59-60.

[20] That *qing* means "essence" can be seen in definitions and quasi-definitions. "To fit in with all within and without and above and below is the essence [*qing*] of duty." *Xunzi* chapter 16. "May I ask what you mean by benevolence and duty? Confucius said: To delight in your innermost heart in loving everyone impartially is the essence [*qing*] of benevolence and

qing as "essence" is slightly different in the *Xunzi* and the *Li Ji*. "Here, *ch'ing* [*qing*] is the genuine and unassumed, in contrast with *mao* "guise and demeanour" which is *wen* "patterned, refined" in obedience to rites. In these texts but nowhere else in pre-Han literature, the word refers only to the genuine in man."[21] As well, in his translations of the *Zhuangzi*, Graham translates *qing* as "essence," "true" or "identity" but never as emotion or any synonym of it.

However, when we examine passages where emotional states and words such as "happy" and "sad" are used, we can see that the character *qing* is used there as a general term for a variety of emotions. Munro, using a passage from the *Analects*, illustrates this.

> If a superior loves trustworthiness, the people won't dare hide their true feelings (*ch'ing*) [*qing*].[22]

If a superior can express his love for something like

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duty. *Zhuangzi*, chapter 13, quoted, *ibid.*, pp. 60-61.

[21] Graham uses passages from the *Xunzi* and the *Li Ji* to illustrate that *qing* refers to the "genuine." From the *Xunzi*: "The refined and ordered and the genuine [*qing*] and the useful, becoming each other's exterior and interior, proceeding together in conjunction, this is the midstream of the rites." *Xunzi*, chapter 16. From the *Li Ji*: What is meant by "the genuine in man" [*qing*]? Pleasure, anger, sadness, fear, love, hate, desire, these are the seven we are capable of without having learned them. *Li Ji*, chapter 9, quoted, *Ibid.*, p.64.

[22] Munro, *The Concept of Man in Early China*, p. 213, citing the *Analects* xiii.4.3.

trustworthiness then the people will follow his example and express their feelings for this virtue as well.

In the *Mencius*, *qing* is defined by the four virtues: *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi*. *Ren*, which Mencius says is the goal for all human beings, involves love for one's kin and love for humanity. If *qing* is partly made up of *ren*, then, it follows that *qing* has an emotional content. Furthermore, the four beginnings of the four virtues are emotions, or at least the beginnings of emotion.

> "As for what is genuinely good [*qing*] in him is concerned, a man is capable of becoming good," said Mencius. "That is what I mean by good....The heart [*xin*] of compassion is possessed by all men alike; likewise the heart of shame, the heart of respect, the heart of right and wrong. The heart of compassion pertains to benevolence [*ren*], the heart of shame to dutifulness [*yi*], the heart of respect to the observance of the rites [*li*], and the heart of right and wrong to wisdom [*zhi*]. Benevolence, dutifulness, observance of the rites, and wisdom are not welded on to me from the outside; they are in me originally."[23]

The four beginnings relate to our innate sensitivity to others. As Wong argues, it makes sense to classify innate sensitivity, such as compassion, as emotion.[24] If the four virtues are based in emotional states, then it seems straightforward to say that *qing* is used, in this passage, as

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[23] D. C. Lau, trans., *Mencius* (London: Penguin Books, 1970), p. 163.

[24] Wong, "Is There a Distinction Between Reason and Emotion in Mencius," p. 31.

a "umbrella" term for emotions. The four virtues are based in human emotions.

However, Mencius also uses *qing* to mean "nature."[25] Benevolence, righteousness, propriety, and wisdom may refer to the "genuine" in us. *Qing* translated as "emotions" does not readily account for qualities like wisdom and righteousness; we do not normally associate them with emotion. The term "nature," on the other hand, can account for all these qualities; those that are easily identifiable as emotions and those that are not. Nevertheless, whatever *qing* refers to here it obviously has strong emotional overtones. If it is "nature," then, we can argue that emotions like compassion and love are part of our nature. No matter how *qing* is translated, emotions, such as love and compassion are part of it in the *Mencius*.

Qing, in the *Zhuangzi*, has two basic meanings: "nature" and "emotions." *Qing* seems to refer to "nature" when it is used in a positive way. In passages where one is exhorted to regain one's original *qing* it means "nature." The *Zhuangzi* says:

> The Way was pulled apart for the sake of goodness; Virtue was imperiled for the sake of conduct. After this, inborn nature [*xing*] was abandoned and minds were set free to roam, mind joining with mind in understanding; there was knowledge, but it could

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[25] "That things are unequal is their nature (*qing*)." See Lau, *Mencius*, p. 104.

> not bring stability to the world. After this, "culture" was added on, and "breadth" was piled on top. "Culture" destroyed the substantial, "breadth" drowned the mind, and after this the people began to be confused and disordered. They had no way to revert to the true form of their inborn nature [*qing*] or return once more to the Beginning.[26]

Qing here refers to what one was born with, it is the optimum state that has been lost due to things like understanding and culture. This type of phrase--the true form of their inborn nature--occurs throughout the *Zhuangzi* and it corresponds to passages that talk about *xing*. Even in this passage *xing* is said to be lost with the advent of goodness and conduct. The inborn nature is the ideal state for human beings. It is only in uncarved simplicity, according to Zhuangzi, that people attain their true nature.[27] When *qing* is referred to in a positive manner in the *Zhuangzi*, as a state that has been lost due to negative influences or as a state one should regain, then, it has the meaning of *xing*, nature.

In a few passages in the Inner Chapters, *qing* is spoken of in a negative manner and it is in these passages that it seems to refer to "emotion." This can be seen in a discussion between Huizi and Zhuangzi.

> Hui Tzu [Huizi] said to Chuang Tzu [Zhuangzi], "Can a man really be without feelings [*qing*] ?"
> Chuang Tzu: "Yes."
> Hui Tzu: "But a man who has no feelings [*qing*]--how

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[26] Watson, The Complete Works of *Chuang Tzu*, pp. 172-3.

[27] *Ibid.*, p. 105.

> can you call him a man?"
> Chuang Tzu: "The Way gave him a face; Heaven gave him a form--why can't you call him a man?"
> Hui Tzu: "But if you've already called him a man, how can he be without feelings [*qing*].
> Chuang Tzu: "That's not what I mean by feelings. When I talk about having no feeling [*qing*], I mean that a man doesn't allow likes or dislikes to get in and do him harm. He just lets things be the way they are and doesn't try to help life along."
> Hui Tzu: "If he doesn't try to help life along, then how will he keep himself alive?"
> Chuang Tzu: "The Way gave him a face; Heaven gave him a form. He doesn't let likes or dislikes get in and do him harm. You, now--you treat your spirit like an outsider. You wear out your energy, leaning on a tree and moaning, slumping at your desk and dozing--Heaven picked out a body for you and you use it to gibber about "hard" and "white."[28]

Zhuangzi claims that feelings are not necessary to human beings. This is not inconsistent with other passages that discuss emotions such as happiness and sadness. Emotions, in Zhuangzi's thought, are portrayed as important elements in the destruction of the original mind and nature of human beings. He claims they are like weeds and rushes choking what is useful and fitting for us.[29] *Qing* here does not mean "nature" or "essence" as Graham argues because Zhuangzi, in this passage, says human beings have a form, a face, as well as a spirit; all these things make up human beings. Zhuangzi, in this passage, is claiming that *qing* is not necessary to human beings; it, therefore, cannot mean "nature" because it is our

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[28] *Ibid.*, pp. 75-76.

[29] *Ibid.*, pp. 286-287.

nature or essence that Zhuangzi is continually exhorting us to attain or regain.

Interestingly, *qing* is often used in passages where emotions are the topic of discussion, even in passages where *qing* refers to "what something is really like." A passage in the *Zhuangzi* where Watson and Graham translate *qing* as "identity," refers to several emotions that are part of the true person.

> Joy, anger, grief, delight, worry, regret, fickleness, inflexibility, modesty, wilfulness, candour, insolence--music from empty holes, mushrooms springing up in dampness, day and night replacing each other before us, and no one knows where they sprout from. Let it be! Let it be! [It is enough that] morning and evening we have them, and they are a means by which we live. Without them we would not exist; without us they would have nothing to take hold of. This comes close to the matter. But I do not know what makes them the way they are. It would seem as though they have some True Master, and yet I find no trace of him. He can act--that is certain. Yet I cannot see his form. He has identity [*qing*] but no form.[30]

Grief, anger, and music are aspects that make things what they are and they are necessary to human beings. What is necessary to the true man is *qing*. *Qing*, then, in this passage, depicts those characteristics necessary for life and these characteristics include joy, anger, grief, delight, worry, and

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[30] *Ibid.*, p.37-38. The quotes from the Zhuangzi that discuss the translations of the character *qing* are taken from the "Inner Chapters." This section of the *Zhuangzi* is considered by many scholars to have been written during the Warring States period. The remaining text is thought to be later additions.

regret. Whether or not *qing* is translated as identity or emotion, feelings, like anger, make up its definition.[31]

As we have seen, Graham defines *qing* as "essence" in the *Zhuangzi*, and as "genuine" in the *Xunzi*. He does not explain why these particular words are appropriate translations or even how he arrived at these conclusions. Watson and Munro unfortunately do the same. Graham and the others merely provide a passage and replace "essence" for the character *qing*. He does say that this is the obvious meaning since *qing* is contrasted with "shape" and "guise," in *Zhuangzi*, and with "refined," in *Xunzi*. Why "emotion" cannot be contrasted with "shape" or "refined" is not obvious. This position leads to some odd translations: from the *Xunzi*, Graham translates the following,

> Our nature's [*xing*] liking and disliking, pleasure and anger, sadness and joy, is called "the genuine in us" [*qing*].[32]

Whatever translation is supplied for *qing* it is obviously a general term for emotions because words like pleasure, anger,

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[31] The *Zhuangzi*, on the whole, has a negative attitude toward emotions. This will become evident later when I discuss his attitude toward emotions and the role they play in the individual. This passage, which suggests emotions are part of the make-up of the true man, conflicts with Zhuangzi's thought regarding emotion. The point here was to illustrate the relationship between the character *qing* and emotions like joy and anger.

[32] Graham, "The Mencian Theory of Human Nature" p.65, citing the *Xunzi*, chapter 24.

sadness and joy are grouped together under it. Whether *qing* refers to "the genuine" or the "emotions," words like pleasure and anger are necessary components of it, and are regarded as innate qualities in human beings. Graham seems to be ignoring the importance of emotions in this passage. Why he translates *qing* as "the genuine in us" is not evident; that it is essential to human beings is already obvious since these characteristics are said to be part of our inborn nature. Thus, his translation of *qing* in this passage as "the genuine in us" is redundant. If we must translate *qing* would not "emotion" be a better translation since it is a general term that encompasses different feelings like anger and love?

Furthermore, when Xunzi refers to human nature he often contrasts the refined nature of the sage to one's genuine or emotional nature, yet, what is refined in the sage is the expression of joy, anger, liking, and disliking. In actuality, then, what distinguishes the nature of the sage from the nature of the uncultured individual is the way in which emotions are expressed. Does it not follow then, that when Xunzi is talking about the original, unrefined nature of human beings he is talking about their emotional nature?

Qing in Warring States texts is often used as a general term for emotion. This is most clearly seen in the *Xunzi* and the *Li Ji* which were written toward the end of the Warring States period and beyond. In these texts words like hatred,

joy, delight, anger, and fear were termed *qing*. In the *Mencius* and the *Zhuangzi*, which were written earlier, *qing* was not as neatly defined. In the *Mencius*, for example, emotions like compassion and benevolence were defined under *qing*, but so were other things like righteousness and wisdom. In the *Zhuangzi*, *qing* is used in passages where emotions and emotional states are discussed. As well, in passages where *qing* is spoken of in a negative way, *qing* refers to emotions like happiness because *qing*, like these feelings, is seen as not necessary to human beings. *Qing*, then, in pre-Han texts, quite often refers to emotions, but it has yet to become clearly defined.

The use of the term *qing* in Warring States literature, can tell the reader a great deal about how emotions were perceived and understood in the *Zhuangzi* as well as in the Confucian texts the *Mencius* and *Xunzi*.

Chapter Three: What an Emotion is in Classical Chinese Thought

While there is very little discussion about emotion by commentators on Chinese philosophy, there has been some discussion in the West. Western philosophers have debated the characteristics of emotions and what is necessary for an emotion. Stephen Leighton argues that emotions always consist of judgements and feelings. Other characteristics that may be present, but are not essential, are desire and behaviour.[33] Robert Solomon says that judgements are the foundation of emotion and all other characteristics, such as desire and physical responses, are tied to them.[34] Jenefer Robinson, on the other hand, maintains that emotions are composed of judgements that are caused by desire.[35] Common to all the works that discuss the nature of emotion are four basic features: judgement, action, desire and physiological responses.

If we examine passages on emotions in Warring States texts it becomes apparent that these four basic features are also considered to be components of emotion in classical Chinese philosophy. There is a definite relationship between

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[33] Stephen Leighton, "Modern Theories of Emotion," *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 2.3 (1988), p. 221.

[34] Robert C. Solomon. "On Emotions as Judgments," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 25 (1988), p. 184.

[35] Jenefer Robinson, "Emotion, Judgment, and Desire," *Journal of Philosophy* 80 (1983), p. 737.

emotion and judgement. A judgement often includes evaluations, beliefs, thought, suppositions and so forth. Judgement seems to be related to emotion in the *Zhuangzi*. Zhuangzi, for example, asks:

> How do I know that in hating death I am not like a man who, having left home in his youth, and not forgotten the way back.[36]

Zhuangzi is questioning the logic of humanity's response to death. Why do we hate it? Our judgement of death as something dangerous and detrimental to our well being makes us hate it. We learn to hate death because we learn to see it as the end of the self; we fail to realize, according to Zhuangzi, that we have no evidence to support this assumption. This evaluation of death seems essential for the emotion of hate.

Stephen Leighton says "judgements seem necessary to account for the object directness of emotion."[37] Obviously, in order for hate to exist we must believe that death will mean the end of our selves. If we did not have these thoughts about death we would neither fear nor hate it. That a judgement about something is necessary in order for there to be an emotion toward it can be seen in the following passage from the *Zhuangzi*,

Confucius said, "I once went on a mission to Ch'u,

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[36] Watson, *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu*, p. 47.

[37] Stephen R. Leighton, "Modern Theories of Emotion," p. 208.

> and as I was going along, I saw some little pigs nursing at the body of their dead mother. After a while, they gave a start and all ran away and left her; she was not the same as she had been before. In loving their mother, they loved not her body but the thing that moved her body. When a man has been killed in battle and people come to bury him, he has no use for medals. When a man has his feet amputated, he doesn't care much about shoes. For both, the thing that is basic no longer exists."[38]

The little pigs loved their living mother. They loved her because they judged her care-giving to be good and beneficial to their well-being. Their love was based on what was basic to her. In other words, the little pigs valued whatever it was that allowed their mother to nurse them. In order for their love to exist what caused this love must also exist. The mother's life force was the object to which the piglets' love was directed: it is because they believed this to be good that they loved her.

Emotions also involve evaluations in the *Mencius*. During his visit with King Xuan of Qi, Mencius tries to show King Xuan that he can bring peace to the people because he has a heart of compassion. Mencius says he heard the following of the king:

> The King was sitting in the upper part of the hall and someone lead an ox to the lower part. The King noticed this and said, "Where is the ox going?" "The blood of the ox is to be used for consecrating a new bell." "Spare it. I cannot bear to see it shrinking with fear, like an innocent man going to

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[38] Watson, *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu*, p. 73.

the place of execution."[39]

Mencius objective here is to point out to the king that his compassion for the ox's suffering led to his subsequent action of cancelling its execution. The king had compassion for the ox because he perceived it to be "shrinking with fear." If the king did not make this judgement about the ox it would be illogical for him to have compassion.

Judgements, then, in the *Mencius* and *Zhuangzi*, are necessary for responding to something with emotion. Judgements also help account for different emotions such as love and hate. We love what we judge to be good or beneficial, but hate what we believe to be unwholesome or terrifying. As Leighton says: "[W]hy a certain state is described as fear rather than excitement, anger or shame is plausibly explained by differences in the evaluations constitutive of those emotions."[40]

Judgements are not characteristic of emotions in Xunzi's philosophy. He claims that emotions are both instinctive and spontaneous: "[I]t is a man's emotional nature to love profit and desire gain."[41] If emotions are innate, then, they cannot be a response to a judgement that something is desirable or

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[39] Lau, *Mencius*, pp. 54-55.

[40] Leighton, "Modern Theories of Emotion," p. 207.

[41] Watson, *Hsun Tzu*, p. 161.

worthy of seeking. The idea that emotions are products of our nature can be seen in the following passage from the *Xunzi*.

> Phenomena such as the eye's fondness for beautiful forms, the ear's fondness for beautiful sounds, the mouth's fondness for delicious flavors, the mind's fondness for profit, or the body's fondness for pleasure and ease--these are all products of the emotional nature of man.[42]

Human beings are born with a fondness for what is pleasing and favourable. Feelings, like pleasure, are naturally expressed, we do not need to judge something as good and worthy of our attention for them to arise. Where Zhuangzi and Mencius speak of judgements as stimuli for emotion, Xunzi talks about emotions as inherent qualities that spontaneously occur.

Is Xunzi's position plausible? For example, when do emotions spontaneously arise? Why does anger occur in one instance and grief in another? If judgement is unnecessary to the presence of emotion how can we account for different emotions such as joy, anger, and fear? If Xunzi argues that emotions are inherent responses, then, the object of emotions self-satisfaction must also be innate. In other words, if feelings, like fondness, are innate, then, knowledge of what is deserving of fondness must also be innate. We must first understand that something is beautiful before a fondness for it can exist. Are we born making these kind of judgements? Are judgements, for Xunzi, instinctive/inherent judgements? Xunzi

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[42] *Ibid.*, pp. 160.

may claim that emotions are instinctive and inherent responses but can he realistically deny that judgement is necessary for emotion?

For others, judgements and emotion are tied to action. King Xuan's compassion for the ox's suffering, for example, led him to rescind the ox's execution. It is the heart behind this kind of action, according to Mencius, that allows one to become a true king.[43] Emotions, in Mencius, are often expressed in moral actions. This can be seen in the story of the child who was about to fall into the well.

> Suppose a man were, all of a sudden, to see a young child on the verge of falling into a well. He would certainly be moved to compassion, not because he wanted to get in the good graces of the parents, nor because he wished to win the praise of his fellow villagers or friends, nor yet because he disliked the cry of the child.[44]

The man, having judged the peril of the child, was moved to compassion: compassion refers to both the emotion and the accompanying action of rescuing the child. There would be no way the parents, villagers, or friends would recognize the compassion expressed by the man unless it was expressed by his ensuing actions.[45] As Roberts argues, "The expressions of

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[43] Lau, *Mencius*, p. 55.

[44] *Ibid.*, p.82.

[45] Emotions, such as compassion, according to Wong, identify salient features of situations as reasons to act. The suffering of child, in this case, is the object of

emotion are not independent of emotion but built into the system of judgements that constitute the emotion...the context of an emotion is not just a cognitive context, but an active context in which we are engaged in the world we care about."[46]

In the *Zhuangzi*, emotions are often described as a source action, particularly ego-action. This can be seen in a conversation between Lao Laizi and Confucius. Lao Laizi says:

> You cannot bear to watch the sufferings of one age, and so you go and make trouble for ten thousand ages to come....You take pride in practising charity and making people happy--the shame of it will follow you all of your days! These are the actions, the "progress" of mediocre men...[47]

Lao Laizi maintains that, because Confucius feels sorry for one age, he will cause trouble for thousands of ages. Confucius' judgement about people's suffering causes his feelings of anguish and compassion that, in turn, result in his works of charity. His judgement regarding the suffering of others has dictated the necessity of relieving not only his anguish, but also the pain of others. In other words, Confucius' emotion, directed at others, is expressed in his acts of charity. Confucius' judgement of others' suffering not only results in this specific emotion and ensuing action, it

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compassion. Perceiving the suffering of the child is seen as a reason to act in a helping way. Wong, "Is There a Distinction Between Reason and Emotion in Mencius?" p. 32.

[46] Solomon, "On Emotions as Judgements," p. 188.

[47] Watson, *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu*, p. 297.

also serves to augment his pride and self-worth that will eventually generate confusion. Emotions do not only result in full blown, direct expressions such as hitting a wall when you are angry, they may also cause less observable results such as increasing one's sense of self worth.

Emotions are described as having a behavioral context in Xunzi's thought as well. He claims emotions result in irrational behaviour such as wrangling and strife:

> ...any man who follows his nature and indulges his emotions will inevitably become involved in wrangling and strife, will violate the forms and rules of society, and will end as a criminal.[48]

Emotions manifest themselves in seemingly pointless actions, actions that can only have negative effects on society. Actions that are deemed virtuous and principled lie outside the domain of emotions. Xunzi says:

> ...for a son to relieve his father of work or a younger brother to relieve his elder brother--acts such as these are contrary to man's nature and run counter to his emotions. And yet they represent the way of filial piety and the proper forms enjoined by ritual principles.[49]

The filial action of a son helping his father is an action that runs counter to emotions. Is Xunzi claiming that a moral person is not subject to emotions? No, according to Xunzi, emotions that are not regulated result in irrational action;

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[48] Watson, *Hsun Tzu*, p. 157.

[49] *Ibid.*, p. 160.

emotions that are guided and shown proper expression result in principled, directed action. Xunzi says:

> Music is joy, an emotion which man cannot help but feel at times. Since man cannot help feeling joy, his joy must find an outlet in voice and an expression in movement....Man must have his joy, and joy must have its expression, but if that expression is not guided by the principles of the Way, then it will inevitably become disordered.[50]

The joy that springs from music, like all emotion, has no recourse but to be expressed in action, in this case singing.

Zhuangzi and other authors from the Warring States period, understand emotion to be systematically connected with action.

Desires are also seen as closely connected to emotion. Desire readily functions as a stimulus for emotion and its corresponding expression. In the *Zhuangzi* the relationship between emotion and desire is depicted in the story of the monkey keeper who changed the feeding patterns of his monkeys.

> When the monkey trainer was handing out acorns, he said, "You get three in the morning and four at night." This made all the monkeys furious. "Well, then," he said, "you get four in the morning and three at night." The monkeys were all delighted. There was no change in the reality behind the words, and yet the monkeys responded with joy and anger.[51]

When the monkeys learned that they would get fewer acorns to eat in the morning, their desire for more led them to act with

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[50] *Ibid.*, p. 112.

[51] Watson, *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu*, p. 41.

anger. Yet, when the monkeys believed their desire for more acorns was fulfilled they responded with joy. The desire for more acorns caused their emotional responses.

Xunzi also speaks of desires and emotions:

> The nature of man is that he is born with a fondness for profit....He is born with feelings of envy and hate, and if he indulges in these, they will lead him to violence and crime.[52]

Our desire for wealth is accompanied by feelings of envy and hate. We envy others for having what we desire. Xunzi argues that, through the rites, both the desires and their accompanying emotions can attain harmony.

> Through rites Heaven and earth join in harmony...men's likes and dislikes are regulated and their joys and hates made appropriate.[53]

Desire is intimately related to emotions: a variation in one's likes and dislikes results in a difference in one's joys and hates. Here, the intensity of our emotions reflects the intensity of our desires. Our emotions, therefore, have systematic connections with our desires.

We can discern the intensity of emotions and desires in others on the basis of observed changes in facial expressions and body language. The attitude of the sage in old times, according to Zhuangzi, could be seen in his manner:

Mild and cheerful, he seemed to be happy;

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[52] *Ibid.*, p. 157.

[53] Watson, *Hsun Tzu*, p. 94.

> reluctant, he could not help doing certain things; annoyed, he let it show in his face; relaxed, he rested in virtue. Tolerant, he seemed to be part of the world; towering alone, he could be checked by nothing; withdrawn, he seemed to prefer to cut himself off; bemused, he forgot what he was going to say.[54]

One could judge when the sage was annoyed because it was revealed in his face. Xunzi, like Zhuangzi, also thinks physiological expressions indicate the kind of emotion present in a person. Xunzi says:

> Smiles and a beaming face, sorrow and a downcast look--these are expressions of the emotions of joy and sorrow which come with auspicious occasions or inauspicious occasions, and they appear naturally in the countenance.[55]

Smiles and a beaming face are expressions of joy, whereas a downcast look reveals the sorrow one is feeling. The idea that emotions can be noticed in others is in the *Mencius* as well.

> Presumably there must have been cases in ancient times of people not burying their parents. When the parents died, they were thrown in the gullies. Then one day the sons passed the place and there lay the bodies, eaten by foxes and sucked by flies. A sweat broke out on their brows, and they could not bear to look. The sweating was not put on for others to see. It was an outward expression of their most inner heart.[56]

The sorrow and guilt the sons felt upon seeing the decaying bodies of their parents was revealed by the sweat that broke

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[54] Watson, *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu*, p. 79.

[55] Watson, *Hsun Tzu*, p. 101.

[56] Lau, *Mencius*, p. 105.

out on their brows. The sweat was an outward expression of their emotions of guilt and sorrow.

Physical expressions and actions indicate the presence of emotion in others. Because they are telltale signs of emotion we can claim they are "empirically necessary"[57] to it. Emotions can be observed in facial expressions or in the actions of others.

Although the *Zhuangzi*, the *Mencius*, and the *Xunzi* do not specifically discuss what an emotion is, by examining various passages we are able to outline features implicit in their concept of emotion. Judgements, actions, desires, and physical mannerisms may be components of emotion. Although each of these features can exist independent of emotion they are, nevertheless, intimately tied to emotion. All four features may be found with a specific emotion or just one or two of these features may be present. Judgements, which consist of suppositions, beliefs, and evaluations, are essential according to Mencius and Zhuangzi because differences in emotions are accounted for by differences in judgements. They are not, however, necessary features of emotion in the *Xunzi*. Emotions, according to Xunzi, are spontaneous. Emotions are often expressed in action in the *Mencius*, the *Xunzi*, and the

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[57] When describing the relationship between emotions and physical changes Stephen Leighton in "Modern Theories of Emotion," uses this expression, p. 216.

Zhuangzi. Compassion for the suffering of others, for example, leads people to act in ways to alleviate the suffering. Desire is often a component of emotion as well. Desire may lead to certain emotions or desire may be present with any corresponding emotion as in the *Xunzi*. Physical responses, like weeping and a sad face, indicate the presence of emotion in people. Judgements, actions, desires, and physical expressions are characteristics that normally define the nature of emotion in Warring states texts.

Zhuangzi's understanding of emotion is not unique. When Zhuangzi, Mencius, and Xunzi discuss emotions they are all working with pre-existing ideas of what an emotion is. Their statements and anecdotes about emotions are full of ideas about contextual judgements, behavioral patterns, desires and physical states. The presence of these characteristics in other texts suggests that Zhuangzi's idea of what is necessary for emotion was common in his day. A general agreement, then, about emotion can be found in most philosophical Warring States texts.

Chapter Four: Emotions in the *Zhuangzi* : A Comparison of Zhuangzi's View of Emotions to Those of Mencius' and Xunzi's

We have seen that Zhuangzi's concept of what constitutes an emotion is not unique, but, it does not necessarily follow that what he has to say about emotions is similar to other Warring States philosophers. There are two questions concerning Zhuangzi's view of emotions that I am concerned with: what does he say about the role emotion plays in the self? and is this view similar to, or distinct from, Mencius' or Xunzi's?

In order to examine Zhuangzi's attitude toward emotion, I will begin by looking at what he has to say about emotions in passages where emotional states are the general topic of discussion. To further investigate his view of emotions, I will consider how emotions relate to his idea of human nature, mind-heart, and the way of the ideal person. Then, we can compare this to what Mencius and Xunzi have to say about emotion.

In Zhuangzi's view, emotions are usually negative. Emotions are qualities that disrupt the natural order of things including the way in which human beings should live. This can be seen in the story where Master Su asked Master Yu, who has fallen ill and become disfigured, whether or not he resented his illness. Master Yu answered:

I received life because the time had come; I will

> lose it because the order of things passes on. Be content with this time and dwell in this order and then neither sorrow nor joy can touch you. In ancient times this was called the "freeing of the bond." There are those who cannot free themselves, because they are bound by things. But nothing can ever win against Heaven--that's the way its always been. What would I have to resent?[58]

Joy and sorrow are not part of the natural order. If people are able to avoid these feelings then they will automatically be relieved. They will be "*xuanjie*," "free of bonds" that bind people to an world where the Way is disrupted. To be influenced by emotions, according to one commentator, is just as painful as to hang somebody upside down.[59] Those who are "*xuanjie*" are free of emotional entanglements, they, like Master Yu, do not lament their plight or fear for their inevitable demise, rather, they live peacefully and harmoniously.

Emotions such as love, expressed in a world without the Dao, according to Zhuangzi, are the products of virtues created by human beings to bring order in the world. The *Zhuangzi* says:

> There is nothing difficult about attracting the people. Love them and they will feel affection for you, benefit them and they will flock to you, praise them and they will do their best, do something they dislike and they will scatter. Love

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[58] *Ibid.*, p. 84.

[59] Wang Fuzhi, *Zhuangzi Jie: Zhuangzi Tung* (The Complete Annotated Notes to the Zhuangzi)(Taibei: Chi Hai Publications, 1984), p. 79.

> and benefit are the products of benevolence and righteousness. There are few who will renounce benevolence and righteousness, but many who will seek to benefit by them. To practice benevolence and righteousness in such a fashion is a best a form of insincerity, at worst a deliberate lending of weapons to the evil and rapacious.[60]

Benevolence and righteousness, in Zhuangzi's view, are human conventions that enable us to appease our greed. Through benevolence people will attain power and position by exhibiting love and benefit, in other words, through them they are able to manipulate others to follow their will. Benevolence and righteousness are not values that strengthen society but are things that are fashioned by human beings and that ultimately destroy society. They are weapons, wrapped in ideals, that meet the needs of selfish and greedy people. As Zhuangzi says: "[W]hen joy is complete, this is called the fulfilment of ambition."[61] Joy is the product of self fulfilment: the completion of our desires. Emotions, such as joy and love, are the concern of a world ruled by ambition and greed.

Emotions hinder us from realizing the unity of the Dao:

> Eminence and wealth, recognition and authority, fame and profit--these six are delusions of the will. Appearances and carriage, complexion and features, temperament and attitude--these six are snares of the heart. Loathing and desire, joy and anger, grief and happiness--these six are

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[60] Watson, *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu*, p.275.

[61] *Ibid.*, p. 174.

> entanglements of virtue. Rejecting and accepting, taking and giving, knowledge and ability--these six are roadblocks of the Way. When these four sixes no longer seethe within the breast,...you will be still; being still you will be enlightened; being enlightened you will be empty; and being empty, you will do nothing, and yet there will be nothing not done.[62]

When we discard feelings of loathing, joy, anger, grief, and happiness we become still and empty like the Dao. Ambition and greed will disappear, and order and harmony will exist as it did before the Way was lost. If emotions like joy and grief impede the Way, it seems straightforward then, for Zhuangzi to argue they are not part of the make-up of human beings.

> He has the form of a man but not the feelings [*qing*] of a man. Since he has the form of a man, he bands together with other men. Since he doesn't have the feelings [*qing*] of a man, right and wrong cannot get at him. Puny and small, he sticks with the rest of men. Massive and great, he perfects his heaven alone.[63]

The sage, who is the natural human being par excellence, has the physical constitution of other human beings, yet he differs from them because he lacks emotion.

Emotions, on a whole, are seen as unnatural, as obstacles of the Way, and as unessential characteristics of the natural person. There are, however, a few passages where emotions are portrayed in a positive light.

> Joy, anger, grief, delight, worry, regret,

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[62] *Ibid.*, p. 259.

[63] *Ibid.*, p. 75.

> fickleness, inflexibility, modesty, wilfulness, candour, insolence....Without them we would not exist; without us they would have nothing to take hold of. This comes close to the matter. But I do not know what makes them the way they are. It would seem as though they have some True Master, and yet I find no trace of him. He can act--that is certain. Yet I cannot see his form. He has identity [*qing*] but no form.[64]

The true man's identity rests in his emotions. He has feelings of joy, anger, grief, and delight. The sage, here, has the feelings of a human being but not the form of one. This passage is a direct contrast to the one above that says the sage has the form of a man but not the feelings of a one. Similarly, there is a passage that has Confucius describing Meng-sun, a man of unique understanding, whose emotions remained a part of him no matter what trial he has to face.

> And when he is changing, how does he know that he hasn't already changed? You and I, now--we are dreaming and haven't waked up yet. But in his case, though something may startle his body, it won't injure his mind; though something may alarm the house [his spirit lives in], his emotions [*qing*] will suffer no death.[65]

Though something may frighten or scare Meng-sun, his emotions will persist. Emotions, in this passage, are portrayed as qualities to be conserved and Meng-sun is praised for his ability to do so. In these two passages, emotions are depicted as characteristics of the ideal person.

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[64] *Ibid.*, pp. 37-38.

[65] Ibid., p. 88.

By examining a few passages in the *Dao De Jing* and the *Liezi* we can see that emotions are usually viewed in a negative manner in Daoist thought. As in the *Zhuangzi*, emotions in the *Dao De Jing* are not a part of the natural world.

> The way never acts yet nothing is left undone.
> Should lords and princes be able to hold fast to it,
> The myriad creatures will be transformed of their own accord.
> After they are transformed, should desire raise its head,
> I shall press it down with the weight of the nameless, uncarved block.
> The nameless uncarved block
> Is but freedom from desire,
> And if I cease to desire and remain still,
> The empire will be at peace of its own accord.[66]

The empire is at rest when people are not influenced by their passions. Passions with their strong feelings and desires belong to a colourful, artificial world, they are not a part of the natural world in which human beings should reside. The natural world, in Laozi's thought, is colourless, without flair or passion. Through the Dao the ten thousand creatures are as they should be: desireless and emotionless.

In the *Liezi* emotions are considered not to be a part of the natural course of life. This can be seen in Liezi's description of the ideal society:

> It is a place which you cannot reach by boat or carriage or on foot, only by a journey of the spirit. In this country there are no teachers and

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[66] D. C. Lau, trans, *Lao Tzu Tao Te Ching*, chapter 37 (London: Penguin Books, 1963), p. 96.

> leaders; all things follow their natural course. The people have no cravings and lusts; all men follow their natural course. They are incapable of delighting in life or hating death, and therefore none of them dies before his time. They do not know how to prefer themselves to others, and so they neither love nor hate....There is nothing at all which they grudge or regret, nothing which they dread or envy. [67]

In this country people are not motivated to satisfy their desires and emotional needs because they follow a natural course. They are not egocentric: they make no distinctions between themselves and others and they are not anxious over their inevitable demise. By following their natures they remain unaffected by love, hate, regret, dread, and envy. When we follow our natural course we are not subject to emotional turmoil. Feelings and desires, according to Liezi, disrupt the harmony we have at birth.

> From his birth to his end, man passes through four great changes: infancy, youth, old age, death. In infancy his energies are concentrated and his inclinations are one--the ultimate of harmony. Other things do not harm him, nothing can add to the virtue in him. In youth, the energies in his blood are in turmoil and overwhelm him, desires and cares rise up and fill him. Others attack him, therefore the virtue wanes in him. When he is old, desires and cares weaken, his body is about to rest. Nothing contends to get ahead of him, and although he has not reached the perfection of infancy, compared with his youth there is a great difference for the better. When he dies, he goes to his rest, rises again to his zenith.[68]

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[67] A. C. Graham, trans., *The Book of Lieh-tzu* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), p. 34.

[68] *Ibid.*, p. 23.

Infancy, youth, old age, and death come from the spontaneous movement of *qi*. When we are born this energy is harmonious, in youth, it is erratic because we are motivated by emotions and desires. Our feelings and their ensuing desires produce intentional actions and because this is contrary to *qi*, our *de*, life force, dwindles away. Emotions excite and agitate what is naturally calm and spontaneous, they, therefore, create chaos within us. Through this confusion we become concerned with things like morality and, as a consequence, we develop principles like benevolence and propriety, which, as Zhuangzi has said, is similar to lending weapons to evil people. Emotions and desires lead us to develop an artificial order because they blind us to the inherent harmony in things.

In Daoist thought emotions are normally seen as unnatural qualities. They are not a part of the natural order nor characteristic of human beings. Emotions, nevertheless, exist; they are a part of everyday expression. What role then, according to Zhuangzi, do they play in our lives? We can begin to answer this question by looking at the relationship between emotions and Zhuangzi's concepts of *xing*, nature, and *xin*, mind-heart and by examining his ideal of the perfected person.

Any discussion of *xing* occurs in the Miscellaneous and Outer Chapters of the *Zhuangzi*. These chapters are considered by most scholars to be later additions to the *Zhuangzi*. The Inner Chapters are thought to be the authentic work of Zhuang

Chou who lived and wrote during the Warring States period. Interestingly, we do not find the character *xing* used in the *Inner Chapters*. This is probably because it was not used at this time or because it was a relatively new character that was being used by some philosophers of that period to refer to the "essence" or the "nature" of a person. Theories concerning the history of *xing* are based on its two components: *xin* and *sheng*. *Xing* is made up of the *xin* radical, which refers to "mind-heart," and the *sheng* radical meaning "to produce," "to give birth," "born with" and "life." The *sheng* part of the character is emphasized by Fu Sinian. He argues that the *xing* one reads in the *Mencius*, the *Xunzi*, and other Warring States texts were written as *sheng* until the Han dynasty when they were changed to *xing*. The *xin* component, he says, has no significance in *xing*.[69] Munro, on the other hand, maintains that the *xin* radical is central to the meaning of *xing* and that the term was being used in the Warring States period. However, Munro, like Fu Sinian, says that *xing* evolved from *sheng* and that, like *sheng,* it was used to mean "life." It refers to the vitality or activity that one has from birth in the form of growth or in response to one's environment. The *xin* radical, he argues, eventually became added to *sheng*

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[69] Fu Sinian, *Xing Ming Gu Xun Pianzheng* (Critical Studies of Classical Interpretations of Nature and Destiny), Vol. 1 (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1947), pp.35-37.

because people were generally interested in the nature of human beings and the mind was considered to be an unique attribute of humanity. *Xing*, according to Munro, refers to the specific regular behaviour unique to a species and the social tendencies brought to the fore by an evaluating mind.[70] Graham takes a middle position. He argues that *sheng* and *xing* were used indifferently in Warring States texts. Nature, in these texts, referred to the natural term of life, therefore, whichever word was used made little difference to the meaning of the text. *Xing*, he says, may have been used during the Warring states period but its usage, in any case, developed only gradually.

Zhuangzi's definition of *xing* found in a terse definition: *Xing zhe sheng zhi zhi ye*, "[T]he inborn nature is the substance of life."[71] Nature is the life or substance of a thing produced by the Dao. The Dao, according to Zhuangzi, is a process that impartially produces all things, including human beings.

> Out of the flow and flux, things were born, and they grew and developed distinctive shapes; these were called forms. These forms and held within them

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[70] The mind becomes associated with social tendencies in Confucian texts such as the *Mencius*. Munro recognizes that this is not the case for Daoist texts like the *Dao De Jing* and the *Zhuangzi*. In fact, for Zhuangzi, the mind is simple and non-evaluating; it simply reflects whatever is put before it. Munro, *The Concept of Man in Early China*, pp. 75-77.

[71] Watson, *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu*, p. 259.

> spirits, each with its own characteristics and limitations, and this was their inborn nature.[72]

Xing, inborn nature, refers to that which is naturally given, it is the characteristics and limitations that are given to a thing at birth. Human nature, in the *Zhuangzi*, is not distinguished from the *xing* of other things. It is defined by what is plain and natural.

> To weave for their clothing, to till for their food--this is the Virtue they share....In this age of Perfect Virtue men live the same as birds and beasts, group themselves side by side with the ten thousand things....Dull and unwitting they have no desire; this is called uncarved simplicity. In uncarved simplicity the people attain their true nature [*xing*].[73]

Just as it is the *xing* of a horse to eat grass and to drink water it is the *xing* of human beings to weave and clothe themselves, and to plough and eat. In the age of perfect virtue, we, like animals, perform functions that are necessary for survival, namely, securing food and shelter. This is the natural course of human beings.

> For in the world there can be a constant naturalness. Where there is a constant naturalness, things are arced not by the use of a curve, straight not by the use of a plumb line,...Then all things in the world, simple, compliant, live and never know how they happen to live; all things, rude and unwitting.[74]

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[72] *Ibid.*, p. 131-132.

[73] *Ibid.*, p.105.

[74] *Ibid.*, pp. 100-101.

When we follow our natural course we are simple, compliant, and unaware. Dull and stupid, we live without knowing how we do so and we remain unaffected by the hustle and bustle we associate with civilised life. Human life in its natural guise is, in Wu Kuang-ming's words, "uncluttered tranquillity."[75]

Xing that is simple and placid is our constant nature. Human nature, nevertheless, is dynamic. Human *xing* involves a set of conditions we are born into, but it is also dynamic in that it can be shaped by surrounding conditions.[76] The changeability of human nature, according to Zhuangzi, is counter productive. Our constant nature, those set of conditions which we were born into, is the human ideal. Adding things to it generates problems: Zhuangzi says:

> People of today, when they come to ordering their bodies and regulating their minds, too often do it in a manner like that which the border guard described. They turn their backs on the heavenly part, deviate from the inborn nature [*xing*], destroy the true form [*qing*], and annihilate the spirit, just to be doing what the crowd is doing. So he who is slipshod with his inborn nature will find the evils of desire and hate affecting his inborn nature [*xing*] like weeds and rushes.[77]

People who try to direct their minds and bodies do not act in accordance with their inborn nature. By acting in this manner

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[75] Wu Kuang-ming, *World Philosopher at Play*, p. 65.

[76]For more information on the concept of the changeability of *xing* see Roger Ames' "The Mencian Concept of *Ren Xing*: Does it mean "Human Nature?"

[77] *Ibid.*, pp. 286-287.

they end up cultivating emotions and desires and destroying their spirits and their bodies. Emotions are external qualities that destroy the inborn nature. They are like weeds and rushes that strangle what is essential.

What is innate in human beings is unadorned. When people become concerned with feelings of benevolence and righteousness they mar their inborn nature. They stress these feelings in order to strengthen the bonds between kin and human beings, yet, they end up generating selfishness in the world:

> He who is fork-fingered with benevolence will tear out the Virtue given him and stifle his inborn nature [*xing*] in order to seize fame and reputation, leading the world on with pipe and drum in the service of an unattainable ideal--am I wrong?[78]

People act in benevolent ways because they see it as a means to seize fame and reputation. Therefore, when we add things, like compassion and love, to *xing* it becomes warped and deranged.

Emotions characterize the person whose *xing* is blighted; they are foreign to one's original nature. In the *Zhuangzi*, then, there are two types of *xing*: constant and adorned. The constant nature is plain and natural and the adorned nature is complicated by things like emotions and virtues. Our original nature becomes adorned when we add external things to it. As

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[78] *Ibid.*, p. 99.

Zhuangzi says:

> Delight and sorrow are there to trap man on either side so that he has no escape. Fearful and trembling, he can reach no completion. His mind is as though trussed and suspended between heaven and earth.[79]

Delight, sorrow, and fear are traps that keep human beings from their constant nature. Emotions confound the simple, uncomplicated nature that we are born with.

The *xin*, mind-heart, is discussed in the Inner Chapters of the *Zhuangzi* in much the same way as *xing* is in the Outer and Miscellaneous Chapters. In fact, in the early use of *xin* in the text, it can "stand in" for *xing*. Zhuangzi speaks of a constant *xin* and an "adorned" *xin*. The constant *xin* and *xing* refer to that which was naturally given to human beings. They are both described as placid and plain. As well, the "adorned" xin, like the "adorned" nature of human beings is made up of things like emotions and desires. That *xin* should have the same meaning as *xing* is not unusual. In early China *xin* and *xing* were closely related and shared many characteristics. Both were made up of emotions, desires, and cognitive thought. The mind-heart was regarded as a unique attribute of human beings. Both Mencius and Xunzi, for example, focused on it in their discussions of human nature. Mencius argues that the four *xin*--compassion, shame, respect, and feelings of right

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[79] *Ibid.*, p. 295.

and wrong-- are innate in human beings and Xunzi claims that human beings are born with emotions and conscious thought. Their concepts of *xing* are either defined by *xin* or are aspects of it.[80]

The constant mind is characteristic of the human being whose nature is the same as it was when she was born: whole and simple.

> If a man follows the mind given to him and makes it his teacher, then who can be without a teacher? Why must you comprehend the process of change and form your mind on that basis before you can become a teacher? But to fail to abide by this mind and still insist upon your rights and wrongs--this is like saying that you set off for Yueh today and got there yesterday. This is to claim what doesn't exist exists.[81]

The mind that we are given at birth is our teacher. When we insist that comprehension, knowledge, and ideas of right and wrong are necessary prerequisites before approaching a teacher we end up creating confusion. The constant mind, like one's inborn nature, is a part of the flux and flow of the Dao; on the other hand, things like viewpoints, which arise from evaluating what is right or wrong, are not a part of it. They are characteristic of the adorned mind. Zhuangzi says that one

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[80] Descriptions of the constant mind and the "adorned" mind of wayward people continue throughout the *Zhuangzi*. In the Outer and Miscellaneous Chapters, there are passages that refer to the both the constant mind and the constant nature, they are, nevertheless, roughly synonymous.

[81] *Ibid.*, pp. 38-39.

who retains the original mind,

> ...doesn't know what his ears and eyes should approve--he lets his mind play in the harmony of virtue. As for things, he sees them as one and does not see their loss. He regards the loss of a foot as a lump of earth thrown away.[82]

When we hold to the beginning we do not evaluate or make distinctions between things. When we see all things as one, a foot is seen as having no more value than a clump of earth. The constant mind is uncomplicated and without prejudice. Zhuangzi says, "[P]roof that a man is holding fast to the beginning lies in his fearlessness."[83] We can distinguish those who follow the original mind from those who do not by their lack of emotion. If we do not judge something as dangerous or harmful we will be fearless. Emotions come from our evaluations and the distinctions we make among things. Hence, they are not part of the constant mind-heart.

People's minds can be altered from their original states when things like emotions influence them. The *Zhuangzi* tells us not meddle with the mind:

> Lao Tan said, "Be careful--don't meddle with men's minds [*xin*]! Men's minds [*xin*] can be forced down or boosted up, but this drowning and upping imprisons and brings death to the mind [*xin*]. Gentle and shy the mind [*xin*] can be hard and strong; it can chisel and cut away, carve and

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[82] *Ibid.*, p. 69.

[83] *Ibid.*, p. 69.

> polish....This indeed is the mind [*xin*] of man.[84]

When we interfere with the mind its becomes divided and changed from its original, complete state. The "adorned" mind is the constant mind altered. It becomes adorned when it is moulded by things such as benevolence, righteousness, and fear. "In ancient times the Yellow Emperor first used benevolence and righteousness to meddle with the minds of men."[85] Benevolent and righteous behaviour destroys the constant mind. These types of social behaviour are preceded by an evaluation of situation that dictates the proper moral action necessary to it. The evaluation plus the directed moral action involved in both benevolence and righteousness only serves to confound the mind. When the mind becomes divided and confused it becomes irrational and beset with fears.

> In sleep, men's spirits go visiting; in waking hours, their bodies hustle. With everything they meet they become entangled. Day after day they use their minds [*xin*] in strife, sometimes grandiose, sometimes sly, sometimes petty. Their little fears are mean and trembly; their great fears are stunned and overwhelming.[86]

People who are entangled in the hustle of society are bound by fears both mean and overwhelming. Because of their fears they learn how to use their minds in sly and petty ways; in ways

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[84] *Ibid.*, p. 116.

[85] *Ibid.*, p. 116.

[86] *Ibid.*, p. 37.

that manipulate a situation for their self gratification.

Human beings can come back to their original *xing* and *xin* by mind-fasting. By getting rid of emotion we can return to the beginning, or as the *Zhuangzi* says, "to serve your own mind so that sadness and joy cannot sway it."[87] When we no longer allow our minds to be affected by emotions, along with the evaluations and actions involved with them, can we return to our original selves.

> Just go along with things and let your mind move freely. Resign yourself to what cannot be avoided and nourish what is within you--this is best. What more do you have to do to fulfil your mission? Nothing is as good as following orders (obeying fate)--that's how difficult it is.[88]

People can get rid of their emotions by not forcing or changing the way things are. Zhuangzi's idea is to allow the mind to move freely and spontaneously. The way to achieve that is simply to follow fate by living in accordance with those characteristics that we were given at birth. Since emotions are not among the qualities that are inherent in us, we can discard them by avoiding convention and following what is natural.

Emotions, in the *Zhuangzi*, are not characteristic of the mind-heart, rather, they are characteristic of an evaluative

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[87] *Ibid.*, p. 60.

[88] *Ibid.*, p. 61.

mind.[89] The evaluative mind makes judgements and decides corresponding actions. This kind of mind compels us to live unnaturally because it can not help but force order, structure, and values on a mind-heart that should be uncomplicated. Zhuangzi's goal, and that of philosophical Daoism in general, is to get people to realize that the evaluative mind is contrary to the Dao, that it forces people to live in conditions foreign to their natures which, in turn, causes them needless pain and suffering. As human beings we cannot hope to find harmony and peace until we regain the mind we were born with. Zhuangzi exhorts us to discard this "evaluative" mind and regain our constant one by discarding all of our emotions. If the mind remains unswayed by feelings, like sadness and joy, then people will no longer feel grief at the death of a loved one, they will be not be ashamed of things like poverty, and they will not fear death. In other words, they will be free from the shackles of everyday life.

The sage, in the *Zhuangzi*, is the perfected person who is unaffected by emotions. Being free of emotion she is objective and can, therefore, treat all things equally and without favour. What does Zhuangzi say about the sage?

> The True Man of ancient times did not rebel against want, did not grow proud in plenty, and did not

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[89] Donald Munro in *The Concept of Man in Early China* uses the phrase "evaluative mind" in his description of human nature in the *Mencius* and the *Xunzi*.

> plan his affairs. A man like this could commit an error and not regret it, could meet with success and not make a show. A man like this could climb the high places and not be frightened, could enter water and not get wet, could enter fire and not get burned....The True Man breathes with his heels; the mass of men breathe with their throats. Crushed and bound down, they grasp out their words as though they were retching. Deep in their passions and desires, they are shallow in the workings of Heaven.
>
> The True Man Of ancient times knew nothing of loving life, knew nothing of hating death.[90]

The sage does not get angry and rebel when she is hungry, she is not affected by pride, and she knows nothing of loving life or hating death. She, unlike ordinary people who are consumed by their desires and passions, is capable of amazing feats: she can enter the water and not get wet and he can enter a fire without getting hurt. The sage seems able to accomplish the most exceptional act because she is untouched by emotion. It is emotion that separates the sage and her activities from the ordinary person. The sage, in the *Zhuangzi*, is aloof, she is not engaged in the world, therefore, she is not affected by the passions of everyday life. Such a person, the *Zhuangzi* says:

> ...will leave the gold hidden in the mountains, the pearls hidden in the depths. He will see no profit in money and goods, no enticement in eminence and wealth, no joy in long life, no grief in early death, no honor in affluence, no shame in poverty....His glory is enlightenment, [for he knows that] the ten thousand things belong to one storehouse, that life and death share the same

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[90] Watson, *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu*, pp. 77-78.

body.[91]

The sage is not guided by her love of wealth and its ensuing prominence, she cares little for a long healthy life, and death and shame have no meaning for her.

Having no emotions, the sage is the embodiment of the constant nature and the constant mind, thus the sage is one with the Dao. Chang Ji asks Confucius if the sage really does have some way of bringing the mind to completion and in what unique way the sage uses her mind. Confucius says,

> Life and death are great affairs, and yet they are no change to him. Though heaven and earth flop over and fall down, it is no loss to him. He sees clearly into what has no falsehood and does not shift with things. He takes it as fate that things should change, and he holds fast to the source.[92]

The sage is able to bring her mind to completion because she neither loves life or hates death, and she would care little if heaven and earth came to an end. Things cannot get in and affect her because she realizes that all things come and go because they are a part of the continuous flux and flow of the mother of all things, the Dao. The sage, therefore, is able to make her mind like a mirror.

> The Perfect Man uses his mind like a mirror--going after nothing, welcoming nothing, responding but not storing. Therefore he can win out over things

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[91] *Ibid.*, pp. 127-128.

[92] *Ibid.*, p. 69.

and not hurt himself.[93]

The perfect person uses her mind to respond objectively to any situation. She is unaffected by her environment--its rules, institutions, values, family and kin--because she neither seeks nor welcomes them. She lives in society but she does not participate in it.[94] The mirror symbol, according to Graham, illustrates that the mind is not "subject to the agitations that obscure the common man's clarity of vision."[95] Joy, anger, hatred, regret, and so on cloud our vision because they are based on the content of individual beliefs and evaluations. Emotions make distinctions between things, they make us view life as worthy of living because we believe it to be good and to see death as deserving of our hate because we perceive as the end of the self. Yet life and death, according to Zhuangzi, are the same. The mind that is without emotion is characteristic of the mirror because "[A] mirror accepts whatever is put before it without interpretation, judgement, or desire...A mirror applies no interpretations; it simply

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[93] *Ibid.*, p. 97.

[94] The mirror symbol is discussed by at length by Lee Yearly in his "The Perfected Person in the Radical Zhuangzi and by A. C. Graham in his "Taoist Spontaneity and the Dichotomy of 'Is' and 'Ought.'" Both of these articles can be found in *Experimental Essays on Chuang-tzu*, Victor H. Mair, ed. (Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press, 1983).

[95] Graham, "The Taoist Spontaneity and the Dichotomy of 'Is' and 'Ought.'" p. 10.

reflects any new image put before it."[96] The image of the mirror symbolizes the constant mind of the natural human being who is unaffected by emotion.

The natural human being, in the *Zhuangzi*, is without emotion. This is evident in Zhuangzi's description of the *xing* and *xin* and in his description of the sage. Both the *xing* and *xin* are depicted as plain and uncomplicated by things such as values, virtues and emotions. In fact, emotions like joy and anger are shown to be characteristic of ordinary people who have altered their natures by allowing themselves to be subjected to artificiality. These people are controlled by their feelings of love and anger, and they are doomed to the pain and suffering that follow them. The sage, on the other hand, is one who is free and spontaneous. By discarding emotions she is able to regain her nature and return to the beginning where there is unity and harmony in all things.

Zhuangzi's view of emotions is somewhat unusual and one has to ask whether or not his views were common during the Warring States period. By comparing his view of emotions to that of Mencius and Xunzi we can determine if his view of emotions is unique.

Zhuangzi's view of emotions differs considerably from that of Mencius. Emotions, in *Mencius*, are seen in a much more

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[96] Lee Yearly, "The Perfected Person in Radical *Chuang-tzu*." p. 133.

favourable light. Where Zhuangzi talks about *ren*, benevolence, as something that tears apart one original nature, Mencius defines humanity in respect to it. "Benevolence," he says, "means 'man.' When these two are cojoined, the result is 'the Way'."[97] To be human is to be generous, kind and loving. The way or method to create a harmonious society is for human beings to become *ren*. In Mencius, a person who has no compassion is alienated from society. Mencius says:

> A man who mutilates benevolence is a mutilator, while one who cripples rightness is a crippler. He who is both a mutilator and a crippler is an "outcast."[98]

In Zhuangzi, it is the person who practices benevolence that is the mutilator because it is this person who destroys that which is naturally given. In Mencius' thought, Zhuangzi would be seen as a mutilator and an outcast because of his disparaging remarks about *ren*.

In the *Mencius*, emotions can be constructive. While emotions like *ren* create good relations among people, other emotions, such as shame, encourage people to achieve moral ideals. Mencius says:

> Great is the use of shame to man. He who indulges in craftiness has no use for shame. If a man is not ashamed of being inferior to other men, how will he

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[97] Lau, *Mencius*, p. 197.

[98] *Ibid.*, p. 68.

ever become their equal?[99]

Shame motivates people to reach for higher standards. Feelings of benevolence, compassion, and shame are seen by Mencius as positive qualities in human beings.

Emotions, in the *Mencius*, are thought to be innate in human beings. People's innate sensitivity to others can be seen in the story of the child who almost fell into the well.[100] Anyone, according to Mencius, would react almost instantly to save the child on the verge of falling in the well not because this would win him the praise of others but because he is aware of the suffering of the child. In order to save the child a person would not have sufficient time to think of how saving the child would benefit him. It is the possibility of the child's death that leads one to react instantly to save the child. Our innate sensitivity for others shows itself in situations where another's well being is at stake. People have mind-hearts sensitive to others because they are born with the four *xin*.

> The heart of compassion is possessed by all men alike; likewise the heart of shame, the heart of respect, and the heart of right and wrong. The heart of compassion pertains to benevolence, the

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[99] *Ibid.*, p.183.

[100] *Ibid.*, p. 82. "Suppose a man were all of a sudden, to see a young child on the verge of falling into a well. He would certainly be moved to compassion...." This passage and the connection of emotion and morality have been discussed on pp. 30-31.

> heart of shame to dutifulness, the heart of respect to the observance of the rites, and the heart of right and wrong to wisdom. Benevolence, dutifulness, observance of the rites, and wisdom are not welded on me from the outside; they are in me originally.[101]

Human beings are sensitive to others because they are born with feelings of compassion, shame, respect, and with feelings of right and wrong. These innate sensitivities are the beginnings of emotional and moral states. Compassion, feelings of right and wrong and so on are the initial defining conditions that human beings are born with. Emotions, or at least the beginnings of emotions, in Mencius, are innate, they are not imposed externally on human beings over a lifetime as they are in the *Zhuangzi*.

Human beings are capable of becoming good because we are born with these innate sensitivities that with nourishment become the four virtues: benevolence, dutifulness, observance of rites, and wisdom. These virtues enhance both our behavioral and evaluative tendencies. *Ren* and *li*, as Munro argues, lead to behavioral constants unique to human beings and *yi* and *zhi* denote evaluative activity. Compassion becomes *jen*, or compassionate activity, respect emerges as *li* in practice, that is, good form in conduct, the heart of shame manifests itself as *yi*, our innate moral sense that determines

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[101] *Ibid.*, p. 163.

what is or is not proper, and *zhi* becomes wisdom.[102] These evaluative tendencies guide our social behaviour. In Munro's words: "[T]he evaluating mind determines what response is right for a particular situation, and when the behaviour actually occurs, human heartedness and good form are realized.[103] If people live in accordance with the four virtues, then, they become moral, social beings. We are born with the potential to be good, therefore, it is our nature to be good.[104]

If we compare Mencius' thought here regarding emotions

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[102] Munro, *The Concept of Man in Early China*, pp. 74-75. Wong, similarly, in his "Is there a Distinction Between Emotion and Reason in Mencius" talks about the four *xin* in terms of evaluative and behavioral tendencies.

[103] *Ibid*, p. 76.

[104] The idea that nourishing one's emotions enables one to become a moral person can be seen in the story of King Xuan. Mencius shows the king that his compassion for the ox about to die can be extended to his rule of the people. Mencius says to King Xuan, "Your bounty is sufficient to reach the animals, yet the benefits of your government fail to reach the people. That a feather is not lifted is because one fails to make the effort; that a cartload of firewood is not seen is because one fails to use one's eyes. Similarly, that peace is not brought to the people is because you fail to practice kindness...all you have to do is take this very heart here and apply it to what is over there." Just as the king's compassion for the ox's suffering lead him to cancel its execution, the king can nourish this trait so that his actions toward his people will be similarly benevolent. The king can become *jen* by extending his heart of compassion for the ox to "what is over there." Lau, pp. 56-57. The conversation between King Xuan and Mencius can be seen in Lau, pp. 54-59. A more complete discussion of this idea can be found in Wong's "Is There a Distinction Between Emotion and Reason in Mencius?"

and human nature to that of Zhuangzi's, we can see that their views on emotions are largely dependant upon their views of what is innate. In the *Mencius*, emotions in part make up what is inborn as well as the nature of the moral, compassionate person. Feelings are viewed as a potential that, given development, will lead to the benevolent, ethical human being. For Zhuangzi, one's constant nature is less colourful, it is plain, uncomplicated and suited to mere survival. The adorned nature is one that is unduly affected by emotions and morality. Zhuangzi does not view the changeability of nature as actualizing some given potential. The dynamic property of *xing* is dubious, in Zhuangzi, because it means that one's original nature, which is the optimal state for human beings, will become flawed. It becomes flawed when we are influenced by emotions. The way Zhuangzi sees it "the rules of benevolence and righteousness and the paths of right and wrong are all hopelessly snarled and jumbled."[105]

Xunzi, in contrast to his predecessor Mencius, has a negative attitude toward emotions. Emotions, he says, are ugly and unpleasant. What are human emotions like? The *Xunzi* says:

> Man's emotions are very unlovely things indeed! What need is there to ask any further? Once a man acquires a wife and children, he no longer treats his parents as a filial son should. Once he succeeds in satisfying his cravings and desires, he neglects his duty to his friends. Once he has won a

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[105] Watson, *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu*, p. 46.

> high position and a good stipend, he ceases to serve his sovereign with a loyal heart. Man's emotions, man's emotions--they are very unlovely things indeed![106]

Emotions run counter to things like filial piety, duty and loyalty. Virtues, like following the rites and filial piety, are beneficial and necessary to a well ordered society, as in the *Mencius*. Emotions, nevertheless, do not guide human beings to perform these acts. Moral actions are contrary to our emotions and our nature. Emotions lead people to act in self destructive ways. Xunzi says:

> The nature of man is such that he is born with a fondness for profit....He is born with feelings of envy and hate, and if he indulges in these, they will lead him into violence and crime, all sense of loyalty and good faith will disappear. Man is born with the desires of the eyes and ears, with a fondness for beautiful sights and sounds. If he indulges in these, they will lead him into license and wantonness, and all ritual principles and correct forms will be lost. Hence, any man who follows his nature and indulges in his emotions will inevitably become involved in wrangling and strife, will violate the forms and rules of society, and will end as a criminal.[107]

Human beings, according to Xunzi, are born with feelings and desires. If we indulge in them they will lead us to commit acts of violence and crime and to violate the forms and rules of society. Where emotions cause disarray, rules and forms make for a structured, harmonious society. This differs

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[106] Watson, *Hsun Tzu*, p. 168.

[107] *Ibid.*, p. 157.

greatly from the *Zhuangzi* where emotions are identified with the forms and rules of society and the destruction of the natural order in which peace and harmony already exist.[108]

Emotions in the *Xunzi* are innate and make up our original nature. They are our constant nature. This can be seen in the following:

> Man's nature is evil; goodness is the result of conscious activity. The nature of man is such that he is born with a fondness for profit....He is born with feelings of envy and hate...[109]

Human nature is selfish because we are born with desires and feelings of envy and hate. "The likes and dislikes, delights and angers, griefs and joys of the nature are called emotions."[110] Emotions, then, like hate, envy, joy, sadness, and anger characterize our nature. Emotions are qualities inherent in human beings at birth, they are natural rather than externally imposed as in the *Zhuangzi*. Human beings, in

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[108] The *Zhuangzi* claims that the joy and happiness expressed in smiles and in the beaming looks of benevolence and righteousness are deceptive and misleading. "So the crouchings and bendings of rites and music, the smiles and the beaming looks of benevolence and righteousness, which are intended to comfort the hearts of the world, in fact destroy their constant naturalness." Emotions or the institutions of society do not pacify or comfort people as Mencius and Xunzi would have us believe, rather they serve destroy our tranquil and placid existence. Watson, *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu*, p. 100.

[109] Watson, *Hsun Tzu*, p.157.

[110] *Ibid.*, p. 139. I translated this passage earlier in the text in the following way: "The *xing's* liking, hatred, joy, anger, sadness and delight are called *qing*."

the *Xunzi*, are born with an emotional nature.

Emotions like anger and hatred, however, are only the initial qualities available to human beings at birth, they, through rites and music, can be altered, so that human nature can become "good." As Xunzi says:

> A warped piece of wood must wait until it has been laid against the straightening board, steamed, and forced into a shape before it can become straight; a piece of blunt metal must wait until it has been wetted on a grindstone before it can become sharp. Similarly, since man's nature is evil, it must wait for the instructions of a teacher before it can become upright, and for the guidance of ritual principles before it can become orderly.[111]

Just as a piece of wood must be steamed and forced into shape before it can become straight and, therefore, useful, human nature must and taught and guided before it can become orderly. Human nature has two levels of meaning in Xunzi. On the first level, it refers to what is inborn, our emotional nature that motivates us to behave in selfish ways. On the second level, it refers to the moral nature that can be reached by education and ritual principles.

Human nature ought be permanently altered so that it can become proper and moral. Xunzi says:

> In ancient times the sage kings realized that man's nature is evil, and that he therefore inclines toward evil and violence and is not upright or orderly. Accordingly they created ritual principles and laid down certain regulations in order to reform man's emotional nature and make it upright,

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[111] *Ibid.*, pp. 157-158.

> in order to train and transform it and guide it in the proper channels.[112]

Our emotional nature is reformed by the rites created by the sage kings in ancient times. The *li*, train, convert, and direct our emotions so as to avert conflict between our own interests and our obligations to others. Once the emotions are refined through the rites they are no longer unlovely things.[113] The rites, as Munro says, "mould natural predispositions into socially acceptable forms by introducing control into all acts." [114] They bring order and harmony to the world and to the individual.

> Through rites Heaven and earth join in harmony, the sun and moon shine, the four seasons proceed in order, the stars and constellations march, the rivers flow, and all things flourish; men's likes and dislikes are regulated and their joys and hates are made appropriate....In the world those who obey the dictates of ritual will achieve order; those who turn against them will suffer disorder. Those who obey them will win safety; those who turn against them will court danger. Those who obey them will be preserved; those who turn against them will be lost.[115]

The *li* dictate the order of all things, from the relationship between heaven and earth to moderating the joys and dislikes

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[112] Watson, *Hsun Tzu*, p. 158.

[113] In an earlier quotation Xunzi describes emotions as unlovely things because they interfere with relationships between people in different positions.

[114] Munro, *The Concept of Man in Early China*, p. 26.

[115] Watson, *Hsun Tzu*, p. 94.

of human beings. Emotions are not qualities to be discarded as in the *Zhuangzi*, they are qualities that are innate in human beings that must be controlled by conventions such as li.

Xunzi, in complete contrast to Zhuangzi, maintains that human nature must be controlled by conventions. Without conventions our emotions would not regulated; they would be out of control and, therefore, open to irrational impulses such our desires for profit and gain. Emotions, in the *Zhuangzi*, are bad in themselves, whereas in Xunzi, it is emotions without channels for proper expression that are seen as immoral. Emotions are viewed negatively, in the *Zhuangzi*, because they not thought to be a part of what is natural in human beings. They, like music and rites, are thought to be conventions of humanity that carve our inborn nature and consequently destroy the inherent order or process of the Dao. Xunzi argues that convention makes the most what is inborn where Zhuangzi argues that convention destroys it.

It is the sage, in Xunzi, who uses convention to help other develop their natures. "The sage," he says, "stands in the same relation to ritual principle as the potter to the things he molds and produces."[116] The function of the sage is to mould our emotional nature by applying musical forms and ritual principles to it. The sage is able to perform a

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[116] *Ibid.*, p. 164.

teaching role because he is not directed by emotions. "The sage follows his desires, satisfies his emotions, and at the same time is restrained because he possesses reason."[117] The sage has emotions and he does express them because, through reason, he is able to maintain a tight reign on them. The rites, according to Xunzi, are the result of conscious activity. In others words the sage limits his emotional expression through ritual, which originated through reason. The sage,

> ...does not allow himself to be influenced by considerations of desire and hate, beginning or end, distance or nearness, breadth or shallowness, past or present, but searches and examines all things and weighs them impartially in a balance.[118]

Emotions and desires, in Xunzi, are contrasted with reason. The person who is not influenced by his passions is able to view things in an unbiased manner. In fact the sage is distinguished from the average person because he is not directed by feelings such as love and hate. The sage is honoured for his impartially whereas the criminal is hated because he indulges in his passions.

> The reason people despise Chieh, Robber Chih, or the petty man is that they give free reign to their nature, follow their emotions, and are content to indulge their passions, so that their conduct is

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[117] *Ibid.*, p. 133.

[118] *Ibid.*, p.126.

marked by greed and contentiousness.[119]

The unreasonable person is one who is subject to his nature, his emotions and passions guide his actions that are greedy and quarrelsome. Both the sage and the criminal have emotions, but where the criminal is under their influence the sage is not. The sage simply judges whether or not an emotion is appropriate or if he can fulfil his desires within the precepts of ritual principles.

Xunzi's concept of the ideal person is quite different from Zhuangzi's. Xunzi, like Zhuangzi, depicts the sage as impartial and open, but this is where the similarity ends. Xunzi's perfected person has emotions and acts in order to teach others how to control their emotional nature. Zhuangzi's sage has no emotions, she has discarded the things that people, like Xunzi's ideal person, try to establish. Zhuangzi's sage throws away what is convention and seeks what is natural whereas Xunzi's regulates natural, uninhibited emotion by imposing convention upon it.

Zhuangzi's view of emotions is quite distinct from the Confucian thought of his age. Emotions, in the *Zhuangzi*, are not natural and are alien to his concepts of *xing* and *xin*. Emotions are adornments of nature that were externally imposed. They are not natural as Mencius and Xunzi supposes.

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[119] *Ibid.*, p.165.

The sage, in Zhuangzi, is representative of the natural human being; he has a nature that is simple and uncomplicated and that is free of emotion and passion. The sage stands in direct contrast to the ordinary person who is guided by his or her emotions and who is consequently susceptible to harm and chaos. Emotions, in Mencius and Xunzi, though evaluated in different ways, were seen as characteristic of people in general. Emotions, in both Confucian texts, are regarded as part of our inborn nature. The emotional nature of the sage differed from the ordinary person because their emotional natures were cultivated: for Mencius this is done by nourishing one's innate sensitivity, that is, the four seeds; in Xunzi, by directing and controlling the expression of emotion through the rites and music. Zhuangzi's ideal is a natural person without emotion, Mencius and Xunzi's in contrast, is a conventional individual, whose emotions, when regulated and nourished by cultural precepts like *li* and *jen*, produce a moral being.

SUMMATION

In the *Zhuangzi*, the ideal person is a person without emotions. The sage discards convention and returns to her natural self. She is plain and uncomplicated and follows along with the natural world; she takes care of her basic needs, and remains aloof from her environment. The sage has no emotions, and, therefore, has no feelings about right and wrong, no feelings of benevolence and righteousness. She does not feel sadness at the loss of anyone around her, she lacks fear in the face of danger and, although she may associate with others, she does not derive pleasure or pain from that association. She neither feels, nor generates, feelings of good humour, cheerfulness, or love. The sage is *xuanjie*, free from the emotional ties surrounding interpersonal relationships and as well, emotional turmoil in the world.

When we looked at the etymology and use of *qing*, emotions primarily in the *Mencius*, the *Zhuangzi*, and the *Xunzi*, I demonstrated that *qing* was being used as an "umbrella" term for specific emotions like joy and grief. By examining passages from the *Mencius*, the *Zhuangzi*, and the *Xunzi* where *qing* and emotional states, such as joy and grief, were addressed their various approaches to emotion became apparent. Discussions of emotions often contained implicit assumptions about what an emotion was. We saw that emotions, in these texts, were often tied to judgements, desires, actions, and physical responses. Xunzi differed in one specific way; he

argued that emotions were natural impulses that did not involve cognitive thought. Zhuangzi's definitions of emotions are not unique, but remarkably similar to Mencius' and Xunzi's.

As well, we encountered Zhuangzi's negative attitude toward emotions. Emotions, he argued, had no place in the natural world and that they were constituents of the imperfect, ordinary person instead of the truly natural, perfected one. Emotions were aspects that were externally imposed instead of initial conditions defining us at birth. I emphasised this unusual view of emotions by comparing it with that of Mencius and Xunzi, other Warring States philosophers.

Zhuangzi, as we have seen, maintains that emotions are foreign to us: they are not a part of the natural make-up of human beings. We have also seen that definitions of emotions are often tied to judgements, actions, desires, and physical expressions. Zhuangzi clearly distrusts all of them. He regards judgements, apart from emotions, as relative and narrow because they project only a partial reality. Judgements, evaluations, or beliefs based on either "this" or "that," acceptability or unacceptability, and right and wrong are biased, subjective, and incomplete. Judgements are based on how we see the world at a particular moment. The sage does not make judgements or evaluations, rather, she, like a mirror, reflects what is happening around her and responds to

it impartially.

Action, that is, self-directed action, is, according to the *Zhuangzi*, contrary to the spontaneous, impartial action of the Dao. Zhuangzi asks:

> What is this thing called the Way? There is the Way of Heaven, and the way of man. To rest in inaction, and to command respect--this is the Way of Heaven. To engage in action and become entangled in it--this is the way of man...The Way of Heaven and the way of man are far apart.[120]

People who act with purpose and for their own self-fulfilment act in a manner contrary to the Way. Human beings act in order to force structure, values, and order on society. By forcing convention on what is natural we inevitably create strife:

> The Way cannot be brought to light; its virtue cannot be forced to come. But benevolence--you can put that into practice; you can discourse on righteousness, you can dupe one another with rites. So it is said, When the Way was lost, then there was virtue; when virtue was lost, then there was benevolence; when benevolence was lost, then there was righteousness; when righteousness was lost, then there was rites. Rites are the frills of the Way and forerunners of disorder.[121]

The Dao is non-intentional and without desire, the opposite of egotistical effort. When egotistical action is carried out, it leads to benevolence and righteousness, which in due course creates disorder. The natural human being acts by *wu-wei*, non-ego action, she does not interfere with the workings of

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[120] *Ibid.*, p. 125.

[121] *Ibid.*, p. 235.

nature.

We have also seen that emotions are connected to desires. Desires, according to Zhuangzi, are not part of natural order. In an age of perfect virtue, people are not led by their individual needs and desires:

> In this age of Perfect Virtue men live the same as birds and beasts, group themselves side by side with the ten thousand things....Dull and unwitting, they have no desire; this is called uncarved simplicity. In uncarved simplicity the people attain their true natures.[122]

When people have no preoccupation with themselves, they live in harmony with the ten thousand things. Desires are forces that activate us to pursue our own interests; they are manifest into ego-action, which is antithetical to the Dao.

Similarly, those who have no emotions, understand the Dao, and do not oppose it, lack physical expression. We have seen Zhuangzi describe these people as people who,

> ...pay no attention to proper behaviour, disregard their personal appearance and, without so much as changing the expressions on their faces, sing in the very presence of the corpse![123]

Perfected people are incapable of feelings like grief, therefore, there is nothing to be reflected in their expression.

We have also looked at Zhuangzi's analyses of *xing* and

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[122] *Ibid.*, p. 105.

[123] *Ibid.*, p. 86.

xin and how they fit into his rejection of emotion. The sage is one who has regained her inborn nature and made her mind impartial and objective. She is without feelings, judgements, desires and self-directed action. The sage's way of life is one of simplicity, tranquillity, spontaneity and non-action. Qualities such as emotion, and the features of emotion, are typical of one whose nature is adorned, of one who has lost his natural state and now lives within the confines of society and its institutions.

CONCLUSION

After examining Zhuangzi's views, one feels some sympathy for some of what he says, but also that he has gone too far. This reaction likely comes from our Western ideas of emotion and what it is to be a person.

In Western thought we tend to devalue emotion by contrasting it with reason. Descartes, for example, says emotions are "animal spirits," hence, an inferior part of the mind. Leibnitz refers to them as "confused perceptions."[124] Reason is used to talk about actions that are sensible, sane, and socially acceptable. We therefore praise people who are unemotional because they are calm and composed. Emotions, in contrast, are seen as wild and chaotic. We talk about them as involuntary states that are uncontrollable. We use phrases like "helplessly in love," "being swept way by our emotions," "exploding in anger," or "falling apart with grief." Emotions are reactive states that occur spontaneously; they are not intentional. They lead us to make erroneous judgements that lead to irrational actions: emotions are natural, internal states that are not organized by cognitive, rational thought. [125]

We also disparage emotions as subjective and biased. Emotions distort our judgements and as a consequence, they cause "both a failure of perception and potential social

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[124] Solomon, "On Emotions as Judgements," p. 183.

[125] Many of these ideas on Western attitudes of emotion are taken from Lutz's *Unnatural Emotion,* pp. 55-70.

disruption. As bias pushes individuals to pursue goals that accord *only* with their own views, the emotional\subjective person may thwart the attainment of a more global, social, objectively determined, and valid goals."[126]

However, emotions are also the source of individual energy. They can be the forces that motivate us to act. Morality, according to Lutz, requires emotion because it provides the motivation for taking particular moral positions. Morality derives from the feelings that make up the inner self.[127] In the West, we often think of emotions as the motivational force behind morality; this is Mencius' view as well. Emotions, he says, lead to a compassionate and righteous life, contrary to Zhuangzi's view. This is evident in the story of the child who almost fell into the well. The person who saves the child is motivated by his compassionate reaction to the child's possible suffering. According to Mencius, we are born with an innate sensitivity to others that leads us to act in compassionate ways. We are born with feelings of compassion, shame, respect, and with feelings of right and wrong. If we do not nourish these emotions we will be more like animals than humans. Mencius argues that to lose one's emotional nature is to be less than human. Though Xunzi does

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[126] Lutz, *Unnatural Emotion*, p. 70.

[127] *Ibid.*, p. 80.

not look at emotions in such a favourable light, he does say that our nature consists of emotions like joy and hatred. Emotions are what make us human. Whether they are rational or irrational, they are part of the definition of human beings.

While morality may have emotional motivation, when emotions are associated with self-indulgence, then morality is seen as the means of controlling them. Catherine Lutz says, "[T]o the extent that morality is culturally defined as self-control in the interest of a higher good, emotion's culturally defined self-indulgence is antithetical to it."[128] Xunzi argues that the sage kings created morality in order to restrain us from pursuing all of our desires and fulfilling all of our emotional needs.

In the West, emotions are seen as irrational and chaotic, but are also used to talk about the self and what is meaningful. In this sense, they define who we are. In both Western and Confucian views, emotions are also thought to make us human.

Thus, there are limits to our belittling of emotion. Emotion is thought to be an important feature of interpersonal engagement. We describe people who are unemotional as "cold blooded" because we see them as lacking empathy and compassion. As Jeffrey Trimm points out, "[P]residential

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[128] Lutz, *Unnatural Emotion*, p. 76.

candidates, for example, are not supposed to cry in public but neither are they expected to respond with cool legalism at questions about the hypothetical rape of a family member. Thus emotion, in a more valued guise forms a second polarity over against estrangement."[129] In Western thought, emotion is perceived as making us both human and humane. Without them we are like the fictional Mr. Spock, detached and estranged.

Thus, Zhuangzi's position that the perfected person lacks emotions would mean that she has no sense of what we would call a self. Emotions are intimately tied to our sense of individuality; they make up our personal views, beliefs and values. As Ronald De Sousa argues, "[T]hey frame, transform and make sense of our perceptions, thoughts and activities."[130] Emotions are projections of our inner selves, they define who we are, hence, our personality is dependant upon them. If Zhuangzi's perfected person lacks emotions, then, we can say that she exists without any sense of individuality.

The idea that the sage lacks a personality because she is unaffected by emotion is strengthened when we see that she is non-judgemental, spontaneous in her actions, and is not

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[129] Jeffrey R. Trimm, "The Celebration of Emotion: Vallabha's Ontology of Affective Experience" *Philosophy East and West* 41.1 (1991), p. 62.

[130] Ronald De Sousa, *The Rationality of Emotions* (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1987), p.3.

self-seeking. Unlike the sage, we make judgements based upon our observations and individual experiences. For example, I may dislike Joe because of behaviour that I find offensive. This kind of judgement is relative to my point of view and, because it is a projection of my inner feelings, it goes toward making up, or reflecting, part of my personality. Judgements lead me to actions that reflect what I believe. Joe's behaviour may make me so angry that I act by hitting him. My action is a response to my judgement. In essence then, who we are is partly defined by our finite views. Not only are our judgements projections of our inner selves, they constitute our desires and actions. When we judge something to be desirable, we engage in a series of manoeuvres that will lead to fulfilment. Judgements, and their corresponding desires and actions, belong to the domain of the individual. They, therefore, constitute a major part of an individual's personality.

Catherine Lutz argues, "[I]ndividuals are sacred only insofar as each of them "owns" his or her particular and distinct set of emotions."[131] Emotions and feelings are intimately private matters. How we feel can only be known to us, others can only guess what we actually feel by observing our facial expression, body language, or through conversation.

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[131] Lutz, *Unnatural Emotion*, p. 72.

Emotions, opinions, and values are totally subjective.[132] Emotions, in the West, are essential to personality and self-identity.

Zhuangzi shares some of our views of emotion. Emotions, in the *Zhuangzi*, as in the West, are thought to be irrational. This can be seen in the anecdote where Chang Wuzi said to Qu Quezi

> How do I know that loving life is not a delusion? How do I know that in hating death I am not like a man who, having left home in his youth, has not forgotten his way back?
> Lady Li was the daughter of the border guard of Ai. When she was first taken captive and brought to the state of Chin, she wept until her tears drenched the collar of her robe. But later, when she went to live in the palace of the ruler, shared his couch with him, and ate the delicious meats of his table, she wondered why she had ever wept. How do I know that the dead do not wonder why they ever longed for life?[133]

Emotions come from our lack of knowledge of the unknown. There is no true reason to love life and hate death, just as Lady Li had no reason, according to Zhuangzi, to weep when she was taken captive. She need not have feared the unknown because it turned out to be pleasurable and satisfying. Zhuangzi ridicules an emotion such as hating death because we do not know what death really is.

Furthermore, emotions leave us susceptible to emotional

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[132] *Ibid.*, p. 71.

[133] Watson, *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu*, p. 47.

upheaval. Zhuangzi, as we have seen earlier, says that to be unaffected by emotion is to be *xuanjie*, free of the bound, free from the vulnerability of being "helplessly in love," free from the grief we feel at the death of a loved one, and in essence, free from the sway of emotion. Emotions disrupt our *qi*, that is, our personal energy and harmony. When we are dispassionate we are not vulnerable nor subject to the many agitations felt by the passionate person. When we are *xuanjie* we "cease to be the plaything of circumstances and enjoy calm and contentment."[134] Thus, while Western thinkers often contrast reason and emotion, Zhuangzi contrasts a spontaneous tranquillity with emotional upheaval.

Both Zhuangzi and Western thinkers argue that emotions are not based in fact and they are subjective. They are biased and dependant on individual interpretation and point of view. Emotions are responses to our individual thoughts and attitudes instead of the whole situation. They are based on judgements and beliefs that, for Zhuangzi, are finite. In his view, emotions are the source of ego-action. They become the primary motivational forces within human beings when we lose our inborn nature. Our self-seeking tendencies are evident in our readiness to pursue our own interests and to satisfy our

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[134] Joel Marks, "Emotion East and West: Introduction To a Comparative Philosophy" *Philosophy East and West* 41.1 1991), p. 2.

desires and emotional needs.

Zhuangzi goes further in his critique of emotions as subjective and biased. People, Zhuangzi says, carry out charitable actions because they enlarge their self-worth. These selfish tendencies cause wrangling, strife, disorder and personal harm. Acts of charity cause disorder for ages to come. The idea that self-directed action causes conflict can be seen in the story of Yan Hui and Confucius: Confucius, acting as a Daoist here, advises Yan Hui on his upcoming trip to Wei, where he plans to advise the ruler,

> Do you know what it is that destroys virtue, and where wisdom comes from? Virtue is destroyed by fame, and wisdom comes out of wrangling. Fame is something to beat people down with, and wisdom is a device for wrangling. Both are evil weapons...if you do not understand men's minds, but instead appear before a tyrant and force him to listen to sermons on benevolence and righteousness, measures and standards--this is simply using other men's bad points to parade your own excellence. You will be called a plaguer of others. He who plagues others will be plagued in turn. You will probably be plagued by this man.[135]

Fame and wisdom are tools used by people to achieve their own desires. Yan Hui's concern about the subjects of Wei leads him to believe he is judicious and therefore in a position to advise the ruler. His actions serve to increase his perception of his prominence and will probably get him killed. Purposeful actions, such as entering political debates and arguing the

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[135] *Ibid.*, p.55.

merits of benevolence can only lead to personal harm. People can achieve longevity by spontaneous, not intentional, action.

Zhuangzi parts company from Western views when he argues that emotions are not natural to us, but are part of an artificial self. There are several passages in the *Zhuangzi* that suggest that the sage, a truly natural human being, has no self: "Therefore I say, the Perfect Man has no self (*ji*); the Holy Man has no merit; the Sage has no fame."[136] Zhuangzi's ideal human being does not perceive an "I." In another passage, Yan Cheng Ziyou asks Ziji: "Can you really make the body like a withered tree and the mind like dead ashes?" Ziji says:

> You do well to ask the question, Yan. Now I have lost myself (*wo*). Do you understand that? You hear the piping of men, but you haven't heard the piping of earth. Or if you've heard the piping of earth, you haven't heard the piping of Heaven!"[137]

Ziji can make himself like a withered tree because he makes no distinctions between himself and the tree. He makes no subject/object distinction because his mind, like dead ashes, is empty and vacuous. This is difficult for an ordinary person like Yan to understand because he does not understand the underlying unity in all things. His ego has a finite understanding of itself and of nature. He is like the morning

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[136] *Ibid.*, p. 32.

[137] *Ibid.*, p. 36.

mushroom who knows nothing of twilight and dawn or the summer cicada who knows nothing of spring and autumn. The sage, who transcends all finite views, makes no distinctions between self and other. Lacking a concept of self, she, therefore, has no feelings, viewpoints, desires, and does not act in a manner that contradicts the Dao.

Zhuangzi's notion that human beings ought to lack emotion fits into his overall philosophy. His attitude toward emotions and their corresponding constituents--judgement, action, and desire--is consistent. Emotions, and Zhuangzi's implied assumptions of what an emotion is, are depicted as qualities that are unnatural and foreign in the ideal world. Individuality is dependent on qualities like emotions, judgements, and self-directed actions. Without these qualities, humans beings return to their original state and become one with the myriad things.

According to Zhuangzi, emotions belong to the domain of the artificial self rather than to the natural human being. Feelings characterize the self, they make evaluations of the world based on a particular time and place embedded in an individual's perspective. Zhuangzi does not value an individual personality in human beings because it is defined by emotion, which is based on finite view. The status of emotions in the West are, at times, precarious because they oppose the "rational" self and may cause senseless, irrational

behaviour; emotions in the *Zhuangzi* are problematic because they make up the self. The self, in Zhuangzi, is associated with limited understanding, and with self-serving and aggressive behaviour.

Zhuangzi would also disagree with the idea that the emotions can move us to moral and compassionate actions. According to Zhuangzi, the sage, the natural human being, is not motivated by emotions because she does not find it necessary to act in a manner which best serves humanity. She, like the Dao, acts spontaneously, and not in accordance with an individual perspective. While individual action attends a problem from a point of view and from a particular time frame, the sage's spontaneity attends the whole because her actions derive from Heaven not herself.[138] In Graham's words, the sage "is as fluid as water which is unimpeded because it adapts to the contours of the ground; his response is as immediate as the echo to the sound."[139] The sage's mind is like a mirror and does not need to judge or evaluate because her response is reflexive. "The sage," as Graham argues, "can dispense with moral imperatives because he has disciplined himself not to let local reactions distract him from attending to whole

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[138] Graham, "Taoist Spontaneity and the Dichotomy of "Is" and "Ought,"" p. 16.

[139] *Ibid.*, p. 10.

situation."[140] The sage, then, does not need emotion to motivate her to act in positive ways, she simply does what is necessary by *wu-wei*. Zhuangzi would point out, however, that while morality might try, it does not always restrain human behaviour. Morality, he argues, creates disputes over what is right and wrong because the question of what is moral is relative to time, place, and point of view. Principles, such as righteousness, are shaped by our social and cultural backgrounds. In other words, morality is subjective and biased just as emotions are. Furthermore, not only is morality relative, it is superficial and completely unnecessary. If human beings regained their inborn nature, they would be unaffected by emotion. Consequently, morality would not exist because its existence is necessitated by the presence of selfish, erratic, and irrational behaviour that stems from emotionality. The sage, therefore, can dispense with moral imperatives because there is nothing in her nature that requires restraint.

It should also be mentioned in passing that, while Zhuangzi argues that emotions have no place in human life, he is not above evoking emotional responses to get our attention and influence our thoughts in the direction he wants. The sage, who has no passion, is portrayed in colourful and

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[140] *Ibid.*, p. 10.

dynamic ways. "The Perfect Man is godlike. Though the great swamps blaze, they cannot burn him.... A man like this rides the clouds and mist, straddles the sun and moon, and wanders beyond the four seas!"[141] Throughout the *Zhuangzi*, there are descriptions of the sage who can accomplish amazing feats. The sage is godlike, Zhuangzi argues, because she lacks emotion. Nevertheless, why is the sage, who is impartial, portrayed with such flair? Is Zhuangzi trying to evoke an emotional response?

However, we may take issue with Zhuangzi in two areas: first, his rejection of compassion and, second, his argument that human beings are naturally without emotion.

Zhuangzi would argue that compassionate actions make us feel good about ourselves, and elevate our self-worth and pride, leaving us with false impressions of our self-importance. It can lead us to believe we know what is right and force that view upon others. This creates disputes between people and leads individuals to pursue their own "right" paths. Zhuangzi says these things cause chaos for years to come. We may argue that emotions do not always lead people to act in inconsiderate ways. Acts of charity include our concern for another's well being. This kind of action benefits both the community and the individual. How then, can they cause

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[141] Watson, *The Complete Works of Zhuangzi*, p. 46.

problems for ages to come as Zhuangzi maintains?

The more basic issue, however, is whether or not emotions are natural to human beings. Is his ideal of a naturally unemotional human being possible or even desirable? Can we live without emotion?

Zhuangzi, as we have seen earlier, believes that it is natural for human beings to band together, but that it is unnatural for us to be affected by emotion.[142] We unite with others, but do not form relationships based on emotion. We are not distinguished from other creatures because we can reason, our nature is simply to plough and weave; the constants that make up human nature are no different from those that make up animals. Throughout the *Zhuangzi,* simplicity is continually stressed. Imbedded in the text is an underlying argument that we should discard culture and its conventions and return to the simplicity that was prevalent in early human communities. It is unlikely we can achieve this ideal. Through anthropology, we know that even the smallest hunting and gathering groups form social groups that involved people working together to hunt and gather food. Their survival was based on cohesive family units. But, the lives of these people were enriched by emotion in ritual, as well in interpersonal relationships based upon love, humour, joy and so on.

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[142] Watson, *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu*, p.75.

Relationships, even those based upon mutual need, produce emotion. Emotions, like love, follow from joint tasks of mutual need, nurturing, and parenting; negative emotions, like resentment, result from competing with others. It seems unlikely, then, that human beings can band together without developing feelings for one another.

It is difficult to picture even an isolated individual who would be devoid of emotions. In order for life to have meaning and value there must be emotions. What value could one find in a life devoid of love? A dispassionate life would lead to alienation and estrangement.

So a problem with Zhuangzi lies in his argument that human beings are naturally without emotion. He says this because he thinks that human beings should model themselves on the Dao. Since the Dao has no emotions, neither, properly, should human beings. However, this may be an error. Perhaps what it is to be human is to be a creature with emotions.

A further problem with Zhuangzi's position is that he tells us to rid ourselves of emotion as we discard the artificial self. But, is this possible? Once emotions are evoked (whether they are natural or learned), can they be discarded or can they only be repressed? One wonders at the cost that repression.

Although there is an underlying rationale to Zhuangzi's notion of the perfected person, as one who lacks emotion and

personality, it is an untenable goal because whether we are isolated or in a group, it seems more likely that emotions are innate. Emotions make sense of our thoughts and beliefs, and enhance and give meaning to our lives. Although emotions may generate emotional upheaval and chaos, they seem to be natural to us.

I noted earlier that, while the West contrasts reason and emotion, Zhuangzi contrasts spontaneous tranquillity and emotional upheaval. Zhuangzi's critique of emotion tends to be a critique of only certain emotions, such as anger, fear, and greed, and of the attitudes they lead to. One is left with an uneasy sense that his rejection of emotion is itself based on fear. Fear of entanglement with the world and fear of the uglier emotions. Had he given us a thorough critique of love or friendship, for example, we might find it easier to agree with his argument.

In the West emotions are both valued and disparaged. Emotions are what make us human. Individuality is dependent upon the existence of emotions: they make up our opinions, values, beliefs and so on. As well, they motivate us to be compassionate and caring. Yet, at the same time, we see emotions as irrational, subjective, biased and selfish, generating discord within individuals and society.

In the *Zhuangzi*, emotions are portrayed in negative ways because they are subjective and selfish and because they make

us unique. Individuality is made up of finite points of view and actions that are ultimately self-directed and self-concerned. If emotions are what make us human, and individual, then, according to the *Zhuangzi*, we are condemned to irrationality, bias, and selfishness. Harmony cannot exist when emotions make us who and what we are.

The way in which emotions and individualism are depicted fits into the overall philosophy of the *Zhuangzi*. It is not reasonable to assert, however, that we ought to strive to become emotionless. Emotions enhance and give meaning to our lives and without them we become alienated and flat. Zhuangzi is not convincing when he says that human nature is naturally without emotions. Zhuangzi's view of emotions is best depicted in his own terms. In one of his anecdotes, Zhuangzi talks about a frog that claims it has a clear and undivided view of the sky. In reality, the frog can see only a small part of it from the bottom of the well. His understanding, therefore, is biased and incomplete. Zhuangzi is like the frog he portrays. He grasps the bias and self-seeking tendencies involved in emotions and individuality, but he fails satisfactorily to argue against, or even to recognise, the positive powers of emotion.

Glossary of Chinese Characters

de 德

ji 己

li 禮

mao 貌

qi 氣

qing 情

ren 仁

sheng 生

wen 文

wo 我

wu wei 無為

xin 心

xing (nature) 性

xing (form) 形

xing zhe sheng zhi zhi ye 性者生之質也

xuanjie 縣解

yi 義

zhi 智

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