

PHILOSOPHY 301

Spring 2021

3rd Essay Assignment

Due Monday, April 19

All papers must be properly word processed or typed with 1" margins on the top, sides and bottom. Use double-spacing and no larger than 12pt font. Turn in by uploading to Laulima as either a Word file or pdf file. Use the following format to title your file: lastname Phil 301 #3.

Write a 3-4 page essay on the *Zhuang Zi* focusing on one of the following:

Vastness and Wandering Beyond

In the first chapter of the *Zhuang Zi*, translated as "Wandering Beyond" or "Free and Easy Wandering, how does Zhuang Zi develop the Daoist notion about the importance of seeing human beings in the perspective of the vastness (*da* 大) of the cosmos or "heaven and earth" (*tiandi* 天地)? Does Zhuang Zi suggest that all human perspectives within the vastness of the cosmos are equally valid or does he suggest some are better than others? How might this be relevant today?

Trained Spontaneity

What is the special skill displayed by the cook in the famous story in chapter 3 of the *Zhuang Zi*? How does this story develop that notion of *spontaneity* (*ziran* 自然) that was emphasized in the *Dao De Jing*? How does Puett and Gross-Loh explain this notion of *trained spontaneity*? Do you find this relevant in your life today?

The Contingencies of Life

What recommendation does Zhuang Zi give in chapters 5 and 6 about dealing with the problem of circumstance or fate (*ming* 命)? What recommendation does Zhuang Zi give about facing the inevitability of death? Sometimes when (*ming* 命) is translated as "fate" Zhuang Zi is thought to be expressing a fatalistic pessimism. Is Zhuang Zi being fatalistic in his recommendation about how one should face the circumstances or contingencies of life? Do you find Zhuang Zi's recommendations about dealing with the contingencies of life relevant to your life?

Ordering the World

What recommendation about governing do we find in chapter 7 of the *Zhuang Zi*? How does this recommendation illustrate the emphasis on *yin* qualities in Daoism? What is the difference between the Utopian and Mystical Imperialist strands of Daoist thought that we find in the Outer Chapters of the *Zhuang Zi*? To what extent do you find these Daoist recommendations relevant today?

The Butterfly Dream

In the 2nd chapter how does Zhuang Zi develop the Daoist concern with the problem of language that was expressed in the opening line of the *Dao De Jing*? How does Zhuang Zi's playful explorations of the problem of language illustrate the *yin* tendency in Daoism? What might be the point of the famous butterfly dream at the end of the 2nd chapter of the *Zhuang Zi*? What are we to make of all of Zhuang Zi's recommendations about attuning to the Dao considering this problem of language?

Grading Rubric

Maximum Points

1) Writing

Grammar and spelling, composition and style. Your essay should be well organized. There should be an introduction, development of a theme, and a conclusion.

20 _____

2) Philosophical Content

The essay should reflect an adequate understanding of the texts. Your exposition of the text should include *at least two quotations* from the primary text material. All quotes should be properly marked within the text and must include a reference to the text cited.

50 _____

3) Commentary

Your own thoughtful reflections on the topic.

30 _____