

DREAM ILLUSION VOID

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ABSTRACT

The dream of an unused or useless stone to be in and participate in the world of Passion. The stone reincarnates ... to find itself in the Illusory world, submerged in all its preoccupations. Finally, it goes back to its original state, back to the great Void. This process brings to mind the philosophy of not a few philosophers, particularly that of Zhuang Zi and Western philosopher Rene Descartes.

The paper is a philosophical treatise on the great eighteenth-century Chinese novel, “*Hónglóu mèng*,” otherwise known as “*Dream of the Red Chamber*.” The author, Cao Xueqin’s, extensive perspectives on dream, illusion, and void as illustrating “life” embodies and surrounds the entirety of the literature. The author makes use of the phenomena, the human experiences of “Dream,” “Illusion,” and “Voidness,” to highlight the life process a human being goes through.

The paper, being based on a work of classic literature, also finds application in the general appreciation of Chinese literature (of novels in particular) and of better understanding of Chinese culture and way of thinking. The paper, designed for the dissemination of information for the greater number of people. As such, only important names and relevant terms in the novels are presented in Chinese characters, albeit with a presentation of the Chinese pinyin, a romanized version of such.

Note: This study centers and focuses basically in Chapters 1 and 5 of the novel. Though reading of the whole novel may be fascinating and provide readers with a better appreciation of the author's sense, limiting ourselves to these two chapters for purposes of this discussion will make discussion succinct and clear.

A reading of the original version is recommended for a greater appreciation of the language used in the novel. Different versions of the English translation: however, are available for those who prefer to read otherwise. “*A Dream of Red Mansions*” by Yang Hsien-yi and Gladys Yang translation, Foreign Language Press Peking, in three volumes of forty chapters each, and “*The Story of the Stone*” by David Hawkes and John Minford, of Penguin Books in five volumes (120 chapters) are models of literary translation.

Keywords: *Dream* (pinyin: 梦 Mèng), *Illusion* (pinyin: 幻 huàn), *Void* (pinyin: 虚 Xū), *Desire* (pinyin: 欲望 yùwàng), *Zhuangzi* (庄子), *Descartes* (笛卡尔), *Real World* (zhenshishijie 真实世界)

Introduction

Hónglóu mèng is one of the masterpieces of Chinese fiction and is considered by many to be one of the greatest novels ever written. It was composed some time in the middle of the 18th century during the Qing Dynasty, and its authorship is attributed to Cao Xueqin (Cao Zhan).

The novel is usually grouped with three other pre-modern Chinese works of fiction, collectively known as the Four Classical Novels. The other three are: *Xi You Ji*: 《西游记》; *San Guo Yan Yi*:

《三国演义》; Shui Hu Zhuan: 《水浒传》. Of these, *Dream of the Red Chamber* is often taken to be the zenith of classical Chinese fiction.

The Author

Being a classical work of literature, the novel has mutated to produce many version throughout the years, Also contributing to this fact is its originally having been read by the common people in hand copied version -- all of which are 80 chapters and incomplete. These hand copied versions are provided with annotations in red ink to further explain or give clues as to the author's intention or meaning. Scholars later, though deeper inquiry into the author's life, attributed these annotations to the author, or to someone very close to the author. These versions were known as "The Red Inkstone" 脂砚斋 or "Rogue versions" 脂本. These hand copied versions have at least 12 independent manuscripts, with minimal differences in wording, characters, paragraphing rearrangements and possible rewritings made each of them vary a little from another. It was only in the twentieth century, after Hu Shi's confirmatory studies, that is was generally agreed that the author of the novel of the first 80 chapters in indeed Cao Xueqin.

Annotations provided by the Red Inkstone say that Cao revised his novel five times, and died before he finished the fifth version. Due to this unfortunate event, many of the latter chapters were lost, and only the 80 that are recovered are ascertained to be that of Cao's.

As the Red Inkstone 《脂砚齋》 or “Rogue version” 《脂本》 is believed to bear a proximity if not the author’s intents himself, most of the current circulated editions have these 80 chapters. Twenty-eight years after the death of Cao, in 1791, Gao E 高鄂, following Cao’s manuscripts and foreshadowings in the novel, “completed” it by adding forty chapters, producing the one hundred twenty-chapter version of “A Dream of the Red Mansion” “*Hónglóu mèng*” 《红楼梦》. This claim is; however, debatable; some Redologists claim that Gao E’s ending does not coincide with the various foreshadowings of the chief characters’ fates in the prophetic poetic lines. But these are properly addressed in studies other than this.

“A Dream of the Red Mansion” “*Hónglóu mèng*” 《红楼梦》 with 120 chapters is the version currently in wide circulation in the market, with Cao Xueqin and Gao E as its authors.

The Name

The book which used to be called “The Red Inkstone” (Zhi Yan Zhai) 《脂砚齋》 or “Rogue version” (Zhi Ben) 《脂本》, is now called “*Hónglóu mèng*” 《红楼梦》 《紅樓夢》, traditional, and simplified respectively, also known as “*A Dream of Red Mansions*”. “*The Story of the Stone*” or “*Chronicles of the Stone*” (Chinese: 《石頭記》; 《石头记》 pinyin: *shí tóu jì*). The latter two closely approximates author’s meaning. Cao Xueqin himself in the first chapter of the book says that it is a record of the story of the stone, “... I availed myself of the story of the ‘Amulet’ to compose the ‘Stone Record.’”

Other less popular names addressed to the book are: “The 12 Beauties of Jinling” (Jinlin Shi Er Chai) 《金陵十二钗》¹; “The Love and Passion in the Mirror” (Feng Yu Bao Jian) 《风月宝鉴》²; “Record of the Passionate Monk” (Qing Seng Lu) 《情僧录》³.

“A Dream of the Red Mansion” “*Hónglóu mèng*” 《红楼梦》 generally called and normally known, may refer to “World Void” “世空”; as it was illustrated in chapter 1, E. C. BOWRA translation:

Whither they went, it is impossible to say, nor is it known how many ages had passed, when a priest, seeking the truth of Metempsychosis, passed by this hill side and saw a stone with the traces of writing clearly visible on its face. The priest read the story from the beginning, and found that the stone was one which, having been found useless for repairing the heavens, had assumed shape and form and had been brought into this world by the Buddhist priest Mang Mang, and the Taoist priest Miao Miao.

¹ Mention in chapter 5, in the dream of Jia Baoyu.

² A metaphor where Cao Xueqin used feng 风, means wind; and yue 月 means moon, together feng yue 风月, means the love and passions of male and female: baojian 宝鉴, (precious witness) means baojing, a precious mirror 宝镜.

³ Cao Xueqin, Foreign Language Press, Beijing translation, “Dream of the Red Mansions”, 1978, p6. “... si the Taoist changed his name to the Passionate Monk and changed the title of the book from “The Tale of the Stone” to the “Record of the Passionate Monk”.

On the stone was written the place where it had fallen,
and the family into which it had entered, and on it were
recorded the household affairs, the pastimes and
amusements of the inner apartments of the family, as
well as the odes, verses and enigmas which the members
of the family had composed. The date and dynasty only
were not given and were nowhere to be discovered. On
the back of the stone was the following verse:--

The azure depths of Heaven's expanse unworthy to repair,
An entrance on the weary world, a tiresome lifetime there,
The sorrows of this double life, the record of my fate,
Where can I find a chronicler the story to relate?

And that of Foreign Language Press translation,

Unfit to mend the azure sky, (无才可去补苍天)
I passed some years on earth to no avail; (枉入红尘若许年)
My life in both worlds is recorded here; (此系身前身后事)
Whom can I ask to pass on this romantic tale? (倩谁记
去作奇传)

The meaning thus implies that for Cao, the world is void, and
therefore everything in it would be just a Dream. The interpretation
of "Red Mansion" as an idiom for the daughters of rich men, which
was commonly known to the people and understood as a "dream of
rich young women", thus limits the meaning which the author would
like to suggest. The term 红尘, or 'hong chen,' describes the

Buddhist's perspective which sees the secular world as "red, painful dust" - merely illusory and to be shunned, a world painful and hard for an impassioned man. Red, because it primarily tells of the woman's life in the material, domestic and emotional lives of the period. Red, because of love and suffering; mansion for power and wealth, were the dream of each character.

A world that is man's dream is that of a "Red Mansion." Cao Xueqin views man as living in an artificial world, manipulated by politics and government; power and wealth; knowledge and ethics. This is also the reason that many scholars draw a parallelism between Cao's real life and Jia Baoyu's (the protagonist).

A general Redologist would say that the novel is conjectured to be semi-autobiographical, mirroring the fortunes of Cao Xueqin's own family. It was also intended to be a memorial to the women Cao knew in his youth: friends, relatives, and servants. But these observations are at best conjectural; reading the first chapter as an introduction does not in any point to us in certainty which of the interpretations are correct. What is certain from a cursory reading of the novel; however, is the obscurity of the language, with supernatural Taoist and Buddhist overtones.

The chapter lends itself to a long but equally revealing title: "*Relating how the Amulet was revealed to Zhen Shi Yin in a dream, and how Jia Yu Cun, while in obscurity, became enamoured of a secluded beauty.*" Seemingly reminding his readers of the main theme of the fiction (that of "Dream" "梦" and "illusions" "幻"), "the

frequent recurrence of the word dream and other words of kindred import in the book, is in accordance with the origin of the work, and is intended to remind the reader of the author's intent."⁴

The general understanding of a dream is that it is no more than a physiological and psychological process. Dream thoughts, it must be noted; however, as Freud would put it, are rational. The dream and the dreamer are so intimate that it might be the hidden concern of the dream.

As opposed to the contemporary understanding of the concept of dreams, dreams for Cao Xueqin were instruments of or coverings of the real things “真事隐” (pronounced zhen shi yin) in the person of Zhen Shi Yin 甄士隐. “WALKING from a dream, says the Author of the book, I determined on enveloping matters of fact in allegory, and I availed myself of the story of the ‘Amulet’ to compose the ‘Stone Record.’ It will be seen that the names of the characters, as Zhen Shi Yin, ‘Hidden Truth’ and others, are allegorical.”⁵ With a sentient stone is hidden the life story - of the author, the stone, Zhen Shi Yin, Jia Baoyu, ... abandoned by Nuwa when she wanted to repair the sky.

“WHEN Nu Wa-shi fused the rocks in order to repair the heavens, she too thirty-six thousand, five hundred and thirty one stones of enormous size from the Wu Ji Peak⁶ among the Da Huang

⁴ This text contains only the Preface and Chapter 1 of the novel as written and translated by E.C. Bowra. ©1998 by the Rector and Visitors of the University of Virginia. <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/chinese>

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Baseless Cliff (FLP, Beijing Translation)

Hills⁷. Thirty-six thousand, five hundred of these she used, and the one solitary stone which was rejected as useless, was thrown at the foot of the Qing Geng Peak.⁸ The fusion of this stone had, however, endowed it with spiritual perception, with power of motion and of self contraction and expansion. Perceiving that all its companion stones were used for repairing the heavens, and that it was only rejected and useless and shut out from the selected ones, the stone was vexed and grieved, and passed its days and nights in pining and lamentation.

One day, while the stone was thus sighing and sorrowing, a Buddhist and a Taoist priest came unexpectedly within view. Arrived at the foot of the hill, they sat down to rest and talk. Seeing the stone lying there, fresh, glossy, bright and smooth, contracted to about the size of a fan handle, they were immensely pleased with it.

Taking it in his hand, the Buddhist priest said smiling, "One may see from the appearance of this stone that it is endowed with life and spiritual perception, but it is without any practical value; we must engrave a few characters on it, so that men may know that it is an extraordinary stone."

"Then we will take you, Oh stone! to a brilliant and flourishing country, to a cultivated and courteous family employed in the service of the state, to a place of luxury and Delight, -- where there are

⁷ Great Waste Mountain

⁸ Blue Ridge Peak (FLP, Beijing translation) Qing Gen, homophone for "roots of love"

blossoming flowers and waving willows, where beauty and prosperity are supreme, we will take you there.”

Great was the delight of the stone on hearing this, and it said, “But I do not yet know what words you will write upon me, or to what place you will carry me. Tell me, I pray.”

The priest replied, “There is no need for you to ask, you will know all in good time” and he put the stone in his sleeve, and, together with the Taoist priest, disappeared.

Whither they went, it is impossible to say, nor is it known how many ages had passed, when a priest, seeking the truth of Metempsychosis, passed by this hill side and saw a stone with the traces of writing clearly visible on its face. The priest read the story from the beginning, and found that the stone was one which, having been found useless for repairing the heavens had assumed shape and form and had been brought into this world by the Buddhist priest Mang Mang, and the Taoist priest Miao Miao.”⁹

A sentient Stone abandoned by the Goddess Nuwa enters the mortal realm after begging a Taoist priest and Buddhist monk to bring it to see the world. The account inscribed on a large stone was the story of being abandoned and viewed as useless. After generations, with the help of a Taoist priest known as Reverend Void, and a Buddhist monk, the stone reincarnation took place, and with it, the story of its adventures. The dream to be useful, the dream to be part of

⁹ “A Dream of the Red Mansion” “Hónglóu mèng” 《红楼梦》, E.C. Bowra trans., Chapter 1.

the “world of wealth and power,” consumed the stone. The dream, like a fervent wish, is a desire, a dream of something he never had nor experienced and wanted to have. Ironically, though, when the stone in “A Dream of the Red Mansion” “*Hónglóu mèng*” 《红楼梦》 starts its adventure, it starts dreaming again.

Zhen Shiyin, on one long hot summer day falls asleep and dreams of the Amulet¹⁰, and also a large stone archway on which was inscribed: “Illusory Land of the Great Void. A couplet on the two pillars read: When false is taken for true, true becomes false; If non-being turns into being, being becomes non-being.”¹¹ Cao Xueqin tells the story of the Amulet through the dream of Zhen Shiyin. What is the reality that is hiding in the person of Zhen Shiyin? Is it the life of the author? Who is Zhen Shiyin? This passage takes us to his personality:

“Adjoining this Temple was the residence of a family of good positioning of the surname Zhen, the head of which was usually known as Shi Yin. His wife, a member of the Feng family, was a woman of intelligence and virtue, well versed in propriety and the rites. Although not very rich, Zhen Shi Yin was looked up to by the people of the neighborhood with considerable

¹⁰ “A Dream of the Red Mansion” “*Hónglóu mèng*” 《红楼梦》, (FLP, Beijing translation), pp 7-9.

¹¹ Ibid, p 9.

respect and esteem, and was regarded as a man of importance. He was naturally of a quiet, retiring, unambitious temperament, devoted to the cultivation of flowers and bamboos, and finding enjoyment in poetry and wine, a man tranquil and contented, and after the mind of the gods. One thing only was wanted to complete his contentment. He was now more than half a century old, and save one daughter named Ying Lian, now three years old, had no children to dandle on his knee.”

Here was a person contemporarily viewed as successful, contented in life, but hiding the failure of a desire of having a son. For indeed, for the traditional Chinese, the son was a continuation, a perpetuation of his lineage. Who would then continue his personality, his legacy if he had no son?

The dream of Shiyin in his own life, is the concept of fate. The fate of the stone, the pearly crimson grass and the fate of Shiyin.

“The Ruby Warden was constantly in the habit of wandering on the banks of the Spirit River. Here it met the Pearly Crimson Grass¹², in which it took a great interest and which it watered daily with the Dew of Heaven. Thus the grass was kept alive, until finally, having become permeated with the life giving essence of

¹² Vermillion Pearl Plant

the Universe, and the Dew of Heaven, it threw off the form of grass and assumed the human shape, attaining only to the state of woman -- not to the full dignity of manhood. Daily she wandered beyond the Heaven where no grief is known eating when hungered of the Fruit of Hidden Love, and drinking when athirst the water which dispel Sorrow; unable to repay the tender care with which the Ruby Amulet had nourished and tended her, her mind was continually filled with a sense of gratitude, and she constantly said to herself: "The Amulet has nourished me with rain and dew, and I cannot repay its care in the same manner, when it becomes a man and descends into the world, *I will accompany him, and endeavor by the tears of a whole lifetime to repay his kindness.*" In this way many other predestined actors in this Love Drama were drawn into the world to bear their parts in this dream of Destiny, and among them was the Gem of the Ruby Pearl Grass. Now that the Amulet¹³ is in the place from whence it came, why should not we take it before the Geni who warns in Dreams and Fables, give it a definite place and name, and send it into the world to join these others and assist in bringing the matter to an end?" "You are

¹³ Red Jade

right,” said the Taoist, “to call this an extravagant and fanciful affair. I never heard before of a debt of gratitude being repaid in tears. What if you and I were to descend also into the world in order to watch over and guide some among these actors? World not this be meritorious and well?”¹⁴

The reincarnations of the stone and grass result in the two main characters of the novel, Jia Baoyu and Lin Daiyu. The dream foreshadows clearly, in accordance with Cao’s beliefs (or the Chinese beliefs for that matter) in reincarnation as payment or atonement for debts and injustices done and incurred in the previous life. This is the dream of Zhen Shiyin, a dream forcing a reader to reflect — on “fate” and man’s incapability to escape from it.

When Zhen Shiyin woke up and took the daughter out on the street for a walk, a monk burst into lamentations. “

Why are you carrying that ill-fated creature, sir?” ...he will bring nothing but trouble to her parents.”¹⁵

“Fool to care for this tender child; 惯养娇生笑你痴，
An image in the mirror, snow melting away. 菱花空对
雪淅淅。

¹⁴ “A Dream of the Red Mansion” “Hónglóu mèng” 《红楼梦》, (FLP, Beijing translation), pp 7-8. “But I’ve no water to repay his kindness. If he’s going down to the world of men, I would like to go too so that if I repay him with as many tears as I can shed in a lifetime I may be able to clear this debt.”

¹⁵ Ibid., p 9.

Beware what will follow the Lantern Feast, 好防佳节元
 宵后,
 The vanishing like smoke when the fire burns out”¹⁶便
 是烟消火灭时。

Ying Lian¹⁷ was destined to be the wife of Xue Pan, there was no way of avoiding that. Here, life for Zhen Shiyin is just like a dream.

These bring to mind the Pre-Qin Philosopher Zhuangzi¹⁸, who once dreamed that he turned into a butterfly.¹⁹ When he awoke from the dream, he started wondering whether he was Zhuangzi or a butterfly. For Zhuangzi man's life is determined, destined from the time he is born. Man has to face these two worlds. These worlds are fate. Man: thus, has no alternative but to face it, take it, and live it. This is “life.” “In the world, there are two great degrees: one is fate and the other is duty.”²⁰ He continues thus: “that a son should love his parents is fate - you cannot erase this from his heart. That a

¹⁶ Ibid. p 10. Other translation like that of E.C. Bowra, “Infatuate man thus to fondle and nourish, A child who will soon find a mate in the snow. On the eve of the feast, though your household may flourish. The morrow shall see it overwhelmed with woe.”

¹⁷ Later in the story has another name ‘Linhua’

¹⁸ ‘Zhuangzi’ is the name of the second foundational text of the Daoist philosophy and the name of the putative author of this text, who early historical sources say flourished between about (350 and 300 B.C.E.)

¹⁹ One day about sunset, Zhuangzi dozed off and dreamed that he turned into a butterfly. He flapped his wings and sure enough he was a butterfly... What a joyful feeling as he fluttered about, he completely forgot that he was Zhuangzi. Soon though, he realized that that proud butterfly was really Zhuangzi who dreamed he was a butterfly, or it was a butterfly who dreamed he was Zhuangzi! May Zhuangzi was the butterfly, and maybe the butterfly was Zhuangzi?

²⁰ “Zhuangzi” Chapter 4 Ren Jian Shi section 2

subject should serve his ruler is his duty - there is no place he can go and be without his ruler, no place he can escape to between heaven and earth. These are called the great decrees. Therefore, to serve your parents and be content to follow them anywhere - this is the perfection of filial piety. To serve your ruler and be content to do anything for him - this is the peak of loyalty. And to serve your own mind so that sadness or joy do not sway or move it; to understand what you can do nothing about and to be content with it as with fate - this is the perfection of virtue. As a subject and a son, you are bound to find things you cannot avoid. If you act in accordance with the state of affairs and forget about yourself, then what leisure will you have to love life and hate death? Act in this way and you will be alright.” Professor Wang of Peking University in his book states, “Man even from his conception, struggles, with De (virtue) as the principle within, Daode (good manners) to exhibit, the knowledge one forgets, the exhibitor forbids, ...all of these from a traveler’s and a struggler’s standpoints are necessary.”²¹ Zhuangzi’s word “you 游”, travel, (journey or adventure) whether this be applied to life struggles or tours, or the butterfly are all related to dream.

“You 游”, the “meng you 梦游”, literally “traveling in a dream or dream tour”, takes us to chapter 5 of the novel entitled 《红楼梦》 “The Spiritual Stone is Too Bemused to Grasp the Fairy’s Riddles: The

²¹ 王博 《庄子哲学》，北京大学出版社，2004 年，112 页”一个从人向世开始的艰难旅程，有德的内充，有进德显现，有知的忘，有行的戒，.....所有这一切，对于逍遥游来说都是必须要走的路。

Goddess of Disenchantment in Her Kindness Secretly Expounds on Love”, to the instance when Jia Baoyu fell asleep, and let him travel “Now having reached the young matron’s room, they were met at the threshold by a subtle perfume which misted over Baoyu’s eyes and melted his bones.”²² Cao, obviously not to be left behind the field of human psychology, masterfully created an ambience pleasurable to Baoyu’s senses...

“Entering he saw on the wall a picture by Tang Yin²³, of a lady sleeping under the blossom of a crab-apple tree in spring. On the two scrolls flanking it, Chin Kuan²⁴ the Sung scholar had written:

Coolness wraps her dream, for spring is chill;
A fragrance assails men, the aroma of wine”²⁵

Pretty soon Baoyu fell asleep and dreamed...and travelled... Baoyu gradually entered into the dream, the dream of illusion. He gets passionately involved in the dream and forgets the world he was in before he fell asleep. He first heard someone singing a song, and before the song had ended he saw the singer.²⁶ Baoyu asked her to lead the way, and she answered with a smile.

²² “A Dream of the Red Mansion” “Hónglóu mèng” 《红楼梦》, (FLP, Beijing translation), pp 69.

²³ Tang Yin, a Ming painter and a poet, celebrated especially for his paintings of beautiful women.

²⁴ A Sung poet, author of many love poems

²⁵ “A Dream of the Red Mansion” “Hónglóu mèng” 《红楼梦》, (FLP, Beijing translation), pp 69-70.

²⁶ Ibid, p71 Cao’s description of the Sister Fairy

“I am the Goddess of Disenchantment from Grotto of Emanating Fragrance on the Mountain of Expanding Spring in the Illusory Land of Great Void. I preside over romances and unrequited love on earth, the grief of women and the passion of men in the mundane world. The reincarnations of some former lovers have recently gathered here, and so I have come to look for a chance to mete out love and longing. It is no accident that we have met. ...Baoyu followed the goddess to a stone archway inscribed: Illusory Land of Great Void (太虚幻境). On either pillar was this couplet:

When false is taken for true, true becomes false;
假作真时真亦假,
If non-being turns into being, being becomes
non-being.”²⁷无为有处有还无.

Forgetting the real and the unreal world; the truth and the untruth, and its subtle distinctions becomes then a consequence of dreaming, where one enters into the illusory world. As in the dream of Zhuangzi as a butterfly, where he flew freely, joyfully with the involvement of feeling and passion. The joy was such that he could hardly distinguish between the two personalities, whether he is Zhuangzi dreaming that he is a butterfly or he is a butterfly dreaming that he is Zhuangzi. The belief that the present is real becomes a

²⁷ Ibid, p72

doubtful thing. Objectively speaking, there is an invisible thread between the world of dreams and the world of the awake. In this case, the dreamer loses his senses with regard to the world of the awake; the images he dreamed of are so real to him so as to render him to be more emotionally and spiritually connected to the world of dreams than to the world of the awake. A concentricity then exists; he dreams while awake. The continuous images formed in the dream with the involvement of sensuous feeling, become a form of illusion. For as long as a dreamer is in the stage of dreaming, he thinks everything is real. The existence of illusion is due to the existence of a certain degree of ignorance on the part of the dreamer, who is living in the stage or world of ignorance. Therefore, when man falls asleep, his senses of the outside world decrease to a certain degree as compared to the normal individual. On the contrary, if said individual is not able to transcend the state but continues to retain and sustain a consciousness of state of being, then it cannot be called absolute real illusion. Many people, especially writers, philosophers, poets, artists, or even deep-thinkers are fond of using 'dream' as a metaphor of life, 'life is like a dream', 'a dream life', 'illusion dream world' etc. We may say that we are in the world of dreams, yet physiologically, psychologically, we are awake and conscious. We are not sleeping. That is why, we always hear people reminding themselves and one another that one has to live with a clear mind, live in a real awakening life, not in a dreaming, illusion stage. As is commonly exclaimed, "Get real!" But why?

How are the images formed in a dream? Man has the sensory faculty that is responsible for vision, audio, smell, feeling...all of these come from life. The first chapter of “Life: The Origin of Nature” 《性自命出》²⁸, states that things have their own nature, and nature originated from life. This life comes from ‘tian 天’ heaven, and nature comes from life. Life in turn comes from heaven. The nature of things make it differ from one another. Though men have things in common, their minds, wills, acts, etc., have their own unique response and behavior. When the *qi* of the human body comes in contact with feeling and capacity, these experiences and the things become the content of their feeling, which are accumulated. And when repeatedly reflected on and practiced, they become instilled in the heart. An experienced heart is not *tabula rasa*; it hides - be it a wish, a dream, a desire for something. When the heart and the things it hides connect and affect the feeling, the result is a beginning of the stirrings of the likes and dislikes, of decisions and acts, reflections and finally a will. This is one aspect. On the other hand, when man gets in contact with objects, and directly shows natural feelings of joy, despair, hatred, anger... whichever, these are all manifestations of the natural principle ‘dao 道’. The natural exhibition of passion, may

²⁸ Xing zhi ming chu, “Nature comes from life” 《性自命出》 Chapter 1, see the illustration. 第章凡入虽有性，心亡莫志，待物而后作，待悦而后行，待习而后莫。喜怒哀悲之凡，性也。及共见外，则物取之也。性自命出，命自天降。这些性情，道始於情，情生於性。始者近情，终者近义。知[情者能]出之，知义者能入之。好恶，性也；所好所恶，物也。善不[善，性也]；所善所不善，势也。

be good or bad; it is when these passions are controlled by the principles of dao, by being educated, that they become right dao. Both the good and the bad are in man's nature. Human acts being viewed as good and not good really depends and varies on the viewer's perspective and these sensory experiences become the object of passion, repeatedly reflected, reviewed and examined. Thus when man sleeps, images that are created are the same as if one were awake.

If man does not fall asleep, where does the dream go? If man were not in contact with other things - both living and nonliving, what is passion? What is the use of passion? What would be the meaning of illusions? If the useless stone, the sentient stone never met the Taoist priest and the Buddhist monk, then he would not have formed the idea of travelling the world and entering the 'red dust'. If one never felt that there is no other way but to accept the world, then he won't come up with the principle of equality of things. In Xing Qin Lun's "Discourse on Passionate Nature", 《性情论》 the author says that it is human nature to have passion, 人性有情²⁹. The root of man's "xing 性, nature" is passion or emotion. Seven passions and six wills, 'qiqing 七情'³⁰ 'liuzhi 六志'³¹.

²⁹ Guo Dian "Xing Zhi Ming Chu" Chapter 1 The root of passion: ".....passion comes from nature."

郭店的《性自命出》：第 1 章：情的根：“性自命出，命自天降。道始于情，情生于性。”

³⁰ "Zhuo Zhuan" zao gong 25: six qi of the people are: good, evil, joy, anger, sad, happy, and later classified as the six will according or for administering purpose.

But what is passion? The dream of the 'Red Mansion' talks of 'passion'. It is said the person with wisdom doesn't talk of passion. "With void one sees color; with color one produces passion. In transmitting passion, one enters color and an understanding of the self - colored is the realization of true void." A neo-confucian philosopher Zhu Xi 朱熹 defines passion to be "the movement of the contact or connection of one's nature with object."

In other words, the different views, different responses of man to life and the world are all from 'nature' 'xing' and manifested with different 'qing' 'passions'. Reactions like joy and happiness, feelings like tiredness and laziness... these differ from one person to the other. According to "... whatever is experienced while dreaming, at that time also appears to be distinct. He could be dreaming ... a dream can seem to be real, and distinct just like reality." These two premises lead Descartes to a conclusion that he cannot tell, on the basis of apparent distinctness, whether he is awake or dreaming. Given both of these undeniable truths, his conclusion must be accurate. This is one of the main strengths of Descartes' argument. It is very possible for a dream to seem to be just as distinct as an ordinary life experience. It is quite possible to have a dream about

《左传》：昭公口十五年：“民有好、恶、喜、怒、哀、尔，生于六气。是故审则宜类，以制六志”

³¹ "Zhuo Zhuan" zao gong 25: six qi of the people are: good, evil, joy, anger, sad, happy, and later classified as the six will according or for administering purpose. 《左传》：昭公二十五年：“民有好、恶、喜、怒、哀、乐，生于六几。是故审则宜类，以制六志。”

attending class and listening to the lecture, with all its inherent qualities. You can dream that you are learning, just as you can be attending that lecture and truly learning. This illustrates the truth that, upon the basis of apparent distinction you can never know if you are waking or dreaming.

When Jia Baoyu met Zhen Baoyu³² in a dream, he really thought it was real. It was only when he woke up that he learned everything was nothing. There was only a void. Descartes' philosophy tells us that the experience in the dream is also real. Both are true; they differ merely in situation and perspective. Zhuang Zi's solution, however, is practical: 'Don't waste your time in distinguishing between dreaming and walking.'³³ The moment you start to distinguish, you have to ask for the 'dao'. The 'dao' has principle, and the passion has desire. Passion comes from nature; the nature of one is not the same as the name of the other. This makes them differ from one another. Thus, what is one's is near to one's heart, and what is one's heart is near to one's nature.

Back to the dream of Jia Baoyu³⁴, where he was overjoyed by the apparition of the fairy. Here is the description:

³² "Hónglóu mèng" Chapter 56. 《红楼梦》第, 56 回.

³³ Wang Bo, "Philosophy of Zhuangzi", Peking University Press, 2004, p89. 王博, 《庄子哲学》, 北京人学出版社, 2004 年, 89 页。

³⁴ "A Dream of the Red Mansion" "Hónglóu mèng" 《红楼梦》, (FLP, Beijing translation)., p71-86

“Leaving willow bank, she comes just now through the flowers, Her approach startles birds in the trees in the court, and soon her shadow falls across the verandah.

Her fairy sleeves, fluttering, give off a heady fragrance of musk and orchid. With each rustle of her lotus garment, her jade pendants tinkle.

Her dimpled smile is peach-blossom in spring, her blue-black hair a cluster of clouds. Her lips are cherries and sweet the breath from her pomegranate teeth.

The curve of her slender waist is snow whirled by the wind. Dazzling her pearls and emeralds and gosling-gold the painted design on her forehead.

She slips in and out of the flowers, now vexed, now radiant, and floats over the lake as if on wings.

Her motherlike eyebrows are knit yet there lurks a smile, and no sound issues from her lips parted as if to speak as she glides swiftly on lotus feet and, pausing, seems poised for a flight.

Her flawless complexion is pure as ice, smooth as jade. Magnificent her costume with splendid designs. Sweet her face, compact her fragrance, carved in jade; and she bears herself like a phoenix or dragon in flight.

Her whiteness? Spring plum-blossom glimpsed through snow. Her purity? Autumn orchids coated with frost.

Her tranquility? A pine in a lonely valley. Her beauty?
 Sunset mirrored in a limpid pool. Her grace? A dragon
 breasting a winding stream. Her spirit? Moonlight on a
 frosty river.

She would put Hsi Shih to shame and make Wang
 Chiang blush. Where was this wonder born, whence
 does she come?

Verily she has no peer in fairyland, no equal in the
 purple courts of heaven. Who can she be, this beauty?”³⁵

In “Prologue to the Dream of Red Mansions”³⁶ Cao Xueqin
 exhibited the mixture of illusion and passion.

“At the dawn of creation, who sowed the seeds of love?
 From the strong passion of breeze and moonlight they came.
 So this world of sweet longing, On a day of distress, in an
 hour of loneliness,
 Fain would I impart my senseless grief
 By singing this Dream of Red Mansions
 To mourn the Gold and the Jade.”³⁷

The theme of the ‘twelve new fairy songs’ called ‘A dream of Red
 Mansion’ is actually “Passion”. Jia Baoyu could hardly forget his Lin

³⁵ “A Dream of the Red Mansion” “Hónglóumèng” 《红楼梦》, (FLP, Beijing translation), p71

³⁶ Ibid, pp79

³⁷ Ibid, pp79-80

Meimei “Lin Daiyu” despite her being married already to Xue Baochai. This is the game of fate, which creates “A Life Misspent”; The love of Bao Dai “Vain Longing” ended painfully. Nothing is stable and remains forever, like Yuan Chun tragedy, “The Transient of Life”³⁸: Tan Chun because of marrying someone far, suffered from pain “Separation from Dear Ones”³⁹; Shi Xiangyun, being separated, ended up alone with “Sorrow Amidst Joy”; Miaoyu’s misfortune gained no acceptance, “Spurned by the World”; “Union of Enemies” is the story of Yin Chun married life; “Perception of the Transience of Flowers”⁴⁰ Xi Chun realizing the situation of Jia’s family is temporal and decided to live in the temple; the story of Wang Xifeng “Ruin by Cunning”, Liu Laolao freed Qiaojie “A Little Act of Kindness”; Li Wan sacrificed her own life “Splendour comes too Late”; a sort of insulting Qin Keqin committed suicide “Good Things Come To An End”; unfortunate ending of the Jia family, Baoyu ended as a Taoist priest, and Jia’s family scattered just like “The Bird Scatter to the Wood”. The whole fiction is a process from dream to illusion, illusion to passion; passion brings forth chaos, which finally ends with desperation. The story of Jia Rui and Wang Xifeng in Chapter 12 of the novel illustrates this. Jia Rui was blinded with his passion, ends up badly. Wang Xifeng, desired of power, authority.

³⁸ “A Dream of the Red Mansion” “Hónglóu mèng” 《红楼梦》, Chapter Five.

³⁹ Ibid, pp 71-86

⁴⁰ Ibid, pp 79-80

Authority versus passion; with passion gone, what happens to authority? How long would it last?

Both stone and Jia Baoyu entered into a dream of an ideal world, a ‘real’ illusory world. In the life of the illusory world, human nature gets in contact with things, objects, persons. The involvement creates discriminations; passions and principles are mixed up, chaos, sadness, and discontentment prevail. The Confucian viewed passion and desire as evil, and thus advocates a rational solution to solve the problem. “Mengzi Li Lou Part 2” “The great one does not lose a pure heart.” It is a best ethical way to treat one’s heart first before solving socio-environmental problems. The conscience is found in the heart; it has capability to go in conformity with humanity. It can be seen that the Confucians had the intention to change, to educate the world. While for Laozi, man’s heart only has “to go back to the original”. “Laozi” Chapter 10 suggests using “salient” ‘static’ ‘静’ primary state, “wrestles the gas to send supply” ⁴¹ “搏气致柔”, empty, to ‘void’ one’s heart like the baby in order to settle one’s heart. “Laozi” Chapter 16 “The true void gets true peace.” ⁴² “致虚极，守静笃。”

⁴¹ “A Dream of the Red Mansion” “Hónglóu mèng” 《红楼梦》, Chapter Ten.

⁴² “A Dream of the Red Mansion” “Hónglóu mèng” 《红楼梦》, Chapter Sixteen.

Conclusion

Zhuang-zi's "Ren Jian Shi" and Cao's "Hong Lou Meng" have a common ground; both describe two kinds of worlds and structures. The stone and the Baoyu travel the dream world and experience the misery and tragedy of the world. After awaking, doubt settles in as to reality. Things in the dream, in illusion cannot be forever; they cannot be continuous. They are merely images from the actual world, the contact of human nature with things. That is why it is Void. In the Awake world, the world of image, man strives for things that are concrete because it is only in these that he is able to manifest some control over some things. But, all material things in this world fade; all things ultimately, in one way or the other become useless. Finally, man realizes that everything he strived and ever dreamed of was for naught; he is left with a large empty void.

"Honglou Meng" uses several juxtapositions between "truth" and "falsity", of the two worlds. Examples are the second chapter on the mansions of Zhen and Jia families; the fifty-eighth chapter on Zhen Baoyu and Jia Baoyu; the first chapter on Zhen Shiyin and Jia Yucun, the character's symbol, representative and so on.

In the ninety-third chapter, Zhen Baoyu changes and adapts to the human world, in accepting the world and being accepted, from 'heaven' to 'man', from 'real' to 'unreal'. Here is a process not only of education and enlightenment but experience and life. This transformation though was not an easy transformation; in fact it was a painful choice for Zhen Baoyu. In Chapter 115, both Zhen Baoyu

and Jia Baoyu meet, the two people with the same name and appearance, but with a different heart. The life world of Jia Baoyu is a pure absolute unreal world. His individuality is contrary to the world, separated from it. He rejected the world, and life, finally take the “real” “void” life and world. “The Illusory Land of Great Void” is the home of passion. In chapter 5, a couplet states:

“Firm as earth lofty as heaven,
Passion from time immemorial knows no end;
pity silly lads and plaintive hardput
to it to requite debts of breeze and moonlights.”

Zhuangzi; however, in pointing out the voidness of the world, had no intention and desire to change and educate it. Rather, practical as ever, he advocates an attitude on how to face this world. Face it in a modest manner, ‘zuo wang’ sitting in forgetfulness, and return to the original. This is discussed in “Zhuan-zi: Ren Jian Shi (Human World)”. The physical brings many desires, but we must strive to remove it. “Zhuang-zi: Da Zong Shi (The Big Master)” “that of great learning and integrity” must pass of transcend from the “outside”. Distinctly discriminate, eliminate, remove. And soon, one will discover that the heart has already emptied, that one has transcended the boundary. Zhuang-zi’s dream of being a butterfly which leads to the question of his reality and that of the butterfly is a process; he calls this: transformation. “Zhuang-zi: Qi Wu Lun” and “Mountain Wooden” “...to be angry and not angry at the same time, to be void and yet real at the same time. The person that can truly empty “void

oneself 虛己” is a person truly to travel the world without harming or being harmed!”

To determine and distinguish the real and void is not a serious matter. All these are only processes. Is it not that the stone reincarnated to Baoyu remains in its essence and in the end still a stone? However, process and experience won't just be wasted. When the stone returns to the barren hill again, his experience will show. But then again, the process, if looked at from this perspective seems real; that the stone has practically all the experiences it had undergone. Taken from another perspective however, the travel and all its attendant experiences were all for naught. After all, the stone remains a stone; it returns merely to its source, the barren hill. Therefore Zhuang-zi's viewpoint regards life as “travelling” and as a “dream”.

Cao Xueqin mainly in “*Hong Lou Meng*” responded universal psychology, right “life world” the understanding, namely person's world, the artificial world, the non-natural world, lives the related world with us: Politics, ethics, authority, wealth and so on. He to China traditional culture: The Confucian said Buddha has the deep experience. He appreciates Taoism very much the thought, especially has to Taoism is partial, lets the Baoyu choose like Zhen Shiyin gives up all, has rambles taoist priest's life. The last 40 chapters of “*Honglou Meng*” completed by Gao E completes according to Cao Xueqin's thought ,

“A tale of grief is told, fantasy most melancholy,
說到辛酸處，荒唐愈可悲。

Since all live in a dream, why laugh at others' folly?

卅來同一夢，休笑世人痴！”

all these absurdity are all words of dream. As “Zhuangzi Ren Jian Shi” words from the dream are of true words. (somniloquy)

“Who wants to go with me in a dream world, 一场幽梦同谁近，

only one like me, mad, can be found in a thousand years
千古情人独我痴”

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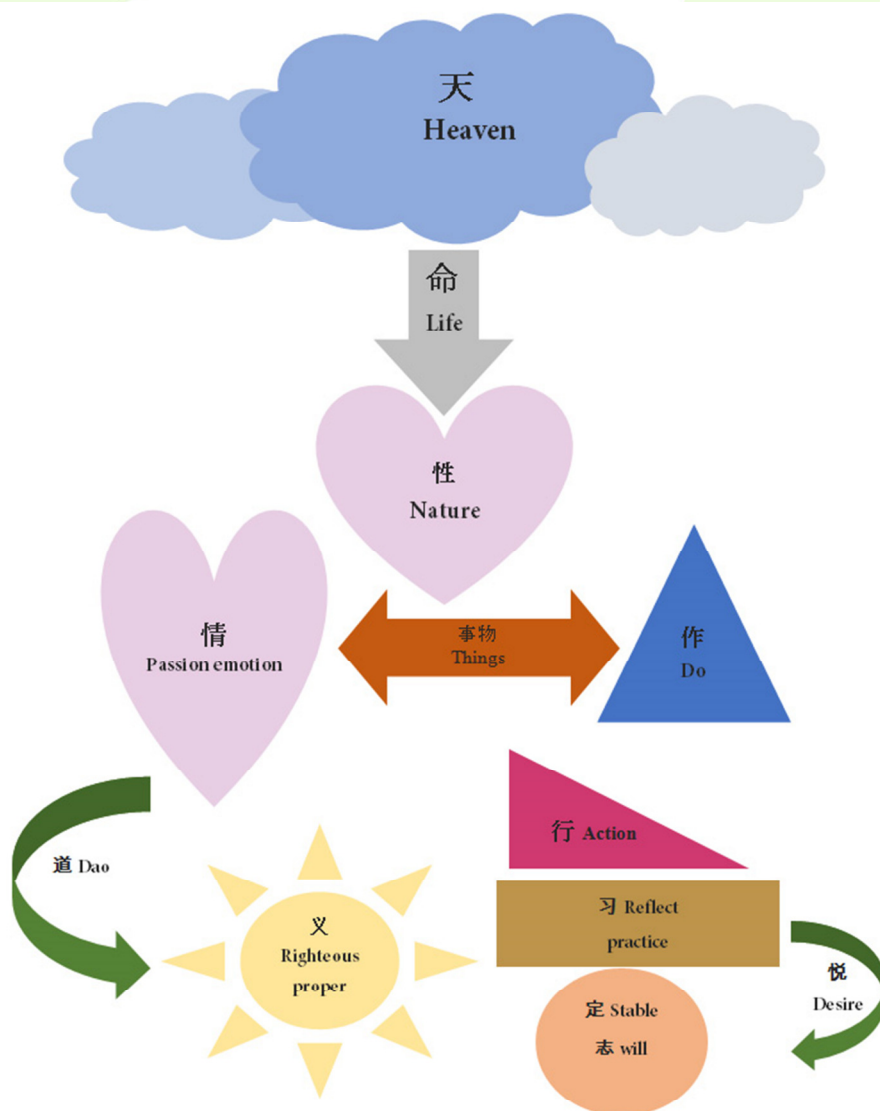


Illustration 1: “Xing Zi Ming Chu” “Nature Come from Life”

图画一：《性自命出》第一章内容图示