

SKILL PERFORMANCE OF ARTISANS AS AN ETHICAL MODEL: Cook Ding Parable by *Zhuangzi*

Jeong-Kyu Han and Woo-Jin Jung♦

Abstract: This study argues that the skill performance of Cook Ding in the *Zhuangzi* is an ethical model of Daoism by examining its cognitive characteristics and derives ethical implications based on the model. In the *Zhuangzi*, the most prominent stories are about artisans, who are portrayed as ideal beings. The ethics of the *Zhuangzi* is not a theory about the standards of conduct; instead, it is a description of the inner state of the sage and a system of theory and practice that can lead to such a state. This study suggests that the skilful performance of Cook Ding displays practical rationality, if not abstract reflection and that it is an autotelic self-cultivation process. Based on these suggestions, the study derives two ethical implications from Cook Ding's performance: i) the skill performance of the artisan can be regarded as not only an economic means but also a process of self-cultivation. ii) even if the other beings to whom we respond in the market are means to sustain our lives, we should treat them as beings with whom we share a symbiotic relationship.

Keywords: Artisan, Cognition, Ethics, Expert Performance, Self-cultivation, Skilled Coping.

1. Introduction

The *Zhuangzi* is considered one of the most entertaining and profound books in the world (Waley 163). The book, which

♦**Dr Jeong-Kyu Han** (first author), is a Postdoctoral Fellow at the Brain Science Institute, Korea Institute of Science and Technology, Seoul. Email: tandoori@snu.ac.kr

Dr Woo-Jin Jung (corresponding author) is Assistant Professor at the Department of Philosophy, Kyunghee University, Seoul.

Email: presolving@khu.ac.kr

represents the Daoism of ancient East Asia along with the *Daodejing*, presents various episodes of the Daoist sage as an ideal being, wherein a prominent element is the description of the inner state of the sage. *Dao* and *wuwei* are the core concepts of Daoism. Edward Slingerland interpreted that *wuwei* appropriately refers not to what is actually happening (or not happening) in the realm of observable action but is a state of mind of the actor and the phenomenological state of the doer (7). In addition, Lau states that *Dao* is a concept that represents a state of a Daoist sage (Lau 369-370).¹ According to their interpretation, *wuwei* and *Dao* are concepts that refer to the inner experience or state of the Daoist sage. Francisco Varela symbolically describes Daoist ethics along with Buddhism and Confucianism as follows: “a wise person is one who knows what is good and spontaneously does it” (4). Therefore, *Zhuangzi*'s ethics can be defined as a description of the inner state of the sage and a system of theory and practice that can lead to such a state instead of a theory-centric system about behaviour standards such as that of Kant.

Numerous parables of craftsmen (e.g., butcher, musician, cicada catcher, boatman, sword maker, and arrow maker) stand out in the *Zhuangzi*, which describes the details of craftsmen's working processes, such as training, preparation, and performance. *Zhuangzi* was a philosopher around the fourth and third centuries BC. Thus, the artisan may have been a representative market participant from that time. Chris Fraser used the virtuoso model to propose an interpretation of *Zhuangzi*'s emotions (Fraser 100). Fraser's interpretation presupposes the idea that the artisan is an ideal model for the *Zhuangzi*'s way of life. Joseph Needham called these craftsmen stories “knack passage” and said that they reveal admirable self-forgetfulness emerging from extremely close contact with the process of nature. (121-122). Angus C. Graham introduced the story of a craftsman as a good example of spontaneity (Graham, *Chuang-Tzu*, 135-142). Similarly, David B. Wong depicted skilful

¹ *Wuwei* has various translations as effortless action or nonaction, among others. We retain this term and *Dao* untranslated.

action in the *Zhuangzi* as a spontaneous, unselfconscious flow (265).² The artisan's skill performance is seemingly a route to the inner experience of the Daoist sage.

In the *Zhuangzi*, which consists of inner, outer, and miscellaneous chapters, only the inner chapters are traditionally considered to have been written by Zhuangzi himself.³ The parable of Cook Ding is the only knack passage in the inner chapters. Several scholars who investigated the parable of Cook Ding or other craftsmen stories from a cognitive aspect raised various interpretations regarding the issue of whether Cook Ding's skill performance portrays language, knowledge, theory, reason, and rationality and whether this skill performance can be considered an ethical model (Graham 1983; Eno 1996; Behuniak 2010; Coutinho 2019; Lau 2021). Interestingly, there had been an influential cognitive debate between Hubert Dreyfus and John McDowell, which is closely relevant to the abovementioned interpretations (Dreyfus 2005; McDowell 2007). The central issue between them was the boundaries within which conceptual rationality is involved in one's skilful coping with the world. In addition, studies on expert performance in cognitive science reveal how experts' brains function using brain scanning techniques. Therefore, this study expects that the debate and empirical research on cognitive science illustrates the cognitive characteristics of Cook Ding's skill performance.

The present study argues that Cook Ding's skill performance is an ethical model. First, we demonstrate that the skill performance of Cook Ding can be approached from the cognitive perspective and introduce critical issues on Cook Ding's skill performance. Second, we consider the debates on the cognition of expert performance and empirical evidence in recent cognitive science, which help explain the cognitive characteristics of the skill performance of Cook Ding and secure the basis for ethical interpretation. Finally, the study draws ethical implications for

²Jochim also characterizes Zhuangzi's art of life as flow, which is carefree flowing with the world of living things (36).

³For a recent study on this issue, see Jung, "Daoist Art of Life: Interpreting Emotions of a Sage in the *Zhuangzi*," 343 note 5.

skill performance by focusing on the relationship between skill performance and the purpose.

2. Analysis of Cook Ding's Skill Performance

The parable of Cook Ding begins with a beautiful description of his skill performance, followed by Lord Wenhui praising his skill. When Lord Wenhui sees Cook Ding cut up an ox and says that his skill is great, Cook Ding says that he just got *Dao* (which is an ideal state) through skill.⁴ Furthermore, he states that he saw the ox not with his eyes but with his spirit, and when the reflective awareness of the senses stopped, the spirit wanted to move (*Zhuangzi* 110-116). This dialogue signifies that the spirit is the core concept for reaching the ideal inner state through skill performance.⁵ Consequently, the following question is raised: what is the spirit that Cook Ding refers to? In the chapter "Worldly Business Among Men," one can find clues in passages to help understand the spirit. Anhui wants to meet the king of Wei and persuade him to stop his tyranny. Zhuangzi introduces the concept of the fasting of the mind, which represents a Daoist self-cultivation technique. Responding to the question regarding the nature of the fasting of the mind, Zhuangzi says:

Make your will one! 1) Don't listen with ears, listen with *xin*. No, don't listen with *xin*, but listen with *qi*. Ears are limited to listening, *xin* is limited to symbol, but *qi* is empty and waits on all things. The Way gathers in emptiness alone. Emptiness is the fasting of the *xin* 2) Let your ears and eyes communicate with what is inside, and throw out mind and

⁴Recall that we earlier defined *Dao* as a concept referring to the inner state of the Daoist sage. There are various interpretations of Cook Ding's skill performance and *Dao*'s relationship. See Lau, "Re-visiting the Role of Craft in Zhuangzi's Philosophy," 370-371.

⁵In this study, cognition includes the process from any stimulus to the response of an organism. According to this definition, cognition includes not only everyday habitual behaviour and abstract reflection but also emotion. This definition differs from Lau's (2021) understanding of cognition. Lau understands cognition as second-order cognition, which is distinct from professional skill performance or daily habitual behavior.

knowledge. Then the spirit will come and stay (*Zhuangzi* 137).⁶ Sensory organs only play a role in the transfer of external information. Mencius, a contemporary philosopher of Zhuangzi, says that "Sensory organs such as ears and eyes do not think; they only follow external things But *xin* has the function of thinking" (Gyeongseo 683). This statement focuses on ethics. However, for ethical judgment, comparing and selecting objects are necessary aspects. Zhuangzi's *xin* may have been only slightly different from that of Mencius. The quotation says, "*xin* is limited to the symbol" (*Zhuangzi* 137). Thus, the function of *xin* ultimately refers to representation-based judgment or thought. Hence, this study translates *xin* into the mind, which is responsible for high-order cognition, such as reflection and planning.

The quotation, which undoubtedly depicts cognition, consists of two repeated statements. In the first part, Zhuangzi tells Anhui not to listen with his ears and not to use the mind. "Throw out mind knowledge" in the second part corresponds to "don't listen with *xin*" in the first part. The composition of the "ear-mind-*qi*" in the first part corresponds to the composition of the "ear and eye-mind and knowledge-spirit" in the second part. Moreover, this composition is consistent with the composition of the saying in the parable of Cook Ding, wherein the spirit was about to move when the reflective awareness of the senses ceased (*Zhuangzi* 111), that is, "ear/mind-spirit." If this is the case, then the study infers that the spirit that Cook Ding referred to is *qi*, and the skill performance of Cook Ding can be approached from the cognitive aspect.

3. Critical Issues in the Parable of Cook Ding

Three issues emerge from the interpretation of the cognition of Cook Ding's performance (hereafter, Cook Ding's cognition or performance). Two issues are related to the conditions for the interpretation of Cook Ding's performance as an ethical model, and the third is concerned with whether Cook Ding's cognition

⁶ All translations of the original texts cited in this paper are our own. However, the translations of the original text of the *Zhuangzi* are basically based on Watson (1986), and are changed as needed.

can be interpreted as an ethical model. The first condition issue, which is more basic than the second condition issue below, is whether Cook Ding's cognition accompanies cognates such as rationality, reason, knowledge, language, and theory. Two interpretations are possible. First, Cook Ding's cognition is completely different from that of the mind, which can be called linguistic cognition. In this case, Cook Ding's cognition is understood as a unique cognition that excludes the cognition of the mind. Second, Cook Ding's cognition simultaneously encompasses, at least partially, the cognition of the mind. According to this interpretation, Cook Ding's cognition is understood to exhibit unique cognitive characteristics while partially including the cognition of the mind.

If Cook Ding's performance does not encompass language, rationality, and so on, it will be no different from animal behaviour; thus, Cook Ding's cognition is amoral. Raymond Lau regards skill performance as noncognitive based on the distinction between cognitive and noncognitive. For Lau, noncognition is understood as being without knowledge (Lau 369). Robert Eno mentions that Zhuangzi is a thorough skeptic regarding the possibility of attaining factual or theoretical knowledge, that is, a certain understanding based on language and reason. Furthermore, Eno assumes that Zhuangzi would propose an alternative route to certainty based on the potential of ordinary skill knowledge (Eno 134). Steven Coutinho's position is unclear. When he details the scenes of deliberation wherein Cook Ding encounters difficult places (Coutinho 91-93), he is likely to argue that rationality exists in Cook Ding's cognition. However, when he says that the artisan's skill performance experience is nonverbal (Coutinho 87), compares it to a bird's flight (Coutinho 95), and mentions Daoist scepticism regarding evaluative concepts (Coutinho 96), he seems to think that no human rationality exists in Cook Ding's cognition. He may have considered that cognition in the deliberative mode of reflective awareness and cognition, when immersed in skill performance, are completely different. This view is consistent with those of Lau and Eno. However, Graham suggests that skill performance

denotes intelligent responsiveness (Graham, Taoist, 8) and responsiveness with awareness (Graham, Taoist, 15). James Behuniak also follows Graham's view (Behuniak 170).

The second issue is about the end, that is, the telos of Cook Ding's skill performance. This issue is more directly related to the conditions for ethical interpretation than the first condition issue. Although reflective awareness, knowledge, theory, and rationality exist in the skill performance of a craftsman in the *Zhuangzi*, skill performance itself is amoral if it has no end. Behuniak said that a craftsman's performance had its own end based on Dewey's ends-in-view concept. He saw that the end emerges from the ever-changing context of ongoing activities as redirecting pivots in action every moment. For this reason, he said that the performance of Cook Ding cannot be called aimless and that this performance can be considered an ethical model (Behuniak 165-166). However, this interpretation implies the necessity of rejudging the morality of the end.⁷ Whether the end of Cook Ding's performance is ethical is a more important question than whether Cook Ding's performance has a purpose. Regardless of how beautiful and sophisticated a technique may be, if it is aimed at immoral acts, such as pickpocketing and killing, skill performance cannot be called an ethical model. To interpret Cook Ding's performance ethically, that Cook Ding's performance has a moral end would have to be demonstrated.

The third issue, which is the main one in this study, is whether the skill performance of Cook Ding can be interpreted ethically. As previously mentioned, Lau said that Cook Ding's skill performance could be viewed as an ethical model for Daoism while interpreting Cook Ding's cognition as a lack of knowledge (Lau 368-369).⁸ However, this interpretation is open to criticism.

⁷Another problem emerges from this interpretation. Redirecting every moment of activity is not an end but should be viewed as practical rationality. This problem is only about the category of concepts, and one may argue that rationality includes the concept of the end.

⁸Lau (2021) did not refer to ethics or morality. However, he said that Zhuangzi's ideal is that cognition in the skill performance of the artisan is generalized to life as a whole, thereby enabling human action to

Eno pointed out that no theoretical knowledge exists in Cook Ding's skill performance and argued that Cook Ding's performance in the *Zhuangzi* is amoral (Eno 1991, 1996). If Cook Ding's performance was as ignorant and thoughtless as in the case of animals, it would be unsuitable as an ethical model. Graham stated that craftsmen in the *Zhuangzi* are not thoughtless in the sense of being heedless and interpreted skill performance as being relevant to the ideal art of life depicted by Zhuangzi (Graham, Taoist, 7-8). Based on the discussion of Dewey, Behuniak argued that the parable of Cook Ding could be interpreted as an ethical model (Behuniak 2010).⁹

Scholars who discussed the cognitive aspects of Cook Ding's skill performance in terms of the ethical model used various cognates, such as rationality, reason, knowledge, language, and theory, to detail the characteristics of cognition in Cook Ding's skill performance. However, because we analyzed Cook Ding's

spontaneously constitute *wuwei*, which ultimately symbolizes the Daoist way of life. Therefore, this study infers that he viewed the skill performance of artisans as an ethical model.

⁹Although they did not approach it from the cognitive aspect, Jochim and Yu suggested an interpretation that the skill performance of a craftsman could be viewed as an ethical model of Daoism. Their interpretations are based on a common documentary basis, that is, "In clinging to outward form, I have forgotten myself" (*Zhuangzi* 617). Accordingly, they said that the skill activity of the craftsman is morally irreproachable (Yu 177) because the craftsman does not completely forget himself even when he is immersed in the practice of the technique (Jochim 50). However, this interpretation is not convincing. It should be said that what we forget when we are immersed in the skill performance is not the physical body but our consciousness, and the consciousness, not the physical body, is related to ethical judgment. Ivanhoe said that no assassins or pickpockets exist among the artisans in the *Zhuangzi*; therefore, Zhuangzi would have believed that the world would return to peace and harmony if we place our human intellect down (Ivanhoe 651). This interpretation based on the absence of immoral examples is not a good argument; his interpretation is overly superficial and naive. As previously mentioned, interpreting the skill performance of Cook Ding as an ethical model is difficult without intellect.

performance from the cognitive aspect, we must explain the very concept of cognition in skilful performance. Therefore, considering the contemporary debate on the topic of skilful coping is reasonable.

4. Debates on Skilled Coping

In his presidential address at the Pacific Division of the American Philosophical Association Program (2005), Dreyfus pointed out that cognitivism has failed. Researchers of artificial intelligence and some philosophers, who were optimistic during the mid-20th century, faced the problem of common knowledge; in other words, computers could not understand simple stories at the level of a four-year-old (Dreyfus 48). Understanding cognition as a symbol was no longer acceptable. He argued that embodied skilled coping is nonlinguistic or nonconceptual (Dreyfus 47). According to him, when we are completely absorbed in something else, we are capable of coping concretely without thinking at all. Indeed, in their direct dealing with affordances, adults, infants, and animals respond alike (Dreyfus 56). He said that, "If we understand concepts as context-free principles or rules that could be used to guide actions or at least make them intelligible, a phenomenology of expert coping shows concepts to be absent or even to get in the way of masterful response to the specific situation" (Dreyfus 58).

However, McDowell refuted the interpretation that rationality is detachable from the world (McDowell 338). He claimed that conceptual rationality is situation-dependent, which is contrary to Dreyfus' interpretation that concepts are context-free principles. According to McDowell, in mature human beings, embodied coping is permeated with mindedness (339). He said that human beings are different from other animals in that they do not just inhabit an environment but are open to a world, and noted that there is more to our embodied coping than to the embodied coping of nonrational animals (344). He argued that affordances, which are features of an object or environment that prompt or promote a specific use or interaction, are no longer merely input to a human animal's natural motivational tendencies; now they

are data for her rationality (344). Then McDowell said that “if an experience is world-disclosing, which implies that it is categorically unified, all its content is present in a form in which, it is suitable to constitute contents of conceptual capacities” (347-348).

The debate continued for two years and concluded with their agreement on some points (McDowell 352). Despite these agreements, the concept of situation-specific mindedness remains controversial between the two.

5. Empirical Evidence of Expert Performance

In cognitive science, various disciplines have examined expert performance. The domains of expertise include arts, sports, games, writing, medicine, and even mathematical ability. In line with the debate between Dreyfus and McDowell, we transformed the question from “How does mindedness or conceptual rationality permeate embodied skilful coping?” to “How does the brain reorganize its structure and functions in expert performance?” Notably, if possible, empirical evidence could explain the brain and cognitive mechanisms of expert performance. Thus, we briefly examined notable studies on expertise in music as representative of expert performance.

Music performance involves interaction between the sensorimotor system and high-order cognitive functions in the human brain (Altenmüller and Furuya 332).¹⁰ Scholars have long considered that the cerebral cortical regions of the brain are involved in high-order cognitive functions, such as execution, planning, memory, and imagination.¹¹ Pantev found that the strength of cortical activation using piano tones is higher compared with that of activation using pure tones produced by a group of long-term trained pianists (Pantev 811). Similarly, opera

¹⁰ The sensorimotor system is responsible for the integration of sensory and motor processing during bodily movement.

¹¹ The brain is inextricably linked with cognitive behaviors; thus, we assume that mindedness or conceptual rationality can be explained with the neural basis of cognition. Therefore, we can measure brain changes in highly skilled musicians using brain scanning techniques.

singers display increased functional activation of cerebral cortices and subcortical areas, which are involved in training-related activation and habitual learning (Pantev 811).¹²

Altenmüller and Furuya proposed the concept of metaplasticity in musicians' brain (Huang 730). Long-term musical training leads to a high level of musical expertise, which stabilizes the sensorimotor system over one's lifetime. Therefore, musicians quickly recognize new auditory regularities and abstract mismatch tone patterns within 10 minutes of auditory stimulation (Herholz 524). In the tactile domain, professional pianists exhibit lower thresholds of spatial discrimination compared with non-musician control subjects (Ragert 473); this difference implies that high-level music experts obtain stronger capacities for reorganization in tactile perceptive fields. Additionally, brain stimulation over the motor cortex results in stronger metaplastic effects in motor-evoked potentials than in nonmusicians (Rosenkranz 5200). Thus, long-term musical training could exert metaplastic effects on expert music performance.

As revealed by much cognitive research, if the brain contains conceptual capacities, one could argue that embodied skilled performance varies its conceptual boundaries in everyday life through plasticity. When one becomes a high-level expert, one's unique expertise can be translated into rationality. If there is rationality in expert performance, Cook Ding's performance also can be said to have rationality, which can be called expert performance, and furthermore, Cook Ding's performance can be regarded as a model of ethics.

6. Characteristics of Cook Ding's Cognition

Dreyfus argued that the embodied skilled coping of experts is nonlinguistic and nonconceptual (Dreyfus 61). Even an expert will be unable to work if they move away from the situation when

¹²The brain network consists of two domains, namely, the cortical and subcortical areas. Although high-level cognitive functions correspond to mainly cerebral cortices, habitual or automatic processing in the sensorimotor system corresponds to subcortical areas.

performing a skill and perceiving the situation based on language and concepts: "The tightrope walker who pauses to ask where do I put my foot next? He would fall from the rope" (Graham, Taoist, 8). This type of cognition is situation-dependent or situation-specific. This notion can be confirmed through the experience of playing the keyboard. For example, a hand that used to move freely on a keyboard becomes unnatural on an empty desk without a keyboard (Fuchs 102). In the chapter, "Mastering Life," a sentence states the following: "carpenter's hand is one with the medium" (*Zhuangzi* 587). This text describes the situation-dependent cognition of the craftsman. Cook Ding said that he becomes cautious when he encounters difficult places (*Zhuangzi* 112), thereby implying that situation-independent cognition emerges when one is faced with an unfamiliar situation.¹³ Another characteristic is the difference in memory. The body knows exactly where the letters are on the keyboard; however, this memory differs from that which surfaces when one recalls something (Fuchs 101). Cook Ding's cognition largely corresponds to embodied coping described by Dreyfus.

However, a difference exists between Cook Ding's cognition and embodied coping, which is completely without thinking at all. We hit type on the keyboard while thinking about what to eat for lunch. We frequently think about work while riding a bike. Typing on a keyboard, walking, or riding a bicycle is nearly automatic. In comparison, Cook Ding is attentive to the highest degree (Graham, Taoist, 7; Yu 178). In the chapter "Worldly Business Among Men," *Zhuangzi* tells Anhui to make his will one when referring to the cognition of *qi* (*Zhuangzi* 137). Cook Ding's cognition must be accompanied by a high degree of conscious concentration. To concentrate, exerting effort to hold onto a mind that might stray is necessary. Slingerland said the following:

Unlike instinctual or merely habitual forms of actions, then, *wuwei* calls for some degree of awareness on the part of the agent, and allows for a considerable amount of flexibility of

¹³ However, this does not imply that situation-dependent cognition has disappeared.

response. Although it does not involve abstract reflection or calculation, it is not to be viewed as mindless behavior (8).

The interpretation of Dreyfus, which regards expertise performance as nonconceptual, is suitable for everyday habitual actions such as opening and closing a door. However, as discussed, empirical evidence from cognitive science suggests that expert performance differs from habitual behaviours. In expert performance, the areas of the brain that represent high-level cognition, such as abstract reflection, are highly activated. It is difficult to judge the validity of McDowell's interpretation that there is practical rationality even for simple, repetitive actions. However, one may find that his interpretation is appropriately applicable to Cook Ding's performance, which differs from everyday repetitive actions. Cook Ding's performance requires long-term training, acquisition of knowledge, conscious concentration, and deliberation. Lau interpreted Cook Ding's skilful performance as simply embodied coping (374-379). Moreover, Eno claims that theoretical knowledge cannot be recognized in Cook Ding's performance (134). The abovementioned discussion indicates that their interpretations are insufficient. McDowell stated that the practical rationality of the *phronimos* is displayed in what one does, even if one does not decide to execute the action because of reasoning (341). Although different from abstract reflection, practical rationality exists in Cook Ding's performance process.

7. Ethical Interpretation

Cook Ding said that he got to *Dao* through his performance (Zhuangzi 111). Skill performance provides access to *Dao* and manifests *Dao* (Yu 178). As previously mentioned, *Dao* is a type of experience, that is, a cognitive experience in the skill performance of the artisan as a model of the Daoist sage. Through embodied coping that accompanies practical rationality, Cook Ding obtains the same high level of satisfaction as artists who are immersed in their work. When immersed in his work, the craftsman experiences it as if he is not self-conscious. In the chapter entitled "Mastering Life," the craftsman exerts effort to transform his

concentration from purpose, such as financial rewards, to skill performance (*Zhuangzi* 585). Furthermore, he forgets what he is making and enters a state of congruence with his environment (Behuniak 164). Ultimately, all that remains for him is the process of performance itself. Therefore, the skill performance of Cook Ding may appear to have no end. However, instead of being aimless, the process should be viewed as its end. Cook Ding's performance is similar to a play or art, which is an autotelic process (Jochim 62-63). However, just as a play cannot be an ethical model, the fact that skill performance is its own end does not justify the claim that Cook Ding's performance is an ethical model.

The basis for regarding Cook Ding's performance as an ethical model is that it is a type of technique of self-cultivation. The chapter entitled "Discussion on Making All Things Equal" begins with a story about breathing meditation that leads to "losing self-consciousness" (*Zhuangzi* 46). The experience of "losing self-consciousness" can be considered similar to that of the craftsman immersed in work. Graham described the experience of the craftsman as equivalent to that of meditation (Graham, *Taoist*, 8-9). The ultimate objective of meditation is the transformation of the meditator. Yu said that Cook Ding's performance is a process of spirit cultivation (178).¹⁴ For Cook Ding, skill performance is not only a means for economic activity but also a method of self-cultivation to transform oneself into an ideal being. The fact that skill performance is a process in which the craftsman becomes a sage is the basis for considering Cook Ding's skill performance as an ethical model. This interpretation can be extended to occupations in general. The first ethical interpretation that can be obtained from *Zhuangzi's* parable is that one's work is not only an economic means of life but also a process of self-cultivation.

The second interpretation becomes clear in comparison with

¹⁴The repetitive cognitive experience uniting with the medium will lead to transformation. In the East Asian self-cultivation tradition, there is a long-standing debate about whether these transformations occur all at once or gradually. Although this debate is interesting, it does not need to be considered here.

Confucianism. Confucius emphasized "correcting names" above all else (*Geongseo* 312). Simply put, "correcting names" means that a king must possess a royal disposition and act in accordance with this position. Alternatively, a subject must possess a servant-like disposition and behave according to their position. "Correcting names" is about regulation by language, and one can infer that Confucius emphasized the value aspect of linguistic cognition. Although Dreyfus and McDowell address linguistic cognition only in terms of objective knowledge, linguistic cognition provides sociocultural or value implications. Zhuangzi emphasized the problem of linguistic cognition in the value context. For example, in the chapter entitled "Discussion on Making All Things Equal," Zhuangzi criticized those who define a person by their titles as people who cannot wake up from a language-bound world, which he compares to dreams (*Zhuangzi* 99). The core of the critique is that human beings are stipulated with specific roles by being addressed by their titles.

In the chapter entitled "Heaven and Earth," an old man who struggled to haul water says the following to a person who recommends using an efficient machine:

I have heard my teacher say, where there are machines, there are bound to be machine hearts. With a machine heart in your breast, you've spoiled what was pure and simple; and without the pure and simple, the spirit knows no rest. Where the life of the spirit knows no rest, the Way will cease to buoy you up (*Zhuangzi* 390-391).

Machine hearts denote mechanical minds, that is, minds that regard other beings as means of desires. Artefacts exist for a purpose or function. Specifically, a function is a concept that can be applied to the organs of an organism, such as the heart or kidney, but cannot be applied to the organism itself.¹⁵ Using a name is inevitable to maintain social order; this fact implies that linguistic cognition is indispensable. However, Zhuangzi proposes ideal cognition from the artisan's performance and

¹⁵ For the philosophical meaning of function, refer to Wright (1973, 1976), which is a philosophical inquiry into the concept of function.

argues that there is a cognition that differs from linguistic cognition.

The representative ethical principle suggested by Zhuangzi is resonance (Jung 339).¹⁶ Through resonance, which is the ideal cognition in the Zhuangzi, we enter a state of congruence with others, just as a craftsman enters a state of congruence with his environment. In other words, other beings in the market also become a part of me that is expanded to the whole by resonance. Being a part of me means being regarded or treated as a symbiotic being. The second ethical interpretation is that even if the others to whom we respond in the market are means to sustain our lives, we should treat them as beings with whom we share a symbiotic relationship.

8. Conclusion

To summarize Zhuangzi's ethics in one sentence, "the sage is ethical." This ethics differs from the theory-centric one familiar to the western world. By examining the immediacy of perception and action of the sage, Varela demonstrated the means of examining this type of ethics (4). His approach is similar to that of this study, which illustrates the inner state of *Zhuangzi's* sage by investigating the performance of Cook Ding from the cognitive aspect. Cook Ding's cognition includes various elements, such as conscious concentration, knowledge, and intellectual insight, and the characteristics of nonverbal and nonrepresentative embodied coping. Cook Ding experiences *congruence* among agent, action, and environment during his performance through embodied coping. These experiences, combined with sophisticated knowledge and high concentration, lead to self-transformation and eventually to sageness. Therefore, Cook Ding's performance can be considered a form of the self-cultivation process. On the basis that the skill performance process itself is an end, it can be considered autotelic. Cook Ding's cognition or performance as a

¹⁶Emotional contagion is a typical resonance phenomenon. However, Zhuangzi's resonance is a broader concept than Goldman's simulation theory based on mirror neurons, and it can be said to operate at the root of all cognition. It is necessary to discuss this subject separately.

means to the inner state and the inner state of the sage itself is an appropriate ethical model for symbolizing the art of life postulated by Zhuangzi.

Reference

- Altenmüller, Eckart and Shinichi Furuya. "Planning and Performance." *The Oxford Handbook of Music Psychology*, Ed. Susan Hallam et al., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016. 529-546.
- Behuniak, James. "John Dewey and the Virtue of Cook Ding's *Dao*." *Dao* 9(2010): 161-174.
- Coutinho, Steven. "Skill and Embodied Engagement," in *Skill and Mastery*. Ed. Lai, Karyn & Chiu, WaiWai. London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2019.
- Dreyfus, Hubert. "Overcoming the Myth of the Mental: How Philosophers Can Profit from the Phenomenology of Everyday Expertise," *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association* 79.2(Nov., 2005): 47-65.
- Eno, Robert. "Cook Ding's *Dao* and the Limits of Philosophy," in *Essays on Skepticism, Relativism, and Ethics in the Zhuangzi*. Ed. Paul Kjellberg and Philip J. Ivanhoe. Albany: State University of New York, 1996: 127-151.
- Fraser, Chris. "Emotion and Agency in *Zhuāngzǐ*." *Asian Philosophy* 21.1(2011): 97-121.
- Fuchs, Thomas. *Ecology of the Brain*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018.
- Gyeongseo 經書. Seoul: Sung Kyun Kwan University, 2000.
- Graham, Angus, C. *Chuang-tzu: The Seven Inner Chapters and Other Writings from the Book Chuang-tzu*. London: Allen & Unwin, 1981.
- Graham, Angus, C. "Taoist Spontaneity and the Dichotomy of Is and Ought," in *Experimental Essays on Chunag-tzu*. Ed. Victor H. Mair. Hawaii: Hawaii University Press, 1983: 3-23.
- Herholz, Sibylle C. et al. "Musical Training Modulates Encoding of Higher-Order Regularities in the Auditory Cortex." *European Journal of Neuroscience*, 34.3(2011): 524-29.

- Huang, Yan-You et al. "The Influence of Prior Synaptic Activity on the Induction of Long-Term Potentiation." *Science*, 255.5045 (1992): 730-33.
- Ivanhoe, Philip, J. *Zhuangzi on Skepticism, Skill, and the Ineffable Dao*. *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 61.4(1993): 639-654.
- Jochim, Chris. "Just Say No to 'No Self' in Zhuangzi," in *Wandering at Ease in the Zhuangzi*. Ed. R. T. Ames. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998: 35-74.
- Jung, Woojin. *Daoist Art of Life: Interpreting Emotions of a Sage in the Zhuangzi*. *Journal of Dharma* 47.3(2022): 339-354.
- Lau, Raymond. *Re-visiting the Role of Craft in Zhuangzi's Philosophy*. *Asian Philosophy* 31.4(2021): 368-384.
- Mcdowell, John. "What Myth?" *Inquiry* 50.4(2007): 338-351.
- Needham, Joseph. *Science and Civilization in China* vol 2. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956.
- Pantev, Christo et al. "Increased Auditory Cortical Representation in Musicians." *Nature*, 392(1998): 811-14.
- Ragert, Patrick et al. "Superior Tactile Performance and Learning in Professional Pianists: Evidence for Meta-Plasticity in Musicians." *European Journal of Neuroscience*, 19.2(2004): 473-78.
- Rosenkranz, Karin et al. "Motorcortical Excitability and Synaptic Plasticity Is Enhanced in Professional Musicians." *The Journal of Neuroscience*, 27.19(2007): 5200-06.
- Slingerland, Edward. *Effortless Action*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.
- Varela, Francisco. *Ethical Know-How*. California: Stanford University, 1999.
- Waley, Arthur. *Three Ways of Thoughts in Ancient China*. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1939.
- Wong, David, B. "Complexity and Simplicity in Aristotle and Early Daoist Thought," in *How Should One Live?: Comparing Ethics in Ancient China and Greco-Roman Antiquity*. Ed. R.A.H. King & Dennis Schilling, Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011: 259-277.
- Yu, Jiangxia, "Comparative Reflections on Skill and the Good Life in Zhuangzi and Stoicism." *Asian Philosophy* 30.2(2020): 175-193.
- Zhuangzi jishi 莊子集釋. Beijing: Zhonghua, 2013.