

Laozi's Construction of Natural Noumenon

Tianhao Li

School of Marxism, Beijing Jiaotong University, Beijing, 100044, China

Abstract: There have always been many opinions on whether there is an exact ontology in Laozi's thought, and whether there is an actual and definite ontology is in line with the meaning of Laozi's theory. Each school has its own viewpoints and research methods. Each scholar should have their own attitude towards Laozi's thought. The content of Laozi's thought is "one", and the constant "one" and the changing "one" are unified in the movement and changes of Tao and Te themselves. Among them, tangible water is transformed into intangible metaphors of Tao, thus achieving the freedom that Tao and Te should have.

Keywords: Tao and Te, Dialectics, ShuiTe, Freedom.

1. Research Methods

Laozi's thought is both broad and profound, as well as profound and concise. Its vastness has been manifested in countless annotations and explanations of Laozi's thought since the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States period, but its content cannot be exhausted. Starting from Laozi's thought, if described in two words, it is "nature", and if described in one word, it is "one" or "none".

The greatest revelation in exploring the process of Laozi's thinking is the lack of great achievements. Syllogism can be used as the first method to analyze Laozi's thinking process. The first one discusses what it is, what Tao and Te are, and how they are defined. The second one discusses why, how Tao and Te form and explain everything in epistemology, pragmatism, and other aspects. The third one is how, and readers will inevitably use syllogism in logic to read this article. The use of such tools of human thought to understand the "nature" referred to in the text is not different from the "layman" in the phrase "when the layman is clear, I am alone in a daze. When the layman observes, I am alone in a depression. Everyone has it, but I am alone and contemptuous". However, it is precisely because of such defects that "the husband is not profitable, so I can cover up and become a new person", This approach is also a necessary stage for achieving the goal of 'I am unique from others, but my mother is precious'. The Tao Te Ching itself cannot escape the contradiction pointed out by it, that is, its existence is originally the benevolence and righteousness in the "absolute benevolence and abandonment of righteousness", and this kind of benevolence and righteousness is the necessary process of achieving what morality itself excludes but also where it is located. This viewpoint can also be confirmed by the recorded time of its writing, as the Te Jing with a metaphysical color precedes the Tao Ching with a metaphysical color.

The interpretation of Laozi's thoughts should first abandon prejudices and inevitably assume the shortcomings of one's own thoughts and the complexity or profoundness of Laozi's thoughts. This method may help people avoid three types of biases. Firstly, standing on the achievements of previous historical achievements, bias can easily lead to errors. The second is the bias towards Eastern and Western ideological attitudes towards personal thoughts. The third is the gap between subjectivity and objectivity in the process of understanding and transforming the world. When the Tao and

virtue return to nothingness, they return to themselves, existence is temporary, and 'nothingness' is 'action', and 'inaction' is the method of returning to themselves. It is currently impossible to say whether the matter of Tao and virtue itself is a return or a departure, but it is indeed a manifestation of action. Since it appears at the level of manifestation, it is necessary to use the method of manifestation to express it, rather than crossing over to its opposite to argue for its irrationality. Starting from the text itself, it advocates that "the great form Is beyond shape is invisible and the Tao is obscure", and its inheritance should be described in language that is more direct to the nature as far as possible to avoid confusing the original meaning because of constant addition. This method of creating vocabulary to describe is not in line with the wishes and indications of the Tao Te Ching's "chaos, such as the unborn child of an infant".

As the learning becomes increasingly important, the Tao loses its value day by day, and even loses its value to the point of inaction. The gains and losses based on this should be returned to the text and personal exploration of Laozi's thoughts should be established. When exploring whether the principle of daily loss for the Tao can only be obtained on the basis of learning, the answer is yes. Can we still completely deny learning? Obviously, it is not possible, and what cannot be done? Since we have determined to move towards the path of daily loss for the Tao, to the point of inaction, two paths have emerged. The first is to completely deny our existing rationality, Recognize the essence of knowledge and virtue through pure and natural intuition. The second is to acknowledge the rationality that humans already have and embark on a path of learning from the Tao.

2. Dialectics of Tao and Te

Tao and virtue not only give birth to all things, but also nourish them. All things are Tao and virtue, and there has always been a "this nature" to explain Tao and virtue. The accumulation of all things explains Tao and virtue. If we must add a definition to Tao and Te, then the author believes that Tao and Te are all things that are inter dependent, decaying, and changing. The nominalistic approach of attributing Tao and Te to one concept ignores the concept of change and generation, and extracts the static from the dynamic and static parts that both Tao and Te manifest to define themselves. This statement is lacking for Tao and Te themselves.

The dialectics of the Tao Te Ching are constantly changing, with Qu being complete, Qu being straight, depression being abundant, depression being new, Less being obtained, and More being confused. From less to more, from more to confusion, from confusion to knowledge, from knowledge to nothingness, ignorance leads to nothingness. Dialectics is a dynamic dialectic. Laozi said, "Knowing the male and guarding the female are the streams of the world. Being the streams of the world, one's virtue remains unchanged and returns to the baby. Knowing the black and guarding the white are the patterns of the world. Being the patterns of the world, one's virtue remains unchanged and returns to the infinite. In the history of the writing of the Tao Te Ching, one theory is that the Tao Te Ching first appeared, followed by the Tao Te Ching. Based on this, it can be seen that only virtue can be explored, and the Tao is the foundation of virtue. The Tao Te Ching points out the location and actions of saints or the One, but does not directly indicate how people can become saints or how things can achieve the One. If based on what is mentioned in the book and historical facts, So it can be considered that the coexistence of Tao and virtue is not contradictory. What is the starting point depends on the specific situation. When the conditions are limited to "Qu", then the result of this stage is "Quan", and at the same time, "Quan" as the result is also the condition of the next stage. If we repeat this cycle without danger, this state is "Yi". The fundamental description of all things through movement has had a great impact on later generations, with the emergence of the study of divination, the debate of reason and desire, and the theory of Tai Chi diagrams, among others, as the manifestation of Tao and virtue in different times. These forms, consciously or unconsciously, have a strong political color, losing the theoretical interest in explaining the fundamental 'one'.

Since modern times, there have been numerous interpretations of Tao and Te, among which Feng Youlan used commonality as a citation. However, it itself was unstable in the dialogue between the elderly Parmenides and the young Socrates, which originated from the Parmenides. If the Tao of Laozi was also 'commonality', Tao would not be omnipresent. It could only exist in good things and not in bad things. This is not in line with Laozi's statement of 'Zhou Xing but not perilous' and 'Da Tao Fan Xi'. Feng Youlan did not take these into account when using the concept of 'commonality'. He not only talked about the Tao being logically prior to all things and being pure 'nothing', but also talked about it being 'concrete' in a certain way. He did not explain why "Da Yin" was neither a palace nor a business, nor a reason for it. In addition, the meaning of his term 'commonality' has the characteristic of Platonic transcendence over specific things, making it difficult to correspond to the Tao of Laozi. Feng Youlan's use of the term "commonality" to interpret the Tao of Laozi can also lead to misunderstandings, making people feel that the Tao is far from people and is a metaphysical concept. [1] Zhang Dainian accurately drew a clear line between the root and the Western ontology, which is more accurate than Feng Youlan's interpretation. He said:

Indian philosophy and Western philosophy speak of noumenon, with a more authentic meaning, believing that phenomena are false or illusory, and that noumenon is true or real. What is the essence? That is the only real thing. This concept is not present in the original philosophy of China. Chinese philosophers say that the difference between roots and things lies not in the differences between reality and

illusion, but in the differences between roots and ends, original flow, and root branches. All phenomena belong to reality, not just their roots. The theory of ontology as the only reality is not presided over by Chinese philosophers. [2]

Zhang Dainian believed that "the most fundamental thing in the universe is called the 'root' in ancient philosophy", and "the earliest root theory is Laozi Zhuangzhou's Tao theory". The term "root" comes from the book "Chuang-tzu's Journey to the North": "Breathing in nature is like surviving in death, oil is not in form but divine; all animals are unaware of it. This is called the root. Zhang Dainian's use of this to explain the Tao is even more appropriate, because the word "animal" in "all things are animals but do not know" precisely indicates that in addition to producing all things, the Tao also needs to raise all things, so that all things can continue to thrive. He further pointed out the three meanings and four characteristics of "root". The three meanings are: first, the initial meaning, which means "everything should have its origin"; Secondly, what exactly is to be treated, that is, "what is to be treated as one"; Thirdly, the concept of overall control refers to the concept of "encompassing all things, encompassing everything, and being the master of everything". The root is 'unspeakable 'because it is not any special thing, but the foundation of all things, and it is' absolute'. The four characteristics of the root are: firstly, it does not exist or does not wait; Secondly, not being assimilated or permanently resident; Thirdly, without deviation or lag; Fourthly, intangible or metaphysical. 'Metaphysics' simply means that it is intangible, and it is different from Western 'Metaphysics'. Zhang Dainian believes that "Chinese philosophers acknowledge that the root is not separated from things. In Western philosophy, it is often believed that the root is behind phenomena, phenomena appear but are not real, and the root is not real, and phenomena and noumenon are two opposing worlds... Most Chinese philosophers do not govern it." In Chinese philosophy, the relationship between the root and things is not the relationship between the reality behind and the surface illusion, but the relationship between the roots and branches of the source, Chinese philosophy places the greatest emphasis on the unity and inseparable relationship between the root and things. Things arise from the root, and the root is within things. This understanding supplements Feng Youlan's explanation of the relationship between the Tao and all things.

Tao and Te are fundamentally different from what Kant called the 'thing in itself'. Kant believed that the 'thing in itself', as the innate thing for understanding things, provides the innate basis for the existence of things and people's understanding of things. It can be considered that there is this thing, although people can approach it infinitely but cannot recognize it. Compared to Kant, Laozi's approach to ontology from an epistemological perspective is closer to the realm of Tao and Te itself, that is, "embracing one as the world". Knowing the male and the female, knowing the black and the white, are the changing and static factors of cognitive things. They view the world through a combination of motion and stillness, and then return to the baby. They do something for the sake of action, and do nothing for the sake of inaction.

3. Freedom of ShuiTe

Most of the inspirations about Laozi's thoughts are mostly about modern people's ideas of management, life, and humanism. What is the actual Laozi? Perhaps no secular person can explain it clearly. I'm afraid we need to learn from

some Taoists about this issue. The laws of the movement of all things in the world as elaborated in the Tao Te Ching, such as Chapter 8

The highest goodness is like water. Water is good at benefiting all things but does not compete, and is disliked by everyone, so it is almost inferior to the Tao. Live in a good place, have a good heart, be kind and benevolent, speak with good faith, govern with good governance, handle affairs with good abilities, and engage in good times. The only way for a husband is not to argue, so there is no special. What kind of thing is water? It should belong to the goodness. Water is beneficial to all things and does not compete with them. It is located in places that people dislike, which is why it almost belongs to the Tao. The kindest person is the one who is best at choosing a place to live, maintains a calm and unpredictable heart, treats people with sincerity, selflessness, and friendliness, speaks with good faith, can govern the country well politically, can leverage their strengths in handling affairs, and is good at seizing opportunities in their actions. The kindest (person) is precisely because of their uncontested virtues, without any mistakes, there is no resentment.

Regarding this paragraph, there are annotations in Wang Bi's "Annotations on the Tao Te Ching". Among them, "therefore, it is more than the Tao" is because "the Tao has no water, so it is called the Ji". Here, the meaning of "nothing" is not absent, but rather, the Tao, as the fundamental element of all things, exists everywhere and is difficult to display. Water has a specific form and the same virtue as the Tao, but because water has become an object, Wang Bi said "therefore, it is called the Ji". In addition, Wang Bi proposed that "water is good for all things and does not compete, and is evil to everyone. The people here are people born in the context of the collapse of etiquette and the downfall of music, rather than those born in the era of "dull politics and honest people". Regarding the moral character of water described in Chapter 8, is there such an interpretation? Firstly, water is superior because it can always be in a place that people dislike, nourish all things and not compete with them? This indicates that water follows the law of mutual growth and harmony, and that everyone's struggle rather than harmony is the basis for Wang Bi's proposal of "people are evil and inferior". Advocating compliance with laws rather than following is only beneficial to one's own desires. Secondly, what kind of behavior should a good person (good person) have, as listed in the Tao Te Ching, reside in a good place, have a calm and unpredictable heart, and interact with people in a friendly and sincere manner, maintaining the principle of benevolence, and other manifestations, in line with the previous "water is good for all things and does not compete". It is proposed that the good of water is not dull and chaotic, but should do appropriate things at the appropriate time and place, Show the benevolence of the Tao in different forms. At the beginning of this paragraph, it is stated that water is the highest good. The first half proposes the general rule of mutual harmony and generation, the second half proposes how to do it in accordance with the Tao (water) in various situations, and finally proposes "the only way to do it is not to argue, so there is no particular". This passage is full of Laozi's dialectical thinking, which

describes the idea of "doing without arguing" in both metaphysical and metaphysical aspects of "Tao" and "vessel" if all things follow laws.

Laozi's "Te Ching" throughout the entire "Tao Te Ching" tends to use secular as a metaphorical narrative to illustrate the operation of laws. The many ethical and philosophical meanings added to the interpretation of the Tao Te Ching by the world are not only helpful in textual exploration, but also have profound practical significance. Chapter 51 shows that the Tao is born of virtue, the animal is born of virtue, the form of things is formed, and the momentum is formed. It is because all things respect the Tao and value virtue. The reverence of the Tao, the preciousness of virtue, and the constant nature of Mo's destiny. From the old way, it is born with virtue and livestock; it is nurtured by growth, matured by maturity, and nurtured by cultivation. Born without existence, done without reliance, grown without slaughter, is called divine virtue.

The Tao is the metaphysical Tao, described in philosophical terms as the essence of the world, which is the "Tao", from which all things are generated. Virtue and animal husbandry are tangible objects, and "virtue" nurtures all things and is the latter part of ontology. The 'zhi' here refers to everything and everything. Displayed in the form of things, the environment enables all things to grow. Therefore, in all things, there is no one who values virtue without respecting the Tao. Why do all things respect "Tao" and cherish "virtue"? It is because the "Tao" grows all things without interference, while the "Virtue" cultivates all things without domination, allowing nature to flow. Therefore, the Tao grows all things, the Virtue nurtures all things, enables all things to grow and develop, mature and bear fruit, and enables them to be nurtured and protected. Growing all things without taking them for oneself, nurturing all things without considering oneself meritorious. This is a very good virtue. The original intention here is to explain that "Tao" as the starting point of all things and "Te" as the principle of birth of all things exist in all things, but it does not directly occupy all things, but rather appears more as a representative of the nature of things. Here, we can understand it from two aspects. On the one hand, starting from subjectivity, it is in line with the Tao and morality to allow the subject to pursue their own nature. This opens the door to freedom for the development of things itself, just like "life is born free". However, this freedom extends the perspective from humans and human society to the more holistic freedom of nature. On the other hand, Tao and Te, as the fundamental sources of all things, do not constrain them. From the opposite perspective, if certain beings deviate from the original meaning of Tao and Te and oppose themselves, then the existence at this time does not have its original meaning and can also be understood as "all are in chains".

References

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