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Essays on Monkey: A Classic Chinese Novel

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ESSAYS ON *MONKEY*: A CLASSIC
CHINESE NOVEL

A THESIS PRESENTED

by

ISABELLE PING-I MAO

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies, University of Massachusetts Boston, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

September 1997

Critical and Creative Thinking Program

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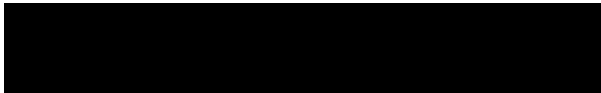
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ABSTRACT

ESSAYS ON *MONKEY*: A CLASSIC CHINESE NOVEL

September 1997

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Directed by Professor Delores Gallo

Monkey is one of the masterpieces in the genre of the classic Chinese novel. It has been immensely popular with the general reading public of China since the sixteenth century. Abridged and translated into English in 1943 by Arthur Waley, it has made its way onto the college campuses in the United States, and has been well appreciated. There is a recent complete and unabridged translation by Anthony Yu, with the title Journey to the West.

In this thesis, I offer a series of critical essays on Monkey. The first essay locates the work in the genre. It traces its heritage in style and content to the story-telling tradition of China and contrasts Monkey to the most distinguished pieces in the genre. The next four essays focus on the four individual characters of importance in the work. The sixth essay offers my interpretation of the view of Wu Ch'eng-en, its author, on what truth is and how a person may achieve his own truth. The final essay offers a reflection speculating on Wu's processes and their connection to concepts in the literature on creative and critical thinking. It ends with a metacognitive description of my own processes in writing these essays.

The personification of the human seeker, the character Monkey goes on a spiritual journey in search of immortality. He is in the company of three other characters: his master the Tang monk Tripitaka, Pigsy and Sandy, Tripitaka's other two disciples. The group is on its way to see the Buddha to obtain Buddhist scriptures for the Tang emperor. After going through many ordeals, they succeed in their mission.

The novel contains an allegory and a metaphor. The allegory assigns the four pilgrims personalities representing different aspects of the human temperament, and in so doing, it describes the human condition. The metaphor presents Wu's views on the meaning of an individual human being's journey on earth: namely that talents and intelligence must be channelled in order to achieve worthy goals. With his book Monkey, Wu Ch'eng-en offers his readers a great piece of entertainment and at the same time his philosophy that truth must be perceived and interpreted by each individual for himself; it cannot be captured in a group of sentences to be transmitted from one person to the next. Additionally, Monkey also offers itself as a good case study of how creativity is nurtured and transformed into an artistic presentation, and the role critical thinking plays in this artistic process.

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I would like to express my deepest gratitude to four professors of University of Massachusetts Boston: Professor Delores Gallo taught me creative thinking and how to write a critical essay; Professor Kathleen Hartford, a China scholar in political science and fluent in Chinese, sacrificed her valuable time to kindly serve on my committee; Professor John Murray taught me critical thinking and sacrificed his time in retirement to serve on my committee; and Professor Connie Veenendaal, retired from the English Department and a good friend of mine for many years, went over the text of this thesis to edit the glaringly awkward spots in my writing.

INTRODUCTION

These essays are on a classic Chinese novel, Monkey, also called Journey to the West, Hsi-yu Chi (Xiyouji) in Chinese. The novel in its original has one hundred chapters, and has been translated in its entirety into English by Anthony Yu of University of Chicago. There is also an abridged translation of this novel, called Monkey, by the renowned translator of Chinese and Japanese literature, Arthur Waley. In the following essays, at different times, quotes are cited from either translation, depending on which source would suit the writer's purpose better.

Monkey is a novel from the sixteenth century, and since its manifestation, it has been a part of every Chinese person's childhood. It has been paraphrased into comic books, on the stage, into films and even borrowed by modern advertising, and it is told by grandparents to grandchildren in that universally traditional manner. Every one in China knows Monkey's name and his adventures.

Though Monkey is, to so many people, a childhood favorite, its appeal to readers is not limited to the juvenile set, for the book carries deep philosophical thoughts on the life of human beings and their existence. It is an extraordinary piece of literature that may be enjoyed on many levels. Readers may either read it as pure entertainment, or as a philosophical discourse, or for both purposes at the same time. In its abridged edition in English translation, the book has been well appreciated on college campuses in the United States.

As material for a CCT thesis, Monkey lends itself exceptionally well to the study of how raw creativity is transformed into an artistic presentation, communicated and preserved for eternity, and how critical thinking plays its part in the creative process. In this book there are deities, immortals, monsters, animals and human characters, all of them

in human forms and personified. They interact with each other, providing the author, Wu Ch'eng-en (1500-1582), with a fiction for his philosophical exploration.

This thesis has seven chapters. Chapter One gives the background of the classic Chinese novel, as well as brief introductions to the masterpieces in this genre. Chapters Two to Five are four critical essays, each on one of the four pilgrims on the journey to the Western Paradise where Buddha is. Chapter Six discusses the philosophical depth of the novel, and what is truth as Wu Ch'eng-en speaks of it. Chapter Seven is an essay speculating on aspects of creativity and critical thinking related to the creation of the novel Monkey.

Part of Chapter Seven also contains my reflections on the creative process of writing these essays. My own experiences in producing these writings has made my study on creativity and critical thinking a very personal matter.

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CHAPTER 1

THE MAKING OF THE CLASSIC CHINESE NOVEL

Monkey is one of the five greatest classical Chinese novels. As a literary genre, the classic Chinese novel owes its making, both in form and in content, to the story-tellers whose profession flourished in the Sung Dynasty (960-1276). The Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) left posterity four great novels: Three Kingdoms, Water Margin, Journey to the West (Monkey) and Golden Lotus, generally given in this order. The Ching Dynasty (1644-1911) added one more to the group, Dream of the Red Chamber, which has been hailed to be the greatest of all Chinese novels. The term, classic Chinese novel refers, mainly, to these five books .

There are other titles produced in both Ming and Ching that are interesting and respectable works, but none of them can be compared to these five. C. T. Hsia, in his definitive work, The Classic Chinese Novel, discusses these five, with the addition of Scholars, a book of satirical intent, having many loosely linked incidents, depicting events in the lives of caricatured scholars or scholar-officials. Scholars lacks structure and narrative wholeness; although the incidents are well drawn and very interesting, they do not as a whole make the book as great a novel as any one of the above five. Professor Hsia believes that there are other traditional titles that may be superior in artistic merit but have not yet won general critical recognition; he does not reference specific titles. (Hsia 1968, 1)

Since the Ching Dynasty ended in 1911, there have been books written in the style of the classic novels, but they are not considered classic novels per se. Colloquially,

classic novels are also called Old Novels (jiu xiaoshuo). This name makes the point clear that new productions are new and by definition are not taken into the league of Old Novels.

After the demise of the Ching Dynasty in 1911 and in the dawn of the twentieth century, China embraced the Western ways in many facets of her life, and Chinese writers created fiction in the Western tradition, away from the traditional chapter-session format that was carved by the story-tellers of the Sung Dynasty.

The classic Chinese novel is also called chapter-session novel (zhang-hui xiaoshuo), because the book is divided into chapters representing sessions of story-telling taking place in tea houses. The author writes as if he is talking to an audience, breaking the narrative now and then to invoke the readers' attention and "speaking" to them directly. He asks them to lend him their ears, addressing them as "dear reader," and inserts his personal opinion or points of view on the plot and characters, and offers a philosophical remark. As may be easily imagined, at the end of an evening's story-telling, the story-teller would urge the audience to return for more at the next session, thus, at the end of every chapter, the authors of these novels make use of a coda, asking the readers "if you want to know what happens next, please 'listen' to the next chapter."

At a time in Chinese history when all forms of communication were written in the classic language, something only the scholars and their scribes could handle, the classic Chinese novel was written in the vernacular language. Owing to its debt to the story-teller's tradition, it is both natural and inevitable that the classic Chinese novels were written in the vernacular, a language that was looked down upon by the scholar-official class who were the elite members of the society. The vernacular was dubbed by them as the language of the "crude" people.

To begin with, fiction was not something of consequence to the educated under the then existing education system. In Chinese, fiction is "xiaoshuo," small talk. Fiction is the talk of the street, the common people's gossip. Confucius (551-479 B. C.) held the

view that “Even by-ways are worth exploring. But if we go too far we may be bogged down.” (Lu Hsun 1964, 4) The prevailing traditional view was that fiction was not an art of significance, and the educated had better things to occupy them than the reading and writing of fiction. This orthodox view presented a paradox. If a person was not educated, he could not write a novel. If he was educated, he was committing himself to a very unorthodox act in writing a novel. Therefore, when a person wrote a novel, he did not put his name on the cover for all to see.

Nevertheless, a great legacy of the Ming Dynasty has been the four classic novels mentioned above. Who would write them? Who were the authors? Posterity does not know for sure. Based on flimsy records and even, in some cases, on conjectures, it has been accepted that Lo Kuan-chung (Luo Guanzhong) wrote Three Kingdoms, Shih Nai-an (Shi Nai’an) wrote Water Margin and Wu Ch’eng-en (Wu Cheng’en) wrote Journey to the West (Monkey). As for Golden Lotus, the cover of the book bears the name Xiaoxiaosheng, which translates to “a laughing young man/scholar”, an obvious pseudonym.

Whoever they were, these authors did not write for fame and profit, for there was none to be had from the undertaking of writing novels. Rather, more likely they would have subjected themselves to reproaches for lacking better judgment, and for wasting their time. These authors did not let their authorship be known except to friends. Their works, during their lifetime, were copied by hand and circulated among friends, as well as friends’ friends. The birth of these novels was entirely due to the creative impulse of these authors.

Dream of the Red Chamber was written in the Ching Dynasty and due to the proximity of the author’s time to the present time, the author has been firmly established to be Tsao Hsueh-chin (Cao Xueqin) (1715-1763). Enough material exists to confirm Tsao’s authorship and also to give today’s readers a prototype of the author of a classic novel. Tsao was educated and he came from a family once prosperous. As a scholar, rather as an

educated man under the imperial examination system of his time, he was unsuccessful and held no official post. Living in shabby conditions, he wrote a novel which was based on his personal experiences, using his once prosperous clan as the framework on which to express his views on the human existence. He never anticipated that his book would be hailed as the novel of all Chinese novels; he died in poverty in his forties.

In content, the four Ming novels borrowed liberally from the repertoire of the story-tellers' materials that were handed down by word of mouth, or in the form of prompt books. And the repertoire of the story-tellers' was based on history, legends, folk tales, religious tales, short stories written in earlier dynasties and popular beliefs in the culture. Whatever these authors had inherited from the existing culture, they picked and chose to use as fodder for their books. They then created the novels as narratives reflecting on the human condition, thus, giving the books their souls.

The Three Kingdoms is fictionalized history, called "yanyi" in Chinese. These three kingdoms existed in the years A. D. 221 to 277, and they were groups vying for control of the empire at the end of the Han Dynasty (206 B. C. - A. D. 220). The author borrowed heavily of men who once lived during that period and whose legends were, for many years, well popular and told in tea-houses by story-tellers. The protagonist group in the novel has three heroes who are sworn brothers and one super-naturally intelligent man who is their strategist. The narrative illustrates, consistently and closely, around the theme of how these four men lived and died and what was of value to them, while also depicting many other colorful characters and their behavior. Three Kingdoms weaves a tapestry of larger-than-life characters striving to achieve their goals. History books are recordings of historical happenings. As fictionalized history, Three Kingdoms is life lived.

Among the five novels, Water Margin preserves the most of the story-tellers' nuances and provides many hints of multiple authorship. (Hsia 1964, 75) Though in book form and a novel in name, it is a collection of stories of one hundred and eight heroes, or

outlaws, or fugitives, and the stories are written in the book much like the way they were told night after night in tea-houses. There is not much structure except that these outlaws banded together under a leader and made things happen. These heroes were macho men who took the law into their own hands, righting wrongs for the weak and helpless. Later, under a leader known as Song Jiang, they made a mountain named Liang into their stronghold and resisted the government troops. These heroes were rebels. The great Chairman Mao (1893-1976) of socialist China was fond of this book, and frequently made references to it. Water Margin comes in versions of different length, and, thus, with different endings. The most popular version circulating today is the seventy-chapter version, edited by the renowned literary critic of the Ching Dynasty, Jin Shengtan (1608-1661).

The first editions of Golden Lotus were dated between the years 1573-1619. In the Ming Dynasty, pornographic writings had their share of popularity. This book in its original form contained much pornography, and was proclaimed by the government authorities as forbidden reading. Even today, copies obtainable by the general public are the so-called “clean” copies, with the sexually explicit portions omitted. This omission in no way diminishes the book as a great novel. It is the first book of China that uses the details of day to day living as the material for a novel, and in this way is an antecedent to the coming of Dream of the Red Chamber. This book is the only one among the five masterpieces that does not have a hero or a heroine, making it a book absent of noble sentiments. It is neither a comedy nor a tragedy but a narrative of the day to day happenings in the household of a man with his six wives. It is, however, total realism and gripping narrative. In today’s vocabulary for television programming, it is a soap opera, but with more coherence than today’s television soap. It is also a spin-off from one of the episodes in Water Margin.

In China, the study of Dream of the Red Chamber is an established field of scholarship named Red-logy (hongxue). Dream is a book on human conflict: conflict between the individual and society, between freedom and obligation, between detachment and attachment. Ultimately it poses the question of whether to stay or not to stay in this mundane world, the decision faced by the hero of the book.

Journey to the West, Hsi-yu Chi (Xiyouji) in Chinese, a novel of one hundred chapters, was first published in 1592. The story is about a Chinese monk, commissioned by an emperor of the Tang Dynasty (618-905) to travel to India to fetch Buddhist scriptures. Its author, Wu Ch'eng-en borrowed the name and more, of his protagonist, Tripitaka, from a renowned historical figure of the same name. Tripitaka, a real monk, went to India on his own during the years 629-45. The trip took him seventeen years, and he succeeded in bringing back the scriptures and translating them. (Hsia 1968, 117) He set himself up to work on the translation of the scriptures in the Big Goose Pagoda, which still stands today in the city of Xi'an in China. He was already a legend in his life time, and the stories of his trip depicted many miracles. As a historical figure who had accomplished an almost impossible feat, the historical Tripitaka would have made an one-dimensional character in Wu's novel. Wu's fictional Tripitaka is a very different person from the monk in history.

In Glen Dudbridge's book, The Hsi-yu Chi: A Study of Antecedents to the Sixteenth Century Chinese Novel, it is reported that stories about a monkey who was fond of pulling pranks and who loved indulging in eating peaches existed in folk stories and dramatic presentations. (Dudbridge 1970) Wu's Monkey is the hero in his novel. On one level, Monkey provides great entertainment for the readers, and on another level, he is the book's anchor in revealing the author's philosophy on human life. Without Wu, the legend of Tripitaka and tales of a monkey were mere historical and legendary fragments. Through Wu's genius, a great piece of literature by the name Journey to the West was created. Wu

never knew that his book would be forever enriching the lives of his people. He wrote because he had to and enjoyed himself doing it. (Waley 1943, 1) The classic Chinese novel was born of the pure motive for creativity.

When Arthur Waley abridged and translated Journey to the West in 1943, he gave his rendition of the book the title Monkey. In reducing the original work of one hundred chapters to thirty chapters and to 294 pages, Waley exercised sound judgment. He preserved, in its entirety, the part relating the birth and growth into adolescence of Monkey, and the story of the origin and the mission of Tripitaka, while omitting many lengthy descriptions and poems. The last three chapters on the pilgrims' arrival at the Western Paradise were also completely translated, with the same kinds of omissions, preserving for the novel a beginning, a middle and an end. Only the number of calamities the pilgrims went through were greatly reduced, from eighty-one to eighteen. The omission of some of these episodes does not hurt the overall structure of the book, since the calamities, though of great entertainment value, do fall into a certain pattern and are therefore repetitious. Waley's reduction makes the book shorter for readers who might be intimidated by a four volume translation, and this one volume rendition has preserved the structural wholeness and the coherence of the novel. The profound meaning of the book is kept intact. Waley's rendition makes it possible for a reader to enjoy reading the story on both the micro-level and the macro-level, reading for the literal meaning of a text which offers, at the same time, a scope that invites digging for the intrinsic meaning of this masterpiece by Wu Ch'eng-en. There is a complete unabridged translation of the one hundred chapter version by Anthony C. Yu, called The Journey to the West, in four volumes, published in 1977, 1978, 1980 and 1983 respectively, and of 428 pages, 417 pages, 429 pages and 429 pages respectively.

As one of the great Old Novels of China, Monkey touches every single person in China sooner or later, and usually sooner, since it is a favorite book in childhood. It is a

book of comic adventures carried out by the Tang Dynasty Buddhist priest and his three disciples: a monkey, a pig and a monster, who are all personified, speaking and behaving as human beings. It is a tale of fantastic imagination, with the four of them going through calamities on their way to the Western Paradise, where Buddha resides. Their mission is to fetch Buddhist scriptures for the salvation of the Chinese people. The pilgrims are “the good guys” and they fight with bad monsters and other bad elements. On this level, the book is a great favorite of both children and adults.

While everyone knows the story in one form or another and almost everyone has read the book, not everyone reads the book in depth, recognizing its symbolic meaning and its relation to the meaning of life as the author has presented it. A critical reader will fathom the author’s philosophy embedded in the story. While told through human characters, animal characters, and immortals in human forms, the book is really only about human beings: their natures and their choices. On their natures, the author uses an allegory and on their choices, he uses a metaphor.

The pilgrims, each represent an aspect of human nature. A person has a side that is all anxiety, worrying about getting from here to there, and meeting his deadlines. He is Tripitaka, the monk. A human being has a sensual self that loves a good meal at the end of a work day, a nice house with a loved one to go back to, and a person has sexual desires. This sensual aspect of a person is represented by Pigsy, Tripitaka’s second disciple. A human being also has a side that is all level-headedness and sincerity and whole-heartedness. This aspect in a person is represented by Sandy, Tripitaka’s third disciple. But, above all, a human being has intelligence and a mind. That mind is not captive to mere creature comforts but craves for knowledge and the control of his own destiny. This aspect is represented by Monkey, Tripitaka’s number one disciple and the motivating force that leads the pilgrims to their destination. It is most apt that upon their arrival at the Western Paradise, Monkey points out that the four of them have needed each other and

have had to make the concerted effort in order to achieve their success, affirming that however different the four of them are, they make an integral whole. (Waley 1943, 282) In the book, *Monkey*, as an individual, also has an odyssey encased in a metaphor which is based on an everyday phrase in spoken Chinese, meaning that the mind needs to be focused in order to achieve.

In the story the three disciples are all immortal beings who made mistakes, and are now working towards their redemption by assisting Tripitaka on this mission. Only Tripitaka is a mortal. Their trip to the Western Paradise, is ostensibly to fetch the scriptures, and they are able to accomplish the mission after going through eighty-one ordeals. Lying beneath this surface, the journey is the search of human beings for the meaning of their existence, variously called immortality, illumination, enlightenment, redemption, salvation or wisdom. If wisdom means the understanding of people and life, the book is about that wisdom, something one attains in life's journey, if one is a thinking person.

James J. Y. Liu, in his book Chinese Theory of Literature, has devised an analytical scheme based on the same four elements devised by M. H. Abrams in The Mirror and the Lamp. (Liu 1975, 9-10) These four elements are universe, writer, work and reader. Together the four constitute an artistic process. This artistic process forms a complete circle: universe --> writer --> work --> reader --> universe. The universe affects the writer, and he produces a work. The work reaches the reader and affects the reader's outlook of the universe. This cycle is activated with each and every reader reading the work. With regard to the novel Monkey, Wu Ch'eng-en's response to the universe in which he resided resulted in his writing Monkey. This work of his, Monkey, reaches us and has an impact on our understanding of the human existence in the universe. This understanding of ours creates a new or affected outlook in us toward the human existence in the universe.

Now, in the tradition of the story-tellers and in the customary words of writers of the classic Chinese novel, if you want to know more about the meaning of these pilgrims' journey, you must read the following essays.

CHAPTER 2

TRIPITAKA

A superficial reading of Tripitaka leaves one with the impression that Tripitaka is a holy monk, most illustrious; that he is the leader of his group of pilgrims; and that he is a model to his three disciples in his learning and understanding of Buddhism. Upon a more thoughtful reading, one will see that Tripitaka is an ordinary human being whose seeming perfection is the result of certain trappings, and that he is merely the nominal leader of his group. Even his understanding of Buddhist teaching is superficial when he first begins his journey to the West. It is when he is going through calamities on his journey to see Buddha, to seek the scriptures, that he gradually gains perspective, insight and finally, redemption. His pilgrim's progress, the real story of Tripitaka, begins only when he is on his way to India, facing his ordeals.

A look at Tripitaka's history before he embarks on his scripture-seeking journey will help to sort out the various trappings that have made him look other than the ordinary person he is. As a child, Tripitaka's name was River Float. He was born to a most distinguished couple. His father was a talented scholar who took first place in passing the highest degree in the imperial examination system, thus fulfilling the dream of every scholar in imperial China. His mother was a daughter of the chief minister of the imperial court, and a most beautiful woman. The emperor appointed the successful scholar to be the governor of Jiangzhou. A boat was hired for the journey to take the scholar and his wife to his post. On their way the boatman murdered the scholar, assumed his identity, took over his wife and proceeded to his post as the newly appointed governor. The wife would have

killed herself, but since she was with child, lived on in order to preserve her unborn child. One day when the imposter governor was away on business, she gave birth to a son and a voice whispered to her:

I am the Star Spirit of South Pole, who sends you this son by the express command of the Bodhisattva Kuan-yin. One day his name will be known far and wide, for he is not to be compared with any ordinary mortal. (Yu 1977, 203)

Thus assured, she took the baby to the river bank, fastened a letter to his chest, tied him to a plank and pushed the plank into the river. The plank floated down the river and came to rest at the bank near the Golden Mountain Temple. The abbot was in a session of meditation when he heard the baby's cry. He saved the baby and named him River Float. Thus, River Float was raised by a monk in pure and religious surroundings. When River Float was eighteen years of age, he was formally ordained a monk with the religious name Xuanzhuang. His family name was Chen, as given in the letter his mother had sent with him on the plank. Now it may be said that Chen Xuanzhuang,--in Chinese, the family name precedes the personal name.-- had been a monk since birth, an advantage very few other monks had. And he was a most devoted monk too, dedicated wholly to the pursuit of nirvana. One day, the emperor of Tang in the year 640 had a near death experience and, after regaining precious life, let it be known that he was to give a grand mass for the souls of all the departed. Chen Xuanzhuang was selected to say the mass. He was now a monk of high regard. He had been a monk since birth, and a vegetarian all his life. He was illustrious and pure as pure can be. While Chen Xuanzhuang was saying the grand mass, the Bodhisattva Kuan-yin, manifested herself as a travelling monk, bare-footed, in rags, covered with scabs and sores. She came to challenge the scripture, Small Vehicle, that Chen Xuanzhuang was preaching. She was duly summoned to the presence of the emperor and she said to the emperor that what Chen Xuanzhuang was lecturing on was the doctrines of Small Vehicles which could not lead the lost up to Heaven, and that only the Great Vehicle Law of Buddha was able to send the lost to Heaven, to deliver the afflicted

from sufferings and to break the circles of reincarnation. The emperor stopped the mass and asked who would be willing to accept the commission to go to India to seek the scriptures of Great Vehicle from Buddha in the Western Paradise. Chen Xuanzhuang stepped forward and volunteered.

In appreciation, the emperor made Chen Xuanzhuang his sworn brother, gave the dynasty name Tang to Xuanzhuang as his family name and bestowed upon him the name of the three collections of the Great Vehicle Law of Buddha that he was to go to fetch, Tripitaka. From now on the baby River Float who had become the monk Chen Xuanzhuang would be known as Tang Tripitaka. The emperor bid Tripitaka a royal good-bye, and Tripitaka told his majesty that he would be returning in three years.

At this point in the book and in the viewpoint of the Chinese, Tripitaka is in a most enviable position. Professionally, he is the highest regarded monk in the whole land. Socially, he has come from a family of prominence and is even related to the emperor. Morally, he is the very embodiment of purity and devotion. He is totally perfect and completely successful. He commands unreserved respect. He is to begin his journey with a most distinguished background and the readers cannot help but look upon him with awe, respect, admiration and even envy, and they certainly are not seeing him as an ordinary human being like themselves.

But once Tripitaka begins his journey, he behaves exactly as an ordinary man, and as the individual he is. He is anxiety-ridden, lacking in perspective, without insight and all together not very intelligent. He learns and improves on the journey, as most of us would in life.

In the preface of Arthur Waley's rendition of Monkey, it is said that "Tripitaka stands for the ordinary man, blundering anxiously through the difficulties of life." (Waley, 1943) T. C. Hsia says that Wu Ch'eng-en presents Tripitaka "as an ordinary mortal

undertaking a hazardous journey and easily upset by the smallest inconvenience.” (Hsia 1968, 126)

Tripitaka will go through eighty-one calamities before he can bring the scriptures back to the Tang emperor. His adversaries are numerous monsters, creatures who have cultivated themselves to the extent that they have shed their animal forms and gained human forms, and they practice transformations and individualized magic. They have a good life, in that they may come and go as they please and do not toil for a living. They have other monsters like themselves for friends and they have social interactions, drinking and eating with friends and family members. They may be monsters but they are not evil. They simply strive to live a good life the mundane way. In fact, they are living the way that the more fortunate Chinese people have lived for thousands of years, and they make efforts to better their lives whenever the opportunity comes their way. It may well be said that they are the quintessential Chinese people.

There is the prevailing conviction among these monsters that since Tripitaka’s person is purity itself, devouring Tripitaka is a short-cut to achieving greater cultivation. They believe that anyone who eats Tripitaka will attain to everlasting life, an upward mobility all of them aspire to. Thus convinced, they go to great length contriving to obtain this instant salvation. They have become the sole source of Tripitaka’s predicament. Each time some monster catches Tripitaka, he sends invitations to his parents, mentors, and relatives to come over to share in the feasting, much in the civilized manner of the Chinese people. The monsters will also discuss how to cook Tripitaka, whether to steam or to fry him, showing much preoccupation with the culinary art, as all the Chinese do. Wu Ch’eng-en wrote about the only people he knew in the sixteenth century. There will be much killing on this journey because none of the monsters who aspire to eat Tripitaka can succeed, and they will be either killed by Tripitaka’s three disciples or be taken away by some deities. Frequently these monsters were once celestial beings who had lived in

Heaven, and they escaped to earth to experience and even enjoy life on earth. Such escapees are testimonies to the fact that life on earth has its enjoyable aspects, an affirmation that the Chinese people are very well aware of. There will be much fighting between Tripitaka's three disciples and the monsters. The goriness, however, is like the fun at Halloween, scary but not violent.

By arrangement of the goddess Kuan-yin, Tripitaka has three disciples to assist him. The disciples owe him obedience as he is their master, and they must serve him and follow his orders. This hierarchy puts him in the leader's position. Events will show that he is only the nominal leader, for he does not possess the qualities that would make him a true leader. He has no ability to direct his group to their destination. He has no perspective of the various situations they find themselves in. He has no recognition in any depth, not until the later part of the journey, of the individual strength and shortcomings of his three disciples. He is ridden with anxiety and blinded by fear. The pilgrims' journey is a long one, taking almost fourteen years, giving Tripitaka the time he needs to make progress. He accomplishes his mission, and achieves his redemption, gaining perfect wisdom in the end.

Tripitaka will find the three disciples during the first leg of his journey. They are all formidable fighters, assigned to guard him to the Western Paradise. They are doing it by way to redeem themselves, for all three of them were once celestial beings who had made mistakes, and now in need of redemption themselves. In the aspect that the disciples and some of the monsters were all once celestial beings, the difference between them is that the disciples are now on the path to salvation and the monsters are on no path. It may be seen that pilgrims as well as monsters are all ordinary people, pursuing what each of them considers to be salvation, or the truth.

Besides the assistance of the three disciples, Tripitaka is also told by a deity that,

During the course of your journey you will at all times enjoy the assistance of spiritual beings, who will see to it that you do not succumb to the perils that will beset you on your path." (Waley 1943, 121)

Ironically, despite of all the help and assurance, Tripitaka, on this journey, is worried and anxious. He is alternately, to paraphrase Waley, in the depth of despair, transfixed by fright, on the verge of collapse and often in tears.

Tripitaka is in precisely such a state when he comes upon Monkey. The two servants he started out with have already been eaten by some ogres. He has been saved by a hunter and now he hangs onto the hunter when they come to the border of the Tang territory. The hunter asks Tripitaka to go ahead alone. "Tripitaka wrung his hands in despair, clutched at the hunter's sleeve and wept copiously." (Waley 1943, 132) Fortunately, Monkey joins him at this crucial time, and master and disciple go on their way.

Tripitaka is not only ridden with anxiety; he is also lacking in intelligence to perceive the deeper meaning in a monk's calling. He sticks to the obvious and the superficial because they are easy to understand. He will be helped to gain insight gradually by Monkey who possesses a higher level of intelligence.

Soon after master and disciple are on their way, six robbers block their way, demanding their luggage and Tripitaka's horse. "Tripitaka, in great alarm, slid down from his horse and stood there speechless." (Waley 1943, 131) The robbers give their names as follows:

The first of us is called Eye that Sees and Delights; the second, Ear that Hears and is Angry; the third, Nose that Smells and Covets; the fourth, Tongue that Tastes and Desires; the fifth, Mind that Conceives and Lusts; the sixth, Body that Supports and Suffers. (Waley 1943, 132)

Upon hearing their names Monkey laughs and says, "You are nothing but six hairy ruffians. We priests, I would have you know, are your lords and masters." (Waley 1943, 132) These six robbers are the six kinds of perception that monks must do away with. Or, to put it in other words, monks have control over these six organs of the senses. Monkey

kills these six robbers and reports to the master. Tripitaka, not comprehending the symbolic meaning of slaying the six robbers, takes Monkey to task, saying:

I am very sorry to hear it. One has no right to kill robbers, however violent and wicked they may be. The most one may do is to bring them before a magistrate. It would have been quite enough in this case if you had driven them away. Why kill them? You have behaved with a cruelty that ill becomes one of your sacred calling. (Waley 1943, 132)

Both Monkey and Tripitaka are here on the subject matter of a priest's calling, but there is a vertical distance in depth between their levels of understanding. Monkey tells the robbers that priests are their lords, and he does away with them. Tripitaka asks, "Why kill them?"

Because of Tripitaka's overwhelming anxiety and lack of a deeper understanding in controlling the six senses, he continues scolding Monkey, and Monkey, being proud and impatient, leaves him in a huff. Using his cloud-riding magic, Monkey disappears instantly without a trace. Tripitaka trudges on alone. Kuan-yin who is the patron goddess of this whole scripture-fetching enterprise, shows herself in the form of an old woman and gives Tripitaka a brocade coat and a cap with a metal band, saying that these are gifts for his disciple to wear. Tripitaka tells the old woman that indeed he had a disciple a minute ago, but he was disobedient and had left his master in a huff. The old woman says that she will go to persuade his disciple to come back and when he comes back, Tripitaka must make him wear the cap and she further teaches him a spell. She reveals herself as the goddess Kuan-yin before she leaves Tripitaka. Now Tripitaka sits on the roadside, practicing the spell and waiting for Monkey's return. When Monkey does return of his own volition, Tripitaka asks him where has he been. Monkey, telling the truth, says that he was on his way to his old home but had stopped at the dragon king's palace for a cup of tea. Tripitaka admonishes him, saying that priests must never tell lies; how could Monkey have reached the dragon king's palace in such a short time. Tripitaka, immediately after preaching to Monkey on the wickedness of lying, contrives to let Monkey see the coat and cap in his luggage, and they have this conversation:

Monkey: "Did you bring this coat and cap with you from the east?"

Tripitaka: "I used to wear them when I was young. Anyone who wears this cap can recite scripture without having to learn them. Anyone who wears this coat can perform ceremonies without having practiced them."

Monkey: "Dear master, let me put them on."

Tripitaka: "By all means." (Waley 1943, 136)

As soon as Monkey puts the coat and cap on, Tripitaka, pretending that he is eating his provision, mumbles the spell and Monkey's head hurts excruciatingly. It takes Monkey a while to figure out that the master and the goddess have put a spell on him. His first inclination is to take the band off with his weapon, but the band has sunk into his head. Next he wants to strike Tripitaka with his weapon, but Tripitaka recites the spell and the pain renders him completely incapacitated. He wants to go to the goddess Kuan-yin to strike her, but Tripitaka reminds him that since Kuan-yin has given him the spell, she must also know how to recite it. It is called the scripture of the Tight Fillet.

Tripitaka: "In future, will you attend to what I say?"

Monkey: "Indeed, I will."

Tripitaka: "and never be troublesome again?"

Monkey: "I shouldn't dare."

Tripitaka: "Very well then, help me on to my horse."
(Waley 1943, 137)

Tripitaka, by lying and by tricking, has "subdued" Monkey, and Monkey, crestfallen, does what Tripitaka says, and they begin on their way once more.

At this point in the novel, our understanding of Tripitaka has changed. He is no longer the larger than life holy monk. He looks now just like an ordinary person. He is scared. He trudges from here to there. He worries about the obstacles on the road. He is under stress in meeting his deadline. He has gained control of Monkey by lying and has compromised himself. He is not such an illustrious monk either, being non-comprehending of the six robbers who symbolize the six senses. The gap in understanding between Tripitaka and Monkey will continue for some time before Tripitaka is to gradually gain insight and appreciate Monkey's ability and devotion.

Intellectually, Tripitaka is not Monkey's match and, as a result, he simply does not understand Monkey. Meanwhile Tripitaka is to take on a second disciple who has some obvious faults, but this second disciple is someone that Tripitaka can understand. Seeing the second disciple's shortcomings, Tripitaka has compassion for him and thus dotes on him and is often partial to him. A good leader has the ability to bring the best out of everyone in his group. Tripitaka, not endowed with that quality, brings out the unworthy side of this second disciple of his. Tripitaka's second disciple is Pigsy. Pigsy is a good worker, having much brutal physical strength. He has magic also and thirty-eight transformations. He is gluttonous. He drools over the opposite sex. He basically looks out for himself. And he has very little spiritual depth. He was once a celestial being residing in Heaven and had the position of a general in charge of some navy force. One day, at a party, he had too much to drink, and he made an unwanted pass at a goddess. For this misconduct, he was banished to earth for punishment. On his way to earth, owing to some mistake, he entered the womb of a mother pig and came out with the set of looks he now has. By the conventional protocol in a Chinese family, as well as in a family of master and disciples, the second brother owes the first one reverence. Besides his higher rank in order of arrival, Monkey is also superior to Pigsy in intelligence, in military skill and in magic, possessing seventy-two transformations. Pigsy, much like the master, is not endowed with the comprehension to understand and appreciate Monkey's ability, and he is unwilling to pay unquestionable reverence to Monkey. Much sibling rivalry takes place between the two of them throughout the book, often fueled by Tripitaka's inability to understand Monkey and his compassion for Pigsy. When Tripitaka sees Pigsy displaying many small flaws, he has empathy for him, and is kind to him. By contrast, he finds Monkey beyond reason and is often annoyed by him.

Now that it is clear that Tripitaka is just an ordinary person, he is a good person. He is very pious, and totally devoted to his calling. He is a sympathetic fellow and has

compassion for all. Yet not possessing insight at this point, his compassion is often misplaced. In fact, often monsters who design to eat him but dare not enter into an open contest with his formidable disciple, Monkey, would appeal to Tripitaka's compassion to gain their purpose. With the addition of Pigsy, the group dynamics is also more complicated. Pigsy, often wanting to get even with Monkey, also uses Tripitaka's compassion for himself to hurt Monkey.

The unabridged version of Journey to the West has one hundred chapters. Tripitaka meets Monkey in chapter fourteen, takes on Pigsy in chapter nineteen, his third disciple, Sandy, in chapter twenty-two, and in chapter twenty-seven, a crisis erupts. One day, the pilgrims come to a very big mountain, and Tripitaka is hungry, so he sends Monkey off to look for alms. Presently, the monster who lives in this mountain spots Tripitaka and she says to herself:

What luck! What luck! For several years my relatives have been talking about a Tang monk from the land of East going to fetch the Great Vehicle. He is actually the incarnation of the Gold Cicada (one of Buddha's disciples), and he has the original body ten previous existences. If a man eats a piece of his flesh, his age will be immeasurably lengthened. So, this monk has at last arrived today! (Yu 1978, 19)

Having heard of Monkey's might, she does not care to pick a fight with the group, so she changes herself into a beautiful young woman with a basket of food. With Monkey away looking for alms, the others in the group do not have the insight to recognize monsters in disguise. So Tripitaka is as cordial as can be, and Pigsy is just about to be swept off his feet. The woman offers them the food. Monkey returns at this juncture and seeing the monster, strikes her down. She escapes, leaving behind a corpse. Tripitaka is beside himself, shaking with terror. Monkey, hoping to convince the master that the "woman" is indeed a monster, shows the master that the "food" left behind by the "woman" is not food but maggots and toads. But Pigsy says to the master that Monkey has killed the nice woman out of his imprudence, and Monkey, in fear of the master's scripture of Tight Fillet, has now used magic to turn the food into maggots and toads to fool the master in

order to avoid punishment. So instigated, the master recites directly the spell and Monkey suffers excruciating pain. Meanwhile, the monster, not giving up, has changed herself into an old lady and approaches them again. Pigsy says that the mother has come looking for her daughter now. Monkey, knowing it is the same monster, strikes her a second time and she escapes again, leaving a second corpse. She comes back a third time as an old man, looking for his daughter and wife, and Monkey strikes the monster a third time, succeeding in killing her. Now Tripitaka has reached his limit with Monkey, and he dismisses Monkey for good from the pilgrimage. He even writes a formal letter of banishment.

The more short of insight Tripitaka is, the more anxiety he has, and the more anxiety he has, the more self-centered he is. Dismissing Monkey, Tripitaka says to him:

You manage to get away even after beating to death altogether three persons only because there's no one here to oppose you, to take you to task in these desolate wilds. But suppose we get to a crowded city and you suddenly start hitting people regardless of good or ill with that mourning staff of yours, how would I be able to go free from that kind of great misfortune caused by you? You'd better go back (to where you came from). (Yu 1977, 29-30)

At this point of the journey, Tripitaka cannot yet appreciate Monkey's superior ability in handling the adversities on the road, nor has he a grip of Monkey's devotion to the pilgrimage, and he worries only about himself and his mission. The dismissal of Monkey turns out to be an important learning process for the rest of the group, for Tripitaka is soon to be abducted by still another monster, and Pigsy and Sandy are not up to it to cope with the calamity. In order to save Tripitaka from the monster, Pigsy pays a visit to Monkey's kingdom, and Monkey comes to Tripitaka's rescue. Tripitaka will soon begin to recognize Monkey's devotion to him and will start to trust him. He will also gain some insight.

Both physically and intellectually, Tripitaka is helped by Monkey on this journey. In chapter forty-three of Journey to the West, Tripitaka is helped on the subject matter that had once confronted them when they first met, the six robbers who symbolize the six

senses. This time around, having known Monkey for this long, Tripitaka is more inclined to lend Monkey his ears, and Monkey has also, by now, gained a certain measure of patience. Monkey says to Tripitaka:

“Old Master, you have forgotten the one about ‘no eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, or mind.’ Those of us who have left the family should see no form with our eyes, should hear no sound with our ears, should smell no smell with our noses, should taste no taste with our tongues; our bodies should have no knowledge of heat or cold, and our minds should gather no vain thoughts. This is called the extermination of the Six Robbers. But look at you now! Though you may be on your way to seek scriptures, your mind is full of vain thoughts: fearing the demons you are unwilling to risk your life; desiring vegetarian food you arouse your tongue; loving fragrance and sweetness you provoke your nose; listening to sounds you disturb your ears; looking at things and events you fix your eyes. You have, in sum, assembled all the Six Robbers together. How could you possibly get to the Western Heaven to see Buddha?” (Yu 1978, 284)

When Tripitaka hears these words, he falls silent for a long time. He is about to have a breakthrough. Half way through the book, in chapter forty-nine of Journey to the West, there is an episode where Tripitaka is very eager to cross a frozen river to continue with his journey. There are many merchants braving the weather to gain time on their business trips. The master decides to join them and he makes the following remark:

Profit and fame are regarded as most important in the affairs of the world: for profit, men would give up their own lives. But the fact that this disciple strives so hard to fulfill the imperial decree may also be taken as his quest for fame. Am I so different really from those people? (Yu 1978, 381)

With this remark, we see that Tripitaka has now gained perspective. He himself sees that he is an ordinary person like all the other people. A few calamities later, in a discourse with some old tree spirits, Tripitaka tells them at their request the rudiments of Zen:

“The wondrous ways of ultimate virtue, vast and boundless, can neither be seen nor heard. It can, however, extinguish the six organs of senses and the six kinds of perception. Thus, perfect wisdom has neither birth nor death, neither want nor excess; it encompasses both form and emptiness, and it reveals the non-reality of both sages and common people.” (Yu 1980, 227)

Here Tripitaka shows that he has achieved a good understanding of what truth or salvation is. Both sages and common people exist in non-reality, and the distinctions he had

accepted before he began his journey, he now discards as unreal trappings. He has now gained perspective, is enlightened and is on his way to obtain perfect wisdom.

In order to achieve that perfect wisdom, Tripitaka must first lose his mortal body through an important rite, when he is close to reaching his destination. When Tripitaka, Monkey, Pigsy and Sandy have arrived at the outskirts of Buddha's land, they must first cross a river before they can see Buddha and receive the scriptures. A ferryman, the Conductor of all Souls, comes with a broken, bottomless boat to take them over. Seeing the condition of the boat, Tripitaka, still much in character and laden with fear and anxiety, is much perturbed, saying, "How can you take people across?" The ferryman who is the Conductor of all Souls answers:

"You may well think that in a bottomless boat, such a river as this could never be crossed. But since the beginning of time, I have carried countless souls to their Salvation." (Waley 1943, 281)

Monkey urges the master to get on board. But the master, still an embodied human, hesitates. For the last time, he is helped by his physical as well as intellectual guide Monkey, who takes him by the scruff of the neck and pushes him on board. There is nothing for Tripitaka's feet to rest on, and he falls into the water. He is helped to the side of the boat. Still in character, he sits there, miserable and complaining to Monkey. The ferryman punts them out from shore, and they see a body in the water, "drifting rapidly down stream." (Waley 1943, 282) It is Tripitaka's body. When they reach the other side of the river, called the Further Shore in Buddhist writings,

Tripitaka stepped lightly ashore. He had discarded his earthly body; he was cleansed from the corruption of the senses, from the fleshly inheritance of those bygone years. His was now the transcendent wisdom that leads to the Further Shore, the mastery that knows no bounds. (Waley 1943, 282)

It has taken Tripitaka close to fourteen years, or 5040 days to arrive at Buddha's Western Paradise. Now Buddha decrees that the group may make the trip back in eight

days, and the pilgrims may receive 5048 scrolls of scripture. (Waley 1943, 289) This number of scrolls represents a scroll per day on the round-trip journey.

Tripitaka, in the company of his three disciples, takes the scriptures back to the emperor of China, his mission accomplished. Having delivered the scriptures, he is welcomed into Buddha's land. A mortal, Tripitaka first appeared to the readers as a saint-like monk, but was revealed to be human. Then he became enlightened, and gave up his mortal body. It has taken him much longer than he thought originally to reach his salvation. From the time when he scolds Monkey for killing the six robbers to the time when he relates to the old tree spirits, extinguishing the six kinds of perception, and the perfect wisdom, he made tremendous progress and came a long way. He now receives his heavenly rank: Buddha of Precocious merit, (Waley 1943, 303) and lives in the Western Paradise, in "ultimate virtue, vast and boundless," for eternity.

CHAPTER 3

PIGSY

In creating the character Pigsy, Wu Ch'eng-en, the author of Monkey has played a joke on his fellow human beings. He makes Pigsy somewhat unworthy and at the same time he makes him very much like his fellow human beings, or the readers. When reading Monkey on a superficial level, readers don't see themselves in Pigsy. They rather look down upon him, because he is without distinct spiritual and moral goals, and he frequently displays his selfishness. However, the less the readers see the resemblance between Pigsy and themselves, the greater the joke is on them. Pigsy, like Tripitaka, is also an ordinary human being, who makes spiritual progress on his journey, ultimately gaining his salvation.

The readers' lack of respect for Pigsy may well have been planted purposely by the author who, in the narrative, often refers to Pigsy as the "idiot" or the "fool." In Chinese culture, the concept of a pig does not command respect. A pig is lazy, dirty and generally does not know better, being content to live in a muddy pig's pen. And Wu Ch'eng-en gives Pigsy the character Pig in place of a real last name. Chinese last names are established clan names. Though there is a homophone to the word pig, and it is a common last name in Chinese, Wu does not use it. The other three pilgrims all have regular Chinese last names. Wu Ch'eng-en drops the practice when he comes to Pigsy. My view is that the author takes care that his humor does not offend any specific group of people. To all people, their last names are sacred, and using any particular last name might have been

construed as singling out a particular clan as the object of ridicule. To do so would be quite uncivilized.

Wu Ch'eng-en further gives Pigsy the looks of a pig. When creating Pigsy as a joke on the readers, Wu Ch'eng-en is making a joke in very good humor and absence of any malice. Furthermore, Pigsy, though not depicted as worthy as his companions, is nevertheless a person with his own strength, and he makes his contribution on the pilgrimage through humble, physical assistance. If in temperament, Tripitaka represents the anxiety that ordinary human beings have, Pigsy represents the sensual and mundane side that human beings have. In playing this joke on his fellow human beings, Wu Ch'eng-en delivers the joke with understanding, sympathy and even respect. His joke is based upon reality. Pigsy craves food. He desires the opposite sex. He values creature comforts. His ambition is to be a homeowner. Given his particular talent in doing expert work around a farm, Pigsy has his heart's desire set on a farm of his own. Indeed, Pigsy's worldly aspirations are not very different from those of many of us. When the readers are oblivious to the similarities between Pigsy and themselves, they miss seeing, at the same time, the positive qualities of Pigsy. Pigsy is a good worker and a good provider. He pursues his values with single-mindedness. As a matter of fact, he may well be the man all women in the old-fashioned world would want for a husband. And in the sixteenth century China, old-fashioned was the norm. And with no disrespect, Wu Ch'eng-en depicts the sensual and carnal aspects of man in Pigsy.

Pigsy's formal religious name is Zhu Wuneng (Chu Wu-neng). Tripitaka nicknamed him Bajie (Pa-chieh), which means to swear off eight kinds of food that are not deemed appropriate for monks to eat. (Yu 1977, 389) It is a very appropriate name for Pigsy. When Pigsy was a celestial being residing in Heaven, his title was Marshal Heavenly Reeds, in charge of Heaven's eighty thousand marines. (Yu 1983, 164) As mentioned in the last chapter, he was banished to earth for having made the mistake of

making an unwanted advance toward a goddess. On earth, he was living the life of a monster until Bodhisattva Kuan-yin converted him to become Tripitaka's disciple to earn his redemption.

When Tripitaka came upon him, Pigsy had married himself into a farming family by the name Kao, as their live-in son-in-law. According to his father-in-law, Pigsy "pushed the plough himself and never asked to use a bull; he managed to do all his reaping without knife or staff." (Waley 1943, 149) And they were quite satisfied with him. He ate a tremendous amount of food, but he had pretty much earned it. Eventually the family became dissatisfied with him because his looks changed for the worse over time, and his lack of a family on earth had deprived his in-laws of the pleasure of social interactions, an important part of Chinese life. Thus, they felt embarrassed by village gossip about their having an ugly, rootless fellow for a son-in-law. A rational examination of the deteriorating relationship between Pigsy and his in-laws indicates that it was not really Pigsy's fault, but the general views and behaviors of a society are not always rational. In coping with the negative views coming from his in-laws, Pigsy locked up his wife in the back of the house and took to his monster habits of coming and going in a gust of wind, taking refuge part of the day in his monster lair at Cloud-Ladder Cave at Fu-ling.

At this point, Tripitaka and Monkey arrive at the village where Pigsy's in-laws are. His in-laws are looking for an exorcist to get rid of Pigsy, the monster. Monkey sees this as an opportunity for some action and fun, and he boasts in a characteristic manner, to Tripitaka's chagrin, that "this is just my job. I'm no unfrocked priest or mouldy Taoist, I really do know how to catch monsters." (Waley 1943, 147) What follows is one of the most amusing and hilarious episodes in the book, and it establishes Pigsy as the main source of mirth for the readers on this journey. To capture Pigsy, Monkey changes himself into Pigsy's wife, Blue Orchid. When Pigsy comes home, Monkey sighs:

Monkey: Was there ever such an unhappy girl as I?

Pigsy: What are you grumbling about? Since I came here, I've cost you something in food and drink, that I own. But I've more than earned what I have got. Haven't I cleaned the ground and drained ditches, carried bricks and tiles, built walls, ploughed fields, planted grain, and improved the farm out of all knowing? You've good clothes to wear and all the food you need. What's all this childish nonsense about being unhappy? (Waley 1943, 151)

These words from the mouth of Pigsy sound like words from a good and proud provider.

Monkey: Today my parents came and made a fearful scene through the partition wall.

Pigsy: What did they make a scene about?

Monkey: They don't like having you here as their son-in-law. They say you've got an ugly face and they don't know who your father is and haven't seen any of your relations. They say you come and go no one knows when or where, and it's bad for the credit of the house that we don't know your name or anything at all about you. . .

Pigsy: What do looks matter? It's a strong man they need about the place, and they can't say anything against me on that score. And if they think so ill of me, why did they accept me here at all? (Waley 1943, 152)

Pigsy's words show clear-mindedness, that he acts in good faith, and he is proud of his abilities and is whole-hearted in maintaining his status in the family. He behaves in a manner that society alleges to respect.

At some point in the ensuing contest of military skills between Monkey and Pigsy, Monkey takes a minute out to report to Tripitaka and Blue Orchid's father, Kao the farmer, of how things are progressing. Monkey says to the farmer:

Monkey: I think you make too much of the whole affair. The monster himself admits that his appetite is large; but he has done quite a lot of useful work. All the recent improvements in the estate are his work. He claims to be well worth what he costs in keep, and does not see why you should be so anxious to get rid of him. . . . He hasn't done any harm to your daughter.

Farmer: It may be true that he's had no influence upon her. But I stick to it that it's very bad for our reputation. Wherever I go I hear people saying "Mr. Kao has taken a monster as his son-in-law." What is one to say to that? (Waley 1943, 154)

Clearly Wu Ch'eng-en has much sympathy for Pigsy, and he conveys it by letting Monkey see the situation from Pigsy's point of view, and give him support. That the relationship has soured between Pigsy and his in-laws is not Pigsy's fault, but rather the result of the in-laws' changing their mind. They were thoughtless when they entered the contract, and Pigsy has all along been honorable and has held up his end of the bargain.

It is the practice in this book that when monsters and disciples are fighting, they carry on a conversation at the same time, each usually boasting of his own glorious background and powers, carrying on a psychological warfare on the side. In the middle of another session of fighting, Monkey mentions that he has been converted and is now a priest going with Tripitaka to the Western Paradise to fetch scriptures. Upon hearing Tripitaka's name, Pigsy drops his weapon, saying he has been converted too, and has been waiting for the Tang priest. Pigsy is duly bound by Monkey and brought to Tripitaka, and to Tripitaka Pigsy relates how Kuan-yin converted him, and he vows he will follow the master to the West. Pigsy is accepted and he does obeisance to the master and to Monkey "whom as the senior disciple he addressed as 'Elder Brother and Teacher.'" (Waley 1943, 157) Then, sincerely but foolishly, Pigsy asks, "where is my wife? I should like her to pay her respect to my Father and Brother in the Law." Monkey says, "Wife, indeed! You haven't got a wife now." (Waley 1943, 157) The next morning the three take leave of the farmer, and Pigsy, as foolish as he was the night before, says to him:

Be so kind as to inform my mother-in-law, my sisters-in-law and all my kinsmen by marriage that I have become a priest and must ask their pardon for going off without saying good-bye to them in person. And father-in-law, I'll trouble you to take good care of my bride. For if we don't bring off this scripture business, I shall turn layman again and live with you as your son-in-law.

Monkey: Lout! Don't talk rubbish.

Pigsy: It's not rubbish. Things may go wrong, and then I shall be in a pretty pass! No salvation, and no wife either. (Waley 1943, 158)

Pigsy's point of view is consistently that of a practical man. He may be the butt of lots of jokes, but there is no denying that he is truthful and faces reality; he demonstrates qualities that are valued by the fellow human beings of Wu Ch'eng-en.

Through Pigsy, the author teases his readers about their lack of spiritual depth. Once Pigsy is on the road to achieve salvation, he reveals his lack of faith and his lack of genuine interest in this pursuit. His lapses into sensual desires for food and women make him a laughable figure. Wu Ch'eng-en does the teasing with humor and kindness. The

way he has depicted Pigsy indicates that he has respect for his fellow human beings who are good workers, and he has sympathy for them if they show their humanness. And Pigsy, though making many blunders, is never allowed to really go astray. Straitlaced readers who do not see themselves in Pigsy are the only objects of the author's ridicule. In the one hundred chapter version of Journey to the West, Pigsy leaves his father-in-law's farm in chapter nineteen, and in chapter twenty-three, the pilgrims come to a test of their devotion to the pilgrimage. They arrive at a very nice house. The master wants to go in to ask for shelter. Out comes a middle aged woman--she is forty-five as the readers will find out soon--with a "seductive voice" asking what they want. She is met by the "furtive, wanton glances of Pa-chieh." "She had charm and beauty like one fair youth." (Yu 1977, 448)

It turns out that she lost her husband two years ago and is living in this house with her three daughters. She is rather direct when she proposes that the four pilgrims take her and her three daughters as their wives and forego the scripture-fetching enterprise. Her proposal just suits Pigsy. But Tripitaka shuts his eyes to protect himself and gives no reply. The woman continues with these words:

We own over three hundred mou of paddies, over four hundred and sixty acres of dried fields, and over four thousand head of yellow water buffalo, herds of mules and horses, countless pigs and sheep; in all four quarters, there are over seventy barns and haystacks. In this household there is grain enough to feed you for more than eight or nine years, silk that you could not wear out in a decade, gold and silver that you might spend for a lifetime. What could be more delightful than our silk sheets and curtains, which can render spring eternal? Not to mention those who wear golden hairpins standing in rows! If all of you, master and disciples, are willing to change your minds and enter the family of your wives, you will be most comfortable, having all these riches to enjoy. Will that not be better than the toil of the journey to the West? (Yu 1977, 449-50)

Apparently Pigsy does not know the maxim that if something seems too good to be true, it is. The woman's offer is just too much for him to resist. Seeing that the others are not showing interest, Pigsy, using the pretext of taking the horse outside to graze, goes to the

back door to see the woman, with the intention of sealing the deal for himself. He offers himself with the following self-recommendation:

Though I may be somewhat ugly,
I can work quite diligently.
A thousand acres of land, you say?
No need for oxen to plow it.
I'll go over it once with my rake,
And the seeds will grow in season.
When there's no rain I can make rain.
When there's no wind I'll call for wind.
If the house is not tall enough,
I'll build you a few stories more.
If the grounds are not swept I'll give them a sweep.
If the gutter's not drained I'll draw it for you.
All things both great and small around the house
I am able to do most readily.

(Yu 1977, 454)

Pigsy has a great deal of self-knowledge, and he is disarmingly honest. He knows that he is not a handsome man. He also knows his strength. He offers himself with sincerity and confidence. She is quite receptive and wants Pigsy to ask for permission from his master. Here Pigsy betrays his lack of loyalty and commitment, saying that Tripitaka is no "genuine parent of mine. Whether I want to do this or not is for me to decide." (Yu 1977, 454) The woman then tells Pigsy of her dilemma in choosing one daughter for Pigsy to marry, because no matter which one Pigsy marries, there will be two unhappy daughters left.

Pigsy, sinking to a rather low moral point, says:

Mama, if you want to prevent strife, why not give them all to me; in that way, you will spare yourself a lot of bickering that can destroy the harmony of the family.
Mother: Nonsense! You mean you alone want to take all three of my daughters?
Pigsy: Who doesn't have three or four concubines nowadays? Even if you have a few more daughters, I'll gladly take them all. When I was young, I learned how to be long-lasting in the arts of love. You can be assured that I'll render satisfactory service to every one of them.
Mother: That's no good! That's no good! (Yu 1977, 457)

Here Pigsy displays an extraordinary mix of male chauvinism and servitude; what a joke this sixteenth century author offers in the image of this rapacious man, lunging at a huge windfall from fortune. The two of them finally agree that Pigsy will be blindfolded and the

three daughters will dodge and run. The one Pigsy catches, he'll marry. But Pigsy is not able to catch anyone. And the mother says that her daughters are all too modest to supersede each other. Pigsy, sinking lower, proposes, "If they are unwilling to take me, Mama, why don't you take me instead." (Yu 1977, 458)

At this point, Pigsy is a new convert to Buddhism, therefore it is not hard for us to see that the enticing offer is too good to be passed up. Pigsy values the property and the live-in arrangement more than any thing in the world, and since marriage is the key condition to this arrangement, marrying any one of the four makes no difference to him. Even if he must marry all three daughters to strike the deal, he is willing to do so. It is not that Pigsy is totally lewd, and is only after the women. He is actually being very shrewd in making a business deal, giving the customer what she wants in exchange for what he himself wants. In the ordinary world, shrewd business men are respected.

It turns out, as it often does in medieval stories of China, that the four women are goddesses in disguise, testing the pilgrims' determinations. And of course Pigsy has failed and has made a complete fool of himself. He is totally mortified. Sandy, the third disciple, says to Pigsy with a laugh: "Second Brother does have all the luck, for you have attracted these four bodhisattvas here to become your wives!" Pigsy says,

Brother, let's not ever mention that again! It's blasphemy! From now on, I'll never do such foolish things again. Even if it breaks my bones, I'll carry the pole and luggage to follow master to the West. (Yu 1977, 462)

Pigsy demonstrates his honesty and willingness to learn from his mistakes. But the dominant view of Pigsy as the butt of jokes and the source of laughs will remain the same throughout the book. After having made himself a total fool with the four bodhisattvas, Pigsy begins to learn through the discipline brought upon him by the journey, and he gradually improves, in spite of his natural inclinations.

Later when they meet seven spider-spirits posing as seven beautiful women with designs on Tripitaka, Pigsy, having learned from his mistakes, jumps into the hot spring with them to have some fun, but sex is the furthest thing from his mind. He is very mindful of his mission and proud of who he is. In this instance, Pigsy teases the fiends.

“Lady Bodhisattvas,” said Pa-chieh, hardly able to contain his giggles, “so you are taking a bath here. How about asking a priest like me to join you?” When they saw him, the fiends became angry. “You are a very rude priest!” they cried. “We are women in a home, and you are a man who has left the home. The ancient book said, ‘By the seventh year, a man and a woman are not to sit on the same mat.’ How could you bathe in the same pool with us?” “It’s so hot now,” said Pa-chieh, “that there’s no alternative. Don’t be so fussy and let me wash with you. Stop throwing the book at me! What’s all this about sitting and not sitting on the same mat!” (Yu 1980, 370)

With these words, he changes himself into a slimy, slippery fish and jumps into the pool with the spider-women. They reach for him wanting to hit him, but Pigsy, once a member of the naval force in Heaven, is extremely agile in water, darting to the right and to the left, leaving the monsters panting with exhaustion. Having had his fun, Pigsy reveals his loyalty and commitment to his master:

You bunch of lawless fiends really don’t recognize me! I’m the disciple of the T’ang elder, someone from the Great T’ang in the Land of the East who is on his way to acquire scriptures. I am Chu Wu-neng, Pa-chieh, the Marshal of Heavenly Reeds. You have my master hung up in a cave, and you are planning to have him steamed for food. My master! Steamed for food? Stretch out your heads at once, and receive a blow, each of you. I want to finish you off! (Yu 1980, 371)

Although Pigsy is on a pilgrimage, he shows his lack of commitment to the spiritual journey from time to time. Being a practical man, Pigsy always thinks of the next step; what to do if the pilgrimage cannot be carried off. Every time Tripitaka is captured by a monster and the future seems hopeless, Pigsy tells Sandy to divide up the luggage and advises all to go their separate ways. This scenario takes place so often that it has become a comic routine and repetition, for every reader knows that the mission will be completed and a success.

Pigsy is often too lazy to take special assignments seriously. He, despite his spiritual growth, maintains his small flaws. For example, many times when he is sent on

reconnaissance duty, he takes a nap in the grass, and returns to report to Tripitaka that all is well. And, of course, all is not well and there is a monster lurking in the bushes. Pigsy has great physical strength, but he would prefer to avoid strenuous work. One day when Tripitaka suggests that Monkey take along the other two disciples to fight off three monsters, Monkey asks for Pigsy alone, leaving Sandy to guard the master.

Terribly alarmed, our Idiot said, "Elder Brother, you're the one who is imperceptive! I'm rather crude, and I don't have much ability. Even when I walk along, I resist the wind. Of what use am I to you?" "Brother," said Pilgrim "even though you may not have great abilities, you are still another person. As the common folks say, 'even a fart is additional air!' You can at the very least build up my courage."
(Yu 1980, 419)

It is because of these numerous minor slips that Pigsy displays that readers look down upon him, and in doing so, miss seeing the greater resemblance between Pigsy and themselves. Basically, Pigsy is "every man," with the same cautions, concerns and desires. The readers should see the positive side of Pigsy: his physical strength; his practical knowledge in his own line of work, farming; his value in maintaining a job, a home, a wife, in a word, a well-settled life. In a mundane world, looking out for oneself is considered being smart; always having a plan to fall back to is good thinking. Pigsy may not possess lofty ideals. But what is the percentage of Wu Ch'eng-en's fellow human beings who are dedicated to lofty ideals? Pigsy takes his values seriously and with honesty. He is never hypocritical. He may have small flaws, but he is not a bad character, not at all.

And Pigsy makes progress again and again. In chapter ninety-two of Journey to the West, the pilgrims are harassed by three rhinoceros spirits, and with divine help from four stars, Monkey has them defeated. At this point Pigsy makes a suggestion. He is complemented by one of the stars and he takes the complement with much grace; he is no longer the idiotic new convert, but rather a committed pilgrim with a certain measure of dignity and command.

“We might as well push these two down to the city for the officials and the people to see,” said Pa-chieh, “so that they’ll know that we are sages and deities. Moreover, we must trouble the four star officers to lower their clouds to the ground and go with us to the prefectural hall for the disposal of these fiends. The truth and their guilt have been firmly established. There’s nothing more we should discuss!” “Of late,” said one of the four stars, “Marshal Heavenly Reeds seems to be quite knowledgeable about principles and shows good understanding of the law. That’s marvelous!” “Being a priest for some years has taught me a few things!” replied Pa-chieh. (Yu 1983, 290)

At this point, nearing to the end of the journey, Pigsy has come a long way and has learned a great deal. Still he remains in character and for him to be in character means giving readers laughs. When the pilgrims are finally in sight of their destination, the Vulture Peak, the Sacred Precinct of the Buddha, they must first cross a river. There is a bridge which “consisted simply of slim tree trunks laid end on end, and was hardly wider than the palm of a man’s hand.” Tripitaka is in great alarm, thinking it is not humanly possible to go over it. Monkey shows them by crossing over and coming back again. “Pigsy lay on the ground and would not budge.” (Waley 1943, 280-81) Prudently, Pigsy rather not risk any bodily danger.

Eventually, Pigsy, along with his master and disciple brothers, arrives at the Western Paradise and earns his redemption. Before Buddha awards him the title, he prefaces his award with the following words:

While you protected the sage monk on his way, you were still quite mischievous, for greed and lust were never wholly extinguished in you. For the merit of toting the luggage, however, I hereby grant you promotion and appoint you Janitor of the Altars. (Yu 1983, 425)

Pigsy, as the joke that the author of Monkey has played on his fellow human beings, and as a human being with limited spiritual depth, is nevertheless able to earn his redemption. Wu Ch’eng-en has shown a great deal of warmth and love towards this laughable figure who is, to the end, somewhat a pig. While Wu Ch’eng-en has depicted Pigsy with humor, sympathy and respect, he does not present him wholly as praiseworthy,

so that when the readers see themselves in Pigsy, they also see themselves as having feet made of clay.

CHAPTER 4

SANDY

Readers often wonder whether Sandy is an essential figure in the book Monkey. To them, Sandy seems a pale character and, therefore, may not be important, may not be essential. Nothing could be further from the truth. Sandy, as part of the allegory of four pilgrims each representing a certain aspect of human temperament, is both important and necessary. Without Sandy, the representation would have been incomplete. The absence of Sandy would rob the allegory of its balance and hence its meaning.

Sandy represents the sober side of human nature. In the novel's plot he lends the narrative a balance: when Tripitaka is helpless due to his excessive anxiety; when Pigsy gives in to his small selfish ways; and when Monkey is frustrated by Tripitaka and Pigsy and loses his patience, Sandy's is a clear, discreet and calming voice. If the allegory of the four pilgrims may be likened to the four legs of a table, without Sandy, the table would be missing one leg and would not be able to stand.

Arthur Waley says in his preface to Monkey:

Sandy is more mysterious. The commentators say that he represents ch'eng, which is usually translated 'sincerity,' but means something more like 'whole-heartedness.' He was not an afterthought, for he appears in some of the earliest versions of the legend, but it must be admitted that, though in some inexplicable way essential to the story, he remains throughout singularly ill-defined and colorless. (Waley 1943)

I disagree with Arthur Waley. Sandy is in explicable ways essential. He is not ill-defined, not colorless and not mysterious either. It takes a close reading of his character and thoughtfulness to appreciate him.

A reader reading the novel in depth and looking at the larger picture in the book will have a grasp of Sandy's character and its importance. Just because Sandy does not have the attention-getting colors of the other characters in the book does not mean that he is colorless. His color is subtle but definite. Just because he takes a low profile in the novel does not mean his existence is unexplicable; he is part of the integral whole of the novel. Sandy's character is the embodiment of good sense, sincerity and discretion. While the other pilgrims will all grow, change and mature in the course of the journey, Sandy is the same from start to finish. He is a committed pilgrim the moment he joins Tripitaka, Monkey and Pigsy. His qualities are definite qualities that do not come with a down side, and Sandy does not overdo anything. It is his very nature. He does not carry his qualities to any extreme, for his qualities are precisely those that keep extreme behaviors in check. The qualities he possesses do not lend his character an entertaining personality. In the midst of a book that is sheer fun and wild imaginations, his presence may be over-looked by readers. He must not be. His existence gives the group much needed calm and balance, just as a certain amount of good sense and discretion provides a necessary balance in an individual. Tripitaka is easily alarmed and gives way to tears. Pigsy is not above selfishness and pettiness. And Monkey loves challenges for challenge's sake. Sandy is calm and he does not leap without taking a look first. In the narrative, Sandy's lines are often those urging his companions to investigate and to look for evidences. He keeps a level head on his shoulders. Hu Shih says in his Introduction to the American Edition of Waley's rendition of Monkey that Monkey, besides being many other things, is a book of profound nonsense. (Waley 1943, 5) But Sandy is never given to nonsense. He keeps his goal, the mission, firmly in sight and moves ahead in steadfast steps.

Like his two disciple brothers, Sandy was once a celestial being residing in Heaven. Heaven, in this novel, was modelled on the same bureaucratic system as on earth. This concept of Heaven being the same but better than the world on earth was an accepted

notion in the popular folk culture of old China. It was not of Wu Ch'eng-en's creation. Things were better in Heaven. For one thing, life in Heaven escaped death, so celestial beings lived forever. And life was easy up there; there was no toil to feed the mortal body. Sandy's title in Heaven was Curtain-raising Marshal, a position as an aide to the Jade Emperor. The Jade Emperor, in the accepted popular folk culture, was not someone who was to deliver the suffering multitude on earth, but in stories, would mete out justice, should the case be brought to his attention. He was a ruler, a ruler in a different world where everyone was better off. As mentioned before, Pigsy was banished to Earth because he, very much in character, had made an unwanted advance toward a goddess. Monkey must earn his redemption because he had made havoc in Heaven, defeating all the celestial armies five hundred years ago. These deeds of Pigsy and Monkey that had cost them the privilege of living in Heaven were willful deeds. That Sandy was banished to the Region Below was entirely due to an innocent accident: he broke a crystal dish while serving as a waiter at a party, the Festival of Immortal Peaches. The Jade Emperor was to have him executed. But one ranking celestial being intercepted on Sandy's behalf. The Jade Emperor gave him eight hundred lashes, changed him into hideous looks and sent him to Earth to live in the River of Flowing Sand. Still, every seven days the Jade Emperor sent a flying sword to stab Sandy's chest and sides more than a hundred times. Suffering cold and hunger, Sandy would come out of the water now and then to seize some travellers for food. (Yu 1977, 189-90)

When Bodhisattva Kuan-yin passed by the River of Flowing Sand on her way to the East to find a saintly monk to go to Buddha to fetch the scriptures, Sandy met her and poured out his misery to her. Kuan-yin, who was also called the Mighty Deliverer, the Great Compassionate Bodhisattva, converted him, bidding him wait at the river for the Tang monk and to be the monk's disciple. Kuan-yin gave Sandy his formal religion name: Sha Wujing (Wu-ching). Sha is a Chinese family name which also means sand, and sand

is in the name of the river where Sandy lived. When Arthur Waley abridged and translated the book he translated Sandy's nickname as Sandy. In Anthony Yu's full translation of the book, Sandy's nickname is given a more literary translation, Sha Monk. The nickname came from Tripitaka. When Tripitaka picked up Sandy, he thought that Sandy "comported himself very much like a monk," (Yu 1977, 443) and just named him plainly Monk.

Sandy has never given Tripitaka cause for anxiety. Comporting himself very much like a monk, he never misbehaves. Once Pigsy, abusing Sandy behind his back, calls him "sissy Sha Monk," (Yu 1978, 107) but Pigsy is wrong. Pigsy, being a foolish fellow, mistakes good behavior for a sign of weakness of character. Sandy is simply very proper, very well behaved, very sensible, totally sincere and completely discreet. In truth, he is a brave and noble soul. He is capable of noble sentiment and acts accordingly.

In the episode with the Yellow Robe monster, Tripitaka is captured by the monster. The monster's wife turns out to be a princess whom he has abducted by magic. The princess contrives to set Tripitaka free and in exchange for the favor she asks Tripitaka to bring a letter to her father to come to her rescue. The king asks Pigsy and Sandy to carry out the rescue mission. Unable to cope with the blows from the monster, Pigsy gives Sandy the slip and takes to the tall grass to take a nap, and Sandy is captured by the monster. The monster who is ordinarily all tender and loving towards the princess, becomes suspicious of the princess and treats her in a very abusive manner, dragging her into Sandy's presence, demanding confessions.

When the shackled Sha Monk saw how furious the monster was, hurling the princess to the ground and threatening to kill her with the scimitar, he thought to himself: "Of course she sent a letter. But she also saved my master, and that was an incomparably great favor. If I admitted it freely, he would kill the princess on the spot and that would have meant our repaying kindness with enmity. All right! All right! Old Sand, after all, has followed Master all this time and I haven't made the merest of merit. Today, I'm already a bound captive here; I might as well offer my life to repay my master's kindness." He therefore shouted, "Monster, don't you dare be unruly! What kind of letter did she send that made you want to accuse her and take her life? There was another reason for us to come to demand from you the princess. Because you had imprisoned my master in the cave, he had the chance to catch a glimpse of

the princess, her looks and her gestures. By the time we reached the Precious Image Kingdom and had our travel rescript certified, the king was making all kinds of inquiry about the whereabouts of his daughter with a painted portrait of hers. He showed my master that portrait and asked us whether we had seen her on the way. When my master described the lady he saw at this place, the king knew it was his daughter. He bestowed on us his own imperial wine and commanded us to come here to take you captive and bring his princess back to the palace. This is the truth. Since when was there a letter? If you want to kill someone, you can kill old Sand! But don't harm an innocent bystander and add to your sins!" When the fiend heard how heroically Sha Monk had spoken, he threw away his scimitar and lifted the princess up with both his hands. . . . (Yu 1978, 65-66)

What a convincing story Sandy has fabricated. He is a very intelligent man. He is observing and keeps his perspective. He puts first things first and has the courage as well as the integrity to be heroic. Can a person of such action and eloquence be labelled mysterious and colorless? Certainly not.

In the episode where Pigsy forsakes readily his master and the mission for a life of creature comforts as a live-in husband to the bodhisattvas in disguise, Sandy's reply to the master's inquiry that perhaps he would be willing to stay behind is as follows:

Tripitaka: I'll ask Wu-ching to stay.

Sha Monk: Listen to the way Master is speaking! Since I was converted by the Bodhisattva and received the commandments from her, I've been waiting for you. It has been scarcely two months since you took me as your disciple and gave me your teachings, and I have yet to acquire even half an inch of merit. You think I would dare seek such riches! I will journey to the Western Heaven even if it means my death! I'll never engage in such perfidious activities. (Yu 1977, 452)

Sandy is completely focused and he cannot be distracted from his goal, and he is never tempted by windfalls of any nature. His good sense will never take leave of him. Just because he makes no waves does not mean he has no personality. Sandy is a noble character. He may not be of eye-catching colors, but he cannot be said as to be colorless. His ability to keep matters in perspective, and accordingly to either act or speak up, stands the pilgrims in good stead at crucial moments. The episode with the Yellow Robe monster comes, as given in the last chapter, after Tripitaka has angrily dismissed Monkey because he killed the monster who had changed herself three times in succession, in her effort to deceive and capture Tripitaka. Pigsy and Sandy cannot overcome Yellow Robe, and the

monster, using his magic, changes Tripitaka into a tiger. Tripitaka is duly chained and locked up by the king. The pilgrimage is coming to an imminent demise and the two remaining disciples are at their wit's end. Pigsy goes to the Water-curtain Cave in the Fruit and Flower Mountain to seek out Monkey for help. Monkey comes. He fights and subdues and everything is well again. But the master is still trapped in the form of a beast, a tiger. Venting his frustration on the master, Monkey ridicules him.

“Master,” said Pilgrim, laughing, “you are a good monk. How did you manage to end up with a fearsome look like that? You blamed me for working evil and violence and banished me. You claimed that you wanted to practice virtue single-mindedly. How did you acquire such features all at once?” “Elder Brother,” said Pa-chieh, “please save him. Don’t just ridicule him.” “You pick on me in everything,” said Pilgrim, “and you are his favorite disciple. Why don’t you save him? Why do you ask old Monkey instead? Remember what I said originally, that after I had subdued the monster to avenge myself from his abuse, I would go back.” Sha Monk drew near and knelt down, saying, “Elder Brother, the ancients said, ‘If you don’t regard the priest, do regard the Buddha.’ If you are here, I beseech you to save him. If we could do so, we wouldn’t have traveled all that distance to plead with you.” Raising him with his hands, Pilgrim said, “How could I possibly be content not to save him?” (Yu 1978, 96-97)

Sandy knows the seriousness of the situation as well as the pilgrims’ need of Monkey. He is persuasive because he is intelligent and sincere. Sandy is the last one to join the group, but by now he has seen enough to know who is dependable and capable, and he has perceived that Monkey always wants his ability to be recognized and, of course, Monkey deserves the recognition. Sandy goes on his knees to implore Monkey to save the master, using some reason, invoking the name of Buddha and appealing to Monkey’s sense of vanity. When the master comes around, Sandy “stands to one side” to give him a full account of the happenings, so that the master can recognize Monkey’s merit and give gratitude where gratitude is due. (Yu 1978, 97)

Two times when Monkey and Pigsy have lost perspective, it is Sandy who brings them back to their sense. Once when Tripitaka is lost in a gust of wind brought up by some monster, and Monkey loses heart to the endless difficulties on the journey and says

perhaps indeed it is time that they all go their separate ways. Sandy, deeply shaken, addresses Monkey, saying,

Elder Brother, how could you say something like that? Because we committed crimes in our previous lives, we were lucky to be enlightened by the Bodhisattva Kuan-shih-yin, who touched our heads, gave us the commandments, and changed our names so that we could embrace the Buddhist fruit. We willingly accepted the commission to protect the T'ang monk and follow him to the Western Heaven to worship Buddha and acquire scriptures, so that our merits would cancel out our sins. Today we are here and everything seems to come to an end abruptly when you can talk about each of us finding our own way off, for then we would mar the good fruits of the Bodhisattva and destroy our virtuous act. Moreover, we would provoke the scorn of others, saying that we know how to start but not how to finish. (Yu 1978, 242)

Sandy is not only to the point but he also calls Monkey's attention to include all angles: their own past crimes and future redemption, the Bodhisattva's mercy toward them and the eventual credit due her, and their own personal shame for not finishing something they have willingly embraced and started. Of course, Monkey is immediately turned around by Sandy's good sense and perseverance.

Another time, Monkey and Pigsy are not able to defeat a monster whose special magic involves fire and are discussing the monster's ability excitedly. Soon Monkey notices that Sandy is laughing so hard that he can hardly stand up. Monkey asks him the reason why and challenges him to overcome the monster. Sandy replies that he does not have the ability to defeat the monster and he is laughing because both Monkey and Pigsy are so "absent-minded." Sandy points out the principle of "mutual production and mutual conquest." (Yu 1978, 252) If the monster's specialty is fire, then Monkey should try to defeat him by using water. So reminded, Monkey goes to his old friend, the dragon king, whose domain it is to make rain, and borrows rain to spoil the monster's magic. Sandy's contribution to the group is always given at the right time, and he never makes a big deal about his insight.

In a world where the pretentious are often mistaken as the able, and where the loud and showy are awarded the praise, Sandy is a rare gem of a character, a very solid man.

As the fourth leg to sustain a table, he is absolutely essential in the allegory, and his contribution in keeping his group in their good sense is important to the group's welfare on the journey. Unfortunately, it is commonplace in the human world that solid but quiet individuals are often overlooked and their importance and contributions obliterated. When the pilgrims have accomplished their mission, Buddha says to Sandy:

Fortunately you submitted to our teaching and remained firm in your faith. As you escorted the sage monk, you made merit by leading his horse over all those mountains. I hereby grant you promotion and appoint you the Golden-Bodied Arhat. (Yu 1983, 426)

Tripitaka and Monkey have been awarded the ranks of Buddha and Pigsy is now a Bodhisattva, but Sandy is only an Arhat. It does seem that even in the land of Buddha, nice guys finish last. No wonder that some readers and commentators are mystified by Sandy's importance, and fail to see the essentialness of his place in the novel.

CHAPTER 5

MONKEY

In chapter seven of the one hundred chapter Journey to the West, there is a poem:

Mind is a monkey--this, the truth profound.

•••••
The Horse works with the Monkey--this means both Mind and Will
Must firmly be harnessed and not be ruled without.

(Yu 1977, 168)

That Monkey represents the human mind in the allegory of this novel has been pointed out a number of times in the previous chapters; in this poem a new imagery is introduced, the Horse. What function does this Horse serve? What do the words in this expression “both Mind and Will must firmly be harnessed” mean?

“Mind monkey will horse” is a phrase that Wu Ch’eng-en is using in his novel as a metaphor to reveal to the readers the meaning of Monkey’s story. Written Chinese is a language of ideographs, a few thousand years old, having evolved from classic Chinese to modern Chinese. And the grammar of classic Chinese is very terse, resulting in short phrases endowed with much meaning still used today. “Mind monkey will horse” is one of such phrases. The expression has been commonly used and readily understood by all Chinese since, well, at least Wu’s time. When a person is described as in a state of “mind monkey and will horse,” it is to liken this person’s state of mind to the monkey’s temperament of constantly moving and jumping around, and to the movement of a horse running. The connotation of this phrase is that when a person’s mind is in a restless and unsettled state, he is not focused and will not be able to accomplish anything worthwhile.

Wu immediately points out in the poem that this Mind Monkey and this Will Horse must be harnessed and ruled.

The theme of Monkey's part in the story is that the mind needs to be harnessed in order to achieve and to accomplish. In the allegorical scheme of the book, Monkey is the human mind. When the mind is restless and unsettled, it is unproductive. Wu uses the metaphor "mind monkey will horse" to say that Monkey starts out with a mind that is restless and unsettled, and he is on a journey where he grows from immaturity to maturity, from unbridled brilliance to settled intelligence, and from being unproductive to goal-oriented, and from a fledgling hero to a hero. Monkey is able to mature and to achieve worthy goals only after he has mustered the self-discipline of harnessing his mind, and ruling his own will.

It is a stroke of genius on Wu's part to communicate, so concisely and directly, to his readers the theme of Monkey's journey, by employing a short phrase made of only four ideograms. It may come as a surprise to the readers who are not acquainted with the Chinese language that this four seemingly disconnected ideograms is actually a commonly spoken and readily understood phrase, and this phrase enables the author to convey the meaning of Monkey's story, to his Chinese readers, more directly and more powerfully than the use of a few sentences.

Lu Hsun says in his book *A Brief History of Chinese Fiction*:

Monkey symbolizes man's intelligence. . . . Monkey first runs wild in heaven and on earth, proving quite irrepressible; but once he is kept in check he steadies down. So this is an allegory of the human mind, not simply a fantasy. (Lu Hsun 1964, 218)

The important point here rests on the words "once he is kept in check he steadies down." Only when Monkey has become steady is he able to achieve worthy goals. In order to apply this commonly used and commonly understood phrase "mind monkey will horse," as a metaphor in his novel, besides the four pilgrims, Wu has also created a horse who is accompanying the pilgrims on the journey, and achieves his own salvation in the company

of the four pilgrims. The pilgrimage is carried out by five members, and the horse who is Tripitaka's mount, shares the sufferings with Tripitaka and his three disciples through the calamities, and the author allows him to play a significant role now and then in the narrative.

The format of the classic Chinese novel is such that there is always a couplet serving as the chapter title, indicating what is to come in the chapter. Journey to the West has one hundred chapters, hence one hundred couplets. One hundred couplets offer the author much space to spell out what he means to say. Wu Ch'eng-en makes use of the chapter titles of the book to make sure that his point is registered in the readers' mind by repeated use of the words Mind Monkey (Xinyuan) and Will Horse (Yima), on Monkey and on Tripitaka's horse respectively. Tripitaka's horse, who is really not an ordinary horse but a celestial dragon converted by the Bodhisattva Kuan-yin and changed into the form of a horse to earn his own redemption, is the Will Horse. In Journey to the West, in the titles of one hundred chapters, the expression, Mind Monkey, comes up seventeen times, Will Horse two times, Monkey and Horse together two times. (Wu 1972, 1-7) The title of chapter thirty has the words "The Will Horse Recalls the Mind Monkey." (Yu 1978, 64) In this episode, the pilgrims are in dire straits because Monkey has left them after Tripitaka angrily ousted him from the group. The horse who is ordinarily mute, suddenly speaks human language to Pigsy, asking him to fetch Monkey back to save the pilgrimage. In order to utilize the metaphor that the mind and the will must be controlled in order to produce worthy results, Wu Ch'eng-en creates the Will horse who is mounted and controlled by his rider Tripitaka. (Yu 1977, 315) Monkey, whom Tripitaka does not have the ability to control, is controlled with divine intervention, by the Tight Fillet that Kuan-yin gives to Tripitaka. (Waley 1943, 137-38) When the mission is to be accomplished imminently, the chapter title of chapter ninety-eight contains the words: "Ape and Horse are Tamed." (Yu 1983, 379)

That despite his exceptional physical prowess, superb intellect and even magic, Monkey must trudge the whole length of 108,000 leagues (Chinese miles), inch by inch, to be tempered is a very sobering thought for the discerning readers, and it proves to them the importance of self-discipline in Monkey's endeavor to achieve. It is a deeply philosophical comment on the human existence, that without discipline there will be no achievement. On the journey to maturity, Monkey not only has to deal with the exterior adversaries, the monsters who want to capture and to eat Tripitaka, but also to suffer frustration generated by members of his own group. Monkey must complete the long journey in the company of such individuals who are very different from himself. Monkey is fearless; Tripitaka is not. Monkey is spiritual; Pigsy is not. Monkey dares to take risks; Sandy does not. Monkey is brilliant and they all are not. It has fallen upon Monkey's shoulders to shepherd his companions to the Western Paradise. The level of frustration Monkey must endure is one more sobering thought to the discerning readers, reminding them of life's difficulties, and of the necessity of subjecting one's will to the will of the others one must live and work with. Monkey must rein in his own will, and he must not force his will on the others. Understanding, negotiating and compromising are some of the things Monkey will gradually learn to exercise.

Monkey's story may be divided into three parts: The first gives his origin and his awakening to a greater need than a comfortable life on earth. He obtains illumination and magic, only to end up becoming an accomplished monster, a monkey spirit. The second part gives Monkey's history of making havoc in Heaven, a period of time when he was a brilliant delinquent, and a period of time that he mentions later with great relish. This period may be viewed as Monkey's adolescent period, in which he makes many blunders but also grows in physical stature and strength. The third part begins with his rescue by Tripitaka and his going through the eighty-one calamities with him to complete the scripture-fetching mission. This part records Monkey's progress to maturity.

Monkey was the product of nature, born of a stone egg. His bravery and physical prowess won him the position of king of the monkeys. Already showing budding audacity, he named himself the Handsome Monkey King. He was leading a perfectly carefree and comfortable life in his monkey kingdom, when he realized that he was unhappy. One thought was troubling him. He said:

Old age and physical decay in the future will disclose the secret sovereignty of Yama, king of the Underworld. If we die, shall we not have lived in vain, not being able to rank forever among the heavenly beings? (Yu 1977, 73)

Monkey left his kingdom and embarked on a journey to seek immortality. Monkey shows, up to this point, that he has leadership ability and an intellect that thirsts for knowledge and longs for control of his own fate. He found an immortal, Patriarch Subodhi of the Cave of the Slanting Moon and Three Stars on the Mountain of the Holy Terrace; Subodhi took him in as one of his pupils to study immortality. (Waley 1943, 18) Monkey proved himself an exceptionally bright pupil, and after a period of study, the master revealed the secret of Illumination to him privately. He also learned Cloud Trapeze, which enabled him to cover the distance of 108,000 leagues with one somersault, as well as seventy-two transformations. One day, goofing around and showing off his transformation skills in front of the other pupils, he angered the master. The master proclaimed that Monkey would never amount to anything good, dismissed him permanently and bade him never to mention to anyone that he was once this master's pupil. Heartbroken, Monkey returned to his kingdom and took up the life of a monster, a life similar to the lives of the monsters whom he must subdue later, with the difference that Monkey was always a vegetarian. Monkey's record as of now shows that he is a leader, that he has a need of religion, that he is uncommonly quick of the mind, that he has a measure of audacity, and that he is a show-off of his abilities. He is now also an accomplished monster. So equipped, Monkey is to

begin an adolescent period which ends when he is seized by Buddha and imprisoned under a mountain.

During this adolescent period of his, Monkey made trouble in the sea, in the Underworld, and in Heaven. The Underworld in the popular folk culture of old China, was where people were taken when their time on earth was up. The Underworld was also a bureaucracy similar to the one on earth. There was a certain amount of traffic between the Underworld, the earth, and Heaven. Monkey, having acquired Illumination and magic had no physical problems commuting between the three regions.

Now that Monkey was living the life of a monster, he needed a weapon. Having been told by an old and wise monkey subject of his, that the sea was full of treasures, Monkey just marched into the palace of the Dragon King of the Eastern Sea, demanding to be given a weapon. The dragon king was cordial and obliging, but he was appalled by the lack of respect and rude manners of Monkey. After Monkey had rejected a number of weapons that the dragon king had offered him, the dragon king took Monkey to the treasury to see a magic piece of iron that no one in the palace could even lift, so it had just been sitting in the king's treasury all this time. It was the Compliant Golden-Hooped Rod, weighing thirteen thousand five hundred pounds. (Yu 1977, 105) It was only compliant to Monkey's wishes and could change its length and size according to Monkey's thoughts. Monkey eventually had it wished into the size of an embroidery needle and he stored it behind his ear.

So satisfied, Monkey did not leave but demanded that, in addition, the dragon king should find him an outfit that suitably matched his magic weapon. The dragon king did not have anything to offer, and Monkey threatened to try the rod on the dragon. Unable to get rid of Monkey, the dragon sent out the agreed upon emergency signal to his dragon brothers, who ruled three other seas, to come to his rescue. Putting their resources together, the four dragon kings came up with an outfit for Monkey. Satisfied, Monkey put

on his new suit and “wielding his compliant rod, he fought his way out in mock combat, yelling to the dragons, ‘Sorry to have bothered you!’” (Yu 1977, 107) The dragon kings were furious, and they resorted to filing a formal complaint against Monkey to the Jade Emperor in Heaven.

Monkey, in his adolescent years shows defiance toward established personnel as well as institutions. Next, Monkey displays his willfulness in the Underworld. One day Monkey was taking a nap and he was taken to the Underworld by two messengers who told him that his time on earth was up. (Waley 1943, 39) Monkey found this turn of events incredible. Having received Illumination from Patriarch Subodhi, he had been under the impression that he was beyond the reach of Yama, king of the Underworld. He demanded to see their registers, and in a book he found his name. Armed with his magic rod, he was formidable and could not be stopped.

“I haven’t got a life span at all,” said Monkey. “I’m eternal. I shall cross my name out. Give me a brush!” The official hastened to provide a brush, soaked in heavy ink, and Monkey put a stroke not only through his own name, but through those of all the monkeys named in the Monkey File. Then throwing down the ledger, “There’s an end of the matter,” he exclaimed. “Now at any rate you’ve got no hold over us!” (Wale 1943, 40)

The officials of the Underworld were outraged, and they resorted to filing a formal complaint against Monkey to the Jade Emperor in Heaven.

When the Jade Emperor received the complaints, he chose the appeasement approach by offering Monkey a job in Heaven to keep him on the court’s roll call, so as to prevent Monkey from making trouble elsewhere. Monkey was delighted to take up residence in Heaven, and he was assigned to work in the celestial stables, with the title Bi-ma-wen. Bi-ma-wen was a nonsense title; it carried no rank. As a resident in Heaven, Monkey came and went as he pleased, and he did a marvelous job with his assignment. One day, drinking wine and chatting with co-workers, Monkey found out how ridiculous a position he held. His pride injured, angrily, he left Heaven in a huff and returned to his

monkey kingdom. The Jade Emperor sent some celestial forces to arrest him, but Monkey defeated them, and to erase his humiliation, Monkey demanded that he be given the title Great Sage, Equal of Heaven. The Jade Emperor tried the appeasement approach a second time, proclaiming that Monkey was the Great Sage, Equal of Heaven, and Monkey was to return to live and work in Heaven. Monkey displayed his youthful exuberance, as well as his lack of proper court manners, by giving “a great whoop of delight” and thanking the Emperor “profusely.” (Waley 1943, 52)

This time Monkey was put in charge of the celestial peach garden, and, by and by, he made a habit of stealing the ripe peaches to eat himself. When it was time for the annual Peach Banquet, the better peaches were not there. At the same time, Monkey found out that he was not on the guest list of the party. Feeling insulted, he went to the banquet site before the guests’ arrival and devoured the daintiest dishes and drank the wine. Much under the influence of wine, he stumbled into Lao Tzu’s apartment and while there, he munched on the pills of elixir of life that Lao Tzu produced in his alchemical laboratory, as if eating peanuts. Presently he realized what he had done, saying to himself:

“Bad! Bad! This escapade of mine is even more unfortunate than the last. If the Jade Emperor gets to hear of it, I am lost. Run! Run! Run! I was better off as a king in the world below.” (Waley 1943, 57)

The Jade Emperor sent, over a period of time, a hundred thousand heavenly troops to subdue Monkey, to no avail. And Monkey, eying the Jade Emperor’s throne, aspired to that seat. Finally, the Jade Emperor had to ask Buddha of the Western Paradise to come and help. Monkey related to Buddha his past and his aspiration:

Born of sky and earth, Immortal magically fused,
From the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit an old monkey am I.
In the cave of the Water-curtain I ply my home-trade;
I found a friend and master, who taught me the Great Secret
I made myself perfect in many arts of Immortality,
I learned transformations without bound or end.
I tired of the narrow scope afforded by the world of man,
Nothing could content me but to live in the Green Jade Heaven.

Why should Heaven's halls have always one master?
In earthly dynasties king succeeds king.
The strong to the stronger must yield precedence and place,
Hero is he alone who vies with powers supreme.
(Waley 1943, 74)

Hearing Monkey's demand, Buddha offered Monkey a wager, saying:

If you are really so clever, jump off the palm of my right hand. If you succeed, I'll tell the Jade Emperor to come and live with me in the Western Paradise, and you shall have his throne without more ado. But if you fail, you shall go back to earth and do penance there for many a kalpa before you come to me again with your talk.
(Waley 1943, 75)

Monkey who was young, with a high opinion of himself, and disrespectful of his elders, thought that Buddha was a perfect old fool. His Cloud Trapeze could take him 108,000 leagues in a single bound, and Buddha's palm, in his eyes, was no longer than seven inches. (Waley 1943, 75) Monkey lost the wager. He was not able to jump out of the palm of Buddha, and the latter flipped his hand over and tossed Monkey out of Heaven. Buddha had Monkey imprisoned under the Mountain of Five Elements.

Monkey has committed a very common mistake that human beings make often. With growth and success comes self-conceitedness, and what usually follows is a fall. Being over-confident, Monkey has no knowledge of, and does not concern himself with what accomplishments other individuals have. He has no insight, nor wisdom. Lacking in wisdom is a shortcoming and a disadvantage. Monkey's feelings were hurt over and over again when he was working in Heaven, because he did not have the insight that the Jade Emperor was using the appeasement approach. Monkey had no perception how he was held in the opinion of other celestial residents, and he simply assumed that he got his job because he was recognized for his talent, and he thought he had the celestial society's respect. It was not true. When Monkey was striving to jump out of Buddha's palm, Buddha watched him "with the eye of wisdom." (Waley 1943, 75) Earlier, when Monkey proposed to take over the Jade Emperor's seat, Buddha said to him:

He has been perfecting himself for 1750 kalpas, and every kalpa is 129,000 years. Just see how long it takes to achieve such wisdom as his! (Waley 1943, 74)

Having no wisdom, Monkey lacks perspective. Monkey does not know that Buddha, symbol of the Law of the universe, is the universe. And no matter how far Monkey can jump, he is still within the universe. His fall does not diminish his good qualities. Yet as great as he is, he has not been productive. His intelligence and his ability have not been tempered and channeled to achieve.

Converted by Bodhisattva Kuan-yin, Monkey stayed under the mountain for only five hundred years when Tripitaka came by and rescued him, and he did not do penance for as many kalpas as Buddha had stipulated in the wager. Monkey, impatient and unwise, was, however, a fast learner. In Chapter II of this thesis, it was cited that Monkey left his master in a huff in the incident with the six robbers, but he later came back to Tripitaka of his own volition. Monkey came back because he had a revelation, and this revelation was a turning point for him. This revelation dawned on him when he was visiting with the dragon king. Having left Tripitaka in anger and frustration, Monkey took a detour on his way returning to his monkey kingdom, to pay a visit to the same dragon whom he had treated so rudely, and from whom he received his Compliant Rod and his outfit. During the visit, Monkey saw a picture on the wall depicting the story of Chang Liang offering the slipper. Monkey asked the dragon king what it was about.

“You were in Heaven at the time,” said the dragon, “and naturally would not know about it. The immortal in the picture is Huang Shih Kung, and the other figure is Chang Liang. Once when Shih Kung was sitting on a bridge, his shoe came off and fell under the bridge. He called to Chang Liang to pick it up and bring it to him. Chang Liang did so, whereupon the Immortal at once let it fall again, and Chang Liang again fetched it. This happened three times, without Chang Liang showing the slightest sign of impatience. Huang Shih Kung then gave him a magic treatise, by means of which he defeated all the enemies of the House of Han, and became the greatest hero of the Han dynasty. . . . Great Sage, you must learn to have a little more patience, if you hope to accompany the pilgrim to India and gain the Fruits of Illumination.” Monkey looked thoughtful. “Great Sage,” said the dragon, “you must learn to control yourself and submit to the will of others, if you are not to spoil all

your chances.” “Not another word!” said Monkey, “I’ll go back at once.”
(Waley 1943, 134-35)

When Monkey looked thoughtful, it was the moment that he acquired some wisdom. In his adolescent period, he had no patience and he always carried out his own will. Now that he was supposed to be on a journey to achieve his redemption, he was behaving in an adolescent manner when he left his master in a huff. He had made a blunder but he was quick and decisive in correcting it. When he returns to his master of his own volition, he begins to practice both patience and submitting his will to others.

Monkey’s process to achievement is a long one. The distance between China and the Western Paradise is given as 108,000 leagues, exactly the distance that Monkey can cover in a single somersault. To earn his redemption, he must carry the responsibility of guarding over Tripitaka to walk every inch of the 108,000 leagues. On the journey Monkey gradually establishes himself as the real leader of his group. The others learn gradually that Monkey is indispensable to the pilgrimage. Having wronged Monkey a few times when Monkey has first joined him, Tripitaka learns to appreciate Monkey’s abilities and his devotion. His fellow pilgrims develop a genuine respect for him. The bonds between disciple and master, between disciple brothers develop and strengthen.

When Tripitaka picked up Monkey as his disciple, he gave Monkey the nickname Pilgrim. (Yu 1977, 301) This journey to the West ostensibly is Tripitaka’s mission, but in reality it is the progress of the human mind on a pilgrimage to truth. Monkey, incarnated as the human mind, is properly nicknamed by Tripitaka as Pilgrim.

Now Monkey adds to the substantial qualities he has all along had, the additional virtue of patience as well as the virtue of submitting his will to those of others. He has dropped his willfulness. Having embraced the callings of a monk and with the brilliance of mind, Monkey comprehends the meaning of the sutras better than even Tripitaka, the acclaimed illustrious high monk. Earlier on, in the episode with the six robbers, Monkey,

as a new convert, comprehended readily what they meant, and as a monk had no problem to do away with them. Having been a monk for some time now, Monkey had even better understanding of the meaning of some sutras. In chapter ninety-three of Journey to the West, Monkey had a conversation with Tripitaka on the interpretation of the Heart Sutra that the Crow's Nest Zen master had taught Tripitaka to recite. Monkey, seeing Tripitaka was worrying again, commented that the master did not learn from the Zen master the sutra's proper interpretation. The master challenged Monkey asking if he knew the proper interpretation. Monkey said emphatically that he did. Then, both fell silent. The two junior disciples giggled and teased Monkey for what they deemed to be the latter's pretentiousness, for, like them, Monkey came with the background of a monster and with no formal Buddhist training. Hearing them, Tripitaka said to the two very seriously: "Wu-neng and Wu-ching, stop this claptrap! Wu-kung's interpretation is made in speechless language. That's true interpretation." (Yu 1983, 295) This comment from Tripitaka confirms that Monkey as the human mind is endowed with the ability to comprehend truth, a comment foretelling the definition of truth to come from Buddha when they eventually reach him.

In chapter ninety-eight, when the "Ape and Horse Were Tamed," the pilgrims arrived at the Western Paradise and Monkey alone perceived where they were, and he informed Tripitaka. To see Buddha they must ascend to the Spiritual Vulture Peak of Mount Spirit. (Yu 1983, 382) While the Peak was insight, there was still some distance. There was also a crucial rite that only Monkey understood. The rite was that Tripitaka must lose his mortal body before he could achieve the ultimate wisdom to see Buddha, and only Monkey could recognize immediately that the ferryman who had come to take them across the river was the Conductor of all Souls. When they saw Tripitaka's body floating down the upstream, it was Monkey who comforted Tripitaka, asking him not to be afraid. (Yu

1983, 385) And Pigsy and Sandy clapped their hands, and the Conductor of All Souls congratulated Tripitaka.

Now that Tripitaka has achieved the “profound wisdom” which enables him to reach “the other shore,” (Yu 1983, 385) ready to see Buddha, he knows better that he owes the most to Monkey, the mind, who has guarded him and guided him to reach his destination. When Tripitaka gives thanks to his disciples for all they have done, it is most appropriate that the following words have come from Monkey:

Every one of us is equally indebted to the other. If the Master had not received our vows and accepted us as his disciples we should not have had the chance to do good works and win salvation. If we had not protected the Master and mounted guard over him, he would never have got rid of his mortal body. (Waley 1943, 282)

Monkey now has thoroughly understood the meaning of working together with his fellow pilgrims. He has been practicing it for many years. He has no trace of willfulness and conceitedness left.

When Tripitaka reaches his destination, Monkey has proved his maturity and achieved his own salvation. Monkey receives the title, Buddha Victorious in Strife. Indeed, the chief merit of Monkey is that he has strived to achieve, by harnessing his will and focusing his mind. He is victorious over all the monsters he struggled with, but the spirit that has propelled him in these struggles has come out of his determination to harness his mind of a monkey and to rule his will of a horse.

When Bodhisattva Kuan-yin asks the various deities who have assisted the pilgrims on their journey “what disposition the pilgrims displayed during their journey,” the answer comes as: “They manifested the greatest determination and devotion.” (Waley 1943, 290) Indeed, all Monkey’s might would have been to no avail in obtaining his salvation, were it not for his determination and devotion in putting his mind and his will to good use, an effort possible for every human mind to attain.

CHAPTER 6

ON TRUTH

The book Monkey does not proclaim a universal truth. To Wu Ch'eng-en, the author, truth is perceived by an individual, not given to him. That the four pilgrims have found immortality does not mean that the book offers a written, user-friendly formula to the readers to find their truth. Nor does the book name one divine power, or source, where from comes the absolute truth.

When the Handsome Monkey King leaves his throne behind to embark on the journey alone in search of immortality, the readers may follow his search with keen interest. Many of them may share the same thought which has prompted Monkey on his quest, the thought that Yama, the king of the nether world, has sovereignty over them, and if they are to die, will they not have lived in vain? (Yu 1977, 73) If preserving the mortal body to live on earth forever means immortality to a reader, he will not find instructions in Wu's book to accomplish that goal.

The character Monkey in Wu Ch'eng-en's novel begins his quest early on in the book to seek immortality. When the book ends with the pilgrimage accomplished, and the pilgrims awarded titles by Buddha, and they live with him in the Western Paradise forever, the question remains, to the readers who are looking to find immortality for themselves: What is immortality, or truth, and how can they find it?

Conveyed through his narrative, Wu Ch'eng-en's answer to the question is that human lives are not lived in vain, though in strife and in overcoming adversities. Tripitaka who is the only pilgrim with a mortal body, must lose his mortal body before he may reach

the “Further shore” and gain “profound wisdom.” (Yu 1983, 385) And the three disciples are all “illuminated.” (Waley 1943, 301) This ending is truth to Wu Ch’eng-en. But, through the narrative in his novel, he makes it known to his readers that what is truth to him may not be truth to them.

In the novel, Monkey seeks immortality, obtains illumination, goes on the pilgrimage to earn his salvation and eventually achieve wisdom. The pilgrims’ mission is to fetch from Buddha the scriptures called Tripitaka, three collections that “are able to save the damned, deliver the afflicted, and fashion the indestructible body,” and “to break the circle of coming and going.” (Yu 1977, 276) In the novel, after Tripitaka loses his mortal body, he is still a whole person, the “body” he now has he cannot lose. In that sense it is indestructible. Popular Buddhism believes in reincarnations, and reincarnation means continued suffering, thus this condition is undesirable. Breaking the circle of coming and going means stopping this continued suffering. At this point, it seems that the readers may safely assume that truth lies in these three collections of scriptures by which the damned and the afflicted will be delivered. But words coming from Buddha will change this assumption.

When the pilgrims arrive at their destination, Buddha bids his two chief disciples to take them to the Treasury to be issued these scriptures. Surprisingly, these disciples expect gratuity from the pilgrims and ask what “small gifts” they have brought. The pilgrims have none. Grudgingly the disciples give them the scrolls. Afterward, to their consternation, the pilgrims find that they have received blank scrolls, with no writings in them. (Waley 1943, 286) Indignant, they go back to Buddha to expose his two disciples. But Buddha “smiling,” says, “as a matter of fact, it is such blank scrolls as these that are the true scriptures.” (Waley 1943, 287)

How are wordless scriptures to save the damned and to deliver the suffering? Tripitaka once told his two junior disciples that Monkey’s interpretation of the Heart Sutra

was done in speechless language and it offered the true interpretation. (Yu 1983, 295)
Based on what Buddha says of the blank scrolls and what Tripitaka says of the speechless language, it will not be groundless for the readers to surmise now that truth must be interpreted by each individual for himself. If the true interpretation is speechless, no one can tell another person what truth is. The damned and the suffering must be delivered by their own perception of truth. In the book A Short History of Buddhism, it is said that,

Buddhism claims that a person called 'The Buddha', or 'The Enlightened One', rediscovered a very ancient and long-standing, in fact an ageless, wisdom, and that he did so in Bihar in India, round about 600 or 400 BC--the exact date is unknown. . . the Buddha formulated no definite doctrines or creeds, but put his entire trust into the results obtained by training his disciples through a threefold process of moral restraint, secluded meditation and philosophical reflection. (Conze 1982, 11)

Conceivably, the concept that these wordless scriptures are the true scriptures is too intangible for some individuals to deal with, and Wu Ch'eng-en's Buddha understands the level of comprehension of these people, so he says: "But I quite see that the people of China are too foolish and ignorant to believe this, so there is nothing for it but to give them copies with some writing on." (Waley 1943, 287)

Buddha does not have a very high opinion of the Chinese people, in his words:

In all the vast and populous bounds of your Eastern Land, greed, slaughter, lust and lying have long prevailed. There is no respect for Buddha's teaching, no striving towards good works. So full and abundant is the measure of the people's sins that they go down forever into the darkness of Hell, where some are pounded in mortars, some take on animal form, furry and horned. In which guise they are done by as they did on earth, their flesh becoming men's food. Confucius stood by their side teaching them all the virtues, king after king in vain corrected them with fresh penalties and pains. No law could curb their reckless debauches, no ray of wisdom penetrate their blindness. (Waley 1943, 283-84)

Buddha in his mercy and compassion, nevertheless gives out the scriptures with writings for these people's salvation. It is because the Chinese people are too ignorant to perceive truth on their own, that giving them written scriptures is better than leaving them with no clues at all by which to perceive truth for themselves. In Buddha's view, to these foolish

Chinese, written scriptures are better than nothing, but written scriptures do not mean the absolute truth.

In the above speech, Buddha singles out Confucius and his teaching and mentions virtues and wisdom. Wu Ch'eng-en writes about the people he knows: the Chinese. And he depicts the culture as it is. Buddhism is popular in China, but Buddhism is not the only source of moral strength for the Chinese. On the surface, Monkey seems to be a book devoted solely to upholding the Buddhist religion. Tripitaka is a Buddhist monk. The Bodhisattva Kuan-yin is a Buddhist goddess, and the pilgrimage is to Buddha's holy land to fetch Buddhist scriptures. Yet in the end, by Buddha's own words, the true scriptures are the wordless ones. Then, what religion is it when the scriptures are wordless? And by what truth, presented by which religion, will human beings, these damned and suffering, be saved? If truth is not written down in black and white and handed out to whoever will take it, but rather it must be perceived by the individual himself, then it would be the individual's choice, what religion or, for that matter, what philosophy he sees his truth in.

In China of Wu Ch'eng-en's time, truth would be found in the Three Religions. Thus Wu Ch'eng-en's Buddha says, upon bestowing scrolls with writings on them to the pilgrims: "The efficacy of these scriptures is boundless. They are not only the mirror of our Faith, but also the source and origin of all three religions." (Waley 1943, 288) Thus, according to Buddha, the three religions have the same source and origin and by extension, the same benefit. In the book A Brief History of Chinese Fiction, Lu Hsun writes:

For centuries a struggle for supremacy raged between Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism, till these three religions decided to tolerate each other and consider themselves as stemming from a single source. (Lu Hsun 1964, 198)

Emphasis on the equal importance of the three religions has come up at least three times in the long course of Wu's narrative. The first time the court officials brought it to the Tang emperor's attention that:

It was Emperor of Wu of the Northern Chou dynasty who set the Three Religions in order. . . . Moreover, it has been held since antiquity that the Three Religions are most honorable, not to be destroyed or abolished. (Yu 1977, 262)

Wu Ti of the Northern Chou dynasty ruled A. D. 561-78. The Three Religions are Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism. (Yu 1977, 520)

The second time it is Monkey who said essentially the same thing as the court officials did. It happened in the Cart-slow country, where some animal spirit disguised as Taoist priests were persecuting monks and deceiving the king of that country. After Monkey had exposed the fake Taoist and delivered the monks, he exhorted them as follows:

Now the whole pest has been extirpated and you see with your own eyes that Buddhism is the true way. Never again follow false doctrines nor follow foolish courses, but know that the Three Religions are one. Reverence priests, reverence Taoists too, and cultivate the faculties of man. (Waley 1943, 248)

Monkey, though on a pilgrimage to see Buddha, told the monks that the three religions were one and admonished the monks to reverence all three. When Buddha himself tells the pilgrims that the scriptures they have been issued are the source and origin of the three religions, it is the third time in the book that the three religions are held together as the moral tenet of the Chinese people.

Of the three religions, Confucianism is more a philosophy than a religion. Webster's New World Dictionary defines religion as "a belief in a divine or superhuman power or powers to be obeyed and worshiped as the creator(s) and ruler(s) of the universe." James Ware says emphatically, "Notice that Confucius has never been deified." (Ware 1955, 7) and "it must be clearly understood that the Chinese have never worshiped Confucius, nor have they ever prayed to him for anything." (Ware 1955, 14) In the classical tradition, Confucius has been revered as the first and foremost teacher. The reason that Confucianism may be logically included in the term Three Religions is because of the word "chiao" which may mean both religion and teaching. Hu Shih, one of the foremost scholars of modern China says in his book, The Chinese Renaissance:

The Chinese word for “religion” is *chiao* which means teaching or a system of teaching. To teach people to believe in a particular deity is a *chiao* ; but to teach them how to behave toward other men is also a *chiao* . (Hu Shih 1963, 79)

Confucius did not speak of divinities. (Ware 1955, 53) The focus of Confucian teaching is on man perfecting himself on earth, on man making himself into the man-at-his-best, or Great Man (*junzi*). (Ware 1955, 18-19) Man may achieve eternity by becoming the embodiment of virtues and earning themselves a place in the continuity of the human race. There is no concept in the Confucian teaching that life on earth is a preparation for the life hereafter. As a matter of fact, Confucius declined discussing the superhuman. Upon being asked by a student how to serve ghosts and gods, Confucius replied, “You cannot treat spirits and divinities properly before you are able to treat your fellowmen properly.” Asked about death, his reply was, “You cannot know about death before you know about life.” (Ware 1955, 72) And no more was said by the Master.

Confucianism, by the definition found in the West's New World Dictionary, cannot be considered a religion. Confucianism is a teaching. Buddhism and Taoism are religions. But the three of them are all “*chiao*” in Chinese, and together they are three “religions.”

Wu Ch'eng-en was an educated man and in the sixteenth century China, all educated men were educated in the Confucian tradition. It should not come as a surprise for the readers to see that Wu, in the Confucian tradition, put his focus on human life on earth in his novel. Wu's allegory on the four pilgrims' representing different aspects of human temperament, is not on the condition of the soul in the hereafter, but rather on the human condition now. His use of the phrase, “mind monkey and will horse” describes life's journey is on earth, and on how man may conduct himself in order to achieve. He borrowed the popular Buddhist religion as a vehicle to carry his narrative, of which the focus is not on religion and the hereafter, but rather on the human temperament and on the meaning of human life on earth. The divinities and spirits provide fantastic scenarios for

him to tell his story. To Wu Ch'eng-en, the most central tenet on how a man is to live his life lies in Confucianism: be the man at his best.

Monkey is a humorous book. All the episodes are fun to read, and Wu depicts all the figures in the book, be they celestial beings, monsters or pilgrims, with good humor. He pokes fun at them. Celestial beings as well as monsters occupy themselves with eating, drinking and socializing. Their cravings and designs are similar to the human's. Even Buddha's disciples in the Western Paradise expect gratuities. The divinities are not divine and the monsters are not evil. Everyone is human. As holy a monk as Tripitaka is, he has his shortcomings. As foolish as Pigsy is, he has his strength. As dull as Sandy is, he has a solid personality. As intelligent as Monkey is, he makes mistakes. Taught by the Master, Confucius, the author examines life. When the pilgrims have arrived at the Western Paradise, his book is finished, for nothing more may be said.

Confucian teaching is on developing the faculties of man and man must take the initiative in this endeavor. The Master said: "If a man does not constantly ask himself, 'What is the right thing to do?' I really don't know what is to be done about him." (Creel 1953, 44) Even Buddha, "The Enlightened One," left his disciples to their own "moral restraint, secluded meditation and philosophical reflection," to perceive the truth for themselves.

Wu Ch'eng-en, an educated Chinese man of the sixteenth century, has revealed to his readers his perception of life and truth in his book Monkey, but he never intended that the readers take his as the last word. Wu has made it amply clear that truth cannot be written down by one source and handed to individuals to be held as the absolute truth. There is no easy way; every person must perceive his own truth.

CHAPTER 7

COMPANION ESSAY

In this companion essay, I shall reflect on the creative process as it relates to the creative writing of these above six essays. I shall, however, begin first by speculating, as I imaginatively reconstruct them, on connections between the literature on creativity I have read in the course of my studies as a student of the Creative and Critical Thinking Program (CCT), and the author Wu Ch'eng-en's process of creating the novel Monkey. I shall also discuss the connections between Wu's presentations of two of his characters as critical thinkers, and the literature I studied in the area of critical thinking as a CCT student.

I have been reading Monkey since childhood, and have read the story countless times. Each time the book has proved itself as absorbing as ever. In choosing to write my thesis on Monkey, I have combined an long-held love with newly found insights. These insights have come to me because of the thinking skills I have learned in my CCT studies. In Chapters I to VI of this thesis, I write as one of, and for, the general readers. In this chapter, Chapter VII, I write as a student of the Creative and Critical Thinking Program.

Any casual reader of Monkey may acknowledge that Monkey is a book of the richest and wildest imagination, and that Wu Ch'eng-en is a creative genius. As a CCT student, I shall try to put into simple prose the "hows" of Wu Ch'eng-en's creativity, at the same time making an attempt to explore the critical thinking encompassed in Wu's work. While studying Wu Ch'eng-en and his book Monkey, I found that the uncommonly creative people are, in many ways, alike in their creative process; they borrow, substitute, make metaphors and put old ideas to new use, and they rely on critical thinking to form and

present their creativity. Only the results of their creativity are different. They each create pieces that are uniquely their own and their individuality lives in their works for eternity.

In CCT 602, Creative Thinking, we read the book Uncommon Genius by Denise Shekerjian. The title of chapter one in this book, “Talent and the Long Haul,” gives the gist of the chapter. There is no magic and there is no trick to creativity, but there are certain things that creative people have done that have fostered their creativity. Among the things mentioned in this chapter, there are three that Wu Ch’eng-en, the author of Monkey, did for himself. The first one is finding out what one is really good at and sticking to it. (Shekerjian 1991, 3) The second is combining two different frames of reference to produce a surprise. (Shekerjian 1991, 6) And the third is being creative in a context. (Shekerjian 1991, 7) Wu Ch’eng-en wrote a book that was full of fun and jests, with monsters and supernatural beings who were personified. He gave his book, which was sheer fun, an additional frame of reference that was about the human condition. The combination of these two frames of reference brought to the readers a surprise that in the middle of all this fantastic fun, they would realize that Wu’s story is about them, the readers, and Monkey’s life is relevant to their lives. By and by, it would dawn upon them that the book was in the context of human life. Surprise, who would have thought that a monster who is a monkey spirit would have so much in common with man.

Wu Ch’eng-en (1500-1582) was a man educated in the Confucian classics. In his day, it was a firmly established tradition that all educated men strived to pass the imperial examinations so as to be awarded government posts. In such positions, they fulfilled their mission in serving the emperor and the common people. (Miyazaki, 1963) Wu only passed one of the lower level examinations and served “briefly” in a “minor official capacity.” (Hsia 1968, 138) He was an “intelligent and witty scholar, well read and fond of a jest.” (Lu Hsun 1964, 210) He was, however, not hung up on his being a “failure,” and he knew himself rather well. He wrote about himself:

I was very fond of strange stories when I was a child. In my village-school days, I used to buy stealthily the popular novels and historical recitals. Fearing that my father and my teacher might punish me for this and rob me of these treasures, I carefully hid them in secret places where I could enjoy them unmolested. As I grew older, my love for strange stories became even stronger, and I learned of things stranger than what I had read in my childhood. When I was in my thirties, my memory was full of these stories accumulated through years of eager seeking. (Waley 1943, 1)

The above passage was found in the preface he gave to a collection of stories of monsters he wrote. The collection had been lost to posterity; the preface survived. He further said in this preface that “it is not I who have found these ghosts and monsters, but they, the monstrosities themselves, which have found me!” (Waley 1943, 1) The signal that these monstrosities had found him, was his creative impulse, but the impulse did not come up all of a sudden; rather there had been a long incubating period before the impulse became compelling. It had been a long time coming since his childhood when would-be scholars began their schooling in the one-room, one-teacher village-school house. Wu did not dwell upon his failure at the examination halls, neither did he suffocate his fondness of monsters. He was the genius with a long haul.

Hu Shih says in the preface he gave to Waley’s translation of Monkey:

Freed from all kinds of allegorical interpretations by Buddhist, Taoist, and Confucianist commentators, *Monkey* is simply a book of good humor, profound nonsense, good-natured satire and delightful entertainment. (Waley 1943, 5)

Hu’s words indicate that there are two frames of reference in the book. The entertainment aspect of Monkey is one frame of reference, and the aspect that induces interpretations from commentators is another frame of reference. Such interpretations are due to the philosophizing over the human condition on the author’s part. These two frames of reference together make Monkey a great piece of literature. Besides being entertainment, Monkey gives its author’s view on how human beings are, and how they live their lives. Such a book of “profound nonsense” is deeply rooted in a background that was China. Wu Ch’eng-en was a Chinese man writing about the Chinese people and their world. How

they longed to understand life and its purposes. How they strived to gain for self-interest and self-preservation. How corrupt they were capable of being. Even how they were fond of the culinary art. How everyone was so different with different dispositions. And what potential they had when they were able to regulate their mind and their will. This world was the book's context. In depicting these people in this world, Wu gave his personal touch: his humor. His imagination of monster beings and the cultural context within which his imagination roamed, produced a delightful surprise: a masterpiece in literature. Because all human beings, regardless of post-birth influences, are fundamentally alike, the novel Monkey, when rendered into English, is appreciated by readers of English. I found it incredibly marvelous that Wu, a man who lived in sixteenth century China, had done what some uncommonly creative people who live in twentieth century America would do in fostering their creativity. What a marvelous proof that all human beings are basically alike. No wonder that readers of English enjoy reading the novel Monkey.

In CCT 602, Creative Thinking, we also read a book by Gary A. Davis, Creativity is Forever. In the chapter, "What is Creativity," it is said that "a creative idea is a combination of previously unrelated ideas, or looking at it another way, new relationships among ideas." (Davis 1992, 44) In writing his novel Monkey, Wu made use of many old ideas, and looked at them in new ways. As mentioned in earlier chapters, Tripitaka was a historical figure, a monk of the Tang Dynasty (618-905) who went to India alone and brought back Buddhist scriptures. But the "Tripitaka of the novel could not have borne any resemblance of his historical counterpart." (Hsia 1964, 125) Wu's Tripitaka would never have arrived at the Western Paradise without the protection from his disciples. He is not one that legends could have been made of. But he is a very real person: anxiety-ridden, pious, merciful, not very bright and extremely differential to all deities. Here Wu borrowed from something old and created something new out of it.

As for Wu's hero Monkey, there were some short stories from the Tang Dynasty featuring a monkey character. (Hsia 1964, 130) But the monkey who longs for immortality and for control over his own fate, and who is the human mind, is Wu's creation. Wu's Monkey is a person, with a very full experience of life. Wu created him and drew him from birth to eternity. He was not born of two other monkeys. He came to life having been nourished by the essence of heaven and earth. Upon deeper thoughts, all human beings are nourished by the essence of heaven and earth. Monkey has a comfortable mundane life made for him when he has ascended as the Handsome Monkey King. Yet Monkey does not live on fruit and seeds--his bread and butter--alone. Neither do Wu's readers. Man needs more than just a mundane life. Monkey does not want to have lived in vain. Neither do Wu's readers. In Monkey's adolescent period, he says that he is "tired of the narrow scope afforded by the world of man." (Waley 1943, 74) Many readers have similar reactions to such restriction as teenagers. What can a person do? Wu's observation is that a brilliant mind and exceptional ability per se are not sufficient to enable man to avoid living their lives in vain. Channeled energy and focused mind could, however, make a life worth living. Out of the idea of using a monkey as a character in a story, Wu created a coherence, an entire life's experiences.

Wu also borrowed from popular folk beliefs. The Three Regions, or Three Realms, Heaven, Earth and Underworld were populated by celestial beings, human beings and ghosts respectively, and all these beings had forms that were the same as human forms. This setup had been related in many stories told by story-tellers in the Sung Dynasty (960-1276), and volumes of such stories have been handed down to the later generations. (Birch 1958) (Ma 1978) Out of these beings of the Three Realms, Wu selected a few with which to fabricate his novel. Kuan-yin became the patroness of the scripture-fetching expedition. Buddha, his mouthpiece on truth. Wu even took one other immortal being's disciple and assigned him to Kuan-yin as her disciple: one by the name:

Muzha. Muzha was the disciple of Immortal Universal Virtue at the White Crane Cave on the Nine Palace Mountain according to Creation of the Gods. (Gu 1992, 133) In Monkey, Muzha was Kuan-yin's disciple and accompanied her on most of her trips. (Yu 1977, 153) Wu borrowed freely, and he used what he had borrowed with exuberance. Such borrowing is not "plagiarism, it is a common analogical creative thinking process used by uncommonly creative people." (Davis 1992, 126) As mentioned in Chapter I of this thesis, one characteristic of the classic Chinese novel is that their authors borrowed from legends, folk tales, history and the storytellers' prompt books. Further proof that the creative processes, regardless of the distance in time and of geography, are alike, linking all humans closer and making the world smaller.

As a matter of fact, the transformation devices Wu used bear remarkable resemblance to parts of Bob Eberle's Scamper, (Eberle 1971) a cluster of transformation devices in creativity. Wu substituted his own version of Tripitaka for the historical Tripitaka. He combined the Three Realms along with their inhabitants to provide Monkey with a behemoth community in which he might experience life. And Wu put various deities to new uses. The dragon kings who were generally recognized in folk beliefs as rulers of the four seas and makers of rain, gave Monkey his magic weapon and his outfit. One of them, the dragon king of the Eastern Sea, even had a role to play at a turning point in Monkey's life, when he had the revelation that the community he was living in was one he shared with other inhabitants, and that he was mistaken in insisting that everything must go his way.

Professor Delores Gallo, who was my instructor of CCT 602, expanded Eberle's Scamper by adding making metaphor to Eberle's magnifying or minifying. And Wu did exactly what Professor Gallo was to suggest four hundred years later. He made a metaphor out of an everyday phrase "mind monkey and will horse," that I examined in the last chapter. In the book, Creativity is Forever, in the chapter, "The Creative Person,"

Davis speaks of “energetic creativeness that may need rechanneling into constructive outlets.” (Davis 1992, 80) This rechanneling was what Wu meant with the monkey-horse metaphor. A lively intellect will not idle; creativeness flows out of it. Such creativeness could be destructive or constructive. When Monkey is on the road to the Western Paradise, he must fight with the monsters, to protect Tripitaka on one hand, and to have an outlet for his creativeness on the other. Monkey’s creativeness manifests in the different ways he copes with each different monster. In his adolescent period, his creativeness makes havoc in Heaven, with a very destructive outcome.

As demonstrated by his book Monkey, Wu Ch’eng-en clearly was a creative person. Davis says “Two traits of creative people are attraction to complexity and tolerance for ambiguity.” (Davis 1992, 39) The world we live in is not sharply divided in black and white, but is in shades and sometimes in obscure colors. In his book, Wu did not set up two camps, the good versus the bad. Affairs and interactions between these beings in the Three Realms were complex, making a simplistic depiction of groups that are totally right or completely wrong, unrealistic and untrue. It was exactly this complexity that made these affairs and interactions interesting to Wu, so he wrote about them. This ambiguity existed in reality and he left it alone, with much good sense of humor.

These two traits, attraction to complexity and tolerance of ambiguity involve secondary process thinking. Davis says:

Primary process thinking, which developmentally occurs before secondary thinking, happens during relaxation. It includes the chaotic realm of dreams, reveries, free associations and fantasies--your basic stuff of creativity. Secondary process thinking is logical, analytic, and oriented toward reality. (Davis 1992, 53)

This is where creative thinking and critical thinking merge in the creative process. On the level of primary process thinking, Wu had all the monsters and their doings. But he could only make sense of them if he was able to present his material with coherence and relevance. Here he must apply critical thinking. The allegory and metaphor he superposed

over the monster tales, are results of creative thinking, and at the same time of critical thinking. When he saw the connections between his monsters and humans, it was his secondary process thinking working. Without secondary process thinking, the creativity of primary process thinking will not go anywhere, because creativity must be captured so that it can be effectively presented, to be understood and appreciated. Creativity must be shown in coherence and relevance for it to exist to the rest of the world. It needs to be given shape so that it becomes tangible and communicable thoughts. Critical thinking forms creativity into well-formed tangible thoughts. In these tangible thoughts creativity is communicated and preserved.

Critical thinking does not offer a formula for thinking, rather it is a mentality. The thinker is not pushing for a conclusion so that he may sit on it as his opinion, so that his mind is made up, period. Wu Ch'eng-en passed no judgment on the various beings in his book, none beyond the most simplistic immoral behaviors, such as contriving to eat a human being, or killing the innocent. The monsters fighting with Monkey all lost to him one way or the other, because they were not as capable as Monkey. Monkey knew so many other beings and had help from so many other beings. Monkey had greater magic than them too. Did Wu present the Jade Emperor as a perfection? Not at all. Look at the punishment he had meted out to Sandy for breaking a crystal dish. How about Buddha; why did he shelter such disciples that asked for gifts from the pilgrims? Wu Ch'eng-en had the critical thinking mentality. Not passing final judgment does not mean putting everything on hold either. A critical thinker makes observations; only he is prepared to modify his observations should he see more facts warranting a modification. Thus Wu did give the readers his observations on human life. It was the hard, matter of fact daily work that counted the most in rendering human life meaningful, and that was what life was made of. And he gave us Monkey, a hero of dimensions, to illustrate his point. In doing so Wu did not say that his observation was the last word. Rather he made it very clear that truth

must be perceived by each individual for himself. To seek perpetually, with an open mind, to understand is indeed the mentality in critical thinking.

In his novel, Wu gave us two models of critical thinkers. Sandy is a critical thinker of a lesser degree than Monkey. Monkey is not only a critical thinker, he is a strong sense critical thinker. A critical thinker has generally a wider perspective than a non-critical thinker, because he is conscious of looking at matters from other people's points of view and from all angles. Sandy does not jump into conclusions and is always the one to caution his companions on waiting to find out more about a situation. He is the last one to join the pilgrims and as the new comer, he does not know what happened before his arrival. He has steadfastly taken in what is taking place around him, and has an understanding of the other three's attributes. When there are crises that demand actions, he is able to take actions according to the understanding he has so far. He sees causes and consequences in their sequential manner. His accident in breaking the dish while serving as an aide to the Jade Emperor caused him to be banished to the River of Flowing Sand, and to suffer the accompanying miseries. In order to regain his well being, he must redeem himself by guarding over Tripitaka on his journey to the West. With his goal in sight, unlike Pigsy, he is not distracted by luck or windfalls. He reveres Tripitaka because the latter is a good monk and his master in teaching him the spiritual. He reveres Monkey because of his superior ability and his devotion to the group. He occasionally teases Pigsy because Pigsy does foolish things. Sandy is logical and has a good grasp of matters taking place in his life. He makes positive contributions to the group and he has an upright character. His attributes, however, do not put him in a position where he may carry the responsibility for the group on his shoulders. His place is limited to that of a contributing member.

It is Monkey's place to lead and to give himself to the betterment of all, because he is a strong sense critical thinker. "Critical thinking can be distinguished into two forms:

‘selfish’ or ‘sophistic’, on the one hand, and ‘fairminded’, on the other.” (Paul 1990, 545) Monkey has consistently displayed fair-minded thinking which has enabled him to be a good leader. Monkey showed the capacity to better his community very soon after he came into being. When some monkeys gave the call for a brave one among them to check out what was behind the waterfall, Monkey responded to the challenge and found for his companions a comfortable and secure home to live in. (Waley 1943, 12-13) As a critical thinker, he showed the desire to understand life when another person might have settled to a smug life as the Handsome Monkey King. He had the drive to give up an uninspiring mundane life to seek immortality. In the course of his growth, he returned from time to time out of necessity, to his monkey kingdom. Each time he was home, he looked out for the rest of the monkeys and he led them in building up their homestead. When the Jade Emperor offered him work in Heaven, Monkey told his subjects, “I’ll have a look round when I get to Heaven, and if it seems all right there, I’ll send for the rest of you to come and live with me.” (Waley 1943, 43) Monkey did not simply look out for his own personal interest. His critical thinking benefits his community at large. But imagine a whole bunch of monkeys living in Heaven! What a jest and how poignant too! But it was how Monkey was and how Wu’s humor was.

As mentioned in the chapter on Monkey, the most crucial turning point in Monkey’s life took place after he had left Tripitaka and the pilgrimage in anger, when he was having a cup of tea with the dragon king of the Eastern Sea. Upon hearing the story of Chang Liang, Monkey displayed the traits of a critical thinker. (Paul 1990, 51) He had the intellectual ability to see the analogy between Chang Liang’s story and his own. He had the intellectual humility to consider the point of view the dragon had just offered. He had the intellectual courage to admit that he was wrong and to change his course. He went back to Tripitaka of his own volition. From that point on he was all perseverance. Kuan-yin did not have to give Tripitaka that Golden Fillet to control him. In the subsequent chapters,

each time when Tripitaka used the control mechanism, it was out of Tripitaka's lack of understanding of Monkey and his inability in perceiving the sinister meaning of the situation at hand. Each time Tripitaka used the control he wronged Monkey. Monkey had never required a physical instrument to force him to the right direction. Monkey had embraced the mission because his critical thinking had led him to that direction. Facts were to prove that he was capable and was single-minded in leading his group to their destination. After Monkey had come back to Tripitaka of his own volition, his only goal was the salvation of the group. The over-sized ego he had as an adolescent, he set aside. Whatever good that came out of his critical thinking was to benefit his community, not for promoting his own interest, not to satisfy his own whim.

As a youngster, Monkey was ingenuous and trusting. His assumption was that everyone was the same way as he was in being straight forward. He was not, however, aware of this assumption of his. He believed everyone. He was a budding critical thinker when he had a healthy reaction to the restrictions in the world of man, and a healthy skepticism toward the established orders. When he lost the wager and was imprisoned under the mountain, he had time to think over matters. He was manly to accept the reality that he must work his way back to his well being. He was absolutely willing, "with all my heart," in his own words, to serve Tripitaka to earn his own redemption. Though frustrated by Tripitaka's density, he used his critical thinking to achieve a perspective and returned to be on the purposeful journey. On the journey, he had frequent contacts with various deities in Heaven, and he went to Kuan-yin's residence more than once to seek the latter's help. In all these interactions with beings who were better off than he and who held the keys to save the pilgrims from their present ordeals, Monkey never ingratiated himself with anyone. He was mature and understood where everyone stood, and he was exhibiting good manners. At all times, he was dignified. And he always conducted himself in good faith. Despite the mistreatment he had suffered at Tripitaka's hand when they first joined

each other, Monkey served the master with all his heart. Each time Tripitaka dismissed him, he was reluctant to leave. He not only wanted to stay on course to his salvation, but to protect the rest from what would happen to them without him. Monkey loved. He was attached to his master and his fellow disciple brothers. He had grown a bond to them. He could do so much and could see so clearly and he was so willing to give. He had a big heart, a very superior mind and an upright moral character. He was a most loveable human being. A critical thinker in the strong sense is the Socratic ideal of a person in whom, “the intimate fusion of reason and passion” takes place. (Paul 1990,113) Such fusion has taken place in Monkey.

Monks are called persons who have left the home (chu-jia-ren), and they should have no attachments and no passion. But Monkey has become attached in the very act of taking up the calling of a monk, and he serves with passion. It is another layer of ambiguity that Wu Ch’eng-en has bestowed upon his readers. Suffice to say that readers who are critical thinkers get more out of Monkey, when they work harder to understand.

Reading Monkey may be done on two levels: the micro level and the macro level. (Paul 1990, 90-91) On the micro-level, the reader reads just for the story: what happens in the story and what next. A critical thinker reader reads on the macro-level. He explores the intrinsic meaning of the story and the characters. What seems to be the meaning of the book is not accepted automatically. Using facts given in the story, the critical thinker reader may begin a dialogical process with himself, and he embarks on a course to fathom what the author has meant by giving his story in the way he does in the narrative. Tolerating the ambiguities that he finds in the book, he is aware that tomorrow he might find sufficient evidences to modify what view he holds today. He thinks, all the time. Wu Ch’eng-en writes that truth is in the wordless scrolls and in the speechless language. And Richard Paul says:

We often talk of knowledge as though it could be divorced from thinking, as though it could be gathered up by one person and given to another in the form of a collection of sentences. (Paul, 1990, 46)

How marvelous for a student like me to find these thoughts in Wu Ch'eng-en and in Richard Paul, two authors who live so far apart and who express thoughts so close. And how wonderful for a student like me to find affirmation that fundamentally all humans are alike. Making connections between what I speculated had happened with Wu in his creative process, and what I had read in my CCT studies was a very gratifying experience.

Reflecting on my own creative process, I shall record in the rest of this chapter, my experience in producing the text; my experience in discovering the monkey-horse metaphor; and my experience in learning to write critical essays. The learning process of writing critical essays was possible because I had received a great amount of help from my thesis director, Professor Gallo. All the experiences were positive and would have been more enjoyable, had it not been for the stress brought upon by deadlines. But, on second thought, without deadlines, I would not have been able to finish this thesis.

Books teaching writing often stipulate writing exercises. The first thing Peter Elbow talks about in his book Writing Without Teachers, is the free writing exercises. (Elbow 1973) But I found out independently that in order to write, I must just write. I could not wait for the moment that I was ready, for I was never ready. I simply had to write, discard and write again. With each try, a particular chapter I was trying to do would take some shape, and it shaped up a little bit more and a little bit better. In general, I drafted each chapter at least four times; each time keeping a bit more and discarding less. Of the seven chapters, only two were drafted during the semester I was teaching full time. The majority of the writing was done during the break in the winter between the fall and spring semesters, when I did not have to leave my house to go to work.

I became my own prisoner and my own jailer at the same time. I marked on the calendar the number of days I had to myself, and allotted a certain number of days to each

chapter, according to length and degree of difficulty. For instance, this chapter, the companion essay was given the largest number of days. The companion essay was to be a new endeavor, while the essays on each character of the book would fall into a pattern, and experience would speed up production. This strategy was fundamentally a sound one. I played the stern jailer to my own prisoner and kept up with the schedule. There were a few times, in my solitary confinement, I leaned my forehead on the wall; I wanted to cry.

Being conscious that I was writing in a second language, I strived to write correctly and clearly. Each time I became lost in producing a complex sentence expressing complex thoughts, I would simply resort to employ two simpler and straight forward sentences. I thought that simplicity was always better than forced refinement.

I worked all day long, resting only when my mind became too tired to think. About ten days into this “labor camp,” I experienced a kind of intellectual intensity that came from the total immersion into writing and thinking. I was quiet, peaceful and excited at the same time. I held the intensity and the excitement mindfully, consciously blocking out distractions, lest I should lose my grip on this unprecedented state of being. When I must attend to certain chores and obligations, I would mentally tuck the special sense of intensity away to a corner of my mind, and when I was to resume my writing, I would mindfully fetch it out. I was actually in control. This state of being lasted for about two and a half weeks. When the time drew close to the end of the break, I became flustered and lost the focused state of existence. I finished the draft two days behind schedule. By that time the spring semester had already begun.

At this time I did not know yet that in the way I had organized and presented my thoughts, I was not writing these essays in the form of critical essays, but rather as expository essays, with interpretations. It was after Professor Gallo had read some of the chapters of my draft, that I was made to understand what a critical essay must do. I began to revise the drafts: taking a critical stand, creating a tension at the onset, showing the

readers what they had missed, or misunderstood, and enlighten them with what I had to show them. Professor Gallo went over some of the text with me, repeating often the phrase, “let’s make it tighter!”

In the process of revising, one day I suddenly realized that to an oriental, writing a critical essay in good form in English is exercising an alien approach, one very much against the oriental upbringing. Orientals avoid direct criticism of other individuals. If they must express a different point of view, they assume a tentative air, to tone down the impact. An oriental would not be naturally inclined to creating tension, much less at the onset. This discovery amused me a great deal, while I did my best in embracing the effective way of writing a critical essay.

This discovery also surprised me. For many years I had assumed that I was almost completely Westernized. In exercising metacognition, now I saw that I had remained in certain ways very much a person of my native culture. For instance, Professor Gallo repeatedly advised me to move some concluding remarks I had made to the lead paragraphs. While I heeded her advise in adjusting the paragraphs, I felt a heavy weight on my mind. After some self-examination, I understood that the weight was due to the cultural reluctance in baring all one’s thoughts all at once as soon as one began. It was considered a lack of sophistication to reveal every thing at the beginning of a talk. One must by and by lead one’s audience to what one meant to say, and while leading them one was giving them time to be convinced of the validity of one’s point of view.

I thought I had a rather comprehensive outline in my mind of what I was to write in each essay, and I knew well where the evidences are in the narrative that I might cite to support my stances. Yet each time when I actually began to write a chapter, I became scared, feeling that I knew very little. The chapter on Monkey was to be an important chapter, not only because he was the hero in the novel, but also because he was the one character that I had always loved with all my heart and mind. When I began the chapter on

Monkey, suddenly all that was left in my mind was that Monkey was incarnated as the human mind, and the rest of my mind was, well, rather empty. Having been a student of the CCT program for five years, I hastily came to my own rescue with some basic skills in critical thinking: collecting evidences. But, so late in the process, where to begin? All I knew was that Monkey was the mind. I had to begin there. I recalled that in the chapter titles, Monkey was referred to more than once as Mind Monkey. Perhaps I should start with the chapter titles. I began to read the chapter titles in the original, and the table of contents ran seven pages. I postponed the writing, in search of inspiration and clues. I circled all the ideograms Mind Monkey in red, and suddenly, a light went up in my mind, that there was also some references made to the Will Horse. As a native of the Chinese language and culture, I understood immediately the significance of the references to both Mind Monkey and Will Horse. While I had no doubt that Wu was using the phrase “mind monkey and will horse--xinyuan yima” as a metaphor, I needed more evidences from Wu’s text to support my finding. First I looked up in Mathews’ Chinese English Dictionary, Harvard University Press, 1960, for a translation of the phrase. I found on page 405, “xinyuan yima: the heart of an ape and the mind of a horse--restless and unsettled.” Next I set out to read the chapters that had the term Mind Monkey in their titles. The first chapter that had the term Mind Monkey was chapter seven, and three pages into chapter seven, I came across the following poem. I immediately looked in Yu’s complete translation of Journey to the West to find the translation:

A monkey’s transformed body weds the human mind.
Mind is a monkey--this, the truth profound.
The Great Sage, Equal to Heaven, is no idle thought.
For how could the post of pi-ma justly show his gifts?
The Horse works with the Monkey--this means both Mind and Will
Must firmly be harnessed and not be ruled without.
(Yu 1977, 168)

I was so absorbed in my search, I did not know how much time had gone by. It all happened so fast. Extremely happy, I could not believe my luck. On second thought, finding such significant material so late in the process proved to me that I was on an absolutely risky course. What other significant material might I have missed? For the present, I had the support I needed to prove that Wu had used a common phrase as a metaphor. I had used more time than had been allotted for the chapter on Monkey, but what a great discovery I had made! How many readers would study the table of contents in a novel as closely as I had done? And with this discovery of the metaphor, how neatly would I wrap up the theme in the chapter on Monkey. I had the chapter made!

I played my own jailer and whipped myself to compose. Without the pressure from the requirement of a thesis by the Creative and Critical Thinking Program, I would not have done the writing. Now that I have finished it, I am elated that I have done it. The experience is my private possession. In a very humble way, on a minuscule level, in the privacy of my own little world, I allow myself the happiness of this small measure of “creativity is forever.”

In hind-sight and in exercising metacognition, I saw the extent I had been educated by critical thinking. Without being aware of what I was doing, I applied some of the strategies in critical thinking when I formulated my approaches and thoughts in writing these essays. I did not consciously apply Richard Paul’s strategies, yet I used a number of them out of the thirty-five he named in his book. (Paul 1990, 305)

I thought independently, refusing to “accept mindlessly” what was presented to me. (Paul 1990, 308) For example, the essay on Sandy was a very short one but one I felt very proud of. The reason was that I relied completely on my own examination in understanding Sandy’s character, refusing to accept Waley’s words in his preface “that, though in some inexplicable way essential to the story, he remains throughout singularly ill-defined and colorless.” (Waley 1943) While most of the readers and commentators

dismissed Sandy as simply unimportant, as a critical thinker, I adhered to the principle of not judging unfamiliar ideas until I had fully understood them, (Paul 1990, 312) and I put my understanding in the chapter on Sandy. When writing on Monkey, I practiced “clarifying and analyzing the meanings of words or phrases.” (Paul 1990, 325) And I was able to discover the metaphor of “mind monkey and will horse.” When writing on Tripitaka, I utilized the approach of “examining or evaluating assumptions,” (Paul 1990, 346) and I was able to separate Tripitaka’s pilgrim’s progress from his social trappings. In writing the chapter “On Truth,” I made “plausible inferences,” (Paul 1990, 344) when offering my interpretation on what truth was to Wu Ch’eng-en and in explaining the “three religions.” One principle I had embraced throughout the chapters was “evaluating evidence,” (Paul 1990, 347) and evidences meant I based my interpretations on happenings in the narrative.

It should not be a surprise to anyone that Professor Gallo used one of Paul’s strategies on me when she was advising me on the re-writing. It was strategy number twenty-four: “Practicing Socratic Discussion: Clarifying and Questioning Beliefs, Theories, or Perspectives.” (Paul 1990, 338) She made notes in the margins such as: “How did you know?” “Did you give a definition of it somewhere?” “Shouldn’t this section have come in an earlier part of this essay?” And “would you like to elaborate on this idea ?” As an conscientious CCT student, I knew this was a strategy to help me develop ideas yet not make me feel stupid. In the CCT spirit, I responded by practicing strategies number six, seven and eight: developing intellectual courage, intellectual integrity and, intellectual perseverance. (Paul 1990, 315-17) I faced my own inner thoughts: I wished that I did not have to compose anymore. Giving up at this point was not very good, so I whipped myself some more and wrote some more. I was very aware that intellectual integrity meant that I bring the self I was, to the self I wanted to be together. It was the reason I enrolled myself in CCT to begin with, so I composed more to improve my thesis. I was stressed

and exhausted; it had been a long haul since late December when I locked myself up in my house to write, and I would rather that I did not have to think about it anymore. But I persevered; I thought more and I wrote more.

Examining the above evidence, I think that indeed I was a critical thinker, and a critical thinker I will always want to be.

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