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SHEER BEAUTY, SHEER JOY

Reflections on the Concept of Humanism
More's Utopia and Episodes from Shakespeare
in the Light of
Chinese Philosophy & Literature

by
Gia-Lee Catherine Shen, B.A.Hon.

A thesis submitted to
the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts
Department of English

Carleton University
Ottawa, Ontario
September 5, 1995

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Sheer Beauty, Sheer Joy
Reflections on the Concept of Humanism
More's Utopia and Episodes from Shakespeare
in the Light of Chinese Philosophy and Literature

submitted by Gia Lee Catherine Shen, B.A. Hons.
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts

M. I. Cameron, Thesis Supervisor

R. B. Lovejoy, Chair, Department of English

Carleton University
September 22, 1995

Abstract

This thesis offers reflections on the concept of humanism by examining selected works of More, Shakespeare, T'ao Ch'ien, Chuang Tzu, Tzu Se, and the I Ching. It attempts to demonstrate, from a perspective that is rooted in Chinese culture, the viability of the concept of common humanity, despite all the differences in experience and view that are induced in individuals and groups by their cultural and historical conditioning. It tries to find a congruence between West and East in the understanding of humanity and its experiential realities, a congruence in the understanding of what it is to be human. A comparison of Chuang Tzu, T'ao Ch'ien, Tzu Se, Shakespeare, and More suggests that the lovers of wisdom, be they in the East or in the West, aspire to achieve the same goal: restoring inner and outer order through a creative life of Reason. In tracing back the philosophical legacy of More and T'ao in particular, the thesis endeavours to show how these two writers recreated, from the traditions of which they were a part, a remarkably similar understanding of the sanctuary of the mind where a contemplation of the divine nature is made possible.

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I would like to dedicate this work to
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student whose first language is not English.

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Introduction

*Whatever man these pictures fair delight,
Who finds in them an art that cheats his
sight,
And shows false forms as real and true as
life;
As he has fed his eyes on symbols vain.*

*So let him turn to truth, his soul to gain,
Then shall he see how frail is earthly fame
That comes and goes but never may remain.*

-- Thomas More, *Epigraph*¹

This thesis attempts to isolate the essential properties of humanism². It is driven by a spirit that seeks to provide a counterbalance to modern scepticism about absolutes. As A. P. d'Entrèves has pointed out, we are "in an age which has grown . . . sceptical about absolute and immutable values," an age that has grown "hostile to the spirit of hope and optimism" that inspired and animated the belief in natural law "in its heyday and ensured its success" (13) during the Middle Ages and early Renaissance. The thesis searches for some common ground upon which a concept of the human might be built, despite the scepticism that d'Entrèves describes.

Thomas More (A.D. 1478-1535) and his Utopia are at the center of the thesis. In his own life as well as in his endeavour with Utopia, More engaged in a profound and imaginative

contemplation of the issues of faith and reason--the two properties which I will be arguing are fundamental to any viable concept of the human.

On the one hand, it should be noted that More lived in the "last age of English medieval Catholicism" (Chambers 360), with its long and fruitful tradition of defining the human through the concept of natural law. On the other hand, with the rediscovery of the classics, More was confronted with an irresistible force of change, of questioning traditional ideas, of being "sceptical about absolute and immutable values," and of "charting a new course" in his thinking. As R. J. Schoeck has written, "Nothing could be further from the truth than to suppose that we now comprehend the complexity of More's intellectual milieu, or that we can chart its lesser currents" (40). This imagery of "charting a course" is appropriate to the venture of understanding More's intellectual milieu, and especially to the venture of understanding Utopia itself.

Imagine that the travelling philosopher Raphael Hythlodæus (More's philosophic invention and leading character in Utopia) has to find his way to the unknown territory, Utopia. Also imagine that he has different maps at hand, some fragmentary, some incorrect, and some more or less proven through other travellers' experience. It is understandable that charting a course by working with maps that are fragmentary or incorrect is very dangerous. So, before the journey starts, what Hythlodæus would have to do is to collect as many proven maps to study as

possible, so that he could reasonably chart the best possible course to his chosen destination. As a human being, however, he knows he is unlikely ever to obtain all the information he needs to chart a perfect journey. Therefore, a leap of faith is required to set the course and start the journey.

No matter how careful, capable, and knowledgeable Hythlodæus may be in charting and choosing his course, in between port and destination he is bound to meet some difficulties, such as storms, currents, monsters, and what not. He may also deviate or be driven away from his original course. What should he do then? He needs some bearings. As a navigator he needs the North Star as a constant reference point from which he can establish his relative positions. How long has it been since the North Star changed its position? In human time, we take it as a constant. So it may serve as a guiding star for Hythlodæus throughout his journey.

What More does with his Utopia is similar. Just as Hythlodæus charts a course through the unknown using the known, More is mapping an unknown territory, Utopia, through his understanding of human nature and the human condition. Knowledge, reason, logic, analysis, and so on, are tools for philosophical thinking, just as compass and sextant are for navigation. Besides these tools, inspiration is like the wind that drives the sails towards the destination. Furthermore, faith is like the ballast that holds the ship upright against any evil powers of nature, especially in a choppy storm. Last but

not least, clear thought, spiritual clarity, healthy instinct, common sense, and a sense of humor are like the rudder that steers the ship along its course.

In a similar fashion, this thesis will proceed by comparing different maps, maps from both sides of the vast ocean of the Pacific, with all of its uncharted territories. In studying them I seek to find the convergent points or fusing principles that will enable me to create a more reliable map--a map on which I can chart a course that will lead to a better understanding of humanity and its experiential realities.

What are the maps which produce the different perspectives and the convergent points that might serve as bases for a common understanding of what it is to be human? In this thesis, I will chart a course of understanding by drawing a line toward the horizon. From this baseline, I will draw a vertical line referenced to well-known stars.

Horizontally, that is, in the domain of space, I will cross a cultural gap and proceed toward understanding from a Chinese to a Western perspective. First, I will consider, in reference to More's thinking in Utopia, the outlook on life expressed in the I Ching (易經), an ancient Chinese work of divination. Then I will contrast and compare More's thinking in Utopia with that of The Peach Blossom Spring (桃花源記), a work of Fourth Century Chinese "Utopian" literature by T'ao Ch'ien (陶潛), A.D. 372-427). Following along this horizontal course, I will endeavour to enter into these two Utopian thinkers' minds to develop a

broader perspective and help fill in details on our map of human experience. Their perspectives and observations on Natural Law, the Law of Nature, or simply the Law of Life should help us discover and understand the broader world of human understanding, of which Thomas More's Utopia is a part.

Vertically, that is, by vertical reference to well-known stars, I will pass through the domain of time, turning my focus to an English poet and humanist one hundred years younger than More, William Shakespeare (A.D. 1564-1616). In doing so, I will bring particular insights of Chuang Tzu (莊子, ?335-?275 B.C.E.), and Tzu Se (子思, 492-431 B.C.E.) to bear on three key episodes from Shakespeare's plays, one from Hamlet, one from King Lear, and one from The Tempest.

The thesis has a contemplative dimension in that it invites the reader to contemplate Thomas More the man, to decipher his vision of human nature and the human condition as revealed in Utopia, and to imagine his state of mind as he created it. The thesis has an experiential dimension in that it invites the reader to an engagement in three Shakespearean moments (creations) in which central elements of human nature and the human condition are presented as dramatically experienced realities. And the thesis has an experimental dimension in that it invites the reader to test the common (that is to say, cross-cultural) grounds that may be proposed for a valid concept of the human. In all its dimensions, the thesis takes its beginning in its author's Chinese perspectives on human experience. Through

my comparative study and analysis, I hope that I have begun to grasp and understand as well the Western perspective, as revealed in the literary forms of More and Shakespeare, and to understand some of the deeper congruences of the two perspectives.

Chapter One A Vision of More's Creation of Utopia (I)

*The dreamer awakes,
the shadow goes by,
When I tell you a tale
The tale is a lie.*

*But ponder it well
Fair maiden, good youth:
The tale is a lie,
What it tells is the truth.*

-- Alice Kane, *The Dreamer Awakes*

Thomas More's journey into Utopia, it seems to me, is an exploration of what it is to be human, an exploration of the experiential grounds common to humanity, or even further, an exploration of what human destiny is about. As with every great philosophical mind, More seems to have been preoccupied with these existential questions from the time of his youth. His preoccupation, it seems, was a journey into the soul, and it took the form of profound meditations on the life of reason that he has left us in his written works. The Book of Fortune and The Four Last Things distinctively represent More's understanding of the life of reason at two drastically different stages of his life. Whereas The Four Last Things (c. 1522) was written when More was, according to Erasmus, "in the way of fortune, with his Under-Treasurership and his knighthood" (Chambers, 199), The Book of Fortune was one of the "[f]our things written in his youth for

his pastime" (Chambers 90), created some time between 1503 and 1505, when he was around the age of 26.

In The Book of Fortune, we can observe his bizarre humor as well as his "capacity in his writing, from very early on, to create elusive personae" (Cousins, 31). The young More analyzes Fortune's power, questions man's free will, and echoes here and there Boethian warnings. For example, it is not difficult, following A. D. Cousins's lead, to find some ideas in the following passage of The Book of Fortune that echo what the Boethian persona is told by Lady Philosophy in The Consolation of Philosophy:

Who so delyteth to proven and assay
Of waueryng fortune the vncertayne lot,
If that the aunswere please you not alway,
Blame ye not me: for I commaunde you not,
Fortune to trust, and eke full well ye wot,
I haue of her no brydle in my fist,
She renneth loose, and turneth where she lyst.

(st.1) (25)

Boethius seems to be one of the guiding stars for young More. According to A. D. Cousins, More's prefatory poems to The Book of Fortune "present a refiguring of Boethian argument and so, in a part, of a canonical Stoic text," and "in doing that they refigure the retreat-from-the-world motif which recurs throughout More's writings" (Cousins, 31). This "retreat-from-the world motif" gives us a very important clue in exploring

More's creative work, Utopia.

More's journey away from the everyday world into the meditative world of the mind recurs in The Four Last Things, which he wrote at the age of 44. As R. W. Chambers comments, in The Four Last Things, "[t]o More, as to Hamlet, the whole world is a prison. And he is a prisoner waiting till the summons comes to execution" (199). To illustrate this point further, Chambers quotes this passage from The Four Last Things:

For if ye took the matter aright, the place a prison, yourself a prisoner condemned to death, from which ye cannot escape, ye would reckon this gear as worshipful as if a gentleman thief, when he should go to Tyburn, would leave for a memorial the arms of his ancestors painted on a post in Newgate. Surely, I suppose that (if we took not true figure for a fantasy, but reckoned it as it is indeed, the very express fashion and manner of all our estate) men would bear themselves not much higher in their hearts for any rule or authority that they bear in this world, which they may well perceive to be indeed no better but one prisoner bearing a rule among the remnant, as the tapster doth in the Marshalsea; or at the uttermost, one so put in trust with the gaoler that he is half an under-gaoler over his fellows, till the sheriff and the cart come for him. (199-200)

There is at least 18 years' difference between the creation

of The Book of Fortune and that of The Four Last Things. We might reasonably assume that, with such a difference, the works themselves might reflect two quite different perspectives. To our surprise, however, the central message rendered by the older More is grounded in the same elements as that rendered by the younger More. For instance, in addition to a recognition of the transience of worldly concerns, there is a sobriety that permeates the two works and leaves the reader a very grim impression of human life. In this, More's meditations appear as mixed products of his Greek reading and his orthodox Catholic training. Chambers calls The Four Last Things the "grimmiest" of all More's books. It is indeed grimmer than The Book of Fortune, which nevertheless was written when More "was in grim earnest" (Chambers 157). Yet, in both works one can still sense between the lines the leaven of More's subtle and bizarre humor and a leaven that is purely philosophical. For example, in the lines quoted, More sketches a view of the Earth in terms of a "prison" and we poor mortals are "condemned to death, from which [we] cannot escape." It seems to me, however, that the reader is allowed to think that it is from "death" that we cannot escape, not the "prison."

What sort of release might be won from our prison? Here, it is evident that More's philosophically inquisitive mind ponders, as it never ceases to do, the questions of change, free will, and the ultimate destiny of human existence. To a contemporary Christian mind, the ultimate end was plain enough--salvation by

renunciation of the earthly realm. To a Greek philosopher's mind, it was also plain--a more perfect knowledge through the pursuit of pure reason (form as distinct from matter). This other-worldly perspective is perhaps why, for More, both "Socrates and the Church agree that the true business of life is meditation upon death" (Chambers 199). What is fundamental both to the perspective of Socrates and the Church and to the perspective of More in The Book of Fortune and The Four Last Things is the conviction that human beings experience life as an "in-between," not only in the sense that life lies between birth and death, but also in the larger existential sense that Eric Voegelin describes in a comment on Plato:

The life of Reason in the classic sense is existence in tension between Life and Death. The concept of the tension will sharpen the awareness for this In-Between character of existence. By In-Between I translate the concept of the metaxy developed by Plato in the Symposium and the Philebus.

Man experiences himself as tending beyond his human imperfection toward the perfection of the divine ground that moves him. The spiritual man, the daimonios aner, as he is moved in his quest of the ground, moves somewhat between knowledge and ignorance (metaxy sophis kai amathias). "The whole realm of the spiritual (daimonion) is halfway indeed between (metaxy) god and man" (Symposium 202a). Thus, the In-

Between--the metaxy--is not an empty space between the poles of the tension but the "realm of the spiritual"; it is the reality of "man's converse with the gods" (202-203), the mutual participation (methexis, metalepsis) of human in divine, and divine in human, reality. The metaxy symbolizes the experience of the noetic quest as a transition of the psyche from mortality to immortality. (279)

What is fundamental to More's thought at all stages of his life is this profound sense of "life In-Between," life between birth and death, between Heaven and Earth, between Known and Unknown, between the multiplicity of existence and the unity of the divine ground of being, between mortal life and immortal life. To every human being, this is the experience of the life of the "Here-and-Now."

More's view of life as revealed in The Book of Fortune and The Four Last Things is a view that is especially significant when compared with pagan views. His ideas stimulate a whole range of philosophical questions. Is all pagan thought similar to that of the Greeks? To what extent does pagan thought differ from that of the Sixteenth-Century Christian humanists who delved deeply into Greek reading? If pagans view life as an "In-Between," is their view grim, or is it joyous? If grim, why so? If joyous, why? Can the life of the "Here-and-Now" really be happy? If we believe that it can be happy, how do we attain this happiness? It seems to me that these must have been some of the

philosophical questions and dilemmas More considered in reaching beyond his earlier works to invent a new world, the world of Utopia. For More, the journey into Utopia is a search for answers to the fundamental questions about life and mankind.

Utopia was created between the time that The Book of Fortune and the time that The Four Last Things were written. It was created when More was not yet "in the way of fortune," but had "just passed what Dante calls the middle point in the path of our life--the age of 35" (Chambers 116). To my mind, what More explores in Utopia is precisely the life In-Between, but he explores it in terms of a quest for happiness. How is it that More came to chart his course into a realm that was not bounded by the limits of reason or the satanic ghosts of original sin or a strictly religious awareness of good and evil or the simple black and white of moral absolutes, all of which gave him his grim view in The Book of Fortune and The Four Last Things? How is it that the problems involving the creation of a people and a culture that lay beyond his Greek reading and his orthodox Catholic training did not seem to baffle him at all? How is it that Utopia can demonstrate so clearly to us how the happiness of Christian times can be compared to that of non-Christian times?

To search for answers to these questions, I would like to set More's purely imagined world in the light of traditional Chinese philosophy and literature. I will start with the I Ching, the most ancient text of Chinese philosophy. Among the tools used in traditional Chinese culture to decipher the divine

nature, the I Ching is a remarkable map because it is based on documented human experience that reaches back to 3000 B.C.E. It is organized as a commentary on 64 figures conventionally called hexagrams. Together, the hexagrams and commentary define sixty-four basic human conditions which can be combined into an unimaginable number of permutations ($64!$ factorial) that relate to human existence. The I Ching has been accepted by a vast number of people (mostly Chinese) as a proven and reliable guide for proper and timely actions. It can also serve as a profound and viable concept for philosophical minds--because it represents and codifies such a large empirical condensation of shared human experience.

Let me use one of the I Ching's sixty-four hexagrams, purely as an experiment, to "decode" More's state of mind in the process of creating Utopia, to "mirror" his soul of those creative moments, and to gain insight into his spiritual journey into his Utopia. In the I Ching each of the sixty-four hexagrams is presented as an image of six lines; it is described in a short passage of prose; and it is interpreted in another short paragraph called a judgement.

As a reflection of More's soul at the moment of creating his Utopia, I have chosen the fifty-eighth hexagram, namely, Tui (兌). The image of Tui is described as follows:

Beautiful lakes resting one on the other:

The image of THE JOYOUS.

An enlightened person, therefore,

Joins with his friends for an exchange of ideas.

The judgement is:

THE JOYOUS. Success.

Perseverance is favorable.

Richard Wilhelm, who is recognized as one of the best translators of the text of the I Ching, provides a helpful annotation on the hexagram, Tui:

This hexagram, like Sun (䷌), is one of the eight formed by doubling of a trigram. The trigram Tui (䷊) denotes the youngest daughter; it is symbolized by the smiling lake, and its attribute is joyousness. Contrary to appearance, it is not the yielding quality of the top line that accounts for joy here. The attribute of the yielding or dark principle is not joy but melancholy. However, joy is indicated by the fact that there are two strong lines within, expressing themselves through the medium of gentleness. True joy, therefore, rests on firmness and strength within, manifesting itself outwardly as yielding and gentle. (224)

The atmosphere of JOY described and defined here permeates the dialogues between various participants in Book I of Utopia. It is the joy of freely exchanging ideas in a world free of earth-bound time and space. This notion of joy was a traditional

feature of ancient Chinese philosophy. Lin Yu-Tang gives us his mental picture of such joy, which he expresses with exceptional clarity:

The same atmosphere that we find among the early Chinese philosophers when thinking was most active and virile, we find in the picture of Greek men, gathered to discuss the topic whether a great writer of tragedies should or should not be also a great writer of comedies, as described in "The Banquet." There was an atmosphere of mixed seriousness and gaiety and friendly repartee. People were making fun of Socrates' drinking capacity, but there he sat, drinking or stopping as he liked, pouring a cup for himself when he felt like it, without bothering about others. And thus he talked the whole night out until everybody in the company fell asleep except Aristophanes and Agathon. When he had thus talked everybody to sleep and was thus the only one awake, he left the banquet and went to Lyceum to have a morning bath, and passed the day as fresh as ever. It was in this atmosphere of friendly discourse that Greek philosophy was born. (IOL 220)

Similarly, the "atmosphere of mixed seriousness and gaiety and friendly repartee" is evident in Book I of Utopia, where Raphael, the persona More, and the persona Peter Giles delight in the joy of freely exchanging ideas. For example, before Raphael tells More and Giles of "the manners and customs of the

Utopians," he touches "with much wisdom on faults in this hemisphere and that," and compares "the wiser measures which had been taken among us as well as among them," for he remembers "the manners and customs of each nation as if he had lived all his life in places which he had only visited" (CW4 55). When the persona Giles, out of sheer admiration for Raphael, urges the travelling philosopher to enter into service to kings, he is answered back quite unassumingly:

"Should I," said Raphael, "make it more prosperous by a way which my soul abhors?" (CW4 57)

The persona More then expresses his pragmatic points of view:

But there is another philosophy, more practical for statesmen, which knows its stage, adapts itself to the play in hand, and performs its role neatly and appropriately. This is the philosophy you must employ. . . . Would it not have been preferable to take a part without words than by reciting something inappropriate to make a hodgepodge of comedy and tragedy? You would have spoiled and upset the actual play by bringing in irrelevant matter--even if your contribution would have been superior in itself. Whatever play is being performed, perform it as best as you can, and do not upset it all simply because you think of another which has more interest. (CW4 99)

More presents the written text of Utopia as itself a part of a convivial, intellectual dialogue. In her essay, "Thomas More to

Antoni Bonvisi," Elizabeth McCutcheon has observed:

Rounding out this early part of More's life is a short letter "to a certain Antony," which Stapleton saw in the (probably autograph) manuscript. The surname of the correspondent is not indicated, and Stapleton refrains from hazarding a guess, "although perhaps I could," he says (ch. 7 of his Vita Mori, p. 32 of the 1689 edition). This Antonius guidam, probably Bonvisi, had shown himself delighted with Utopia. At first reading the letter is a little more than a grace-note, urbane, witty, self-deprecatory, as More protests that Antony's affection, rather than his judgement, is behind the praise: the book "clearly deserves to hide itself away forever in its own island" (90). But he protests too much. And in playing as he does with kinds of being More makes a profound ontological point of a sort which he could make only to someone with a mind like Bonvisi's: Utopia as book and Utopia as place are inextricably one, since it is a verbal construct, existing as idea, argument, and fiction.

(43)

It is understandable that such an atmosphere of joy makes possible the existence of inspiring dialogues and hence the lucidity of thought which ultimately leads to the supreme good. This is what the image of "tui(䷗), "beautiful lakes resting one on another," implies. The ancient Chinese uses Tui to stand

for the natural condition in which men happily exchange ideas and encourage education: great minds reflect great minds; beautiful souls mirror beautiful souls. This is also true of the dialogue between the persona More and Raphael. Are Raphael and the persona More not beautiful souls? Are they not conscientious thinkers? It is especially in the light of Raphael Hythlodæus's absolute idealism that the persona Thomas More's pragmatism appears the more attractively clear-eyed; it is only in the light of the persona More's sensible pragmatism that Raphael's idealism appears the more attractively pure. The two beautiful souls reflect each other and thus make each other appear the more shining, the more clear, the more brilliant, the more sparkling, the more beautiful.

Second, the joy of Tui is also a joy based on discipline. "True joy," according to the hexagram, as R. Wilhelm points out, "rests on firmness and strength within, manifesting itself outwardly as yielding and gentle" (224). This is what the judgment of Tui means by "Perseverance is favorable." No example makes clearer the judgment and image of Tui than what is exemplified by the Utopians themselves--gentle, beautiful, and joyous souls that are sustained, preserved, and supported by good education and disciplined minds. The Utopians in general are "easy-going, good-tempered, ingenious, and leisure-loving" (CW4 179). They are happy, and "there is nowhere in the world a more excellent people nor a happier common-wealth" (CW4 179). They are well educated and highly disciplined: "They have very few

laws because very few are needed for persons so educated" (CW4 195); "trained in all learning, the minds of the Utopians are exceedingly apt in the invention of the arts which promote the advantage and convenience of life" (CW4 183). In the words of one of the marginal glosses³, "Respect for Freedom Is Preserved Everywhere so that People Do Nothing under Compulsion!" (CW4 141).

Moreover, the Utopians are gentle souls that dread violence and avoid it in every possible way. For example, in the matter of religion, King Utopus "did not venture rashly to dogmatize" because

if the struggle were decided by arms and riots, since the worst men are always the most unyielding, the best and holiest religion would be overwhelmed because of the conflicting false religions, like grain choked by thorns and underbrush. (CW4 221)

The hexagram of Tui of the I Ching, thus, prompts us to see how, in its genesis, Utopia was a creation of sheer joy in pursuit of a beautiful vision. The Utopian moments are moments in which More visualizes joy and beauty through his understanding of what joy and beauty mean. It seems to me, however, that the Utopians realize the Tui in an even deeper way, for their deepest "strength" and "gentleness" are to be found in their respect for natural law and in the humility that they show before the domain of the unknown and perhaps unknowable that surround them. For example, they are people who recognize the limitation of human

reason and intuitively aspire to something more: "They believe that human reason can attain to no truer view, unless a heaven-sent religion inspire man with something more holy" (CW4 179). Their philosophy of pleasure shows their conviction for the existence of a creative God who is the source of their very existence, their nature, and their happiness:

Now reason first of all inflames men to a love and veneration of the divine majesty, to whom we owe both our existence and capacity for happiness. Secondly, it admonishes and urges us to lead a life as free from care and as full of joy as possible and, because of our natural fellowship, to help all other men, too, to attain that end. (CW4 163)

This leads in turn to a conviction that virtue is inherent in nature:

As it is, they hold happiness rests not in every kind of pleasure but only in good and decent pleasure. To such, as to the supreme good, our nature is drawn by virtue itself, to which the opposite school alone attributes happiness. The Utopians define virtue as living according to nature since to this end we were created by God. That individual, they say, is following the guidance of nature who, in desiring one thing and avoiding another, obeys the dictates of reason. (CW4 163)

Although King Utopus "made the whole matter of religion an

open question and left each one free to choose what he should believe," there is one exception: a thing that is spiritually essential and morally necessary is imposed by law. Namely, belief in immortality of soul and in the Divine Providence:

[H]e conscientiously and strictly gave injunction that no one should fall so far below the dignity of human nature as to believe that souls likewise perish with the body or that the world is the mere sport of chance and not governed by any divine providence.

(CW4 222)

A belief in an after-life follows from this sole law of religion:

After this life, accordingly, vices are ordained to be punished and virtue rewarded. Such is their belief, and if anyone thinks otherwise, they do not regard him even as a member of mankind, seeing that he has lowered the lofty nature of his soul to the level of a beast's miserable body--so far are they from classing him among their citizens whose laws and customs he would treat as worthless if it were not for fear. Who can doubt that he will strive either to evade by craft the public laws of his country or to break them by violence in order to serve his own private desires when he has nothing to fear but laws and no hope beyond the body?

(CW4 221-223)

The logic behind this sole law is not the Utopians' alone. It may be an element of the strength and gentleness of a purely

imagined people, but More has drawn it from St. Thomas Aquinas. In defining natural law, St. Thomas offers his reasoned perspective:

Supposing the world to be governed by divine Providence . . . it is clear that the whole community of the universe is governed by the divine reason. The rational guidance of created things on the part of God . . . we can call the Eternal law.

[Now] since all things which are subject to divine Providence are measured and regulated by the Eternal law . . . it is clear that all things participate to some degree in the Eternal law, in so far as they derive from it certain inclinations to those actions and aims which are proper to them.

But, of all others, rational creatures are subject to divine Providence in a very special way; being themselves made participators in Providence itself, in that they control their own actions and the actions of others. So they have a certain share in the divine reason itself, deriving therefrom a natural inclination to such actions and ends as are fitting. This participation in the Eternal law by rational creatures is called the Natural law. Thus when the Psalmist said (Psalm IV, 6): "Offer up the sacrifice of justice," he added, as though being asked the question, what is the sacrifice of justice, "Many say, who sheweth us good

things?", and then replied, saying: "The light of Thy countenance, O Lord, is signed upon us." As though the light of natural reason, by which we discern good from evil, and which is the Natural law, were nothing else than the impression of the divine light in us. So it is clear that the Natural law is nothing else than the participation of the Eternal law in rational creatures.

(Summa Theologica, 1a 2ae, quae. 91, art. 1 and 2)⁴

In Utopia what is not imposed by law can still be spiritually and morally important or necessary. However, as with St. Thomas, the very basis or essence of their existence is conceived of in terms of natural law, for in Utopia it is not possible to be a genuine human being if one does not live according to natural law.

What deserves our attention here is King Utopus's intellectual humility--backing up the law with his careful consideration and evaluation as well as his sound judgment:

He was uncertain whether God did not desire a varied and manifold worship and therefore did not inspire different people with different views. But he was certain in thinking it both insolence and folly to demand by violence and threats that all should think to be true what you believe to be true. (CW4 221)

Moreover, the humility that underlies his religious tolerance is reinforced by his faith in the natural force of truth:

[E]ven if it should be the case that one single

religion is true and all the rest are false, he readily foresaw that, provided the matter was handled reasonably and moderately, truth by its own natural force would finally emerge sooner or later and stand forth conspicuously. (CW4 221)

In Utopus's delicate and conscientious reasoning, can we detect a streak of a gentle regret for the insufficiency of deism and an earnest longing for a revealed truth? Do the Utopians sound like "lost children"⁵ who take care of themselves pretty well? These are questions which have no ready answer. Yet natural wisdom and healthy instincts seem to play a more vital role in the life of the Utopians than a strictly religious awareness of good and evil or the simple black and white of moral absolutes.

This is the point at which to re-introduce one of the questions with which we began, for it seems that More has made no effort to think away his Greek reading and his orthodox Catholic training in the creation of his purely imagined people, the Utopians. First, in addition to portraying a joyous dialogue that is characteristic of Greek civilization, More's Utopia describes a happy people who resemble the most illustrious Greek philosophers, whose first concern in life was seeking truth and achieving the supreme good. For instance, from the point of view of the Utopians, seeking truth and seeking happiness or pleasure go hand in hand; they are inseparable. "To the soul," as Raphael says, the Utopians "ascribe intelligence and the sweetness which

is bred of contemplation of truth. To these two are joined the pleasant recollection of a well-spent life and the sure hope of happiness to come" (CW4 173).

This "contemplation of truth" is entirely consonant with Boethius' "contemplation of the mind of God," as he dramatizes it in the character of Lady Philosophy:

Human souls are of necessity more free when they continue in the contemplation of the mind of God and less free when they descend to bodies, and less still when they are imprisoned in earthly flesh and blood.
(Boethius 149)

Besides, the Utopian concept of pleasure also echoes the dialogue between Socrates and Protarchus in Philebus⁶, where Socrates step by step describes the nature of pleasure and at one point makes the following comment:

[C]onsider what happens in the soul when it anticipates these experiences by itself: the part of the soul which anticipates future pleasures is pleased and confident; but the part which looks to future pains is fearful and distressed. (Plato Philebus 32c 87)

The soul "which anticipates future pleasures" is, in the Utopians' term, the soul which expects "the sure hope of happiness to come."

Furthermore, the Utopian philosophy of pleasure is in agreement with Aquinas's teaching on joy. According to St. Thomas, joy is one of the three interior effects (joy, peace, and

mercy) of love: "The Law prescribes joy, as being an act of charity, albeit not its first act" (Summa Theologica, quae. 28, art. 4). It seems to me that the Utopian distinction between true and false pleasure develop the ideas of pleasure that St. Thomas expresses in the following passage:

Pleasure arising from virtuous activities will be more delightful than any other pleasure. One may by the judgment of one's reason choose to be affected by a passion in order to work more promptly with the cooperation of the sensitive appetite. And thus a passion of soul increases the goodness of an action.

(Commentary on Aristotle's Ethics I, L. 13, 69)

To the Utopians, "a joyous life" or "pleasure" is the end of all their operations; with this attitude towards life, charity naturally follows:

[N]ature herself, they [the Utopians] maintain, prescribes to us a joyous life or, in other words, pleasure, as the end of all our operations. Living according to her prescription they [the Utopians] define as virtue.

To pursue this line. Nature calls all men to help one another to a merrier life. (CW4 165)

This vision does not at all contradict Aquinas's vision of joy: "[L]ove of God is accounted a special virtue, namely, charity, to which joy must be referred, as its proper act" (Summa Theologica, quae. 28, art. 4).

The Tui hexagram of I Ching, thus, prompts some valuable reflections on More's creation of Utopia. Not only does Utopia represent More's joyous and beautiful vision at his moments of spiritual creativity, but it also encompasses a humility before the unknowable cosmos and a respect for natural law that was well defined by More's predecessors. Paradoxically, it is precisely this cosmic humility, this recognition of the limitation of human reason, that keeps the Utopians from being confined within the limits of reason and enables them to reach beyond, beyond man and this world.

Chapter Two A Vision of More's Creation of Utopia (II)

*Just get to the root,
never mind the branches.*

--Zen Master Ta Hui⁷

If More did not discard his Greek reading and his orthodox Catholic training in order to create his Utopians, how much scope and what freedom were left to him to adopt other perspectives? What conceptual problems remained in his creation of non-existent though seemingly human beings, and how did he solve them? We can come closer to a full answer to these questions if we look at Utopia in the light of one of the earliest and greatest works of "Utopian" literature in Chinese: The Peach Blossom Spring by T'ao Ch'ien (A. D. 365-472). The Peach Blossom Spring is a poem preceded by a prose account serving both as its introduction and as its object of discussion or comment. The focus of The Peach Blossom Spring is on the poem and not on the prose account, unlike that of Boethius' The Consolation of Philosophy, which also combines poems and prose accounts. Both T'ao and Boethius are alike, however, in their remarkable lucidity of thought and their remarkable simplicity and clearness of style.

To fully appreciate this small but philosophically significant Chinese work, two things should be recognized from the beginning. First, the tone of the prose is a story teller's,

and that of the verse a commentator's. Second, there is a strong autobiographical dimension to T'ao's works.

In ancient China, a poet's poetry is viewed as a mirror of his soul, a testimony of his character, and a simple memoir of his life. This is especially so in the case of T'ao Ch'ien. A glimpse of his life may be critical in helping us to understand his works:

In his youth he [T'ao] accepted a minor official job in order to support his old parents, but soon resigned and returned to the farm, tilling the field as a farmer, from which he developed a kind of bodily ailment. One day he asked his relatives and friends, "Would it be all right for me to go out as a minstrel singer in order to pay for the upkeep of my garden?" On hearing this, certain of his friends got him a position as a magistrate of P'engcheh, near Kiukiang. . . . When a government delegate came and his secretary told him that he should receive the little fellow with his gown properly girdled, T'ao sighed and said, "I cannot bend and bow for the sake of five bushels of rice." And he immediately resigned and wrote that famous poem, "Ah, Homeward Bound I Go!" From then on, he lived the life of a farmer and repeatedly refused later calls to office. Poor himself, he lived in communion with the poor [W]hen he managed to send a peasant boy to his sons

when he was away, to help them do the work of carrying water and gathering fuel, he said to them, "Treat him well, for he is also someone's son." (Lin IOL 117)

This philosophical attitude of T'ao's toward life is at least partially a legacy of natural wisdom from the ancient Chinese sage, Chuang Tzu (335?-275? B.C.), as described in the following anecdote:

Once, when Chuang Tzu was fishing in the P'u River, the king of Ch'u sent two officials to go and announce to him: "I would like to trouble you with the administration of my realm."

Chuang Tzu held on to the fishing pole and, without turning his head, said, "I have heard that there is a sacred tortoise in Ch'u that has been dead for three thousand years. The king keeps it wrapped in cloth and boxed, and stores it in the ancestral temple. Now would this tortoise rather be dead and have its bones left behind and honored? Or would it rather be alive and dragging its tail in the mud?"

"It would rather be alive and dragging its tail in the mud," said the two officials.

Chuang Tzu said, "Go away! I'll drag my tail in the mud!" (Chuang Tzu ch. 15, Watson 187-188)

It is interesting that when facing a financial crisis T'ao's first concern was his garden. It is a love shared by the Utopians: "The Utopians are very fond of their gardens. In them

they have vines, fruits, herbs, flowers, so well kept and flourishing . . . it would seem their founder attached the greatest importance to these gardens" (CW4 121). Poor as T'ao was, the beauty and joy of his idyllic life still permeates his poetry, and his imaginary land of wonder is only one of his many works that reflect that beauty and joy. Living in a world of chaos, he found great consolation in Nature.

The Peach Blossom Spring opens with a fisherman's fantastic adventure. The reader is fascinated and invited to take the trip with the fisherman.

During the T'ai-yuan period of the Chin dynasty a fisherman of Wu-ling once rowed upstream, unmindful of the distance he had gone, when he suddenly came to a grove of peach trees in bloom. For several hundred paces on both banks of the stream there was no other kind of tree. The wild flowers growing under them were fresh and lovely, and fallen petals covered the ground--it made a great impression on the fisherman. He went on for a way with the idea of finding out how far the grove extended. It came to an end at the foot of a mountain whence issued the spring that supplied the stream. There was a small opening in the mountain and it seemed as though light was coming through it. The fisherman left his boat and entered the cave, which at first was extremely narrow, barely admitting his body; after a few dozen steps it suddenly opened out

onto a broad and level plain where well-built houses were surrounded by rich fields and pretty ponds. Mulberry, bamboo and other trees and plants grew there, and criss-cross paths skirted the fields. The sounds of cocks crowing and dogs barking could be heard from one countryyard to the next. Men and women were coming and going about their work in the fields. The clothes they wore were like those of ordinary people. Old men and boys were carefree and happy.

(Hightower 254)

Just as More's Raphael Hythlodæus is impressed by the Utopian's happiness, so is the fisherman struck by the joyousness of the dwellers of the hidden land. But unlike the Utopians, these people do not expect any visitor from the outside world. It deserves our attention that the writer arranges a narrow entrance through which the fisherman has to pass before he can reach the heavenly land. Similarly, More's Utopia is located in "a place with a natural defense" (CW4 111). To reach the island where the Utopians live, one has to pass through channels which "are known only to the natives, and so it does not easily happen that any foreigner enters the bay except with a Utopian pilot" (CW4 111). The people in T'ao's story are less "modern" than the Utopians and have to rely entirely on purely natural defenses.

How are they going to deal with the intruder then?

When they caught sight of the fisherman, they asked in surprise how he had got there. The fisherman told the

whole story, and was invited to go to their house, where he was served wine while they killed a chicken for a feast. When the other villagers heard about the fisherman's arrival they all came to pay him a visit. They told him that their ancestors had fled the disorders of Ch'in times and, having taken refuge here with wives and children and neighbors, had never ventured out again; consequently they had lost all contact with the outside world. They asked what the present ruling dynasty was, for they had never heard of the Han [Dynasty], let alone the Wei [Dynasty] and the Chin [Dynasty]. They sighed unhappily as the fisherman enumerated the dynasties one by one and recounted the vicissitudes of each. The visitors all asked him to come to their houses in turn, and at every house he had wine and food. He stayed several days. As he was about to go away, the people said, "There's no need to mention our existence to outsiders." (Hightower 254-5)

Like heavenly people in a heavenly land, these people are happy, good-natured, and hospitable. The only thing they ask from their unexpected guest is to be silent about their existence. Considering their kindness towards him, the fisherman is most likely to honor this unsigned pledge, isn't he?

After the fisherman had gone out and recovered his boat, he carefully marked the route. On reaching the city, he reported what he had found to the magistrate,

who at once sent a man to follow him back to the place. They proceeded according to the marks he had made, but went astray and were unable to find the cave again. (Hightower 255)

It is mysterious that the searching team should go astray. Is it because the dwellers of the hidden land are so shrewd that they have undone all the fisherman's marks? Is it because these people are mysteriously protected by some unknown divine being? Or is it because they do not really exist? Perhaps they only exist in some fourth-dimensional space which the fisherman chances to come across by passing into some extremely unlikely time warp. Whatever the cause may be, there are still some individuals who take the hidden world very seriously.

A high-minded gentleman of Nan-yang named Liu Tzu-chi heard the story and happily made preparations to go there, but before he could leave he fell sick and died. Since then there has been no one interested in trying to find such a place. (Hightower 255)

Why does T'ao Ch'ien give such a sad ending? What would happen if, after hearing Hythlodæus's report, the persona More "happily made preparations to go" to Utopia? That question prompts a series of interesting questions. It is interesting and significant that no action is taken by the persona More. Is he not interested in visiting such a wonderful place as Utopia himself? By reference to history, we know the real More's literary career had to be interrupted on October 26, 1529, when

he accepted the office of Lord Chancellor. Had he not accepted appointment to this office, would there have been Book III of Utopia? Maybe his sparks of creativity had been extinguished little by little after October 26, 1529. Perhaps More himself, like those who tried to find their way back to the fisherman's "discovered world," could not find his way back to his Utopia. And then, why has no one attempted to rediscover and continue More's Utopia following along More's line of thinking? Having asked that, one must ask, what is More's line of thinking really centered on after all?

In The Peach Blossom Spring, the poem that follows the story shows how questions like these might be answered. The aim of the poem is quite complex: first, to comment on the fisherman's story as if the poet was an eyewitness of everything that happened in that remarkable society; second, to add historical notes in order to make the story complete and convincing; third, to highlight some important traits or conditions of the existence of the dwellers of the hidden land; fourth, to clarify the philosophical foundation of their being; and fifth, to invite dialogues from soul friends.

The first six lines of the poem give a historical account that explains why and how such a hidden place came into being, and why it is rarely known to the world. With this approach, the poet enhances the factual aspect of the story on the one hand, and on the other lays down the empirical foundation of the philosophy that supports the essence of the poem and its meaning.

T'ao's vision of law and order is revealed in the phrase, "Heaven's ordinance," which appears in the opening line. Obviously this refers to matters that reach beyond man and this world and needs to be considered from a Chinese perspective to be fully appreciated. From this perspective my phrase, "beyond man and this world," cannot mean "beyond human understanding." An excellent explanation of "Heaven's ordinance" can be found in the following passage from Chou I Nei-chuan, written by the greatest I Ching scholar of the Ch'ing era (A.D. 1664-1911), Wang Fu-Chih, who illustrates quite precisely how human thought and ideas can reach beyond their empirical foundations:

Between heaven and earth there exists nothing but law and energy. The energy carries the law and the law regulates the energy. Law does not manifest itself (has no form); it is only through energy that the image is formed, and the image yields the number. (Image here equals idea, number is the intelligible aspect of law as embodied in the idea.) If this law becomes blurred the image is not right and the number is not clear. This reveals itself in great things and expresses itself in small things. Thus only a man of the highest integrity can understand this law; basing himself on its revelation he can grasp the symbols, and observing its small expressions, he can understand the auguries. In this way the art of the image and number (that is, consulting the oracle) comes about by itself.

(H. Wilhelm, 97; the comments in the parentheses are Wilhelm's)

Such a vision of law is the basis of the Chinese outlook on the universe. It is on this basis that the poet describes disorder and chaos as disruption of "Heaven's ordinance" in the first six lines of his poem:

- 1 The Ying clan⁸ disrupted Heaven's ordinance
- 2 And good men withdrew from such a world.
- 3 Huang and Ch'i went off to Shang Mountain
- 4 And these people too fled into hiding.
- 5 Little by little their tracks were obliterated
- 6 The paths they followed overgrown at last.

In the following lines 7-12, the poet returns to the people who were discovered by the fisherman in their idyllic world. He highlights the sustaining features of these people. They appeared to share a high degree of consensus among themselves. To them, as to the Utopians, "agriculture" is the "foremost concern" (CW4 115).

The duties of the farmers are not specifically stated here as they are in Utopia, because to an ancient Chinese these duties would have been plain enough and the poet would only need use two words to allude to them--"[b]y agreement." In addition to this sense of "unspoken agreement" generally shared by everyone, the original Chinese phrase here also suggests a joyful spirit of "encouragement of one another." Therefore, people work, understanding that it is a natural activity that they can share

as part of the larger human family in their idyllic world. Because they work diligently and because they live in harmony with Nature they are well rewarded. They enjoy what they have and are content with what they have. It is evident that they have created no human systems that they have to pay homage to or submit to. The only governing rule on this land is the law between heaven and earth, which is manifested in the very being of the people. Consider the profound simplicity in these lines written about an "ideal Chinese world," which is a sanctuary from chaos:

- 7 By agreement they set about farming the land.
- 8 When the sun went down each rested from his toil.
- 9 Bamboo and mulberry provided shade enough,
- 10 They planted beans and millet, each in season.
- 11 From spring silk worms came the long silk thread
- 12 On the fall harvest no king's tax was paid.

In the foregoing lines the poet sets the stage for the ideal world. In lines 13-18, he follows through by giving details of their life. Special attention is paid to the simplicity of their clothing and the antiquity of their ritual vessels--a sign of making no progress or no desire to make any change. Moreover, the joyousness of both the young and the old is highlighted as a sign of a just and peaceful society. Lines 19-24 ("No sign of traffic on overgrown roads, / Cockcrow and dogsbark within each other's earshot") suggest that they were happily disconnected from the outside world and found total fulfillment clustering

closely together.

There is a philosophical parallel here with ideas expressed in More's Utopia. More also creates an idealized setting and state of being that are similar, though somewhat more complicated than those of the Chinese village. His is a Utopian island which "contains fifty-four city-states" and "none of them is separated by less than twenty-four miles from the nearest, but none is so isolated that a person cannot go from it to another in a day's journey on foot" (CW4 113). Yet, in a spirit similar to that of its Chinese counterpart, "special consideration is paid to the old" (CW4 143) in More's Utopia, and people's garments are simple and "of one color throughout the island and that of the natural color" (CW4 133).

We can see that More's Utopians are far more organized and modern than T'ao's people, who live in their simple rural village, for the Utopians have achieved efficiency in the management of their social and political life as well as of their everyday livelihood. Yet, in Utopia, government is not there to burden or subdue people. Instead, it is there to serve and sustain them as an ideal society. Every attempt is made to internalize the common good, especially in the raising of children, where learning is emphasized:

They take the greatest pains from the very first to instill into children's minds, while still tender and pliable, good opinions which are also useful for the preservation of their commonwealth. (CW4 229)

With all the foregoing comparisons in mind, let us now return to T'ao's ideal world:

- 13 No sign of traffic on overgrown roads,
- 14 Cockcrow and dogsbark within each other's earshot.
- 15 Their ritual vessels were of old design,
- 16 And no new fashions in the clothes they wore.
- 17 Children wandered about singing songs,
- 18 Greybeards went paying one another calls.

It is true that the Chinese village idealized in these lines appears to be stopped in time or even to be going backwards towards nature (for example, in its overgrown roads). In the lines that follow (19-24) the Chinese poet goes on to illustrate how extraordinary the way of life of the hidden people of the mountain indeed is.

First, unlike most civilizations, they do not develop an efficiency that requires, for instance, such a thing as a calendar. Instead, their sense of time depends entirely on roughly distinguishing one season from another. Even in that, little effort is necessary.

Second, no "clever contrivance" is needed; they do not take the usual progressive route followed by most civilizations we know. In this timeless village, it seems that a day, a month, a year, or even a century, makes no difference to them. Is it because the villagers enjoy every "second" that they see no need to account for time? Or, is it because they are determined to hold their simple ideals and state of being "forever"? In this

timeless and simple world of the ideal rural farm village, would words like "forever" or "eternity" really have any meaning? But then, are the villagers beings of the physical world? It would appear at first that they are, since everything in Nature still drives the circle of life in their world. But how then can we explain the quality of "stillness" in their world? And there are still some strange and eery qualities to their existence. No "clever contrivance"? No accumulating of knowledge? No development of further civilization? It is almost as though this idyllic village is set on a course to return to some primeval state where man finds happiness by yielding to nature rather than defining and taking control over it.

- 19 When grass grew thick they saw the time was mild,
- 20 As trees went bare they knew the wind was sharp.
- 21 Although they had no calendar to tell,
- 22 The four seasons still filled out a year.
- 23 Joyous in their ample happiness
- 24 They had no need of clever contrivance.

In lines 25-26 the poet makes reference to village ancestors as people who sought out a sanctuary to hide from the chaos during the rule of Ch'in (221-207 B.C.). In the Chinese context of this poem, the hundreds of years in which the villagers were set apart as an inwardly accessible community emphasizes that the bond that ties them to one another is blood or family. Similarly, the "family bond" is stressed in More's Utopia, as the marginal comments indicate, "The Commonwealth Is Nothing Else than a Kind

of a Big Family," and "How They Are Everywhere Mindful of This Community of Theirs!" (CW4 149), make clear, though of course the "family bond" of their community, as is implied in "the commonwealth," is more of the spirit than of blood. In T'ao's Spring, the poet tells us that the simple people had already enjoyed for five centuries their joyful and peaceful life, and until the fisherman's unexpected visit, nobody knew of this place--with its people cast off from the mainstream of life and long forgotten:

25 Five hundred years this rare deed stayed hid,

26 Then one day this heavenly land was discovered⁹.

From the story we know the fisherman did not show respect or honor for these people or for their simple and idyllic sanctuary. Instead, he was disloyal to their simple request to be left alone in their sanctuary. He left a trail that he thought would lead back to this place as he hurried off to report his discovery to the magistrate, and thus to the whole world. In the lines 27 and 28 of the poem, the poet comments in a very quiet and subdued tone as he draws a contrast between the "pure" idyllic natural world and the "shallow" corrupt world of magistrates that the ancestors had fled. Then he strikes a note of hope by announcing that their sanctuary returned and they were hidden again.

27 The pure and the shallow belong to separate
 worlds:

28 In a little while they were hidden again.

This causes one to wonder why the team sent by the

magistrate went astray. Why were they unable to find a way to the cave entrance that leads into the village? One might also wonder why no one has been interested since then in finding this place of simplicity. In the context of the poet's spiritual view, the answer may be easy. People of this world, T'ao seems to say, deserve only a glimpse of this heavenly land, and the fisherman was blessed with a moment of the heavenly joy that is now lost again forever. T'ao appears to be suggesting that whatever belongs to the world of "dirt and noise" eventually returns to "the dirt and noise," that the world that is corrupted by thoughtless conventions cannot fathom anything above or beyond itself.

29 Let me ask you who are convention-bound,

30 Can you fathom those outside the dirt and noise?

It is noticeable that, among the various qualities such as purity and simplicity, there is also a quality of "silence" that runs throughout The Peach Blossom Spring. The same quality runs through Utopia. Take, for example, the public worship and private confession in Utopia:

[T]he religion of all is not the same, and yet all its manifestations, though varied and manifold, by different roads as it were, tend to the same end, the worship of the divine nature. Therefore nothing is seen or heard in the temples which does not seem to agree with all in common. (CW4 233)

So, we can see that in Utopia all is united in silent prayers

which "formulated are such as every man may utter without offense to his own belief" (CW4 233). The Utopians' private confession further explains that the overall silence of the society comes from an inner peace in the conscience of every individual:

They confess that they have erred, either by committing some fault or by performing some duty carelessly, and beg pardon for their offense. Hence, if any cloud of quarrel in the family has arisen, it is dispelled by this satisfaction so that with pure and clear mind they may be present at the sacrifices, for they are too scrupulous to attend with a troubled conscience.

(CW4 233)

In the final couplet of the poem in The Peach Blossom Spring, the poet tells of his dream of reaching out to find others with whom he can share a kindred spirit, one that goes beyond conventions and dirt and noise. He longs for a soul friend who can share with him the world of ethereal thought and ideals.

31 I want to tread upon the thin thin air

32 And rise up high to find my own kind.

(Hightower 255-6)

T'ao Ch'ien lived in a time that historically the Chinese call the Six Dynasties. "In historical terms," as Sun Kang-i pointed out, "the Six Dynasties period marks China's first surrender to foreign invasions" (Sun, xi). Buddhism had entered China by then and had become a popular religion in the midst of

chaos, mainly because its promise of a next life provided a kind of comfort to the suffering Chinese. Richly endowed with the Chinese cultural heritage, T'ao Ch'ien naturally aspired to find a distinct and individual Chinese voice. Whether he was a Confucian (as Lin defines him) or a Neo-Taoist Naturalist (as Sun calls him) is less important than what his poetry reveals in its essence. He is simply a gentle, humble, and independent soul, who seeks a sanctuary by tracing back the natural wisdom of his Chinese culture. It is a wisdom of living the here-and-now. Lin Yu-tang, a true admirer of T'ao, has observed:

T'ao represents to me that strange characteristic of Chinese culture, a curious combination of devotion to the flesh and arrogance of the spirit, of spirituality without asceticism and materialism without sensuality, in which the senses and the spirit have come to live together in harmony. For the ideal philosopher is one who understands the charm of women without being coarse, who loves life heartily but loves it with restraint, and who sees the unreality of the successes and failures of the active world, and stands somewhat aloof and detached, without being hostile to it. Because T'ao reached that true harmony of spiritual development, we see a total absence of inner conflict and his life was as natural and effortless as his poetry. (Lin IOL 116)

We have now perhaps arrived at a true humanist moment when

East meets West. Considering More's "grim" philosophical and spiritual works, then considering what Chambers has called his most marked characteristic, his festivitas (18), does More not fit the image of the ideal philosopher that Lin describes?

Although they are from different traditions, both More and T'ao demonstrate, in their lives and through their writings, how to restore the inner order and create outer harmony in a world of chaos. The light that T'ao can shed on the Utopia has to do with the dimension of sanctuary. It is, to my mind, a dimension crucial to More's creation of Utopia. That is to say, in the process of More's creation, a desire to seek a spiritual sanctuary is precisely what fuelled his creative fire, inspired him with a vision of joy and beauty, and sent him on and through his journey to Utopia.

To seek a sanctuary, both writers visualize their ideal world in the sanctuary of their minds: beautiful visions, idealized existence, and free exchange of ideas among reasonable men. It is in the sanctuary of the mind that they invite dialogues from soul friends. More's Utopia is an expression of his vision of order. Yet, More leaves many questions open to further discussion, a gesture that invites continuing dialogues from all lovers of wisdom. T'ao expresses quite explicitly his longing for those who can share with him his world of ethereal thought and heavenly joy.

More and T'ao expressed their ideas in a poetic or fictional form, with a humorous touch here and there. And to visualize

their idealized state of being, they journeyed back to the philosophical roots of their respective intellectual and spiritual traditions. More created his Utopia by tracing back the wisdom of the old, such as St. Thomas' interpretation of natural law and the Greek philosophers' ideas of the supreme good. T'ao created his hidden land of wonder by getting to the roots of Chinese original natural wisdom, a "love of the simple and unassuming" which "derives directly from intuitive perception of the nature of Tao" (Blofeld 43). For example, the joy of the village people in their idyllic world described by T'ao can be traced back to the "heavenly joy" observed by Chuang Tzu:

[F]or him who understands Heavenly joy, life is the working of Heaven; death is the transformation of things. In stillness, he and the yin share a single Virtue; in motion, he and the yang share a single flow. Thus he who understands Heavenly joy incurs no wrath from Heaven, no opposition from man, no entanglement from things, no blame from the spirits. So it is said, his movement is of Heaven, his stillness of earth. With his single mind in repose, he is king of the world; the spirits do not afflict him; his soul knows no weariness. . . . This is what is called Heavenly joy. Heavenly joy is the mind of the sage, by which he shepherds the world. (Chuang Tzu ch. 13, Watson 144)

The Heavenly joy described here may account for qualities such as

simplicity, purity, stillness, and silence, that we have found in the state of being of T'ao's village people. It is a natural wisdom that observes the beauty in the silent universe, as described again in Chuang Tzu:

Heaven and earth have their great beauties but do not speak of them; the four seasons have their clear-marked regularity but do not discuss it; the ten thousand things have their principles of growth but do not expound them. The sage seeks out the beauties of Heaven and earth and masters the principles of the ten thousand things. Thus it is that the Perfect Man does not act, the Great Sage does not move--they have perceived [the Way of] Heaven and earth, we may say.

(Chuang Tzu ch. 22, Watson 236)

The quality of stillness that Chuang Tzu describes here-- "the Perfect Man does not act, the Great Sage does not move"-- evokes a quality of sanctuary in T'ao and More that marks perhaps their deepest congruence. On the surface, there seems to be a problem. In The Peach Blossom Spring, T'ao portrays an ideal human condition that appears to be devoid of the existential tension which, I have argued, is the given principle in all of More's writings. The problem is solved, however, if one considers carefully why the fisherman's marks do not lead back to the cave, why no one can find the hidden land, why no reader can say whether it exists or not. If the world outside and the world inside symbolize a conflict between action and inaction, then as

Lin says of T'ao,

[t]he conflict between action and inaction ends in a compromise, or contentment with a very imperfect heaven on earth. This gives rise to a wise and merry philosophy of living, eventually typified in the life of T'ao Yuanming [T'ao Ch'ien]--in my opinion China's greatest poet and most harmonious personality.

(IOL 96)

In other words, what is given is not the hidden world, but the world of the river, with its magistrates and wars and peach blossoms: the sanctuary is itself an element of the life-in-between, with all its existential tension, and T'ao, as is known from his other writings and from stories about him, sincerely loved the life in-between. So it is with More, who hid his ideal world behind its name of "No-Place." The world that is given in Utopia is a world of enclosures and greed and poverty and self-serving politicians and war, and it is a world too of divine services in Our Lady's church in Antwerp, of longing for wife, children and native land, and of inspired dialogues with beautiful souls. Within that world, "No-Place" is not an achievable ideal, but a focus of speculation, rich and vital, that stimulates Reason in its endeavor to bring order to the life in-between.

To my mind, in More's Utopia, one can see how the witty soul tempers the "fire of justice" with the "wisdom of water," to borrow John Wu's phrases. This is the charm of Utopia, one may

say. Or, is this also the charm of More, the best layman in Western history? Wu has observed that More's profound understanding of natural law makes him "the most illustrious sage and saint of the common law" (Justice 79) and in him "the fire of justice and the water of wisdom worked together in perfect harmony" (Justice 199). More himself has become a tradition: "[I]n order to keep the common-law tradition," later generations have to "pass through a spiritual renaissance and go back" to More "as a first step" (Justice 145).

Likewise, there is also a kind of "spiritual renaissance" that every educated Chinese has to pass through, in order to reach at T'ao's Spring. T'ao has also become a tradition: His Peach Blossom Spring is "one of the works that every educated Chinese used to read when being trained in literature," as Sean Kane pointed out, "[t]he simple statement of a longing for sanity and sanctuary carried two-thousand-year-old memories of the peach tree that stands in Chinese myth as the doorway to the spirit world" (Kane 177).

Chapter Three Humanist Moments in Shakespeare

The greatest grace lending grace.

--All's Well that Ends Well (2.1.164)

If there are important similarities between More and the Fourth-Century Chinese poet, T'ao Ch'ien, there are equally important differences, and they have to do with each author's understanding of nature. Apart from--or perhaps because of--their different times, different traditions, different backgrounds, and hence different preoccupations and concerns, More and T'ao Ch'ien differ in their affinity with Nature. The calmness in More's Utopia is evident, but it is a calmness won through an intelligent exercise of reason and "clever contrivance" is indispensable to it. In T'ao's work, in contrast, one can sense between the lines a calmness that is effortless. It is a calmness "without any interference of the conscious will" (Mitchell, viii). As Lao Tzu says in Tao Te Ching: "The great Way is easy, yet people prefer the side paths" (ch. 53). Why should More and T'ao Ch'ien be so different?

Their difference has to do with what their cultures understood to be the deepest law of nature or law of life and how we human beings can develop our disposition accordingly. Psalms 139 provides a partial answer to our question: "Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me. . . . I will praise thee; for I am

fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well" (139.1; 139.14). Yes, we are wonderfully made, yet we are also fearfully made. And what does it mean to be fearfully made? More has answered this question. His Utopians are indeed wonderful enough, but More still fears for them. As the creator of the Utopians, he can give them whatever qualities, privileges, and advantages he wishes, but he constantly feels he must protect them in order to secure for their "holy commonwealth" (CW4 147) a truly happy life on earth.

How does More protect this "holy commonwealth" and secure for the Utopians a truly happy life on earth? If their "natural defense" (CW4 111) is inadequate, he has endowed them with physical strength: "They are nimble and active of body, and stronger than you would expect from their stature" (CW4 179). If their physical advantage is not sufficient, he has given them a philosophical mind that naturally leads to "scholarly pursuit" (CW4 129), "the contemplation of Nature" (CW4 183), a mind that is apt for being "trained in all learning" and "exceedingly apt in the invention of the arts which promote the advantage and convenience of life" (CW4 183). If a philosophical mind is insufficient, he has given them, as their last stronghold, their soul. As a matter of fact, their philosophical thinking is married to their religious principles: "They never have a discussion of happiness without uniting certain principles taken from religion as well as from philosophy, which uses rational arguments" (CW4 161). A Utopian begins his prayer with thanks to

God "for all the benefits received, particularly that by divine favor he has chanced on that commonwealth which is the happiest and has received that religion which he hopes to be true," and he ends his prayer with a wish that

God will take him to Himself by an easy death, how soon or late he does not venture to determine. However, if it might be without offense to His Majesty, it would be much more welcome to him to die a very hard death and go to God than to be kept longer away from Him even by a very prosperous career in life. (CW4 237)

This being said, if all other protections fail and the Utopians are unable to preserve their city on earth, they are, doubtless, qualified dwellers in the City of God.

It is Shakespeare who has most fully articulated that experience of life that makes "for I am fearfully made" entirely comprehensible. Yet, in his great plays, in the midst of the most fearsome experience, there are moments of an existential calm that has similarities to the calmness both of Utopia and of the great Way of Tao Te Ching. They are moments that highlight a deep reality of human experience and thus lead the audience to a form of enlightenment. Why should enlightenment arise out of fearsome experience? It is perhaps because in such plays the heroes are placed under extreme human conditions, their mind, spirit, body, and soul are exposed to extremely cruel tests, and they are therefore forced to accelerate their process of growth toward their higher self.

There is something here that can throw light on the ways the two cultures--that of More and that of T'ao Ch'ien--understand or experience the deepest law of nature or law of life. The question to be put is this: what substantial parallels, if any, exist between this experience of existential calm in Shakespeare and that effortless calmness that characterizes the great enlightenment of the Chinese philosophic tradition? I will examine three episodes that I will call "humanist moments" from Shakespeare and set them against episodes in the writing of Chuang Tzu (?335-?275 B.C.E.) and Tzu Se (492-431 B.C.E.), two ancient Chinese sages who express their perception of the law of nature in a most delightful poetic or literary form.

I. Hamlet

The scene where Hamlet holds the skull in his hand and addresses it "Alas, poor Yorick!" (5.1.183) has always recalled vividly to my mind Chuang Tzu's comment on the sight of a skull:

When Chuang Tzu went to Ch'u, he saw an old skull, all dry and parched. He poked it with his carriage whip and then asked, "Sir, were you greedy for life and forgetful of reason, and so came to this? Was your state overthrown and did you bow beneath the ax, and so came to this? Did you do some evil deed and were you ashamed to bring disgrace upon your parents and family,

and so came to this? Was it through the pangs of cold and hunger that you came to this? Or did your springs and autumns pile up until they brought you to this?

(Chuang Tzu ch. 18, Watson 193)

According to Lin Yu-Tang, it is with Chuang Tzu that "Chinese philosophy first acquired depth and humor" and it is on this comment on a skull that Chuang Tzu "based his entire philosophy" (FPTC 115).

To experience the depth and humor in Hamlet's comment on Yorick's skull, we need read it whole:

Hamlet: Let me see. [Takes the skull.] Alas, poor Yorick! I knew him, Horatio, a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy. He hath borne me on his back a thousand times. And now how abhorred in my imagination it is! My gorge rises at it. Here hung those lips that I have kissed I know not how oft. Where be your gibes now? Your gambols, your songs, your flashes of merriment that were wont to set the table on a roar? Not one now to mock your own grinning? Quite chapfall'n? Now get you to my lady's chamber, and tell her, let her paint an inch thick, to this favor she must come. Make her laugh at that. Prithee, Horatio, tell me one thing.

Horatio:What's that, my lord?

Hamlet: Dost thou think Alexander looked o' this
fashion i'th'earth?

Horatio:E'en so.

Hamlet: And smelt so? Pah!

[Put down the skull.] (5.1.183-200)

This is a moment of grace! The moment that the prince puts down the skull is the moment that he liberates his imprisoned soul from its bonds, from his old ideas and concepts about life, from his morbid thinking. Symbolically, a skull represents more than just "death." According to certain African tribes, "the pure essence of the dead [is] contained in the head" and there are "ghosts consisting only of a head" (Franz Tales 116). Within the skull are all our opinions, our musings, our rational thinking, our reasoning power. It is these that the prince turns away from as he turns away from the skull. He lets his abstract thinking rest and simply experiences the present moment: "And smelt so? Pah!" The rationalization has stopped in a simple human reaction to a stinking skull, the smell of death.

From Act I to Act V, if we follow carefully the humanist prince's soul's journey, we witness his spiritual progress from the rejection of life to the affirmation of life, from "How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable / Seem to me all the uses of this world!" (1.2.133-134) to "Our indiscretion sometime serves us well / When our deep plots do pall. . . . There's a divinity that shapes our ends, / Rough-hew them how we will" (5.2.8-11). The prince who begins by rejecting love, marriage, and sex,

crying, "Why wouldst thou/ be a breeder of sinners?" (3.1.121-122), ends by affirming his love, stating: "I lov'd Ophelia" (5.2.264). He begins sunk in a deep mental depression ("What a piece of work is a man, . . . and yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust?" [2.2.309-316]), and he ends at a profound faith in Providence ("There is special providence in the fall of a sparrow. . . . Let be" [5.2.221-226]).

The Hamlet who says "[l]et be" is no longer the Hamlet who was imprisoned by his own thinking ("for there is nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so. / To me it is a prison" [2.2.253-255]). But he has to endure the journey. He has to be earnest enough to engage himself intensely in a dilemma that is intellectual, spiritual, and even physical--"To be or not to be" (3.1.56). He has to be passionate enough to lose himself in anger, to experience "the very torrent, tempest, and whirlwind" (3.2.5-6) of his earthly passion, to be carried away in his moments of madness, even to the extreme of killing, only to learn how to tame his whole moral being--not to control, repress, suppress or destroy, but simply let go of or cleanse away the obstacles that prevent him from growing and living as naturally as a tree. At this moment in the graveyard, Hamlet in a sense dies before his actual physical death: it is a spiritual death which is also a spiritual rebirth. John Carroll makes an interesting comment on the graveyard scene:

This, the gravediggers' scene, is the climax to the play. As much as the shattering of Hamlet's

character is determined by the first meeting with the ghost, that formative early scene has its completion, the end-point of its logic, in "Alas, poor Yorick", the meditation on death stimulated by memories of his father's court jester. Any audience having sat through the gruelling first four acts of long-winded discourse, unrelieved by much action or change of tone, immediately lifts as Act V opens and the earthy gravediggers clown through their scene together. The play comes alive, the morose fog lifts for a moment, there is lightness as the two yokels crack skulls with their shovels and pun through their philosophy of life. Hamlet too, for a moment, is a different man. The words he speaks to Yorick's skull are the only ones of real attachment and affection he utters in the entire play. . . . Yes, the gravediggers are the only cheerfulness in the long dirge that is Hamlet. The last of the gods is Death, the one abiding and true love is Yorick, twenty-three years dead, his skull stinking. (39-40)

Carroll has observed the cheerfulness of this scene. He has also brilliantly pointed out its philosophical significance. But he has failed to note that this is not the end-point of Shakespeare's logic for the entire play, nor is it the climax to the play. A meditation is usually a beginning of something more, and here the meditation on death is a starting point for Hamlet's

spiritual transformation, and the climax is still to come. A moment of grace this may be, but one must not be cling to it or become stuck in it; one must proceed to a greener pasture.

It is precisely this point that Chuang Tzu's meditation on life and death can illuminate:

How do I know that loving life is not a delusion? How do I know that in hating death I am not like a man who, having left home in his youth, has forgotten the way back? (Chuang Tzu ch. 2, Watson 47)

These are questions that no one can answer. Could life and death be something like a dream?

When a man is dreaming, he does not realize that he is dreaming. Sometimes he even dreams that he is awake and goes on to interpret the dream he has just had. Only when he awakes does he realize that it was all a dream. So, when the Great Awakening comes, one will realize that this life is a big dream. Yet fools consider themselves as awake, knowing for sure that "this is the prince and that the shepherd!" Oh, what cocksureness! Confucius and yourself are both dreams; and I who say that you are dreams am likewise a dream. (Chuang Tzu ch. 2, Wu Joy 26)

Or perhaps life and death are "companions" to each other.

Who can appreciate the connection between the two?

When a man is born, it is but the embodiment of a spirit. When the spirit is embodied, there is life,

and when the spirit disperses, there is death. But if life and death are companions to each other, why should I be concerned? Therefore, all things are one. What we love is this mysterious life. What we hate is corruption in death. But the corruptible in its turn becomes mysterious life, and this mysterious life once more becomes corruptible. (Chuang Tzu ch. 2, Lin FPTC 129)

And here follows Chuang Tzu's most lovely conclusion:

Do life and death depend upon each other? Both have that in them which makes them a single body. There is that which was born before Heaven and earth, but is it a thing? That which treats things as things is not a thing. Things that come forth can never precede all other things, because there were already things existing then; and before that, too, there were already things existing--so on without end. The sage's love of mankind, which never comes to an end, is modeled on this principle. (Chuang Tzu ch. 22, Watson 246)

Thus the Chinese sage wonders, "How could that which is changing say that it will not change, and how could that which regards itself as permanent realize that it is changing already?" (Chuang Tzu ch. 2, Lin FPTC 129).

Therefore, Chuang Tzu says, "Resign yourself to the sequence of things, forgetting the changes of life, and you shall enter the pure, the divine, the One" (Chuang Tzu ch. 2, Lin FPTC 129).

These last lines strike a note of religious resignation which possesses a mystical quality, a note of religious resignation strikingly similar to the note in the voice of Shakespeare's humanist prince when he says to Horatio at the beginning of Act V, Scene II:

Rashly

(And praised be rashness for it) let us know,
Our indiscretion sometimes serves us well
When our deep plots do pall, and that should learn us
There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will. (5.2.6-11)

And the second is the speech later in the same scene, where Hamlet says:

We defy augury. There is special providence in the
fall of a sparrow. If it be now, 'tis not to come;
if it be not to come, it will be now; if it be not now,
yet it will come. The readiness is all. Since no man
of aught he leaves knows, what is't to leave betimes?
Let be. (5.2.221-226)

Here we see how the wholeness of the newborn Hamlet, shattered in the course of life, is now serenely and mysteriously reconstituted. Shakespeare's humanist prince is not ultimately engaged upon "the embassy of Death" that Wilson Knight suggests he is (Carroll 41), nor does he fit in the category that "belongs to a different cultural universe" where "there is no higher law," as John Carroll suggests he does (Carroll 41). Rather,

Shakespeare represents him as a unique individual who, seeking, genuinely and earnestly, for the meaning in life that can help him to deal with the chaos within and outside himself, finally connects himself to "a higher law," which, in his own words, is the "special providence" or "divinity."

As with the Chinese sage, the humanist prince's spirituality is developed through his reason and is an excellent example of More's argument that "[r]eason is servant to Faith and not enemy" (Chambers 253). The process through which Hamlet's thinking reaches its end is extremely interesting. In the process, seen from a Utopian view, philosophy is married to religion--in the broadest sense of the word. That is, philosophy is experienced as "the sacred" and it "represents an order of reality, the presence of which commands man's attention and at the same time escapes him; it is simultaneously desired and regarded with awe. In other words, it possesses an essentially ambivalent character, which makes man feel at once irresistibly attracted by its grandeur and frightened by its superiority" (Goetz 241).

Hamlet at these moments--holding a skull or commenting on the fall of a sparrow--is very much another version of Job, who says to Yahweh:

Behold, I am of small account; what shall I answer thee? I lay my hand on my mouth. I have spoken once, and I will not answer; twice, but I will proceed no further. (Job 40:4-5)

Job experiences a religious resignation. God is not to be judged

from a human level. To be fully human is to respect the mysteries and to have faith in the divine providence.

Nevertheless, one cannot help being overwhelmed by the fact that this Shakespearean stage is actually "littered" by eight dead bodies. So much for Hamlet's deep thinking, reasoning power, intellectual capacity, and what not, one may say. In such a response, one is perhaps trapped by one's utilitarian notions. Marie Louise von Franz once met an elderly lady who "had not achieved much in her life, in terms of outward achievement." But "she had in fact made a good marriage with a difficult husband, and had somehow developed into a mature personality" (MAHS 164). When this elderly lady complained to von Franz that she had not "done" anything in her life, von Franz told her the following story related by the same ancient Chinese sage, Chuang Tzu:

A wandering carpenter, called Stone, saw on his travels a gigantic old oak tree standing in a field near an earth-altar. The carpenter said to his apprentice who was admiring the oak: "This is a useless tree. If you wanted to make a ship, it would soon rot; if you wanted to make tools, they would break. You can't do anything useful with this tree, and that's why it has become so old." (Chuang Tzu ch. 4, MAHS 165)

Here Stone is trapped by his utilitarian notions. Yet, very soon he learns to see things from a different perspective.

But in an inn, that same evening, when the carpenter went to sleep, the old oak tree appeared to

him in his dream and said: "Why do you compare me to your cultivated trees, and all the others that bear fruit? Even before they can ripen their fruit, people attack and violate them. Their branches are broken, their twigs are torn. Their own gifts bring harm to them, and they cannot live out their natural span. That is what happens everywhere, and that is why I have long since tried to become completely useless. You poor mortal! Imagine if I had been useful in any way, would I have reached this size? Furthermore, you and I are both creatures, and how can one creature set himself so high as to judge another creature? You useless mortal man, what do you know about useless trees?"

The carpenter woke up and meditated upon his dream, and later, when his apprentice asked him why just this one tree serves to protect the earth-altar, he answered, "Keep your mouth shut! Let's hear no more about it! The tree grew here on purpose because anywhere else people would have ill-treated it. If it were not the tree of the earth-altar, it might have been chopped down." (Chuang Tzu ch. 4, MAHS 165)

Upon this, the elder lady "understood immediately and felt great relief" (MAHS 165). M.-L. von Franz thus comments:

The carpenter obviously understood his dream. He saw that simply to fulfill one's destiny is the

greatest human achievement. (MAHS 165)

What is destiny? Is Hamlet simply fulfilling his destiny? Has he fulfilled his destiny? We do not know. It would be too strong to say that it is so or to say that it is not so. Both we and Hamlet are creatures, and "how can one creature set himself so high as to judge another creature"? We had better, like Job or like the carpenter, lay our hand on our mouth.

What deserves our attention here is the strength and inner clarity Hamlet achieves in his mental journey. This strength and inner clarity shape his new attitude towards life, a state of mind similar to the one that Keats explored all his writing life:

[He finds] the positive good that is to be had by accepting the very depths of despair; as Carlyle was to put it later, the Everlasting Yea that comes out of the deepest abysm of the Everlasting Nay.

(Gittings 245)

Here again is a paradox, a paradox that gives human existence its dynamic, a special dynamic that can be detected in the prince's last words:

O, I die, Horatio!

The potent poison quite o'ercrows my spirit.

I cannot live to hear the news from England,

But I do prophesy th'election lights

On Fortinbras. He has my dying voice.

So tell him, with th'occurrences, more and less,

Which have solicited--the rest is silence.

(5.2.354-360)

This is Hamlet, who is proud of his "prophetic soul" (1.5.40) and cannot resist making use of it even at the last moments of his life, who cares if "[t]hings standing thus unknown, shall live behind me!" (5.2.347) and insists that Horatio "tell my story" (5.2.351), who is living to the last drop of life and even looks forward to the future--in a word, who is still very much alive! This is the dynamic of Hamlet. This is the dynamic of Shakespeare. This is the quality that defines what it is to be human--being alive--with the burning fire of spiritual elation coming up at the moments of great enlightenment, of existential calmness.

One does not experience a pale good-bye in the conclusion of the tragedy. Paradoxically, one experiences Hamlet's aliveness. "The rest is silence," but Hamlet's voice is still heard today.

II. King Lear

King Lear, an anointed king, is represented in a revealing way in the following speech of Gloucester addressing Regan:

Because I would not see thy cruel nails
Pluck out his poor old eyes; nor thy fierce sister
In his anointed flesh rash boarish fangs.
The sea, with such a storm as his bare head
In hell-black night endured, would have buoyed up

And quenched the stelled fires.

Yet, poor old heart, he help the heavens to rain.

If wolves had at thy gate howled that dearn time,

Thou shouldst have said, "Good porter, turn the
key."

All cruels else subscribe. But I shall see

The wingèd vengeance overtake such children.

(3.7.58-68)

Nails! Fangs! Plucking! Rashing! Cruel! Fierce! These are words and imagery usually associated with beasts and not with human beings. V. K. Whitaker says that "[t]he ultimate horror of Goneril's conduct lies in its unnaturalness" (308). This comment raises a question that generates endlessly other related questions: What makes a human being human? What is natural for a human being? What is unnatural? What is human nature? What is "the human"?

An answer is given by Tzu Se (492-431 B.C.E.), the grandson of Confucius and writer of Chung Yung (中庸), literally, The Golden Mean or The Middle Way). He describes a "moral law within" by first observing what human nature means:

What is God-given is called nature; to follow nature is called Tao (the Way); to cultivate the Way is called culture. Before joy, anger, sadness and happiness are expressed they are called the inner self; when they are expressed to the proper degree, they are called harmony. The inner self is the correct

foundation of the world, and harmony is the il' strious Way. When a man has achieved the inner self and harmony, the heaven and earth are orderly and the myriad things are nourished and grow thereby.

(Chung Yung ch. 1, Lin IOL 143-144)

Then, he proceeds to emphasize man's faculty of understanding, that is, Reason. Reason serves man in doing justice to his nature and thus in fulfilling his nature:

To arrive at understanding from being one's true self is called nature, and to arrive at being one's true self from understanding is called culture; he who is his true self has thereby understanding, and he who has understanding finds thereby his true self. Only those who are their absolute selves in the world can fulfil their own nature; only those who fulfil their own nature can fulfil the nature of others; only those who fulfil the nature of others can fulfil the nature of things; those who fulfil the nature of things are worthy to help Mother Nature in growing and sustaining life; and those who are worthy to help Mother Nature in growing and sustaining life are the equals of heaven and earth. (Chung Yung ch. 21-22, Lin IOL 143-144)

Such is a Chinese observation of the laws of nature. If we follow this line of thinking, we may see that the source of chaos in King Lear lies in the characters' failing to fulfil their nature and their failing to live in harmony with nature. The law

of nature, according to Tzu Se, contains both a moral law within our nature and a universal moral order. It has certain qualities or characteristics. First, it is a law that is all-pervasive:

The moral law [Tao] is a law from whose operation we cannot for one instant in our existence escape. A law from which we may escape is not the moral law.

(Chung Yung ch. 1, Lin FPTC 71)

Second, it has a special kind of subtlety and paradox that is beyond human comprehension:

The moral law is to be found everywhere, and yet it is a secret. . . . For there is nothing so great but the mind of the moral man can conceive of something still greater which nothing in the world can hold. There is nothing so small but the mind of the moral man can conceive of something still smaller which nothing in the world can split. (Chung Yung ch. 12, Lin FPTC 71-72)

Third, it is absolute, eternal, infinite, and all-embracing:

Thus absolute truth is indestructible. Being indestructible, it is eternal. Being eternal, it is self-existent. Being self-existent, it is infinite. Being infinite, it is vast and deep. Being vast and deep, it is transcendent and intelligent. It is because it is vast and deep that it contains all existence. It is because it is transcendent and intelligent that it embraces all existence. It is

because it is infinite and eternal that it fulfills all existence. In vastness and depth, it is like the Earth. In transcendent intelligence, it is like Heaven. Infinite and eternal, it is the Infinite itself. (Chung Yung ch. 26, Lin FPTC 72)

Finally, it is immutable:

The principle in the course and operation of Nature may be summed up in one word: because it obeys only its own immutable law, the way in which it produces the variety of things is unfathomable.

(Chung Yung ch. 26, Lin FPTC 72)

Here we can see the Chinese philosopher approach the question of natural law with a gentle, delicate, and almost reserved attitude. He gives a very vague face to it and treats it as an "unfathomable" mystery. He tries to be in harmony with the law of nature through understanding it. This understanding, however, is very subtle, based largely, I would say, on man's instinct and its spontaneous or reflexive connection with nature. And the ancient sage perceives and describes this natural law with a singularly naïve simplicity. Naturally, human nature is given by God. Naturally, parents and children are affectionate toward each other. Naturally, husband and wife have different duties. Naturally, king and subject have rigid discipline. Naturally, when the above three things are in order, then everything else follows. Such is the philosophical basis of Confucianism. When things are not in such natural order, chaos

comes in.

Interestingly, V. K. Whitaker, in tracing Shakespeare's mind and art, discovers a link between Shakespeare's use of learning and the law of nature "by tradition going back to Plato." Both Chinese and Western philosophers approach the law of nature through reason--the capacity of understanding. But the Western tradition gives it a distinctive face, one that V. K. Whitaker describes in rather strong terms:

Granted, then, that King Lear portrays a kingdom in chaos because of repeated violations of the laws of nature, the problem arises of explaining those violations. Shakespeare offers the two explanations that we should expect--ignorance (or rather reason's failure to recognize the law) and appetite, always blended but blended in varying proportions. . . . Lear is, I believe, the only character in the play whose acts are repeatedly branded as foolish as well as unnatural. (308)

His conclusion is even stronger:

One may not believe that there are laws of nature; one may grant that there are principles of cause and effect which can be called laws without too much violence to metaphor and still doubt that they are moral, even in the cosmic sense in which they are moral in Lear. But one cannot deny that Shakespeare's vision of life invested his characters with meaning and with

emotional conviction. What is even more important, it enabled him to face squarely and with a clarity that our own sentimental and fuzzy-headed age sometimes finds appalling. The wages of sin is death--of one kind or another--and Shakespeare confronted that fact honestly. Failure to use one's brains, both to chart a course of action and to follow it once it has been determined, may lead to disaster not only for one's self but for innocent bystanders as well, and Shakespeare presents the full consequences of ignorance and irrationality. Like the fundamental ideas of any period, those of the Renaissance had been tested by experience and found adequate; in using them, Shakespeare applied to his own observations the best thought of the ages, and the deeper his insight probed, the higher his dramatic achievement soared. (327-328)

It seems to me, however, that Whitaker has captured only part of the story. A dream from The Gilgamesh Epic, as reported by Fraser Boa, may put us on the right track:

This dream comes from The Gilgamesh Epic and is one of the oldest recorded dreams of mankind. Gilgamesh was king of the Sumerian walled city of Uruk. He was a powerful ruler in the ancient world, and his dream was considered important enough to be inscribed in stone. Here is the dream of King Gilgamesh.

In the middle of the night I walked proudly up and

down among my people. There were stars in the sky. Suddenly, one of the stars of the sky-god Anu fell upon me. I tried to lift it, but it was too heavy for me. All Uruk assembled around this star, and the people kissed its feet. (Boa 48)

This is a forty-six-hundred-year-old dream. How should we interpret it? Here is an interpretation offered by Marie-Louse von Franz:

[T]he star represents his uniqueness . . . [and] also means the immortal soul of man. . . . And so he has now to follow his unique destiny instead of fulfilling a collective role. And this proves to be no glorious call, but a heavy burden to him. (Boa 49-50)

This causes one to wonder why this is not a glorious call. Why is it a heavy burden?

Until the star fell upon him, Gilgamesh thought he was a great man. He was king, he was hero, he was the fortress of his people. But now he has to see that that is not much. What the people worship is that star stone, that greater thing in him and not his collective power. In the dream, the people kiss the star's feet and not the feet of Gilgamesh. They prostrate themselves before the star, which is his true greatness. . . . And so from then on in the epic, Gilgamesh becomes the servant of his unique, heroic task, which is the search for his immortality.

(Boa 49-50)

Similarly, before his tragic destiny befalls him, King Lear, the anointed king, is playing a collective role of power. It seems evident that his tragedy is brought upon himself through his own "foolishness." But if we only see his "foolishness" without seeing his "greatness", we miss the best part of the play. From Act I to Act V, if we follow carefully the king's soul journey, we witness his spiritual progress. As with Gilgamesh, Lear begins by thinking himself as a great man, a king, a hero, the fortress of his people. During his exile, the king anointed by divine right, for the first time in his life reaches out to the many and truly realizes what he means to his people:

Take physic, Pomp;
Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel,
That thou mayst shake the superflux to them,
And show the Heavens more just. (3.4.33-36)

He begins his journey swept along by his indignant anger ("Here I disclaim all my paternal care" [1.1.13]), and he ends with a profound faith in his beloved daughter:

You must bear with me.
Pray you now, forget and forgive. I am old and
foolish. (4.7.84)

Looking back, in the midst of inner and outer chaos, Lear, like most of us, sets his eyes on evil. "Whence comes evil?" the king wonders. In his moment of great distress, he links female

sexual anatomy with evil, saying:

there's hell, there's darkness,
There is the sulphurous pit -burning, scalding,
Stench, consumption: fie, fie, fie! (4.6.126-128)

Finally, he regains the order of his heart, and the beautiful pattern returns. Just as Gloucester's heart "[b]urst smilingly" (5.3.198), the king's love for his beloved daughter is ultimately confirmed with a profundity which the reader does not experience at the beginning of the play:

Come, let's away to prison;
We two alone will sing like birds i'the cage.
When thou dost ask me blessing, I'll kneel down,
And ask of thee forgiveness: so we'll live,
And pray, and sing, and tell old tales, and laugh
At gilded butterflies, (5.3.8-13)

Is this not a most poetic moment? Is this not a most blessed moment? When his heart is filled with love, the prison becomes a sanctuary, a shelter from chaos, a Utopia, where the king and his beloved daughter can "pray, and sing, and tell old tales, and laugh" This is distinctively Lear's voice, I would say. At this point of the play, to a reader who has followed carefully step by step Lear's pride, Lear's suffering, Lear's dignity in the face of evil, Lear's raving, and Lear's moments of existential calmness, this is the tone that sounds natural to Lear. There is majesty in his humility.

This is the dynamic of King Lear. Through one's intense

experience of and with this play, one feels that, in a sense, Shakespeare gives his King Lear a quality that makes the king immortal. What is immortal is precisely the fullness of Lear's unique "humanness." Paradoxically, what is unique or most sharply individual can be most universal and human. There lies the dynamic of Shakespeare's art, which still speaks to our heart to this day. It is through suffering that Lear fulfils his inner life. From an one-sided outer life to an attentive inner life there is a great leap the king has to take in order to reconcile the two. Everyone has his own cross to carry, and since "the star falls upon his back," so to speak, what Lear has done is just that.

III. The Tempest

Hamlet's philosophical bent becomes in Prospero an active, creative thinking life, and Lear's involuntary suffering and forced withdrawal to the inner self become in Prospero, to a great extent, a voluntary and conscious choice. Prospero's charm does not lie in his magical repertoire, for the careful reader immediately senses that "we are not justified in taking the supernaturalism of this play too seriously" (Whitaker 323). Nor does it lie in his rather peculiar personality. Where then does it lie? Prospero carries out, or lives out, some potential that Hamlet and Lear are not "lucky" enough to realize, so to speak.

But the success of his whole being does not rely on luck. It is something in himself that makes him so lucky in the end of the play and so unlucky in the beginning.

That is to say, Prospero must have been both cursed and blessed by the same qualities that he possesses. And what are those qualities? Here one finds it a great temptation to put Prospero alongside Chuang Tzu (c. 335-275 B.C.), "the first writer in China to have felt and expressed the inner restlessness over the poignancy of human life and to have wrestled with the problems of the spiritual universe" (Lin FPTC 116). Is it an "inner restlessness over the poignancy of human life" that secretly drives Prospero constantly to attempt to elevate his soul through arcane knowledge of the divine, through alchemy, through the lore of supernatural signs, or through communication with spirits? What is in Tzu Se an attempt to live in harmony with nature, both inner and outer, becomes in Chuang Tzu, as well as in Prospero, an effort to transcend nature, either inner or outer, a longing for immortality.

The outer chaos of seeming does not create inner chaos for Chuang Tzu:

[T]he world is in great disorder. The Way [Tao] and its Virtue [Te] are no longer One. So the world too often seizes upon one of its aspects, examines it, and pronounces it good. But it is like the case of the ear, the eye, the nose, and the mouth: each has its own kind of understanding, but their functions are not

interchangeable. In the same way, the various skills of the hundred schools all have their strong points, and at times each may be of use. But none is wholly sufficient, none is universal. . . . Therefore the Way that is sagely within and kingly without has fallen into darkness and is no longer clearly perceived, has become shrouded and no longer shines forth. The men of the world all follow their own desires and make these their "doctrine." How sad!--the hundred schools going on and on instead of turning back, fated never to join again. The scholars of later ages have unfortunately never perceived the purity of Heaven and earth, the great body of the ancients, and "the art of the Way" in time comes to be rent and torn apart by the world.

(Chuang Tzu ch. 33, Watson 364)

In the midst of such chaos, Chuang Tzu describes himself as "[t]he scholar cramped in one corner of learning" who "tries to judge the beauty of Heaven and earth, to pry into the principles of the ten thousand things, to scrutinize the perfection of the ancients," and yet "seldom is he able to encompass the true beauty of Heaven and earth, to describe the true face of holy brightness" (Chuang Tzu ch. 33, Watson 364).

One may be amused to think that this Chinese philosopher of the Fourth Century B.C. seems to be describing the chaos of today. Or of all ages? The "one-alley scholars" that Chuang Tzu talks about are very similar to Plato's prisoners who are chained

in the cave, constantly having to play with the shadows on the cave wall. As a human being, no one can escape the fate of being chained and playing with the shadows for some time. The trick, it seems to me, lies in knowing when to stop and take a rest.

Chuang Tzu knows the trick, as Lin Yu-Tang argues:

[Chuang Tzu's] escape from all this flux and uncertainty [of existence] was to retreat, on the one hand, to the ordinary common experience, and on the other, to stop talking and speculating as soon as one reached the border of Tao. (Lin FPTC 128).

Chuang Tzu himself expresses this point in the following lines:

[The truly intelligent] discard the distinctions and take refuge in the common and ordinary things. The common and ordinary things serve certain functions and therefore retain the wholeness of nature. From this wholeness, one comprehends, and from comprehension, one comes near to Tao. There one stops. To stop without knowing how one stops--this is Tao. (Chuang Tzu ch. 2, Lin FPTC 128)

Prospero's charm, perhaps, lies in his knowing when to stop or in his stopping without knowing how he stops. And therein also lies his "luck", so to speak. The moment he breaks his magic wand is the moment he, consciously or unconsciously, takes refuge in the common and ordinary things and thus retains the wholeness of his nature.

But this rough magic
 I here abjure; and when I have required
 Some heavenly music (which even now I do)
 To work mine end upon their senses that
 This airy charm is for, I'll break my staff,
 Bury it certain fathoms in the earth,
 And deeper than did ever plummet sound
 I'll drown my book. (5.1.50-57)

The "magic" is "rough"; the "truth" or the "Tao" is "subtle."
 The magician now becomes the mystic. The following lines sum up
 Chuang Tzu's philosophy:

Some of the teachings of the ancients lay in this:
 reality is ever elusive and formless, and all life is
 constant change. What are life and death? Am I one
 with the universe? Where do the spirits move? Whither
 do they go, and where do they disappear, so
 mysteriously and suddenly? The creation lies spread
 before me, but in none of these things can be found the
 true source. Chuang Tzu¹⁰ heard such teachings and
 loved them. (Chuang Tzu ch. 33, Lin FPTC 120-121)

Chuang Tzu loves the teachings of the ancients because to his
 mind "[t]he knowledge of the ancients was perfect" (Chuang Tzu
 ch. 2, Fung 46):

How perfect? At first, they did not yet know there
 were things. This is the most perfect knowledge;
 nothing can be added. Next, they knew that there were

things, but did not yet make distinctions between them. Next they made distinction between them, but they did not yet pass judgments upon them. When judgments were passed, Tao was destroyed. (Chuang Tzu ch.2, Fung 46-47)

As with Plato's prisoner who goes out of the cave, "would not men laugh at him and say that having gone up above he had come back with his sight ruined, so that it was not worth while even to go up?" (Republic Bk VII, 519-21, Lindsay 199), Chuang Tzu, too, has his moments of being misunderstood.

He expounded them [the Way and the views of the ancients] in odd and outlandish terms, in brash and bombastic language, in unbound and unbordered phrases, abandoning himself to the times without partisanship, not looking at things from one angle only. He believed that the world was drowned in turbidness and that it was impossible to address it in sober language.

(Chuang Tzu ch. 33, Watson 373)

Here follow the lines that describe the man and his art:

His "ladle words" are a continual pouring forth, his "serious words" are true, and his "allegories" are broad in implications. Alone he stands with the heaven and earth and wanders as a companion of the spirits. But he does not despise the things of the universe, or quarrel about what others regard as right and wrong, and he mingles with conventional society. (Chuang Tzu

ch. 33, Lin FPTC 121)

How powerful is his spiritual creativity! How abundant! How rich! How unceasing!

Although his books dazzle and spin out lengthy discourses, this is a minor blemish. Though his language is uneven [shifting from the serious to the facetious], it is lively and good reading, for it overflows from the fullness of his thoughts and he cannot stop himself. (Chuang Tzu ch. 33, Lin FPTC 121)

But the sage finds great consolation and joy in the sanctuary of his mind and soul.

Above he wandered with the Creator, below he made friends with those who have gotten outside of life and death, who know nothing of beginning or end. As for the Source, his grasp of it was broad, expansive, and penetrating; profound, liberal, and unimpeded. As for the Ancestor, he may be said to have tuned and accommodated himself to it and to have risen on it to the greatest heights. Nevertheless, in responding to change and expounding on the world of things, he set forth principles that will never cease to be valid, an approach that can never be shuffled off. Veiled and arcane, he is one who has never been completely comprehended. (Chuang Tzu ch. 33, Watson 373-374)

These lines are a summing-up of Chuang-Tzu's philosophy. They are also a summing-up of Prospero's world and in a way of

Shakespeare's art and mind. The essential ideas in the above lines are marvelously and beautifully expressed by Prospero, in his hypnotic tone of voice:

We are such stuff
As dreams are made on, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep (4.1.156-158)

From Act I to Act V, we witness the spiritual progress of the journey of the philosopher duke's soul. Prospero begins embittered by his exile, telling his daughter:

This King of Naples, being an enemy
To me inveterate, hearkens my brother's suit;
Which was, that he, in lieu o'th'premises
Of homage and I know not how much tribute,
Should presently extirpate me and mine
Out of the dukedom and confer fair Milan,
With all the honors, on my brother. Whereon,
A treacherous army levied, one midnight
Fated to th'purpose, did Antonio open
The gates of Milan; and i'th'dead of darkness,
The ministers for th'purpose hurried thence
Me and thy crying self. (1.2.121-132)

He ends, having gained wisdom through his sorcery, permitting the king and his party to shed the "subtleties o'th'isle":

You do yet taste
Some subtleties o'th'isle, that will not let you
Believe things certain. Welcome, my friends all.

(5.1.124-125)

And by the end of the story he expands this friendly gesture even further, saying: "I'll deliver all [the story of my life]; / And promise you calm seas, auspicious gales, / And sail so expeditious that shall catch / Your royal fleet far off"

(5.1.314-317). He begins by burying himself in his books, claiming, "my library / Was dukedom large enough" (1.2.109-110), and he ends by accepting his humanity, saying that he will devote "[e]very third thought" (5.1.311) to his own grave. This moment of existential calmness that Prospero has arrived at is a moment in which the truth seeker, after travelling far and wide, has found his sanctuary and has become a hermit and mystic, one who perceives a Higher Reality in the life in-between.

It is a spiritual clarity that Chuang Tzu shares with Prospero. When Prospero speaks of "our little life" as "rounded with a sleep," he seems to chat with Chuang Tzu about the butterfly dream that the Chinese sage had:

Some time ago, Chuang Tzu¹¹ dreamed that he was a butterfly, fluttering freely hither and thither, to all intents and purposes a butterfly! The butterfly was conscious only of its happiness in its natural freedom, with no thought whatever of Chuang Tzu. A little while later he awoke and found the same old Chuang Tzu lying quietly in bed! But there is no knowing whether it was then Chuang Tzu dreaming that he was a butterfly or whether it is now the butterfly dreaming

that it is Chuang Tzu. But since it is certain that Chuang Tzu and the butterfly are two different things, this is a good instance of metempsychosis. (Chuang Tzu ch. 2, Wu Joy 28)

"Is man's life but a butterfly's dream, my friend?" Chuang Tzu seems to be asking. "[B]e cheerful, sir," Prospero seems to be answering, "Our revels now are ended. These our actors, / As I foretold you, were all spirits and / Are melted into air, into thin air" (4.1.147-150). It would seem indeed that very substantial parallels exist between the moment of existential calm as experienced in the East and the moment of existential calm as experienced in the West; and that the difference between them in the quality of effortlessness and contrivance is superficial, not substantial.

Chapter Four The Merging Points: Essence of Humanism

*We say also that God rejoiceth
and delighteth in justice and
for that cause he delighteth to see a man so
delight in the same ...*

-- St. Thomas More¹²

Understandably, the substance of a story is usually found in the hero, who is its soul and center. I would like to look now at the heroes of some of the stories I have examined--King Utopus, Hamlet, King Lear, Prospero, and Chuang Tzu's Holy Man--to see if they share any observable pattern in relation to the stories of which they are the center.

At a first glance, they represent extremely different characters with extremely different inborn dispositions, so to speak. At a second glance, one may say that they are rulers in different realms, on different levels, and with different qualities. Then at a third glance, one is lost. Why? Because one has been confronted with a spectrum of levels of being, and differentiating one from another is not an easy task. There may be, for example, two extremes among them. And between two extremes, there may be thousands of nuances.

One of the extremes at least, one can be sure of: Chuang Tzu's Holy Man. The Holy Man may be chosen as a reference point,

and the reason has to do with how Chuang Tzu defines him, as he does in the following dialogue:

Chien Wu questioned Lien Shu: "I heard Chieh Yu telling strange stories, long and fantastic, going on and on without end. I was amazed at his words. They seemed to be as boundless as the Milky Way and had no connection with the way things really are."

Lien Shu asked, "What did he say?"

"Far away on Mount Ku lives a holy man. His flesh and skin are like ice and snow; he is as gentle as a young girl. He eats none of the five grains, but takes deep draughts of the wind and drinks the dew. He rides on clouds and mounts a flying dragon and wanders beyond the four seas. By using his spiritual powers he can protect creatures from sickness and decay, and ensure a rich harvest. I think this is ridiculous and do not believe it."

Lien Shu said, "So it is. The blind cannot appreciate beautiful patterns, the deaf cannot hear the sounds of bells and drums. Blindness and deafness are not just physical; they can be mental too. Yours is a case in point. That holy man with all his virtues looks on all the confusion of the ten thousand things as one. Because of his very existence, the world is emerging from chaos. Why should he do anything about it? Nothing can harm him. A great flood reaching the

sky could not drown him. Though a great drought caused metals and rocks to melt and scorched the earth and hills, he would feel no heat. From his own substance he creates philosopher kings like Yao or Shun. Why should he bother with worldly things?"

(Chuang Tzu ch. 1, Feng 12)

Why is it that the Holy Man does not need to do anything? My first encounter with the above text from Chuang Tzu was a vague experience, with a faint appreciation of the "political ideal" or "beautiful pattern" that it expresses. My second encounter with the same text was after my baptism in modern rationalism or modern scepticism, and my reaction was similar to that of Chien Wu. It was only after I read a story about an experience of Richard Wilhelm that I started to evaluate the ancient sage's "beautiful pattern" empirically and not just theoretically. Here is the story recorded in von Franz's Psyche & Matter:

In Kiaochou came a great drought so that men and animals died in the hundreds. In despair, the citizens called for an old rainmaker who lived in the mountains nearby. Richard Wilhelm saw how the rainmaker was brought into town in a sedan chair, a tiny little gray-bearded man. He asked to be left alone outside the town in a little hut, and after three days it rained, and even snowed! Richard Wilhelm succeeded in being allowed to interview the old man and asked him how he

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made the rain. But he answered, "I haven't made the rain, of course not." And then, after a pause, he added, "You see it was like this--throughout the drought the whole of nature and all the men and women here were deeply disturbed. They were no longer in Tao. When I arrived here I became also disturbed. It was so bad that it took me three days to bring myself again into order." And then he added, with a smile, "Then naturally it rained." (161)

Here is a living commentary on Chuang Tzu's words, "[b]y using his spiritual powers he can protect creatures from sickness and decay, and ensure a rich harvest." Here is also a living example, though a minor one, of "[t]hat holy man with all his virtues [who] looks on all the confusion of the ten thousand things as one. Because of his very existence, the world is emerging from chaos. Why should he do anything about it?" It is an experience of order that the Shakespearean heroes know too, for it is after Hamlet puts down the skull and emerges from his mental and emotional chaos that he opens his eyes to a higher law, to divine providence; it is when King Lear regains the order of his heart that things start to fall into place by themselves; it is the very moment that Prospero decides to abjure his rough magic, break his staff, and drown his book, that he has intimations of "[s]ome heavenly music" inside. It is inside. The order is first inside. And then it manifests itself in thousands of outside objects. It is just this belief that

explains the underlying logic for T'ao's Utopia: the focus is the overall impression or atmosphere of his Utopian realm as a whole: smiling, happy, joyful. and innocent. No ruler, not even a "symbolic ruler," is mentioned. A genuine ruler, as in Chuang Tzu's philosophy, dwells in the spiritual realm, and thus fades into the background. The parallel symbols in Western civilization have to do with, one may say, Plato's "spiritual man."

Though there are thousands of nuances to be acknowledged, the shared--and I would say essential--property of human experience is the inner order in every individual, not merely in rulers, for everyone is his own ruler. It is fundamentally for this reason that King Utopus "conscientiously and strictly gave injunction that no one should fall so far below the dignity of human nature as to believe that souls likewise perish with the body or that the world is the mere sport of chance and not governed by any divine providence" (CW4 222). From a conception of the human that is founded in the fact of and need for inner order, it follows that every individual gives, and ought to give, priority to the well-being of his or her soul. One may say, as in the case of Hamlet, that a sick soul is very unlikely to create harmony. It follows too that every individual maintains, and ought to maintain, a good order in his or her heart. One may cite Lear's "flaw'd heart," to which Edgar's comments on Gloucester's death accurately apply:

But his flaw'd heart--

Alack, too weak the conflict to support!--

'Twixt two extremes of passion, joy and grief,

Burst smilingly. (5.3.196)

And as Eric Voegelin writes in his "Reason: The Classic Experience," to reason is to experience the centrality of inner order in human existence, and reasoning is the means of achieving inner order in the life of individuals:

[T]he "lovers of wisdom," the philosophers as they styled themselves, were engaged in an act of resistance against the personal and social disorder of their age. From this act there emerged the Nous as the cognitively luminous force that inspired the philosophers to resist and, at the same time, enabled them to recognize the phenomena of disorder in the light of a humanity ordered by the Nous. Thus, Reason in the noetic sense was discovered as both the force and the criterion of order.

Moreover, the rise of Reason to articulate self-consciousness was accompanied by the philosophers' consciousness of the event as an epoch that constituted meaning in history. Once man's humanity had become luminous for its order, one could not return from this meaningful advance of insight to less differentiated modes of experience and symbolization. The discovery of Reason divided history into a Before and After. This consciousness of epoch expressed itself in the

creation of symbols which intended to characterize the new structure in the field of history. The central symbol was the "philosopher" in whose psyche humanity had become luminous for its noetic order; parallel symbols were Plato's "spiritual man" (daimonios aner) and Aristotle's "mature man" (spoudaios). The man who was left behind in a less differentiated state of consciousness remained the "mortal" (thnetos) of Homeric language; the man who insensitively resisted the advance of insight became the "unwise" or "dull-witted man," the amathes. In Aristotle's Metaphysics, myth and philosophy denoted the two symbolisms by which, in historical succession, compact cosmological and differentiated noetic consciousness expressed the respective experiences of reality. And regarding the same epochal advance, Plato developed in the Laws a triadic symbolism of history in which the ages of Kronos and Zeus were now to be followed by the age of the Third God--the Nous. (265-266)

If Voegelin's observation is sound, then it seems valid to say, first, that both Western and Chinese "lovers of wisdom" are "engaged in an act of resistance against the personal and social disorder of their age," second, that "Utopia" is a symbol of such engagement, third, that all Utopian literature reflects an inner order of its author, and fourth, that a "Utopia" exists first and foremost in the spiritual realm and Utopian literature is

ultimately a product of spiritual creativity.

This conjunction between West and East--a conviction of the anteriority of inner order, and the congruence of inner order and reason--also indicates a subtle disjunction between Chinese and Western observations of Natural Law or the Law of Nature. The question lies in "how." How do the "lovers of wisdom" perceive "order" in each case? In the case of Western tradition, the "order" has to be "acquired" through certain human measures, for example, the law and/or a ruler to enforce the law or impose the law upon people. On this point, Colin Starnes's note on the "rulers" in *Utopia* is very helpful. In it Starnes points out that "[f]rom the standpoint of Antiquity and the Middle Ages it is not possible to have laws without real rulers to enforce them--because the law, coming from the intelligible and divine realm, is opposed to the immediate desires of men and women and must therefore be imposed on them by powerful rulers" (xiii).

Such is indeed the Western perception of order and how the order can be gained, maintained, acquired, enforced, or simply formed. More in his *Utopia* has done something to revise it, for in *Utopia* the law is "thought" or "recognized" as an "inborn disposition," so to speak, "within each person," and therefore there is no need for a ruler to "bring down from on high and enforce from without." There are, however, some "occasional" decisive acts that are taken in the case of "some defect in the nature of an individual." Seen from the standpoint of Chuang Tzu's "beautiful patterns," the vision of order in More's *Utopia*

is far from the ideal, though it is an improvement upon the vision of order that More inherited from Antiquity and the Middle Ages.

The subtle disjunction between Eastern and Western ways of thinking about Natural Law does not represent a serious breach between the two traditions, however. To demonstrate how this may be so, let me reflect further upon More as a hero (his story being that of his own life as well as that of his creation of Utopia) and upon the subject with which I began, the humanism of More. In More's life, we can also find a living example of Chuang Tzu's "holy man with all his virtues [who] looks on all the confusion of the ten thousand things as one. Because of his very existence, the world is emerging from chaos," for Chambers tells us:

The other story for which we are indebted to Harpsfield is startling. It will be told more at length below. For the moment it is enough to say that William Roper, about the time of his marriage to [More's daughter] Margaret, had reduced himself by immoderate prayer and fasting to such a state of mind, that he "thought there could be no truth but that which was come forth out of Germany". So he became a Lutheran. He must have been an awkward inmate of More's house, for in addition to other absurdities, "of all the world he did, during that time, most abhor" Sir Thomas More. After much vain dispute, More abandoned argument, and took to

prayer. Prayer proved effective. (32)

It seems valid to say that the moment More abandoned argument and took to prayer, things started to fall into place themselves and the family began to restore its inner order. If one had been allowed to interview More then and ask him what he had done to his son-in-law, he might have answered, "I haven't done anything, of course not." And then, after a pause, he might have added, "You see it was like this: throughout the dispute, everyone was disturbed and I became also disturbed. It was so bad that it took me days of prayers to bring myself again into order." And then he might have added, with a smile, "Then naturally everyone too was back into order."

"Order" in the Chinese perception is rather a restoration of an original and natural situation. If, as Eric Voegelin argues, "Reason in the noetic sense was discovered as both the force and the criterion of order" (265), it follows that through the life of Reason order has to be first "restored" to its original and natural situation before it manifests itself in outer settings. Or, perhaps, only when one restores one's inner order does one perceive the cosmic order. Perhaps only then can one realize how impatient one was with the seeming chaos. But how can one achieve the restoration of inner and outer order? An answer can be found in Shakespeare's Richard III:

KING RICHARD: All unavoided is the doom of destiny.

QUEEN ELIZABETH: True, when avoided grace makes
destiny. (4.4.218-219)

It seems that to fulfill one's destiny, one needs first to fulfill one's nature, that is, to do justice to one's nature and restore the inner order. This will explain both why More devoted his whole life to a search for the inner man and why, at one point of his life, he concluded that reason is the servant of faith. Apparently, that faith can be a faith in the eternal order.

To illustrate the point of "doing justice to one's soul or nature first," let us consider the fantasy mentioned by P. A. Marks in his commentary on John F. Tinkler's "Praise and Advice: Rhetorical Approaches in More's Utopia and Machiavelli's The Prince":

It has probably long been a secret and cherished fantasy of many Renaissance scholars to imagine Thomas More and Niccolo Machiavelli sitting down to dine together in some warp of time and place. More is faced with the ultimate crisis of his life, and Machiavelli, after a glass or two of wine, leans across the table and whispers, "Sign the damned thing, Tom. You're a fool not to." (95)

What might be More's answer? To continue the fantasy, I offer here three possibilities.

After listening to this advice, More, taking a sip of his brandy, with a stern face, tells his Italian friend a joke from A hundred mery tales, printed in 1516 by his brother-in-law, John Rastell. The joke goes like this:

A penitent . . . confesses miserably that he inadvertently swallowed a bit of cheese one Friday. Assuring him of God's mercy, the priest then asks if he has played a part in some recent robberies. Well, sure, says the penitent, but "it was a custom among them that when any booty came of any rich merchant . . . to help another when one called another. And so they took that but for good fellowship and neighborhood" (16)¹³. (Prescott 7)

Or, in response to Machiavelli's whispering, More says, with a big smile, what chanced to cross his mind--the following Boethian warning which he echoes in the opening lines of The Book of Fortune:

If you commit your sails to the winds, you go not where your will desires but where the blasts push you; if you entrust your seedlings to the fields, you balance fruitful years against sterile ones. (Cousins 25)

Or More simply answers Machiavelli's good intention with utter silence, with an idiotic expression on his face, as what Job might have done to his three well-intended friends, for this is a matter entirely between himself and God--a matter of his nature and soul.

E. P. Simon argues that More conceived of Utopia in terms of his concern for the redemption of the individual's soul as it was presented in Erasmus' Novum Instrumentum (1516) and The Education of the Christian Prince (1516) (21). Yet, it seems to me that

More's primary concern in Utopia is similar in spirit to T'ao's in The Peach Blossom Spring. It is the concern that all ancient Chinese philosophers held to be primary, and it is clearly articulated by Lin Yu-Tang:

The only problem unconsciously assumed by all Chinese philosophers to be of any importance is: how shall we enjoy life, and who can best enjoy life? No perfectionism, no straining after the unattainable, no postulating of the unknowable; but taking poor, mortal human nature as it is, how shall we organize our life that we can work peacefully, endure nobly and live happily? (IOL 96)

It is also a question posited against all secondary concerns. By secondary concerns I refer to what is observed by Northrop Frye in the following passage:

[T]he secondary or ideological concerns, such as social loyalties or religious orthodoxies, have usually taken precedence over the primary concerns of "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness," so that we continue to go to war in spite of our primary concern to live.

(140)

It is the basis for what has been called Chinese humanism, which also is clearly articulated by Lin Yu-Tang:

To understand the Chinese ideal of life one must try to understand Chinese humanism. The term "humanism" is ambiguous. Chinese humanism, however, has a very

definite meaning. It implies, first a just conception of the ends of human life; secondly, a complete devotion to these ends; and thirdly, the attainment of these ends by the spirit of human reasonableness or the Doctrine of the Golden Mean, which may also be called the Religion of Common Sense. (MCMP 100)

It is from this standpoint that I proceed to isolate the essential properties of humanism as revealed in the given literary forms by More and Shakespeare. From a Chinese humanist's perspective, the ends of human life can be simply described:

The true end, the Chinese have decided in a singularly clear manner, lies in the enjoyment of a simple life, especially the family life, and in harmonious social relationships. (MCMP 101)

And this perspective is shared by More, as exemplified by his own life and by his imagined world, Utopia. The primary concern of Utopia is this: how one can do justice to one's nature and best enjoy a simple life--with all its existential tension, which is so acutely experienced by a philosophical mind.

This primary concern is evident above all in the Utopians' attitude toward death:

[T]hey regret the death of no one but him whom they see torn from life anxiously and unwillingly. . . . Persons who behold this kind of death are filled with horror and therefore carry the dead out to burial in

melancholy silence. Then, after praying God to be merciful to their shades and graciously to pardon their infirmities, they cover the corpse with earth.

(CW4 223)

As Father Germain Marc'hadour has put it, the Utopians regard "the quality of one's dying as the ultimate test of the quality of one's living" (122). This again shows that More's primary concern in Utopia is the life In-Between, the Here-and-Now. It seems that, at the moment of dying, the existential calmness settles upon those who love life and have sincerely lived their lives. These are men, in the eyes of the Utopians, who "have died cheerfully and full of good hope" (CW4 223). Therefore, "no one mourns for them, but they accompany their funeral with song, with great affection commending their souls to God" (CW4 223). To the Utopians, this is a moment for celebration--celebration of life, a well-lived life! Thus, "[w]ith reverence rather than with sorrow, they cremate the bodies. On the spot they erect a pillar on which are inscribed the good points of the deceased" (CW4 223). The Utopians are blessed with a good memory of the dead and "[o]n returning home they recount his character and his deeds" (CW4 225). It is thrilling to think that More, in these lines, was not merely describing a purely imagined people, but rather foresaw, unknowingly, exactly what would happen to him after his "cheerful death," for are we all not blessed with a good memory of More? Happily, unceasingly, we "recount his character and his deeds,"

from generation to generation. As with the Utopians, when we speak of More, "no part of his life is more frequently or more gladly spoken of than his cheerful death" (CW4 225). Hence, like the Utopians, we go about our business "with more confidence because of reliance on such protection" (CW4 225) as from the blessed dead.

Conclusion

*Wisdom takes care of those who look for
her;
she raises them to greatness.
Loving her is loving life itself;
rising early to look for her is
pure joy.*

--Ecclesiasticus 4:11-12

"In Utopia," says Hythlodæus, "as has been seen, the religion of all is not the same, and yet all its manifestations, though varied and manifold, by different roads as it were, tend to the same end, the worship of the divine nature" (CW4 233). If one gives sufficient latitude to the phrase "the worship of the divine nature," Hythlodæus' comment could describe the results of the reflections that this thesis has offered on the works of More, Shakespeare, T'ao Ch'ien, Chuang Tzu, Tzu Se, and the I Ching.

I have attempted to demonstrate, from a perspective that is rooted in Chinese culture, the viability of the concept of common humanity, despite all the differences in experience and view that are induced in individuals and groups by their cultural and historical conditioning. I have tried to show that what is given in all the writing of More is that human existence is experienced as a tension between perfection and imperfection, between knowledge and ignorance, between life and death, between mortality and immortality, and ultimately between the flux of

human existence and that permanence which is sensed as the divine. I have tried to show that this same perception of the human condition underlies traditional Chinese philosophy, most explicitly perhaps the work of Wang Fu-Chih in his reading of the I Ching.

If there is a congruence between West and East in this understanding of human consciousness, so too is there in the understanding of its assumptions and implications. A comparison of Chuang Tzu, Shakespeare, and More suggests that the lovers of wisdom, be they in the East or in the West, aspire to achieve the same goal--to bring the disorderly tension of their inner world into order, and in so doing to bring into order the disorderly tension of the outer world as well. In restoring inner and outer order, they are felt to be continuously reaffirming life.

In both East and West, Reason is the force and criterion of order. It is evident in all the works I have cited that the exercise of Reason plays a vital role in the life in-between, in the here-and-now with all its existential tension. Through the course of Reason, both Eastern and Western thinkers discover a philosophical joy that defines what it is to be human: being alive with the fire of spiritual elation. It is precisely on this point of philosophical joy that the Chinese humanism and the Western humanism merge into one, for both have inherited from the ancient past a similar philosophical commitment to life: living the life in-between wholeheartedly, with a spiritual clarity that reaches beyond the limits of this world. In this perspective,

perhaps, a humanist is one who not merely passively accepts the teaching and insights of ancient thought but actively ponders it and recreates something out of it throughout his life of Reason. This is what I call the dynamic of humanism.

A comparison of Shakespeare with Chuang Tzu and Tzu Se reveals another converging point of East and West: an existential calmness achieved in an active life of Reason. It seems to be an inner (effortless) calm to which the lovers of wisdom of all times aspire in their efforts to resist the outer (seeming) chaos of their age. The works I have studied display a great confidence in human reason; it is "a confidence," in Bouwsma's expression, "in the possibilities of human progress through a rational comprehension of the order of the universe" (6). This perhaps explains why humanism in both hemispheres emphasizes education. In the West, the term "humanism," as pointed out by Bouwsma, "refers to a certain kind of curricular emphasis; it belongs to the vocabulary of education" (7).

Finally, it becomes evident that each of the authors I have studied in this thesis strives for a perspective that reaches beyond the physical realm, bound to time and space, into the realm of human values that transcend the present order. The works thus stand forth as a testament to the spirit of goodness in man and his resilience in the struggle for perfection through spiritual progress.

"When the living are dead," Eric Voegelin writes, "the dead who are living have no audience" (335). Likewise, Lao Tzu

advises us in Tao Te Ching:

To find the origin,
trace back the manifestations.
When you recognize the children
and find the mother,
you will be free of sorrow. (ch. 52)

I have tried to demonstrate that both More and T'ao were a good audience of "the dead who are living." By tracing their thought back to its philosophical sources, I have tried to show that both More's and T'ao's Utopian thinking is based on the same element--a contemplation of the divine nature--a task taken up centuries before by their respective predecessors, their guiding stars. For More turned to ancient Greek philosophy and original Catholic teachings, such as the writings of Plato, Boethius, and St. Thomas Aquinas, to chart his course, and T'ao journeyed back to the original Chinese natural wisdom, such as the I Ching's observation of the law of life, Lao Tzu's "Tao," and Chuang Tzu's "beautiful patterns," to chart his.

Evidence of this philosophical legacy, as the thesis has proposed, can be found in the striking similarities or textual parallels between the younger writer and his predecessors. It is equally evident in the implicit commentary, or even subtle revision or refiguring, that the younger makes of the older. "Utopia," viewed in this light, means a sanctuary of the mind, a land of wisdom for wisdom seekers, a land created by lovers of wisdom. In this perspective, perhaps, T'ao and More deserve to

be identified with a spiritual renaissance. Regardless of this, the fact of their vital engagement with "the dead who are living" points to another feature of the humanism that they share--a genuine concern and respect for the wisdom of the ancients.

I too aspire to be a good audience to "the dead who are living." This thesis, far from hoping to offer a complete and final mapping of the subject of Utopian thinking or humanist ideas, is rather a recording or log for a journey that I have begun and is still under way. This work has provided an orientation, however, for the next stages of the journey I wish to take.

For example, the discussion of Chuang Tzu's "beautiful pattern" gives rise to the question of the relationship between inner and outer order. This question inevitably prompts another question: the philosophical roots of the attitudes towards evil in the East and West. My thesis has suggested that in this matter of contemplating the divine nature, the East and the West actually take different roads. A fundamental difference, for example, can be detected by comparing Tzu Se's "moral law within" with St. Thomas Aquinas's interpretation of the natural law. It seems that the former presents a mystical view of the universe, and the latter an intellectual endeavor to decipher the divine mind. This difference raises several important questions which I would need to study in greater detail in order to better grasp them. Among all the problems to be solved and questions to be answered, what fascinates me most is Chuang Tzu's deadly weapon--

humor--a weapon that More also knew well and used throughout his life.

What I would like to do in the future is to dig more deeply into the philosophical roots of More's and T'ao's thought, into the sources of their respective Utopian visions. It seems that the deeper one digs, the more inexhaustible and fascinating these sources appear. I am convinced that a more thorough study of them will yield a richer understanding of Reason and of humanity and will invite more fruitful dialogues between lovers of wisdom from both Western and Eastern cultures. If "wisdom is justified of all her children" (Chambers 156), if "rising early to look for her is pure joy" (Ecclesiasticus 4:12), and if "beautiful lakes resting one on the other" are like beautiful souls reflecting one another (I Ching, Tui), an on-going dialogue between children of wisdom can only engender more understanding and more appreciation, and thus more beauty, more joy.

END

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FIN

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NOTES

¹ More's epigraph is cited in Thomas Stapleton, The Life and Illustrious Martyrdom of Sir Thomas More, tr. by Philip Hallett, ed. by E. E. Reynolds, (New York: Fordham UP, 1966), p. 5. It is also quoted by Elliott P. Simon in his brilliant essay: "Thomas More's Utopia: Creating an Image of the Soul."

² Throughout the thesis I use "humanism" in the second sense recorded in the OED, "the character and quality of being human," and only by distant implication in the fourth sense, "devotion to those studies which promote human culture; literary culture; esp. the system of the Humanists, the study of the Roman and Greek classics which came into vogue at the Renaissance."

³ The marginal glosses may not be More's. According to the Cambridge edition of Utopia, "Giles here seems to claim credit for the marginal glosses in Utopia. On the title page of the 1517 edition, however, they are attributed to Erasmus. Perhaps both contributed glosses; or perhaps the 1517 edition is wrong" (27, n.23).

⁴ Cited by A. P. d'Entrèves 39-40.

⁵ Here the word "lost" refers to a point of view from which Christians see the pagans.

⁶ The "striking similarity between details of Socrates' description of the nature of pleasure itself and the Utopian concept of pleasure" (Jones 64) is fully demonstrated in Judith J. Jones's "The Philebus and the Philosophy of Pleasure in Thomas More's Utopia," MOREANA 31-32 (1971): 61-69.

⁷ This is quoted on the inside front page in Albert Low's work, The Butterfly's Dream: in Search of the Roots of Zen, (New York: New York UP, 1961).

⁸ This refers to Ying Cheng, the first Emperor of Ch'in Dynasty (221-207 B.C.), whose tyranny was hateful and fearful to many worthy men, who fled into hiding.

⁹ This particular line is quoted from Sun's translation, for, compared with Hightower's "fay retreat," its "heavenly land" renders more immediately the original Chinese phrase, "神界," which literally means "realm of gods and goddesses."

¹⁰ To be consistent, I have changed "Chuang Chou" into "Chuang Tzu."

¹¹ To be consistent, in this passage I have changed the philosopher's last name, "Chou," into "Tzu."

¹² This is quoted on page 219 of 1988 MOREANA, Vol. XXV, 98-99.

¹³ This joke is quoted by A. L. Prescott from A Hundred Merry Tales and Other English Jestbooks of the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries, ed P.M. Zall (Linclon, Neb., 1963)

Appendices

1

I. The Original Chinese Text of the Fifty-eighth Hexagram of the I Ching, Tui

"I Ching" is transliteration of 易經, literally, "The Book of Change" or "The Book of Changes" or "The Canon of Change." The original text of Tui is as follows:

兌 ( )

象曰。麗澤兌。君子以朋友講習。
兌。亨利貞。

My translation of "the image"(象) is a reconciliation of the following two translations:

(1) R. Wilhelm's:

Tui(兌)/ The Joyous, Lake

THE JUDGMENT
THE JOYOUS. Success.
Perseverance is favorable.

THE IMAGE
Lakes resting one on the other:
The image of THE JOYOUS.
Thus the superior man joins with his friends
For discussion and practice.

(2) R. L. Wing's:

Tui(兌): ENCOURAGING

An Encouraging exchange brings progress.
There is an advantage in correct persistence.

Openness (lake) upon openness (lake) forms the
condition for Encouraging.
An enlightened person,
therefore, joins with his friends for a brief
exchange of ideas.

11. The Original Chinese text of The Peach Blossom Spring

(i) Title: The Peach Blossom Spring

桃花源記

(ii) Prose:

晉太元中，武陵人捕魚為業；緣溪行，忘路之遠近。
忽逢桃花林，夾岸，數百步中無雜樹，芳華鮮美，落英繽紛。
漁人甚異之。復前行，欲窮其林。
林盡水源，便得一山。山有小口，彷彿若有光。
便捨船從口入。
初極狹，纔通人。復行數十步，豁然開朗。
土地平曠，屋舍儼然。有良田、美池、桑竹之屬。
阡陌交通，雞犬相聞。
其中往來種作，男女衣著悉如外人。
黃髮垂髫，並怡然自樂。
見漁人，乃大驚。
問所從來，具答之。
便要還家，設酒殺雞作食。
村中聞有此人，咸來問訊。
自云先世避秦時亂，率妻子邑人，來此絕境，不復出焉。遂與外人間隔。
問今是何世，乃不知有漢，無論魏晉。
此人一一為具言所聞，皆歎惋。
餘人各復延至其家，皆出酒食。
停數日，辭去。
此中人語云：「不足為外人道也。」
既出，得其船，向路，處處誌之。
及郡下，詣太守說如此。
太守即遣人隨其往，尋向所誌，遂迷不復得路。
南陽劉子驥，高尚士也。
聞之，欣然規往，未果，尋病終。
後遂無問津者。

(iii) Verse: Compare the translations of Hightower's and Sun's.

嬴氏亂天紀，

The Ying clan disrupted Heaven's ordinance,
When Ying overturned the heavenly principle,

(Hightower's)

(Sun's)

賢者避其世。

And good men withdrew from such a world.
Virtuous men retired from the world.

黃綺之商山，

Huang and Ch'i went off to Shang Mountain,
When these people fled into hiding.

The ancestors of these people also went into hiding.

往跡漫復湮。

Little by little their tracks were obliterated,
Slowly their tracks were buried,

來徑遂蕪廢。

The paths they followed overgrown at last.
Their trodden paths gave way to weeds.

相命肆農耕。

By agreement they set about farming the land,
They encouraged one another to be diligent in farming,

日人從所憩。

When the sun went down each rested from his toil.
At sunset each returned to his home to rest.

桑竹垂餘蔭。

Bamboo and mulberry provided shade enough,
Mulberry and bamboo gave ample shade,

菽稷隨時藝。

They planted beans and millet, each in season.
Beans and millet were planted in season.

春蠶收長絲。

From spring silkworms came the long silk thread,
From spring silkworms long silk threads were gathered,

秋熟靡王稅。

On the fall harvest no king's tax was paid.
On the autumn harvest no official tax was levied.

荒路曖交通。

No sign of traffic on overgrown roads,
Overgrown roads were bare of traffic,

雞犬互鳴吠。

Cockcrow and dogs bark within each other's earshot.
Cocks and dogs crowed and barked at one another.

俎豆猶古法。

Their ritual vessels were old design,
Their ritual vessels still followed the old designs,

衣裳無新製。

And no new fashions in the clothes they wore.
Their clothes were not in the new fashions.

童孺縱行歌。

Children wandered about singing songs,
Children sang their songs with abandonment,

斑白歡遊詣。

Greybeards went paying one another calls.
Grey-haired men wandered about in high spirits.

草榮隨節和，

When grass grew thick they saw the time was mild,
When grass was lush and green, they realized the season was mild, 4

木落知風厲。

As trees went bare they knew the wind was sharp.
When trees withered, they knew the wind were chilly and harsh.

雖無紀曆誌。

Although they had no calendar to tell,
Although they had no calendar to mark the time,

四時自成歲。

The four seasons still filled out a year.
The four seasons naturally made a year.

怡然有餘樂。

Joyous in their ample happiness,
Joyfully they lived in ample happiness,

千何勞智慧。

They had no need of clever contrivance.
Why should they tire themselves with knowledge.

奇蹤隱五百，

Five hundred years this rare deed stayed hid,
Their extraordinary existence had lain hidden for five hundred years,

一朝敞神界。

Then one fine day the fay retreat was found.
Then one day this heavenly land was discovered.

淳薄既異源。

The pure and the shallow belong to separate worlds:
Since the pure and the low-minded are different in nature,

旋復還幽蔽。

In a little while they were hidden again.
Shortly after, their world vanished from sight again.

借問游方士。

Let me ask you who are convention-bound,
Let me ask you who wanders within the conventional world,

焉測塵囂外。

Can you fathom those outside the dirt and noise?
Can you imagine those who live outside the earthly dust and noise?

願言躡輕風。

I want to tread upon the thin thin air,
I wish to move astride the clear breeze,

高舉尋吾契。

And rise up high to find my own kind.
And fly high to find my understanding friend.

END

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