

H-ASIA
October 15, 2004

Mind-body dualism in China

From: John_Groves@FERRIS.EDU

Asia scholars: I've been working on Chinese mentality, and it seems to be a commonplace among Chinese philosophy experts (Ames, Graham, Fingarette and others) that China has nothing comparable to the mind/body dualism of the West. While it is true that there is little discussion of the mind-body problem in Chinese philosophy, Ancient Chinese poetry does seem to indicate dualism. I am thinking of the "Summons of the Soul" from the Ch'u Tz'u. Consider the following lines:

"Oh, soul, come back! In the east you cannot abide....Oh soul, come back, in the south you cannot abide....Oh soul, come back! For the West has many perils..." and so on. The context is one in which the character is near death and fears the loss of the soul. [David Hawkes, trans. Songs of the South, p.104.]

Sounds very dualistic to me. If the soul can separate from the body, how is that not dualism?

Comments?

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H-ASIA
October 16, 2004

Mind-body dualism in China (two replies)

From: Paul R. Goldin <prg@SAS.UPENN.EDU>

Is it appropriate to offer references to one's own work on H-ASIA? I share J. Randall Groves's doubts about the conventional view that Chinese philosophy knows nothing of a mind-body dualism, and have explored the issue in this article:

"A Mind-Body Problem in the Zhuangzi?" in Hiding the World in the World: Uneven Discourses on the Zhuangzi, ed. Scott Cook, SUNY Series in Chinese Philosophy and Culture (Albany, 2003), 226-47.

Paul R. Goldin
University of Pennsylvania

From: Michael Stanley-Baker <mstanle@indiana.edu>

Dear Dr. Groves;

I'm writing a term paper on the subject, so just thought I'd share...

Your citation 'O Soul come back' from the Chu3ci2 reminded me of the article of the same name by Yu Yingshi (Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies, 47.2 1987) which discusses the (at least) tripartite concepts of 'soul' in early Chinese conceptions - the hun2, the po4 and the shen2 .

Yu discusses your point about the hun2 in the Zhao1hun2 poem of the Chuci, in relation to the fu4 ritual, where the priest dashes up to the rooftop, and swings the clothing of the deceased, calling "O soul come back!" The poem shows a predominant focus on the hun2, and points towards a duality, where the qi4hun2 (energy and cloudsoul - quick, ascends after death) is balanced against the xing2po4 (body and whitesoul - slow and descends after death).

But the duality is between earthly and heavenly souls, which, although they govern body and consciousness, are themselves distinct material from the body itself. The body, in this makeup, is usually contrasted with qi4 (pneuma), a substance that doesn't imply consciousness. It's worth noting too that the hun2(soul) in the Zhao1hun2 is one which is dissipated to the four corners, quite different from a Cartesian notion of a distinct, 'thing that thinks' after death.

But see also a refutation of this article by K.E. Brashier "Han Thanatology and the Division of 'Souls'" in Early China Vol 21, 1996, which argues against some of Yu's localizations of the destinations of the hun2 and po4 after death, and points out the different conceptions of them which are evidenced in Han tombs. It is difficult to say that any one concept of body or soul(s) was universally accepted in Han China, or across any length of time.

In the Wei-Jin period, however, extensive debate about the nature of the soul takes exactly the terms "soul-body" xing2shen2. This circles around the questions of whether the (qualities of) the soul can be revealed through observing the body (and its behaviours), around reincarnation, and around concepts of emptiness and form. Certainly dualistic concepts occurred here, yet in the midst of vigorous theoretical exploration, and the misalignment of Buddhist concepts of kong/se (Emptiness and Colour) with Daoist notions of you/wu (Being and Non-being). For a very lively discussion of character appraisal and mind/body dualism in cultural practice, see "Spirit and Self in Medieval China" by Qian Nianxiu, U. of Hawaii Press, 2001. You may find this interesting, because aesthetics, personality and individualism play a large role in Qian's discussion of the "New Tales of the World" Shi4shuo1 Xin1yu3 which was cited almost verbatim in contemporary histories of the period. This may speak to some of your earlier discussions about aesthetics, self and history in the PHILOFHI postings in 2000.

It might be more accurate, in sum, to say that Chinese have frequently conceived the body and soul in dualistic terms, but it would be inaccurate to map these dualities onto European ones.

I have a question about Western 'dualities.' Wasn't it in "The Meditations" that Descartes described the link between the soul and the body as mediated via 'animal spirits?' How did we get a dualistic conception from that? If this was indeed Descartes' model, then would this concept and other contemporary European analogues bear more fruitful comparison with Chinese models? I'm trying to recall a source for the model of the self as body, pneumas and spirit: body Shen1(or xing2), pneuma qi4 and spirit shen2. Does anyone have any ideas?

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H-ASIA
October 18, 2004

Mind-body dualism (response)

From: Brian Hoffert <hoffert@sisna.com>

With regard to the question of "mind-body" dualism in Chinese conceptions of the soul, the difference between the Chinese concept and "Cartesian" dualism is that in China both the body and the soul are composed of qi (also spelled ch'i and translated in a variety of ways, including "psychophysical stuff,"

"material force," and "vital energy"), and hence are in some sense "physical"; needless to say, Descartes' whole point was that the soul was non-physical (and hence immortal). This has led to the classic problem with Cartesian dualism, namely if body and soul are two entirely different kinds of things, then how can one influence or affect the other? How can a non-physical soul cause a physical body to do anything, since physical bodies are moved by physical forces. This is precisely why scientific studies of the brain are so powerful: they demonstrate the physical changes that take place in the brain, leading to the physical firing of neurons, which stimulate physical nerve endings throughout the body (leading to muscle activity, etc.). Of course, the Chinese developed their own ways of thinking about the relationships between mind, body and soul, the point is that they do not run into the mind-body problem because mind and spirit are ultimately composed of the same "stuff" (i.e. qi) as body--they have simply taken on a different, more rarefied, form.

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H-ASIA
October 18, 2004

Dualism: mind/soul/body (response)

From: James D. Sellmann <jsellman@uog9.uog.edu>

First we have to ask what is dualism; are there different types, and what type were the noted scholars referring to and what type of dualism or non-dualism) have you identified in the Chuci (Ch'u Tzu)?

Usually the noted scholars are proposing that

there is no thing like Plato's ontological dualism or Descartes' epistemological dualism in some specific thinker such as Kongzi or Zhuangzi. Even in the Chuci, or Han culture in general, is there an ontological dualism of a really real world of perfect (Platonic) forms separate from this one? One will be hard pressed to find it in the texts. Even in the Chuci the soul is still traveling within the four directions; it is still in and of this here-now, natural, physical world. It is not an abstract form. Is the Chu soul part of a *res cogitans* or realm of cognition of Descartes? The Chu soul is embodied; it rides chariots and dragons and lives in the four directions or spatial world.

The mind (xin) is another matter it is a bodily organ, seat of consciousness, emotion and moral judgment, and is always embodied in Chinese texts, and usually embodied in the physical body.

There are other aspects of consciousness in the *gui*-ghost, *hun*-soul, *po*-soul, *shen*-spirit, and in different texts and cultural traditions of South, and South-west and North "China" aspects of consciousness do separate from the body, but they are still described as being embodied in their container(usually an apparition of the physical body). But these aspects of

out-of body consciousness are still part and parcel of the natural world. One of the best sources to turn to for textual and more general East Asian cultural evidence for this would be TOM (traditional oriental medicine). In Chinese medicine these aspects of consciousness are composed of qi (life energy; physical or material force, breath). So again the Platonic ontological dualism and the Cartesian epistemological dualism do not apply.

There are differences and even opposites in the East Asian non-dual, correlative world view, but they are interdependent, interpenetrating, moving in cycles, and transforming--not dualistic opposites. Hope this helps.

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H-ASIA
October 21,2004

Mind-body dualism in China

From: Joseph Adler <adlerj@kenyon.edu>

This discussion so far [as of 10/17] seems to be conflating the concepts of "dualism" and "difference." The claim that there is no mind-body dualism in traditional Chinese thought does not mean that the difference between mind and body was not recognized; the examples raised so far clearly demonstrate that it was, and this should not be surprising. The point is that "dualism" implies two non-overlapping, irreducible substances, such as Descartes' mind (that which thinks) and body (that which is extended in space). The various Chinese concepts of mind and soul, on the other hand, are all forms of qi, which is the fundamental substance of all existing things (body, mind, spirit, gods, ghosts).

Therefore no mind-body dualism is entailed, but there are obviously differences among the various forms of qi. Many scholars of Chinese thought prefer to use the admittedly ambiguous term "non-dualism" to describe this pattern of thinking, with non-dualism staking out a middle ground between "monism" (such as Sankara's system) and "dualism."

Might I shamelessly plug a paper I have written on this subject, focusing on the concept of shen (spirit) in Neo-Confucian discourse:

"Varieties

of Spiritual Experience: Shen in Neo-Confucian Discourse," in Confucian Spirituality, vol. 2, edited by Tu Weiming and Mary Evelyn Tucker (Crossroad, 2004).

Joseph Adler
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H-ASIA
October 22, 2004

Further comment re: Mind-Body Dualism in China

From: Paul R. Goldin <prg@sas.upenn.edu>

In response to Joseph Adler's statement, "The various Chinese concepts of mind and soul, on the other hand, are all forms of _qi_, which is the fundamental substance of all existing things (body, mind, spirit, gods, ghosts)":

The problem is that serious doubts about whether mental processes can indeed be located in the qi are frequently expressed in early Chinese philosophical literature. For example, in the "Dazongshi" chapter of Zhuangzi, in the passage dealing with Ziyu's illness, we are told that "there was disorder in his yin and yang qi, but his mind was at ease, as though there was nothing the matter." Or when Xunzi responds, in the "Zhenglun" chapter, to the argument that an aged ruler should abdicate, he states: "In his blood, qi, sinews, and energy, there may be decay, but in his wisdom, deliberation, choices, and rejections, there is no decay." Or in the Chuci: "Though my body be dismembered, I would still not change; for how could my mind reform through punishment?" I can't write Chinese characters on this machine, but the original texts corresponding to these and other passages are quoted in "A Mind-Body Problem in the Zhuangzi?"--the article I mentioned on here before--where I contend that the vision of the afterlife in the Zhuangzi is not comprehensible unless one assumes that the qi of the body is recycled after death and thereafter can take virtually any other form, but that some kind of disembodied mind, not identified by any precise term but still clearly described, lives on eternally after death.

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H-ASIA
October 22, 2004

Naive request for clarification on Mind-body dualism in China

From: Shawn McHale <mchale@gwu.edu>

I write in reference to Professor Joseph Adler's post of Oct. 21 in the contuing discussion of this thread.

This is probably a naive question, but are the distinctions between Cartesian dualism and Chinese difference (to use Joseph Adler's distinction) slightly exaggerated? It strikes this innocent observer (who is not a philosopher :)) that when individuals discuss Descartes, they forget the fact that for Descartes, the "mediator," for want of a better word, between mind and body is God. It is thus not quite true that there can be no established relationship between mind and body.

That being said, the God of Descartes does not seem to be analogous to _qi_. Once again, a bit naively, it would seem that Spinoza's god would be closer to _qi_ than Descartes'.

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H-ASIA
October 24, 2004

Further comment on discussion of Chinese Mind-Body Dualism

From: John C Didier <jcdidier@alumni.princeton.edu>

Regarding Professor Goldin's latest helpful contribution to the discussion, all of the examples cited from Zhuangzi, Xunzi, and Chuci indeed refer to a physical sort of _qi_ (or body), but this is the specific _qi_ level in the cycle of life-coming and death-going that has to do with the making of the physical stuff of the universe. There are other levels of _qi_, as well, including _jing_ ("quintessence"), _shen_ ("numen" or "spirit"), and _xing_ ("embodiment" or "form"), and they all are formed from and participate in the universe of the greater _qi_. Mental processes thus do not escape the bounds of this universal _qi_; nor does any sort of "soul" or immortal or physically-transcendent entity.

The "medieval" Chinese internal alchemists and other contemporary pursuers of internal cultivation recognized this distinction between a primal and universally immanent _qi_ and the specific level _qi_ in the creation of things, and they thus employed distinct characters for _qi_ to distinguish the one type from the other. The "yin/yang _qi_" of the Zhuangzi to which Professor Goldin refers indicates the _qi_ that forms physical stuff out of the greater or universal _qi_. When the text seems to distinguish between a _qi_ and a mind, then, really it distinguishes mind only from this _qi_ stuff that forms physical embodiment but which remains, within and throughout embodiment, a pneumatic energy that at one level makes "stuff" go. But there is within and through this lesser _qi_ always a primordial and quintessential _qi_, as well as a numenic (_shen_) type of _qi_, that, immanent, constitutes the essential energy of the universe, including the energy of will, mind, and thought.

I have appreciated Professor Goldin's and Adler's references to their own works, which will make good and informative reading. In turn, I might also shamelessly refer interested readers to my own work on the subject, my PhD dissertation that traces Chinese understandings of these levels of _qi_ in discourse dating from the Warring States

through the Song ("Way Transformation: Universal Unity in Warring States through Sung China -- The _Book of Transformation_ (_Hua Shu_) and the Renewal of Metaphysics in the Tenth Century"; Princeton, 1998).

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H-ASIA
October 24, 2004

Further comment on Mind-body dualism in Chinese thought

From: Brian Hoffert <hoffert@sisna.com>

I fully agree with John Didier's response to Paul Goldin, where he explains the examples provided by Professor Goldin in terms of different types (or "levels") of _qi_. More specifically, in the "Dazongshi" chapter of the Zhuangzi, the fact that there was "disorder in [Ziyu's] yin and yang qi, but his mind was at ease, as though there was nothing the matter" can be understood in terms of the type of self-cultivation practices described in the Neiye (for an excellent discussion of this text, see Hal Roth's _Original Tao: Inward Training and the Foundations of Taoist Mysticism_)**. According to which the heart/mind is emptied through apophatic meditation, creating a "lodging place" for the "numinous" (shen) power of the Tao, which is described by Professor Didier as the "essential energy of the universe, including the energy of will, mind, and thought." The Neiye describes the process by which this "numinous mind" arises in terms of a breath control technique whereby "vital energy" (qi, in this case referring to the air that one breathes) is circulated through the body, where it is refined into jing (quintessential energy), which in turn lodges in the heart/mind where it becomes the "numinous mind" (shen). Since this "numinous mind" is simply a refined form of qi, it clearly does not represent the type of distinction between mind and body that is usually connoted by the term "dualism." To return to the "Dazongshi" passage, his "yin and yang qi" is disordered because this is the inevitable fate of the body; however, his "mind" was at ease because it had been "emptied" of its self-centered contents, which were then replaced by a numinous force that allowed it to respond to events in the world with the "spontaneity" of the Tao. Since the "numinous mind" that is associated with the Tao is by definition "well-ordered" (a characteristic that is explicitly mentioned in the Neiye), there is no problem in saying that Ziyu's (bodily) qi was disordered while his (numinous) mind was "at ease, as though there was nothing the matter."

With regard to the second example, where Xunzi says "In his blood, qi, sinews, and energy, there may be decay, but in his wisdom, deliberation, choices, and rejections, there is no decay," the attempt to attribute a

metaphysical reality to "wisdom, deliberation, choices, and rejections" seems totally inappropriate, since the quote is readily understood without making such assumptions. More specifically, his body may be suffering the effects of age, but if he still possesses his mental faculties (wisdom) and is able to deliberate, make correct choices and reject incorrect ones, then his mind is unaffected by the physical changes that have attacked some parts of his body. Even if one adopts a completely materialistic perspective on the body, who would deny that some people's minds deteriorate before their bodies, whereas other people suffer significant bodily deterioration while their minds' remain as sharp as a tack!

As for the quote from the Chuci, since I don't have the precise reference it's hard to know the original context; based on the quote itself, however, I still don't see how this implies the type of mind-body dualism under discussion. As with the quote from Xunzi, the fact that Chinese thinkers were able to make a conceptual distinction between body, mind and soul does not imply that they thought of these distinctions in dualistic terms. In this case, the author clearly assumes that his soul will continue to exist after his body is dismembered; moreover, it is equally clear that the physical punishment of the body will not result in the reformation of his soul. However, when it says "I will not change" and "how could my mind reform through punishment," the point is not that "I" and "my mind" are not subject to any type of change, but rather that the dismemberment of his body will not convince him that he has done something wrong, for he presumably believes that he is being punished for a crime that he did not commit. (I apologize if my lack of context has led my interpretation astray, but this is what seems to be implied by the quote.)

In short, all three of these examples can be easily understood without reference to the dualistic mind-body distinction that has played such a prominent role in the intellectual history of the West.

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** Ed. note: The bibliographic reference to Roth's work noted above is:

Author Roth, Harold David
Title Original Tao : inward training (nei-yeh) and the foundations
of Taoist mysticism / Harold D. Roth
Pub info New York : Columbia University Press, c1999
Series Translations from the Asian classics
Uniform title Nei ye
LCCN 99020737
ISBN 0231115644 (alk. paper)
OCLC # 40954074
FFC

H-ASIA
October 25, 2004

Further response /discussion: Mind-body Dualism in Chinese Thought

From: Paul R. Goldin <prg@sas.upenn.edu>

I'd like to reply to the recent comments of John Didier and Brian Hoffert on the Chinese mind-body question.

My purpose in offering those quotes from Zhuangzi, Xunzi, and the Chuci was not to prove that there was such a thing as a mind-body problem in Chinese philosophy, but to show, in response to a note by Joseph Adler, that doubts have long been expressed in Chinese philosophical literature about whether mental processes can in fact be located in the qi. I think the Zhuangzi does reveal, on rigorous analysis, a fundamental "folk-psychological" dualism, and I've made the full argument in the paper that I cited. (It would be a waste of bandwidth to rehearse it here.) This is not a Cartesian dualism, nor the kind of dualism "that has played such a prominent role in the intellectual history of the West" (as Professor Hoffert puts it), but it is a form of dualism nonetheless.

For example, even if we grant for the sake of argument that the Zhuangzi shares the same world-view as the "Neiye," as Hoffert seems to assume, it is still not clear to me how this resolves the mind-body dilemma in the passage from "Dazongshi." Hoffert writes:

>"To return to the 'Dazongshi' passage, his 'yin and yang qi' is disordered
>because this is the inevitable fate of the body; however, his 'mind' was
>at ease because it had been 'emptied' of its self-centered contents, which
>were then replaced by a numinous force that allowed it to respond to
>events in the world with the "spontaneity" of the Tao."

If that is the case, in what material is the mind's "ease" located? Obviously not his yin and yang qi, which, as we're told, are "disordered." So Ziyu's mental processes either have to be located in some other kind of material, or else they are just immaterial--in which case you have a genuine dualism. Since no other kind of material is specified in this passage (or anywhere else in the Zhuangzi), I find it more costly to resist interpreting such ideas as dualistic than simply to accept that Graham, Fingarette, and so on may have overstated their case about the absence of any mind-body dualism in pre-Buddhist Chinese philosophy. After all, some kind of dualism seems necessary to explain the various depictions of the afterlife in the Zhuangzi, in which our material bodies are said to be recycled after our deaths, but our immaterial souls live on in something approximating eternal somnolent bliss. I would welcome a response from Hoffert to these other arguments in my paper.

As for Professor Didier's note, I would be very interested to know of pre-imperial texts that, as he asserts, divide qi into such "levels" as shen (spirit, numen) and xing (body, form). At first blush, that sounds quite anachronistic. For example, Didier writes:

>"The 'medieval' Chinese internal alchemists and other contemporary
>pursuers of internal cultivation recognized this distinction
>between a primal and universally immanent qi and the specific level qi
>in the creation of things, and they thus employed distinct
>characters for qi to distinguish the one type from the other. The
>'yin/yang qi' of the Zhuangzi to which Professor Goldin refers indicates
>the qi that forms physical stuff out of the greater or universal qi. When
>the text seems to distinguish between a qi and a mind, then, really it
>distinguishes mind only from this qi stuff that forms physical embodiment
>but which remains, within and throughout embodiment, a pneumatic energy
>that at one level makes 'stuff' go. But there is within and through this
>lesser qi always a primordial and quintessential qi, as well as a numenic
>(shen) type of qi, that, immanent, constitutes the essential energy of the
>universe, including the energy of will, mind, and thought."

Where does the Zhuangzi construct anything resembling this "medieval" vision of the universe? On the face of it, I am skeptical that qi in the Zhuangzi can be shown to refer to two such fundamentally different types of substances as "a primal and universally immanent qi and the specific level qi in the creation of things." But I am eager to hear more about this, because if Didier is right that even in "Dazongshi" mental processes are located within what he calls the primordial qi that constitutes the essential energy of the universe, then I would concede that a dualistic interpretation would be very hard to defend.

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H-ASIA
October 25, 2004

Further discussion and response: Mind-Body Dualism in Chinese Thought

From: Joseph Adler <adlerj@kenyon.edu>

John Didier and Brian Hoffert have responded as I would have (better, actually) to Paul Goldin's reservations about the alleged absence of mind-body dualism in Chinese thought, so I won't belabor the point any further here -- although it is a point that should continue to be explored. As a further example, and to extend the evidence to a much later period, I would just offer one sentence by Zhu Xi that uses the word qi in both a general sense and a more specific sense:
"Pure qi is qi, turbid [qi] is matter" (Zhuzi yulei [Zhu Xi's Classified Conversations], rpt. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1986), ch. 3, p.37, line 1). The first qi would be the "universal" qi that is the single substance of all

existing things; the second qi (same character) refers to the more refined form, i.e. breath or spirit.

In response to Shawn McHale's comment about God being the mediator between Descartes' body and mind, I would say that "God" there strikes me as a non-answer to the problem, at least in philosophical terms. Isn't Descartes simply saying that he can't imagine any relation between body and mind as he defines them, so let's just call it God? It's a purely faith-based intrusion into his argument. The Chinese thinkers we have been discussing would never fall for that!

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H-ASIA
October 27, 2004

Further response to discussion on Mind-Body Dualism in Chinese Thought

From: John C Didier <jcdidier@alumni.princeton.edu>

Professor Goldin asks what pre-imperial Chinese sources depict a universe divided into levels of qi, suggesting that so conceived a universe has been projected backward from early imperial and later sources. Further below I will cite some passages from the Zhuangzi that demonstrate the existence of the universal-qi cosmological view in the pre-imperial period, but first we may wish to consider that while thankfully no early source serves as a sound-bite billboard advertisement for this kind of world view (for this would be rather boring for us if it did), the evidence in many of those early sources is clear enough to allow us to conclude with confidence that their writers subscribed to the idea of such a universalistic, multi-layered qi-composed world. Such sources include Laozi, Mengzi, Zhuangzi (Inner, Outer, Miscellaneous chapters), Guanzi (Neiye, Xinshu), and Xunzi. Han texts that develop on this Warring States metaphysics include the Huainanzi, Zhongyong, and the Xici (Dazhuan) of the Yijing. Other contemporary texts also betray this world view, but the above-named eight are the texts by which in my aforementioned 1998 Ph.D. dissertation I demonstrated the early development of this metaphysics in the Warring States and Qin-early Han periods.

Regarding the 'medieval' developments along these lines mentioned in my previous note, we of course understand

that the early imperial and 'medieval' views of the cosmos derive in large part, and are contiguous with, pre-imperial developments.

While the introduction of Buddhism beginning in the early centuries AD of course influenced 'medieval' Chinese concepts of the cosmos, my rather explicit linking of pre-imperial, early imperial, and neo-classical 'medieval' texts (through the Song) makes a clear case for the contiguity of the Chinese belief in the universal-qi world view from the Warring States through the Song periods. Indeed it is among the most defining elements of Chinese civilization throughout these periods.

But on to the Zhuangzi in particular. First, we should note that the passage from the Dazongshi chapter (Ch. 6) being bounced around in this discussion in fact does not delineate any kind of dualism. It is simultaneously both much more complex and simple than this. The context of the citation is four fellows making a pact to form a friendship on the basis of their shared individual commitment to not being bothered or stirred in their minds by changes that inevitably occur continually in their world, their bodies, and their lives. Shortly after having engaged in the pact, one of the four, Ziyu, begins to sprout anomalous appendages from his body, such as a willow limb. The narrator describes Ziyu, depicting first his increasingly bizarre physical distortions, but then goes on to differentiate clearly first a qi and then both a mind and a spirit from Ziyu's body. In a translation derived from my dissertation (as are all the translations that follow) we read first of Ziyu's status amid these emerging deformities and then his answer to his friend's question about whether or not he detests these transformations of his body imposed by 'the maker of things' (zaowuzhe):

"His back became crooked and hunched, his internal organs rested atop [his head], and his will hid in his navel, such that his shoulders rose above his head and the bun at the nape of his neck faced the sky. His yin and yang qi were polluted, but his mind was relaxed and untroubled." Zisi asked him, "Do you detest it?" [In response Ziyu] said, "Why should I detest it? If [the maker of things] gradually transformed my left shoulder into a rooster, then I would accordingly seek to call out the time; if [the maker of things] transformed my right arm into a pellet, then I would accordingly seek

an owl and roast it; if [the maker of things]
transformed my buttocks into wheels and made my spirit
(shen) serve as horses, I would accordingly go along
with it. How would I alter its (the horse drawn
wheeled cart of what had been Ziyu) piloting?!"
(Zhuangzi, Ch. 6)

In the description of Ziyu's condition clearly the author moves inward from physical deformities to their cause, which is the pollution of Ziyu's yin/yang qi at the foundation of Ziyu's physical being, and finally to the mind at the center of Ziyu's being. This particular qi is not the physical stuff of Ziyu's body but the qi pneuma that constitutes and energizes that stuff. It is the energized agent of 'the maker of things' employed in constituting and bringing about changes in physical things. Later, in Ziyu's own words we find that he also has a spirit (shen). Now, the spirit is known from elsewhere in the Zhuangzi (as well as the Neiye of the Guanxi, as Professor Hoffert indicated, and, I would add, the Xinshu) to situate itself in a quiescent mind and thus govern the person's interactions with the universe, allowing therefore the mind in question to maintain its quiescence and not then be troubled -- and thus destroyed -- by physical things. Ziyu's mind was one such mind, since it remained quiescent (relaxed and untroubled) amid a deterioration in Ziyu's yin/yang qi and the consequential horrific changes occurring in Ziyu's body. There are thus four identifiable parts to Ziyu, not two. Shall we thus argue for a quadruplism in ancient Chinese thought? I would suggest not, because despite the specific delineation of physical stuff, qi, a mind, and a spirit that we find in this passage, elsewhere in the Zhuangzi we come to understand that they are all interactive due to their being kinds or layers of qi that, overall, constitute the immaterial and material universe and all of its workings.

For example, in Chapter 4 of Zhuangzi (Renjianshi) we find a passage that clearly places qi in the mind and relates it to the ability, such as that of Ziyu, of a person to remain quiescent in the mind as changes occur external to the mind. This is clearly a different, more seminal, kind or layer of qi than the yin/yang qi of the passage on Ziyu's condition. We read,

"Concentrate into one your will (zhi, which is within the mind). Do not listen to things with the ears, but listen to them with the mind (xin). [When you have

achieved this, then] do not listen to things with the mind, but listen to them with qi. Listening should stop at [the point of reaching] the ears, and the mind should stop at [the point at which it reaches] a tallying [with the perception of the ears, and no more] (i.e. the mind should register the perception but not be moved). Qi is what is vacuous and responds to things. The Way collects only in vacuity. Vacuity is the fasting of the mind." (Zhuangzi, Ch. 4)

We now have a qi at the very source and pivot of creation, a vacuous presence of the mind in which the Way itself, or 'the maker of things' of the Dazongshi passage, collects. This is the universal immanent qi otherwise often identified in Warring States-Han texts as the jing, 'quintessence.' It certainly is not the yin/yang qi of the Dazongshi passage, which was differentiated from both body and mind.

Another passage from Zhuangzi, Chapter 4, says something very similar, but here it is explained that the spirit (shen) comes to lodge in what is very apparently the vacuous or quiescent mind in which 'the white' has been born. We know from the passage immediately above that this 'white' must be a qi, the vacuous qi in which the Way collects. We thus can understand 'the white' to refer, in its purity, to the purest form of qi, or quintessence (jing). For the latter identification, see further below.

"You have heard of the knowing that has knowing but have yet to hear of the knowing that has no knowing. Looking reverently upon the closed door (i.e. treating reverentially the inner mind, by being quiescent), the vacuous room (i.e. the mind within) will give birth to the white (i.e. quintessence), and propitiousness and favorable fortune (i.e. shen or guishen, or 'spirit,' which governs matters of fortune; see below) will come to rest [therein]. Moreover, they do not [then merely] rest there. [They exude from you outwardly.] This is called the racing [that is born of being] at rest (i.e. the transformation of externalia without having exerted effort). Now, allowing your ears and eyes to communicate internally [with the mind,] but keeping to the [not-knowing] knowing of the mind (i.e. not allowing externalia to upset or move the inner mind), then spirit (guishen) will come to lodge therein, not to mention the people [of the world]! This is the [Way of] the transformation of the myriad things, the basis of [the rulership of] Yu and Shun, the essence of the

practices of [rulership of] Fuxi and Jiqu...." (Zhuangzi, Ch. 4)

Penultimately, in another passage from Zhuangzi we read of the interrelationship enjoyed by the jing, quintessence, and shen, spirit (or numen), as embodied in the person:

"Neither seeing nor hearing, embrace shen by being quiescent, and your form (xing, i.e. body) will rectify itself. You must be quiescent; you must be pure. Neither laboring your form nor stirring your jing, then you can live a long time. When your eyes see nothing, your ears hear nothing, and your mind knows nothing [because your jing rests therein and knows for you,] then your shen will guard your form, and your form will be long-lived." (Zhuangzi, Ch. 11, Zaiyou)

From these parallel passages we know that this jing, then, is the qi or the 'white' that, pure, settles into the quiescent and vacuous mind and enables the shen to also lodge in or be embraced by and within the mind. Therefore, by comparing across parallel passages we can conclude that jing and shen are layers or kinds of qi that are not equivalent with the yin/yang qi of the Dazongshi passage. For one thing, they are identified with both the mind and also qi. The yin/yang qi of the Dazongshi passage is delineated from the mind and also the body. The body, made from the qi that also governs the body's changes continually, is also a form of qi. Thus we can identify four forms of qi from these passages alone: jing, shen, qi, and xing (embodiment, or body). There thus exists in the Zhuangzi a quadripartite delineation of elements of the whole, but there is no sense of there being any element outside of the realm of qi, which constitutes all of creation. As the Zhuangzi also states, "Connecting all in the world is one qi, that is all." (Zhuangzi, Ch. 22)

Finally, that in the Zhuangzi the spirit (shen) does not constitute any kind of transmigrating identity of a person either before or after the death of the person in bodily form is apparent in the Dazongshi chapter itself, when Ziyu speaks of just going along with his spirit becoming transformed into the horses that pull the wheels and cart into which the rest of his body might be transformed. He thus does not conceive of an individual identity to his spirit but rather views himself as a composite of layers (of qi) that on further transformation bear no resemblance to the

person that was Ziyu, in any form or any layer of existence.

We can make a note in passing that the Chuci spirit in question is not a post-mortem spirit. It is a spirit in fanciful flight from the basis of a living being, so there is no issue of dualism in this case. The spirit is still integrated with the person but only temporarily on a flight internally in the universe of qi. That it can do so and not separate from the living person can be explained by the interconnectedness of the levels or layers of qi of which the universe consists: a spirit need not die and disperse to be able to communicate with all other levels of existence in qi, because all are connected in and through qi. This universality of qi and its endless communion is the basis of the ganying "resonance" cosmology that became prominent in and after the 2nd century BC (see Charles Le Blanc's fine book on this subject). Ganying is only a more careful refinement of the basic thesis that had existed already in China for at least 100 and perhaps 200-300 years previously, the thesis of universal qi. Neo-classicist Tang dynasty theorists on cosmology and internal cultivation further refined this system of qi, often borrowing Buddhist terminology to ensure that they communicated fluidly with the times.

This is necessarily an extremely abridged version of the full treatment of the thesis of qi, and I have restricted myself, as requested, to the employment of text from the Zhuangzi. A lack of time and the necessarily restricted space of this venue of course prevent me from offering a more thorough account.

Regards,

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H-ASIA
October 29, 2004

Further observatios on discussion of Mind-Body Dualism in Chinese Thought

From: Michael Stanley-Baker <mistanle@indiana.edu>

Mind-Body Dualism: Chuci, Zhuangzi and Descartes

As a beginning student of Chinese religion, I've been very excited to read the dialogue on this topic of mind and body. I feel somewhat

hesitant to enter the discussion from my neophyte position, but wish to beg your indulgence as I'm very curious as to what the response might be.

Regarding the connectedness of the hun-soul to the body in the Zhao Hun poem from the Chuci, it seems that unless David Hawkes and Yu Yingshi have been disproven, the ostensive purpose of the poem (and the related fu2[returning] ritual) is an invocation for the purpose of returning to the body the soul which has strayed too far in the 'external' universe. Line 5 of Hawkes' translation states: "His soul has left him. Make divination for him." If the soul did not leave the body, the ritual of running to the topmost part of the building and waving the deceased's clothes would seem pointless. If the person was on an "internal" flight of fancy, it would seem much more effective to ring bells around the body, not run away from it to the rooftop and shout into the sky. This ritual appears to have been used in very real circumstance of death, which was taken quite seriously as a sign that the soul was leaving the body. However, the separation of mind and body here would appear to be incidental to the dualism debate going on, since the multi-qi theory could still apply to soul and body whether they were separate or together.

I have been wondering if there isn't a way to de-polarize the discussion going on? It seems to me that dualism and non-dualism seem to co-exist quite comfortably, and that the two can be invoked situationally, by the same person, within the same theoretical belief set. For example, one can say "Ouch, I burned myself." or say "Ouch, I burned my hand." The first utterance implies a non-duality, and the second implies a separation. Often we use them interchangeably. For Ziyu to decide to mind or not mind the transformations of his shoulder entails a distinction between his intellect and his body - even if it is only a necessary, and temporary, result of the grammatical need for a subject and object when making utterances. But this does not seem to contradict the statement "my mind/heart/shen is qi, my shoulder is qi." Isn't possible to think then, that Zhuangzi could at times be expressing himself in a dualistic manner, while maintaining a theoretically non-dualist position? Invoking the spirit of play in the Qi wulun, is fixing Zhuangzi into a position of 'dualist' or 'non-dualist' too duellistic (pun intended), and not recognizing the freedom and flexibility of perspectival choices that he asserts therein?

On another note, it seems that after Descartes wrote the Meditations (1641-2), Princess Elisabeth took issue with Descartes' unconvincing explanation of the interaction between the soul and the body. Descartes' correspondence with Princess Elisabeth pushed him increasingly to rely on the theory of the animal spirits interaction with the soul via the pineal gland. There are anatomical passages in the "Passions" (1649) which make no reference to God whatsoever.(1)

While Descartes held on to his interactionist theory, he invoked an anatomical model which was anything but dualistic - animal spirits mediate between the soul and the body. Hence my earlier, and admittedly,

poorly expressed comment.

Very much enjoying the discussion,

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(1) Descartes, pp. 347-348 "The Passions of the Soul I XXXI," in "The Philosophical Works of Descartes v. 1," trans. and eds. E.S. Haldane and G.R.T. Ross (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1969),

H-ASIA
November 8, 2004

Further suggestions re: Mind-body dualism in Chinese thought

Ed. note:

This post was sent in on October 25. Somehow, I failed to post it at the time. I apologize to Miroslav Bakos for this delay. FFC

From: Miroslav Bakos <miro.hasia@gmail.com>

To the ongoing discussion about mind-body duality in Chinese thought I would recommend:

- Taoist Meditation and Longevity Techniques. Edited by Livia Kohn in cooperation with Yoshinobu Sakade. Published by Center For Chinese Studies, The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor 1989.

Especially the following chapters:

- Body and Mind: The Chinese Perspective. By Hidemi Ishida.
- Longevity Techniques in Japan: Ancient Sources and Contemporary Studies. By Yoshinobu Sakade.

My own position is that when studying the Chinese thinking, I try not to use my Western standards. Clearly, Western mind-body dualism does not apply in Chinese thinking. Therefore the Chinese view of Western mind-body duality is not dualism, not monism, but also not (as someone tried to specify it) non-dualism. Simply, it is not relevant question.

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