

altogether too much for Chetqua, who proceeded to invent where he could not guess. The trusting assistant copied it all down with complete confidence. Typical of Chetqua's pronouncements are the following.

"This Book is difficult to be comprehended by the Chinese themselves and is supposed to contain some abstract Doctrines of their Religion." (Note inside the book *Taihei bukan taizen*, a register of the feudal aristocracy giving family crests, lineage, residence, income, etc.)

"This Book is in the old Chinese Character which Chetqua does not sufficiently understand to explain. But it probably is an Account of the different Dresses of the Empire in different Times." (*Ise monogatari shō*. Selections from the *Ise monogatari* with commentary notes, illustrated by Hishikawa Moronobu.)

"A Book of Instruction by a Chinese Priestess." (Chetqua's description of the text of *Nokiba no ue*, a Nō play by Zeami Motokiyo.)

"A Book of Examination for the Office of Mandarin." (A collection of five Nō plays by Zenchiku, Motokiyo, etc.)

It is pleasing to be able to record, in this anniversary number for Arthur Waley, that it was Dr. Waley himself who saw that all was not well with Chetqua's account of the last two items, and added in pencil in his distinctive handwriting a correct description of the books. No doubt Dr. Waley has long forgotten this, but his pencilled notes survive (though unsigned) as another small tribute to his astonishingly wide-ranging scholarship.

The British Museum hopes to publish in the near future a catalogue of the books which Kaempfer brought back from Japan. This will bring to light no startling discoveries of Japanese literary works unknown to bibliographers, and few unrecorded editions, but it will at least place on record a full description of this small library of historic interest, in all probability the first Japanese books ever seen in this country.

"BEING" IN WESTERN PHILOSOPHY COMPARED WITH SHIH/FEI AND YU/WU IN CHINESE PHILOSOPHY

by A. C. GRAHAM

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INTRODUCTION¹

To what extent are differences between Chinese and Western thought affected by grammatical differences between Chinese and the Indo-European languages? Every Western sinologist knows that there is no exact equivalent in his own language for such a word as *jen* 仁 or *tê* 德, and that as long as he thinks of it as synonymous with "benevolence" or "virtue" he will impose Western preconceptions on the thought he is studying. He is bound to suspect that there are also deeper structural differences which mislead him in the same way, and which it is much harder to identify. This question, vital to the study of Chinese philosophy and still hardly touched, is of interest to others besides sinologists. It is now widely recognized that the relation between the thought of a society and its language presents an

important problem. The best known statement of this problem, that of B. L. Whorf in the papers posthumously collected under the title *Language, Thought and Reality* (1956),² is based on the American Indian language Hopi. But almost the first language to be attacked from this point of view was Chinese, in I. A. Richards' *Mencius on the Mind* (1932); and for more than one reason Chinese is especially suitable for the purpose. It is the only language outside the Indo-European family with a rich philosophical tradition entirely independent of Europe; and the fact that it is an uninflected language, with rules of word-order largely similar to those of English, reduces the difficulty of explaining the structure of a Chinese sentence to those ignorant of the language.

The verb "to be" is one of the most striking peculiarities of the Indo-European group, performing a variety of functions which most languages distinguish sharply. The metaphysical problems which it raises have been important throughout the history of Western philosophy, from Parmenides to the Existentialists. Classical Chinese deals with the various functions of "to be" by means of at least six different sets of words and constructions, several of which have other functions outside the scope of "to be". Among the Chinese words, *shih/fei* and *yu/wu* occasion philosophical problems which overlap our own problem of Being. Until we can decide in what respects these words resemble and differ from "to be", we cannot avoid projecting our own presuppositions about Being on to Chinese philosophy.³

¹ Abbreviations: *SPTK*, *Ssü-pu ts'ung-k'an*; *SPPY*, *Ssü-pu pei-yao*; *BSS*, *Basic Sinological Series*.

² Like many other revolutionary books, this is important less for its conclusions than for the questions it asks. Cf. *Language in Culture* (American Anthropological Association, Memoir No. 79, 1954), edited by Harry Hoijer, a symposium on the Whorfian hypothesis, including a contribution on *Chinese versus English* by Charles F. Hockett.

³ The relation between "to be" and Chinese words with similar functions is discussed by Waley (cf. Part 2, Introduction below); by Nakamura Hajime 中村元, *Tōyōjin no shii hōhō 東洋人の思惟方法* (Tokyo 1948-9), 1/303-9, 320-30; by Chang Tung-sun 張東蓀, *Differences between Chinese and Western Philosophy from the Point of View of Linguistic Structure* (*Tung-fang tsa-chih 東方雜誌*, 1938, 3/1, not seen).

PART I. THE TREATMENT OF SIX FUNCTIONS OF "TO BE" IN CLASSICAL CHINESE

A. EXISTENCE. "THERE IS A MAN"

Classical Chinese has one word for "have" and "there is", *yu* 有, negative *wu* 無;

我有大樹

"I have a big tree"

宋有富人

"There was a rich man in Sung" (Sung had a rich man)

廐有肥馬

"There are fat horses in the stables" (The stables have fat horses)

天下無馬

"There are no horses in the world" (The world has no horses)

有人於此

"There is a man here"

When existence is affirmed, *yu* generally has no subject, as in the last example. But a Chinese sentence does not necessarily have a subject, and even in these cases we need not hesitate to say that *yu* is a transitive verb followed by its object. There are two words in classical Chinese which always function as object, *chih* 之 (him, her, it) and *so* 所 (him or her whom, that which). Both are often found with *yu*: 有之 (have it, there is this), 所有 (what one has, what there is).

Thus in Chinese one approaches existence from something outside, usually undefined, which has, in which there is, the thing in question. The same is true of ordinary English and French, in which one says "there is X" rather than "X is", "il y a X" rather than "X est". But Western philosophy, grounded in Greek and Latin rather than in ordinary modern speech, has generally approached the question from the opposite direction, from the thing which "is" or "exists". The object of *yu* is the subject of "is".

B. GENERAL COPULA LINKING NOUNS. "HE IS A MAN"

In modern Chinese there is a straightforward copulative verb *shih* 是, negated by *pu* 不, the ordinary negative preceding verbs. But in classical Chinese the position is more complicated. There is a negative copulative verb *fei* 非 linking nouns and substantival phrases:

白馬非馬。

"A white horse is not a horse."

But there is no corresponding verb in the affirmative. Sometimes two nouns are simply juxtaposed without a copula; more often (in philosophical texts nearly always) they are followed by the final particle *yeh*:

白馬馬也, 乘白馬乘馬也。

"A white horse is a horse. To ride a white horse is to ride a horse."

Although this is the commonest function of final *yeh*, it has many others; thus it is frequently used after substantival clauses and after passive verbs following *k'o* 可 "may".

In long sentences the division between subject and complement is often marked by *shih*, "this" (the aforementioned, the thing in question . . . not "this here", which is *tz'ü* 此, opposite of *pi* 彼 "that there"). This pronoun gradually became the modern verb *shih*, a development which is easy to understand since *shih* stands in the same position as *fei*, between subject and complement.

知之爲知之, 不知爲不知, 是知也。

"When you know it to recognize that you know it, and to recognize that you don't when you don't, this is knowing."

When there is a judgement between alternatives, *yeh* and *fei* can cover a whole sentence: "(The right alternative) is that . . ." or "is not that . . .";

‘爾曷爲哭吾師?’ 對曰, ‘臣非敢哭君師, 哭臣之子也。’

"Why are you weeping for my army?" They answered, 'It is not that we presume to weep for your army; we are weeping for our sons.'¹

From the opposite direction, whether A is or is not B, and whether an assertion or action is right or wrong, is judged by *shih* and *fei*, "It is this (is B, is the right alternative)" and "It is not":

輪匠執其規矩, 以度天下之方圓, 曰, ‘中者是也, 不中者非也。’

"Wheelwrights and carpenters take their compasses and squares to measure the world's squares and circles, and say 'What coincides, is this; what does not coincide, is not'.²

前日之不受是, 則今日之受非也。

"If your refusal on a previous day was right, your acceptance today is wrong."³

In this usage *shih* is genuinely parallel with *fei*, and ceases to be a pronoun at an early date; in the third century B.C. it is already sometimes negated by *pu*.⁴

Chinese indicates time by particles which precede verbs (and adjectives, if we choose to classify them separately); since there is no main verb in "A B *yeh*", it may be asked how one is to show whether A was, is or will be B. But there is no time reference in sentences of this class. Of the six classes distinguished in this essay, four have the possibility of time reference. A man's existence (type A) has a beginning and end in time; so does his being a soldier or an artist (D), his being young, tall or happy (E), his being in England or in France (F). But it would clearly be meaningless to ask since when he has been a human being, a mammal and a solid object, or for how long he will continue to be the person I met yesterday or the reason why I visited Bristol last December. Although Socrates is dead, we can all see that to introduce tense into the syllogism would be a useless complication. Japanese Kambun versions of Chinese texts replace *yeh* by a verb, *nari*, but they keep it in the plain form without conjugation. There are many examples of sentences containing *yeh* in the present essay; is there one in which the tense of "to be" in the translation gives any information which the Chinese text fails to provide?

¹ *Kung-yang chuan*, Duke Hsi 33, summer.

² *Mo-tzu*, SPTK, 7/5B/6-8.

³ *Mencius* 2B/3.

⁴ Cf. *Mo-tzu*, 10/22A/4, 11/8B/7; *Chuang-tzu*, SPTK, 1/45B/8; *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu*, SPTK, 16/18B/8.

C. IDENTITY. "HE IS CHARLES"

Yeh can be used for identity (A is B and B is A) as well as for class membership;¹ but there is also a special copula for identity, *chi* 卽. The pre-Han philosophers make little use of it, but later the Buddhists and the Neo-Confucians use it regularly:

道卽性也。若道外尋性, 性外尋道, 便不是。

"The Way is human nature. It is wrong to seek human nature outside the Way, or the Way outside human nature."²

¹ Throughout this essay I shall speak of class membership and ignore class inclusion, since the logical difference between the two is not reflected in the ordinary forms of either Chinese or English.

² Ch'eng Hao 程顥 (1032-85), in *Ho-nan Ch'eng-shih yi-shu* 河南程氏遺書, BSS, 1/1.

D. ROLES. "HE IS A SOLDIER"

As we have seen, the copula *yeh* does not provide for time reference. In order to deal with temporary roles, classical Chinese used the verb *wei* 爲, "make". *Wei* can hardly be called a copula: it has the flavour of an active verb, "to act as" . . . 爲君 "be ruler", 爲臣 "be minister".

七日化爲虎.....方其爲虎也, 不知其嘗爲人也。方其爲人, 不知其且爲虎也。

"After seven days he changed into a tiger . . . When he was a tiger, he did not know that he had been a man; when he was a man, he did not know that he was going to be a tiger."¹

¹ *Huai-nan-tzu*, SPTK, 2/2B/1, 5f.

E. COPULA WITH ADJECTIVES. "HE IS TALL"

In Indo-European languages adjectives have much in common with nouns (especially where they are declined, as in Latin); in Chinese, on the other hand, it is doubtful whether there is any formal division between adjectives and verbs. Thus in English an adjective, like a noun, is linked as predicate to the subject by a copula ("He is tall"); in Chinese it stands in the position of the main verb without a final *yeh* (人性善 "Human nature (is) good"). Like a verb, it is negated by *pu* instead of *fei*, can be preceded by temporal particles such as *chiang* 將, "about to" and *chi* 既 "already", and can be followed by the perfective particle *yi* 矣.

It is of course true that the final *yeh* often occurs after a verb or adjective, among other reasons because the verb or adjective is substantivized (是亦走也 "This is also running away"), or because the sentence as a whole is linked with what precedes (見牛未見羊也 "It is because you

had seen the ox but not yet seen the sheep"). In the case of adjectives, one is sometimes tempted to suppose that the *yeh* is linking the adjective to the subject; but closer inspection shows that this is not the case. In the following examples of *jen*, "benevolent" from *Mencius*¹ there is no *yeh*:

君仁莫不仁。

"If the ruler (is) benevolent, no one (is) not benevolent."

爲富不仁矣，爲仁不富矣。

"Those whose concern is riches (are) no longer benevolent, those whose concern is benevolence (are) no longer rich."

In the following, there is *yeh*:

惻隱之心仁也。

"A sympathetic heart *is* benevolence" (not "is benevolent").

殺一無罪非仁也。

"To kill one guiltless person *is not* benevolence" (not "is not benevolent").

In the following, the first *jen* (with *yeh*) contrasts with the second (without *yeh*):

有人於此，其待我以橫逆，則君子必自反也，‘我必不仁也，必無禮也，此物奚宜至哉。’其自反而仁矣，自反而有禮矣，其橫逆由是也……君子曰，‘此亦妄人也已矣。’

"Suppose there is a man who treats one unreasonably; then a gentleman will always examine himself, thinking: 'It must *be* that I have not (been) benevolent, that I have failed in courtesy. How could such a thing happen to me?' If after examining himself he (is) benevolent, does he behave courteously, but the man remains as unreasonable as before . . . the gentleman will say: 'After all he is just a man without principles'."

As we have seen, one refers back to a noun by *shih*, "this"; similarly, one refers back to a verb by *jan* 然, "thus":

皆有怵惕惻隱之心……非惡其聲而然也。

"All have the feeling of sympathy and distress . . . It is not because they hate getting a bad reputation that it is thus (that they have this feeling)."²

In this respect also the adjective goes with the verb against the noun: 人情甚不美……唯賢者爲不然。

"Human passions are utterly evil . . . it is only in the worthy that it is not thus (they are not evil)."³

Like *shih*, *jan* may be used to approve a statement, an action or a thing; and in this usage the difference between the two diminishes:

因其所然而然之，則萬物莫不然。因其所非而非之，則萬物莫不非。

"If you approve them on the basis of what they approve, the myriad things are all right (*jan*); if you condemn them on the basis of what they condemn, they are all wrong (*fei*)."⁴

Jan is normally negated by *pu*, but in certain contexts it has a special negative *fou* . . . 然否 "Is it so or not?" 然 "Yes" . . . 否 "No", 然則 "If so, then . . .", 否則 "If not, then . . ."

Wei, "make" is often found before a predicative adjective:

民爲貴，社稷次之，君爲輕。

"The people are to be valued most; the spirits of the land and the grain come next; the ruler is the least important."⁵

But the *wei* is not a copula. The implication is that "the people (out of all things) is to be accounted valuable"; it can often be conveyed in English by making the adjective superlative.

¹ *Mencius* 4A/21, 3A/3, 6A/6, 7A/33, 4B/28.

² *Mencius* 2A/6.

³ *Hsün-tzu*, *SPTK*, 17/12B/3f, 6f.

⁴ *Chuang-tzu* 7/49A/6.

⁵ *Mencius* 7B/14.

F. COPULA WITH LOCATION. "HE IS IN PARIS"

There is a special verb of location, *tsai* 在 "is in":

‘所謂道，惡乎在?’ 莊子曰，‘无所不在。’

"Where is it, what you call the Tao?" Chuang-tzu said, "There is no place where it is not'."

Tsai is sometimes used without an indication of place—"is present, is alive":

父在觀其志，父沒觀其行。

"When his father is alive, observe his intentions; when his father is dead, observe his conduct."

CONCLUSIONS

The verb "to be" is a characteristic of Indo-European languages which may well be unique; according to Ernst Locker¹ languages outside this group generally distinguish between existential and copulative being, and the majority also have a single word for having and existential being. Are we to conclude that only Indo-European languages have a word for the concept of Being, and that other languages are forced to fill the gap with words which really mean "have", "this" and "make"? The absurdity of this conclusion becomes apparent as soon as it is put into words; but since as a hidden presupposition it may be fatal to the understanding of Chinese discussions of *shih/fei* and *yu/wu*, let us consider more closely what is wrong with it.

An Englishman learning Chinese takes a little time to rid himself of the impression that something is missing from such a sentence as 人性善 "Human nature (is) good". If I say "The rose red" or "He in Paris", haven't I left out the relationship between the rose and its colour, the man

and the place—a relationship which is exactly defined by the splendidly unambiguous word “is”? No, for “the red rose” and “the man in Paris” are no more ambiguous than “the rose which is red” and “the man who is in Paris”. But these phrases do not pretend to be sentences. “The rose red” needs a verb, not to show how redness is related to the rose, but to assert the redness; for it is a rule of English that there is no sentence without a verb.

The conviction that a sentence needs a verb is so deeply rooted in us that when we try to define a proposition we find it very hard to resist the feeling that its nature is somehow bound up with the nature of the verb. But this rule is of course merely a grammatical convention, not universal even among Indo-European languages. It may be objected that what is asserted must be located in time, and that a verb locating it in time must be understood even if it is not present. But in Chinese temporal particles precede adjectives as well as verbs, and in Japanese adjectives even have tense conjugation (*takai*, “is-high”, *takakatta*, “was-high”, parallel to *yuku*, “go”, *itta*, “went”). Further, as we have noticed in section B above, many kinds of proposition have no time reference. In such cases English generally puts the verb in the present tense (“Two and two make four”, “The lion is a mammal”), but sometimes uses other tenses:

“Augustus was the greatest of the Roman Emperors” (Has he stopped being the greatest? Did he become the greatest before the last Roman Emperor had proved inferior?)

Besides linking the subject to a verb, a sentence may, to take the most obvious possibilities, link it to another noun or to an adjective:

X comes	X 來
X is a man	X 人也
X is good	X 善

In Chinese only the first sentence has a verb. The English rule that a sentence must have a verb is only practicable because there is a stop-gap verb, “to be”, which can be supplied in the latter cases also. There is no concept of Being which languages are well or ill fitted to express. The functions of “to be” depend on a grammatical rule for the formation of the sentence; it would merely be a coincidence if one found anything resembling it in a language without this rule.

¹ *Être et avoir. Leurs expressions dans les langues. Anthropos* 49 (1954), 481-510.

PART II. SHIH/FEI AND YU/WU IN CHINESE PHILOSOPHY

INTRODUCTION

In 1934 Dr. Waley wrote in *The Way and Its Power*:

“A large number of the tangles in which European thinkers have involved themselves have been due to the fact that the verb ‘to be’ means a

great many different things. The fact that Chinese lacks anything exactly corresponding to the verb ‘to be’ might at first sight seem to put Chinese logicians at an initial advantage. But this is far from being the case. Chinese assertions take the form ‘commence begin indeed’, *i.e.*, ‘To commence is to begin’. And this pattern of words, attended upon by the harmless-looking particle *yeh*, ‘indeed’, has caused by its reticence far more trouble than any Western copulative by its assertiveness. Some of the things that this simple pattern may express are as follows: (1) Identity, as in the example given above; (2) that A is a member of a larger class, B. For example, ‘Boat wooden-thing indeed’, *i.e.*, ‘boats are made of wood’; (3) that A has a quality B. For example, ‘Tail long indeed’, *i.e.*, ‘its tail is long’. If words have a fixed connexion with realities, the Chinese argued, *yeh* (‘indeed’) ought always to mean the same thing. If for example it implies identity, one ought to be able to travel hundreds of leagues on any ‘wooden-thing’; but in point of fact one can only travel on a boat.”¹

This is one of the first attempts to pin down a problem which will remain elusive for a long time to come; and the value of such an attempt (the present essay is merely another) is that, by presenting for criticism a clear idea on an obstinately obscure subject, it helps to clarify the ideas of its critics. In the first place it is doubtful, for reasons given in Part I, E above, whether *yeh* has more than the first two of the functions attributed to it. “Tail long *yeh*” would mean something like “It is that the tail (is) long”. But even accepting Waley’s three functions, it is difficult to see why *yeh* should cause “far more trouble” than “to be”, which has all these functions and the existential function besides.

Again, in what way is *yeh* more “reticent”, less “assertive” than “to be”? Both words have the function of bringing two units into relation, but neither, in isolation from a context, is either reticent or assertive about how units are related. “To be” can link the subject with a past participle to form a passive (“is eaten”), with a present participle to indicate duration (“is raining”) or the future (“is coming tomorrow”), with an adjective (“is red”), with a preposition (“is in”): when it links the subject with a noun, it can indicate identity, class membership, and in special patterns many other relations (“Time is money”, “His speech is a sensation”, “It must be the lobster I ate”). *Yeh* occurs in just as wide a variety of contexts. What matters is not the meaning of “being” and *yeh* in isolation, but the structure of the sentence patterns “X is Y” and “X Y *yeh*”.

Now in classical Chinese there are two main kinds of sentence, nominal and verbal:

(A) Nominal, with a noun complement: 白馬馬也, “White horse, horse *yeh*”.

(B) Verbal, with a main verb (which may be an adjective in the position of main verb): 孔子聞之, “Confucius heard of it”.

A is negated by *fei*, B by *pu*; A generally (but not always) has the final *yeh*, B may have the perfective final *yi*; the interrogative particles in A are *yü* 與 and *yeh* 邪,² in B *hu* 乎; for comparison, A uses *yu* 猶, B uses *ju* 如 and *jo* 若. The structural difference is thus much sharper than between English "A white horse is a horse" and "Confucius heard of it". Both the latter have a main verb; and although traditional grammar distinguishes between complement and object, the noun's loss of case endings has almost obliterated the distinction. (English pronouns still have case, but "It is me" has good claims to be better contemporary English than "It is I". The only remaining difference between "to be" and a transitive verb is that it has no passive voice.)

A sentence is marked as type A, not only by *yeh*, but by the presence of a noun complement and the absence of a main verb, and by the ways in which it is negated and turned into a question. The *yeh* by itself is not a decisive criterion; it is sometimes absent from type A, and is found in at least one class of sentence which does not fit easily into either type, that in which *k'o*, "may" (negated by *pu*) is followed by a passive verb.³ It is therefore difficult to agree with Waley that the Chinese can ever have argued that "yeh ought always to mean the same thing". In any case Chinese thinkers do not talk about *yeh*, which as a final particle cannot stand in the position of subject or object, and therefore cannot be treated as indicating a thing to be discussed (although, of course, one can discuss 也字 "the word *yeh*"). They talk instead of *shih* and *fei* (which can replace the complement in type A) and of *jan* (which can replace the main verb in type B).

It is not clear what examples Waley has in mind when he says that *yeh* has caused "far more trouble than any Western copulative", and that it was assumed that *yeh* "ought always to mean the same thing". His illustrations in this section are taken largely from the Mohist *Hsiao-ch'ü* 小取, which contains some interesting examples of confusion which are impossible in English because of number and the indefinite article,⁴ but none connected with "to be". There are more than fifty propositions ending in *yeh*, limited exclusively to class membership and identity, and without a single case of confusion between the two. The one case of confusion mentioned by Waley is an argument the existence of which he infers from a Mohist proposition which he interprets as a criticism of it.⁵ Although this instance is very questionable, there is certainly one really spectacular case of confusion between identity and class membership in early Chinese literature, the *Essay on the White Horse* of Kung-sun Lung 公孫龍 (c.300 B.C.) In this the claim that "A white horse is not a horse" is justified by arguments which in fact prove merely that a horse is not necessarily a white horse, for example:

馬者無去取於色,故黃黑皆所以應。白者有去取於色,黃黑馬皆所以色去,故唯白馬獨可以應耳。無去者非有去也。故曰,白馬非馬。

"With 'horse', there is no selection and exclusion in respect of colour; therefore one can answer both with yellow and with black ones. With 'white', there is selection and exclusion in respect of colour, and yellow and black horses are both excluded on grounds of colour; therefore one can answer with nothing but a white horse. What excludes none is not what excludes some: Therefore I say: a white horse is not a horse."⁶

Two points can be made about this confusion. In the first place, it certainly does not suggest that "X Y *yeh*" is any less assertive than "X is Y". If the trouble with *yeh* were its reticence, one would expect Chinese thinkers to be deluded by the possibility that "White horse horse *yeh*" means no more than "White horses are somehow dependent on horses"; one would not expect them to insist on its narrowest possible sense, "White horses are the same as horses".

In the second place, the Chinese sentence is ambiguous only to the same degree as the English "A white horse is a horse" or "White horses are horses", either of which could be taken as asserting identity by anyone with Kung-sun Lung's talent for exploiting ambiguities. Indeed, English lacks any means of specifying identity as convenient as the Chinese *chi* 卽. In "I am a man", "Socrates is a man", "The King of Sweden is a man", the indefinite article does specify class membership. But such sentences have a particular subject, which is enough to imply class membership even in Chinese. 予人也 could only mean "I am a man": "I am the man" or "I am Man" would need other words qualifying 人, "man".

We thus arrive at conclusions very unlike Waley's.⁷ The Chinese language sharply distinguishes three questions which in English are assimilated by the verb "to be"; but it combines each of these questions with others which are outside the scope of "to be":

(A) *shih/fei* "Is X (a horse) or is it not?" But also: "Is the (statement, person or action) X right or wrong?"

(B) *yu/wu* "Is there X or is there not?" But also: "Has X (form and colour) or has it not?"

(C) *jan/fou* "Is it so or not (that X is white)?" But also: "Is it so or not (that X did this)?"

The last has a less direct connexion with Being than the others have, and we shall not discuss it in detail.

¹ *Op. cit.* 63.

² I have given reasons for this claim in *The Relation between the Final Particles yu and yeh* (Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, 1957, 19/1/105-23).

³ *ut sup.* 113-17.

⁴ Cf. D. C. Lau, *Some Logical Problems in Ancient China*, Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society (1952), 189.

⁵ *Mo-tzu* 11/9A/5. 船木也, 人船非人木也。

I should translate (reading 入 for 人): "A boat is tree (wood), but to enter a boat is not to enter a tree" (implying a confusion in the thought which is excluded in

English by the indefinite article). Waley prefers "wooden-thing" for "tree"; but to enter a boat is to enter a wooden-thing.

In any case the passage does not imply that there were people who argued that one should be able to do with any wooden-thing whatever one can do with a boat. It is one of a series of propositions, deliberately chosen as unquestionable, adduced in support of the highly questionable Mohist thesis that "A robber is a man, but to kill a robber is not to kill a man" (盜人人也。殺盜人非殺人也). We are told explicitly that "the world agrees in accepting them" (世相與共是之 9A/7f), and, of the Mohist thesis, "This is of the same class as those; the world admits those without condemning itself, but condemns the Mohists for admitting this." (此與彼同類。世有彼而不自非也，墨者有此而非之。9B/2f).

⁶ *Kung-sun Lung tzü chi-chieh* 公孫龍子集解, edited Ch'en Chu 陳柱 (Commercial Press, 1937), 75.

⁷ Of Waley's two other examples of confusion due to ambiguities in the Chinese language (*op. cit.* 63f), I accept the one connected with number (*Mo-tzû* 11/10B/7-11A/2). But his example of ambiguity due to the absence of tense, "An orphan colt has never had a mother" (孤駒未嘗有母 *Chuang-tzû* 10/42A/7) has the temporal particles 未嘗, "never". This seems to me to make a perfectly good paradox in English; compare "No Pope has ever been a young man". Waley seems to be interpreting it in the light of certain Mohist passages with which it may not have so close a connexion (*Mo-tzû*, 4A/2-4, 4B/1f, 5f, canons; 18A/4-7, 13A/4-6, 18B/8-19A/1 their explanations).

A. SHIH AND FEI IN CHUANG-TZÜ AND THE MOHIST CANONS

The controversy over *shih* and *fei* in the third century B.C. originated in the disputes between the Confucian and Mohist schools over such issues as universal love, destiny and music. These disputes had led to an increasing concern with methods of proof, culminating towards the end of the fourth century in the schools of Hui Shih 惠施, and Kung-sun Lung, who specially studied the arguments by which one "discriminates" (*pien* 辯) between right and wrong. The failure of Confucians and Mohists to convince each other led other thinkers of the late fourth century, such as Shen Tao 慎到, to deny that judgements of right and wrong are absolute.¹ The classic statement of this relativism is the chapter on *Treating Things as Equal* (齊物論) in the third century compilation *Chuang-tzû*.² The absoluteness of right and wrong is defended in the Mohist canons, which probably also date from the third century B.C.

This controversy involved judgements of *shih* and *fei* and to a lesser extent of *jan* and not *jan*; since the same arguments apply to both, there is no need to give separate attention to the latter. As we have seen, *shih* and *fei* can be used either (A) of a thing which "is-this" (an ox, a horse) or "is-not", or (B) of an assertion (that human effort cannot alter destiny) or an action or principle of action (aggressive war, universal love, mourning one's parents for three years) which "is-this" (is the right alternative) or "is-not". In practice it is the latter use of *shih* and *fei* (in which it is convenient to translate them "right" and "wrong") which concerns philosophers; but this is only an extension of the former usage, and when they discuss *shih* and *fei*

in the abstract their examples are of the former type—"Is or is not X an ox, a horse, a dog?"

The Mohist canons confine the name *pien*, "discrimination" to disputes of the form "X is or is not Y", in which one alternative must be right and the other wrong; they do not admit disputes as to whether X is Y or Z, in which both contestants may be wrong. They recognise the principle of the excluded middle in practice if not in theory:

經 彼不可兩不可也。

說 [彼]凡牛樞非牛，'兩'也。無以非也。

'Canon The other's case must be "paired".'

Explanation All that is an ox side by side (literally, "pivoted") with all that is not an ox, is "pairing". There is no way for it not to be (one or the other).'

經 辯爭彼也。辯勝當也。

說 (辯)或謂之牛，或謂之非牛，是'爭彼'也。是不俱當，不俱當必或不當。不若當犬。

'Canon Discrimination is contesting the other's case. Victory in discrimination is one's claim fitting the facts.

Explanation One saying that it is an ox, the other that it is not, is 'contesting the other's case'. Their claims will not both fit, and if they do not both fit one necessarily does not fit. It is not like one's claim fitting a dog. (If you argue that it is a dog, instead of merely that it is not an ox, both contestants may be wrong.)³

經 謂辯無勝必不當。說在辯。

說 (謂)所謂非同也，則異也。同則或謂之狗，其或謂之犬也。異則或謂之牛，其或謂之馬也。俱無勝，是不辯也。辯也者，或謂之是，或謂之非，當者勝也。

'Canon To say that there is no winner in "discrimination" necessarily does not fit the facts. *Explanation*: "discrimination".

Explanation What the contestants call it is either the same or different. If it is the same, one calls it "puppy" and the other calls it "dog". If different, one calls it "ox", the other calls it "horse". Neither winning is because they have not "discriminated". Discrimination is one saying that it is this (*shih*), the other that it is not (*fei*), and the claim which fits winning'.⁴

We possess three full-length examples of Discrimination, the two genuine essays in the *Kung-sun Lung tzü*,⁵ and the Mohist *Hsiao-ch'ü*. All use the "X is or is not Y" form as regularly as Aristotle does. Kung-sun Lung argues that a white horse is not a horse, and in a second essay the significance of which is much disputed, that "No thing is not *chih* but *chih* are not *chih*" (物莫非指而指非指). The arguments of the *Hsiao-ch'ü* begin with "A white horse is a horse. To ride a white horse is to ride a horse" (quoted in Part I, B above), and show only slight variations from this formula throughout.

According to the relativist argument of *Treating Things as Equal*, judgements of *shih* and *fei* depend on making distinctions between things by giving them separate names; but the sage unlearns these distinctions and recovers the experience of an undifferentiated world which precedes language:

古之人，其知有所至矣。惡乎至？有以爲未始有物者。至矣，盡矣，不可以加矣。其次以爲有物矣，而未始有封也。其次以爲有封焉，而未始有是非也。

"There were men in ancient times whose knowledge was perfect. Wherein was it perfect? There were some who thought there had not yet begun to be things. Perfect! Exhaustive! One can go no further! The next in knowledge thought that there were things, but that there had not yet begun to be boundaries. The next thought that there were boundaries around them, but that there had not yet begun to be *shih* and *fei* (one being itself and not being another)."⁶

As soon as men begin to distinguish themselves from the external world, and things from each other, preference arises; and each clings to what he likes, dismisses from him what he dislikes. What is near to him he calls This (*shih*), what is distant That (*pi*). Whether a thing is This or That depends on one's point of view; thus music, prolonged mourning, and belief in destiny "are-this" (*shih*) for Confucians, "are-not" (*fei*) for Mohists. But there is no true contradiction between them, since what is This to itself is That to another:

物无非彼，物无非是……是亦彼也，彼亦是也。彼亦一是非，此亦一是非。果且有彼是乎哉？果且无彼是乎哉？彼是莫得其偶，謂之道樞。樞始得其環中，以應無窮。是亦一无窮，非亦一无窮也。

"No thing is not That, no thing is not This . . . This is also That, That is also This. There they use 'is-this' and 'is-not' from one point of view; here we use 'is-this' and 'is-not' from another point of view. Are there really That and This? Or really no That and This? Where neither That nor This finds its opposite is called the axis of the Tao. Once the axis is found at the centre of the circle (where everything is equally near), we respond without end. On the one hand there is no end to what 'is-this', on the other no end to what 'is-not'.⁷

This argument depends on the fact that where in English we say "true" or "right", Chinese use words which are primarily demonstrative—*shih*, "this" and *jan*, "thus". In order to make his point convincingly, the writer uses *shih* regularly as the opposite of *pi*, "that" as well as of *fei*, "is-not", avoiding as far as possible the use of *ts'ü*, the ordinary opposite of *pi*.⁸ Whether he confuses two senses of *shih* distinguished in English, or whether the expression of approval by *shih* justly calls attention to the subjective element in judgement, is outside the scope of this article; in any case it is not a question with a simple answer.

Even when I ask whether something is or is not a horse, I am asking whether or not it is This—what I have picked out from other things to call "horse". Names are given only by convention ("Words are about something, it is only that what they are about is not fixed" 言者有言，其所言者特未定也).⁹ The horse will not be the meaning of "horse", will not be a horse, if I give the name to another thing. Kung-sun Lung's elaborate arguments about meanings (*chih*) and horses were quite unnecessary:

以指喻指之非指，不若以非指喻指之非指也。以馬喻馬之非馬，不若以非馬喻馬之非馬也。天地一指也，萬物一馬也。

"Using the meaning to show that the meaning is not the meaning is not as good as showing it by means of what is not the meaning. Using a horse to show that a horse is not a horse is not as good as showing it by means of what is not a horse. Heaven and earth are the one meaning; the myriad things are the one horse."¹⁰

The absolute This which Confucians and Mohists confuse with their own limited points of view can be reached only by unlearning all distinctions, recognizing every variety of conduct as equally right, embracing the entire universe as This; for it is only the universe which is This from every point of view:

是不是，然不然。是若果是也，則是之異乎不是也，亦無辯。然若果然也，則然之異乎不然也，亦無辯。

"Treat even what is not This as This, even what is not Thus as Thus. If This and Thus are really (from every point of view) This and Thus, there can be no discrimination between This and not This, Thus and not Thus."¹¹

It is assumed that, in the words of the commentator Kuo Hsiang 郭象 (died c. A.D. 312), "If *shih* is really *shih*, there can no longer be anyone in the world who considers it *fei*" (是若果是，則天下不得復有非之者也).¹² Judgements (not only value judgements, but "X is a horse" also) cannot be absolute unless there is universal agreement. This presupposition seems strange if we forget that *shih* is primarily demonstrative and take it as equivalent to English "right"; but the claim that X is absolutely This is of course discredited by the appearance of a single person for whom it is That. Consequently, "discrimination" (*pien*) cannot reconcile different points of view:

既使我與若辯矣。若勝我，我不若勝，若果是也，我果非也邪？……使同乎若者正之，既與若同矣，惡能正之？

"Suppose that I dispute (*pien*) with you; if you defeat me, if I do not defeat you, is it that what you say really 'is-this', what I say really 'is-not'? . . . [Whom shall I call in to decide it?] Suppose that one whose point of view is the same as yours decides it, since his point of view is the same as yours how can he decide it?"¹³

The dialectician Hui Shih had tried to show, by arguments similar to Kung-sun Lung's sophistries about the white horse and about hardness and whiteness, that "Heaven and earth are one body" (天地一體也).¹⁴ But Discrimination is useless even for this purpose. I cease to distinguish between things by an inward, wordless illumination; as soon as I use words to say that everything is one, I have fallen back into a world of things distinguished by words. "The Tao is brought about by walking it; things are Thus because of what we call them." (道行之而成, 物謂之而然)¹⁵ Language by its nature selects and excludes. One who describes in words is like a musician who, as long as he plays, must choose certain notes and ignore others; he ceases to leave out only when he ceases to play and silence returns. Hui Shih is compared with two famous musicians:

皆其盛者也, 故載之末年。唯其好之, 以異於彼。其好之也, 欲以明之。彼非所明而明之, 故以堅白之昧終。

"They were all men who excelled, therefore their names will be carried to later generations. But they liked something, and differentiated it from That. Liking it, they wished to understand it; but since they understood it without That being what they understood, they ended in the obscurity of hair-splitting discussions of hardness and whiteness."¹⁶

Suppose that I try to make a statement in which nothing is left out. At first sight it seems possible to say something, and then go on enlarging its scope until everything is included without exception:

今且有言於此。不知其與是類乎? 其與是不類乎? 類與不類, 相與爲類, 則與彼无以異矣。

"Now let me say something. I do not know whether what is said is of the same class as This? Or not of the same class? If we make a class of both things which are and things which are not of the same class, then there is no longer any difference from That."¹⁷

But however many additions I make to the original statement, there is always an elusive That still to be included:

雖然, 請嘗言之.....有有也者, 有无也者, 有未始有无也者, 有未始夫未始有无也者。

"However, let us try to say it . . . There is something (yu)—there is nothing (wu)—there is having not yet begun to have nothing—there is having not yet begun not to have begun to have nothing."

Further, my attempted description of everything is a failure at the very first step, since 俄而有无矣, 而未知有无之果孰有孰无也。今我則已有謂矣, 而未知吾所謂之果有謂乎, 其果无謂乎?

"Suddenly there is nothing; but I still do not know of something and nothing really which there is and which there is not. Now I have already referred to them, but I still do not know whether what I referred to is really referred to or not."

Again, if I say that "the myriad things are one with me" (萬物與我爲一),¹⁸ there are already two—the universe and my own statement about it. I cannot affirm my own unity with things, for it is by ceasing to affirm and deny that distinctions disappear for me.

At least six of the Mohist canons attack theses found in *Treating Things as Equal*. One defending Discrimination is quoted above. Another points out that shih and fei are not subject to degree, and are therefore not relative in the way that "long" and "short" are:

經 物甚不甚。說在若是。

說 (物) 甚長甚短, 莫長於是, 莫短於是。是之是也非是也者, 莫甚於是。

"Canon Whether or not a thing is so to the highest degree—Explanation: "As much as this".

Explanation If a thing were to the highest degree long or short, nothing would be longer or shorter than it. As for this being this or not being this, nothing reaches a higher degree than this."¹⁹

According to *Treating Things as Equal*, we can treat every statement either as shih or as fei. The Mohist canons reject these claims as self-contradictory:²⁰

經 以言爲盡諄, 諄。說在其言。

說 (以) 諄, 不可也。之人之言可, 是不諄, 則是有可也。之人之言不可以當, 必不審。

Canon One who considers all statements mistaken is mistaken. Explanation: "His own statement".

Explanation "Mistaken" means "inadmissible". If this man's statement is admissible, that is to say not mistaken, then this means that there are admissible statements. This man's statement cannot fit the facts: it must be ill-considered."²¹

The opposite claim that all statements may be accepted as right is exposed as self-contradictory by turning it into a double negative—"Denial may be rejected":

經 非非者諄。說在弗非。

說 不(非)非己之非也, 不非非。'非可非也'不可非也, 是不非非也。

Canon One who rejects denial is mistaken. Explanation: "He does not reject it".

Explanation If he does not reject his own denial, he does not reject denial. If "Rejection may be rejected" may not be rejected, this is not rejecting denial."²²

Another canon rejects the claim that one can abandon the distinction between This and That, treating everything either as one or as the other.

It points out that although my This may be treated as That, whoever does so must also treat my That as This:

經 彼此彼此與彼此同。說在異。
說 (彼)正名者彼此彼此可。彼彼止於彼,此此止於此,
彼此不可。彼且此也,彼此亦可。彼此止於彼此,若是
而彼此也,則彼亦且(此)²³此也。

Canon One cannot treat This as That without exchanging That and This.²⁴ Explanation: "[The two sides] are different".

Explanation It is admissible for those who use names correctly to exchange That and This. If what you treat as That is confined to That, and what you treat as This is confined to This, it is inadmissible to treat This as That. If That is also treated as This, it is admissible to treat This as That. If in treating This as That, you go so far as to confine to This what you treat as That, then That is also being treated as This.²⁵

Finally, an obscure canon attacks the assertion in *Treating Things as Equal* that one should "treat even what is not This as This" (是不是), approve even the wrong alternative as right.²⁶ A key word in the text has been corrupted to 文 throughout the explanation; although other suggestions have been offered,²⁷ it seems likely that the word was 止.²⁸ This translation is offered without much confidence:

經 是是與是同。說在不州。
說 不是是,則是且是焉。今是止於是,而不止於是,故
是不止。是不止,則是而不止焉。今是不止於是,而止於
是。故'止'與'是不止'同說也。

Canon You cannot approve as right without approving as right only the right. Explanation: "(Right) is not all-embracing".

Explanation When even the wrong is approved as right, the right is also being approved as right. Now if right is confined to the right, your approval is not being confined to right. Therefore your approval as right is not confined.

But when approval as right is not confined, right itself is not being confined. Now if right is not confined to the right, your approval is being confined to right. Therefore you cannot show that your approval as right is not confined without showing that it is confined.²⁹

¹ Chuang-tzu 10/32A-34B.

² Feng Yu-lan does not question Chuang-tzu's authorship of this chapter, and argues that its ideas are not identical with those of Shen Tao's circle although influenced by them. (*History of Chinese Philosophy*, translated Derk Bodde, Princeton, 1952, 1/155-8) Fu Ssü-nien 傅斯年 goes so far as to claim that Shen Tao actually wrote the chapter. (*Authorship of the Ts'i-wu-lun in Chuang-tzu*, Academia Sinica, 6/4 (1936), 557-67).

³ *Mo-tzu* SPTK 10/2A/1f, 9A/6-8. The first word of the canon is, as is usual, repeated as the first word of the explanation. 彼 is corrupted to 攸 in both the canons

but not in the explanations. This part of *Mo-tzu* is notoriously corrupt; a considerable proportion of emendations (mostly the work of Sun Yi-jang 孫詒讓 in his *Mo-tzu hsien-ku* 墨子閒詁) are solidly established, but many passages are unintelligible unless virtually rewritten at the whim of the commentator. Fortunately, most of the corrections in the sections quoted are of the former kind and generally accepted.

⁴ *ut sup.* 5B/4, 15B/6-16A/2. In the second but not the first 其 or the first character is corrupted to 牛.

⁵ I have argued elsewhere that the last three essays belong to the time of the Six Dynasties (*Composition of the Gongsuen Long tzyy, Asia Major*, New Series, 5/2 (1957), 147-83).

⁶ *Chuang-tzu* 1/31A/4-8.

⁷ *ut sup.* 1/27A/5f, 28A/1-28B/3.

⁸ Chang T'ai-yen 章泰炎 suggested that there is textual confusion between *pi* and *fei*, but his corrections seem to me unnecessary. (*Chuang-tzu chieh-ku* 莊子解詁, 3A/2-4, in *Chang-shih ts'ung-shu* 章氏叢書).

⁹ *Chuang-tzu* 1/26A/4f. One of the contentions of the sophists was that "a dog might be regarded as a sheep" (大可以爲羊). Commenting on this (*Chuang-tzu* 10/40B/2), Ssü-ma Piao 司馬彪 (died A.D. 306) says that "the shape belongs to the thing, the name belongs to man" (形在於物, 名在於人), and points out that *p'u* 璞 means "uncut jade" in one dialect and "dried rat-meat" in another. (This was a favourite illustration of the pitfalls of language. Cf. *Chan-kuo-ts'ê*, SPTK 3/53A/11-53B/2; *Yin Wen tzü* 尹文子, SPTK 13B/4-7; *Shih-tz* 尸子, SPPY, B/7B/6; *Hou Han shu*, *Pai-na* 百衲, Biographies, 38/19B/1f).

¹⁰ *Chuang-tzu* 1/28B/5-7.

¹¹ *ut sup.* 1/45B/8-46A/2.

¹² *ut sup.* 1/45B/2, commentary.

¹³ *ut sup.* 1/44B/6f, 45A/5f.

¹⁴ *ut sup.* 1/39B/7f.

¹⁵ *ut sup.* 1/29A/8.

¹⁶ *ut sup.* 1/32A/4-8.

¹⁷ *ut sup.* 1/33A/5-7, 33B/2, 33B/5-34A/4.

¹⁸ *ut sup.* 1/34A/7.

¹⁹ *Mo-tzu* 10/6A/3f, 22A/1f. The first 甚 in the canon is corrupted to 箕.

²⁰ This type of argument is found in other canons; thus one points out the self-contradiction in teaching (causing to learn) that learning is useless (*ut sup.* 5B/7f, 21B/3-5, translated Bodde, *ut sup.* 276).

²¹ *Mo-tzu* 10/5A/8, 20B/3-5. The first but not the second 之人 is corrupted to 出入. (The canons do not use 此 as adjectival "this", always preferring 之).

²² *ut sup.* 6A/2, 21B/7-22A/1. 諄 is corrupted to 諄. The first word of the canon is repeated (cf. n3 above) after instead of before the first word of the explanation and is corrupted by the addition of the speech radical. (It is remarkable that the repeated word is often found one word too late, never one word too early; this suggests that it was originally written by the side of the first word of the explanation and later incorporated in the text, generally before, sometimes after the first word).

²³ One text omits this character (*Mo-tzu hsien-ku*, BSS, 240/6, commentary).

²⁴ The formula "Doing X is the same as doing Y" is used in the canons to deny that one can do Y without being logically committed to doing X. Cf. 6A/5, translated below (where 同 in the canon is expanded to 同說 in the explanation), and 5A/3f, translated *Composition of the Gongsuen Long tzyy, ut sup.* 163 (where, however, I failed to recognize that the second word of the explanation is the repeated first word of the canon, cf. No. 22 above).

²⁵ *ut sup.* 5A/4f, 19B/7-20A/2. In the canon 彼 is in both cases corrupted to 循. There is a parallel in one of the spurious essays of the *Kung-sun Lung tzü* (217), which, however, pillage the Mohist canons without understanding them (cf. n5 above).

²⁶ Contrast *Hsün-tzu*, 1/18A/3f 是是非非謂之知, 非是是非謂之愚. "To treat right as right, wrong as wrong, is called wisdom; to treat right as wrong, wrong as right, is called foolishness."

²⁷ T'an Chieh-fu 譚戒甫 reads 是 for 文 (*Mo-pien fa-wei* 墨辯發微, Peking, 1958, 208); Kao Heng 高亨 reads 久 (*Mo-ching chiao-ch'üan* 墨經校詁, Peking, 1958, 202). Cf. n.28 below.

²⁸ One of the most solid results in the textual criticism of the Mohist canons is the discovery that 文 is throughout simply a graphic error for 之. Sun Yi-jiang (*Mo-tzu hsien-ku* 243/7), Liang Ch'i-ch'ao 梁啟超 (*Mo-ching chiao-shih* 墨經校釋, 163) and Wu Yü-chiang 吳鐵江 (*Mo-tzu chiao-chu* 墨子校注, Tu-li ch'u-pan she, 1944, 10B/25B), making this emendation here, try in various ways to account for the fact that the word in question is used as a verb. But the character 之 was originally the same as 止, which was still used for it on Chou bronzes (Karlgren, *Grammata Serica*, Stockholm, 1940, Nos. 961a, 962a). The corrupted character is used in the same contexts as 止 in the canon on This and That just quoted, which is closely related to this one in subject and phrasing.

²⁹ *Mo-tzu* 10/6A/5, 22A/4-6. 州 for 周, as in 14/5A/2 (cf. 16B/5). The 止 in the second sentence of the Explanation is restored on the analogy of the corresponding last sentence but one; a verb is required in any case after the 不. In this passage I prefer to assume that the second word of the Explanation is not (cf. n.22 above) the repeated first word of the canon.

B. YU AND WU IN TAOISM AND NEO-CONFUCIANISM

The words *yu* ("have", "there is") and *wu* ("have not", "there is not") give rise to metaphysical problems in some ways like, in some ways very unlike, those connected with "to be". They become especially important in the Taoism of the third and succeeding centuries A.D. and in the Neo-Confucianism of the Sung dynasty (A.D.960-1279).

As we saw in Part IA above, the subject of the English "is" corresponds to the object of Chinese *yu*. In Indo-European languages a thing simply *is*, without implying anything outside it, and it is the most abstract entities which the Platonic tradition most willingly credits with being. In Chinese, on the other hand, one approaches the thing from outside, from the world which "has" it, in which "there is" it. From this point of view, the more concrete a thing is, the more plainly the world has it; for example, one can emphasize the absolute non-existence of X by saying 天下無 X, "The world does not have X" (more literally, "There is no X under the sky"). In this respect, as in the absence of the copulative functions of "to be", *yu* is like "exist", which also implies a concrete thing with a background from which it stands out (*existit*). But there remains the difference that "exists", like "is", is attached to a subject and not to an object.

This is the source of one of the most striking differences between Chinese thinking about *yu* and *wu* and Western thinking about Being. In English, a table is a thing, exists, is; Beauty is not a thing, does not exist, but we can still say it is. Having a verb "to be" (*esse*), we can form a noun from it and say that Beauty, although not a thing, is an "entity" (*ens*, *entitas*). We can also form an adjective from "thing" (*res*) and say that it is "real". To indicate the kind of being which is not existence we can invent *s'ubsistence*. Beauty, that real, subsisting entity, is assimilated as closely as possible to the table, that real, existing thing. As a last refinement, we

may find reasons for claiming that such an immaterial entity more truly *is*, is more real, than the phenomena perceived by the senses.

In Chinese, on the other hand, the word *yu* is used primarily of concrete things (*wu* 物). So is the word *shih* 實, "solid", "real", the opposite of *hsü* 虛, "tenuous" (if absolute, "void") or "unreal". There are horses, they are things, they are solid or real; but what of the Tao, or the Neo-Confucian *li* 理, "principle"? Occasionally philosophers extend the scope of *yu* to cover these abstractions; but it is more usual to decide either that they are Nothing, the Void, or that the distinction between *yu* and *wu* does not apply to them.

When *yu* and *wu* are used as nouns, a serious ambiguity arises; they may mean either "(there-)being" and "(there-)not-being" or "something" and "nothing". This confusion is inherent in Classical Chinese, which has no convenient way of distinguishing the substantivized verb from the agent, even when the verb is followed by *chê* 者 (知者 may mean either "knowing" or "he who knows"). *Wu* may be taken as either (A) "there not being" (non-existence), or (B) "that which there is not", "that in which there is not" (the non-existent, nothing). Speculations about *yu* and *wu* generally assume the latter sense, but without clearly distinguishing it from the former. An argument of the Neo-Confucian Ch'êng Hao 程顥 (1032-85) provides a good illustration. Taoists had identified the Tao with Nothing, *wu* in sense B; the Neo-Confucian Chang Tsai 張載 (1020-77) replied that "there is no Nothing", *wu wu* (1); Ch'êng Hao holds that both positions are self-contradictory:

言有'無'則多有字,言無'無'則多無字

"If you say that there is what there is not (*yu wu*), you have no right to say 'there is'; if you say that there is no (there-) not-being (*wu wu*), you have no right to say 'there is no'."²

Chang Tsai meant by *wu wu* that "there is not what there is not", and this sense is also demanded by the analogy with *yu wu*. But in this sense *wu wu* is not self-contradictory; on the contrary, it is a tautology.

The second sense of *wu* has just been defined as "that which there is not" or "that in which there is not". Logically, there is no difference between these alternatives, as Ch'êng Hao assumes. But grammatically *wu* is only "that in which there is not" (what does not have); the substantivized verb is confused with the agent, not with the object, and "that which there is not" (what is not had) should be *so wu* 所無. Those who identify the Tao with *wu* mean primarily that it lacks form and other qualities, and only secondarily that it is not a thing which exists in the world. Compare these two Taoist definitions of the Tao, the first by Wang Pi 王弼 (A.D.226-49) the second by Ho Yen 何晏 (died A.D.249);

道者,無之稱也。無不通也,無不由也;況之曰道。寂然無體,不可爲象。

"The Tao is a term for Nothing. Since there is nothing it does not pass through and nothing which does not follow it, it is called by metaphor the Tao (Way). It is still and has no body, and cannot be conceived as an image."³

夫道者，惟無所有者也。

"The Tao is only that in which there is not anything that there is."⁴

A sentence of the *Lao-tzū* (third century B.C.), "Something is born from nothing" (有生於無), reappears in the *Huai-nan-tzū* (second century B.C.) in the following context:

無形而有形生焉，無聲而五音鳴焉，無味而五味形焉，無色而五色成焉。是故有生於無，實出於虛。

"It has no form but what has form is born from it, no sound but the five notes resound from it, no taste but the five tastes are formed from it, no colour but the five colours come about from it. *Therefore what has (yu) is born from what does not have (wu)*, the solid comes out of the tenuous."⁵

The English word "Nothing" implies the absence of any "entity", the Chinese *wu* only the absence of concrete things. Taoists agree with Western idealists in exalting the immaterial, but cannot like them identify it with pure Being; for Taoists all that lacks material form is by definition *wu*. But if the Tao is Nothing, then Nothing is a positive complement of Something, not its mere absence. A similar conception of Nothing is found in the West (for example, in Hegel and in Existentialism), but the Chinese language gives it especial encouragement. *Yu*, "there is" and *shih*, "solid" are not, like most verbs and adjectives, negated by *pu*, "not", but form pairs with *wu*, "there is not" and *hsü*, "tenuous", similar to such pairs as long and short, left and right, Yin and Yang. It is therefore easy to see them as mutually dependent, as in these passages from the *Lao-tzū*:

有無相生，難易相成，長短相較，高下相傾，音聲相和，前後相隨。

"Something and Nothing give birth to each other, difficult and easy complete each other, long and short offset each other, high and low determine each other, voice and accompaniment harmonize with each other, front and back give each other sequence."

三十輻共一轂，當其無有車之用。埏埴以爲器，當其無有器之用。鑿戶牖以爲室，當其無有室之用。故有之以爲利，無之以爲用。

"Thirty spokes share one hub; it is just where it does not exist that the wheel is useful. We turn clay to make a vessel; it is just where it does not exist that the vessel is useful. We chisel out doors and windows to make a house; it is just where it does not exist that the house is useful. Therefore we draw advantage from them where they exist, use them where they do not exist."⁶

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The second passage deals, not with Nothing in general, but with the parts of the wheel, vessel or house which do not exist (其無). Each is a combination of something and nothing; the hole in the wheel which takes the axle, the empty space inside the vessel, doors and windows in the house, are nothing yet belong to the things which could not be used without them. To live in the world we must use the Tao, just as to keep things in a vessel we must use the void inside it.

It is thus possible for the Taoist to hold that the world depends on the Tao in spite of the latter's nothingness. But the dependence must be mutual; "Something and Nothing give birth to each other." The verb "to be" allows us to conceive immaterial "entities" detached from the material, for example God before the Creation. But if the immaterial is a Nothing which complements Something, it cannot be isolated; the immanence of the Tao in the universe is not an accident of Chinese thought, it is inherent in the functions of the words *yu* and *wu*. Admittedly "Something is born from Nothing", things with form and colour emerge out of the formless, and in early Taoism it is not always clear whether this is a continuous process or a single event before which Nothing reigned alone. But as soon as this issue is clearly perceived, for example by Kuo Hsiang 郭象 (died c. A.D. 312), the second interpretation is definitely excluded:

誰得先物者乎哉？吾以陰陽爲先物，而陰陽者即所謂物耳。誰又先陰陽者乎？吾以自然爲先之，而自然即物之自爾耳。吾以至道爲先之矣，而至道者乃至無也。既以無矣，又奚爲先？然則先物者誰乎哉？而猶有物無已。明物之自然，非有使然也。

"Who can have preceded things? I may suppose that the Yin and Yang preceded things; but the Yin and Yang are exactly what is meant by 'things'. I may suppose that Nature (*tzü-jan*, 'being so of itself') preceded them; but Nature is simply things being as they are of themselves. I may suppose that the utmost Tao preceded them; but the utmost Tao is utmost Nothing. Since it does not exist, how can it be considered to precede? Then who is it that preceded them? But still things exist without coming to an end. This shows that things are so of themselves, there is nothing which makes them so."⁷

非唯無不得化而爲有也，有亦不得化而爲無矣。是以有之爲物，雖千變萬化，而不得一爲無也。不得一爲無，故自古無未有之時而常存也。

"It is not only that Nothing cannot be transformed into Something; Something also can no longer be transformed into Nothing. Therefore Something is so constituted that, although it alters and transforms in thousands and myriads of ways, it can never become Nothing. Because it can never become Nothing, from the remotest past there has never been a time before there was Something and it will always continue."⁸

In Western and Indian mystical philosophies, God, the One, the Absolute, *Brahman*, are conceived as more real than the phenomenal world. These systems were developed in Indo-European languages, in which "to be" is not confined to speaking of concrete things, and in which it is easy to argue that what is heavy or light, large or small, does not enjoy the pure being of what simply *is*. Even Buddhism, which rejects the *Brahman* identified in the *Upanisads* with *sat* ("being"), and refuses to attribute either being or non-being to the void (*śūnyatā* 空), puts the main stress on the unreality of phenomena. For Taoists, on the other hand, it is concrete things which exist and are solid or real, the Tao which does not exist and is tenuous or unreal.

This difference is all the more striking since in each of these mystical traditions, Western and Chinese, we find elements which are better suited to the intellectual scheme of the other. In the West also there is a tendency to emphasize the absence of sensible qualities by saying that the object of the mystic's search is Nothing—an assertion which Taoists intend quite literally, but which Christians can offer only as a daring paradox. On the other hand, Taoists play with the idea that the world is a dream, without being able to fit it into their philosophy. When Chuang-tzū wakes from dreaming that he is a butterfly,⁹ he does not conclude that the Tao is the reality behind all dreaming; he merely suspects that he is a butterfly dreaming that he is a man. The third chapter of the *Lieh-tzū* argues at length that there is no difference between dreaming and waking, but never suggests that we should wake from both to some deeper reality. The idea that the world is a dream has the same kind of significance in Taoism as the idea that God is Nothing has in Christian mysticism—it is a metaphor expressing an intuition for which the system has no place. The difference between *yu* and "to be" is one of the factors which radically alter the interpretation of what may well be very similar experiences.

Chinese Buddhism at first confused the Void (*śūnyatā*) with the *wu* of Taoism, but later learned to deny that it is either *yu* or *wu*.¹⁰ In place of the *sat* (Being) of the central Hindu tradition, Buddhism speaks of *tathatā*, generally translated "suchness" or "thusness". The Chinese translation of *tathatā* is *ju*, generally used in the combination *chên-ju* 眞如 "genuine *ju*". *ju*, "like, as much as", comparing qualities and actions rather than things, is related to *jan*, "thus" (like this, as much as this). As a noun, one may take *ju* as "being as (not "what") it is",—Being in sense E above ("He is tall"), quite different from *yu*, which is comparable with Being in sense A ("There is a man"). But the reception of a recent book by D. T. Suzuki provides an interesting example of how easily such an equation can cause misunderstanding:

"Eckhart's experiences are deeply, basically, abundantly rooted in God as Being which is at once being and non-being; he sees in the "meanest"

thing among God's creatures all the glories of his is-ness (*isticheit*). The Buddhist enlightenment is nothing more than this experience of is-ness or suchness (*tathatā*) which in itself has all the possible values (*guṇa*) we humans can conceive."¹¹

But "suchness", however vague it may sound, is much narrower than "being", overlapping with only one of the six senses of the latter which we have distinguished, and having no connexion with existence. It is clear to an Orientalist that Suzuki is aware of this, but it is not clear to the general reader to whom the book is addressed; one reviewer drew the conclusion that "what links them (Eckhart and the Zen Buddhists) must closely be their common recognition of God as Being".¹²

Confucians always disliked the Taoist doctrine of Nothing because of its practical corollary, that just as the world depends on Nothing, so the good government of the Empire depends on *wu-wei* 無爲, "no action". P'ei Wei 裴頠 (267-300) wrote an essay, *Honouring the Existing* (崇有論), in which he argued that Nothing is not the complement of Something, but merely its absence:

夫至無者無以能生。故始生者自生也。自生而必體有，則有遺而生虧矣。生以有爲己分，則虛無是有之所遺者也。故養既化之有，非無用之所能全也，理既有之衆，非無爲之所能循也。

"Utmost Nothing ('that which to the utmost degree *does not have*') *does not have* the means to produce. Therefore what was produced first was produced of itself. If what is produced of itself must exist bodily, then by what it leaves out it will produce a gap. If what is produced takes existence for its own share, then the void and Nothing are what the existing leaves out. Once the existing has developed, one cannot maintain it by using nothing; once the people exist, one cannot govern them by doing nothing."¹³

More than a thousand years later Wang Fu-chih 王夫之 (1619-92) attacks from a slightly different angle:

言無者激于言有者而破除之也。就言有者之所謂有而謂無其有也。天下果何者而可謂之無哉？言龜無毛，言犬也，非言龜也。言兔無角，言麋也，非言兔也。言者必有所立而後其說成。今使言者立一無于前，博求之上下四維古今存亡而不可得窮矣。

"One who says 'There is not' is provoked to denial by someone saying there is. He takes up what the other says there is and says there is no such thing. What is there in the world really which can be called Nothing? If you say there is no hair on a tortoise, you are talking about (something on) a dog, not (nothing on) a tortoise. If you say there are no horns on a hare, you are talking about (something on) a deer, not (nothing on) a hare. A speaker must set something up before he can argue successfully. Now if he is to set a Nothing in front of us, he can search everywhere above and below, North,

South, East and West, in the past and the present, the surviving and the lost, without succeeding in getting to the end of it."¹⁴

Wang Fu-chih goes so far as to claim that even abstractions such as principles (*li*) exist:

天下惡有所謂無者哉? 于物或未有, 于事非無。于事或未有, 于理非無。

"How can there be anything in the world which is called Nothing? What we do not find existing as a thing may exist as an activity, what we do not find existing as an activity may exist as a principle."¹⁵

It is natural that some Confucians should carry their reaction against the Taoist concept of a non-existent Tao justifying "No Action" to the point of insisting that moral principles are solid, real, existing. An earlier example is Ch'êng Yi 程頤 (1033-1107), who held that "nothing in the world is more real than Principle" 天下無實於理者.¹⁶ Yet this conflicted sharply with the ordinary use of the words *yu* and *wu*, as can be seen from a dialogue in which Ch'êng Yi declares that moral Right exists:

‘義還因事而見否?’ 曰, ‘非也, 性中自有。’ 或曰, ‘無狀可見。’ 曰, ‘說有, 便是見。但人自不見昭昭然在天地之中也。’

"Q. I suppose that it is through conduct that Right becomes visible? A. No. It exists of itself within human nature. Q. It has no visible features. A. To say that it exists is to say that it is visible. But men do not let themselves see it. It is there quite plainly between heaven and earth."¹⁷

Yu applies to concrete things, as the questioner recognizes; in crediting moral Right with existence, Ch'êng Yi finds himself saying that it is there quite plainly *between heaven and earth*. It is easy to understand why other Neo-Confucians should prefer to deny that Principle (*li*), their basic metaphysical concept, can be discussed in terms of *yu* and *wu*. According to Hu Hung 胡宏 (died 1161):

生聚而可見則爲有, 死散而不可見則爲無。夫可以有無見者, 物之形也。物之理, 則未嘗有無也。

"When something is born, comes together and is visible, it is considered to exist; when it dies, disperses and is invisible, it is considered not to exist. What is visible as existing or not existing is a thing's form. A thing's principle, however, never exists or does not exist."¹⁸

Chu Hsi 朱熹 (1130-1200), the most influential of the Neo-Confucians, says:

‘理’之一字, 不可以有無論。未有天地之時, 便已如此了也。

"The word 'principle' cannot be discussed in terms of existence and non-existence. Before there was a heaven or an earth, it was already as it is now."¹⁹

We may note the implication that if *li* existed it would be a material thing, originating with heaven and earth.

¹ *Chang-tzu ch'üan-shu* 張子全書 BSS 24/1.

² *Ho-nan Ch'êng-shih yi-shu* 134/1.

³ ap. *Lun-yü chu-su* 論語注疏, SPPY 7/1B/7.

⁴ ap. *Ch'ung-hsü chih-tê chen-ching* 沖虛至德真經 (*Lieh-tzu*), SPTK 4/2B/12 commentary.

⁵ *Huai-nan-tzu* 1/11B/10-12, cf. *Lao-tzu* 40.

⁶ *Lao-tzu* 2, 11.

⁷ *Chuang-tzu* 7/55A/7-55B/1 commentary.

⁸ *ut sup.* 7/54B/6-8.

⁹ *ut sup.* 1/47B, 48A.

¹⁰ cf. W. Liebenthal, *Book of Chao*, Monuments Serica Monograph 13 (1948), 33 n.113, 128 n.553, 146, 158.

¹¹ *Mysticism Christian and Buddhist*. London, 1957, 7.

¹² *Times Literary Supplement*. Dec. 13, 1957.

¹³ ap. *Chin-shu*, *Pai-na* 35/7B/2-5.

¹⁴ *Ssü-wen-lu* 思問錄, edited Wang Po-hsiang 王伯祥, Peking, 1956, 11/12-14.

¹⁵ *Chang-tzu chêng-mêng chu* 張子正蒙注, edited Chang Hsi-ch'en 章錫琛, Peking, 1956, 13/8f.

¹⁶ *Ho-nan Ch'êng-shih yi-shu* 71/2.

¹⁷ *ut sup.* 206/5f.

¹⁸ *Hu-tzu chih-yen* 胡子知言, *Yüeh-ya-t'ang ts'ung-shu* 粵雅堂叢書 1/9A/6-8.

¹⁹ *Chu-tzu ta-ch'üan* 朱子大全, SPPY 58/10B/12-11A/2.

C. THE TREATMENT OF "TO BE" IN CHINESE TRANSLATIONS OF WESTERN PHILOSOPHERS

In order to see the relation between Being and *shih/fei* and *yu/wu* in perspective, we must compare them also from the opposite point of view. How do Chinese translators deal with the verb "to be"? Outside philosophy, "to be" of course gives no special difficulty to the translator, who simply uses whichever is suitable among the words and constructions described in Part I above. But philosophers do not merely use the verb "to be", they talk about Being; and they are liable to switch without warning from the being of "There is a man" (*yu/wu*) to that of "He is a man" (*shih/fei*) or of "He is tall". The need to translate the same word differently in different contexts does not by itself prove that the word is ambiguous; thus *yu* as a verb is not ambiguous, although we represent it sometimes by "there is", sometimes by "has". Nevertheless, Western philosophers do tend to confuse functions of "to be" which, in addition to being separated in Chinese, have different logical implications in their own languages. In such cases, the failure of the Chinese translation shows up the flaw in the argument, in the same way that the difficulties of English translators sometimes expose confusion in the thought of the Chinese.

We may begin with a notoriously fallacious argument of Plato:

"Q. And what about things which are double something else? If they are double one thing, can't they be equally well regarded as half something else?

A. Yes.

Q. And things which are large or heavy may equally well, from another point of view, be called small and light.

A. Yes; any such thing will in a sense have both characteristics.

Q. Then can we say that such things are, any more than they are not, any of the many things we say they are?

A. They are ambiguous like the puzzles you hear at parties (he replied), or the children's riddle about the eunuch hitting the bat and what he threw at it and what it was sitting on. They are neither one thing nor the other, and one can't think of them either as being or as not being, or as both or as neither."¹

Whatever one says a thing is (double or half, heavy or light, large or small), one can also say it is not; therefore one has as much right to say it is not (does not exist) as that it is. The reproduction of this fallacy in Chinese presents the Chinese translator Wu Hsien-shu 吳獻書² with an insoluble problem. In the first passage in italics above "to be" is a copula. Since Chinese does not use a copula in saying "X is heavy" or "X is large" (Function E above), Wu Hsien-shu has to use *shih/fei*, which are used only to link nouns (Function B):

然則世間固不乏似是而實非，似非而實是之物歟？

"In that case, the world certainly does not lack things which seem to be (*shih*) what really they are not (*fei*), seem not to be what really they are?"

To complete the argument the translator must jump from *shih/fei* to the existential *yu/wu*; and we catch him in the act in the second italicised passage:

欲確知其是與否，有與無，誠非易事。

"It is truly not an easy matter to know definitely whether these things are (*shih*) something or are not so (*fou*), whether there are (*yu*) these things or there are not (*wu*)."

As a second example, let us take this Chinese summary of the Ontological Argument for the existence of God:

神也者，至高之存在也。假謂有更高於神而存在者，此人心中所不可得而思惟。故一切存在者之中，惟神為完全，故神為絕對完全者。凡謂之絕對完全，必其具備性質，一無所闕。故神不可不具有存在性。神而無存在性，是不得謂之完全也。

"God is the highest existence (*ts'un-tsai*). If we suppose that there is anything existing which is higher than God, this would be inconceivable to the human mind. Therefore, among everything that exists, only God is perfect; and therefore God is that which is absolutely perfect. Whatever is called absolutely perfect, must have no deficiency among the qualities which comprise it. Therefore God must include existence. If God did not include existence, He could not be called perfect."³

The success of this summary of the argument depends on the use of *ts'un-tsai*, which follows a subject like "exist" instead of preceding an object like *yu*, and which modern Chinese writers have deliberately adopted as the equivalent of "exist". It is clear that the argument cannot be stated in terms of *yu* and *wu*. In the first place, it assumes that existence is included by the side of omnipotence and omniscience among the attributes which make up perfection. But *yu*, unlike *ts'un-tsai*, cannot be treated as an attribute, since the noun in question is not its subject—X 善, "X is good", but *yu* X, "(The world) has X", "There is X". Again, it would be absurd to take *yu* as a precondition of perfection; it is precisely because the Tao is *wu*, without confining properties, that it is limitless and pervades all things. Kuo Hsiang's criticism of the idea of a personal Creator is unintelligible unless one remembers that anything there is (*yu*) is necessarily a material thing, limited and imperfect:

請問夫造物者有邪，無邪。無也，則胡能造物哉？有也，則不足以物衆形。故明乎衆形之自物，而後始可與言造物耳。

"I should like to ask whether the Creator is something or nothing. If he is nothing, how is he able to create things? If he is something, he is unequal to making things in their multitude of forms. It is pointless to discuss creation with someone until he understands that the multitude of forms become things by themselves."⁴

In Chinese one cannot treat *yu* as a predicate; but in Western languages it is so natural to treat existence as a predicate that it was nearly 700 years before Kant exposed this flaw in the Ontological Argument. Even Kant's refutation confuses existential and copulative "to be", and therefore defies translation into Chinese:

"Sein ist offenbar kein reales Prädikat, d.i. ein Begriff von irgend etwas, was zu dem Begriffe eines Dinges hinzukommen könne. Es ist bloss die Position eines Dinges, oder gewisser Bestimmungen an sich selbst. Im logischen Gebrauche ist es lediglich die Copula eines Urteils. Der Satz: Gott ist allmächtig, enthält zwei Begriffe, die ihre Objekte haben: Gott und Allmacht; das Wörtchen: ist, ist nicht noch ein Prädikat obenein, sondern nur das, was das Prädikat beziehungsweise aufs Subjekt setzt. Nehme ich nun das Subjekt (Gott) mit allen seinen Prädikaten (worunter auch die Allmacht gehört) zusammen, und sage: Gott ist, oder es ist ein Gott, so setze ich kein neues Prädikat zum Begriffe von Gott, sondern nur das Subjekt an sich selbst mit allen seinen Prädikaten, und zwar den Gegenstand in Beziehung auf meinen Begriff."⁵

Lan Kung-wu 藍公武 translated Kant, not from the German original, but from Norman Kemp Smith's English version. I therefore append Kemp Smith's translation after the Chinese, and insert notes on the Chinese into it:

‘存在’(*Sein*)顯然非一實在的賓辭；即此非能加於事物概念上之某某事物之概念。此僅設定一事物或某種規定，一若其自身存在者。在邏輯上，此僅一判斷之系辭而已。‘神為全能’之命題包有二種概念，每一概念皆有其對象：神及全能。‘為’之一字並未增加新賓辭，僅用以設定賓辭與其主辭之關係而已。吾人今若就主辭(神)與其所有之一切賓辭(全能賓辭在其中)總括言之，謂‘神在’或‘有神’(按：以上‘為’‘在’‘有’三字德文為 *Sein*，英文為 *Being*)。吾人並未以新賓辭加於神之概念，僅設定此主辭自身與其所有之一切賓辭，且實設定為‘與我之概念有關之一種對象’。⁶

“*Being* (*ts'un-tsai*) is obviously not a real predicate; that is, it is not a concept of something which could be added to the concept of a thing. It is merely the positing of a thing, or of certain determinations, as existing (*ts'un-tsai*) in themselves. Logically, it is merely the copula of a judgement. The proposition ‘God is (*wei*) omnipotent’ contains two concepts, each of which has its object—God and omnipotence. The small word ‘is’ (*wei*) adds no new predicate, but only serves to posit the predicate in its relation to the subject. If, now, we take the subject (God) with all its predicates (among which is omnipotence) and say ‘God is (*tsai*)’ or ‘There is (*yu*) a God’ (Note by Lan Kung-wu; ‘The three words *wei*, *tsai* and *yu* above are *Sein* in German and *Being* in English’), we attach no new predicate to the concept of God, but only posit the subject in itself with all its predicates, and indeed posit it as being an *object* that stands in relation to my concept.”⁷

“God is omnipotent” has no copula in Chinese, so Lan Kung-wu is reduced to the expedient of inserting *wei* (Part I, E above). In “God is” and “There is a God” he has to use *tsai* (Part I, F above) and *yu*, neither of which is a copula. This makes nonsense of the whole passage; successful translation is impossible because in Chinese one cannot make the mistake which Kant is exposing.

Finally, let us consider a couple of examples from 賀麟 Ho Lin’s translation of Hegel’s *Lesser Logic* (from the German compared with William Wallace’s English version). Ho Lin uses *yu* for *Sein*, “Being”, reserving *ts'un-tsai* for *Existenz*. This is an inevitable choice since Hegel is throughout thinking primarily of existential being—a fact which does not prevent him defining Being in terms of identity:

“*Sein* kann bestimmt werden, als Ich = Ich, als die absolute Indifferenz oder Identität u.s.f.”⁸

This becomes nonsense in Chinese, which has words for “exist” (*yu*) and “be identical with” (*chi-shih*, *chi*, Part I, C above) but no word which covers both:

‘有’可以界說為‘我即是我’，為‘絕對的無別’，或同一等。⁹

“Being (*yu*) may be defined as I = (*chi-shih*) I, as Absolute Indifference, or Identity and so on” (Wallace).¹⁰

Ho Lin’s translation of the next passage is not very literal, and we shall have to make a second English translation direct from the Chinese.

“Die Qualität ist zunächst die mit dem Sein identische Bestimmtheit, dergestalt, dass etwas aufhört, das zu sein, was es ist, wenn es seine Qualität verliert. Die Quantität ist dagegen die dem Sein äusserliche, für dasselbe gleichgültige Bestimmtheit. So bleibt z.B. ein Haus das was es ist, es mag grösser oder kleiner sein, und Roth bleibt Roth, es mag dasselbe heller oder dunkler sein.”¹¹

“Quality is, in the first place, the character identical with being; thus a thing ceases to be what it is, if it loses its quality. Quantity, again, is the character external to being, and does not affect the being at all. Thus e.g. a house remains what it is, whether it be greater or smaller; and red remains red, whether it be brighter or darker.” (Wallace).¹²

‘質’首先就具有與‘有’相同一的性質，兩者的性質相同到這樣程度，如果一物失掉它的質，則這物便失其所以為這物。反之，‘量’的性質便與‘有’相外在，量之多少並不影響到‘有’。譬如，一所房子，仍然是一所房子，無論大一點或小一點。同樣，紅色仍然是紅色，無論深一點或淺一點。¹³

“Quality, in the first place, includes a character identical with being (*yu*). The identity of the characters of both is so complete, that if a thing loses its quality, then it loses the reason why it is (*wei*, Part I, D above) this thing. On the other hand, the character of quantity is external to being, and the degree of quantity does not affect the being at all. For example, a house is (*shih*) still a house, whether it (be) greater or smaller; similarly, red is (*shih*) still red, whether it (be) lighter or darker.”

Reading this passage in Chinese, it seems illogical; granted that “if a thing loses its quality, then it loses the reason why it is this thing”, how does this illustrate the claim that quality has “a character identical with existence (*yu*)”? If a two-dimensional figure ceases to be round, it ceases to be a circle, but it does not cease to be (exist). But the fault is Hegel’s, not Ho Lin’s; translation exposes the ambiguity in “to be” on which the argument depends.

It is curious to watch Chinese translators struggling to reproduce Western fallacies in a language which, whatever its defects, does not permit them to make these particular mistakes. But there is nothing very surprising in the spectacle; until Wittgenstein’s revolution in philosophy, it was generally assumed everywhere that if one cannot state a philosophical argument in another language, it is the language and not the argument which is at fault. The adaptation of philosophy to a new language (from Greek and Latin to modern languages, from Sanskrit and from Western

languages to Chinese) often involves both an improvement in terminology and a deterioration in syntax. It is a remarkable fact that although Western philosophers have hardly yet rid themselves of confusion between existential and copulative being, the languages in which they have been philosophizing since the decline of scholastic Latin distinguish the two almost as sharply as does Chinese. Standard English, French and German confine "to be" almost entirely to its copulative functions, using special formulae for existence—"there is", "il y a", "es gibt". Nevertheless, philosophers have continued to say "X is" instead of "There is X", and to speak of "being" wherever they used to say *esse*. (One reason is no doubt that one cannot conveniently turn these formulae into verbal nouns, and philosophers who hold that they are studying entities, not the logical structure of language, have to operate with nouns.) The passage from Kant quoted above provides a good illustration—*Gott ist* (*Deus est*), to which Kant appends a translation into his own language, *Es ist ein Gott*. Traditional English grammar, framed on the analogy of Greek and Latin, parses "There is X" with X as the subject of "is"; the way we think is affected, not only by the language we speak, but by the grammar we impose on it and by the languages in which the problems were originally stated.

¹ Republic 479, translated H. D. P. Lee (Penguin, 1955), 242f. I do not know Greek.

² P'o-la-t'u chih li-hsiang-kuo 柏拉圖之理想國 (Commercial Press, 1920), A, 388f.

³ Chê-hsiieh ts'ü-tien 哲學辭典, edited Fan Ping-ch'ing 樊炳清 (1930), 497.

⁴ Chuang-tzu 1/47A/3f.

⁵ Kritik der reinen Vernunft (Kant's gesammelte Schriften, hgg. v. d. Kgl. Ak. d. Wissensch. Bd. 3 (Berlin 1904) p. 401.

⁶ K'ang-teh 康德 (Kant), Ch'un-ts'ui li-hsing p'i-p'an 純粹理性批判 (Peking, 1957), 430.

⁷ Immanuel Kant's Critique of Pure Reason, 2nd impression with corrections (London, 1933), 504f.

⁸ System der Philosophie. Erster Teil; die Logik. § 86.

⁹ Hei-kê-êrh 黑格爾 (Hegel), Hsiao lo-chi 小邏輯 (Peking, 1954), 199.

¹⁰ The Logic of Hegel (Oxford, 1874), 135.

¹¹ Logik § 85.

¹² The Logic of Hegel, 134.

¹³ Hsiao lo-chi, 198.

APPENDIX

THE SUPPOSED VAGUENESS OF CHINESE

Most scholars who reflect on the differences between Chinese and Western languages agree on one point—that Chinese is an exceptionally loose and ambiguous language, in which logical precision is almost unattainable. This generalization seems indeed so obvious as hardly to need illustration; it is therefore disconcerting to notice how often the illustrations which have been offered prove to be baseless. Apart from Waley's observations, already quoted, the only attempt known to me to expose in detail a

Chinese ambiguity connected with "to be" is made by Bodde in a footnote to his translation of Kung-sun Lung's *Essay on Chih and Things*:¹

"The chief difficulty arises in connexion with the Chinese word *fei*, which occurs consistently throughout the text linked with the word *chih*, and which seems to hold three different meanings: (1) Meaning 'not', as in the phrase, 'There are no things are not *chih*' (*fei chih*) 物莫非指. (2) Meaning 'no', as in the phrase 'But these *chih* are no *chih*' (*fei chih*) 指非指. (3) Meaning 'non', as in the phrase 'There are no *chih* that are non-*chih*' (*fei-chih*) 指非非指也. This third sense seems to be required in the last lines of the passage, which speak about *chih* and non-*chih* in apposition to one another."

This essay of Kung-sun Lung is notoriously difficult, but it is possible to challenge Bodde's comments without concerning ourselves with Kung-sun Lung's meaning:

(1) *Not*. As we have seen, *fei* is "is not", a negative copula linking nouns and substantival clauses only. Classical Chinese is a language especially rich in sharply distinguished negatives, none of which except *pu* has such a wide range as the English "not"—*wu* 無 "have not", *mo* 莫 "none, no one", *wei* 未, "not get to, not yet", *wu* 毋 "don't!" *wei* 微, "if there were not", *fou* 否 "not so", *fu* 弗=不之, *wu* 勿=毋之. Bodde, who of course knows all this in practice, does supply "to be" in eight of the nine cases in which he translates *fei* as "not".

(2) *No*. It is strange to define one of the meanings of *fei* by the English "no", which is itself ambiguous outside a context. Bodde in fact understands *fei* in two different ways when he uses "no" as an equivalent:

A. [指]非指 is four times rendered "(*chih*) are no *chih*". But how does this differ from "*chih* are not *chih*"? There is no doubt a slight difference between "He is not a gentleman" and "He is no gentleman", but the distinction is hardly significant even for post-Wittgensteinian philosophy. By "are no *chih*" Bodde perhaps understands "are not true *chih*"; but if so he is accusing Kung-sun Lung of not making it clear when he is using *chih* in a special narrow sense, rather than of using *fei* ambiguously. Bodde has succeeded in illustrating the vagueness of English rather than of Chinese.

B. 非指 is four times rendered "there are no *chih*" (with slight variations). This does give a different sense, but it is impossible as a translation, unless Bodde is emending *fei* to *wu* 無.

(3) *Non*. A non-smoker is someone who is not a smoker. When *fei* is the main verb, Bodde generally translates it "are not" or "are no". When it occurs in the substantival phrase *fei chih* he could have translated "what is not a *chih*", but prefers to express the same sense by the terser "non-*chih*".

Thus on Bodde's own showing *fei* has only one function in Kung-sun Lung's essay (except for the examples in 2B above, in which his translation

is unacceptable), a function narrower than the English "is not", let alone "not" or "no". His only reason for claiming that it "seems to hold three different meanings" is that it is convenient to translate it by three words in English.

The present study does not encourage one to take it for granted that Chinese is either better or worse than English as an instrument of thought; each language has its own sources of confusion, some of which are exposed by translation into the other. Although the supposed vagueness of classical Chinese may not be altogether an illusion, some of the factors which contribute to this impression are certainly misleading. We discover by listening or reading that a foreign word is used in contexts where a similar English word is not; we also discover by speaking or writing that we cannot use the foreign word in contexts where we can use the English one. But most Western sinologists (including myself) read literary Chinese without being able to write it, so that, although we gradually learn to narrow down meanings, every classical Chinese word seems a little vaguer than it really is. Again, we know too little about Chinese grammar. We say that *ju* 如 has two senses, "if" and "like". In the former sense, it is obviously used quite differently from, for example, *kou* 苟, also translated "if", and in the latter quite differently from *yu* 猶, the dictionary meaning of which is also "like". Has anyone ever clearly explained what these differences are? Until we can distinguish between the ordinary words with which classical Chinese deals with such basic ways of thinking as hypothesis and comparison, how can we tell whether it is a vague language or not? None of us yet knows classical Chinese. Even if the accusation of vagueness eventually proves to be true, it is a truth which it is unhealthy to keep too much in mind.

¹ Fung Yu-lan, *History of Chinese Philosophy*, translated Derk Bodde, Vol. I (2nd edition, 1952), 210 n.

HSI P'EI-LAN

by DAVID HAWKES

Say not that love is like a cloud
One moment dense, the next dispersed.
Say not that love is like a flower
That blooms so soon and falls so fast.
True love is hard as rock or iron;
Knows no todays or yesterdays:
A flower whose fragrance does not fade,
A cloud whose vapour constant stays;
That only fears the untrue thought,
The mirthless smile, the tear constrained;
The clouds that wet a dreamer's clothes,
The flowers in the mirror feigned . . .

Hsi P'ei-lan ae. c.34.

Readers of Dr. Waley's delightful *Yüan Mei* will recall that only one of the poet's lady disciples, Chin I, is mentioned there by name. Perhaps the most famous of them, and certainly the one whose poetry Yüan Mei regarded with most approval, was Hsi P'ei-lan, (席佩蘭, T. 韻芬, 道華, 浣雲), wife of the poet Sun Yüan-hsiang (孫原湘, T. 子瀟, 長真, H. 心青, 1760-1829).

Yüan Mei's high regard for her as a poetess is expressed in the introduction he wrote for a volume of her poems:

Every word from the heart; no echoing of the ancients; a jadelike sonority: these are the qualities that make Hsi P'ei-lan's verse so unusual—and not only among her own sex, either. For with her, inspiration always comes first before the poem is written; and in this respect she puts to shame many of the so-called poets of our time. His Excellency Ho-lin wrote to me from the Army to say that every line of my verse which he can get hold of is conned and chanted by him night and day with as much devotion as if it were from the Sūtras. I, too, feel this way about Hsi P'ei-lan's poems.¹

Yüan Mei knew the husband before he met the wife, and seems at first to have been dubious about her talents:

My lady disciple Hsi P'ei-lan has a pure and ingenious poetic talent. I used to suspect that her poems were written for her by her

¹ *Ch'ang-chen ko chi* 長真閣集, Preface.