

*Lao Tzu and the Immanence of Immanence:
A Possibility for Reconsidering Our Natural “Beingness”*

By

David Bergeron, Ph.D.

davidbergeron9@hotmail.com

David.Bergeron@umoncton.ca

*Persequimur omnes eius fibras vivimusque super excavatam, mirantes
dehiscere aliquando aut intremescere illam, ceu vero non hoc
indignatione sacrae parentis exprimi possit.*

Pliny the Elder

Abstract: This short essay or reflection founded on Lao Tzu’s *Tao Te Ching* has for principal purpose to nourish a reflection on Nature as “wholeness” of possibility and being—i.e., similarly to Tao, albeit in a *more* “determinate” manner (we take into account and acknowledge the differences between both concepts). Our *own* relation with such primordially and absoluteness is also central, as it is through such reflection that proper “reconceiving” and “repositioning” become possible. We center our exposition on the notions—among *many* others—of “indetermination,” “reception,” “inherence,” “possibility,” “emanation,” “determination,” “partaking,” “humility” and “necessity.”

Résumé : ce court essai ou cette réflexion fondée sur Lao Tzu et le *Tao Te Ching* a pour but principal de nourrir une réflexion sur la Nature en tant que « totalité » en termes de possibilité et d’être – un principe similaire au Tao mais *davantage* « déterminé » (nous prenons en considération et reconnaissons les différences entre les deux concepts). Notre *propre* relation avec une telle primordially et absoluité demeure centrale, de par le fait que c’est par une telle réflexion qu’une « reconception » et un « repositionnement » adéquats deviennent possibles. Nous centrons notre exposition sur les notions – parmi *plusieurs* autres – d’« indétermination », de « réception », d’« inhérence », de « possibilité », d’« émanation », de « détermination », de « participation », d’« humilité » et de « nécessité ».

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**Lao Tzu and the *Immanence of Immanence*:
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Transcendence, domination and determination have generally characterized Western Civilization’s posture towards Nature. The consequences and impacts are now indubitable.

In this short essay, we would like to use the thoughts and words of Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu (or Laozi, or Lao-Tze, c. 500 BCE) in order to propose a reconsideration of such defining and determinant—paradigmatic—parameters of Western thought and existence. We want to propose a “way” centered more on indeterminacy and humility—and, we think, *lucidity*—to rethink what clearly consists in man’s existential predicament in terms of future perdurance, if not of sheer survival.

We need to specify that we understand “Nature”—comparatively to Tao—as being *somewhat* “more determinate” as an eco-biological *totality*, but it is her indetermination *by us*—as much conceptually than practically—that “imposes” *on us* the determination, by and through her, of our own being. Because of this ontological truth, we can then affirm that to “know” for us consists far less in acquiring data and analysing and interpreting it than in respecting the Source from which we are and, most importantly, from which we *can be*. It is only this indetermination, by us, of Nature—which consists in her absolute “immanence (depth-fundamentality) / transcendence (over-beyond),” and, reversely and consequently, in our absolute dependence—, that makes us determined by and through her as *The* precondition¹ of our existence. Thus, her indetermination creates and imposes our “moral” obligation through our own being’s determination—*qua* our being’s “necessity.”

¹ Note that in this essay we often use the term “condition” as a synonym for “source,” since Nature is properly man’s Source *and* condition through being as much his ontological origin *than* his absolute necessity—*qua* the prerequisite, or “condition,” for his being, for its existence (and thus a “source”). She “must” exist in order for man to be, as he emerges from her and he is constituted of her.

1. Tao as “indetermined,” and *as such*, as the “foundational-foundation”—the *possibility of possibilities*

Tao as a notion remains mostly “unconceptualized” in terms of clear positive attributes. It is, as indeterminate—indetermined—truth, referred apophatically or negatively—as what it is *not*—, or in terms of conditioning and determining possibilities, or in terms of what we could define as ontological “stances,” or *ways of being*, and their end products. As such, through its indeterminacy, every possibility, malleability and nuance are understood as anchored *in* and emanating *from* it. Thus, it is the foundation of all foundation achieved through the negativity of an immanent “self-immanence.” As the Tao is the “receptacle” of all possibles, and as such, their principle of “emergence,” it consists in the inexhaustible “point” or “locus” of beingness and achievability. A form of “double negation” through negating one’s negation as “that” from and through which, *positively*, there “is”—beingness for the Tao being an end product and not properly a “state”—, consists in the ultimacy of foundationality and of possibility. It is so as a “determined” principle of possibility is itself limited through its determinate nature—its parameters, content and attributes, as “could be” conceived and understood, for example, Parmenides’ “Being,” and differing in this, we think, from an “emanating receptacle” as could be conceived Anaximander’s *Apeiron*, and maybe, in some ways, the “One” of Neoplatonism. We could thus say an “emanating and generating vacuity” beyond—*qua* foundational to—determination and determinability.

We ought here to quote Lao Tzu directly: “The unnamable [*sic*] is the eternally real [...] This source is called darkness. Darkness within darkness” (1);² also, “The Tao is infinite, eternal [...] it was never born [...] it is present for all being [...] detached from all things [...] she is one with them [...] she has let go of herself, she is perfectly fulfilled” (7). Then follows the idea that “The Tao is ungraspable [...] unfathomable [...] before time and space [...] beyond *is* and *is not*” (21) from the sheer un-determination and un-possessiveness of the Principle’s *undefinable*, and

² Numbers in parentheses refer to the numbered parts of the *Tao Te Ching*. We follow the English version of Stephen Mitchell, published by HarperCollins e-books. Link: https://docdrop.org/download_annotation_doc/-Perennial-Classics-Lao-Tzu-Stephen-Mitchell---Tao-Te-Ching_-A-New-English-Version-Harper-Perennial-Modern-Classics-2006-2-4--pDMw9.pdf. When we quote a specific passage, the passage’s number in Lao Tzu’s work usually follows the quotation marks. Sometimes we use quotation marks only to emphasize a point or a term in our own reflection. Some passages are used several times. Also, third person singular pronouns (i.e., for “being,” he or it), are alternatively used. The text, we think, is always clear about the pronouns’ referents. Also, sometimes we capitalize a concept or a term—as with Reality/reality—to emphasize a point or a particular idea, and sometimes we don’t. Again, we consider the clarity of the text sufficient to avoid confusion.

thus, *un-apprehensible*, “nature” or “essence,” the understanding of which emerges through what could be termed interiority’s self-evidence: “I look inside myself and see” (21) ... what is “about” the Tao. Receptivity *as* indeterminacy-in-and-through-itself thus founds any possibility of determination and affirmation through, *as receptivity*, being the negation of negativity (the “not” *not-is*): $\neg A \rightarrow A$: “being is born of non-being” (40) as non-entity—as negation of “its” determinacy—is the nourisher and completer-completion of reality—*qua* reality-determined—, (41) *as its possibility*. So, what “all things issue from [is that to which they] return” (52) as their “receiver.” The receptacle of possibles—*qua* their principle of emergence—is thus the ultimate “inexhaustible-receiver-concretizing,” as “the Tao never does anything, yet through it all things are done” (37): “there is nothing to see [...] there is nothing to hear [because] when you use it, it is inexhaustible” (35). The inexhaustibility of Tao—or Nature as beingness’ possibility—comes from the immanent receptivity (*open-for*) of it as indeterminate immanency *encapsulating all determinability*.

Mother Nature herself should be thought of as receptacle, locus, condition and “emergence’s *immanent* principle” of possibility—*through receivability*. Thus, as we will argue later on, she should be conceived less as something to apprehend, to know and to “grasp”—let alone to “master”—, than as something to be acknowledged as “there,” to be respected, and above all, as Primordality which, by necessity—as precisely our condition—, transcends our epistemic possibilities in terms of explaining why and how it came about that she “determined” us to be, as much as what is foundational in her that founds our ontological possibility. Even at a deeper level, it doesn’t “belong” to us—otherwise we conceive ourselves justified in “mastering” her—to reach the indeterminacy of this Indeterminate since the “negation” from which possibility is “thrown” implies (and here to be prudent we will say “must” imply) the necessity of our unknowing, as to “proceed-from” is to “depend-from”—no “grasping” implied! The partial truth (us) is conditioned and determined by the whole (her), one which “explains,” as precisely “grasps,” its *part* (us). She is the “explainer,” and for our sake, she *ought* to remain so and *never* be conceived otherwise!

Here we could say that “nothing” equates to “everything,” since “Reality” is not properly “determined” as we ourselves are determined through her in relation to any determination we could “grasp” in terms of notions of possibility. Vacuity or “nothing” as receiver of possibility consists in the principle of its emergence as it is the totality-of-possibility, being thus undetermined—*qua* determined from “nowhere” or “nothing.” Power, production and concretion are then realized from

emanation's negative principle precisely as their possibility. To think then of "determining" ourselves through any notions such as "apprehension" and "agency"—let alone to acquire and determine reality—consists in the most profound and acute impossibility as we are the products of the "reception" of our determination, a receptivity whose nature *qua* principle is "indetermination-as-possibility-of-determination," that is, of "being." In this vein, "being and non-being create each other" (2), or more basically and analytically said, "we work with being [with matter], but non-being [as space, or here more properly "void," like a vase, or a house, i.e. a form of "receiver-receiving(permitting)-possibility(*thus* emitted)"] is what we use" (11). This joins that "the heavy [the base, what *receives*] is the root of the light [as] the unmoved is the source of all movement" (26), because, at the most basic, "the Tao can't be perceived [as undetermined and unaffected, so it is] smaller than an electron, [but] it contains uncountable galaxies" (32). Indeterminate ("voided") openness receives, i.e. permits, everything. Nature herself is the primordially *of being* not as "determinately" so, but as *determining to be so*—as receiving it *as such* (*to be* "as such"). It is all(everything)-and-nothing(particular) as *the part* and *the whole* all in one nourishing, merging and concreting each other—"returning" *through* each other—through being's receptacle-as-possibility (for these ideas, see generally 34 and 40) as "one with the whole universe" (42). The reception *is* precisely the emanation.

Then, through possibility at the "junction" of being and non-being, Lao Tzu makes one realize the problem hubris poses in terms of "us" (even thinking) assuring *that-from-which-is-possible* (this idea at 44), as any of existence's *absolute* polarities encapsulate, imply and permit each other (45) through void's negativity *receiving as possibility*. Being has for condition what "is" *already* emanated and expressed spontaneously "from" Tao—or Nature—through necessity *qua* receptacle of determinability and (thus) determinations (51)—and so, of "being." It is why to believe knowing Reality as "of-itself-determined," which would mean *not* an immanence to and through itself *through voidness' receptivity*, is a pride unparalleled as to be nothing, absent and evanescent "is" properly to be everything, present and affirmed. Like Tao, it is to be everywhere un-abnegated as "it gives itself up continually" (56), letting go of itself to receive and permit. We can only learn (we *ought* to) to position ourselves as the humble receivers of what outwardly permits "inwardly" *our* determination *as what properly "receives" determinate possibility* from and through which determinations (as us, or *any* natural entities) emerge.

It teaches us to be humble in life as being (as receiving) from such “reception-permission.”

2. Principle of procession *as possibility* through its fundamental vacuity or “bareness” receiving everything (all *possibilities*): to “receive” is to “produce”

“The world is formed from the void” (28). Nothingness can be predicated of Tao precisely as negating *its* determination and affirmation, implying in return “reception”—openness—and offer, through subsuming-harboring, of the condition (inherence) for possibility’s emanative essence (propensity) for determination. It is as such through being fundamental, as neither emanating nor emanated itself, and as such, “receiving” *qua* integrating-imbricating through *itself* as consisting of negation of any determinate instances—of any “it,” “this,” or even “there”—, but a basal “space” for possibility’s totality of *possible* instantiations of emanations:

The Tao is like a well:
used but never used up.
It is like the eternal void:
filled with infinite possibilities.
It is hidden but always present.
I don’t know who gave birth to it.
It is older than God. (4)

It is thus right to say of the receptacle of possibility—“inhering” *possibles*—that it “is like a bellows: it is empty yet infinitely capable. The more you use it, the more it produces; [as indeterminate, i.e. un-apprehended, “un-grasped”] the more you talk of it, the less you understand” (5) as it precedes everything in possibility—as the “reception” of possibility itself—, and thus certainly any being and apprehension. Nature herself can certainly be “called the Great Mother: empty yet inexhaustible,³ [as] it gives birth to infinite worlds,” (6) to infinite beings received *through* her. “It flows through all things, inside and outside, and returns to the origin of all things” (25) precisely as *itself* such origin *receiving-harboring-inhering possibility* (possibility’s possibilities); a condition of conditionalness, conditionality and conditions, that “follows only itself” (25) as its own necessity through un-necessitating any necessity—any “beingness”—as the “space” or reservoir of possibility itself (as its necessity *of-being-received*): “all things end in the Tao as rivers flow into the sea” (32).

³ For “Nature,” inexhaustible in terms of *possibilities*, but not in terms of “actual” (“emerged”) *qua* determinate resources.

The great Tao flows everywhere.
 All things are born from it,
 yet it doesn't create them.
 It pours itself into its work,
 yet it makes no claim.
 It nourishes infinite worlds,
 yet it doesn't hold on to them.
 Since it is merged with all things
 and hidden in their hearts,
 it can be called humble.
 Since all things vanish into it
 and it alone endures,
 it can be called great.
 It isn't aware of its greatness;
 thus it is truly great. (34)

The receptivity *qua* “passivity” is precisely emanation’s possibility: “The Tao never does anything, yet through it all things are done” (37). As with Nature, its essence is regeneration as “return is the movement of the Tao” (40). The principle consists in its own “negation”—as *not-“determined”*—which is the source of everything. Through not being towards “himself,” Tao thus “permits” as making space for everything: “yielding is the way of the Tao” (40) as its un-determinate nature permeates everything through its placelessness (*not-“there”*) opening a *way* for determination and being to emerge: “all things are born of being [but] being is born of non-being” (40). Tao’s—Nature’s—passivity is thus *not* “passiveness”! It is openness “inhering” *to permit*.

Parallely, Nature herself *is* her elements precisely as *not being any* “one” of them, but being the—inherent—receptivity of possibility and truth for each and all. She “constitutes” through her *individual* un-determination (un-constitution). To understand that remains for us a guide in thought and action since we *partake* of her as our ontological “reception.” Thus, as individuals, to accept and make way—i.e., *not to* “affirm” as “impose”—is *the way* (for these ideas, see 45 and 51). As we will see again in this essay or reflection, the “possibility” for *anything*—among “other things,” for Humanity—consists in “not-doing” *as permitting—qua* “receiving.” Being can thus truly “emerge” from its receptacle *opening* (inhering) its possibility: “that which has no substance enters where there is no space. This shows the value of non-action” (43; see also the notions of non-domination and non-interference at 59 and 81). We should now turn to the parallel notion of “humility.”

3. Humility as principle of possibility

Tao is *humility-in-itself* as un-determinate (and so undetermined) reason for everything. Vacuity cannot but signify to “leave space,” to “make room,” for anything as permitting the possibility of its emergence. Only as such can “oblivion” be That *of* and *by* which being is permitted as emergence. Without receptivity as openness to positivity (to its possibility), existence is not. Here, the “base” is *integration* precisely as *integrativity* and *integrativeness*. The space is *openness for* “it.” Humility—to “make room”—is thus to permit; and as such, it is “possibility.” Like Tao (8), Nature is “like water, which nourishes all things without trying to. It is content with the low places that people disdain,” as it permeates (receives) everything everywhere as all things are *equally* constitutive of reality and truth. She does not “compete” (8) with *any*-thing that constitutes—is received and inhaled *by* and *through*—*herself* not as “self” (13), but as whole—receptacle—of possibilities which determine and constitute *beingness (qua Reality) “as such,”* and so with neither gain nor “loss” (23), but only with acceptance of what things are and should be (24)—a reality achieved not through destruction (31), but through receptivity, and thus, through acceptance, and even through empathy. Reality is what *ought* to be through Nature—or, through “Tao.” It is so as received as *how* “is” *can* be—i.e., humbly.

Tao, or analogically Nature as Being’s possibility, is humble through itself vanishing in everything it permeates as the permeation—possibility-as-received—of emergence and determination; i.e., of *everything* received (see the indented quote *supra*, taken at 34). Renewal as reintegration (re-reception) and re-actualisation (redetermination) is the constancy of “That” inhabiting without imposing, permitting without obliging, compassionate as understanding *qua* humble as *not* “for itself,” but shaping everything through permissiveness and partaking (39).

Although Nature could be conceived as somewhat more “determinate” or “there” than Tao as portrayed by Lao Tzu, both principles share openness, one that cannot but bring us to the comprehension of the universal permeation which is Life as “giver”—taking or receiving *only* to give, as “creating without possessing, acting without expecting, guiding without interfering,” as always remaining “in the very nature of things” (51). This realization has to bring ourselves to openness towards otherness as “us” or essentially “selfness” (*qua* “selfsame”), and so bring us to respect and devotion in our beingness towards possibility *qua* Nature as humble “love” (51)—and as such, never “to impose [one’s] will” (58; for humility as non-interference, see also 61).

“Being one with the Tao” (62), as it would, or could be, with Nature, consists always in being in truth. The contrary, which is to presume or “assume” one’s ability to transcend one’s condition, is to prepare failure as it is to reject oneself through *not* accepting and letting reality—and oneself in and through it—*be as it is* (thus rejecting the reception of our receiver)—the contrary consisting in truth; i.e., in the possibility *of* and *for* being’s realization and achievement (actualization and completion) (64): “All streams flow to the sea because it is lower than they are. Humility gives it its power [thus] you must learn how to follow [as then] the whole world is grateful to [you]” (66; for humility, non-action or non-imposition, and receptivity and flexibility as vectors of possibility—infinite—, see also 69 and 77).

To be humble and respectful is to accept one’s *true* self in existence, as Tao (79), or Nature, “accept” themselves for what they “are”—inhering “*as such*.” Humility is to be proportional, equivalent and adequate—true—to one’s being. It is to receive and accept *as such*—i.e., one’s “reality.”

It is to be “real”!

4. Intelligence as “un-science,” or *dis-apprehension*

Baconian modern science, which we might call the “Western epistemic paradigm,” has pretended to “seize” reality through intellect in order to use it. But we affirm, through Taoism and our own reflection on Nature, that in fact one needs to think in terms of “precedence,” in terms of ontological a priori and necessity—i.e., condition and state of dependence—, for one to truly understand the hubris behind such conception and posture. And this is affirmed as much on an epistemic than on a moral level. We believe that the sheer fact of “existing” confirms the logical and existential predicament and profound illusion behind emitting the possibility of “grasping” our possibility, which can only lead to “ungrasping,” or more precisely, to “losing,” ourselves as beings. It is to demand and pretend too much of ourselves as dependent and vulnerable entities, almost deifying ourselves, something which can only lead to our demise through “overreaching” thoughts and actions unequal to, and so destructive of, our condition as beings through themselves being incompatible with our Source and our “true”—*qua* necessary—relation with it.

True science, or “intelligence,” for such dependent and vulnerable beings as us—a condition which demands humility and obliges restrain and reserve—, is “un-science” (relatively to—and “paradoxically” so—how we generally define “science”), as we cannot afford to pretend “grasping” that which we necessitate; by definition and necessity, it seizes and holds us. So utilitarian domination cannot be good for us, as it cannot be “adequate” to us, to what we truly are. It is so as it leads to un-equality with our true being-in-the-world, or our relation and posture towards our condition—*qua* our Source. Thus, it leads to unequal consequences towards us, as it first does towards Nature, meaning un-equilibrium or imbalance in the order of things, and thus, destruction. To reverse the scientific paradigm and posture is properly to “know ourselves” in existence; then, to know ourselves is, by nature, unscientific, as to know through our Source consists in de-apprehending—*qua* “ungrasping” (such “grasping” remaining, anyway, *impossible*)—as it is to “make one” with something, by necessity, preceding and transcending us—in an “immanent” way. It is to integrate and to be symbiotic with something greater than us. “Ungrasping” here is the necessity, as to “unknow” is properly to accept (“receive”), to be open to, and to partake of, possibility; i.e., it is to be *ourselves* “received” and/as “partaken” *of, by and through*.

As Lao Tzu says, it is not through “thoughts,” senses and passion that one acquires truth, but through trusting the innermost and opening up to reality as a greater whole and necessity, and accepting it, have confidence in it, and even loving it (12, 13 and 14), even though it cannot be “grasped” or “apprehended” (“seized”), as it surpasses every conceivability and intellection from itself being *possibility* “ungraspable” to (or by) its “emergent” or “product” (us), who then can only *partake* (*qua* be partaken) of it: “you can’t know it, but you can be it, at ease in your own life. Just realize where you come from: this is the essence of wisdom” (14), of courage, of resilience and of virtue (16). To forget and “unknow” *oneself* (selfishly as “particular-isolated”) is to accept reality as “the” necessity; it is what makes one a good person (18). This unknowability and unapprehensibility, but communion and union through interiority, acceptance and openness (be partaken *of, by* and *through*), can be summarized through Lao Tzu’s words:

The Master keeps her mind
always at one with the Tao;
that is what gives her her radiance.
The Tao is ungraspable.
How can her mind be at one with it?
Because she doesn’t cling to ideas.
The Tao is dark and unfathomable.
How can it make her radiant?
Because she lets it.
Since before time and space were,
the Tao is.
It is beyond is and is not.
How do I know this is true?
I look inside myself and see. (21)

Intuiting ourselves at our most basic as “beings of necessity” should be prioritized before any supposed notion of apprehension—intellectual or otherwise. To let Nature be our guide, to be opened to its revealing—and honest to what it says—, should precede any conceptualisation or “grasping,” as “intelligence” can never “equate”—contrarily to what René Descartes would say about intelligence (thought) in relation to physical reality as *minimally* necessary to “apprehend” what it, *at the very least*, “equals” to in terms of “ontological reality”—Reality itself, as Reality is its own possibility *as intelligence* (as, for Descartes, God would be), and through this, such fundamentality cannot but remain *to it* an eternal mystery (27). It ought to be so through man’s intrinsic limits, which in fact are his necessity *qua* his nature and his reality. So “the more you

know, the less you understand” (47), since in the process of intellection and apprehension what is grasped leaves one blind to the rest, akin to the forest hiding the tree, and to the tree hiding the forest. Martin Heidegger says it well through the idea that through revealing his “self” as thrown “into” the world—*qua* projected “there”—, “*being-there*” (Dasein) hides reality (the “there”) through “him-as-there,” and so, reversely, hides himself from “it” *qua* ontic presence through *being-“there”*—the unveiling is the hiding or dissimulation, the concealment is the existential “thrownness”—; and Francis Herbert Bradley, through his notion that judgement as an abstractive and synthetic process (but also, at the level of the “presently experienced,” an analytic one), hides “that” with which we are ontologically and foundationally connected—always (or mostly) unconsciously (not consciously reasoned and conceived) and intuitively—and which is “revealed” (felt) through immediate experience of basic “sensuous” feeling or intuition: the Absolute, or Totality (the Whole). Thus, one should simply “open [his] heart” (47) *qua* his entire being, to every necessity *qua* reality revealed-as-“lived,” and do so as *total* “partaker” of, and as *absolute* “dependner” upon, such absoluteness. To “open up” and to refrain one’s overreaching, and thus hubristic, thoughts and acts, is to achieve, as it is to “complete” and to “perfect”—to “symbiotize,” or ontologically “share”—, since it is to be true to existence itself: “true mastery can be gained by letting things go their own way. It can’t be gained by interfering” (48). It cannot be gained through “judgment” either since, as already explained while referring to Bradley, such process abstracts (dissociates?) one from reality through—by necessity—limited apprehension (synthesis). The Source, then, be it Tao or Nature, cannot be *actively* and *purposefully* “communed with” as such possibility and process can only be achieved through “letting” through us what is One with us above and under any will and apprehension: “seeing into darkness is clarity. Knowing how to yield is strength. Use your own light and return to the source of light. This is called practicing eternity” (52), as it is called practicing what is true—something limited, and even negated, by and through any notion and/or posture and/or active engagement-performance of “acquisition,” of “apprehension,” and upstream, of “judgment.” To be truly “oneself” is to be with and through wholeness, as it is to be free from all hubristic grasping which limits (because of *its* own intrinsic limits), and even negates (because of *its* own epistemic impossibility), whatever “eternal” and “total” reality and truth—possibility—there is about us, and whatever good—realization—there is for us. Truth is synchronously and synergically to “be” and to “have” totality and eternity, as it is

to join infinity through “ourselves” as beings partaken *of* and *through* our Source. To “not-know” is to exist truth; it is true wisdom:

Not-knowing is true knowledge.
 Presuming to know is a disease.
 First realize that you are sick;
 then you can move toward health.
 The Master is her own physician.
 She has healed herself of all knowing.
 Thus she is truly whole. (71)

She is “truly whole” since the dissociation from her Source is gone (67), the hubris of acquisition done with. The supposed “grasping” (70) has turned into respect, as we *learn* and orient without “learning” (similar idea with “teaching” at 65, 67, 70 and 72), but through simplicity, contentment, acceptance, openness, humility and respect (65-67). Then we can connect with our “own true nature” (65, and also 70) as we connect with others through our Source (67). To be wise and true is not achieved through words and acquisition—of knowledge, of property, or of whatever—, but through acceptance and generosity, as Nature herself (and also Tao...) nourishes without demanding, without requiring and without obliging (81). It is so as the quality of “free”—i.e., *non-imposed*—results **totally** from the quality of “real”—they are “one.” We ourselves have to be true (i.e., be free *as* “ourselves”) to Reality as she is for us; we have to be so if we want to perdure in being.

Thus, for us, to “grasp,” or “acquire,” is *not* properly to “know,” since *true* knowledge is not formally and strictly an “epistemic” state, but one of integration with Tao, or, from the standpoint of this paper (while taking into account the differences), one of integration, or of symbiosis, with Nature. To know is to partake of, which is to integrate, and be integrated by, to and through our Source. It is to “fuse” ontologically, or “make one *with* One,” with wholeness itself (idea at 42 and 54), as Nature is *the* possibility and reality. It is something which we already do by necessity, whether we “like” it or not, otherwise we wouldn’t be here. But it is something which we do not “know”—understand and/or have conscience of—, or at the very least, it is something we do not accept. Thus, it is a necessity which needs our understanding of ourselves (self-knowledge at 54) *in Reality* (as *through Reality*), and our deep humility as a result from such “true” and “necessary” understanding. We have to “embody it” (41)—our Source—, as it “gives

birth to all things” (42) and “it nourishes and complete all things” (41, and universality at 49) *through being “nowhere” particularly, but “everywhere” entirely*. What results from such posture cannot but be possibility, or even “permission,” to be, as it cannot but be respect towards such possibility and permission, i.e. towards our Source—and at the end, towards ourselves.

To know is then to accept and to follow the Source, to welcome it as permeating our being, as “true fullness seems empty, yet it is fully present [and] allows [all] things to happen [and] shapes events” (45) and permits “harmony” (46) everywhere as She “flow[s] [through] the core of [...] being” (50). To know is thus to be ourselves harmonized with being’s possibility; it is to give (56) and to respect, to be moderate, to be acceptant and caring (59) of *the* Reality permitting us, and also to be conscious of others partaking of it (ideas at 33). To know is to be true to what we are in existence.

But what about “to act”?

5. To engage actively, apprehensively and “masterly” is destructive through unrealism of, to and for self as diverting and upturning from and of being as *counter-being* (i.e., countering the possibility *for* being); to not-do, or even, to “un-do,” is to be conscious of being-*self* through “right-acting”—as its nonactive lucid, humble and realist (*qua* moral) “product”

The action may itself unroot possibility and beingness as unrelentingly un-affirming voidness’—Tao’s—permeation through un-affirmation—*qua* reception. In fact, to be “conscious” could be to achieve one’s true self of acquiring from non-affirmation/non-imposition, and mostly from openness, the principle of efficiency which proceeds through and from itself “intuitively” as received (given) *as-itself*. It is even beyond spontaneity, more “instantaneous,” as the principle, or “negativity-from-which,” is the “open ended” achievement of an undetermined beginning—or *begun-not-as-determinately-so*, or even, *not-as-yet*—as permeation’s possibility of, and to, determination “itself.” It *already received* the “sprung” *already emerged*— i.e., *before* it “did”—, i.e., emerged through voidness’ “open ended permeation *as* reception” permitting truth (the *already*) *as being*.

Nature herself is the space *of* and *for* receptivity as it is the permeation “opened to”—as permitting—possibility. Its “passivity,” or non-affirmation, as an unspecific and total-global *undetermined*, “requires” (for “it” *to be*) determination of, for and to others specifically through permeation. Non-action, or “respect,” is then *The way*, as it is the permission from openness—receptiveness’ “engagement.” It is *That* from and through which is done, as the “letting-go” determines—makes possible—the “presence” (see related ideas in the unpaginated foreword by Stephen Mitchell): “practice not-doing, and everything will fall into place” (3), and do so as Nature does, “not seeking, not expecting, she is present, and can welcome [receive-*to/as*-permeate] all things” (15), as all things are “immersed in [her] wonder” (16) through the fact that she acts... without “acting” (idea at 17 and 19). This is a prescription for all of us, as to respect and understand Nature and life—or Tao—simply consists in “stay[ing] at the center [locus of reception] of the circle and let all things take their course” (19):

The world is sacred.
It can’t be improved.
If you tamper with it, you’ll ruin it.
If you treat it like an object, you’ll lose it.

[...]
 The Master sees things as they are,
 without trying to control them.
 She lets them go their own way,
 and resides at the center of the circle. (29)

Here the “circle” *is* the “resident,” i.e. Nature proper, as she is *her own element and totality* (*residing “through” herself*), “reversing towards herself” as “herself” the “way”: “for every force there is a counterforce” (30), as the “there” is the “remainder” receiving-harboring *all* sense and direction. The “is”—as “ought”—remains *of* itself precisely as **through** (reintegrating as “integrated”). Thus, one should not impose and try to determine, or “try to be powerful” (38), as if one “accepts himself [as “is”], the whole world accepts him” (30) *as already accepted*. The entity who “does nothing [...] leaves nothing undone” (38) *as remaining-integrated*. Thus, the wise “concerns himself with the depths and not the surface [...] he has no will of his own [*willed it is already*]. He dwells in reality, and lets all illusions go” (38). Everything is possible through acceptance and openness: the wise “arrives without leaving, sees [...] without looking, achieves without doing a thing” (47), as “when nothing is done, nothing is left undone [which means] letting things go their own way” (48); “Nothing is impossible for him. Because he has let go” (59), he has left Reality “alone” (75) ... *as it is*. The integrated—accepting and opened—is *his* “integration” *qua* “remaining.”

But is this sheer “passivity” in terms of negating one’s capacity and necessity to act? No, because the wise will act *according* to Nature (or Tao); i.e., according to that which is “true” *in* and *of* Reality herself. The act “remains” *already acted*. He will act with, or *as* (as “permeated”), Nature—she being *acted already* as “Necessity”! He will then “receive” *and* “accept”—be permeated *of* and *through*. Thus, to “act” means to be in *accordance* with Reality, or, in Lao Tzu’s case, with Tao; it cannot but be to fuse one’s own self to it, to be symbiotic to it, to integrate, to partake, and to inhere in (as *be inhered of, from and through*) That from and through which *there is*. The determination here *is* the partaking or integration; the act *is Nature* (acting-Nature). It is *received-as-such...as-it-receives*. Thus, to integrate is precisely to “let go,” as to act is precisely to be (remain) one’s true self “in”—as “with” and “through”—existence itself. It is to “be” Reality, to exist Truth, as through one’s nature, being Nature herself. It is to receive *as being received*. The partaking—which negates the possibility of negating through existing and inhering—is the action, the agency, as it is the source and the consequence as much “as” being (as it is *what it is*) as it is

“of” being. It is Necessity as inherence (reception) for determination. It is the nature and the order of things themselves, “fluid as melting ice. Shapable as a block of wood. Receptive as a valley. Clear as a glass of water [as to] remain unmoving till the right action arises by itself [...] not expecting [because] welcom[ing] all things” (15). To be “residing in the Tao” (22), or in Nature, which means symbiotically “with it”—or “as it”—, permits to achieve and possess everything—to “incarnate” and “actualize” every possibility—, and thus to not forgo anything *because* never demanding anything, never taking anything, and never producing anything *as already being-it, being-“everything” (received)*: “only in being lived by the Tao can you be truly yourself” (22) as you “receive the world in your arms [through being] a pattern for the world” as Nature will partake of you, as you will “accept the world [...] and you will return to your primal self ” (28) through being “your own” being—i.e., through *inhering-in-“self” (qua Nature as Truth)*.

One certainly does not have to “act” to “be” oneself—i.e., to answer to one’s being—, as Nature cannot but be *already* permeating (inhering) individuated being and beingness itself. It is like water just remaining “its-self” and *not* “of-itself” moving, but only being permeated by gravity which makes it rush downhill: “all things end in the Tao as rivers flow into the sea” (32)—the receiver receiving (inhering) his “self” *as received (inhered)*. Things “end” in their principle as they are constituted *of* and *from* it; they are themselves *that of which is permeated*—the permeator-as-receiver—as “it is inexhaustible” (35): “if you want to take something, you must first allow it to be given” (36), as the receiver is the permeated, i.e. non-active through receiving the principle of any determination and action *given to it*. This is why *to do* means to “spoil,” as the obstacle “disappear[s] by itself” through “giv[ing] nothing to oppose” (both quotations at 60), as one cannot *actively* “achieve” his principle (condition), as “being [*already...*] one with [it] [...] you find” (you are) your being (62)—*being already* “achieved” *by* and *through* your principle. Achieving is inhering *qua* receiving (*being received*):

Act without doing;
work without effort.
[...]
The Master never reaches for the great;
thus she achieves greatness.
When she runs into a difficulty,
she stops and gives herself to it.
She doesn’t cling to her own comfort;
thus problems are no problem for her. (63)

[...]

The journey of a thousand miles
 starts from beneath your feet.
 Rushing into action, you fail.
 Trying to grasp things, you lose them.
 Forcing a project to completion,
 you ruin what was almost ripe.
 Therefore the Master takes action
 by letting things take their course.
 He remains as calm
 at the end as at the beginning.
 He has nothing,
 thus has nothing to lose.

[...]

He cares about nothing but the Tao.
 Thus he can care for all things. (64)

So, “the virtue of non-competition [...is...] harmony with the Tao” (68). We could affirm with Nature that non-resistance is logical on an ontological basis since we are permeated with our condition, a condition from which emerges a necessity for respect and acceptance. How can we “resist” our own selves? Thus “the Master gives himself up [...as...] he has nothing left to hold on to [...] his actions [...] flow from the core of his being. He holds nothing back from life” (50), or, for that matter, from Nature. When you do not “oppose” wrongness—not actively “fighting” it, while of course, *not partaking* of it—, goodness arrives by herself (idea at 60). So non-action is what “permits” and what “produces,” as to “let go” consists in accepting and receiving—integrating—, and from this, in opening space for common and universal possibility (idea at 57). It means “going forward without advancing” (69), since you realize and achieve through remaining “yourself,” as one cannot *not* be one’s own self, which realistically is to be Nature as an “inescapability” in order... to be (idea at 73)—i.e., to “achieve.” It consists in noninterference with the source of possibility which is Nature *through you*. You are thus integrated *of-through* yourself—inhered. There is no “act” *of self*, but only reality. Thus, to “remain” is to be, and as such, it is to “act”—rightly!

Thus, non-action is neither sheer “passivity” imposed nor self-imposed. It is the realistic—as lucid and humble—truth of our *dependent* constitution. Not accepting such truth consists in

negating that we exist—or “what” we exist. Such negation is blindness and wishfulness, and thus, it is weakness, as acceptance, *being truth*, is strength *qua* possibility.

6. Strength is weakness since one can never be stronger than one's "self" (Nature); to believe oneself strong is to prepare to destroy oneself *through oneself*—as *through (one's) reality*—; to act "strong" is to "destroy" reality—i.e., to be "unequal" to it... as to *yourself*—, a reality which then cannot but destroy the "strong" as "he" is her (reality) own "self"—i.e., "re-equalize" things...; "self" re-equilibrium—; it is thus a contradiction to "be strong," as it is to go against oneself; it cannot but be a "weakness"—precisely *as a falsity*

We are auto-limited beings through our own nature. Taoism can teach us the opposite of *hubris* because it is a teaching which consists in avoiding falsity as to "authenticity," which we define as *being true to one's own self in existence*. It means not to reach otherwise—i.e., to "outreach"—than we are as dependent beings, which consists first and foremost in a dependence *on ourselves to ourselves* as constituted *of and through* our condition which is Nature. To believe oneself powerful is to negate oneself, as it is the opposite of being "adequate" (equivalent, proportionate, equipollent) to one's true nature. It is trying to be one's own "God," as "Western" science often thinks of herself towards her many objects—not realizing their precedence, and even their conditioning, of her sheer possibility. It consists in "overreaching," in trying to attain "beyond" *our* truth, to pretend other than Nature towards some kind of "noumenal" paradigm or state inexistent relatively to "our" *true* truth. We could qualify such illusion as "*onto-negation*"—negation of one's being *and* beingness.

To respect Nature as she truly and entirely "is"—unmodified through "endeavours," and thus unmitigated—consists in not affirming and pretending more than we are, and thus it is "the only path to serenity" (9), as it is the only path to being. It is to be "infant" (20) in existence, because we cannot but be otherwise towards our necessity as we "drink from the Great Mother's breasts" (20). We are conditioned, and thus, we should accept things as they are and as they become, since we cannot, and, *for our own sake*, we ought not to, have any "word" in such equilibrium that is, contrary to us, "of itself," and being so, that is and must in a great extent remain a "mystery" *for our own sake*—i.e. for our reality of depending on it and for our necessity of not disrupting it, as we are its "result" (its *infant*) (for some terms, and the general idea, see 36).

To try to control what precedes is to believe we can ourselves precede what we are, something which, ontologically and logically, is impossible. To try to be all powerful and achieve everything is thus, *realistically*, to remain weak and undoing (idea at 38), as it consists in being

counterproductive through being counter-nature. On the contrary, in “absence” and “acceptance” and “un-will” the depths of being are reached and true “reality” is reached and lived (ideas and some terms at 38). Harmony, “being-togetherness,” contentment, repetition and renewal are thus possible, as to “interfere” is to restrict, to restrain, to deplete, to negate the whole for the parts, not understanding the possibility and sense from, by and through the whole (ideas at 39). Humility and acceptance of our conditioning and determination of what lives through us is the, is *our*, only reality as beings (idea at 39). It is our *beingness*. It is our only “chance,” as it is properly “us.” It is so because it is receiving the Source of all “issues,” the “origin” of all “manifestations,” as it is *that from which is* (received *as such*). It is the return, through eternity and infinity—as through *all possibles*—, to the clarity, the purity, the wisdom and the steadfastness of possibility; the truth of *any* embodying “everywhere-anywhere *in particular*” through being distinctly “nowhere” (ideas and terms at 52 and also 41)—as to be embodied and permeated with-by (*of*) wholeness. It is being totally in every unicity as the Whole exists—inhere—entirely in every part⁴, everything(one) thus partaking of—being through—everything(one).

Thus, to be true one doesn’t need to be powerful, as through acceptance he receives all power through centering and inhering in—i.e., being “inhered” by and from (as *through*)—his Source. All *from it* is equilibrium, harmony and purveyance (idea at 53):

Whoever is planted in the
Tao will not be rooted up.
Whoever embraces the
Tao will not slip away.
[...]
Let the Tao be present in your life
and you will become genuine.
[...]
How do I know this is true?
By looking inside myself. (54)

⁴ We could here make a parallel with *some interpretations* of Anaxagoras’ *Nous* as the “intelligent” principle of reality present entirely—its totality-infinity—in every “part” of reality, so it is **absolutely everywhere** through being **distinctly** “nowhere” (as unmixed with any *particular* “being,” which would *necessarily* limit its “beingness” *in every part...* and thus its possibilities and efficiency). Spatiality (here-there)—and, by extension, temporality (was-now-will)—has no true meaning for such Absoluteness. Total undetermined-unlocated omnipresence is *possibility in-itself!*

We would say looking “to” ourselves as we are incarnations (embodiments) of our Source, thus we do not need to act or to be powerful, since through her (us) we “already are”; we do not need “effort” and “desire,” and we cannot be “disappointed,” as everything we are and can be, we already are through her, and this *absolutely from eternity* (ideas taken at 55). Things are as they are and should be accepted as such, as otherwise we cannot but disturb the “order” of things, and thus “negate” *our-selves*:

If you realize that all things change,
 there is nothing you will try to hold on to.
 If you aren't afraid of dying,
 there is nothing you can't achieve.
 Trying to control the future
 is like trying to take the master carpenter's place.
 When you handle the master carpenter's tools,
 chances are that you'll cut yourself. (74)

To be is to receive (as being received), to adhere (as being adhered), to inhere (as being inhered); thus “Whoever is soft and yielding is a disciple of life” (76, and idea also at 78). To be true is to be one's own nature, and this cannot but consist in being *that from which is received*—as The Receiver—as properly constituted (received) from and through it. In terms of “possibility” and “becoming” (received/constituted), we could thus affirm that “True words seem [but are not] paradoxical” (78).

How can one be otherwise than one's *own*—than one's “truth”? But such state *is not* from/for making, but from/for receiving. We cannot “make” ourselves, as we are *already* made. In our deep state of dependence, to accept and “let be,” is to *be*.

7. Reality as harmony and equilibrium: neither “being-in-itself,” nor “being-for-itself,” nor “being-to-itself,” but “*for* and *to* being,” or more accurately, “encapsulating” and “*inhering*”—as Tao (if “more” concreted *qua* “determined”: as Nature)—as consisting “by,” “from,” and “through,” and all this ultimately, *for* and *to* being *receiving-its-self...as-receiving-as-inhered-as-received*...

Before we conclude this short exposé, we need to stress the fact that being is not as much a “state” as it is an equilibrium, as a truth or equivalence or adequation to one’s *own* truth; it is to be in the “middle” (the center) of oneself as to be nothing else than oneself—and mostly, as we just saw, to never try to be otherwise! It is, in fact, to “receive” *one’s-self*; to be “inhered” (permeated) by one’s own truth. To “*be-of*” is the truest statement about man, as it is the most unhubristic, and being so, it is the most authentic, because the most realist. It consists in being identical to self. It is to reaffirm “oneness” with yourself, to be compatible or “supple” with your being, to be enlightened only by and through truth, in a state of “detachment from”—*qua* unity or oneness *with* and *through*, if not “by” the *other* (as “us”)—“alterity-otherness” and such dissociative categorizing, and from this, to proceed to “understand all things” (some terms used from 10) through *being them*. In this vein, to “know” is to accept—receive—reality and your dependence, as then you *exist yourself* through “drink[ing] from the Great Mother’s breasts” (20) and (as) you do not need anything else—neither (never) asking nor imposing. Thus you:

[...] receive the world in your arms.
 If you receive the world,
 the Tao will never leave
 you and you will be like a little child.
 [...]
 be a pattern for the world.
 If you are a pattern for the world,
 the Tao will be strong inside you
 and there will be nothing you can’t do.
 Know the personal,
 yet keep to the impersonal:
 accept the world as it is.
 If you accept the world,
 the Tao will be luminous inside you
 and you will return to your primal self. (28)

Nature is everything—the possibility of every possibility—, and as everything, “it can’t be improved” (29). Thus:

The Master sees things as they are,
without trying to control them.
She lets them go their own way,
and resides at the center of the circle. (29)

Reality herself is permanent and complete, but not man’s actions (idea at 32), since they are “insufficient” for “possibilizing” being. As for all things “human”—*qua* limited and thus necessitating—, endeavors, as they are actively willed only *through themselves*, end in *non-being*. True endeavors get back to Nature, as agents (i.e., agency) cannot be without her (idea at 32). True agency can only be effectuated through Nature; more precisely, true agency *is* Nature. Effective action then consists in Wholeness’ gifts *received-through-action* (its “substance”), and they are enough as they themselves are “being-permitted”; nothing can be superadded to them as they are their being’s *possibility-achieved*. To act is thus to accept reality (receive it), which is properly to “endure forever” (33)—as inhering truth itself. It is to be in harmony (one) with possibility. You cannot “be-to-yourself,” as such state *cannot be*. What can be is “to be,” or to be towards being, which is to make one with its possibility: Nature. Harmony is truth, as it is possibility; as equilibrium-to-itself, it is equality(adequation-sameness)-to-self. Thus, it is “being,” as it is *that through which there is* from “harmony” itself and “natural rhythms” (*qua* truth’s possibilities and effectuations). No superaddition (“superadded effectuation”) is desired or expected (ideas and some terms at 37), let alone “needed,” as the “depths” are reached; there remains nothing to be willed, as everything is *all-always-already-beforehand-now-forever* fulfilled and renewed through receiving and inhering humbly “reality” (possibility-*realizable-as-realized*) and truth (ideas and some terms at 38, and also 39).

Tao, as with Nature, is the “source” of all possibility, and for that, of all being and determination, and this in every conception, understanding and meaning of the term: logical, numerical, ontological, effectual, processional... (idea at 42). Harmony is then reality as she is truth, or things as they *ought to be*—i.e., as their possibility is received and inhered. It is “being” *at its true logic*—order, meaning and necessity—as at one with, and consequent to, *his-“self”* (idea at 42 and 53), consisting—through his inhering Source—in his own *principle* and *power*, as

“naturally” emerging and processing from him as (his, i.e. being’s) truth, and this only through remaining himself “*as being*,” without any expectation and/or any active or purposeful willing (idea at 55). Permanency in “balance” from inherent sufficiency, completeness and congruity to truth’s intrinsicity *as achieved* (ideas and some terms at 77)—through the reception of truth’s possibility as “truth”—, are *the* “result” as ontological factualness and necessity. Again, there is nothing to “desire” or to “expect”—or *to thrive for*—from completeness itself (*in-itself*), as the “substance” is ever-present, since of Nature (or Tao) “there is no end to her wealth” (77, and also 80)—being the receptacle of all possibilities. There is only contentment and serenity (idea at 80), as there is only possibility received and inhered (of Truth) *for* and *to* truth—truth’s inherent *inhering-in-Nature-as-received/inhered*.

So, truth’s “inherence” (inhering and/as being inhered) is its own necessity. Thus, being can only proceed from that which “is,” and upstream, from openness and reception of/to its possibility. “Is-ness” *is* already *for* and *to-its-self* as received *through* the receptacle (inherence) of processing-being. Becoming (processing) then is its “presence,” or procession as inhered by and through its “receiver”—*qua* Nature. Thus its “reality” is not affirmation, but reception, as reception is its true and only inherent (as received/inhered) possibility.

We turn now to such “truth”—as to what we were *already* discussing. How could it be otherwise? It cannot, since *of-its-self* (and thus *for*), it is complete, achieved, as receiving *all achievements*—all “possible” (real) ones. What negates—pretention, imposition, hubris—is not of such possibilities, since it becomes, *to-its-self*, contrary to its own possibility—i.e., to its reception from and through Nature (or Tao). As such, it is negation, or *is-not*—as “cannot be,” because *ought-not-to!*

Unreality, untruth, is **unharmony** *to-“self”*—“self” *qua* reality (thus *for-“self”*).

8. Conclusion: truth undetermined by—“un-grasped” through—“human categories” and “conceptions” as *above* (i.e., *a priori* of) epistemology and morality, more basic than concretely “right” or “false,” beyond “good” and “evil,” as equating to—receiving—“*of-being’s-possibility*” (its reception); (of itself) a “fact” *that(and)-of-which-permits*

Truth cannot come from the determined, from that which emerges from openness to emanation’s possibility—i.e., the vacuity opening the inherence of reality’s ontology (as itself inhering through it). Nature (or Tao) is the “reception” of inherent necessity, the “receptable *unbeing-to-its-self*” as *being-of-every-self*. It is the permission of our emanation, of our truth, as dependence—*being received as “of-that”*—is the precondition for emergence, which implies the “agency” of partaking—of *being-“partaken-of”(received)-through-partaking—*, but **not** of autonomy—i.e., **not** *determining one’s self*. This truth is hubris’ rejection for humility’s “affirmation” as the basis of becomingness, as the “space” for possibility.

Here “thought” doesn’t have as much an “object” than receiving, noticing and acquiescing, or “contemplating” (not rationally but “inherently”) one (idea at 16). As Lao Tzu says: “each separate being in the universe returns to the common source. Returning to the source is serenity” (16). To understand this is to become at peace and to be receptive to being’s necessity and conditionality in relation to being’s Source. This leads to acceptance, and from this, to wisdom: “Immersed in the wonder of the Tao [or Nature], you can deal with whatever life brings you, and when death comes, you are ready” (16). So “thought” cannot be *thought* as commonly conceived. To be “active” is to miss the point, as the object or referent evacuates (inherently) towards non-object and non-reference through having his own determination from the “possibility” of it, which itself, through the open-ended essence of its inherence (as inwardly “voidness-to-itself” which, as “double-negation,” projects possibility of “it”; i.e., “receives” conditionality), cannot be *yet* determined—thus permitting determination *to be*. As for its inherence:

Seamless, unnamable,
it returns to the realm of nothing.
Form that includes all forms,
image without an image,
subtle, beyond all conception.
Approach it and there is no beginning;
follow it and there is no end.

You can't know it, but you can be it,
 at ease in your own life.
 Just realize where you come from:
 this is the essence of wisdom. (14)

So, categories or schemes of human thought are incapable of such “wisdom”; they are inadequate to apprehend and pertain—referentially and conceptually, but through this, ontologically—to the basis of enunciation’s (or procession’s, or determination’s) possibility. The referent evacuates in, or even more fundamentally, *is evacuated through*, the “That” from which can be referred, as true referential possibility’s *possibility* is its reception (dwelling) in the “space” of enunciation, in the vacuity harboring (“depths”) all possibles (“surface”) through its indetermination—through it being “none” as receiving “all”: “Let your workings remain a mystery” (36, and some terms and ideas at 38). We cannot “will” (38) when we are received and permitted, and being so, when we are “only” possibilized and “*then*”-*thus* determined—*as emitted through possibility “already” received*. Nature (pre-“reality”) is our truth, and not “will,” but “acceptation” and “humility,” are required as what is received is what is true *as-it-ought-to-be/become*—through its reception. It is *not* our illusioned perspective which *couldn't possibly* “understand” it better (idea at 45).

Then, to be is, in a way, to be naïve “like children and in harmony with the Tao” (68), or for that matter, with Nature, so there is nothing to “will” or to “compete” about, as Reality herself is “given” (idea at 68)—i.e., you (through your possibility) are “received” and “inhered” (thus “constituted” *qua* “determined”). Thus, to be excellent is not to “achieve,” but to accept and exist That which impregnates you as “possibility”; the “space” receiving your “being”—your *can-be*—, and as such, permitting its determined emanation (concretization). Categories thought about or imagined cannot encapsulate and “seize” *beyond-as-possibility's-reception*; it cannot be “attained” *as inhering “attainess”*:

My teachings are easy to understand
 and easy to put into practice.
 Yet your intellect will never grasp them,
 and if you try to practice them, you'll fail.
 My teachings are older than the world.
 How can you grasp their meaning?
 If you want to know me,
 look inside your heart. (70)

It is to be “child” in and of Reality; it is a joy that cannot be rationally and conceptually “grasped,” but only “lived”; i.e., intuitively “felt” and “existed.” It is so because it is to be received as you yourself receive your possibility inherent to your self as permitting you through being one with you—as That from which there is *any* possibility *of-you*. Our respect is thus demanded through our *own* reception in relation to which action and autonomy are as much hubris than illusion—*un*-possibilities, as *un-to-their-selves* (i.e., their *true* “selves”). Accepting and respecting is letting Nature be through you—as from and through whom you connect with your authentic, *qua* true, self. This possibility remains *a priori* of being’s emanation *as its* “*space*”—through being void of any being, of any determination, of any “in,” “of” and “to-itself.” Thus, she can “be” (opened) *for all* (possible) *selves*:

The world is formed from the void,
like utensils from a block of wood.
The Master knows the utensils,
yet keeps to the block:
thus she can use **all** [possible] things. (28)

Thus, to decategorize is to reveal, as it is to fuse with Truth. It consists, as for the Tao (or Nature), of *not to* “be-to-oneself” (as to *one*’s-“self”), but of being *of-one*’s-*self* **through** Nature—partaking-inhering **as** partaken-inhered.

It is to accept, to welcome, to “will” our truth, which is a state of absolute dependence and necessitation towards the natural world. It is our only possibility, our only permission, our only *true* inherence, as it is the **only** answer to the Shakespearean ontological interrogation: *to be, or not to be?*

For our hubristic species, it has become our true and ultimate “question,” and we might even say—through meaning it as much as *category* than as *dilemma*—, our “**ONLY**” *true predicament*.