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THE *DAODEJING*: RESOURCES FOR CONTEMPORARY FEMINIST THINKING*

The spirit of the valley never dies.
It is called the subtle and profound female.
The gate of the subtle and profound female
Is the root of Heaven and Earth.
It is continuous, and seems to be always existing.
Use it and you will never wear it out.

Daodejing 6, translated by D. C. Lau

The *Daodejing*, believed to be the earliest Daoist text, provided a challenge to the patriarchalism prevalent in ancient Chinese society, in a way that other existing schools of thought, including Confucianism, did not. The *Daodejing* was radical in that it subjected to meticulous scrutiny a wide range of existing norms, practices, and beliefs in ancient Chinese society. It was skeptical about existing notions of strength, achievement, and power, and derided attempts to achieve such (*Daodejing* 2, 3, 8, 12, 13, 19, 20). Furthermore, according to the *Daodejing*, shows of strength and power and the need to conquer are reflective of a masculinist outlook (*Daodejing* 6, 10, 61). In contrast, the approach that is upheld in the *Daodejing* is associated with femininity: "the female always overcomes the male by tranquillity, and by tranquillity she is underneath" (*Daodejing* 61, translated by D. C. Lau).

A number of Daoist scholars have commented positively on the Daoist concept of the feminine and have set it in contrast to Confucian conceptions of moral and political achievement as embodied in the paradigmatic *junzi* (Confucian gentleman) concept. In the context of such comparisons, feminine modes of being in Daoist thought, drawing upon the maternal archetype and emphasizing an all-encompassing, receptive approach are commended. In addition, the advantages of such a feminine approach to ethics and sociopolitical philosophy are often highlighted in the literature.[1]

Given its treatment of the notion of femininity, the *Daodejing* might be construed as being sympathetic to the feminist cause in general, which seeks to address and deal with the oppression and subjugation of women. It is undeniable that the approach in the *Daodejing* associated with feminine modes of being casts doubt on certain Confucian ideals and sheds light on issues related to ethics and political power and achievement.

The primary aim of this article differs somewhat from the projects described earlier which applaud certain aspects of the notion of femininity in Daoist thought. It takes a rather more cautious approach to the Daoist notion of femininity and explores some of the warnings set forth by contemporary feminist philosophers regarding how femininity might be (mis)construed in ways that could be detrimental to women. This article aims to demonstrate that instead of its notion of femininity, the Daoist notion of complementarity of pairs of opposites provides interesting insights into how femininity (and masculinity) might be construed, thus providing feminist thinking in contemporary Western philosophy with conceptual resources for rethinking key issues arising in that field.

In the first section, the concept of femininity in the *Daodejing* and the values and ideals associated with it are examined. The second section examines the Daoist notion of femininity in the light of feminist thought in contemporary Western philosophy. The approach in this section is cautious, taking the lead from some contemporary feminist philosophers regarding the possible dangers of associating femininity with submissiveness. Here it is argued that the Daoist notion of femininity by itself has little to offer contemporary feminist thinking.

The argument is taken further in the third section to contend that Daoist thought has important *conceptual resources* to offer to contemporary feminist philosophy. Two key notions in Daoist thought, *dao* and *de*, and the relation between them, are discussed to exemplify key ideas pertaining to the Daoist notion of complementarity. It is argued that these key ideas provide the basis for a fresh approach to the concepts of femininity and masculinity, and to issues in contemporary feminist thought.

The Concept of the Feminine in Daoist Philosophy

There are two terms in the *Daodejing* that refer specifically to female, or femininity. These are *ci* and *pin*.[2] It is unclear whether there is any significant difference in meaning and scope between the terms *ci* and *pin.* The terms seem to be used interchangeably in their various occurrences in the *Daodejing.* For instance, in chapters 10 and 28, the *Daodejing* upholds keeping in line with the female principle (*ci*), and in chapters 28 and 61, the benefits of keeping in line with *ci* and *pin* are similar.

The most striking application of the concept of the female in the *Daodejing* relates to its suggestive imagery of nonassertion and submissiveness. In both chapters 28 and 61, submissiveness and tranquility are upheld for their beneficial effects; it is significant that the benefits of keeping to the female principle in both these chapters pertain to the exercise of military power and political strategy. The emphasis in chapter 61 seems to be somewhat narrow and restricted to the topic of how a country might, in adopting the *modus operandi* of the female in being tranquil and still, conquer another country. Chapter 28 allows for a richer interpretation of the concept of the feminine by aligning it with other significant concepts in Daoist thought such as darkness and humility.

The different functions of submissiveness and nonassertiveness are outlined in Table 1.

TABLE 1

Concept	**Reference (*Daodejing*)**	**Description/Function/Principle**
Noncontending or nonassertive (*buzhen*)	Chapter 8	Water does not contend; the best is like water, benefiting all things
Quiet or still (*jing*)	Chapter 16	To return to stillness and quiet is to return to *Dao*
	Chapter 61	The female, in being still, takes the lower position
Weak (*ruo*) and soft (*rou*)	Chapter 36	The soft and the weak overcome the hard and the strong
	Chapter 43	The soft overcomes the hard; this is the advantage of taking no action (*wuwei*)
	Chapter 76	The soft and the weak are superior, or take the higher position (*shang*)

	Chapter 78	There is nothing softer and weaker than water; the weak overcomes the strong and the soft overcomes the hard
To take the lower position (*yixia*, or *xiazhi*)	Chapter 61	The female, in being tranquil, takes the lower position (*yixia*); the big state, in placing itself below the small state, can take over it
	Chapter 66	The great rivers and seas are kings of all mountain streams because they stay below them (*xiazhi*); in order to be the superior of the people, one must place oneself below them

There is consistent emphasis in the *Daodejing* on the beneficial effects of being submissive, weak, and nonassertive. The idea of taking the lower position is sufficiently vague to accommodate a range of interpretations. In one view, certain chapters of the *Daodejing*, such as 61, 66, and 76, suggest that the weak, the soft, or the inferior overcome their respective contrastive terms and subsequently assume the higher position (*shang*). According to this picture, taking the lower position is merely a means to an end. If this is the case, then it is arguable that Daoist thought offers a strategy for conquering (this motif is particularly apparent in chapter 76).

Although some Daoist scholars believe that Daoism offers little more than a political and/or military strategy for conquering through submissiveness, there is a broader conceptualization of the male–female polarity if it is understood in the light of other contrastive pairs,[3] and of other key concepts, in the *Daodejing.* A more general interpretation of the major task of the *Daodejing* is that it seeks to overturn existing contemporary norms and values. In some of its chapters, the preference for what is generally held to be inferior, such as ugly, nonactive, evil, dark, submissive, low, tranquil, female, black, and weak, is based on their ontological primacy; these concepts are primary rather than derivative (see chapters 8, 11, 26, 28, 36). In some of the chapters, the ontological primacy of attributes such as female, weak, and submissive is rooted in their moral superiority.[4] It needs to be noted, however, that the *Daodejing* does not simply advocate that existing norms be discarded. Rather, corresponding contrastive attributes such as strong, hard, active, and male have their place, albeit secondary, in the order of all existence (chapters 2, 29).

Due to lexical and textual ambiguities, interpretation of the Daoist rejection of contemporary values and norms is varied amongst scholars. In this article, the focus is on a synthesis of two perspectives, the first taking the approach of linguistic skepticism, and the second that of

ethico-political analysis.

The thesis that the paradigm of the *Daodejing* rests in linguistic skepticism is advanced by Daoist scholar Chad Hansen.[5] Hansen resists the commonly accepted interpretation of Daoism as a metaphysical mysticism, a theory of language and reality that is content to relegate the vague or unexplained to the mystical. Instead, Hansen promotes an interpretive theory of the *Daodejing* as an expression of skepticism regarding conventional norms; in this view, ". . . learning social distinctions typically involves internalizing society's preferences . . . we learn names by mimicking their use in guiding choices in ordinary contexts."[6]

According to Hansen's analysis, the important message of the *Daodejing* is a cautious—even skeptical—approach to conventional (and unquestioned) attitudes and values expressed in and acquired through the use of language. These acquired attitudes and values in turn shape our perspectives, coloring our perceptions, tastes, and desires. In this regard, chapters 2, 12, 19, and 20 of the *Daodejing* are particularly pertinent to Hansen's thesis.

Applying Hansen's thesis to the Daoist notion of femininity and its associated ideals, two basic ideas arise. First, one should be cautious about internalizing conventional preference for masculinity and its associated characteristics and, concomitantly, devaluing femininity and its associated characteristics. Second, Hansen's thesis reminds us that there is little reason simply to overturn the existing value system by preferring the feminine to the masculine, the dark over light, etc. The mere overturning of the value system would reveal a misunderstanding of the *Daodejing* in Hansen's view. This is because turning a system of values on its head does not seem to transcend the need for a proper understanding of conventional values and ideals (often uncritically accepted as normative), and of the role of language in reinforcing those conventions.

Hansen's thesis of linguistic skepticism is not inconsistent with an ethico-political analysis of Daoist thought. According to this latter view, the Daoist rejection of masculinity and its associated ideals needs to be situated within the larger context of the Daoist rejection of norms, customs, institutions, language, and government. From the point of view of the Daoist paradigm, all these concerns are merely human and hence necessarily narrow and restrictive. Chapters 2, 3, 5, 19, 20, 38, and 63 articulate the Daoist suspicion of anthropocentric constructs; chapter 19 is most succinct in this regard:

Abandon sageliness and discard wisdom;
Then the people will benefit a hundredfold.
Abandon humanity and discard righteousness;
Then the people will return to filial piety and deep love.
Abandon skill and discard profit;
Then there will be no thieves or robbers.
However, these three things are ornament (*wen* [culture]) and not adequate.
Therefore let people hold on to these:
    Manifest plainness,
    Embrace simplicity,
    Reduce selfishness,
    Have few desires.

The rejection of ideals associated with sageliness (*sheng*) and wisdom (*zhi*), humanity (*ren*) and righteousness (*yi*), and skill (*qiao*) and profit (*li*) involved, in part, a rejection of Confucian ideals.

From the point of view of a critical assessment of Confucian philosophy and culture, Daoist philosophy provides a refreshing challenge to some of the patriarchal attitudes in ancient Chinese society, many of which were framed within Confucian thought. The close scrutiny of existing ideals of power, strength, and hierarchy conducted by the early Daoists provides an insightful critique of the nature of the Confucian institutions of sagehood and of moral achievement as ostentatious and forced. Chapter 5 of the *Daodejing* states the Daoist attitude toward Confucian ideals:

Heaven and Earth are not humane [*ren*]
They regard all things as straw dogs.
The sage is not humane.
He regards all people as straw dogs.
How Heaven and Earth are like a bellows!
While vacuous, it is never exhausted.
When active, it produces even more.
Much talk will of course come to a dead end.
It is much better to keep to the center [*zhong*].

This chapter expresses the Daoist appeal to natural processes as providing a model or paradigm for government. The Daoist sage seeks to replicate the processes of Heaven and Earth. The idea that Heaven and Earth are not humane, or are not modeled according to human life or concerns, is representative of the Daoist repudiation of *ren*, the central concept in Confucian humanism.[7]

Two important aspects of Daoist anti-anthropomorphism are revealed in this chapter. First, human beings, one of many beings, and of many forms of existence (*wanwu*), are not granted special status or special consideration by Heaven and Earth. Accordingly, the Daoist sage, modeling himself on Heaven and Earth, should not accord priority to human beings or human concerns over and above all other beings. Second, all things, including human beings, are viewed in this chapter as having instrumental value only.[8] This view has important implications for Daoist axiology. It is not merely expressive of an awareness of the framework and exercise of value-ascription; it also seems to imply that there is nothing that is intrinsically valuable in a context of the interconnectedness of all things.

From the perspectives of both the linguistic and ethico-political analyses, it appears that the Daoist preference for a model of the feminine over that of the masculine is not rooted in feminist concerns. Rather, it originates from Daoist suspicion regarding the contingency and arbitrariness of social and political institutions and, more generally, of language and value.

Submissiveness as the Feminine *Modus Operandi*: A Feminist Analysis

With regard to the notion of femininity, the *Daodejing*, while critical of the Confucian project, and more generally of the inevitable internalization of conventional values through language, seems unable to reach beyond the boundaries of existing norms and standards. For instance, the *Daodejing* does not stop to question *why* the female is aligned with the submissive. In addition, it seems to be caught within the structures of conquering and of winning, and its positive valuation of submissiveness is situated in that context: In order to conquer a small state, a large state is advised to take the "lower" position (*Daodejing* 61).[9]

Furthermore, it should not be overlooked that the early Daoist texts do not provide much by way of a substantive account of value or virtue associated with the concept of the feminine that could serve as a constructive basis for the promotion of some of the interests or concerns of women.

It appears that the lack of substantive content in the Daoist conception of femininity rests partly in the motivations for, and the nature of, the Daoist project. In this connection, it is worth reiterating that the Daoist attack on patriarchalism does not stem from feminist considerations.
In other words, the causal connections are important here: Some weight is placed on submissiveness—normally aligned with femininity—as a virtue or principle, but this maneuver is merely a derivative of the attack on anthropocentricism.

Many contemporary feminist philosophers are wary of identifying submissiveness or docility as a feminine characteristic because this could reinforce a patriarchal theme: that females are weak and thus to be cared for or told what to do. Such an ideology is detrimental to both women and men, and might be manifest in creating certain unwarranted and inappropriate expectations. For instance, with respect to the reason–passion dichotomy where men were expected to be rational and women passionate (and or irrational), ". . . men were expected to conform to a stereotype of masculine behavior, in which affectivity was interpreted as weakness, whilst women were constructed as weak, hysterical and intellectually inferior."[10]

Concerns like this were expressed in response to "difference" feminism, which asserted the legitimacy of women's *different* experiences and needs from those of men. In its heyday, many perceived this move as a positive development from "equality" feminism where women simply strove to be like men or to attain characteristics associated with masculinity, but there have been responses to difference feminism that urge caution. In this regard, some point to the danger of veering into a notion of femininity aligned with features such as weakness (versus strength), passion (versus reason), and domestic domains (versus public domains). Indeed, if difference feminism yields such a concept of femininity, to insist on difference would be to inflict the curse of oppression.

Somewhat more mature criticism of the difference strategy runs deeper than a rejection of traditional feminine values which contributed in part to the oppression of females. The underlying philosophic commitment of a difference strategy is a dualistic framework which highlights the dichotomy between masculinity and femininity. It has often been noted in the work of feminist theorists that the positing of dichotomies is often coupled with a hierarchical rating. There is often a preferred term in the dichotomous set, and pairs such as male–female, light–dark, strong–weak, rational–emotional, mind–body implicitly carry with them a preference for the male, strong, and

rational, etc. Furthermore, the hierarchical preference rating often carries with it a moral weight: A moral dualism lies at the center of how pairs such as male–female, rational–emotional, and mind–body are conceptualized, implying the moral inferiority of the female, of the emotions and of the (physical) body.[11]

The conceptualization of dichotomous pairs is more problematic where one of the terms of the dichotomy is taken as normative. If this is the case, the opposite term is viewed as a deficiency or failure in comparison with the normative. In other words, if the male is viewed as normative, the female, which stands in contrast to the male and which lacks its distinctive properties, might be viewed as a poor approximation to it. Commenting on both the "sameness" and "difference" strategies, Genevieve Lloyd, discussing Catherine MacKinnon's views, writes:

> What is fundamental is the political fact, which both sameness and difference approaches obscure, that maleness is the standard with reference to which both sameness and difference are judged. Sameness means being the same as men, difference means being different from them.[12]

More generally, there is a danger of dichotomous pairs being conceptualized in a manner that posits one of the terms as normative (A), and the other term as aberrant or as displaying the absence of what is normative (not-A). According to such a schema, if the masculine is taken as the norm, then the feminine (not-A) is understood to be lacking in comparison to the masculine. Nancy Jay, a feminist philosopher writing on the topic of dichotomy, comments that

> Hidden, taken for granted, A/Not-A distinctions are dangerous and, because of their peculiar affinity with gender distinctions, it seems important for feminist theory to be systematic in recognizing them.[13]

Returning to the notion of femininity in the *Daodejing*, the cautionary remarks from contemporary feminist philosophy should be heeded. First, the *Daodejing* does not provide a substantive account of values associated with the feminine (apart from its insistence on submissiveness as the feminine *modus operandi*). The mere rejection of ideals associated with masculinity does not adequately challenge existing structures. The question still remains: How are we to supply a set of values associated with the feminine that is not simply an alternative masculine model, still rooted in existing patriarchal structures?[14]

Second, the mere overturning of existing norms such as a preference for the female instead of the male is an unreflective and unhelpful way of approaching an inquiry into political and social (including patriarchal) dogmatism. Such a simplistic reversal would not advance the feminist cause because the approach does not extend much beyond a rejection of what is normative. Viewed in this way, the Daoist affirmation of submissiveness as a feminine characteristic could be interpreted as merely reaffirming the traditional view that women are complementary and subsidiary to men who occupy a central position in philosophy and culture, and according to whom standards of normativity are set. In feminist philosophy, such moves to "revalorise" traditional femininity have been described as ". . . conservative pre-feminist or anti feminist strategy,"[15] which would not lead to the addressing of issues of women's interests and needs.

From a feminist perspective, the notion of femininity in the *Daodejing* is indeed riddled with many difficulties and with possible antifeminist elements. A possible approach is to resist the attempt to explain this concept as a simple concept in isolation, and instead to situate discussions of femininity within the larger context of the *Daodejing*. In this connection, Hansen, who offers an interpretive theory of the *Daodejing*, is judicious in his assessment that an unsophisticated approach to the overturning of conventional values will result in a reading of the *Daodejing* that has little to offer to contemporary philosophy:

> Where conventional value assignments favor the upper, the strong, the wise, the dominant, Laozi's sayings help us appreciate the value of the lower, the weak, the ignorant, the submissive. Traditionalists value the male; Laozi emphasizes the female . . . [however] its theoretical point must be more subtle than merely reversing conventional guidance and dogmatically pushing the negative discourse *dao.*[16]

In the final section of this article, I endeavor to demonstrate that a more profound understanding of the *Daodejing* yields a concept of complementarity between male and female that would provide a valuable resource for contemporary feminist thinking.

Daoist Conceptual Resources for Contemporary Feminist Thinking

The analysis in this section focuses primarily on the notion of complementarity in Daoist thought, with the goal of highlighting its relevance for contemporary feminist thinking. It is contended that

a fundamental aspect of the Daoist notion of complementarity is a rejection of any dichotomy between polarities such as masculinity and femininity. For the purpose of this discussion, dichotomy is taken to mean antithesis and mutual exclusion.

The discussion utilizes the concepts of *dao* and *de*, two key concepts in Daoist thought, to demonstrate a notion of complementarity that not only transcends dichotomization but also proceeds to affirm both the interdependence and the integrity of polarities.

Against the Dichotomization of Polarities

In Daoist thought, it is clear that some tension exists between the pairs of opposites; hot and cold do not simply meld into each other such that they are indistinguishable. On the other hand, there is a sense of fluidity and flux between the opposites that is fostered by their interconnectedness: It is clear that such opposites are not dichotomous.

Contrastive pairs in Daoist thought are represented in some chapters of the *Daodejing* as being ontologically connected. Chapter 36, for instance, presents a view of pairs that encompasses not merely a methodology but also posits an ontological connectedness between the contrastive terms:

> In order to contract, it is necessary first to expand.
> In order to weaken, it is necessary first to strengthen.
> In order to destroy, it is necessary first to promote.
> In order to grasp, it is necessary first to give.
> This is called subtle light.
> The weak and the tender overcome the hard and the strong . . .
>
> —*Daodejing* 36, translated by W. T. Chan

It is significant that terms such as stillness, dark, inferior (*Daodejing* 16, 26, 39) are identified as the root of their corresponding terms. This suggests not only ontological connectedness of the pairs, but also that terms that are customarily held to be inferior have greater ontological significance. These aspects of the contrastive pairs are also emphasized in the Daoist use of figurative metaphors such as the infant, in contrast to the old and wise (*Daodejing* 10, 20, 28, 55), the uncarved block, in contrast to development and complexity (*Daodejing* 15, 19, 28, 33, 37,

57), the yielding nature of water (*Daodejing* 8, 15, 78) as well as the description of *dao* as shadowy, nameless, and undifferentiated (*Daodejing* 1, 14, 20, 25, 32, 37, 41).

It needs to be noted that, while there is an overturning of existing norms and values, these are not abandoned. Both terms of the contrastive pairs are preserved in the Daoist value system and are often (*Daodejing* 22, 26, 28, 36, 61, 63, and 77) poised in delicate balance: "Know the male but keep to the role of the female" (*Daodejing* 28). Interplay between the terms of each contrastive pair is sometimes described according to a theme of reversion: The weak overcomes the strong and is, in turn, overcome by the weak. Attempts to explain this idea of balance include metaphors of a seesaw up-and-down surge and fall, a process of cyclic change, with or without reversion, a cycle of development and decline, and a view of change like a children's slide: "One climbs laboriously to the top, but once over the edge the downward movement is quick, abrupt, inevitable, and complete."[17] Some of these metaphors incorporate a sense of tension such as a view of cyclic change whereby the submissive prevails over the strong and becomes the strong; in turn it is overcome by the submissive. Other views argue against any hint of tension, arguing that Daoist philosophy is inconsistent with such cycling.

Interpretation of this theme of reversion (see *Daodejing* chapters 7, 22, 26, 36, 40, 41, 45, 58, 63, 66) is important in understanding the concept of complementarity in Daoist philosophy.[18] The explanations of reversion described above involve the connection between the two terms and primarily describe a process of balance and surge between the two (see *Daodejing* 22: "Bowed down then preserved; bent then straight; hollow then full; worn then new"). On the other hand, some have argued that the reversal does not involve a mere overturning of norms (an idea that could find support in *Daodejing* 43: "the most submissive thing in the world can ride roughshod over the hardest in the world") whereby a particular term is replaced by its opposite, and replaces its opposite in turn.

Reversion, rather than *replacement*, describes the dynamic between the opposites. Many chapters of the *Daodejing* seem to urge the transcendence of a dichotomous two-value system. Dichotomy is discouraged in a range of domains. This includes the

1. aesthetic (2, 12: "the five colors make man's eyes blind");
2. evaluative (2, 12, 20: "Between good and evil, how great is the distance?");
3. moral (18, 38: "when the way was lost there was virtue");

4. sociopolitical (13, 18, 20, 38, 65, 19: “exterminate the sage, discard the wise, and the people will benefit a hundredfold”);
5. metaphysical (11, 23, 32: “dao is nameless; as soon as there are names one ought to know that it is time to stop”); and
6. epistemological (12, 2: “the whole world recognizes the beautiful as the beautiful, yet this is only the ugly”).

With regard to the extent of the reversal, Angus Graham, a Daoist scholar, argues that the reversal is not internal and pertaining merely to interaction between the contrastive pairs. Specifically, he contends that the notion of reversal is rather more comprehensive, involving a rejection of dichotomization between A and B:

> For *Lao-tzu* . . . reversal is *not* a switch from preferring A to preferring B, aiming to become weak, soft, below instead of strong, hard and above. Since all human effort is against a downward pull toward B, that direction is a first approximation to the Way of spontaneous process, to be adjusted next to the upward impulse after renewal from the fecund bottom of B. *The reversal smashes the dichotomy of A and B*; in preferring to be submissive the sage does not cease to be oriented towards strength, for he recognises that surviving by yielding to a rising power is the road to victory over it when its climax is past.[19]

Graham’s description of the balancing process between A and B refers to a dissolution of dichotomy between A and B. The end result of the dissolution, however, is not a merging of A and B, nor the reduction of one in favor of the other. Rather, the separate qualities and identities of both A and B are maintained. This notion of reversal supports a specific picture of complementation of the terms A and B.

Complementarity of Opposites

In an article that explores the notion of complementarity in the contrastive pairs, Antonio Cua, a scholar of Daoism, uses the story of the two characters Narcissus and Goldmund from Hesse’s novel as an illustration.[20] According to Cua, Narcissus and Goldmund exemplify two extremes: Narcissus seeking to further develop his scholarly mind and Goldmund in pursuit of sensuous satisfaction. However, in their relationship, Narcissus and Goldmund are reconciled in a profound

and genuine manner, recognizing their extreme differences, yet allowing their differences to coexist in complementarity: "It is not our purpose to become each other; it is to recognize each other, to learn and see the other and honor him for what he is; each the other's opposite and complement."[21]

Analyzing various aspects of the relationship between Narcissus and Goldmund, Cua notes that the significance of *dao*, with regard to the contrastive pairs, does not lie in its function as rules or principles with substantive content, but rather as an *orientation* independent of one's theoretical and normative commitments. Cua argues that:

> Tao, as an ideal theme of harmony of opposites, has a vague and minimal cognitive content. We are offered no guiding principles for articulating clearly its specific or detailed practical import . . . A commitment to tao is more a resolution to view things in a certain way, rather than knowledge of the nature of things.[22]

Briefly, the features of complementarity that arise from Cua's analysis include:

- Acceptance and recognition: There is an acceptance and recognition of each other's integrity with no thought of influence or attempt at molding or altering one another's character or way of life.
- Completion of the other, not duplication: The two are not meant to grow like each other; each has deficiencies which the other makes up for. In other words, there is an assumption of mutual completion of the other and that either one on its own is in some sense incomplete.
- Reciprocity: The complementarity is achieved not by means of mutual adjustment of segments in two opposed ways of life, or by means of recognizing their common and intersecting elements to form a coherent way of life. Rather, it is achieved by a reciprocal appreciation and learning.
- Resonance: This draws upon the concept of *ganying* (resonance),[23] a classical Chinese theory of mutual influence and response which, according to Cua, involves ". . . an expansion of intellectual horizon and a restructuring of one's vision of life."[24]

Cua's analysis is interesting and persuasive and offers a fresh and useful insight into the notion of complementarity. It yields a picture of complementarity that is not reductionist and that

emphasizes mutual dependence between the concepts, which foregrounds both the distinctiveness and interdependence of the terms. In such a view, the possibility of the contrastive terms being presented in certain relations such as A, not-A, or A or B (in the mutually exclusive sense), are immediately excluded.

Complementarity: The Case of Dao and De

There is a set of Daoist concepts that would best demonstrate the Daoist picture of complementarity. The set is comprised of two key concepts in Daoist thought, *dao* and *de*.[25] Some attention needs to be given to the articulation of *dao* and *de*, and the connection between them because, whereas attempts to explore the meanings and dimensions of *dao* have been extensive, the concept *de*, by contrast, has been left in obscurity.[26]

The two most popular translations of *de* are "virtue"[27] and "power."[28] The translation of *de* as "virtue" has been criticized at various points; the most notable criticism being that *de* construed as virtue is an unwarranted Confucianist rendition of a Daoist concept.[29] Similarly, there are problems with the translation of *de* as power particularly in light of the Daoist rejection of masculinist assertions of power.

The main problem with these translations of *de* lie, however, with the assumption that *dao* and *de* are distinct *and* independent concepts. In this regard, there have been persuasive accounts of *dao* and *de* as internally connected and poised in delicate balance, hence placing the two concepts within a framework consistent with major Daoist themes. Such accounts cast *dao* and *de* in complementary relation, with *dao* denoting the universal and *de* the particular.

In one such account, for example, *dao* is described as "inwardness," with *de* denoting the particular *dao* of humanity. Wawrytko's rationale for such a characterization is, she argues, ". . . grounded in the fundamental assumption of a feminine philosophy that our internal reality is equivalent to the outer one."[30] In other words, the conception of wholeness and its attainment rests in *de*, the human innate source of values "which microcosmically represents the macrocosm of Tao."[31] In her characterization of *dao* and *de*, Wawrytko refers to Wing-tsit Chan's description of *dao* partly in terms of its homophone "de," meaning "to obtain." In support of Wawrytko's analysis, *de* can be understood as ". . . that which has been obtained from Tao, that is, individualised Tao."[32]

It might be argued that Wawrytko's notion of *de*, while insightful, gives too much precedence to humanity. Although Wawrytko subsequently qualifies her view that *de* includes all of nature and not simply human nature (and that humans hold no privileged position), her description of *de* in terms of "feminist ethics" still fails to transcend the essentially human category of ethics.

This analysis of Wawrytko's viewpoints to a need for an understanding of *dao* and *de* that is perhaps more in tune with Daoist themes. One such view is that of Fung Yu-Lan. Fung, a scholar in Chinese thought, provides a more holistic and process-oriented view of *dao* and *de.* According to him,

> . . . *Te* is what an individual thing receives from *Tao.* The total spontaneity of all things is *Tao.* The spontaneity that an individual thing receives from *Tao* is *Te*. . . . the relation between *Te* and *Tao* is just like that between the water in river or lake, and water in general.[33]

In comparison with Wawrytko's account, Fung's comprehension of the concepts *dao* and *de* sits more comfortably within Daoist thought because it conceives of the connection between the two in terms of the Daoist style of spontaneity (*ziran*). In other words, Fung's view reflects the Daoist emphasis on holism and fluidity in the conceptualization of particulars.

These two facets of the connection between *dao* and *de* have been taken up more recently by scholars such as David Hall. Hall characterizes *dao* as a totality, as the "sum of all possible orders."[34] Each particular element within this totality is an abstraction from the totality and *de*, within this framework, refers to the "particular focus" or "intrinsic excellence" of a thing. Hall views *dao–de* as a single notion, describing their relationship in terms of the connection between field (*dao*) and focus (*de*).

In a similar manner, Roger Ames has characterized *de* in terms of a process: that of ". . . the arising of the particular in a process vision of existence."[35] According to Ames, while each particular "determines conditions within the range and parameters of its particularity," it has to do so within the context of the whole, that is, *dao.* In other words, while the whole is comprised of particulars, the latter, on the other hand, are partly determined by their context.

The characterization of *dao–de* by Hall as well as by Ames reveals an interdependent complementarity of the two concepts which are internally related. In that regard, Ames's account makes explicit the interdependence. According to Ames,

> Just as any one ingredient in the stewpot must be blended with all of the others in order to express most fully its own flavor, so harmonization with other environing particulars is a necessary precondition for the fullest self-disclosure of any given particular . . . [The particular] can through harmonization and patterns of deference diffuse to become coextensive with other particulars, and absorb an increasingly broader field of "arising" within the sphere of its own particularity. This then is the "getting" or "appropriating" aspect of *te*.[36]

With reference to the various aspects of the Daoist notion of complementarity discussed above, the *dao–de* pair, as construed by Hall and by Ames, embodies certain features. While the field–focus or universal–particular aspects of the *dao–de* relation are not relevant to the concepts of femininity and masculinity, some key features of complementarity emerge from the analysis of the *dao–de* connection. Thus, *dao* and *de*

1. are not mutually exclusive;
2. are interdependent;
3. are not reducible each to the other;
4. must remain distinct (this means that the integrity of each is maintained within the context of a healthy tension between the two); and
5. are not static.

Each particular operates within various limits of self-determination, set by the context of the whole. The combination and relation of particulars will in turn determine the whole. This makes for a dynamic conception of the Daoist project.

Dao-de and Contemporary Feminist Philosophy

The analysis of the *dao–de* pair sheds light on complementarity between femininity and masculinity. If a similar analysis were applied to the female–male contrastive pair, various important features of the connection between the two are revealed. These include:

1. *Femininity and masculinity are not mutually exclusive.* The presence or existence of one does not imply the nonexistence or absence of the other. This feature operates in terms of causality as well: The presence or existence of one does not negate, eliminate, or neutralize the other in the sense that it does not *cause* the absence of the other. In this connection, it has been noted by feminist philosophers that a focus on antagonism and dichotomy between masculinity and femininity could detract from a proper conceptualization of each of the concepts: It could betray the complexity within both the notions of femininity and masculinity.[37]

2. *Femininity and masculinity are interdependent concepts.* The accounts of femininity and masculinity arising from this analysis are nonseparatist accounts. The *Daodejing* discourages a separatist notion of the contrastive pairs. It asserts, instead, the view that these terms are ontologically connected. Many feminist scholars have noted the inaccuracy and futility of separatist accounts of femininity. Some have emphasized that separatist accounts are unrealistic because "women . . . do not live or act in a world from which men are absent; what it is therefore essential to study . . . is the dynamic of relations between the sexes."[38] An extreme version of separatism is gynocentrism, which involves the rejection of men or masculinity while maintaining female exclusivity. Some feminists have argued against gynocentric accounts of femininity, pointing out that gynocentrism, in failing to transcend dualism, fails to fulfill the tasks it sets out to achieve.[39]

3. *Femininity and masculinity are nonreducible each to the other.* Although the *Daodejing* does seem to have a preference for values associated with the feminine, it does not, on the other hand, discard those associated with masculinity. Its account of the contrastive pairs is nonreductionist. Feminist philosophy rejects the assimilation and reduction of femininity to masculinity. A reasonable construction of both masculinity and femininity would imply that a reduction of masculinity and femininity would be unsatisfactory as well. Reductionist accounts, either of masculinity or femininity, are unsatisfactory because they artificially discount or disregard important features of the term being reduced.

4. *Femininity and masculinity must remain distinct.* The view that the contrastive pairs are interdependent incorporates not only the idea that the terms are nonseparable but also that the integrity of each is maintained. Such a view recognizes, and sees a place for, healthy tension

between the two. In emphasizing their interdependence, what is sought is not a middle-ground compromise situation in which each concept loses its features which do not fit into the compromised model. In the compromise model, which seeks to reduce or eliminate tension, those features that femininity and masculinity do not share in common are pared down, and both concepts are reduced to a common core. A danger in such an approach is that such compromise sometimes leads to a mere combination of two unsatisfactory existing models. In constructing a feminist philosophy, androcentrism, which is seen as one such form of compromise, is often avoided. Val Plumwood, a feminist philosopher, argues against the simplistic, shallow, and arbitrary nature of such an approach:

> The concept of androgynous human character suggests a recipe analogy, in which the new human ideal is put together from existing ingredients: take good points of each gender and place in bowl, mix gently, throw bad points into dustbin.[40]

5. *Femininity and masculinity are not static concepts.* The reciprocity and mutual dependence of one on the other renders the relation between both concepts, as well as the concepts themselves, dynamic. The factors that constitute both concepts are various and constantly subject to change. It stands to reason, therefore, that an accurate account both of femininity and masculinity should accommodate such interactionism, multicausality and reciprocity of factors. Furthermore, the recognition of a certain flux and dynamism of the concepts, and of their interaction, avoids essentialist approaches to femininity and masculinity.

Four important aspects of the preceding analysis should be noted. First, while the examination of the concept *dao–de* is based on readings of the *Daodejing*, the remarks made about the connection between femininity and masculinity are not derived from the text. The excursion into the *dao–de* concept is not intended as a demonstration by analogy of femininity and masculinity in the text. In other words, the discussion of *dao–de* is meant to be *illustrative* of the Daoist conception of *complementarity*.

Second, the notion of complementarity discussed in this paper is different from that shunned by feminist thinkers. Feminist philosophers tread warily on the suggestion that femininity complements masculinity. This is because in one possible conception of complementarity, the masculine ideal is left unchallenged and the feminine ideal is simply added to it. In this approach, the masculine is basic, normative, and independent of the feminine whereas on the other hand, the

feminine is dependent on the masculine and derives its status and validity only from the masculine norm.

In contrast, the Daoist notion of complementarity insists on the integrity and distinctiveness both of the feminine and the masculine. In this view, the focus is on the cooperative, responsive, and interdependent aspects of complementarity. In Daoist thought, the connectedness of femininity and masculinity provides the basis for an epistemology in which feminine and masculine can only be adequately construed and explained by reference to the other.

Third, Daoist philosophy supports the idea that existing norms need to be carefully scrutinized. Some Daoist scholars have taken this theme further to argue that the Daoist suspicion of existing ideals involves a rejection of dichotomous concepts in which one set of values is held to be antithetical with the other, and one set held to be superior while the other inferior. The rejection of dichotomy between masculinity and femininity is of fundamental significance in feminist philosophy. This prevents an oversimplified conceptualization of pairs such as public–private, impersonal–personal, universal–particular, moral–natural, rational–emotional, and nature–nurture as comprised by mutually exclusive terms. In other words, what is being held up for scrutiny here is not that distinctions cannot or should not be made, but rather that it should not simply be assumed that each of these pairs of concepts are dichotomous. For instance, Val Plumwood addresses the egoism–altruism contrast associated with masculinity and femininity respectively:

> If egoism is taken as consisting in pursuit of a person's own selfish interest, and altruism to consist in a person's denying or setting aside their own interest in favour of that of others, the false contrast standardly presented between the two overlooks the alternative of interdependence of interest, the situation where interests are not discrete and disconnected but where a person's interest essentially involves the needs of others. Similar points can be made for most of the other gender-related dualisms.[41]

The rejection of dichotomy between masculine and feminine highlights an important feature of complementarity discussed here. The area of overlap, signifying engagement between the two, is one that is complex and dynamic, and that provides the context for responsivity.

Fourth, Daoist philosophy upholds a conception of dynamic interchange through which the concepts *enrich* or *complete* the other rather than reduce the significance of the other. The

translation of chapter 2 of the *Daodejing* by Daoist scholar Chung-ying Cheng is particularly enlightening in this regard:

> Therefore being and nonbeing mutually generate each other. The difficult and easy mutually complete each other; the long and the short mutually define each other; the high and the low mutually recline on each other; the simple and complex (sounds) mutually harmonize each other; the before and the after mutually follow each.[42]

The *Daodejing* views cooperative dialogue between the polarities as an essential feature of the particularity and definition of each of them. In applying this idea to concepts of femininity and masculinity, it becomes apparent that the concepts are interdependent and thus incomplete in themselves; such a view provides a metaphysical basis for a picture of interactive dynamism between the two.[43] This is important because it has been noted by many feminist scholars that separatist views of femininity and masculinity are either unrealistic or undesirable because they do not properly reflect the anthropological, sociological, ecological, and political aspects of human life.

In conclusion, one issue that remains is how the notion of complementarity might practically be realized in contemporary feminist thought. First, eliminating assumptions about a dichotomy between femininity and masculinity breaks the conception of the two as antithetical and irreconcilable. An important corollary of rejecting a dichotomy between masculinity and femininity is the rejection as well of dichotomy between pairs of concepts conventionally and stereotypically associated with masculinity and femininity. Hence, this should lead to a careful examination of pairs of concepts such as reason–passion, public–private, and impersonal–personal, and whether it is plausible in all cases to conceptualize each term of a contrastive pair in a fashion that suggests total exclusion of the other. In other words, the shattering of the dichotomy should force one to question conceptual frameworks such as “male is rational” and “female is emotional,” which ignore important overlaps between the terms.

Second, the removal of dichotomy sets the groundwork for the introduction of complementarity between masculinity and femininity. The model of complementarity discussed here is strengthened by its recognition of the integrity of each of the concepts without the reduction or compromise of either. Furthermore, it emphasizes the openness and responsivity of each to the other, allowing for mutual enrichment of the two. This yields a picture of femininity and

masculinity as interdependent and dynamically engaged. In such a view, the notion of human excellence is inclusive and augmented; it would include not merely the masculine and the feminine, and their particular and distinctive characteristics, but also the richness and complexities of their interaction and interdependence. The implications and advantages of this paradigm would not merely be restricted to feminist thought, but would also inform debates in a range of areas including ethics, epistemology, and social and political philosophy.

Chinese Glossary

buzheng	不爭		
ci	雌	ruo	弱
dao	道	shang	上
Daodejing	«道德經»	sheng	聖
de	德	wanwu	萬物
ganying	感應	wen	文
junzi	君子	wuwei	無爲
li	利	xiazhi	下之
mu	母	yi	義
pin	牝	yixia	以下
qiao	巧	zhi	知
ren	仁	zhong	中
rou	柔	ziran	自然

Endnotes

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[1] See, for example, Sandra Wawrytko, *The Undercurrent of Feminine Philosophy in Eastern and Western Thought* (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1976) and Everett Kleinjans, "The Tao of Women and Men: Chinese Philosophy and the Women's Movement," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 17: 99–127.

[2] There is a third term, *mu*, which is commonly translated as "mother." This notion has a central place in Daoist thought pertaining to ideas of dependence, origin, and/or causality.

[3] These include being–nonbeing, action–nonaction, high–low, beautiful–ugly, good–evil, light–dark, contending–submissive, restless–tranquil, white–black, honored–disgraced, and strong–weak.

[4] Benjamin Schwartz, a scholar of Chinese thought, comments that there is an ". . . obvious and striking 'asymmetry' in the Lao-tzu's view of the female versus the male, the weak versus the strong, the soft versus the hard, and the passive versus the active. In all cases, the first term of the dyad is definitely 'preferred.' It enjoys a higher 'ontological' status, just as water is preferred to stone; it seeks lowly places, and it is, in a profounder sense, stronger than stone" (*The World of Thought in Ancient China* [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985], p. 203).

[5] Chad Hansen, A Daoist Theory of Chinese Thought; A Philosophical Interpretation (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).

[6] Ibid., p. 213.

[7] In Confucian thought, the ideal society was a large and rather complicated network of relationships, based on a set of moral norms derived in part from the customs of the early Chou dynasty (1122 b.c.e.–221 b.c.e.). These Confucian relationships, and hence social differentiation, were marked by notions of (moral) superiority and inferiority and, accordingly, one's actions and behaviors were assessed according to the nature of the relationship, and one's position in that relationship. In the Confucian *Analects*, gender difference is coded within norms of social appropriateness, biased against women. The female person is recognized only in her roles as wife, and/or as mother. In her role as wife, the status of the woman is inferior to that of her husband. From the moral perspective, the Confucians made little allowance for the development of character or individual achievement in women. Values appropriate to womanhood were explained solely in terms of the woman's relationships and of her place within the family. However, even the role of the mother is marginalized. Little, if anything, is mentioned in Confucian writings about the role of the mother and of her relation to her child, although much is made of the father–son relationship. The exclusion of women is obvious in Confucius's articulation of the primary principle of relational attachment, *xiao*, solely in terms of the father–son relationship. The idea that a mother might serve as an exemplar and as a teacher to her daughter, or for that matter, to her son, is nonexistent. In *Analects* 8:20.2–3, Confucius marks the boundaries of feminine excellence, excluding women from the arena of political involvement. While men could excel according to the *junzi* paradigm, there was no feminine equivalent. This construct is more insidious than it first seems because in classical Confucianism, moral social and political achievement and participation were irretrievably intertwined. Thus, the stance in the *Analects* is that women should be excluded from any such forms of participation. Confucius sketched the picture of an ideal polity in which only men were involved in government. Given that Confucian theory accords to those involved in government the highest ranks of social status, power, and authority, the significance of women within the ideal community was kept to a minimum.

[8] D. C. Lau notes, regarding the idea of "straw dogs," that "In the *T'ien yün* chapter in the *Chuang tzu* it is said that straw dogs were treated with the greatest deference before they were used as an offering, only to

be discarded and trampled upon as soon as they had served their purpose" (*Lao Tzu: Tao Te Ching* [Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1963], p. 61, translator's notes).

[9] See Schwartz's view that Daoism seems to be concerned with military strategy in its notion of submissiveness.

[10] Mary Evans, *Introducing Contemporary Feminist Thought* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1997), p. 35. Evans writes about this phenomenon as a symptom of the nineteenth century post-Enlightenment climate in which science and rationality were associated with masculinity, and weakness with femininity.

[11] Elisabeth J. Porter, *Women and Moral Identity* (North Sydney, Australia: Allen and Unwin, 1991).

[12] Genevieve Lloyd, "Woman as Other: Sex, Gender and Subjectivity," *Australian Feminist Studies* 10 (summer 1989): 16.

[13] Nancy Jay, "Gender and Dichotomy," *Feminist Studies* 7, no. 1 (spring 1981): 47.

[14] In "Women, Humanity and Nature," in *Socialism, Feminism and Philosophy*, edited by Sean Sayers and Peter Osborne (London: Routledge, 1990), Val Plumwood warns that the set of "patriarchal structures" might include the classification of masculine traits *as* the human model. If an inquiry into patriarchal structures does not attempt to replace this particular set of masculine traits, *and* if it does not carefully scrutinize the validity of the human model based on existing masculine traits, what it might end up with is the mere replacement of one set of masculine traits with an alternative set of masculine traits. See p. 214 f.

[15] Ibid., p. 287.

[16] Hansen, *A Daoist Theory of Chinese Thought*, p. 223.

[17] D. C. Lau, *Lao Tzu: Tao Te Ching*, Introduction, p. 27.

[18] It is important to note that in the *Daodejing* there are two terms that could be confused. The first is reversion (*fan*) (e.g., chapter 40), and the second return (*fu*) (e.g., chapters 16, 65). The former relates to the process of change, whereas the latter denotes a process of returning to the source or origin. Chung-ying Cheng makes the following distinction between the two: "Reversion is the opposition of the opposite: it is the derivation of opposite from an overexerted position. Return on the other hand seems to suggest a return to the origin or source of change which is the *Tao* or voidness" ("Toward Constructing a Dialectics of Harmonization: Harmony and Conflict in Chinese Philosophy," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 4 [1977]: 216).

[19] Angus Graham, *Disputers of the Tao* (La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1989), pp. 228–229 (italics mine).

[20] Antonio Cua, "Opposites as Complements: Reflections on the Significance of Tao," *Philosophy East and West* 31, no. 2 (April 1981): 123–140.

[21] Herman Hesse, *Narcissus and Goldmund*, translated by Ursula Molinaro (New York: Bantam Books, 1971), p. 42, cited in Cua, "Opposites as Complements," p. 125.

[22] Ibid., p. 132.

[23] With *ganying*, which was a feature of Chinese thought from the time of the earliest historical records, the early Han period (206 b.c.e.–220 c.e.), thinkers set out consciously to demonstrate that some of the correlations between human life and cosmic processes were regular and predictable. For instance, some

thinkers in this period posited correspondences between human communal and sociopolitical life and the processes of the cosmos. In addition, the interaction between different spheres and forms of life was explained in terms of groups and sets of numerical balances and contrapositions such as the four seasons, four directions, five colors, five sounds, five tastes, five smells, five phases, and eight trigrams and sixty-four hexagrams. See Graham, "Yin-Yang and the Nature of Correlative Thinking," *IEAP Occasional Paper and Monograph Series, no. 6* (Singapore: Institute of East Asian Philosophies, 1986) and J. S. Major, *Heaven and Earth in Early Han Thought* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993).

[24] Cua, "Opposites as Complements," p. 127.

[25] At this point, some might question why the *dao–de* pair, rather than the *yin–yang* pair, are given emphasis. Given that *yin–yang* pertains to the connection between the masculine and the feminine it would appear rather myopic to ignore this set of terms. It needs to be noted, however, that the *yin-yang* concept does not receive much prominence and is rather undeveloped in the *Daodejing*. Furthermore, it will become clear in the following discussion that an analysis of *dao–de* within the *Daodejing* yields a much more fruitful basis for illustrating the Daoist notion of complementarity.

[26] See, e.g., Roger Ames, "Taoism and the Nature of Nature," *Environmental Ethics* 8 (1986): 326 ff. Ames is critical of the tendency to minimize the significance of *de*.

[27] See, e.g., *Tao Te Ching: The Book of the Way and Its Virtue*, translated by J. J. L. Duyvendak (London: John Murray, 1954); *Lao Tzu: Tao Te Ching*, translated by D. C. Lau.

[28] Arthur Waley, The Way and Its Power: A Study of the Tao Te Ching and Its Place in Chinese Thought (New York: Grove Press, 1958).

[29] See, for example, Marie Ellen Chen, "The Meaning of te in the Tao Te Ching: An Examination of the Concept of Nature in Chinese Taoism," *Philosophy East and West* 23 (October 1973): 457–470. Roger Ames cautions against an overly forceful separation of the notion of *de* in Confucian and in Daoist thought. He contends that the difference between them is in their domain—that they function at different *levels*—rather than in their conceptual content: In Daoism, *de* is categorial; in Confucianism, *de* is ethical (Roger Ames, "Taoism and the Nature of Nature," pp. 329–330). However, the point made here is this: If the view held is that "virtue" is primarily an ethical concept, that construal of *de* might not sit well with the Daoist construct.

[30] Sandra Wawrytko, *The Undercurrent of Feminine Philosophy in Eastern and Western Thought* (Washington: University Press of America, 1976), p. 86.

[31] Ibid., p. 86.

[32] Ibid., pp. 89–90.

[33] Fung Yu-Lan, trans., *Chuang-Tzu: A New Selected Translation with an Exposition of the Philosophy of Kuo Hsiang* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1989), p. 8.

[34] David L. Hall, "On Seeking a Change of Environment: A Quasi-Taoist Proposal," *Philosophy East and West* 37, no. 2 (April 1987): 169.

[35] Roger Ames, "Taoism and the Nature of Nature," p. 331.

[36] Ibid.

[37] See Mary Evans, Introducing Contemporary Feminist Thought.

[38] Jane Aaron and Sylvia Walby, *Out of the Margins* (London: Falmer Press, 1991), cited in Evans, *Contemporary Feminist Thought.*

[39] Elisabeth J. Porter, *Women and Moral Identity*, pp. 34–51.

[40] Plumwood, "Women, Humanity and Nature," p. 229.
[41] Porter, *Women and Moral Identity*, p. 294.
[42] Chung-ying Cheng, "Toward a Dialectics of Harmonization," p. 216.
[43] In this view, a more fitting and favorable description of the Daoist characteristics of the feminine such as nonassertiveness, noncontending, or "taking the lower position" would be "yielding," rather than "submissive."