

Zhuangzi on Role Models and Varieties of Freedom

Phil 210, Fall 2023

1

Overview of Today

- Updating the Moral Psychology Triad
- Modest Wandering
- Radical Wandering
- Conclusion

2



3



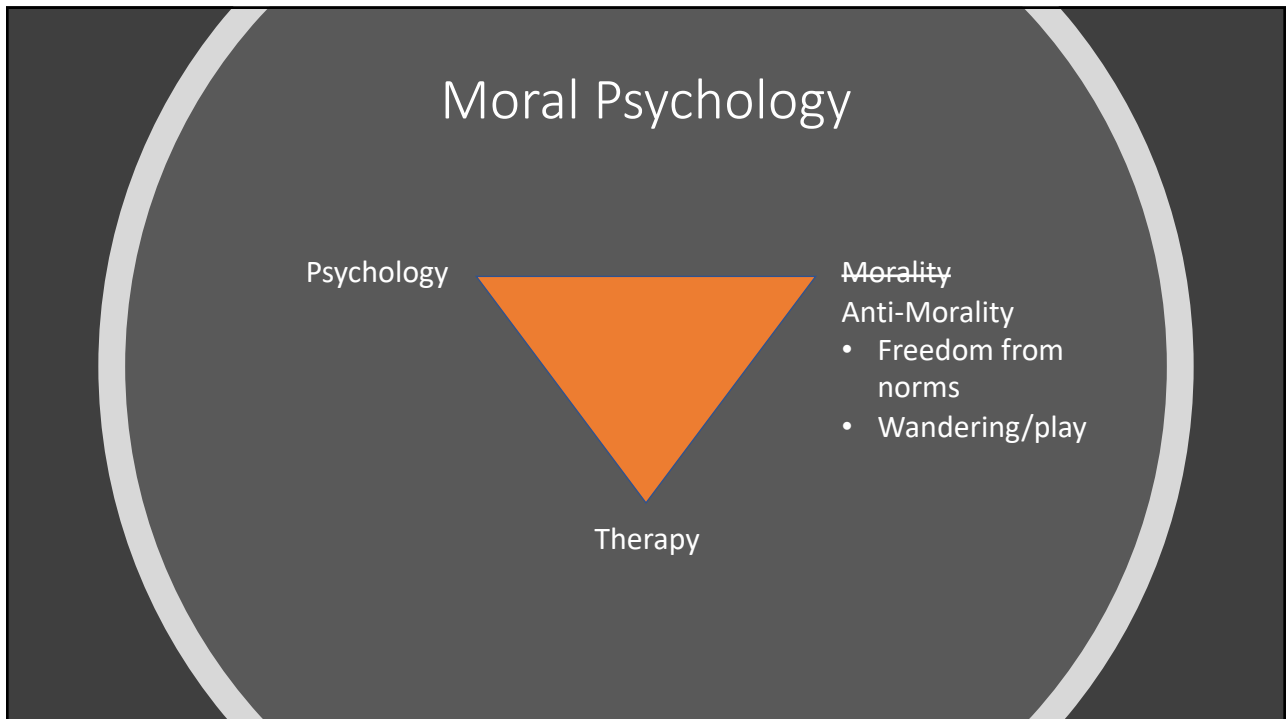
4



But ... Perspectivist
“Therapy” May
Undermine
Commitment

- Arbitrariness of “formation”
- Absence of a decisive perspective
- Affirming according to circumstance (“the rightness of the present this”)

5



6

The “Great Constraints”

(Ch 4, pp 38-9)

- Fate
 - A child’s love for their parents “cannot be removed from their heart”
- Responsibility
 - “An underling’s service to a boss...cannot be avoided anywhere in the world”
- To be “reconciled” (or “at peace” *an 安*) with constraints is “virtuosity” ... says Confucius



7

Moral Psychology

Psychology

Constraints

- Unavoidable limits or dependencies
- Bio-socio-psychological

Morality

Anti-Morality

- Freedom from (or reconciliation with) norms
- Wandering/play

Therapy

8

Modest Wandering I: The Cook

- “What I love is the Course, going beyond mere skill.” (pp 29-30)
- The king learns “how to nourish life”
- Would the cook be a good ruler? Does the cook represent a Daoist ideal?



9

Modest Wandering I: The Cook

- Free of external categories: “I encounter it with the imponderable spirit in me...”
- Wandering: “more than enough room for the play of the blade...”
- But: goal-driven (= constraint?)
 - Cutting up oxen
 - Nourishing life = making a living?



10



Modest Wandering II: Confucius/Yan Hui

- Yan Hui the good Confucian is criticized for “high-handed” “regulating words about humankindness and responsible conduct...” (p. 35)
- Avoid “conscious understanding,” “getting a name,” and “treating your mind as your teacher and master”
- How does this relate to previous accounts of “morality”?

11



Modest Wandering II: Confucius/Yan Hui

- Fast the mind
 - Instead of tallying with preconceptions, “wait for the presence of things”
- “With this, you can roam around in his cage...”
- “You will be of one household with all but will find temporary lodgings in whatever you cannot avoid”

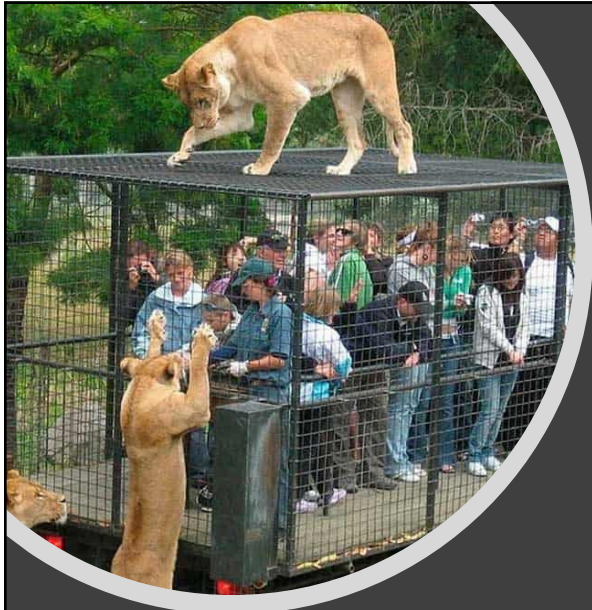
12

Radical Wandering I: Transport and Comealong

- Sir Transport on his illness:
 - “...what is there to dislike in such a demise? Perhaps he will transform my left arm into a rooster...” (p 58)
- Sir Comealong falls ill:
 - Friend to weeping family: “Do not disturb his transformation!”
 - “Filial” constraint: “Yin and yang are much more to a man than his parents. If they send me to my death and I disobey them....”
 - “What makes my life good is what makes my death good...”



13



Radical Wandering II: Mourning Sir Berrydoor

- “Proper” mourning – ritual or singing? (pp. 59f.)
- Roaming outside the lines
 - Forgetting
 - Wandering uncommitted
 - “Unfettered in the great work of doing nothing in particular” (*wuwei* 无为)
- Roaming inside the lines, a “casualty of Heaven”

14

Radical Wandering III: Yan Hui Sits and Forgets

- Forgetting humankindness and responsibility (p. 62)
- Forgetting ritual and music
- Sitting and forgetting!
 - Free of any preference?!
 - Free of any constancy?!



15

Conclusion

- Living a good Daoist life
 - Resisting predetermined answers
 - But reconciling to the inevitable
 - Wandering where one may
 - ... to the extent one can
- Dylan and me

16