

# 遊於方外

## ——想像與身體經驗

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### 摘 要

在全球化時代裡的各種通俗觀光經驗中，行旅的概念可以從中國傳統中汲取不同的意義來源，本文從原始儒家與道家對遊的概念界定出發，探索其意義分歧所帶出的不同思考線索，特別是藉助莊子對遊的描述。以遊於方外作為主要線索，本文也著眼於聯繫行旅與想像，而從想像中的轉化能力來思考行旅。莊子對於操舟、蹈水的描述則彰顯出身體經驗的特徵，但也抹除了一些固有的界限，這是其所強調的忘。正是這種忘的操作使得身體與想像的關係得以結合，亦即，朝向新經驗的開放，在忘之中，將新與舊整合起來。想像的旅程不再是被吸收入重複陳舊的框架中，而是能帶出身體主體的不同經歷方式。而藉助巴修拉的詩學論述則可以呈顯出意象的獨特性與想像作用的構造能力，這有助於打開宇宙性的向度。想像突破實在的框限時，也打開一個方外的空間，擴展了人的能力。而想像的旅程也因此有助於身體經驗的擴展。同時，這種想像歷程也有價值轉換的道德意義，因為即使一個道德行為者也是以活生生的身體來體驗價值轉換。這個觀點可以讓我們重新考慮行旅經驗。旅行者在行旅中同時進入一種身體與想像的新經驗，能夠從想像的原初構成作用中參與到宇宙性的運動。

**關鍵詞：**宇宙性、意象、旅程、價值、漫遊

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## Visiting the Beyond: Imagination and Body Experience

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### Abstract

Among the ordinary tourist experiences in the global age, the journey can receive a different rendering adapted from Chinese tradition. This paper bases on the conceptual determination of wandering or voyage in Confucianism and Taoism, in order to investigate the different clues drawn from the divergence of significance, especially from Chuang-tzu's description of wandering. In following the idea of visiting the beyond, this reflection links the journey to the imagination in endorsing a transformative power in it. The descriptions of handling a boat or of swimming by Chuang-tzu reveal the characteristic of bodily experience, but also erase some established boundaries; it is the idea of forgetting. The procedure of forgetting combines body and imagination, which leads to a new experience; in the forgetting, the new and the old are merged together. Rather than being absorbed in the repetition of old schema, the imaginary journey can bring forth a different engagement of the bodily subject. By way of Bachelard's poetics, one can realize the singularity of the image and the construction of the imagination, which help to open the cosmic dimension. While the imagination breaks through the reality, it releases also a beyond and expands the human capacity. The imaginary experience can therefore enlarge the bodily experience, in the meantime, the imaginary journey may have a moral sense by rendering a reevaluation. In fact, a moral agent experiences a transmutation of values with his concrete body. This perspective may help us to arrive at a new consideration of the journey experience, to join the cosmic movement implied in the original constitution of imagination.

**Keywords:** cosmic, image, journey, value, wandering

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# 1

What is a voyage? How is it possible to have a nice journey? What do we experience during and after a journey? These questions belong to the everyday experience and refer often to certain technical and economic perspectives. But even this everyday experience is culturally conditioned. What is more is that, in this global age, the cultural dimension is composed of several divergent factors. It is almost a common sense that the capitalist, technological, and political manipulations penetrate all dimensions of body experience, especially that of the tourism. However the process of modernization pushes to a radical boundary, still one factor can't be ignored: the traditional factor. Returning to the traditional resources is not to avoid the up-to-date social actuality, but to dig out some fundamental conditions of cultural experience, especially in regard to the possible profundity given by the reflection coming from tradition. Nevertheless do we evoke the cultural condition to justify an illusion of beautiful scene in the voyage. Neither staying in a conservative way nor in a fanatic style, we try to reveal the core experience while touching on certain limit.

In fact, the idea of journey or travelling has been a theme already discussed by ancient Chinese thinkers. The word *yu* (wandering, roaming, voyage, or even swimming<sup>1</sup>) indicates among its various meanings in Chinese

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<sup>1</sup> In a French context, Jean François Billeter explains this concept specially in relation to “a visionary apprehension of activity”, in addition to the ordinary sense as in French “se promener”, “se ballader”, “évoluer librement”, and “nager”, see Jean François Billeter, *Leçons sur Tchouang-tseu* (Paris: Allia, 2003), 68.

semantics a central idea of displacement.

In the Confucian tradition, according to the principle of filial piety, there is no free travel. The teaching is seen in Confucius' words, "While his parents are alive, the son may not go abroad to a distance. If he does go abroad, he must have a fixed place to which he goes." (*Analects*, 4/19/171)<sup>2</sup> But in the Confucianism, the sense of morality is no pure rigorism. A joy is possible in the intimacy with nature even still expressed in a moral tone. The nature, being simplified in mountains and waters, carries a certain moral analogy. "The wise find pleasure in water; the virtuous find pleasure in hills. The wise are active; the virtuous are tranquil, the wise are joyful; the virtuous are long-lived." (*Analects*, 6/21/192) The contrast between pleasure by water and pleasure by hill is not rigid. The term combined by mountain and water – Mountain-Water – means landscape, while the theories of painting can not do without this moral origin. For example, in the essay on painting of Tsung Ping (375-443), the first paragraph refers to the sage and the wise<sup>3</sup>. Confucius had his moral image aroused by the scene of river: "The master standing by a stream, said, 'It passes on just like this, not ceasing day or night!'" (*Analects*, 9/16/222) He also gave his consent to an artistic wish of one disciple Tseng-Tien that "the last month of spring, with the dress of the season all complete, along with five or six young men who have assumed the cap, and six

<sup>2</sup> James Legge, *Analects* (Taipei: Southern Materials Center, 1983 reprint), 171. The ciphers of *Analects* 4/19/171 designate chapter 4, section 19 in the original coordination, and page 171 in Legge's translation.

<sup>3</sup> "Sages, harboring the Tao, respond to things. The virtuous, purifying their thoughts, savor images. As for landscape, it is substantial, yet tends toward the ethereal plane." (*Introduction to Painting Landscape*) Cited from Susan Bush, 'Tsung Ping's Essay on Painting Landscape and the "Landscape Buddhism" of Mount Lu' in *Theories of the Arts in China*, eds. Susan Bush and Christian Murck (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 144.

or seven boys, I would wash in the YI, enjoy the breeze among the rain altars, and return home singing.” (*Analects*, 11/25/248)<sup>4</sup> There is a pleasure, but the travel is never far. In the ideal of Confucius, the harmony is realized in the human rites along with a feeling of nature. According to Hsu Fu-Kuan, this is a type of origin of Chinese artistic spirit: the harmony of artistic realm and moral realm<sup>5</sup>. In Confucian tradition it is often to take the music (*yueh*) as a common symbol for the arts in general, so the epigraph “the great music is in harmony with Heaven and Earth<sup>6</sup>” is understood as an ultimate expression for the goal of art. But Hsu Fu-Kuan has also interpreted the convergence of music (*yueh*) and pleasure (*lo*) in the same Chinese character by affirming the liberating pleasure implied in the concept of roaming or rambling (*yu*)<sup>7</sup>. Also being taken as a disciplined pleasure, the roaming is connected with the arts. A typical attitude is expressed by the ideal of “rambling among the arts”<sup>8</sup> or “relaxation and enjoyment in the polite arts” (*Analects*, 7/6/196). This rambling is then a kind of learning polished by the arts instead of wandering in the wild. If the pleasant rambling is somewhat rendered by the imagination, it requires nonetheless a discipline well arranging the diverse categories of life.

At this first glance, the idea of journey is ambivalent. It may evoke a shakiness that threatens the family system, but also a fulfillment that develops the

<sup>4</sup> Legge, James, *Analects*, 248.

<sup>5</sup> Fu-Kuan Hsu, *Chung-Kuo-Yi-Shu-Ching-Shen (Chinese Spirit of Art, 中國藝術精神)* (1966; Taipei: Hsueh-Sheng Press, 1981), 17-18.

<sup>6</sup> ‘Notes on Music’ in *Notes on Rites (Li-Ji)*. (《禮記·樂記》：「大樂與天地同和」)

<sup>7</sup> Hsu, Fu-Kuan, *Chung-Kuo-Yi-Shu-Ching-Shen*, 60.

<sup>8</sup> See also *The Analects of Confucius (Lun Yu)*, tr. Chichung Huang (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 87. “Aspire after the Way; adhere to virtue; rely on humanity; ramble among the arts”. Whereas Legge’s translation is the following: “Let the will be set on the path of duty. Let every attainment in what is good be firmly grasped. Let perfect virtue be accorded with. Let relaxation and enjoyment be found in the polite arts.” (James Legge, *Analects*, 196).

artistic potentials. The key idea of journey or roaming in Confucianism is still the cultivation having in view the moral responsibility. This is the condition of journey in the eyes of Confucian thinkers.

In contrast to this canon in accordance to the family custom and to the everyday life rites, a deep reflection comes from Chuang-tzu to set free the travel; the opening chapter of the Book *Chuang-tzu* is given as “Going rambling without a destination<sup>9</sup>” (Hsiao-Yao-Yu). The critique of the Confucian school is quite obvious in the text of *Chuang-tzu*. In the Chinese commentary tradition even until now there is often a certain opinion to see Chuang-tzu as a disciple in the Confucian school, but this topic exceeds my concern here. To speak globally, this rambling without destination touches the concept of spiritual freedom. But the articulation of this “spiritual freedom” merits a more detailed discussion.

## 2

One detour may be useful if we take a passage of Lieh-tzu, also being qualified as a representative of Taoist besides Lao-tzu and Chuang-tzu, who

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<sup>9</sup> Translation taken from Agnus C. Graham (tr.), *Chuang-Tzu: The Inner Chapters* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1981), 43. In this essay, the citation mainly uses the Graham’s translation as reference. Among those who criticize the translation of Graham, the Chinese scholar teaching in University of Michigan Shuen-Fu Lin renders the title as “Free and Easy Wandering”, cf., Shuen-Fu Lin, ‘A Good Place Need Not Be a Nowhere’, in *Chinese Aesthetics. The Ordering of literature, the Arts, and the Universe in the Six Dynasties*, edited by Zong-qi Cai, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii’s Press, 2004), 124. Sam Hamill and J. P. Seaton have the same rendering “Free and Easy Wandering” as Shuen-Fu Lin, see *The Essential Chuang Tzu*, tr. Sam Hamill and J. P. Seaton (Boston & London: Shambhala, 1998), 1. Billeter translates the title as “Aller selon”.

conserved many similar texts in his work *Lieh-tzu*. Even in *Chuang-tzu* there is a place for Lieh-tzu to play a significant metaphor in some stories. One can remember the journey of Lieh-tzu with the winds, judged as “still depended on something to carry his weight”, in comparison to a true journey – “to travel into the infinite<sup>10</sup>”. A teaching on the possibility of journey (travel) for Lieh-tzu by his mentor Hu-tzu<sup>11</sup> is also discussed in *Lieh-tzu*. But the following text is not seen in the *Chuang-tzu* book.

*Before this Lieh-tzu liked travel (yu). Hu-tzu asked him: ‘What is it you like so much about travel?’*

*‘The joy of travel is that the things which amuse you never remain the same. Other men travel to contemplate the sights, I travel to contemplate the way things change. There is travel and travel, and I have still to meet someone who can tell the difference!’*

*‘Is not your travel really the same as other men’s? Would you insist there is really a difference? Anything at all that we see, we always see changing. You are amused that other things never remain, but do not know that you yourself never remain the same. You busy yourself with outward travel and do not know how to busy yourself with inward contemplation. By outward travel we seek what we lack in things outside us, while by inward contemplation we find sufficiency in ourselves. The latter is the perfect, the former an imperfect kind of travelling.’ From this time Lieh-tzu never went out any more, thinking that he did not*

<sup>10</sup> Graham, Agnus C., *Chuang-Tzu*, chap. 1, 44. Hereafter we use the sign *Chuang-Tzu*, 1/44.

<sup>11</sup> Hu-tzu (Hu-Chiu-Tzu-Lin) is an important personage in chapter 7 of *Chuang-tzu* where he reveals a principle of responsiveness to be a guideline for managing the world (Heaven-Earth), for responding the emperor (*Chuang-Tzu*, 7/96-98).

*understand travel. Hu-tzu told him: 'How perfect is travel! In perfect travel we do not know where we are going, in perfect contemplation we do not know what we are looking at. To travel over all things without exception, contemplate all things without exception, this is what I call travel and contemplation. That is why I say: "How perfect is travel!"'*<sup>12</sup>

According to the distinction in the cited text, there are two kinds of travel: the outward travel to satisfy the sights and the inward travel (perfect travel) to contemplate the becoming. This distinction is in fact in echo to that of finite travel (dependent travel) and infinite travel ("travel into the infinite"). In a more straightforward way, to respond to the question "what is travelling?", the answer in the manner of Chuang-tzu will be discretely that it is not what one thinks in the first place.

One should consider the issue in a more profound way and ask what the principle of this infinite true voyage is. To take it literally, it concerns the contemplation of the becoming. Among various possible answers, one key idea is to consider: "the fasting of the heart" (hsin-chai<sup>13</sup>)(*Chuang-Tzu*, 4/68). The "fasting of the heart" is a term that collects a group of ideas, metaphors, and images explained by Chuang-tzu. A probable definition (otherwise more similar to an exercise) here it is:

*Unify your attention. Rather than listen with the ear, listen with the heart.  
Rather than listen with the heart, listen with the energies. Listening stop*

<sup>12</sup> Agnus C. Graham, *The Book of Lieh-tzu* (London: John Murray, 1960), 81-82. *Lieh-tzu* (Taipei: Yi-Wen Yin-Shu-Kuan, 1975), 55-56.

<sup>13</sup> See also Burton Watson, *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), 57. Hamill and Seaton translate the word *hsin* as "heart and mind", so this term here is "the fasting of heart and mind" in Sam Hamill and J. P. Seaton, *The Essential Chuang Tzu*, 25.

*what tallies with the thought. As for 'energy' (chi, air), it is the tenuous which waits to be roused by other things. Only the Way (Tao, Dao) accumulates the tenuous. The attenuating is the fasting of the heart. (Chuang-Tzu, 4/68)<sup>14</sup>*

The term “tenuous” (*hsu, xu*, unreal) has its original sense close to the void, so a Swiss sinologist Jean-François Billeter translates these last two sentences as “La voie s’assemble seulement dans ce vide”, “Ce vide, c’est le jeûne de l’esprit.”<sup>15</sup> How is this concept related to the infinite travel? An image “flying by being wingless” (*Chuang-Tzu*, 4/69) reveals a certain idea of this journey. To fly without wings means that a voyage is possible without any outer appearance of displacement. So the fasting of the heart is the immobility which makes possible all the movement. Chuang-tzu gives a description of its effect as “In the empty room the brightness grows” – a void that lets glimmer the light. Correspondingly this act is also called “going at a gallop while you sit” (*Chuang-Tzu*, 4/69). Besides the apparent contradiction in all these expressions, the reason lies in the concept of the Way (*Tao*) which transcends the ordinary level of life.

In referring to three friends (Master Sang-hu, Meng Tzu-fan and Master Ch’in-chang) who disregard the influence of life and death and hope to be “able to climb the sky and roam the mists and go whirling into the infinite”, Chuang-tzu puts the words into the mouth of Confucius that:

*‘They are the sort that roams beyond the guidelines,’ said Confucius. ‘I*

<sup>14</sup> “The *ch’i* is empty. Being so, it is able to attend upon all phenomena. Tao comes to roost in emptiness. This emptiness is the fasting of the mind.” in Hamill, Sam and Seaton, J. P., *The Essential Chuang Tzu*, 25-26.

<sup>15</sup> Billeter, Jean François, *Leçons sur Tchouang-tseu*, 96.

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*am the sort that roams within the guidelines. Beyond and within have nothing in common, and to send you to mourn was stupid on my part. They are at the stage of being fellow men with the maker of things, and go roaming in the single breath that breathes through heaven and earth.'*  
(Chuang-Tzu, 6/88)

For the reader, the expression “go roaming in the single breath that breathes through heaven and earth” can be aligned to another expression “lets the heart go roaming in the peace which is from the Power (*te*, Virtue)” (Chuang-Tzu, 5/77)<sup>16</sup>. But if it is all about the freedom, we should emphasize further that, to exempt from the constraints is only a negative freedom; a positive one should be more powerful. The idea of voyage is surely a roaming around, a rambling along with the Energy (*chi*), with the breath, “breath that breathes through heaven and earth”. We will not go into more details on the precise determination of this energy, but contend ourselves to observe the demand of freedom in this description of the breath. Instead of ascribing to a cosmological picture disposing the movement of the Energy, the freedom concerns more on the act of roaming itself. This roaming releases the men from the worldly affairs and invites the reader or the listener to go into a new open field. This field is the beyond.

To accumulate these expressions mentioned above, the reflection on the concept of voyage presupposes at first a distinction between the beyond (“beyond the guidelines”) and the within (“within the guidelines”). However the within is not totally rejected. While talking about the flying without wings and the brightness in empty room, Chuang-tzu affirms the inevitability of

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<sup>16</sup> Hamill and Seaton let coexist power and virtue in their translation of the term *De* “the Power of Virtue”, in Hamill, Sam and Seaton, J. P., *The Essential Chuang Tzu*, 33.

living in this world – “treating all abodes as one you find your lodgings in whichever is the inevitable, you nearly there” (*Chuang-Tzu*, 4/69). It is inevitable to dwell within some constraints (the worldly life, within the guidelines etc.). Still the beyond guides the true voyage, that is, “to travel the realm of Nothingwhatever and settle in the wilds of the Boundless” (*Chuang-Tzu*, 7/95). In fact, this perfect travel belongs to an act of “sitting and forgetting”:

*‘What do you mean, just sit and forget?’ ‘I let organs and members drop away, dismiss eyesight and hearing, part from the body and expel knowledge, and go along with the universal thoroughfare. This is what I mean by “just sit and forget” ’. (Chuang-Tzu, 6/92)*

Ever since Chuang-tzu, the issue of forgetting is central to Chinese thoughts, including some expression in poetry. To forget our having body and knowledge is to join in the universal Becoming. Taking this act of “sitting and forgetting” more literally, it is about a dwelling on a place and letting go the memory. One is no more what one was (even what one will be), but what one is in place, where one is. To travel in this way will not just to perceive everything in the finest way or to appreciate the nuance in all possibilities, but rather to initiate a different way of life in place. The forgetting invites us to roam in Nowhere – a now-here<sup>17</sup> maybe. This will be an invitation to journey<sup>18</sup>,

<sup>17</sup> Cf., Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *What is philosophy?*, translated by Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 100. “Erewhon, the word used by Samuel Butler, refers not only to no-where but also to now-here.” Gilles Deleuze et Félix Guattari, *Qu’est-ce que la philosophie?* (Paris: Minuit, 1991), 96.

<sup>18</sup> Gaston Bachelard, *L’air et les songes* (Paris: José Corti, 1943), 10. *Air and Dream*, Edith R. Farrell and C. Frederick Farrell, tr. (Dallas: The Dallas Institute Publications, 1998), 3.

to an imaginary journey<sup>19</sup>, in Bachelard's term.

If we recall the most famous illustration of rambling in the first chapter of Chuang-tzu, the image of fish-bird is well inscribed in this imaginary journey:

*In the north ocean there is a fish, its name is the K'un: the K'un's girth measures who knows how many thousand miles. It changes into a bird. Its name is the P'eng; the P'eng's back measures who knows how many thousand miles. When it puffs out its chest and flies off, its wings are like clouds hanging from the sky. This bird when the seas are heaving has a mind to travel to the south ocean. (Chuang-Tzu, 1/44)*

It is not just an allegory to reveal a grandious journey through the images of animals. Neither will this story be a series of metaphors that show the metamorphosis of human spirits into animal forms. I take this story as an imaginary travel. What is at metamorphosis is the human imagination. The imagination that offers a beyond can reveal the function of the unreal, i.e. the tunuous (the void). The Power (Virtue) comes from the unreal.

Certainly the unreal here is not a nothingness taken literally, it refers to the suspension of ordinary concerns, or in phenomenological terms, the suspension of the natural attitude. Neither the mind nor the body is cancelled. But rather there happens a transposition of intention. "Just sit and forget" is the very act that opens the boundless, so that the boundary or limitation can be shifted. To take a more concrete example, we can see how Chuang-tzu offers his description of this problem of forgetting. Apparently the problem relies on the skillfulness of the technique. But Chuang-tzu explains in the mouth of a ferryman: "A good swimmer picks it (i.e. to handle a boat) quickly because he

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<sup>19</sup> Bachelard, Gaston, *L'air et les songes*, 11. *Air and Dream*, 4.

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forgets the water. As for a diver, he would handle a boat even if he had never seen one before, because he looks at the depths as at dry land, at the capsizing of a boat as at his carriage sliding backwards.” (*Chuang-Tzu*, 19/136-137) In this case, the limit between the water and the land no more exists in the eyes of the swimmer or the good ferryman, for he “forget” the water and sees it as the dry land. One should notify that the forgetting here is not related to losing memory but to positing an intimacy with the familiar experiences. Now this experience with the water, i.e. the experience of handling a boat, reveals a new dimension that happens within the suspension or the distinction. The intimacy acquired in the habitude with the water and the boat erases the established distinction between the familiar and the unfamiliar, the real and the unreal, the nature (water) and the artificial (boat). Finally the indistinction inscribes in the human body so that the skill becomes nothing exterior or extraordinary.

Similar discourse on the swimming delivers the reflection of the Natural Way in relation to the body experience. The swimmer answers to Confucius on the question whether he has the Way to stay afloat in water: “No, I have no Way. I began in what is native to me, grew up in what is natural to me, matured in what is destined for me. I entered with the inflow, and emerge with the outflow, following the Way of the water and do not impose my selfishness upon it.” (*Chuang-Tzu*, 19/136) The distinction among the native, the natural, and the destined should be taken into consideration in some other discussion. A point to be notified is the indistinction implied in the art of forgetting, which even arrives at forgetting the Way. A good swimmer will not occupy the way of water in a selfish manner, but to follow the natural response intimate with the water. A good and “skilled” swimming will be at home with the water; it will let the body to join the flowing of water.

For these two paragraphs on handling a boat and on the swimming, A. C. Graham classifies them under the category of spontaneity which means the natural course. But Billeter gives a precision on the spontaneous function of the body, by referring to a superior regime of activity, the heaven, to designate the necessary, spontaneous, and unconscious activity<sup>20</sup>. The forgetting is then related to the mastering of the art in so far as the artificial and human intention is forgotten. If there is a transformation of the art, it will happen under the condition of body experience and also of the connection of this body with the object in question (water or boat). But this connection becomes a natural one, a cosmic one.

We will not deny that some metaphorical functions are operating in the discourse on dwelling and roaming. What is more relevant is that there is a transposition which shifts the man from the artificial to the natural.

To consider in this way, we may pass to the “invitation to journey” of Gaston Bachelard. Without going into the details of the poetics of four elements and poetics of space, of reverie, I will only stick to some principles necessary in this discussion.

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As Maurice Blanchot understood it, “image, imaginary, imagination do not only designate the aptitude to interior phantasms, but the access to the proper reality of the unreal<sup>21</sup>”. Blanchot didn’t confirm the positive function of

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<sup>20</sup> Billeter, Jean François, *Leçons sur Tchouang-tseu*, 49.

<sup>21</sup> Maurice Blanchot, *L’entretien infini*, (Paris: Gallimard, 1969), 476-477.

the image, but saw in the works of Bachelard as an ensemble open to question of “work”, to space of writing. If we take the imagination (*Einbildungskraft*) as a faculty ever since Kant, including the tradition of Fichte and Schelling, the force of imagination can lead us to a new discussion in the constitution of the experience of the world. We remember also the system of images in Bergson, which constitute an ontology of images according to a late understanding of Gilles Deleuze. Bachelard didn't separate image from imagination, for him, image is the product of imagination. The power of image does not lie on the verification of perception as defined by Bergson. The unreal (*l'irréel*) for Bachelard is not a fault of image, the function of the unreal is to “go beyond reality<sup>22</sup>”. The act to surpass, to go beyond reveals two possibilities of imagining forces: to bring the novelty and to call into play the profundity and the intimacy<sup>23</sup>; in sum, the issue is the open imagination (*une imagination ouverte*<sup>24</sup>).

The usage of image is quite controversial in the eyes of Blanchot, for he could not accept the evidence of the image<sup>25</sup>. The protest of Blanchot consists in the idea of “detached image” evoked by Bachelard. Blanchot transformed “the profound, upsetting absence of image” into a reading of “the very presence of the space of writing”. Thus we can see the different emphasis of concerns in two thinkers of poetry. For Bachelard, the detached image is rooted in the force of imagination which is productive and even constitutive for the world itself<sup>26</sup>. So ever since his work on the image of water *L'eau et les rêves*

<sup>22</sup> Bachelard, Gaston, *L'air et les songes*, 61. *Air and Dream*, 49.

<sup>23</sup> Gaston Bachelard, *L'eau et les rêves* (Paris: José Corti, 1943), 1.

<sup>24</sup> Bachelard, Gaston, *L'eau et les rêves*, 4.

<sup>25</sup> Blanchot, Maurice, *L'entretien infini*, 472.

<sup>26</sup> An implicit and possible reference is the concept of *Ein-bildung* or *In-eins-bildung* in Schelling or the esemplastic vision in Coleridge.

(*Water and Dreams*), the graft (*greffe*) can be a sign to indicate the human imagination and further “the imagining humanity is a beyond of the *natura naturans*<sup>27</sup>”. But this humanity is not confined in a self-closing; by defining the imagination as “the faculty of forming the images that exceed the reality, sing the reality”, Bachelard added that “it is a faculty of over-humanity (*sur-humanité*). A man is a man in proportion to how he is a superman.<sup>28</sup>” It is all about the poetic image, but not a reproductive image as icon to imitate the real world. Accordingly the imagined image (in poems) brings forth a new dimension in humanity. In talking about the imagination of movement, Bachelard distinguished between simple drift and journey. He specified a poetic imagination:

*A true poet is not satisfied with this escapist imagination. He wants the imagination to be a journey. Every poet must give us his invitation to journey. Through this invitation, our inner being gets a gentle push which throws us off balance and sets in motion a healthy, really dynamic reverie. If the initial image is well chosen, it stimulates a well defined poetic dream, an imaginary life that will have real laws governing successive images, a truly vital telos.<sup>29</sup>*

We see thus in the imaginary journey a vital destination. This invitation to journey is also an invitation to vitality.

To justify this function of image, Bachelard gave a metaphysical explanation. In difference to the Bergsonian intuition of duration, he defined

<sup>27</sup> Bachelard, Gaston, *L'eau et les rêves*, 14: «A nos yeux, l'humanité imaginante est un au-delà de la nature naturante».

<sup>28</sup> Bachelard, Gaston, *L'eau et les rêves*, 23.

<sup>29</sup> Bachelard, Gaston, *L'air et les songes*, 10. *Air and Dream*, 3.

the poetry as an instantaneous metaphysics<sup>30</sup> wherein there is a metaphysical instant, a poetic instant. The dimension of this poetic instant is vertical; the verticality includes the depth and the height<sup>31</sup>. Being vertical to the horizontal dimension of time stream in everyday life, the poetic instant cuts itself from the social frames, the phenomenal frames and the vital frames. Bachelard indicated the selfhood of the image: auto-synchronous, auto-referent, for the image bursts out from itself as the time no more flows, the time “spurts out”<sup>32</sup>. This verticality is a beyond for the succession of ordinary life, but not totally without relation. In further distinguishing the *cosmodrame* (cosmic drama) from *sociodrame* (social drama, specially referring to psychoanalysis<sup>33</sup>), Bachelard gave a heavier accent on the effect of verticality. The cosmic drama opens another possibility for the imaginary journey. To travel into the imaginary place, just as throwing oneself into the sky, is not only a fancy without consequence; it is a cosmic act. Bachelard took the vertical dimension – depth and height – as a demand for valorization. The values are distributed along with the vertical axe. Assumption (elevation) or fall is not a verbal metaphor, but a psychic dynamism. Corresponding to the expression of super-humanity in *Water and Dreams*, Bachelard took in *L'air et les songes* (*Air and Dream*) the *Übermensch* of Nietzsche as a guiding concept in this cosmic and vertical poetry. The following paragraph is a characteristic one:

*This duality of the vertical personality, especially its immediate, decisive*

<sup>30</sup> Gaston Bachelard, *Le droit de rêver* (Paris: PUF, 1970), 224.

<sup>31</sup> Bachelard, Gaston, *Le droit de rêver*, 225.

<sup>32</sup> Bachelard, Gaston, *Le droit de rêver*, 227: «Le temps ne coule plus. Il jaillit.»

<sup>33</sup> Bachelard, Gaston, *Le droit de rêver*, 71; Gaston Bachelard, *La poétique de l'espace* (1957; Paris: PUF, 1984), 57; *The Poetics of Space*, Maria Jolas tr. (1964; Boston: Beacon, 1992), 44.

*nature, cannot be overemphasized. Because of this duality, we live in the air; by the air, for the air. Because of its immediacy, we understand that the transmutation of the being is not a smooth, gradual emanation, but that it is the product of pure will, that is, of instantaneous will. Here dynamic imagination asserts itself over material imagination; cast yourself up, free as the air, and you will become the matter of freedom.<sup>34</sup>*

For Bachelard, the immediacy and the decisiveness are joined in the vertical instant – “an instantaneous will”. This will to power highly emphasized by Nietzsche and then Bachelard is related to “transformation of the being”, but also to the transformation of value, trans-valuation (*Umwertung*). The images of bird, tree (pine, fir tree), rock in the mountain, and the abyss, rich in Nietzsche’s poems (*Dionysos-Dithyramben*) or some sections in *Also Sprach Zarathustra*, are seen to “resist the forces of gravity<sup>35</sup>”. But the cosmic act combines the value-giving and the will to power. So Bachelard noted that “Nietzsche’s fir tree, on the edge of the abyss, is a cosmic vector of the aerial imagination.<sup>36</sup>”

In his *La poétique de l'espace*, the old Bachelard still addressed a cosmic dynamology to the image of space, the house. He elaborated an image of house in Malicroix of Henri Bosco: the solitude of a house on an island (La Redousse) furnishes the inhabitant in it “with strong images, that is, counsels of resistance”. Under the image of cosmic resistance – a house resisting to the storm seen in the eye of an poetic imagination –, the house “invites mankind to

<sup>34</sup> Bachelard, Gaston, *L'air et les songes*, 167. *Air and Dream*, 145.

<sup>35</sup> Bachelard, Gaston, *L'air et les songes*, 169. *Air and Dream*, 147.

<sup>36</sup> Bachelard, Gaston, *L'air et les songes*, 170. *Air and Dream*, 148.

heroism of cosmic proportion<sup>37</sup>” and may help them to arrive at a self-affirmation without feeling being “cast into the world” (*jeté dans le monde*, a favorite term of Sartre adopting from Heidegger). The topo-analysis<sup>38</sup> in Bachelard’s sense is also a self-affirmation of the topos which allows speech and dwelling. When he spoke of an anthropo-cosmology, he meant that the human and the cosmic meet in the same place, in the same world, and in itself. For the part of the cosmic, “A house that is as dynamic as this allows the poet to inhabit the universe. Or, to put it differently, the universe comes to inhabit his house.<sup>39</sup>” For the part of the human, “An imaginary room rises up around our bodies, which think that they are well hidden when we take refuge in a corner. (...) Noël Arnaud writes: *Je suis l’espace où je suis* (I am the space where I am).<sup>40</sup>” Reciprocally the being and the place belong to one another, all as within a house, a man and a universe join together.

Reading the intertwining of Bachelard’s commentaries and the poetic verses, we can have an impression of the arbitrariness of his “imagination”. However what is convincing in the discourse of Bachelardean poetics may not be a tone of literary criticism, but the demonstration of how an image - in Bachelard’s sense, for we can remember how Blanchot had doubt on the sense of the image – can arouse a philosopher to project his imagination.

If we take some examples of *Chuang-tzu*, we can see immediately how the imagination of the author provokes. Nevertheless we often neglect who this author is. We don’t really care where, when, and how he lives. The lifestyles, attributed to the person Chuang-tzu, are in some way anonymous,

<sup>37</sup> Bachelard, Gaston, *La poétique de l’espace*, 58; *The Poetics of Space*, 46.

<sup>38</sup> Bachelard, Gaston, *La poétique de l’espace*, 11, 58; *The Poetics of Space*, xxiv, 47.

<sup>39</sup> Bachelard, Gaston, *La poétique de l’espace*, 62 ; *The Poetics of Space*, 51.

<sup>40</sup> Bachelard, Gaston, *La poétique de l’espace*, 131; *The Poetics of Space*, 137.

anonymously justified. What one admires in the book *Chuang-tzu* is often the cosmic dimension opened and guided by the “images”.

To add some more considerations in this topic, I would like to cite some images in the poems of a famous Chinese poet Tao Yuan-Ming (Tao Chien, 365-427) in medieval China (Wei-Chin period, 220-420). I would like to cite a poem of solitude.

*Unsettled is the bird lost from the flock, / Still flying alone in the dusk.  
/Back and forth, it finds no stable resting-place; / From night to night, its  
voice turns more mournful. / With shrill cries it yearns for the dawn; / But  
traversing far, on what may it rely? / Then it meets with a solitary pine, /  
And folds its wings, having arrived from afar. / In the keen wind there is  
no flourishing tree. / Yet this foliage alone has not withered. / Now that it  
has a place to entrust itself, /Not for a thousand years will it leave.  
 (“Drinking Wine”, #4) <sup>41</sup>*

This poem is interesting if one can grasp sense of solitude in the image of lost bird and solitary pine. Where the flying bird and the pine meet is the place of solitude. The “place to entrust itself” is powerful in so far as the solitude is common for the bird seeking to rest itself upon a lonely pine, that is, the solitude is inescapable. Each comes to meet its own solitude in itself. We can compare this situation to the verse of Tristan Tzara cited by Bachelard – “lonely flame, I am lonely (*Flamme seul, je suis seul*<sup>42</sup>)”. A similar tone is given for Tao Yuan-Ming that the solitude is resolved in finding an inalienable

<sup>41</sup> Cited from Charles Yim-tze Kwong, *Tao Qian and the Chinese Poetic Tradition* (Michigan: University of Michigan, 1994), 93-94. (〈飲酒〉之四) One can compare another poem “Singing of Poor Literati, #1” (〈詠貧士〉之一), *Ibid.*, 103-104.

<sup>42</sup> Gaston Bachelard, *La flame d'une chandelle* (1961; Paris: PUF, 1986), 37.

power from within, from the instant of affirmation of “this place”. My solitude is the place where I am.

Another poem reveals also a sense of place.

*Since youth I have not fitted the worldly tune; / From the first my nature loved mountains and hills. / By mistake I fell into the dusty net, / And was gone for thirteen years. / The fettered bird yearns for the old woods; / The pond-fish longs for the former deep. / Opening up some waste land by the southern wilds, / I abide by rusticity, and have returned to my farmland. / My homestead covers a few acres, / My thatched house several rooms. / Elms and willows shade the rear eaves; / Peaches and plums range before the hall. / Hazy, hazy, the distant villages; / Soft, soft, the smoke from hamlet lanes. / Dogs bark in hidden alleys; / Cocks crow atop mulberry trees. / Within my doors there is no dust or clutter; / In my empty rooms there is leisure to spare. / Long have I been in the confining cage; / Again I have managed to return to Nature. (“Returning to Dwell in Gardens and Fields”, #1)<sup>43</sup>*

This long poem can be analyzed in detail, but I will only focus on the last four verses. In the verse - “In my empty rooms there is leisure to spare.” - “leisure in empty room” evokes a motive of Chuang-tzu - “In the empty room the brightness grows”. One can stop before the image of “leisure in empty room” to consider the wish to “return to Nature”. The journey is backward. Why is then it possible to have this leisure? It calls into play the spiritual freedom within the body and the house. Back to the empty house, there is

<sup>43</sup> Cited from Charles Yim-tze Kwong, *Tao Qian and the Chinese Poetic Tradition*, 122. (〈歸田園居〉之一)

already leisure. For this motive, I would like to cite one poem for ending.

*I built my cottage in the human world, / yet there is no noise of horse and carriage. / How then did you manage to achieve this? / When the heart is far away, the locale naturally becomes remote. / Picking chrysanthemum flowers by the eastern hedge, / I gaze at South Mountain in the distance. / The mountain air is lovely at dusk, / and birds fly back with one another. / In this return there is a fundamental truth, / I am going to explain it, but already forgot the words. ("Drinking Wine", #5)<sup>44</sup>*

The last sentence catches my attention. With the flying back of the birds, the fugal takes a way of returning. But the power of this returning journey lies again in the forgetfulness. In returning to oneself, there is a silent truth. For a Chinese poet, the lesson of forgetting in Chuang-tzu is too evident.

*"Fish forget all about each other in the rivers and the lakes, men forget all about each other in the lore of the Way." (Chuang-Tzu, 6/90)*

In his own Way, Tao Yuan-Ming gave his echo to Chuang-tzu with the truth of forgetting. His way is the way of return, of returning to one's own solitude. There is still a journey specific to Tao Yuan-Ming, a journey of coming back to home. As a journey of returning to one's own solitude, Tao's journey is destined to be a solitary journey. However the solitude is different to the loneliness. This solitude is on the Way, in the nature, in one's nature. To forget oneself in the nature may bring one to be in face of cosmic self, that is, the natural self.

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<sup>44</sup> Cited from Xiaofei Tian, *Tao Yuanming and Manuscript Culture: The Record of a Dusty Table*, (Seattle & London: University of Washington Press, 2005), 23-24. (〈飲酒〉之五)

## 4

To end this short essay, I would like to add some words.

In the art of forgetting – “men forget all about each other in the lore of the Way” – one is staying in the Way. The truth resides on the way of return. Forgetting the long distance, forgetting the remoteness, it is because of the grandiose Becoming. In the dramatic event, one important character is the cosmic happening. But there is an invitation to journey. When one answers this invitation, he or she is in place to enter into an empty space where the leisure waits. The place is then inscribed in a structure of calling and responding. Blanchot has reason in reading Bachelard’s reverberation (*retentissement*) as a reverberation of the space itself. But this apparent self-reference or even paradox could be understood in a way of Chuang-tzu. The beyond lies in the act of “sitting” (“sitting and forgetting”, “going at a gallop while sitting”), only it does not really mean that the real journey is in vain. More over, an imaginary journey is meaningful in so far as it provides a place to meet oneself. The solitude of a poet invites the reader to roam afar, but finally to reveal his own emptiness. To use a term of Bachelard, this is an act of valorization. To fly high is never an escape, for there is no place to escape and nowhere to hide. From the point of view of Chuang-tzu, the best way to hide -- “to hide the world in the world”<sup>45</sup>, or “the world stored within the world” given by Graham (*Chuang-Tzu*, 6/86)--, is to hide in oneself. Since there is no place to escape between Heaven and Earth, one can roam afar and return back to oneself. Back

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<sup>45</sup> This translation is from Watson, Burton, *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu*, 81.

to the poetic experience, a place is then where one gives a value. A poem can be that *topos*, a *topos* to stay and to accumulate speech. An image is itself a poetic *topos*.

To travel is surely to move along with the places, taking times. A distance and a space are implied in this physical and bodily movement. But at the same time, a possible transformation may happen to the traveler when he joins himself to the change of place. The traveler encounters constantly the time-space limitation; meanwhile he de-limits the boundary in being open to the beyond. The art of forgetting projects this traveler into a place of the unreal, be it poetic, imaginary or dramatically on the edge of death. In this way, the transformation of experience throws the traveler into the process of becoming; this will mean an emergence of new experience in attaching to the old experience and transforming it. Following the indication of “perfect travel” in which “we do not know where we are going”, the answer to the profound consideration will be to recognize the roaming or the rambling as forgetting. To embrace the beyond let open the new dimension of experience. What is essential in this idea is no more the measure of distance or the sublimity of the scene, but rather the effect of transformation. In the body relies this possibility of openness and thus of the transformation.

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