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The Problem of Authorship and the Project of Chinese Philosophy: Zhuang Zhou and the *Zhuangzi* between Sinology and Philosophy in the Western Academy

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Abstract This essay looks into a particular aspect of Sinological challenge to the modern project of Chinese philosophy within the Western academy through the lens of authorship, using the *Zhuangzi* 莊子 as a case study. It explores philosophical implications for texts whose authorship is in doubt and develops a new heuristic model of authorship and textuality, so that a more robust intellectual space for the philosophical discourse on Chinese classics can be carved out from the dominant historicist Sinological discourse. It argues that philosophical and Sinological approaches to Chinese classics have divergent scholarly objectives and follow different disciplinary norms. To clarify such divergence, it proposes a heuristic model to distinguish two sets of scholarly objects operative in Sinology and philosophy respectively, namely original text versus inherited text, historical author versus textual author, and authorial intent versus textual intent. These two sets of scholarly objects are related, at times overlapping but often irreducibly distinct, with the former in the pairs belonging to Sinologists and the latter to philosophers.

Keywords Original/Inherited text · Historical/Textual author · Authorial/Textual intent

1 Introduction

At a workshop on classical Chinese philosophy at Princeton University on February 22, 2014, Mark Csikszentmihalyi recounted an intriguing exchange with Herbert Fingarette when they were on a panel talking about the formation of the *Analects* at a symposium at Berkeley in October 2013. Csikszentmihalyi was making the case that the *Analects*

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was a multivocal text and that reading it that way gave an interesting look into a diverse and dynamic period in the formation of Confucianism. Surprisingly, Fingarette was not at all willing to entertain this approach, claiming that philosophers would not be interested in it. Csikszentmihalyi wanted to find ways to convince scholars like Fingarette that they should be interested in such claims.

This exchange points to a critical issue lurking beneath the contemporary project known as "Chinese philosophy," namely the disciplinary chasm or mountain between Sinology and philosophy within the Western academy concerning the interpretation of early Chinese texts, especially the "philosophical" texts such as classics (*jing* 經) like the *Book of Change* (*Yijing* 易經) and the *Analects* (*Lunyu* 論語) as well as texts attributed to various masters (*zi* 子) like the *Mozi* 墨子 and the *Zhuangzi* 莊子. This essay seeks to unpack Fingarette's refusal to acknowledge the multivocality of a classic such as the *Analects* or the *Zhuangzi* from a philosophical perspective, in order to delve into a core tension confronting Chinese philosophy between Sinological and philosophical approaches to early Chinese texts. The *Zhuangzi* will be used as a case study.

So far the debate about the legitimacy of Chinese philosophy has been mostly addressing challenges from (Western) philosophy, especially the applicability of the category of philosophy to Chinese intellectual traditions,[1] whereas not as much attention has been given to challenges from Sinology.[2] This essay focuses more on the latter, using the lens of authorship to look into a particular aspect of Sinological challenges to the project of Chinese philosophy. I argue that Fingarette's refusal to engage with the Sinological discourse on the authorship of classical Chinese texts reveals the underappreciated high stake of authorship in the philosophical project. I explore philosophical implications for interpreting texts whose authorship is in doubt and develop an alternative, heuristic model of authorship and textuality, so that a more robust intellectual space for the discourse on classical Chinese philosophy can be carved out from the dominant Sinological discourse within the Western academy.

Philosophical and Sinological approaches to Chinese classics have divergent scholarly objectives and follow different disciplinary norms. To clarify such divergence, I propose an interpretative model to distinguish two sets of scholarly objects operative in Sinology and philosophy that are related and at times overlap but are often irreducibly distinct, namely original text versus inherited text, historical author versus textual

[1] Defoort 2001 and 2006 provide a helpful summary of the debate.

[2] The Sinological challenge to the project of Chinese philosophy has garnered some scholarly attention in China. For example, LIU Xiaogan 劉笑敢 has tried to grapple with some aspects of this challenge in several of his more recent works (e.g., Liu 2007, 2008). He uses ZHU Xi's 朱熹 commentarial method as an example to articulate two orientations in hermeneutical practice: restorative construction (*sigou* 似構) and creative construction (*chuanggou* 創構). The former refers to an interpretative effort that attempts to recover the original text and its historical context as much as possible, whereas the latter is a hermeneutical exercise that is more geared toward addressing contemporary concerns of the interpreter. Accordingly, the restorative construction of a text has an "objectivist orientation" that deals with the text in its historical vicissitudes, whereas the creative construction has a more "subjectivist orientation" that pertains more to the interpreter's appropriation of traditional resources in her deliberations on contemporary issues. The former is a typical Sinological approach and the latter philosophical. Liu makes a persuasive case that these two interpretative orientations need to be evaluated differently, as they have different objectives. As the reader will see in the following, our approaches share similar concerns, but this essay frames the problems differently and proposes different solutions. I thank HUANG Yong for pointing me to Liu's works on this topic, of which I was not aware prior to writing this essay.

author, and authorial intent versus textual intent, with the former in the pairs belonging to Sinologists and the latter to philosophers.

2 Chinese Philosophy in the Western Academy

The study of (pre-modern) Chinese philosophy[3] within the contemporary Western academy is straddled between Sinology and philosophy, with the former dominated by historians and the latter remaining almost exclusively Western. As a result, scholars of Chinese philosophy in the West have to engage both Sinologists and philosophers. Conforming to two disciplinary norms is never an easy task, and one of the unfortunate consequences of the contemporary study of classical Chinese philosophy in the west is that it remains outside the mainstream of both Sinology and philosophy.

Much of the difficulty facing Chinese philosophy in the Western academy has to do with the fact that Chinese philosophy as an academic discipline is relatively new, a result of the encounter between the West and China in modern history. In many ways, Chinese philosophy is a modern invention. A recent book, *Learning to Emulate the Wise: The Genesis of Chinese Philosophy as an Academic Discipline in Twentieth-Century China*, provides a comprehensive look at the origins of the discipline of Chinese philosophy in early 20th-century China. Chinese intellectuals at the time tried to reconfigure the way Chinese classics were studied in their struggle to counter the overwhelming Western challenge in the intellectual discourse, which was part of the overall Western dominance of China in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. As a result of that effort, Chinese intellectuals, often learning from their Japanese counterparts, categorized traditional texts as philosophical or historical in order to align them with established disciplines in Western intellectual discourse. As John Makeham observes in his introduction to *Learning to Emulate the Wise*:

> [I]t is well known that Chinese intellectuals introduced a new "language" or "grammar"—academic philosophy—into China soon after the turn of the twentieth century, subsequently leading to the institutional incorporation of the discipline "Chinese philosophy" (*Zhongguo zhexue* 中國哲學) alongside Western philosophy. This was one of many responses to an "epistemological crisis" in which China found itself in the closing decades of the Qing [清] dynasty (1644–1911). Western philosophy provided key conceptual paradigms, vocabulary and technical terms, bibliographic categories, and even histories and periodization schemes essential to the demarcation, definition, and narration of the discipline of Chinese philosophy. This was not, however, a simple case of the blanket inscription of Western philosophy upon a Chinese *tabula rasa*. Nor was the process by which Western models of knowledge categorization were introduced into China a passive one in which the "foreign" was imposed on the "native." Rather, it was an ongoing process of negotiation and appropriation initiated and conducted by Chinese protagonists, in which traditional categories of Chinese knowledge were "translated" into the new academic category of *zhexue*. (Makeham 2012: 2–3)

[3] I am limiting the scope of Chinese philosophy in this essay to the masters' texts (*zi* 子) and some classics (*jing* 經), following Defoort (Defoort 2006: 627).

Put briefly, the birth of *Zhongguo zhexue* is the fruit of intense intellectual negotiations between traditional Chinese categories of knowledge and Western philosophy with the result that Chinese philosophy is, strictly speaking, neither traditional Chinese nor Western, but something new.

However, *Learning to Emulate the Wise* deals with Chinese philosophy almost exclusively within the Chinese (and some Japanese) context with its focus on key figures in the "invention" of Chinese philosophy in the China of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It does not tackle the state of affairs of Chinese philosophy within the Western academy, which is vastly different from the Chinese context. Despite the relatively recent birth of Chinese philosophy, it is a firmly established discipline in the Chinese academic world. Almost all Chinese universities that have a philosophy department include Chinese philosophy as one of the subject areas. Except for periodic disputations among Chinese scholars about whether or not China has a philosophical tradition, sometimes as a nativist way to assert uniqueness from the West (e.g., Ouyang 2012), the legitimacy of the discipline of Chinese philosophy is by and large taken for granted and institutionalized in the way philosophy departments are set up in Chinese universities.

By sharp contrast, the status of Chinese philosophy is much more perilous in the Western academy. Its viability is still very much a question mark. Institutionally, there is no disciplinary home for Chinese philosophy. The arguably natural disciplinary home for Chinese philosophy is the philosophy department, but there are few faculty positions on Chinese philosophy in major Anglo-American Ph.D.-granting philosophy departments.[4] Some scholars of Chinese philosophy are housed in area studies (East Asian studies or Asian studies) dominated by Sinologists. This means that many scholars of Chinese philosophy need to engage scholars who might have little, if any, interest in philosophical approaches to Chinese intellectual traditions. Furthermore, it also means that many students pursuing their doctorate in Chinese philosophy are trained in non-philosophy programs, depriving them of the opportunity to engage with their natural (or maybe not so natural after all) disciplinary partner, namely Western philosophy, and making them less desirable for potential hires by philosophy departments. This is clearly a vicious cycle concerning the institutional viability of Chinese philosophy in the Western academy.

Furthermore, the disciplinary and institutional split between religion and philosophy in the modern Western academy adds to the complication in the study of Chinese intellectual traditions: even if we accept philosophy and religion as broadly applicable categories to the Chinese intellectual traditions, a split between the religious and the philosophical did not take place in Chinese intellectual history the way it did in the West. The categorial ambiguity is institutionally reflected by the fact that many scholars of Chinese philosophy in the West are housed in a religious studies department rather than a philosophy department. When situated within religious studies, the disciplinary acculturation pulls these scholars of Chinese philosophy in the direction of intellectual

[4] The Philosophical Gourmet Report, which has come to dominate the all-important ranking of "mainstream" philosophy programs in the Anglo-American world, has created the incentives for top philosophy departments to compete for prominent philosophers in the ranked areas in order to boost their rankings. Since Chinese philosophy is not one of the primary ranking categories and hence, whether it is covered or not (mostly not) has no impact on the standing of a philosophy department, there is very little institutional incentive for top philosophy programs to invest in the study of Chinese philosophy.

engagement with scholars of other religions with their own distinct theoretical frameworks and canonical foundations,[5] which might be of little direct scholarly interest to either philosophers or Sinologists.

The institutional diffusion (or, rather, homelessness) and vulnerability of Chinese philosophy in the West reflects a skeptical attitude Sinologists and philosophers harbor toward the very project of Chinese philosophy. For a Sinologist, a work on classical Chinese philosophy tends to be historically inadequate[6] in that it does not illuminate the *historical* complexities of a text or its context; on the other hand, for a (Western) philosopher a work on Chinese philosophy is likely to be too involved in the intricacies of historical and cultural contexts—not to mention the linguistic complexities with regard to key terms and names—that are hard to keep track of, unless one is already familiar with them. Put differently, if a work is too embedded in the Sinological discourse, it loses the audience on the philosophy side; if it is too philosophically focused, Sinologists are not interested. If it tries to appeal to both, instead of attracting audience from the two camps, it can easily end up losing readers from both sides, falling through the proverbial interdisciplinary cracks rather than serving as a bridge to bring the two together. The asymmetric power dynamics and divergent disciplinary norms in the Western academy involving Chinese philosophy means that scholars of Chinese philosophy have to be acquainted with both Sinological and philosophical discourses, whereas such efforts are, more often than not, unreciprocated from the other directions, some notable exceptions notwithstanding.

At the root of the difficulty facing Chinese philosophy in the Western academy lies its very legitimacy, torn between the historicist orientation of Sinology and the presentist orientation of mainstream contemporary Western philosophy. Such divergent disciplinary norms have put scholars of Chinese philosophy in a difficult position. On the one hand, they have to defend the philosophical nature, or even the philosophical worthiness, of classical Chinese texts in front of contemporary Western philosophers whose interests tend to be more issue-driven and in the philosophical integrity of ideas, rather than the historicity of ideas. At the same time, these scholars of Chinese philosophy, when dealing with Sinologists, need to justify the basic premise of their philosophical approach to the classics due to the historical ambiguity and compositional instability of these texts.

This problem is particularly salient with pre-Qin (*xian Qin* 先秦) classical texts, which happen to be the primary interest of most scholars of Chinese philosophy in the West right now. Pre-Qin classical texts are the favorites of Western scholars of Chinese philosophy (including Chinese scholars working in the West), and it is precisely those texts whose textual ambiguities are the greatest, given their early dates. Excavated texts from Mawangdui 馬王堆, Guodian 郭店, and other tombs have generated a good deal of excitement in the study of Chinese classics in light of the newly available materials. However, this also means that Sinological skills are much more at work in such studies, whereas philosophical analysis is often relegated to a minor role.

[5] For example, works by Max Weber, Emile Durkheim, Clifford Geertz, Jonathan Z. Smith, and others are critical to scholars of religious studies, whereas they are of little interest to philosophers who have their own canons in Plato, Aristotle, Hume, Kant, Wittgenstein, Rawls, and others.

[6] For a recent example, see Nylan 2013: 677.

Herein lies one of the central problems in the philosophical approach to classical Chinese texts, namely the problem of authorship, crystallized in the exchange between Fingarette and Csikszentmihalyi. Most scholars of classical Chinese philosophy, both in China and in the West, acknowledge the Sinological consensus on the multivocal nature of many of these early texts. That is, most, if not all, of the early texts are the results of collective efforts by people across several generations, even though they are usually attributed to a single person as the "author," whether that person is a historical figure, a fictional character, or some mixture of the two. However, the problem of authorship pertaining to early texts is even more serious, since the concept of authorship was at a very early stage during the pre-Qin period.

Mark Lewis, in *Writing and Authority in Early China*, traces the early development of text and authorship, using the *Analects* as the paradigmatic example. According to Lewis,

> [T]he master began to figure as the author of his own text only in the fourth century B.C. In the earliest philosophical writings he appeared as a figure whose words were addressed to followers or political figures, and recorded by an implied scribe. The texts were produced by those who shared a common master, and reproduced within themselves the factional splits or debates among these followers. As object rather than subject of writing, and as an object offering a ground for disputed narratives, the master acquired distinctive characteristics that had a formative impact on later Chinese writing practices. In order to accommodate the multiple agents speaking through him over the centuries, the master appeared not as a consistent philosophic voice speaking in the form of binding universals, but rather as a set of individual propositions whose underlying principles, or lack thereof, had to be deduced by the reader. (Lewis 1999: 83)

In other words, many of the early texts were the result of group effort (reflecting factional interest and lineage stake) and the master to whom a text was attributed or dedicated was the very product of the text instead of its producer. The emergence of the idea of author as an isolated and individual voice gradually took place when the textual authority shifted to the "classic" (Lewis 1999: 63). Lewis identifies the breakthrough of authorship in the construction of Qu Yuan (屈原, 340–278 BCE) as the author of the lead poem in the *Songs of Chu* (*Chu Ci* 楚辭), "Sorrow at Parting" ("Li Sao 離騷"):

> The appearance of the proto-*Chu ci* under the name of Qu Yuan was a crucial step in the invention of authorship in the late Warring States or early Han [漢]. A set of themes and images, probably defined by generic conventions, was redefined as the expression of an individual's response to his experiences. The mutual echoes and resonances of the poems that appeared when they were read together were explained by reference to a single author, and ultimately each poem was linked to a specific stage in the writer's life. The author was thus effectively invented out of the anthology, just as Confucius was created within the collected sayings of the *Lun yu*. However Qu Yuan, the figure of isolation, had no disciples and was thus credited with personally composing the poems. (Lewis 1999: 186)

What is especially compelling here is the fact that the idea of a single author is an interpretative invention, demonstrating its attractiveness and effectiveness in textual

exegeses. Lewis calls Qu Yuan "the first author to be identified for an individual, poetic voice, and as such he became the archetype for later Chinese poets" (Lewis 1999: 186). Once such an identification took place, Qu Yuan became fundamental to the interpretation of "Li Sao": "The text was bound to the narrative of a presumptive author's life and understood as a record of his experiences, so no reading of the poem could escape reference to the poet" (Lewis 1999: 186). In contrast to Confucius, the "author" of the *Analects*, Qu Yuan was not portrayed as addressing his followers in the "Li Sao" and in fact had no known disciples. This means that under such a construction "Li Sao" represents a singular voice, that of Qu Yuan, who supposedly composed the poem in isolation, instead of a group effort. This is the dominant paradigm of authorship we take for granted today.

Indeed, Sinological scholarship has vastly enriched our understanding of authorship of early Chinese texts while, on the other hand, historicizing it to such an extent that the value of traditional exegetical approach is thrown into question. Because traditional exegeses are largely premised upon an original single author for a text, their value is rather limited in helping us understand the historical specificities of the text they comment on. Given their primary philosophical interest, in order not to get caught in the complex Sinological discourse on authorship, many scholars of classical Chinese philosophy have defaulted to a strategy of acknowledging the Sinological consensus at the outset of their works before going on to philosophizing those texts largely in disregard of the historical complexity involving textuality and authorship. In other words, the multivocality of classical texts is not *philosophically* integrated into the contemporary philosophical interpretations (and it is not clear how that can be done).

This makes the exchange between Csikszentmihalyi and Fingarette particularly noteworthy, given Fingarette's outright refusal to acknowledge the Sinological consensus on the multivocal nature of classical texts such as the *Analects*, unlike most scholars of Chinese philosophy. Fingarette is a Western philosopher who has taken a keen interest in Chinese philosophy, especially Confucianism, and is the author of the now classic philosophical interpretation of the *Analects*, *Confucius: Secular as Sacred*. Since he is not a Sinologist, his disagreement with Csikszentmihalyi does not necessarily mean that Fingarette disputes Csikszentmihalyi's point about the multivocality of the *Analects* on Sinological ground. Rather, his refusal to engage Csikszentmihalyi on the Sinological discourse of authorship points to Fingarette's keen awareness of the philosophical stake in assuming Confucius as the single author of the *Analects*. This essay attempts to scrutinize Fingarette's refusal on philosophical grounds, in terms of how philosophical discussions of a classical text can be seriously undermined, if not outright nullified, by the Sinological discussion of its historicity.

We will use the *Zhuangzi* as a case study here by taking a close look at the contemporary debate on the stratification and authorship of the *Zhuangzi*, especially the Inner Chapters, and examine what is at stake philosophically in this debate. I will argue that it is nothing less than the viability and integrity of the philosophical approach to Chinese classics that hangs in the balance.

3 Contemporary Debate on the Authorship of the *Zhuangzi*

The *Zhuangzi* is a brilliant but difficult text, both textually and conceptually. It is generally believed to originate in the Warring States period (476–221 BCE), although

scholars disagree on when the chapters were put together as some date it as late as the Former Han dynasty (202 BCE–9 CE). The received text, consisting of 33 chapters, is divided into three parts: 7 Inner Chapters (*nei pian* 內篇), 15 Outer Chapters (*wai pian* 外篇), and 11 Miscellaneous Chapters (*za pian* 雜篇). The *Zhuangzi*'s textual and conceptual heterogeneity has led to many fruitful studies of its composition, revealing stylistic differences and conflicting historicity of ideas and terminologies that is unlikely the work of a single person.

Historically, two important Chinese sources have shaped the scholarly discussion on the *Zhuangzi*, namely Sima Qian's 司馬遷 (138–86 BCE) brief biographical note on Zhuang Zhou 莊周 in the *Shiji* 史記 (*Record of the Grand Historian*), and Guo Xiang's 郭象 (d. 312 CE) redaction of the *Zhuangzi*. The former is our only source for biographical information about the historical Zhuang Zhou, while the latter is the earliest extant and complete version of the text that has been adopted by almost all subsequent editions of the *Zhuangzi*.

According to Sima Qian, Zhuang Zhou was a minor official in the state of Song 宋. He was devoted to Laozi's 老子 ideas, ridiculing Confucians and Mohists of his time and harboring no interest in higher office. This portrayal of Zhuang Zhou has provided critical historical contexts and clues for interpreting the *Zhuangzi*. Given the complex textual history of the *Zhuangzi*, there are textual references and citations scattered throughout Chinese literary works and historical records,[7] but Sima Qian's biographical note and Guo Xiang's redacted text are the most important historical sources that have provided the foundation for subsequent discussions on Zhuang Zhou the person and *Zhuangzi* the text.

Modern scholars, both in China and in the West, have more or less coalesced around a position that accepts the Inner Chapters as the core of the text written by the historical Zhuang Zhou portrayed in the *Shiji*. According to this conventional wisdom, the Outer Chapters and Miscellaneous Chapters, due to their lack of textual coherence and integrity, mostly represent later additions by those who either followed or shared at least some of the historical Zhuang Zhou's philosophical outlook, although these chapters may contain misplaced fragments from the Inner Chapters representing the authentic voice of the historical Zhuang Zhou.

The most prominent representatives of this prevailing view in contemporary scholarship are A. C. Graham and Liu Xiaogan. Graham and Liu, writing in English and Chinese respectively, have reached a similar conclusion about the *Zhuangzi* independently, especially that the Inner Chapters are the writings of the historical Zhuang Zhou, although they differ on how fragmented the Inner Chapters are and how the Outer Chapters and Miscellaneous Chapters should be classified.

Graham, in his 1986 article, "How Much of the Chuang Tzŭ did Chuang Tzŭ Write?," starts with a high-stake question:

> Can we take for granted the common authorship of the *Inner chapters*? There have been attempts to deny Chuang-tzŭ some of them, notably Fu Ssŭ-nien's [傅斯年] ascription of *Equalizing things* 齊物論 (chapter 2) to Shen Tao 愼到—a proposal as unsettling as it would be to credit Bacon with *Hamlet* while leaving the rest of the plays to Shakespeare. (Graham 1986: 283)

[7] For example, the *Hanshu* 漢書 (*History of the Former Han Dynasty*) lists the *Zhuangzi* as containing 52 chapters with no other detail.

Indeed, the assumption of ZHUANG Zhou as the author of the Inner Chapters lies at the heart of contemporary scholarly attempt to philosophize the *Zhuangzi*. Questioning such an assumption might jeopardize the philosophical project, as we will see later in the essay. Graham tries to provide some relief from the concern that denies ZHUANG Zhou the authorship of the "Qi Wu Lun 齊物論" chapter (Graham 1986: 284), even though he does not really make a case for it. Instead, he devotes a significant amount of effort to reassigning some parts of the Miscellaneous Chapters to emend Chapter Three, regarded by Graham as the most mutilated chapter due to its conspicuous brevity. His masterful translation, *Chuang Tzu: The Inner Chapters*, rearranges much of the fragmentary Outer and Miscellaneous Chapters under the categories of the School of CHUANG Tzu (Zhuangzi), primitivist, Yangist, and syncretist. Graham's translation largely keeps intact the chapters that are single essays, such as the Inner Chapters and the Yangist and Primitivist chapters, as well as Chapters 15, 16, and 33.

LIU Xiaogan's book, *Classifying the Zhuangzi Chapters* (1994), is a translation of the first three chapters of his Chinese book *Zhuangzi Zhexue Ji Qi Yanbian* 莊子哲學及其演變 (1987). Liu's book is a much more sustained effort to make an argument for ZHUANG Zhou's authorship of the Inner Chapters and its chronological precedence over the Outer and Miscellaneous Chapters. He tries to establish "objective differences" from within the text itself in order to differentiate the Inner Chapters from the others and appeals to intertextual references to date these strata of the text. Liu surveys the occurrences of certain key terms in the Inner Chapters, like *dao* 道, *de* 德, *ming* 命, *jing* 精, *shen* 神, and finds that these terms are shared among many texts of the middle Warring States period. Their compounds, like *daode* 道德, *xingming* 性命, and *jingshen* 精神 that appear in the Outer and Miscellaneous Chapters, occur in texts like *Lüshi Chunqiu* 呂氏春秋 (*Lü Buwei's Spring and Autumn Annals*) and are indicative of later compositions, likely right before the Warring States ended in 221 BCE. Liu also devotes a lot of space to discussing different threads of ideas that dominate the Inner Chapters versus the Outer and Miscellaneous Chapters, dividing the latter into such groups as the "Transmitters" (*shu Zhuang pai* 述莊派), the "Huang-Lao School" (*Huang-Lao pai* 黃老派), and the "Anarchists" (*wujun pai* 無君派).

The most serious and sustained challenge to this prevailing consensus on the *Zhuangzi* in recent Western scholarship is offered by Esther Klein in her article, "Were There 'Inner Chapters' in the Warring States? A New Examination of Evidence about the *Zhuangzi*." Klein takes a cue from REN Jiyu's 任繼愈 claim that the Inner Chapters are the works of later Zhuangists, and challenges the established consensus on the composition and authorship of the *Zhuangzi*, at least the Inner Chapters. The most significant findings in Klein's article are the following two points:

> First, the "core *Zhuangzi*" in SIMA Qian's time and before did not include the seven inner chapters: either they were not a significant unit distinct from other proto-*Zhuangzi* materials, or they did not exist in their received form.
>
> Second, there may be a "core *Zhuangzi*," suggested (albeit tentatively) by citation patterns and excavated texts. Regardless of who actually composed this set of texts, the *impression* they give of their author as a person and a thinker dovetails far more closely with SIMA Qian's characterization of ZHUANG Zhou than with the ZHUANG Zhou of the "inner chapters" that philosophers know and love. (Klein 2011: 301; original italics)

One of the keys to Klein's questioning the scholarly consensus on the Inner Chapters being authored by the historical Zhuang Zhou is Sima Qian's biographical note on Zhuang Zhou, which mentions the titles of several of the *Zhuangzi* chapters, namely "The Old Fisherman" ("Yufu 漁父"), "Robber Zhi" ("Daozhi 盜跖"), "Rifling Trunks" ("Quqie 胠篋"), and "Kangsangzi 亢桑子" that is likely the variant of "Gengsang Chu 庚桑楚" in the received text. However, these are not among the beloved Inner Chapters. Klein argues, sensibly, that the lack of reference to the Inner Chapters in Sima Qian's account of Zhuang Zhou's works, though inconclusive in terms of its implications, should at least call into question the almost universal acceptance of the Inner Chapters being the core *Zhuangzi*, authored by the historical Zhuang Zhou portrayed in the *Shiji*, considered to be chronologically prior to the other chapters.

Klein has assembled an impressive array of historical sources to make a powerful case about the unsettled nature of the received *Zhuangzi* and the problems with the prevailing opinion on what constitutes the core *Zhuangzi*. Her questioning the attribution of the authorship of the Inner Chapters to the historical Zhuang Zhou portrayed in the *Shiji* and the canonical status accorded to the Inner Chapters by scholars of classical Chinese philosophy is worth further studying. However, the implication of Klein's finding to the project of classical Chinese philosophy is profoundly troubling. So far in modern philosophical interpretations of the *Zhuangzi*, the Inner Chapters provide the foundation for scholars to construct versions of the Zhuangzian philosophy while the other chapters play a supplementary role. The destabilization of the authorship of the Inner Chapters can put such philosophical projects in jeopardy. That is, without being able to attribute the authorship of the Inner Chapters to a single person known as Zhuang Zhou, the philosophizing enterprise might become groundless. This conundrum has to do with critical, but often implicit, roles authorship plays in our philosophical interpretation of a text. Let us take a closer look at such roles.

4 Multiple Roles of Authorship

Authorship is more than a matter of whether or not someone is the actual author of a text. Rather, the assumption of a single author makes possible a particular interpretative strategy. That is, when we approach a text, the implicit or explicit assumption of its being composed by a single author sets the boundary of interpretative strategies, in terms of its textual unity and coherence, grounded in the unity of authorial intent and agency, however nebulous they turn out to be. For example, the advantage of anchoring the Inner Chapters to the historical Zhuang Zhou is that scholars of classical Chinese philosophy can use the person of Zhuang Zhou depicted in the *Shiji* as an interpretative linchpin to approach the Inner Chapters by attributing authorial intent, often implicitly, to their interpretation of the text, however problematic the idea of authorial intent is *when it is made explicit*.

The problematic nature of appealing to the authorial intent in textual exegesis was addressed by W. K. Wimsatt Jr. and M. C. Beardsley in their influential 1946 article "The Intentional Fallacy." Wimsatt and Beardsley dismiss the relevance, desirability, and public availability of authorial intent to the interpretation of a text. This is known as the anti-intentionalist position, in contrast with the so-called intentionalist position that maintains the availability and relevance of the authorial intent in the scholarly

discussions of a text. The practical difficulty with the access to the author(s)' intention can indeed be intractable such that it becomes a distraction to the scholarly interpretation of the text under discussion.

However, authorial intent is not so easily dispensed with in textual interpretations. Nor does it exhaust the role played by the author in the scholarly discourse on the works that bear his name. As Michel Foucault points out in his famous 1969 article, "What is an Author?," "it is not enough to declare that we should do without the writer (the author) and study the work itself. The word *work* and the unity that it designates are probably as problematic as the status of the author's individuality" (Foucault 1998: 208; original italics). Authorship establishes a boundary in the interpretation of texts deemed acceptable within the contemporary academic discourse, however porous and contested that boundary actually is. As Steve Coutinho admits in his book on the *Zhuangzi*, even though he is "skeptical that there can be such a thing as *the* interpretation with which the author would uniquely agree if confronted with it," he still accepts that "such an idea may function as a regulative ideal for one possible, and very valuable, type of interpretative methodology" (Coutinho 2004: 34; original italics). It is indeed much more difficult to discard the often implicit but operative idea of authorship in our philosophical interpretation of a text than we realize since to treat a text as an integral whole is to regard it as representing the voice of a unified authorial agent.

This critical role of the author in our interpretation of a text starts with the author's name, which is much more than a proper name. To quote Foucault again, an author's name

> performs a certain role with regard to narrative discourse, assuring a classificatory function. Such a name permits one to group together a certain number of texts, define them, differentiate them from and contrast them to others. In addition, it establishes a relationship among the texts. … The author function is therefore characteristic of the mode of existence, circulation, and functioning of certain discourses within a society. (Foucault 1998: 210–211)

In other words, an author is not just a historical person. S/he is also a critical function—Foucault calls it "author function"—that frames certain discourses. This is clearly the case with ZHUANG Zhou and the *Zhuangzi* in the Chinese tradition. First of all, the image of a hermitic, witty, playful, iconoclastic and at times outrageous ZHUANG Zhou was central to the production and redaction of the *Zhuangzi*. The multivocality of the *Zhuangzi* is indicative of the way its compilers and editors, GUO Xiang being the most famous one, went about putting a diverse body of texts together under the titular umbrella of *Zhuangzi*, presumably guided by such an image of ZHUANG Zhou. Scholars have speculated that Guo redacted a larger and more heterogeneous body of the text available to him into its current shape by taking out some of the more incompatible texts from the corpus, presumably to preserve its textual integrity and the "authentic" voice of the historical ZHUANG Zhou. Second, the poignant images and striking style of argument in the *Zhuangzi* has inspired and shaped a unique form of intellectual discourse and aesthetic sensibility distinct from others like Confucianism in Chinese history. The figure of ZHUANG Zhou is integral to the interpretation and transmission of the *Zhuangzi* and the tradition it has inspired. In other words, the

Zhuang Zhou in Chinese history, as the figurehead of a particular intellectual discourse, is much more than the historical Zhuang Zhou who lived in the Warring States period and was the putative author of the *Zhuangzi*.

Furthermore, as Foucault perceptively observes,

> The author provides the basis for explaining not only the presence of certain events in a work, but also their transformations, distortions, and diverse modifications (through his biography, the determination of his individual perspective, the analysis of his social position, and the revelation of his basic design). The author is also the principle of a certain unity of writing—all differences having to be resolved, at least in part, by the principles of evolution, maturation, or influence. The author also serves to neutralize the contradictions that may emerge in a series of texts: there must be—at a certain level of his thought or desire, of his consciousness or unconscious—a point where contradictions are resolved, where incompatible elements are at last tied together or organized around a fundamental or originating contradiction. Finally, the author is a particular source of expression that, in more or less completed forms, is manifested equally well, and with similar validity, in works, sketches, letters, fragments, and so on. (Foucault 1998: 214–215)

As Lewis's analysis of the invention of Qu Yuan demonstrates, the personal history of an author provides a useful anchoring structure in presenting a coherent picture of the works attributed to him by laying out a trajectory of ideas in them. This interpretative strategy is especially helpful when there are variations in the works. The shadowy presence of the author in our interpretation of a body of texts that bear his name sets up important boundaries for our philosophical analysis and construction such that textual differences can be attributed to the development of the author's thinking, instead of to other people's voices. Liu Xiaogan's argument, that we need to challenge the assumption that one thinker can have only one thought in our analysis of the *Zhuangzi* (Liu 1994: 26), very much echoes Foucault's observation here.

Clearly, authorship is not just an issue concerning the historicity of the authorial person, but is also integral to the viability of the philosophical discourse of a text that bears an author's name. Philosophers rely on the idea of author in their philosophical analysis and construction rather than problematizing it since the latter can easily lead them down a different line of inquiry away from philosophical explorations. Therefore, to question Zhuang Zhou as the author of the *Zhuangzi*, while invaluable as a Sinological project in bringing to light the historicity of the multiple voices represented in the text and the various contexts of its composition, compilation, and transmission, can threaten the philosophical project built on the image of an intellectual giant that is the very creation of the *Zhuangzi*, its internal tensions notwithstanding. Plainly put, the historicist Sinological approach to Chinese classics can potentially deprive the philosophical approach of its scholarly object, rendering the latter objectless. Therefore, the stake of authorship in the project of classical Chinese philosophy cannot be higher.

If scholars of Chinese philosophy can no longer build their philosophical project on the Sinological discourse of authorship, they need an alternative philosophical model of authorship that can serve as the foundation for philosophizing a text, especially when confronting conceptual incoherence or contradictions, without having to endlessly

historicize an issue. What is needed here is the development of new conceptual resources to deal with the problem of authorship and the related issue of textuality that can accommodate the philosophical approach to classics like the *Zhuangzi* while respecting the findings of Sinological scholarship. This is what we will do in the next section.

We will examine some of the disciplinary differences between Sinology and philosophy on the problem of authorship and the related issue of textuality, especially when dealing with textual tensions, and will try to articulate the operative models of authorship and textuality in Sinology and philosophy so as to accommodate the integrity of both discourses on Chinese classics. I will propose that we distinguish historical author from textual author and authorial intent from textual intent when interpreting historically important works like the *Zhuangzi*. Historical author and its corollary authorial intent belong to the Sinological discourse, whereas textual author and its corollary textual intent fall within the domain of philosophical discourse. Furthermore, on the related issue of textuality, I will argue that we should differentiate inherited texts from original texts when studying historically significant texts like the *Zhuangzi*, in order to provide an intellectual space for the philosophical approach to Chinese classics that focuses on the philosophical integrity of ideas in received texts while respecting the Sinological interest in discovering the original texts and all the historical entailments such endeavors require.

5 Philosophy and Sinology on Textual Coherence and Authorship

A text, especially an ancient text with its ambiguous compositional history, has tensions or even contradictions within itself, to a greater or lesser extent. When scholars approach such a text, those tensions and contradictions need to be explained, especially the obvious ones. Implicit in this scholarly endeavor is the notion of coherence. That is, instances of incoherence need to be problematized in order to examine how they originated such that the incoherence can be accounted for, whereas a coherent text needs no special explanation to account for its very coherence.

There are at least two kinds of coherence at stake in the discussion of a classic like the *Zhuangzi*, namely textual and conceptual. A textually coherent work is one that is stylistically and linguistically consistent; a conceptually coherent text is one that does not contradict itself (and if it does, there must be sensible reasons). Although both philosophers and Sinologists deal with both kinds of coherence, Sinologists are much better equipped to deal with textual (in)coherence, while philosophers are more excited about the conceptual one. However, it is on the subject of conceptual (in)coherence and contradictions that Sinologists and philosophers often diverge in their approaches and the gap of disciplinary norms between Sinology and philosophy becomes most striking.

When scholars try to explain conceptual contradictions in a text, if the text is presumed to have a single author, the apparent contradictions become either intentional or unintentional. This is crucial since intentional contradictions provide a fertile ground for philosophizing, whereas unintentional contradictions might simply be cases of intellectual sloppiness and confusion in the author's thinking. Ludwig Wittgenstein is said to have observed that certain conceptual self-contradictions in some texts are simply too obvious to be simple mistakes. This can only apply to intentional self-

contradictions. Put simply, the single-author premise allows philosophers to construct a philosophical system that can account for the obvious tensions within a text.

For philosophers, there are at least three ways to account for conceptual tensions in a given text or body of texts, once the singularity of the authorship can be established or assumed: either such tensions can be attributed to the fact that the author is addressing different audiences within different contexts, or the tensions are only apparent but not real upon further philosophical probing, or they might reflect a deeper structure of potentially incompatible elements in reality, rationality, or a value system that needs to be accounted for through vigorous philosophical analysis. All three lines of inquiry are appealing to philosophers, especially the latter two, since to pursue them requires philosophical (rather than historical) reasoning.

On the other hand, if the text is taken to be the work of multiple authors, those apparent contradictions can often be more easily attributed to the fact that it represents the voices of many people whose intents are simply in conflict with one another. This line of inquiry is more exciting to a Sinologist whose first inclination, when faced with textual tensions, is to investigate whether such tensions are the product of the historical vicissitudes in the origination of the text, namely, the result of multiple authorial/editorial persons addressing different audiences, interest, and issues through a prolonged period of time. An analysis of textual incoherence provides a Sinologist a potent tool to deal with conceptual incoherence historically (as opposed to philosophically), as such tensions are often manifested as the linguistic and stylistic inconsistencies of the text. Studying those tensions allows a Sinologist to probe into the textual history that can reveal the complexity of the larger social, cultural, and intellectual history reflected in the way the text is produced, redacted, and transmitted.

Let us use an example from the Inner Chapters to illustrate how these two approaches deal with textual tensions. In the "Worldly Affairs among People" ("Ren Jian Shi 人間世") chapter, Zhuangzi, through the mouth of Confucius, sets down two constraints for living in the world, *ming* 命 and *yi* 義. The former refers to one's filial love of one's parents and the latter a minister's service to his lord. Here Zhuangzi is rather unequivocal that there is no escape from these two commandments (Graham 2001: 71). However, in the "On the Equalization of Things" ("Qi Wu Lun 齊物論") chapter, he calls on us to "forget the years, forget duty (*yi* 義), be shaken into motion by the limitless, and so find things their lodging-places in the limitless" (Graham 2001: 61). Clearly there is a conflict regarding the proper attitude toward *yi*. If the two chapters are considered to be the work of a single author, a philosopher can propose at least one of three ways to deal with the conceptual tension, all based on the implicit and charitable assumption that the author is aware of the conflict: first, the tension might reflect different stages of Zhuangzi's thinking; second, the tension is only apparent but not real since the "Ren Jian Shi" chapter deals specifically with living in the world, whereas the "Qi Wu Lun" chapter focuses more on transcending worldly norms; third, the contradiction between keeping one's duty to one's lord and leaving it aside cannot be explained away as they are simply incommensurable positions, and Zhuangzi does not have a solution to the problem. There are of course other ways to address this tension philosophically, but the three are listed as examples to illustrate the way a philosopher tends to approach the problem. On the other hand, if textual analysis of the two chapters can somehow show that they come from different people, the

tension can then be easily attributed to the fact that those authors simply have different ideas about *yi*, hence losing an opportunity to engage the tension philosophically.

In a word, a Sinologist historicizes a text to reconcile tensions within it by constructing a historical narrative to provide a better understanding of its historical context, whereas a philosopher philosophizes the tensions involved by speculating on their implications on the nature of the natural and human worlds without necessarily looking into the historicity of the tensions involved. Put differently, a Sinologist is primarily interested in studying the history of a particular period and a particular region within which a text was produced, preserved, and transmitted, whereas a philosopher is more interested in the conceptual world that is the product of the text, however the text was put together historically (the boundaries in the scholarship are often not as sharply drawn as is portrayed here but the "ideal types" I am conceptualizing in this essay can help to clarify what is at stake disciplinarily).

Consequently, we have two methodological approaches to achieve conceptual coherence of a text when confronted with internal tensions: philosophical/synchronic and historical/diachronic. Philosophical interpretations of a classical Chinese text always involve some kind of conceptual reconstruction to produce a coherent philosophical system in order to encapsulate the philosophical complexity of the text and find a philosophically compelling way to accommodate its conflicting elements within a larger system.[8] This is viable only when the text is assumed to have a single author. By contrast, Sinologists are much more interested in constructing a historical narrative about the vicissitudes of the particular social, cultural, and intellectual context of a particular region and/or a particular period in accounting for textual tensions within a text. A Sinologist's training and interest more likely incline her to treat the conceptual incoherence as representing voices of different people under different contexts, hence historicizing away the tensions involved. Put simply, in approaching classical texts philosophers tend to build on the idea of a unified authorial agent, whereas Sinologists tend to problematize that very idea. Clearly historicizing a text and philosophizing it can be at odds with each other such that the former can deprive the latter of the opportunity to engage philosophically a text that has a complicated compositional history.

When confronted by such divergent disciplinary demands and norms in interpreting Chinese classics, some scholars of classical Chinese philosophy have adopted the strategy of discussing a classical text on Sinological ground in order to establish their Sinological *bona fide* before engaging the text philosophically. Essentially their strategy is to target two distinct, though at times overlapping, audiences in the hope that Sinologists will be satisfied with their Sinological knowledge and philosophers will be happy with their discussion on ideas in the text. The Chinese version of Liu Xiaogan's book on the *Zhuangzi* is representative of this effort, wherein Liu plays the roles of both

[8] This does not mean that a scholar always has to interpret an entire text. She can, of course, focus on some parts of the text, a passage, a few sentences, or even several phrases in her philosophical interpretations, as an anonymous reader rightly points out. Still, her understanding of the entire text lurks in the background within which her interpretation of those selected parts of the text is situated. Otherwise, there would be little or no constraint on the interpretation of those parts with troubling consequences. For example, without some, at least general and implicit, understanding of the *Zhuangzi* in its entirety, a scholar would be free to interpret Zhuangzi as a Confucian, based on some selected parts of the text, without having to reconcile such an interpretation with many other parts of the text wherein Zhuangzi makes a mockery of the Confucians.

a Sinologist and a philosopher. The scholarly reception of this book in the West is rather instructive of the scholarly interest in the contemporary study of Chinese classics within the Western academy. The Chinese version of his book has a large segment on Zhuangzi's philosophy, but it is Liu's discussion about the *Zhuangzi* on Sinological ground that has captured scholarly attention, as reflected in the way his book is translated and cited in Western scholarship. This is indicative of the center of gravity in the current Chinese *philosophical* discourse within the Western academy that tilts heavily in the direction of Sinology.

However, quite often Sinological and philosophical *discourses* do not really engage each other, as they have different scholarly objectives and follow different disciplinary norms. Nor is the historicist Sinological discourse always helpful to the philosophical interpretation of Chinese classics, as we have seen previously. Therefore, the tension in the strategy adopted by many scholars of Chinese philosophy, to target two distinct though sometimes overlapped audiences in Sinology and philosophy, needs to find a better solution so that philosophers can be allowed to entertain ideas in Chinese classics more freely without having to engage in the Sinological dance that is not always integral to the philosophical project. This is precisely the sentiment Fingarette expressed in his exchange with Csikszentmihalyi.

In order to ease the disciplinary conflict in the interpretation of Chinese classics between Sinology and philosophy, I propose that we distinguish between historical author and textual author. A historical author is a person who has left behind traces in historical records, in addition to the text traditionally attributed to him, which support the claim of authorship (the ambiguity and complexity of the concept notwithstanding), whereas a textual author is the personality who has been credited as the author of a classic in a tradition. The boundary between these two concepts is not always sharply drawn and they often overlap, but they are distinct enough to warrant a conceptual differentiation in order to articulate the discrete scholarly objects of the disciplines involved.

A historical author does not have to be the "writer" of his text, given the ambiguous status of early texts whose production often presupposes a dialogical or instructional context, an invisible scribe of the conversation and other voices speaking through the texts (Lewis 1999: 83). In those cases, a historical author can be understood to be an, or even the, originator of the text, but all such claims, including the evolution of the very concept of authorship, require historians' investigation by carefully combing through historical records. On the other hand, a textual author is an authorial personality that is primarily the product of a text, whether through traditional attribution or created by the text itself. For example, the (putative) historical author of the *Zhuangzi* is ZHUANG Zhou depicted in SIMA Qian's *Shiji* and the textual author of the *Zhuangzi* is Zhuangzi who emerges *from the text* as someone who is hermetic, witty, and iconoclastic, internal tensions notwithstanding. Historical author and textual author coincide when the authorship is not disputed (e.g., SIMA Qian and the author of *Shiji*), but the two diverge when authorship is in doubt (e.g., ZHUANG Zhou and the author of the *Zhuangzi*).

Correspondingly, we can also differentiate authorial intent from textual intent, aligning the former with historical author and the latter with textual author. The concept of textual intent allows an interpreter to make use of the authorial personality created by the text, the textual author, by attributing intention to it in the interpreter's effort to understand the totality of the text and construct a coherent conceptual universe

available in the text. The pair of historical author and authorial intent has more to do with the historicity of the person(s) of author and his (or their) intent(s), whereas the pair of textual author and textual intent emphasizes the integrity of the text itself that produces various interpretative constructions in relative independence of the historical author and his intent.

Textual author and textual intent are postulated on two basic premises. First, the concepts are grounded in the fact that a historically influential text has created an authorial personality that possesses a distinct character and intention of its own, whatever the historical author's intent was. Second, the text has been treated as presenting a largely coherent body of ideas by the tradition within which it has exerted significant historical impact through successive generations of commentators and critics, regardless of whether or not such coherence is apparent from a modern scholarly perspective. If the study of Chinese philosophy is a way to study Chinese culture, it is important to study the conceptual resources available to Chinese intellectuals through the ages. Importantly, however, textual author and textual intent are *not given*, but rather *constructed* by exegetes in order to achieve conceptual coherence of the text within specific interpretative contexts, whether historical or contemporary, without presupposing the singularity of the historical author or even privileging the author(s) as necessarily the best interpreter of his/their own text.

Differentiating between historical author and textual author and between authorial intent and textual intent can help to preserve the integrity of a text that has taken on a life of its own. Regardless of how a classic was put together and whom it has been attributed to, it has been read as a single text in a culture and has created a distinct conceptual universe that has shaped the worldview of people in that culture. This means that there is some degree of conceptual coherence *that can be accomplished and has been accomplished* within the tradition, if such coherence is not apparent, *prima facie*, from a more critical contemporary scholarly perspective.

If historical author is the prerogative of historians and authorial intent is largely inaccessible and hence a problematic, if not illegitimate, object of scholarly inquiry, textual author and textual intent can offer an alternative framework for the philosophical discourse as they provide a new foundation for philosophical reconstructions of the classics. That is, scholars of classical Chinese philosophy can bracket the issue of historical author and its corollary authorial intent, and instead philosophize on the ground of textual author and textual intent, since the scholarly object of classical Chinese philosophy is precisely those influential, received texts and the conceptual universes they create that have continued to shape the Chinese intellectual landscape.

Let us call such historically influential texts "inherited texts," as opposed to "original texts" which emerged at a particular historical juncture,[9] to further illuminate the disciplinary divide between Sinology and philosophy in terms of their scholarly objects. Put simply, the scholarly objects operative in Sinology and philosophy are different when it comes to treating the Chinese classics: the discourse on "original" Chinese texts is the prerogative of Sinology, whereas inherited Chinese texts is mostly

[9] I am inspired by the constitutional scholarship in interpreting the American constitution, those who advocate that the constitution is a living and evolving document versus those who claim to stand by the original intent of its framers. The title of the book by E. Bruce Brooks and A. Taeko Brooks, *The Original Analects* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), is also an inspiration in my coining the terms, original and inherited texts. The word "inherited" is chosen over "living" in coining the term "inherited texts" in order to avoid adjudicating what constitutes "living" texts, especially when it comes to texts like the Mozi.

what interest philosophers. The former focuses on the historicity of the texts, the circumstances of their production and circulation, and so on, whereas the latter places much more emphasis on studying the conceptual resources contained in the inherited texts available to Chinese intellectuals over the ages and on reconstructing those ideas as a potential conceptual resource in dealing with philosophical issues of contemporary significance, often in dialogue with Western philosophy.

By training and inclination, Sinologists are much more responsive to archaeological discoveries of newly available texts, since they give Sinologists better access to the original texts without the intervening centuries of textual mutations, whereas philosophers are much more interested in exploring new ways to read the received texts, the inherited texts, especially in dialogue with Western philosophers. On the other hand, inherited texts are particularly invaluable to philosophers precisely because it is they that have exerted influence on the tradition under study, not necessarily the original texts. A case in point: a Sinological approach to the *Zhuangzi* emphasizes the historical, cultural, and intellectual contexts of its production as well as the vicissitudes of its redactions and its historical reception (e.g., Klein 2011). On the other hand, a philosophical approach is more interested in explaining why the conceptual apparatus available in the text is philosophically compelling from a contemporary perspective and can be fruitfully appropriated as conceptual resources for contemporary philosophical discourse on metaphysics, ethics, and politics, and so on (e.g., Huang 2010). Clearly, the scholarly objects philosophers and historians work with are quite distinct, and such distinctions should be accommodated in the pluralistic contemporary academic discourse. Fingarette's exchange with Csikszentmihalyi crystallizes what is at stake for scholars of classical Chinese philosophy.

However, can the notion of textual author be applied to texts whose historical authorship is in even greater doubt than the *Zhuangzi*?[10] For example, Western Sinology has long reached a strong consensus that there is little, if any, historical connection between the Laozi 老子 depicted in the *Shiji* and the author of the *Dao De Jing* 道德經 and that the text was not the work of a single person within a short span of time. The gap between textual and historical authors in the case of the *Dao De Jing* is one of the biggest among the inherited texts since there might be no overlap between the two at all. Still, the text has been treated as a single text in Chinese history and the conceptual universe generated in the text has exerted a powerful impact in Chinese intellectual history. In this regard, it makes perfect sense to discuss the conceptual world available in the inherited text of the *Dao De Jing* by relying on the notion of textual author to *construct* a coherent conceptual framework that can be construed as the textual intent. Put differently, as long as it still makes sense to talk about a philosophical vision contained in the *Dao De Jing*, the notions of textual author and textual intent are useful in the philosophical interpretation of the text. In fact, textual author and intent are especially useful for philosophical explorations of texts that have dubious historical authorship.

In many ways, contemporary scholars of classical Chinese philosophy are not unlike some of the traditional commentators of the classics over the ages in that they both treat the texts as an integral whole in order to appropriate ideas for their own contemporary audience. As LIU Xiaogan demonstrates, traditional commentators like ZHU Xi 朱熹 are

[10] I would like to thank one of the anonymous reviewers for raising this question.

creative thinkers in appropriating the Confucian classics to construct a coherent and cogent philosophical system when they engage in contemporary debates of their time, even though Zhu's commentaries on the Confucian classics are not necessarily the most useful ones if our goal is to understand those classical texts in their originating historical contexts (Liu 2007, 2008). Indeed, the differences between traditional and modern interpreters of the classics are better understood in terms of the vast chasm in the contexts and audience of their interpretations, traditional versus modern as well as Chinese versus global.

6 Conclusion

The roles played by Western Sinology in the contemporary philosophical interpretations of Chinese classics can be summed up in terms of the following three kinds. First, it offers invaluable and important historical, intellectual, and linguistic contexts to the texts, and let us call this the preparer. Second, it questions the premise of the philosophical approach by challenging the coherence and the authorship of the texts. This is the role of a challenger, the focus of this essay. Third, and somewhat ironically, it sometimes also offers scholars of Chinese philosophy an easy escape when faced with difficult conceptual tensions in a text, and let us call this the jailbreaker. That is, Sinological maneuvers can offer a useful or even convenient tool when scholars of Chinese philosophy are confronted with philosophically difficult issues since they can always appeal to Sinological specifics, like historical vicissitudes of the text, to dodge the problems. The latter two roles played by Sinology can potentially undermine the integrity, or even legitimacy, of the philosophical approach to Chinese classics and scholars of Chinese philosophy need to have a clear-eyed view of the stakes involved.

It is, however, important to recognize the constructive role of Sinology in the project of Chinese philosophy, as the preparer. That is, Sinological knowledge prepares the necessary historical, intellectual, and linguistic contexts for the philosophical approach to Chinese classics. It is neither possible nor desirable for scholars of Chinese philosophy to completely ignore Sinological scholarship (despite the fact that many Sinologists have been rather ignorant of scholarly works in Chinese philosophy). Due to the peculiar status of Chinese philosophy, situated between Sinology and philosophy, there is no escape from Sinology if one wants to study the classics philosophically with proper cultural and intellectual sensibility, even though a scholar of Chinese philosophy does not have to engage in the historicist Sinological *discourse* per se. The more Sinological knowledge a scholar has, the more culturally rich and grounded her philosophical interpretations of Chinese inherited texts can be. But scholars of Chinese philosophy should not keep their eyes off the primary objective of their endeavors, namely the philosophical integrity and implications of a large body of classics whose conceptual universes have shaped the Chinese cultural and intellectual outlooks. If Plato and Aristotle have relevance in contemporary intellectual life, so do Confucius and Zhuangzi. Given the dominance of historicism in Western Sinological discourse, scholars of Chinese philosophy need to carefully weigh historical evidence against the potentials for philosophically creative explorations of a text such that philosophical interests are not completely marginalized by Sinological concerns when it comes to the interpretations of Chinese classics.

There is a parallel debate on the legitimacy of Chinese philosophy, primarily within the Chinese academic community with occasional opining by Western philosophers. There the focus is on the very definition of philosophy and whether it is applicable to the Chinese intellectual traditions. As Carine Defoort observes, the definition of philosophy has been an opaque and fluid one in the history of Western philosophy that has not been consistently applied by those who reject Chinese philosophy (Defoort 2001: 407). She proposes that it might be more fruitful to consider various philosophical traditions as a case of family resemblance that shares the family name of "philosophy" and to think of Chinese philosophy as an "adopted" child of the family with all the promises and difficulties therein (Defoort 2001: 407–409).

Rein Raud, a scholar of Japanese philosophy, echoes much of Defoort's sentiment about the debate on non-Western philosophy. That is, a very narrow definition of philosophy would exclude many prominent philosophers in the history of Western philosophy, such as Socrates, Diogenes, or Nietzsche (Raud 2006: 619). A more serious problem for Raud is the two self-contradictory premises assumed by Western philosophy that philosophy is "both universal and Western at the same time" (Raud 2014: 17), hence masquerading a larger context that is not always philosophical in nature. As the leading Chinese intellectual historian Ge Zhaoguang 葛兆光 suggests, the label "philosophy" is less about definition than about history and identity and the question of whether or not there is Chinese philosophy is thus a pseudo-question (Ge 2001). We will not get into the sweeping debate on whether or not there is Chinese philosophy in this essay. The philosophical worthiness of Chinese texts needs to be studied case by case, through careful scholarly interpretations by specialists. There is no point in foreclosing such effort. Indeed, most scholars of Chinese philosophy in the West are more interested in the possibility of appropriating Chinese texts to engage in contemporary philosophical discussions. For them, the Chineseness of Chinese philosophy is its very attraction.

So what is exactly Chinese about Chinese philosophy? Our discussion here may provide one useful way to think about this question without essentializing it as the uniqueness of some "epistemological nativism."[11] The Chineseness in Chinese philosophy can refer to the fact that for Chinese intellectuals, texts like the *Zhuangzi* are inherited texts that have continued to shape the Chinese intellectual outlook. Accordingly, what makes a text like the *Zhuangzi* a text of Chinese philosophy is, aside from its composition in Chinese, the fact that it has exerted significant impact in shaping the Chinese intellectual landscape by providing foundational vocabularies, arguments, imageries and other conceptual resources for Chinese intellectuals over the centuries. The scholarly object of Chinese philosophy is precisely the conceptual resources available in Chinese inherited texts that can be rigorously critiqued and appropriated, through fruitfully dissecting and constructing the textual author and the textual intent within various interpretative contexts, for contemporary philosophical discourses and explorations.

[11] John Makeham defines it as "the idea that the articulation and development of China's philosophical heritage must draw exclusively on the endogenous paradigms and norms of China's indigenous heritage" (Makeham 2012: 347).

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