

The core of the paper is a philosophical and philological analysis of four shorter passages from the old Chinese philosophical text Zhuangzi. Considering traditional Chinese commentaries (especially Guo Xiang) and inspired by modern continental philosophy (especially Ricoeur and Heidegger), the author seeks to interconnect some of the crucial philosophical themes (losing and forgetting of I, change, freedom, dream, usefulness/uselessness) and build a framework for an overall philosophical interpretation, which would challenge the wide-spread but one-sided view claiming Zhuangzi to be a relativist and irrationalist. Drawing on reflections that will find a key to the text in a Zhuangzi's call for mutual incorporation of the voluntary with the involuntary and the reflective with the spontaneous the author is trying to grasp the relation of things and voidness as the underlying principle or reality. Much like the whole text of Zhuangzi this relation is also intrinsically ambiguous. Voidness turns out to be nothing but an expanded thingness, things, however, cannot be expanded unless they cease to be things. This conflict is incorporated in an sage, whose wisdom and legitimacy as a ruler over things is determined by the ability to accept this conflict and to reconcile with himself.