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The Doctrine of Theodicy in a Scientific Age:

Examining the Evolutionary Theology of John Haught
and the Daoist Philosophy of Zhuangzi

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Declaration

I, Jaeho Jang, declare that this thesis has been composed solely by myself and that it has not been submitted, in whole or in part, in any previous application for a degree. Except where states otherwise by reference or acknowledgment, the work presented is entirely my own.

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Abstract

Modern evolutionary science has brought a sharp focus to bear on the problem of evil, and especially of natural evil and suffering in the natural world. Moreover, I believe that contemporary theodicy may benefit from engagement with the East Asian religion, Daoism. Therefore, I will comparatively examine the work of the evolutionary theodicy of Haught and the Daoist philosophy of Zhuangzi. I will not cover all of the thought of Haught and Zhuangzi, but instead I will focus on their ideas concerning the problem of evil, and develop them in harmony with evolutionary science.

In order to do this comparative study, I will suggest the necessity of a new methodology, and propose five steps for the comparative work between religion and science and between Christianity and Daoism: description, comparison, generalisation, differentiation and supplementation. Based on this methodology, I will generalise the ideas of Haught and Zhuangzi on evil into seven different theodicies (the natural state defence, the free action defence, the suffering God defence, the hidden God defence, the harmony defence, the progress defence, and the final fulfilment defence). I will then supplement the evolutionary theodicy of Haught with the Daoist ideas of Zhuangzi on the basis of their differences.

The main aim of this study is to develop Christian theodicies to inform both the West and the East in a scientific age by comparing the evolutionary theology of Haught and the Daoist philosophy of Zhuangzi. I will suggest that Western evolutionary theodicies would benefit from engagement with the Daoist philosophy of Zhuangzi, and that the evolutionary theodicy of John Haught might be of benefit in an Asian Christian context. I also expect that the Daoist philosophy of Zhuangzi can be seen in a new light through conversation with the evolutionary theology of Haught and evolutionary science generally. I hope that this thesis can be a catalyst for comparative study between religion and science and between Christianity and Daoism.

This thesis is dedicated to my loving and supportive parents,

Yongun Jang & Junghee Lim

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Dates and Main Terms

Confucius, Laozi and Zhuangzi

Confucius	孔子	551–479 BCE	<i>Lunyu (Analects)</i>
Laozi	老子	c.5 th –4 th century	<i>Daodejing</i>
Zhuangzi	莊子	c.350–300 BCE	<i>Zhuangzi</i>

Key Daoist Terms mentioned

<i>Dao</i>	道	the Way
<i>daojiao</i>	道教	Daoism
<i>daojia</i>	道家	Daoist philosophy
<i>wuwei</i>	無為 (无为)	non-action, effortless action
<i>ziran</i>	自然	spontaneity, nature
<i>de</i>	德	Virtue, power of Dao
<i>qi</i>	氣 (气)	vital energy
<i>tian</i>	天	Heaven
<i>yin</i>	陰 (阴)	the shadow side
<i>yang</i>	陽 (阳)	the bright side
<i>ming</i>	命	fate
<i>tianming</i>	天命	mandate of Heaven
<i>tianrenyitong</i>	天人一通	the unity of heaven and human being
<i>zhenren</i>	真人 (真人)	true man
<i>shengren</i>	聖人 (圣人)	sage
<i>shenxian</i>	神仙	one who achieves immortality
<i>zuowang</i>	坐忘	sitting in forgetfulness
<i>wuhua</i>	物化	the transformation of things
<i>xianjie</i>	縣解 (县解)	freeing of the bound
<i>junzi</i>	君子	the exemplary person
<i>xiangsheng</i>	相生	being-born-together to engender one another
<i>heping</i>	和平	universal peace
<i>pinghe</i>	平和	inner peace
<i>hundun</i>	混沌	chaos
<i>huangdi neijing</i>	黃帝內經	The Emperor's Inner Canon
<i>Taiping Dao</i>	太平道	Dao of the Great Peace
<i>Wudomi Dao</i>	五斗米道	Dao of the Five Pecks of Rice

Chapter 1

Introduction

Human life cannot be experienced without pain and suffering, and yet our individual and collective struggle with this fact is evident in the world's philosophies and religions. In Christianity, St. Paul says, 'We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time' (Rom. 8:22). Paul understands that suffering is not only applicable to certain creatures, of whom human beings first come to mind, but that 'the whole creation' undergoes suffering. In Buddhism, pain and suffering are arguably even more central: Buddha is reputed to have taught just two things: *dukkha* (suffering) and the cessation of *dukkha*.¹ Damien Keown describes the ultimate goal of Buddhism as putting an end to suffering and rebirth.² The Buddhist path culminates in reaching a state of *nirvana*, a state of freedom from suffering. The *Zhuangzi*, a classical Chinese Daoist text states, 'Man lives his life in company with worry, and if he lives a long while till he's dull and doddering, then he has spent that much time worrying instead of dying, a bitter lot indeed!'³

Pain and suffering seem to be an inevitable aspect of life. We nonetheless tend to look for both for their explanation and a method for their cessation. In particular, religious believers usually understand their pain and suffering in relation to their beliefs in ultimate realities.⁴ The experience of pain and suffering are the root of what is theologically and philosophically known as problem of evil, we can ask: what exactly is evil? Answering this question will help us to understand and how humans have striven to settle the problem of evil (the apparent inconsistency between God's existence and the existence of arbitrary evil and suffering) throughout history.

¹ Rupert Gethin, *The Foundations of Buddhism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 59.

² Damien Keown, *Buddhism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 43.

³ *Zhuangzi*, chap. 18. (人之生也，與憂俱生。壽者惛惛，久憂不死。何故也!) Cited by Burton Watson, *The Complete Works of Zhuangzi* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 139. Own translations when another translation is not cited.

⁴ When I refer to 'ultimate reality' in this thesis, it means the supreme being or principle of each religion, e.g. God in Christianity and Dao in Daoism.

The problem of evil has arguably become the most pressing issue for theologians and theist philosophers. Alfred North Whitehead says, ‘All simplifications of religious dogma are shipwrecked upon the rock of the problem of evil’.⁵ This one sentence from Whitehead reveals how important the problem of evil has been for religious believers. Many theologians have tried to settle the problem of evil throughout Christian history,⁶ and their efforts have been responses to these questions: how can we continue to affirm the lordship of God in the face of horrendous evil and if God is both omnipotent and good, why is there so much evil in the world? In confronting evil, some religions, such as Confucianism and Daoism, call upon fate (in Chinese, *ming*) as the answer, and others, like Buddhism, focus on the afterlife, or least, subsequent modes of consciousness to this particular consciousness we possess now. Philosophers have long been interested in the definition of evil and the origin of evil. Christian theologians, however, in addition to these questions, must also answer the problem of evil in relation to God’s existence, nature, and His relationship to human beings.

I believe that a study of the problem of evil should not overlook pain and suffering as it is experienced. Theodicies, if they are to be relevant, must not only be theoretically sound but also practically valuable, efficacious in remedying the psychological pain involved in experiencing pain and suffering. That the problem of evil is an *existential* problem and not just a theoretical one for theists and non-theists alike is illustrated by Elie Wiesel who introduces an episode from the death camp of Auschwitz in his book *Night*. One day, a young boy was hanged in front of all the prisoners because of a minor mistake. When the boy was dangling from the rope, Wiesel was asked by someone. ‘Where is God now?’ And a voice within him replied, ‘Where is He? Here He is – He is hanging here on this gallows’.⁷ Wiesel’s story, by focusing on the profound crisis of faith that suffering and death can bring about, demonstrated that the problem of evil is an existential problem, experienced by people here and now, challenging their most fundamental beliefs. My interest in

⁵ Alfred North Whitehead, *Religion in the Making* (Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, 1954), 74.

⁶ See Marilyn McCord Adams and Robert Merrihew Adams, eds., *The Problem of Evil* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990); John Hick, *Evil and the God of Love*, 2nd ed. (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, [1966] 2010).

⁷ Elie Wiesel, *Night* (New York: Bantam Books, 1982), 62.

the problem of evil started when I was in the military as a chaplain in South Korea. North Korea attacked the *Cheonan* warship and killed 46 naval men in 2010. In November of the same year, North Korea fired about 160 missiles at Yeonpyeong Island, and two South Korean soldiers died. Soldiers also died during training or while on duty, with some fighter pilots dying in jet crashes because of weather conditions deteriorating unexpectedly. As a military chaplain, I had to interpret this tragedy for Christian soldiers and the bereaved as they sought not only consolation but answers. This thesis is a product of my own practical experience of the problem of evil – not perhaps, as a victim, but as someone who needs to know how to respond practically to those who face pain and suffering and for whom retaining their Christian faith becomes an excruciating ordeal itself.

As a Korean, I would like to approach the problem of evil and theodicy not only from a Christian perspective but also from that of Asian traditions because Korean Christian history has been closely connected to East Asian religions, whose history in the region is much longer than Christianity since its arrival there. The Scottish United Presbyterian missionary John Ross published the first Korean translation of the New Testament in 1887.⁸ In this version, he translated John 1:1 like this: ‘In the beginning was Dao, and Dao was with God, and Dao was God’. Ross thought that the best Korean word for Logos was Dao (도, 道). Although Dao in Daoism and God in Christianity are very different – one being the impersonal or supra-personal principle of all that is and the other being the personal Creator and Lord of all contingent creation – Dao can be identified with God insofar as both are the ground of being or the source of all creatures, as I will argue in Chapter 4:3.

Se Hyoung Lee explains that both God and Dao can be understood as the source of being, both being and becoming, both transcendent and immanent, and both female and male.⁹ According to Lee, Dao is Ultimate Reality, comparable to the Christian God for Asians. For this reason, a degree of syncretism between Daoism and Christianity in Asian contexts such as Korea is an important part of religious culture there. Koreans still use the word Dao in ordinary life, and people often read the Daoist Scriptures regardless of their religion. When preaching, many pastors

⁸ Harvie M. Conn, "Ross, John," in *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions*, ed. Gerald H. Anderson (New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 1998), 577.

⁹ Se Hyoung Lee, "A Reinterpretation of God and Evil from the Taoist Perspective" PhD dissertation, Drew University, 1997, Drew Library Catalog (drew.a297522), 124-60.

often quote Daoist texts to support Biblical passages. It seems that regardless of their religion, Koreans accept and feel comfortable with Daoist teachings.¹⁰

An interest in evil as a practical experience and my identity as a Korean Christian led me to ask this question: *how can I develop the most relevant Christian theodicy for both the West and the East in a scientific age?* To answer this question, among the various Christian theodicies, I will focus on evolutionary theodicy because of its relevance in today's scientific age. Because the ideas of evolutionary theologians vary and a thesis such as this is limited in scope, I have chosen a prominent scholar, John Haught, as one of the most significant and prolific voices in bringing Christian theology and evolutionary biology into dialogue with one another. The main reason I chose Haught as interlocutor for a conversation with Daoism is that I think a case can be made to show that his evolutionary theology connects with Daoist philosophy very well – especially due to his understanding of creation as 'letting be', his notion of the self-absenting of God, divine kenosis and the dark side of creation, as I will expound in Chapters 6, 7 and 8. Haught has also expressed his interest in Daoist philosophy in his book¹¹ and an interview, which suggests that he would have thought about such similarities himself.¹² Among Asian religions, I have chosen Daoism in virtue of the fact that it has been closely related to Christianity in Korean Christian history.¹³

Daoism, originating in China and whose sources are still in much dispute with regard to their date and composition, is an ancient and extremely rich tradition. Today, scholars and practitioners agree on a very broad distinction of 'philosophical'

¹⁰ I will explain the relationship between the Christian God and Dao in Daoism in Chapter 4.

¹¹ John F. Haught, *God after Darwin: A Theology of Evolution*, 2nd ed. (Boulder, CO.: Westview Press, 2008), 81-84.

¹² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wgu4OkZ0brY&t=726s>, 11'40"-15'40", accessed 22/10/17.

¹³ When Christianity first spread to Korea around the latter half of the 19th Century, Daoism was prevalent among the lower classes, and Confucianism was the dominant religion among the powerful. Because Christianity spread first among the poorest and most powerless people in society, it became indigenized by Daoist culture. For example, Korean Christians call God 'Hanōnim (하느님)', and Hanōnim is the name of the Daoist god in Korea. Moreover, Korean churches have a dawn worship service every day at 4 or 5 a.m., which is very important for Daoism because Daoists believe that gods descend to the earth at dawn. Korean Christians also offer rice at church, calling it 'elaborate rice (성미, 誠米)', and this rice is used for community lunches on Sunday, pastors' meals, and helping poor people. This practice originated from *Wudoumi Dao* (五斗米道, Dao of Five Pecks of Rice), which was a powerful denomination of Daoism. [Changsam Yang, "Dogyowa Hankuk Gidokkyowae Goangyesunge Dahan Yeongu (A Study on the Relationship between Daoist Rituals and Korean Christian Practices)," *Minjokkoa Monhwa (People and Culture)* 2, no. 0 (1994): 411-13.]

or ‘contemplative’ Daoism and so-called ‘religious’ Daoism. The first major Daoist texts that have been passed down to us in varying degrees of purity, the *Daodejing* and the *Zhuangzi*, are regarded as constituting the philosophical foundations for later religious embellishments and practices. I will focus on the *Zhuangzi*, which was written by the famous Daoist Zhuangzi (ca. 369–289 BCE) and his followers,¹⁴ developing the central insights of Laozi (ca.570–479 BCE). Obviously Haught and Zhuangzi are writers from very different parts of the world, writing at very different times, but I believe meaningful dialogue between the two is possible for the reason that their subject matter is very similar, including cosmology, life and death, theory of creation, and transcendental being. This is in contrast to Laozi to some extent.¹⁵

Korean Christian rituals have clearly been influenced by religious Daoism, but can the same be said of philosophical Daoism? Religious Daoism is vanishing as time goes by, but Daoist philosophical ideas have, in fact, merged with Koreans’ way of thinking at the most general level, placing the Daoist notions of *wuwei* (non-action or effortless action) and *ziran* (spontaneity or nature) at the heart of Korean vocabulary, forming a generic perspective that the things that happen in life are to be attributed to *ming*, and an ideal of the spiritual life of detachment partly based on the life and teaching of Zhuangzi – with many people still enjoying reading the *Daodejing* and the *Zhuangzi*. Because philosophical Daoism remains palatable for most Koreans and still influences Koreans today, I believe it, rather than religious Daoism, is the most prudent choice for comparative work serving as the basis for an integral and relevant theodicy. Although Haught and Zhuangzi belonged to different

¹⁴ Among 33 chapters of the *Zhuangzi*, the first seven or *Inner Chapters* are generally considered to be genuine, and the *Mixed Chapters* (11) and the *Outer Chapters* (15) are recognized as Zhuangzi’s followers’ work. [Robert E. Allinson, *Chuang-Tzu for Spiritual Transformation: An Analysis of the Inner Chapters* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1989), 6; A. C. Graham, *Chuang-Tzu: The Inner Chapters* (Indianapolis: Hackett Pub. Co., 2001), 3.]

¹⁵ While Laozi and Zhuangzi are often grouped together in virtue of their being the foundational Chinese Daoist writers, both the style and the content of their writings are different. Concerning death and life, for instance, while accepting death as the decree of fate (*ming*), Laozi aspires to live a long life and sees premature death in a negative way, that is, as the result of living in disharmony with Dao. On the other hand, Zhuangzi teaches passivity regarding life and death, advising against grief. The core notions of Dao and *De* in either thinker also appear quite different in terms of emphasis. Laozi emphasizes the nature of *wuwei* of Dao and *De*. Zhuangzi emphasizes the Dao’s nature of conceptual and metaphysical boundlessness and *De*’s nature of adapting fate. [Taik-Yong Lee, "Sasangwaneul Tonghae Bon Noza Zangza Cheolhakei Bigyo Yeongu (A Comparative Study on the Philosophy of Laozi and Zhuangzi through the View of Death and Life)," *Dongyang Cheolhak Yeongu (Journal of Eastern Philosophy* 77, no. 0 (2014): 130.]

times and cultures, I believe their thoughts can give us ideas for developing the most relevant theodicy for both the West and the East in a scientific age.

(1) The Necessity and Purpose of This Study

The Necessity of This Study

Comparative study between science and religion is a growing field, but technically speaking, it is for the most part the comparative study between science and *theology*. Even though Christianity is perhaps the major and most familiar religion for Western scholars, it is obviously not homogeneous in the world, given the plurality of religions, religious denominations, worldviews and systems of thought. The discourse of Western scholars concerning Christian *theology* also does not apply well to East Asian religions which have different conceptions of ultimate reality and the good life. Here, I will briefly discuss the necessity of this comparative study between theology, science and Daoism.

The first reason for the necessity of this study is raised by the question of whether science and religion are clearly distinct. The catch-all notion of ‘science’, which is employed in the science–religion dialogue, mainly denotes the natural sciences in their present mature state after their initial development in the seventeenth century. Modern people often assume that science and religion exist in conflict with each other, but many early scientists, or what were called ‘natural philosophers’ were also religious believers, and found that there was no essential conflict between their work and their religion.

However, the relationship between natural philosophy and religion started to change with the emergence of a fully-fledged natural science based on physics, led by Nicolaus Copernicus, Johannes Kepler, Francis Bacon, René Descartes, Isaac Newton and Galileo Galilei, despite the fact that they would not have seen themselves as establishing what has now come to be seen by many people as an opposition between science and religion. Descartes classified *mind* and *body* in the *Sixth Meditation* of his *Meditations on First Philosophy* as two different substances.¹⁶ The Newtonian mechanistic paradigm assumed that the nature of

¹⁶ René Descartes, *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, trans. John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff, and Dugald Murdoch, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 50-62.

(physical) reality, as mind-independent is nonetheless susceptible to systematic reduction to its essential components¹⁷ – a view which has been very influential in Western society at large and which is philosophically known as the view of ‘reductionism’.¹⁸ These ideas have been of paramount importance in our understanding of the relationship between science and religion, in establishing seemingly intractable dichotomy between science, dealing with what is mind-independent (including the body) and religion, dealing with what is subjective or under the purview of the soul. Science and religion thus became entirely different fields, inevitably leading to either conflict or necessary reconciliation.

In contrast, in East Asian thought, science and religion are not so clearly divided, and are not viewed in terms of conflict *per se*. Technically speaking, East Asian religions have contributed to the development of science in East Asia. Science in East Asia has often been developed out of religious necessity. For example, religious Daoism, which pursues immortality and the elixir of life, led to the development of mineralogy, chemistry and medicine in China. *Huangdi Neijing* (黃帝內經, The Emperor’s Inner Canon), an important Daoist text, which probably dates to the first century BCE,¹⁹ has been regarded as the fundamental doctrinal source for Chinese medicine for more than two millennia, and is still used by practitioners of traditional medicine, including herbal medicine and acupuncture.

If science and religion are not divided so clearly in some religions, or, to be more exact, if some people do not accept that science and religion are different or constitute different realms of thought and enquiry, dialogue and conflict models between science and religion constructed by Western scholars may be insufficient and in need of rectification. In other words, there are people for whom there is no sharp distinction between science and religion, and for these people there is no conflict between science and religion, in contrast to those in the West who feel either that science and religion are in conflict or that science and religion are not in conflict and endeavour to demonstrate such. Therefore, the conversation between

¹⁷ Lous Heshusius, "The Newtonian Mechanistic Paradigm, Special Education, and Contours of Alternatives: An Overview," *Journal of Learning Disabilities* 22, no. 7 (1989): 405.

¹⁸ Steven Horst, *Beyond Reduction: Philosophy of Mind and Post-Reductionist Philosophy of Science* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 23.

¹⁹ Nathan Sivin, "Huang Ti Nei Ching," in *Early Chinese Texts: A Bibliographical Guide*, ed. Michael Loewe (Berkeley, CA: Society for the Study of Early China & the Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 1993), 199-201.

science and religion should not be restricted to the paradigms of Western systems of thinking, but should be also open to Eastern ways of thinking.

The second reason for the necessity of this study is the divergence in religious beliefs and practices to the extent that what a religion actually may be is a matter of contention. Can religions be defined in one sentence or one paragraph? Consider the fact that according to the most accurate studies available, what westerners would classify as ‘religious’ beliefs and practices such as veneration of ancestors and ritualistic offerings to gods and spirits immanent in the world are *not* considered by most Chinese citizens today as religious practices at all.²⁰

Most scholars in the Western science–religion dialogue presuppose that some identifiable or at least conceptually conceivable Ultimate Reality exists, and that Ultimate Reality is most often the Christian God, albeit differently conceived. The following questions are important issues in the science and religion dialogue, but they presuppose some Ultimate Reality about which we can talk about and debate: ‘Does science rule out a personal God? Does evolution exclude God’s existence? Was the universe created? Does the universe have a purpose?’

However, whether there is an Ultimate Reality posited in other religions such as Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism is debatable. *Tian* (天, Heaven) in Confucianism and *Dao* (道, Way) in Daoism are entirely different from the God of Christianity, Islam and Judaism, who is usually regarded as a personal reality with certain wants and intentions for the world it made. If the existence and nature of Ultimate Reality is vague in some religions, and if it has totally different manifest properties to the Christian God (even if It does exist), we have to raise new questions for the conversation between science and religion, for key notions which usually feature in that dialogue, such as divine ‘purpose’, ‘intervention’, and ‘causality’ have to be re-interpreted.

Moreover, the Western science–religion dialogue usually assumes, following the Judeo-Christian tradition, that Ultimate Reality created the world in the

²⁰ For modern Chinese, to be ‘religious’ is to be a member of a centralised institution, which their practices and days of veneration of *qingming* fall outside the realm of. Another surprising fact is that only 0.6% of modern Chinese identify themselves as Daoist. This is in spite of the fact that Daoist philosophy and symbolism is ubiquitous in China as the home of Daoism both philosophically and religiously. [Rodney Stark and Xiuhua Wang, *A Star in the East: The Rise of Christianity in China* (West Conshohocken, PA: Templeton Press, 2015), 7.]

‘beginning’ – positing an absolute beginning of all reality other than Ultimate Reality, created by It *ex nihilo*. In fact, the Western scientific revolution has challenged such traditional ideas of Christianity, especially since the evolutionary biology of Darwin. This is because evolution is often regarded as the theory that definitively contradicts the biblical story of creation.²¹ In contrast, the creation of Dao in Daoism can be seen as compatible with evolution. According to the *Daodejing*, ‘Dao produced the One. The One produced two. Two produced three. Three produced all creatures’.²² Creation in Daoism is an evolutionary creation in which each entity originated from the Ultimate One or Oneness. But for Daoism, Ultimate Reality also transcends the Being/Becoming dichotomy present in Western philosophy and theology. The One of Christianity is modelled on the Platonic One of the immutable Form of Beauty (which in turn was modelled on the immutable Parmenidean One), standing in opposition to pure change or becoming, as exemplified in the Heraclitean flux²³ or the Bergsonian élan vital (vital force) or ‘duration’²⁴ – philosophical schools which believed that no *thing* exists, only constant change which can be *experienced* but not known.

Yet another issue in the Western science–religion dialogue that I would like to raise is the problem of so-called ‘natural’ evil, by which is traditionally meant that which ‘naturally’ or by inevitability causes suffering and death, such as earthquakes and floods. The reason why natural evil is a severe problem in the discussion is that the Christian God is assumed to be perfectly good or ‘omnibenevolent’ and to have created the world itself as ‘good’ *given* that anything that God does cannot *not* be good. The Dao in Daoism is not so defined and, we might say, imprisoned by the categories of good and evil. According to the *Daodejing*, ‘Heaven and earth are not benevolent (*jen*, humane)’.²⁵ The expression ‘heaven and earth’ is a different expression of Dao, meaning that which is the province of human action and influence

²¹ Some evolutionary theologians argue that the Big Bang theory of modern cosmology can be seen to support the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo*, in the sense that the Big Bang suggests a beginning of both space and time.

²² *Daodejing*, chap. 42. (道生一， 一生二， 二生三， 三生萬物.)

²³ Gay Watson, *A Philosophy of Emptiness* (London: Reaktion Books, 2014), 63.

²⁴ Henri Bergson, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. T. E. Hulme, New ed. (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1999), 12-13.

²⁵ *Daodejing*, chap. 5. (天地不仁.)

(earth) and that which is uninterested or beyond the influence of the actions of human beings (heaven) – revealing a property of Dao. In light of its different conception of Ultimate Reality and the different conceptual frameworks underlying its moral universe, Daoism forces us to rethink whether we can actually ask Ultimate Reality to account for evil.

This is not to say that any particular religion is better-suited than another for the conversation with science. Rather, I suggest that science–religion dialogue should subdivide according to properties of religions – their underlying conceptual frameworks and conceptions of Ultimate Reality – and the dialogue between science and particular religions can help the dialogue between science and other religions globally. The conversation between science and Christian theology can learn from the conversation between science and Daoism. For these reasons, this comparative study between theology, science and Daoism is necessary for us in developing an integral theodicy for a pluralistic and scientific age.

The Purpose of This Study

The main aim of this study is to develop Christian theodicies to inform both the West and the East in a scientific age by comparing the evolutionary theology of Haught and the Daoist philosophy of Zhuangzi. I will suggest that Western evolutionary theodicies would benefit from engagement with the Daoist philosophy of Zhuangzi, and that the evolutionary theodicy of John Haught might be of benefit in an Asian Christian context. I also expect that the Daoist philosophy of Zhuangzi can be seen in a new light through conversation with the evolutionary theology of Haught and evolutionary science generally. I hope that this thesis can be a catalyst for comparative study between religion and science and between Christianity and Daoism.

With regard to evolutionary theology, many scholars have discussed the problem of evil over the last 30 years. Jeff Astley,²⁶ David Bradnick,²⁷ Jonathan

²⁶ Jeff Astley, "Evolution and Evil," in *Reading Genesis after Darwin*, ed. Stephen C. Barton and David Wilkinon (New York ; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 163-80.

²⁷ David Bradnick, "Entropy, the Fall, and Tillich: A Multidisciplinary Approach to Original Sin," *Theology & Science* 7, no. 1 (2009): 67-83.

Chappell,²⁸ David Fergusson,²⁹ Robert Fleck,³⁰ Michael Fuller,³¹ John Haught, Mark Harris,³² Jürgen Moltmann,³³ Arthur Peacocke,³⁴ Ted Peters,³⁵ John Polkinghorne,³⁶

²⁸ Jonathan Chappell, "Raymund Schwager: Integrating the Fall and Original Sin with Evolutionary Theory," *Theology & Science* 10, no. 2 (2012): 179-98; Jonathan Chappell, "Rethinking the Historical Fall in the Light of Evolution: F.R. Tennant and After," *Science & Christian Belief* 25, no. 2 (2013): 131-54.

²⁹ David Fergusson, *The Cosmos and the Creator: An Introduction to the Theology of Creation* (London: SPCK, 1998); David Fergusson, "Darwin and Providence," in *Theology after Darwin*, ed. Michael S. Northcott and R. J. Berry (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2009), 73-88.

³⁰ Robert K. Fleck, "Natural Selection and the Problem of Evil: An Evolutionary Model with Application to an Ancient Debate," *Zygon* 46, no. 3 (2011): 561-87.

³¹ Michael Fuller, *Atoms and Icons: A Discussion of the Relationships between Science and Theology* (London: Mowbray, 1995).

³² Mark Harris, *The Nature of Creation: Examining the Bible and Science* (Durham: Acumen Publishing Ltd, 2013); Mark Harris, "Will Resurrection Be a Law of Nature? Science and Divine Action at the End of the World," in *Chance or Providence? Religious Perspectives on Divine Action*, ed. Louise Hickman (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014), 21-44; Mark Harris, "Do the Miracles of Jesus Contradict Science?," in *Reason and Wonder: Why Science and Faith Need Each Other* (London: SPCK Publishing, 2016), 169-84.

³³ Jürgen Moltmann, *Creating a Just Future: The Politics of Peace and the Ethics of Creation in a Threatened World*, trans. John Bowden (London ; Philadelphia: SCM Press ; Trinity Press International, 1989); Jürgen Moltmann, *The Way of Jesus Christ: Christology in Messianic Dimensions*, trans. Margaret Kohl (London: SCM Press, 1990); Jürgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God: The Cross of Christ as the Foundation and Criticism of Christian Theology*, trans. R.A. Wilson and John Bowden (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993).

³⁴ Arthur Peacocke, *Theology for a Scientific Age: Being and Becoming - Natural, Divine and Human* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993); Arthur Peacocke, "A Map of Scientific Knowledge: Genetics, Evolution, and Theology," in *Science and Theology: The New Consonance*, ed. Ted Peters (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1998), 189-210; Arthur Peacocke, "The Cost of New Life," in *The Work of Love*, ed. John Polkinghorne (Mich. ; Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2001), 21-42.

³⁵ Ted Peters, "Science and Theology: Toward Consonance," in *Science and Theology: The New Consonance*, ed. Ted Peters (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1998), 11-42; Ted Peters, "Constructing a Theology of Evolution: Building on John Haught," *Zygon* 45, no. 4 (2010): 921-37.

³⁶ John Polkinghorne, *One World: The Interaction of Science and Theology* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1987); John Polkinghorne, *Belief in God in an Age of Science* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998); John Polkinghorne, *Faith, Science and Understanding* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000); John Polkinghorne, *Science and the Trinity: The Christian Encounter with Reality* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004); John Polkinghorne, *Science and Providence: God's Interaction with the World* (Philadelphia: Templeton Foundation Press, [1989] 2005); John Polkinghorne, *Quarks, Chaos & Christianity: Questions to Science and Religion*, Rev. and updated ed. (New York: Crossroad Pub. Co., 2005); John Polkinghorne, *Exploring Reality: The Intertwining of Science and Religion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005); John Polkinghorne, *Theology in the Context of Science* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009); John Polkinghorne, "Reflections of a Bottom-up Thinker," in *God and the Scientist: Exploring the Work of John Polkinghorne*, ed. Fraser Watts and Christopher C. Knight (Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2012), 1-12.

Holmes Rolston,³⁷ Michael Ruse,³⁸ Robert Russell,³⁹ Gloria Schaab,⁴⁰ Christopher Southgate,⁴¹ Thomas Tracy⁴² and Wesley Wildman⁴³ (in alphabetical order) are representative scholars. John Haught has been one of the leading thinkers throughout,

³⁷ Holmes Rolston, "Kenosis and Nature," in *The Work of Love*, ed. John Polkinghorne (Mich. ; Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2001), 43-65; Holmes Rolston, "Naturalizing and Systematizing Evil," in *Is Nature Ever Evil? Religion, Science, and Value*, ed. Willem B. Drees (London: Routledge, 2003), 67-86.

³⁸ Michael Ruse, "Atheism, Naturalism and Science: Three in One?," in *The Cambridge Companion to Science and Religion*, ed. Peter Harrison (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 229-43; Michael Ruse and Joseph Travis, *Evolution: The First Four Billion Years* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 2009).

³⁹ Robert J. Russell, "Does the "God Who Acts" Really Act in Nature?," in *Science and Theology: The New Consonance*, ed. Ted Peters (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1998), 77-102; Robert J. Russell, *Cosmology, Evolution, and Resurrection Hope: Theology and Science in Creative Mutual Interaction*, ed. Carl S. Helrich (Kitchener, Ont.; South Australia: Pandora Press; ATF Press, 2006); Robert J. Russell, "Recent Theological Interpretations of Evolution," *Theology & Science* 11, no. 3 (2013): 169-84.

⁴⁰ Gloria L. Schaab, "The Creative Suffering of the Triune God: An Evolutionary Panentheistic Paradigm," *Theology & Science* 5, no. 3 (2007): 289-304.

⁴¹ Christopher Southgate, ed. *God, Humanity and the Cosmos: A Textbook in Science and Religion* (London: T & T Clark, 1999); Christopher Southgate, *The Groaning of Creation: God, Evolution, and the Problem of Evil* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008); Christopher Southgate, "Re-Reading Genesis, John, and Job: A Christian Response to Darwinism," *Zygon* 46, no. 2 (2011): 370-95; Christopher Southgate, "Divine Glory in a Darwinian World," *Zygon* 49, no. 4 (2014): 784-807; Christopher Southgate, "God's Creation Wild and Violent, and Our Care for Other Animals," *Perspectives on Science & Christian Faith* 67, no. 4 (2015): 245-53; Christopher Southgate, "Cosmic Evolution and Evil," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Problem of Evil*, ed. Chad Meister and Paul K. Moser (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 147-64.

⁴² Thomas F. Tracy, "Evolutionary Theologies and Divine Action," *Theology & Science* 6, no. 1 (2008): 107-16.

⁴³ Wesley J. Wildman, "Incongruous Goodness, Perilous Beauty, Disconcerting Truth: Ultimate Reality and Suffering in Nature," in *Physics and Cosmology: Scientific Perspectives on the Problem of Evil in Nature*, ed. Nancey Murphy, Robert J. Russell, and William Stoeger (Berkeley, CA & Vatican City: CTNS & Vatican Observatory, 2007). According to Wildman, 'determinate-entity theism' affirms that the world we inhabit is the best of all possible worlds—a view which is fundamentally optimistic and undeniably anthropocentric (but not to the detriment of other species).. 'Process theism' has the intention of delivering us from an unhealthy obsession with an illusory image of God, arguing that divine omnipotence is a concept which needs to be dropped from our categorisations about God. 'Ground-of-being theism' tends to regard suffering as ontologically co-primal with creativity by refusing that God can be unambiguously morally good. This view does not regard suffering as an unwanted side effect of creation (or natural processes) and regards God as the One who is beyond narrowly human concepts of goodness and justice. Wildman argues that among these theisms, ground-of-being theism can best deal with the problem of suffering in nature.

authoring many books⁴⁴ and articles⁴⁵ about evolutionary theology. In addition, his work has received critical appreciation from other scholars.⁴⁶ I will not cover all of the thought of either Haught or Zhuangzi, but instead I will focus on their ideas concerning the problem of evil, and develop them in harmony with evolutionary science. This is primarily because modern evolutionary science has brought a sharp focus to bear on the problem of evil, especially when it comes to ‘natural’ evil in the natural world and this is what Haught’s evolutionary theology can be used to approach most directly.

In his work, Haught argues first that evolution does not rule out God’s existence but reveals the God of grace ‘letting the world be itself’, second that there is purpose or direction in evolution, third that the ‘Christ-event’ shows the self-emptying or *kenosis* of God for all creatures, and fourth that God’s creation was not complete at the outset but will be completed in the eschatological future (new creation). In my view, Haught has thereby suggested comprehensive solutions to the most important issues of evolutionary theology. Peters’ assessment of Haught’s work suggests that Haught has helped ‘to draw a blueprint to guide the construction of a healthy theistic

⁴⁴ John F. Haught, *The Promise of Nature: Ecology and Cosmic Purpose* (New York: Paulist Press, 2004); John F. Haught, *Science and Religion: From Conflict to Conversation*, 2nd ed. (New York: Paulist Press, 1995); John F. Haught, *Responses to 101 Questions on God and Evolution* (New York: Paulist Press, 2001); John F. Haught, *Deeper Than Darwin: The Prospect for Religion in the Age of Evolution* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 2003); John F. Haught, *Is Nature Enough? Meaning and Truth in the Age of Science* (Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006); John F. Haught, *Christianity and Science: Toward a Theology of Nature* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2007); John F. Haught, *God and the New Atheism: A Critical Response to Dawkins, Harris, and Hitchens* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008); Haught, *God after Darwin: A Theology of Evolution*; John F. Haught, *Making Sense of Evolution: Darwin, God, and the Drama of Life* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010); John F. Haught, *Science and Faith: A New Introduction* (New York: Paulist Press, 2012).

⁴⁵ John F. Haught, "In Search of a God for Evolution: Paul Tillich and Pierre Teilhard De Chardin," *Zygon*, no. 3 (2002): 539-54; John F. Haught, "The Boyle Lecture 2003: Darwin, Design and the Promise of Nature," *Science & Christian Belief* 17, no. 1 (2005): 5-20; John F. Haught, "True Union Differentiates: A Response to My Critics," *Science & Christian Belief* 17, no. 1 (2005): 57-70; John F. Haught, "Darwin and Contemporary Theology," *Worldviews: Global Religions, Culture & Ecology* 11, no. 1 (2007): 44-57; John F. Haught, "Theology, Evolution, and the Human Mind: How Much Can Biology Explain?," *Zygon*, no. 4 (2009): 921-31; John F. Haught, "Is Physics Fundamental? Robert Russell on Divine Action," *Zygon*, no. 1 (2010): 213-20; John F. Haught, "Darwin, Teilhard, and the Drama of Life," *Teilhard Studies*, no. 63 (2011): 1-22.

⁴⁶ Ann M. Michaud, "John Haught - Finding Consonance between Religion and Science," *Zygon* 45, no. 4 (2010): 905-20; Peters, "Constructing a Theology of Evolution: Building on John Haught," 921-37; Gloria L. Schaab, "An Evolving Vision of God: The Theology of John F. Haught," *Zygon* 45, no. 4 (2010): 897-904; Robert E. Ulanowicz, "From Pessimism to Hope: A Natural Progression," *Zygon* 45, no. 4 (2010): 939-56.

evolution'.⁴⁷ Other scholars, such as Gloria Schaab, Robert Ulanowicz and Ann Michaud, likewise praise his work.⁴⁸

Books and articles providing comparative study of Christianity and Confucianism abound.⁴⁹ There is also much material providing comparative study of western philosophy and Daoism.⁵⁰ However, little has been attempted thus far by way of comparative study of Christianity and Daoism,⁵¹ and most of what is available is not concerned with the problem of evil. I believe this is in part because theodicy has not been an important topic in Daoism, for the reason that Daoists generally accept evil as fate (*ming*) (Chapters 5:1, 6:2) and that Dao manifests both good and evil. Daoism emphasizes a cosmic harmony which is only possible if there is both the bright side (*yang*) and the shadow side (*yin*) (Chapters 5:2, 7:3).⁵² For

⁴⁷ Peters, "Constructing a Theology of Evolution: Building on John Haught," 936.

⁴⁸ See footnote number 46.

⁴⁹ Julia Ching, *Confucianism and Christianity: A Comparative Study* (Tokyo ; New York: Kodansha International, 1977); John D. Young, *Confucianism and Christianity: The First Encounter* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1983); Xinzhong Yao, *Confucianism and Christianity: A Comparative Study of Jen and Agape* (Brighton, U.K.: Sussex Academic Press, 1996); Heup Young Kim, *Wang Yang-Ming and Karl Barth: A Confucian-Christian Dialogue* (Lanham, Md: University Press of America, 1996); Yanxia Zhao, *Father and Son in Confucianism and Christianity: A Comparative Study of Xunzi and Paul* (Brighton England: Sussex Academic Press, 2007); Robert C. Neville, *Boston Confucianism: Portable Tradition in the Late-Modern World* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2000); Robert C. Neville, *Ritual and Deference: Extending Chinese Philosophy in a Comparative Context* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2008).

⁵⁰ Kuang-Ming Wu, "Dream in Nietzsche and Chuang Tzu," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 13, no. 4 (1986): 371-82; G. E. R. Lloyd and Nathan Sivin, *The Way and the Word: Science and Medicine in Early China and Greece* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002); Günter Wohlfart and Marty Heitz, "Heidegger and Laozi: Wu (Nothing) - on Chapter 11 of the Daodejing," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 30, no. 1 (2003): 39-59; G. E. R. Lloyd, *Ancient Worlds, Modern Reflections: Philosophical Perspectives on Greek and Chinese Science and Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Alan Fox, "Process Ecology and the "Ideal" Dao," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 32, no. 1 (2005): 47-57; Katrin Froese, *Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Daoist Thought: Crossing Paths in-Between* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2006); Geling Shang, *Liberation as Affirmation: The Religiosity of Zhuangzi and Nietzsche* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2006); Mario Wenning, "Kant and Daoism on Nothingness," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 38, no. 4 (2011): 556-68.

⁵¹ George D. Chrystides, "God and the Tao," *Religious Studies* 19, no. 01 (1983): 1-11; Hans Küng and Julia Ching, *Christianity and Chinese Religions* (New York: Doubleday, 1989), 159-93; Heup Young Kim, *A Theology of Dao* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2017).

⁵² Contrary to the old culture based on the fluid equilibrium (the harmony of *yin* and *yang*), modern Chinese culture after Mao Tse Tung has focused on 'the modern scheme of history with its ideas of progress and linear, purpose-orientated time' (93). Although the relatively recent liberalisation of the Chinese economy has brought rapid industrialisation to China, Moltmann suggests the need for a balance between equilibrium and progress: 'The ancient Chinese way of thinking in dynamic harmonies full of tension is again of inestimable significance for the new paradigm of society brought into a balance with the nature of earth which enables it to survive and to this extent is the paradigm of

Daoism, good and evil are the sole preserve of intentional human action, rather than originating in Ultimate Reality (Chapters 5:2, 6:3).

I will therefore identify evil in the *Zhuangzi* by an indirect method. I will find the opposites of what is regarded as the good to be pursued in the *Zhuangzi*, and then, I will compare them with equivalent objects, qualities, or states in Haught's evolutionary theodicy. Although the opposite of good does not always mean bad in the *Zhuangzi*, the opposites can provide a clue to reconstructing the real meaning of evil for Zhuangzi, even if the text does not designate them using the word 'evil'. My method, then, is to identify what is 'evil' in the *Zhuangzi* by looking for what could be called by the author as 'an evil'.

The similarities between Haught and Zhuangzi with regard to the problem of evil will be the point of departure for this study, and the differences between the two thinkers will supply ideas to be used in developing the evolutionary theodicy of Haught for constructing an integral, holistic theodicy.

This thesis may be the first comparative study between evolutionary theodicy and Daoism. It will demonstrate the similarities and differences between evolutionary theodicy and Daoism regarding the problem of evil and develop the debate or dialogue between religion and science, *including* Daoism, serving as a catalyst for further study.

(2) Methods of Study

The Conversation between Religion and Science

Ian Barbour classifies the relationship between religion and science into four types: Conflict, Independence, Dialogue and Integration.⁵³ Barbour's 'integration' model seems to be manifested in three forms in the conversation between evolutionary biology and theology. First, is 'natural theology', the idea that the existence of God

a post-industrial society' (101). [See Moltmann, *Creating a Just Future: The Politics of Peace and the Ethics of Creation in a Threatened World*, 87-101.]

⁵³ 'Conflict' is the view that science is incompatible with any form of religion. 'Independence' is the theory that religion and science are two different fields and can be distinguished by the questions they ask, the domains to which they refer, and the methods they employ. 'Dialogue' is the view that religion and science can speak to and listen to each other. 'Integration' is discussed among those who seek a more systematic and extensive partnership between religion and science. [Ian G. Barbour, *When Science Meets Religion* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2000), 7-38.]

as a hypothesis can be supported by the evidence of design in nature, and science has actually helped us to become aware it. Second, the ‘theology of nature’ is the idea that scientific theories can affect the reformulation of certain religious doctrines even though the main ideas of religion lie outside science. Third, ‘systematic synthesis’ is the idea that ‘both science and religion contribute to the development of an inclusive metaphysics, such as that of process philosophy’.⁵⁴

John Haught similarly suggests four distinct ways in which science and religion can be related to each other: Conflict, Contrast, Contact and Confirmation. Conflict is ‘the conviction that science and religion are fundamentally irreconcilable’. Contrast is ‘the claim that there can be no genuine conflict since religion and science are each responding to radically different questions’. Contact is ‘an approach that looks for dialogue, interaction, and possible “consonance” between science and religion, and especially for ways in which science shapes religious and theological understanding’. Contact means that religion must not disregard new scientific developments because science and religion *inevitably* interact with each other. Confirmation is ‘a somewhat quieter, but extremely important perspective that highlights the ways in which, at a very deep level, religion supports and nourishes the entire scientific enterprise’.⁵⁵ Confirmation implies that religion can pave the way for some scientific ideas and discoveries.

According to Barbour, Haught’s first two categories, Conflict and Contrast, are identical with his own of Conflict and Independence. Haught’s third category, Contact, combines Barbour’s categories of Dialogue and Integration. Haught’s fourth category, Confirmation, is treated in the category of Dialogue by Barbour.⁵⁶ In my opinion, the most important difference between the two scholars is their method of explanation. Barbour classified ‘most’ debates about science and religion into four types and analysed each category’s merits and demerits. On the other hand, Haught selected ‘useful’ conversations about religion and science, categorised them into four types, and explained them from the first-person point of view. Haught excludes less useful discourses in his types (e.g. creationism and concordism), and he tries to prove the usefulness of all four of his types for each topic. Haught prefers the categories of

⁵⁴ Ibid., 27-28.

⁵⁵ Haught, *Science and Religion: From Conflict to Conversation*, 9.

⁵⁶ Barbour, 4.

Contact and Confirmation, but he also tries to show the importance of the categories called Conflict and Contrast. This is different from Barbour, who classifies scientific creationism as belonging to the category of Integration, while Haught calls scientific creationism and concordism ‘conflation’. Haught rules out conflation in his typology because he believes that conflation is an inadequate attempt to prevent conflicts by commingling science with belief inappropriately, and the fusion of science and religion obscures any real relationship between them.⁵⁷

In this thesis, my methodology concerning the relationship between religion and science will be similar to those underlying the categories or typologies of ‘Contact’ (Haught) and ‘Integration’ (Barbour). I will try to develop the theodicies of Haught and Zhuangzi in conjunction with evolutionary science. Like Haught’s category of ‘Contact’, I will examine how science can help to shape the theories of Haught and Zhuangzi. As the category of ‘Integration’ by Barbour signifies, I will seek a more extensive partnership between science and the ideas of the two thinkers regarding the problem of evil. This perspective is sometimes called ‘theistic evolution’, but I will use the term ‘evolutionary theology’.⁵⁸ When I discuss the problem of evil and the righteousness of God, I will use the term ‘evolutionary theodicy’.

The Conversation between Christian Theology and Daoism

In comparing religions, we must have in mind a method for doing so. Jonathan Smith is one representative scholar who studies methodology in regard to the comparative

⁵⁷ Haught, *Science and Religion: From Conflict to Conversation*, 13-14.

⁵⁸ It is impossible to provide a coherent general categorisation of ‘evolutionary theology’, covering all scholars who undertake comparative study between evolutionary science and Christianity, because these scholars have very diverse opinions according to the degree to which they accept evolutionary science. I will discuss in detail in Chapter 2:1, ‘What are Evolution and Evolutionary Theology?’

study of religions,⁵⁹ and he has published widely in this field.⁶⁰ He asks, ‘Is comparison an enterprise of magic or science?’⁶¹ He criticizes previous comparative work as more impressionistic than methodical and summarises the modes of comparison that have been utilized for the last 2,500 years into four types. First is the ‘ethnographic’ approach, which is based on travellers’ impressions, so it depends on ‘intuition, a chance association, or the knowledge one happens to have’.⁶² According to him, this comparison lacks the proper basis of comparisons and is not systematic. Second is the ‘encyclopaedic’ tradition, which compares data just because they cohabit within some category, providing no clues about the method of comparison. This approach consists of ‘contextless lists held together by mere surface association’,⁶³ so that data are not compared or explained properly. Third is the ‘morphological’ approach, which arranges individual items in a hierarchical way of increased complexity and organization, ignoring categories of historical and geographical context. This approach presupposes an *a priori* notion of economy in which there are few ‘original elements’ (the archetypes) from which complex systems are generated.⁶⁴ Fourth is the ‘evolutionary’ approach, which is an

⁵⁹ Braun and McCutcheon praise Smith as ‘one of the towering intellectual figures of his generation’ in the study of religion. ‘This’, they say, is ‘not only because of the impressive variety of data domains at his command and his ever startling theoretical thought concerning these data, but also because of his continued willingness to serve the academy as scholar, teacher, thoughtful leader in the proper role and place of education’. [Willi Braun and Russell T. McCutcheon, eds., *Introducing Religion: Essays in Honor of Jonathan Z. Smith* (London ; Oakville: Equinox Pub., 2008), xv.] Moreover, two well-known books about comparative religious study reflect Smith’s influence. *A Magic Still Dwells: Comparative Religion in the Postmodern Age* was titled in reference to Smith’s article, “In Comparison a Magic Dwells,” and another book about comparative study, composed by sixteen famous contributors was entitled, *Introducing Religion: Essays in Honor of Jonathan Z. Smith*, despite the fact that the content of the book is not related to Smith.

⁶⁰ Jonathan Z. Smith, *Map Is Not Territory: Studies in the History of Religions* (Leiden: Brill, 1978); Jonathan Z. Smith, *Imagining Religion: From Babylon to Jonestown* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982); Jonathan Z. Smith, *To Take Place: Toward Theory in Ritual* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987); Jonathan Z. Smith, *Drudgery Divine: On the Comparison of Early Christianities and the Religions of Late Antiquity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990); Jonathan Z. Smith, *Relating Religion: Essays in the Study of Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

⁶¹ Jonathan Z. Smith, "In Comparison a Magic Dwells," in *A Magic Still Dwells: Comparative Religion in the Postmodern Age*, ed. Kimberley C. Patton and Benjamin C. Ray (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000), 26.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 27.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ Smith acknowledges that Mircea Eliade left behind remarkable achievements in religious studies based on the morphological approach. However, Smith criticises the philosophical presuppositions of

unauthorized combination between the morphological approach and the new framework of the evolutionists. This approach allows comparativists to draw data (cultural materials) ignoring the given time and place, and locate them in a series from the simplest to the more complex. The simplest was assumed chronologically and logically prior.⁶⁵

Based on these criticisms of previous methods, Smith suggests the following four moments of comparative work: description, comparison, redescription and rectification. 'Description' is a process that comprises the anthropological or historical dimensions of the study. 'Comparison' has to be undertaken both *in terms of* aspects and relations held to be significant, and *with respect to* some category, theory, question, or model of interest to comparativists. He claims that the goal of comparison is the 'redescription of the exempla (each in light of the other) and a rectification of the academic categories in relation to which they have been imagined'.⁶⁶ There is then a redescription of compared materials in the light of others. Rectification modifies previous academic categories based on redescription. Smith claims that '[P]rogress is made not so much by the uncovering of new facts or documents as by looking again with new perspectives on familiar materials'.⁶⁷ Therefore, matters of comparative methods are central to him, and four moments are needed in comparative work. Other scholars, such as William Paden,⁶⁸ have considered similar methods to Smith's.

While Smith's study is classified as 'comparative religion', there is a prominent scholar in 'comparative theology', too: Francis Clooney.⁶⁹ According to Clooney,

Eliade's approach because they are based on the Romantic and Neoplatonic Idealism, and his approach is designed to exclude the historical. (ibid., 29.)

⁶⁵ Ibid., 28-29.

⁶⁶ Smith, "The "End" of Comparison: Redescription and Rectification," in *A Magic Still Dwells: Comparative Religion in the Postmodern Age*, 239.

⁶⁷ Smith, *Drudgery Divine: On the Comparison of Early Christianities and the Religions of Late Antiquity*, viii.

⁶⁸ William E. Paden, "Elements of a New Comparativism," in *A Magic Still Dwells: Comparative Religion in the Postmodern Age*, ed. Kimberley C. Patton and Benjamin C. Ray (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000), 182-92.

⁶⁹ Francis Clooney and Robert C. Neville are eminent scholars in comparative theology. Neville focuses on Confucianism and Buddhism in his comparative study, and Clooney concentrates on Hinduism. While Neville is philosophical and reflective, Clooney is practical and participative. According to Clooney, Neville's thought draw him toward 'subtle distinctions perfected with an air of detachment', but Clooney's work moves toward 'deeper engagement in stubborn particularities'. [Francis X. Clooney, *Comparative Theology: Deep Learning across Religious Borders* (Malden,

comparative *religion* emphasizes a neutral perspective with respect to what the comparison might imply religiously or where it might lead.⁷⁰ On the other hand, comparative *theology* seeks explanations ‘which are rooted in a particular faith tradition but which, from that foundation, venture into learning from one or more other faith traditions’.⁷¹ Clooney puts stress on Christian identity, and also thinks Christianity should be open to other religious traditions. He calls his methodology ‘including theology’, which means that he brings what he learns from other traditions into his reconsideration of Christian identity.⁷²

For performing a comparative study between Christian theology and Daoism, I will be mainly following the comparison theories of both Smith and Clooney because their methodologies are particularly helpful for my study. First of all, Smith’s emphasis on the importance of differences between religions in comparative study will guide me in finding the relevant differences between the evolutionary theodicy of Haught and the Daoist philosophy of Zhuangzi and rethinking Haught’s ideas in the light of these differences. Second, Smith thinks that ‘*x* resembles *y*’ is logically incomplete, and recommends that propositions of comparison such as ‘*x* resembles *y* more than *z* with respect to ...’ or ‘*x* resembles *y* more than *w* resembles *z* with respect to ...’ are far more useful.⁷³

Now, my comparative work will not simply claim ‘the evolutionary theodicy of Haught is similar (or different) to the Daoist philosophy of Zhuangzi’. My comparison will be not dyadic but triadic: other Christian theodicies will be the third comparison group. I expect that the relationship between the evolutionary theodicy of Haught and other Christian theodicies both uncovers and better informs the dialogue between science and religion, and the relationship between the evolutionary theodicy of Haught and the Daoist philosophy of Zhuangzi uncovers what genuine dialogue between Christianity and Daoism consists in. The topics for each section will be the criteria of the comparative work; for example, ‘Christian theologians have

Mass.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 47. Neville, *Ritual and Deference: Extending Chinese Philosophy in a Comparative Context*, 127-48.]

⁷⁰ Clooney, 9.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 16.

⁷³ Smith, *Drudgery Divine: On the Comparison of Early Christianities and the Religions of Late Antiquity*, 51.

said the following about topic *z*. However, John Haught says this in harmony with evolutionary science (Religion and Science). Daoism in the *Zhuangzi* is more similar to or more different from the evolutionary theodicy of Haught than traditional Christian theodicies with respect to *y* about the topic *z* (Christianity and Daoism)'.

As Clooney's comparative theology connects traditional theological concerns with the actual study of another tradition,⁷⁴ I will combine Zhuangzi's ideas with the evolutionary theodicy of Haught. My goal in this thesis is to supplement Christian theodicy with the ideas of Daoism as Clooney suggests, as the goal of his comparative theology.

Based on Smith's four steps of comparative work and Clooney's comparative theology, I would like to define my own five steps of comparative study: description, comparison, generalisation, differentiation and supplementation.

In the first step, 'description', I will describe the evolutionary theodicy of Haught and the Daoist philosophy of Zhuangzi separately according to each chapter's topic. In the second step, 'comparison', I will try to find similarities between these two thinkers. In the third step, 'generalisation', I will generalise my ideas discussed in the second step. This step will reveal how the ideas of two thinkers of different times and cultures can be discussed together using the same terms. Generalised forms of theodicies by Haught and Zhuangzi will contribute to a broader conversation between Christianity and Daoism and between science and religion. In the fourth step, 'differentiation', I will explore the differences between Haught and Zhuangzi. In the fifth step, 'supplementation', I will explore how the Christian evolutionary theodicy of Haught can be developed further through the utilisation of the Daoist thought of Zhuangzi. It will be paramount not to present the similarities in a simplistic way or think that something I find is particular to a certain religion⁷⁵ throughout my steps 'comparison' and 'differentiation'. By this I simply mean that for this study to be objective, personal prejudices must not be allowed to influence the analysis. It is imperative to remain open to learning from other religions⁷⁶ throughout the methodological step of 'supplementation', in that what we may sometimes take to be 'unique' to a certain religion – perhaps being that which drove

⁷⁴ Clooney, 10.

⁷⁵ Smith, *Imagining Religion: From Babylon to Jonestown*, 6.

⁷⁶ Clooney, 16.

us to belief in the first place – may not actually be unique in the history of ideas and religions. Supplementation, when it operates correctly, leaves open the possibility of one religion or philosophy learning from another, clarifying or deepening its insights.

My methodology is similar to Smith's in the way that it puts the same premium on differences and similarities between religions. I agree with Smith's argument that the end of comparison cannot be the act of comparison itself.⁷⁷ Therefore, I will not cease my comparative work at the point of comparing the two thinkers, and I will try to generalise the ideas that are present. However, while Smith concentrates on redescribing compared materials in the light of other materials in the step of 'redescription', I will focus on generalising and theorizing in the third step.

Instead of stopping at the final step of 'rectification', I will develop this thesis by employing 'differentiation' and 'supplementation'. This is because the purpose of this thesis is to develop Christian theodicy in the light of comparison with Daoism rather than to develop academic categories that are regarded as important in comparative religious study. Through comparison and generalisation, we will see how two different religious traditions can be compared. Differences between the two thinkers will be the key for supplementation. Through differentiation and supplementation, Christian theodicy will be developed from a wider viewpoint. My methodology therefore follows Smith's comparative religion in the steps of 'comparison' and 'differentiation' and follows Clooney's comparative theology in the final step, 'supplementation'. Because Clooney's comparative theology aims to combine theological concerns with actual study of newly encountered traditions or religions,⁷⁸ my final step can receive assistance from his methodology. I will use the strengths of the two thinkers, and this means developing my thesis with regard to both the analytic and practical, the objective and the subjective, and both the external and internal in religious life.

In undertaking this comparative study between the evolutionary theodicy of Haught and the Daoist philosophy of Zhuangzi, I will divide my main chapters into three parts. In the first part, I will examine the evolutionary theology of Haught and the ideas constituting his theodicy (Chapters 2 and 3). In the second part, I will

⁷⁷ Smith, "The "End" of Comparison: Redescription and Rectification," in *A Magic Still Dwells: Comparative Religion in the Postmodern Age*, 239.

⁷⁸ Clooney, 10.

expound the Daoist philosophy of Zhuangzi and his ideas on evil (Chapters 4 and 5). In the third part, I will compare the two thinkers (Chapters 6, 7 and 8). The topics that will be covered in the comparison will be the following: information and *qi* (vital energy), the grace of God and *ziran* (spontaneity), free will and *wuwei* (non-action), the kenotic God and Dao's omnipresence, the self-absenting of God and the hiddenness of Dao, the 'dark side' and *yin* (the shadow side), purpose or direction of evolution, and new creation and *tianrenyitong* (the unity of heaven and human being).

Based on these comparisons, I will generalise the ideas of Haught and Zhuangzi on evil into seven different theodicies (the natural state defence, the free action defence, the suffering God defence, the hidden God defence, the harmony defence, the progress defence, and the final fulfilment defence). I will then supplement the evolutionary theodicy of Haught with the Daoist ideas of Zhuangzi on the basis of their differences. In the conclusion of the thesis (Chapter 9), I will summarize my main ideas, explore the meaning and importance as well as the limitations of this study, and provide direction for future comparative study between science and religion and between Christianity and Daoism.

PART I. THE EVOLUTIONARY THEOLOGY OF JOHN HAUGHT

To do comparative study between the evolutionary theology of John Haught and the Daoist philosophy of Zhuangzi concerning the *problem* of evil, we first need to know the two thinkers' basic philosophical and theological doctrines and thoughts on evil – what it is, how it comes about, and how it can and should be experienced. Thus in Part I, which is composed of chapters two and three, the evolutionary theology of Haught will be discussed. In chapter two, I will expound Haught's perspectives on evolutionary science and Christian theology, and in chapter three, I will give an exposition of the problem of evil and of theodicy in Haught. Part I serves to lay out the ideas of Haught for later comparative work with the Daoist thought of Zhuangzi in Part III, so it will be more descriptive rather than critical.

Chapter 2

Evolutionary Science and Christian Theology in Haught

The influence of Darwinian evolutionary science is continuously growing. Many scholars in various fields, such as in the natural sciences, social sciences, philosophy, and linguistics, have accepted Darwinian evolutionary theory, with evolutionary theory informing their respective research areas. However, according to Haught, theologians still think and write almost as if Charles Darwin had never lived.⁷⁹ I also suggest that contemporary religious ideas should consider a transition to the Darwinian world.

Haught does not worry that an appropriate idea of God will be distorted or simply be made redundant by science because for him, the larger our sense of the universe is, the better sense we should have of the dimensions and grandeur of deity.⁸⁰ For Haught, religious believers do not need to be afraid to learn from science about the universe. Similarly, Arthur Peacocke says, ‘Theology has been most creative and long-lasting when it has responded most positively to the challenges of its times’.⁸¹ I also think that scientific knowledge, especially Darwinian evolutionary theory, can enlarge our sense of God, and Haught aims to demonstrate this in his evolutionary theology.

In this chapter, I will explain how Haught tries to harmonize evolutionary science with Christian theology. First of all, I will define the concepts of ‘evolution’ and ‘evolutionary theology’. Next, I will show how Haught keeps balances between the evolution of life and a creator God, between natural selection and divine providence, between the three notions of contingency, law and time and a transcendent personal God, between cosmic evolution and divine promise, and finally, between evolutionary science and ecotheology. I chose these categories because they clearly illuminate the most important aspects of Haught’s Christian theology with regard to evolutionary science for us. This chapter is not only an exposition of the main ideas of Haught about religion and science, but also a

⁷⁹ Haught, *God after Darwin: A Theology of Evolution*, 2.

⁸⁰ Haught, *Responses to 101 Questions on God and Evolution*, 37.

⁸¹ Peacocke, *Theology for a Scientific Age: Being and Becoming - Natural, Divine and Human*, 7.

preliminary chapter and a basis upon which to examine the evolutionary theodicy of Haught in further detail in the next chapter.

(1) What are ‘Evolution’ and ‘Evolutionary Theology’?

The goal of this section is to fix the scope and provide brief definitions of the terms ‘evolution’ and ‘evolutionary theology’ rather than to provide detailed exposition and analysis.

Life on Earth seems to have developed throughout its history, expressed today in the familiar concept of *evolution*.⁸² In fact, the idea that all organisms are generated by natural methods from other forms is rooted in ancient times. For example, Plato toyed with such thoughts.

Sinew, skin, and bone were interwoven at the ends of our fingers and toes. The mixture of these three was dried out, resulting in the formation of a single stuff, a piece of hard skin, the same in every case. Now these were auxiliary causes in its formation – the pre-eminent cause of its production was the purpose that took account of future generations: our creators understood that one day women and the whole realm of wild beasts would one day come to be from men [*exandrōn gunaikēs kai talla thēria genēsointo*], and in particular knew that many of these offspring would need the use of nails and claws or hoofs for many purposes. This is why they took care to include nails formed in a rudimentary way in their design for humankind [*anthrōpōis*], right at the start.⁸³

So we can see that evolutionary thought, in various pre-Darwinian forms, is a very old idea.⁸⁴ Evolutionary ideas spread during the second half of the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth centuries into areas other than biology, including philosophy, linguistics, sociology and economics.⁸⁵

⁸² Ernst Mayr, *What Evolution Is* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), 8.

⁸³ *Timaeus*, 76d5–e8. in Stella Sandford, *Plato and Sex* (Cambridge, UK ; Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2010), 132.

⁸⁴ There is, in fact, also a famous discussion by St. Augustine which can be read as ‘evolutionary’, in his discussion of Genesis 1 in *The Literal Meaning of Genesis*. Augustine thought that God created the world with the capacity to develop of itself – a perspective that is harmonious with biological evolution. [Augustine, *The Literal Meaning of Genesis*, Ancient Christian Writers, no. 41 (New York: Newman Press, 1982)]

⁸⁵ Mayr, 9.

Jean-Baptiste Lamarck (1744–1829) was the first scholar to develop the specific idea that all of the different forms of life had been successively produced, from the simplest to the most complex, by natural causes operating over immense periods of time. He claimed that animals were induced to develop new habits when they were confronted with new environments, and acquired characteristics that were then passed on to the next generation.⁸⁶ His idea, called the ‘Lamarckian’ explanation, is considered as the first inclusive theory of biological evolution, and the theory has seen a recovery in popularity largely because of new discoveries in epigenetics. Evolutionary theory today at least is largely Darwinian, but it has definite Lamarckian tendencies.

Evolutionism became the subject of intense focus as a result of the publication of Darwin’s *On the Origin of Species* in 1859. Darwin says in his book:

There is grandeur in this view of life, with its several powers, having been originally breathed by the Creator into a few forms or into one; and that, whilst this planet has gone cycling on according to the fixed law of gravity, from so simple a beginning endless forms most beautiful and most wonderful have been, and are being, evolved.⁸⁷

Darwin presented evidence that species were not fixed or in static states without development, and explored many specific ideas to substantiate his theory of evolution by natural selection, establishing that all species have descended from common ancestors, time after time. Before Darwin, some scholars such as George-Louis Leclerc de Buffon⁸⁸ (1707–1788) and Jean Baptiste Lamarck⁸⁹ proposed the notion of the evolution of species, but it was Darwin who systematized the theory of evolution by means of his mechanism of natural selection. When I use the concept of ‘evolution’ in this thesis, then, I refer to *Darwinian* evolution, which features natural selection as one of its most important aspects. ‘Evolution’ in this thesis also refers to Neo-Darwinism, which informs all of the life sciences.

⁸⁶ R. W. Burkhardt Jr., "Jean-Baptiste Lamarck (1744-1829)," in *Evolution: The First Four Billion Years*, ed. Michael Ruse and Joseph Travis (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 2009), 672-74.

⁸⁷ Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species*, ed. Gillian Beer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, [1859] 2008), 360.

⁸⁸ *Histoire naturelle* (1749–1788, 36 volumes)

⁸⁹ *Philosophie zoologique* (1809)

Darwin explained the idea of evolution by using phenomena and processes that could be observed in nature, and therefore did not need to rely on special creation or any supernatural forces. In *On the Origin of Species*, Darwin explains variation under domestication, variation under nature, struggle for existence, and natural selection. According to Darwin, the struggle for existence among all organic beings inevitably exists throughout the world, and natural selection almost unavoidably causes extensive extinction of less adaptable organisms and forms of life – adaptable, that is, to changes in predational and environmental pressures. Darwin also posited that natural selection therefore results in ‘Divergence of Character’ because ‘the more living beings can be supported on the same area the more they diverge in structure, habits, and constitution, of which we see proof by looking to the inhabitants of any small spot or to naturalised productions’.⁹⁰ These constituent theses came to be taken together, resulting in the view that evolutionary biology cannot be compatible with Christianity for the following reasons.

The first reason is that Darwin’s ideas on evolution provide a whole new story or account of creation which *ostensibly* seems to be in conflict with biblical accounts, such as the creation story in Genesis.⁹¹ Christians had hitherto regarded the world as the special creation of God, complete at the outset and very much like (if not the same) as how we find it today – an account which is in clear contrast to the Darwinian account of the gradual evolution of the world and its species, not based on perfect plan but rather on adaptability in survival.

The second reason for the apparent opposition between science and religion that Darwin’s notion of natural selection – which proposes that the natural world is governed by accidental or contingent aspects of evolution and ruthless struggle – raises difficult questions about God’s role in creation. God’s traditional role of a morally perfect Father of all creatures Who neither desires nor intends their suffering or death came to be seen untenable given the immense and arbitrary suffering in the world.

⁹⁰ Darwin, 7-8, 98.

⁹¹ There are many attempts to harmonize modern science and the biblical creation stories. For example, many scholars interpret the ‘days’ mentioned in Genesis as metaphors for much longer episodes in time, such as geological periods. Some also suggest that the ‘six days’ are better thought of as God’s timescale, different from that of the earth’s. Finally, some also interpret the texts metaphorically or poetically rather than as a literal account of creation. (cf. Harris, *The Nature of Creation: Examining the Bible and Science*, Chapter 3 ‘Creation According to the Bible I: Genesis’.)

Third, Darwin's theory of human descent from lower forms of life seems to question age-old beliefs in the uniqueness and distinctiveness of human beings in virtue of their being created in God's image (Gen. 1:26). The traditional doctrine of the *imago dei* posits that human beings, while existing in the world, are of a different ontological plane to the other life forms on Earth in virtue of possessing a soul. A soul, which constitutes a rational substance for traditional Boethian/Aristotelian/Scholastic philosophy possesses free will and intelligence – properties which are by definition *spiritual* or *immaterial* and which therefore require a divine cause and cannot result from material causes or come about from gradual processes. Hence, in traditional scholastic philosophy, the human embryo possesses a soul (and the intelligence and free will inherent in it) from the outset, from the moment of conception, *despite* the fact that we know the human person's intelligence and freedom of the will *as capacities* will develop as the child matures. The capacities of intelligence and freedom of the will, constituting the essential properties of the soul and being *complete* therefore demand a cause *prior to* and *beyond* terrestrial causes, given that terrestrial causes are always bound up (in scholastic terminology) in *potency* (potential) and *act* (realisation) deriving from material events.⁹²

The fourth reason for the apparent opposition between science and religion is that chance or accident in evolution seems to destroy the notion of divine providence and teleology in virtue of the sheer randomness and contingency of life and the fortunes of creatures attempting to survive in the world.

Fifth, Darwinian evolution appears to rob the universe of purpose, and human life of any lasting significance for the principle reasons that human beings seem not being made in the image of God, not possessing a special place in God's plan for creation, and no longer being assured of being held in the guiding, providential hands of God in the face of suffering. Human beings are *apparently* 'thrown into'⁹³ a fundamentally irrational world without reason other than the biological exigency of the survival of our species to merely *survive* and pass on our genes until our inevitable death. These views, emerging from a mechanistic view of the world devoid of rationality or any discrimination between creatures or individuals in their

⁹² Jacques Maritain, *The Person and the Common Good*, trans. John J. Fitzgerald (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1947), chap. 3.

⁹³ Michael Inwood, *A Heidegger Dictionary* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1999), 218-20.

needs, desires and vulnerabilities – in other words, no ‘existential guardianship’ whatsoever – was the foundation of the philosophies of absurdism and existentialism, exemplified in the writings of Albert Camus, Jean-Paul Sartre and Martin Heidegger in the twentieth century. Combined with the view of Freud that humans were mostly driven by the unconscious desires to dominate and to procreate, this formed a rather monstrous picture of the human being – isolated in the world, subject to the primordial and impersonal forces of natural selection and the *libido*, and fundamentally selfish and animalistic.

Finally, sixth, the origin of human beings posited by Darwinian evolution seems to conflict with the notion of original sin and the Fall. Put simply, if human greed, vindictiveness, violence, as well as the suffering caused by ‘natural force’ in the world is simply intrinsic to the nature of this reality, both necessary and inevitable, then the Christian narrative that those things were due to a pre-historic, voluntary decision by the first human being appeared not only outdated, but absurd. The implication for Christianity was this: that by removing the ontological wound inherited from Adam (and the collective guilt and tendency to commit evil due to it), the new Darwinian picture of the world apparently removed any need for a saviour and any need of spiritual redemption.

Largely for these reasons, notable critics of Christianity since Darwin’s time have advocated the view that religion should not simply be tolerated but should be challenged using critical argumentation wherever its influence arises. The ‘New Atheism’ of Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris, Christopher Hitchens, and Daniel Dennett is a relatively recent example of such ‘scientific naturalism’ and its central dogma is that ‘only nature, including humans and our creations, is real; that God does not exist; and that science alone can give us complete and reliable knowledge of reality’.⁹⁴ According to what is called the ‘New Atheism’, which exemplifies ‘scientism’ and combines it with an aggressive form of argumentation employing rhetorical devices including that of the appeal to ridicule, scientifically educated people have to deny belief in God, because God does not lie within the realm of evidence that science deal with. For the New Atheists, people who still believe in God in some form or other today are, in light of all the evidence against the hypothesis of God’s existence, less intelligent than atheists or agnostics.

⁹⁴ Haight, *God and the New Atheism: A Critical Response to Dawkins, Harris, and Hitchens*, x.

After Darwin, therefore, theologians had to answer the challenge posed by evolutionary theory. The Wilberforce–Huxley debate⁹⁵ in 1860 is emblematic of the objections made by churchmen to Darwin’s theory at the time. John Thomas Scopes’ trial known as ‘Monkey Trial’ in 1925 is also widely regarded as the first conflict between Christian fundamentalism and Darwinism.⁹⁶ In the modern world, some theologians such as Henry Morris and John Whitcomb remained unswayed by the evidence for evolution and by the implications that it has for traditional Christian theism. Morris and Whitcomb deny evolution and claim that God created the earth and all terrestrial life during a relatively short period, between 5,700 and 10,000 years ago. This idea is known as ‘young-earth creationism’ or ‘flood geology’. Relative to cosmological time scales used today, youth-earth creationists posit God’s recent special creation of all that is present in the physical universe in six twenty-four-hour periods and a geologically significant flood at the time of Noah that buried most of the fossils.⁹⁷

In contrast, Haught not only accepts evolutionary theory but also tries to develop Christian theology with the help of evolutionary biology. He has written more than ten books concerning this issue, in particular, *Responses to 101 Questions on God and Evolution* (2001), *Deeper than Darwin: The Prospect for Religion in the Age of Evolution* (2003), *God after Darwin: A Theology of Evolution* (2008), *Science and Religion: From Conflict to Conversation* (2008), *Making Sense of Evolution: Darwin, God, and the Drama of Life* (2010), and *Science and Faith: A New Introduction* (2012). Haught proposes in his books that essential aspects of the biblical tradition can allow us to think about Ultimate Reality in a way that is not only religiously satisfying but also acknowledges the evolutionary nature and history of the world.

Before giving specific answers to the issues surrounding science and religion, Haught divides theologians’ answers to Darwinism into three types: Opposition,

⁹⁵ Thomas Henry Huxley and Bishop Samuel Wilberforce participated in an intense debate at the Oxford University Museum after the presentation of a paper by John William Draper on the intellectual development of Europe in relation to Darwin’s theory.

⁹⁶ Peter J. Bowler, "Christian Responses to Darwinism in the Late Nineteenth Century," in *The Blackwell Companion to Science and Christianity*, ed. J. B. Stump and Alan G. Padgett (Chichester, West Sussex ; Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 37.

⁹⁷ Ronald L. Numbers, "Scientific Creationism and Intelligent Design," in *The Cambridge Companion to Science and Religion*, ed. Peter Harrison (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 128.

Separatism and Engagement.⁹⁸ ‘Opposition’ claims that theology and neo-Darwinian science are mutually antagonistic and irreconcilable in explaining the world. Haught classifies scientific materialism (e.g. Richard Dawkins,⁹⁹ Daniel Dennett¹⁰⁰ and Steven Jay Gould¹⁰¹), creationism (e.g. Duane Gish¹⁰²) and intelligent design as instances of Opposition. ‘Separatism’ claims that science is naturally limited to dealing with questions about physical causes of events, while theology is concerned with questions about the ultimate ‘meaning’ or purpose of things, so that there is no conflict between the two (e.g. Guy Murchie¹⁰³). The final category of ‘Engagement’ brings Darwin’s ideas into theological frameworks, and places evolution at the very centre of theological reflections on the natural world. Haught classifies post-Darwinian natural theology¹⁰⁴ (e.g. John Polkinghorne¹⁰⁵) and evolutionary theology as instances of Engagement.

⁹⁸ Haught, *God after Darwin: A Theology of Evolution*, 27-47. This is different from Haught’s four types for the dialogue between science and religion (Conflict, Contrast, Contact and Confirmation). In particular, Haught organizes scientific creationism as an instance of the Opposition type, but he rules it out as being a possible instance of any of the four dialogue models between science and religion because he believes that the fusion of science and religion (such as scientific creationism and concordism) obscures any real relationship between them (see Chapter 1).

⁹⁹ Richard Dawkins, *The Blind Watchmaker*, 1st American ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 1986).

¹⁰⁰ Daniel C. Dennett, *Darwin’s Dangerous Idea: Evolution and the Meanings of Life* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995).

¹⁰¹ Stephen Jay Gould, *Ever since Darwin: Reflections in Natural History* (New York: Norton, 1977). Gould’s views are generally placed in the categories of ‘Separatism’ or ‘Independence’ rather than ‘Conflict’, but Haught places him in the ‘Conflict’ category, justifying this by saying that ‘He [Gould] even stated at times that religion and science do not conflict (although in order to do so he first reduced “religion” to ethics). Nevertheless, it inevitably follows from the logic of Gould’s position that Darwinism is antithetical to the most fundamental tenets of theistic faiths’. [Haught, *God after Darwin: A Theology of Evolution*, 27-28.]

¹⁰² Duane T. Gish, *Evolution: The Challenge of the Fossil Record* (El Cajon, Calif.: Creation-Life Publishers, 1985).

¹⁰³ Guy Murchie, *The Seven Mysteries of Life: An Exploration in Science and Philosophy* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1978).

¹⁰⁴ According to Haught, after Darwin, natural theology has taken on a new broadness and fresh confidence by encounters with contemporary cosmology. He reports that with the help of recent discoveries and theories of cosmology and astrophysics, natural theology seems to be able to justifiably posit divine intentionality at the very foundations of the universe itself. He calls this new phase in natural theological thought ‘post-Darwinian natural theology’.

¹⁰⁵ ‘The intelligible regularity of the universe reflects the rational reliability of its Creator. Its delicately balanced structure, intricately knit, evinces the subtlety of God’s purpose to be achieved through the evolution of the world.’ [John Polkinghorne, “Creation and the Structure of the Physical World,” *Theology Today* 44, no. 1 (1987): 67.]

What, then, is meant by ‘evolutionary theology’? Niels Henrik Gregersen defines evolutionary theology as ‘forms of religious self-reflection that are significantly shaped by the resources of evolutionary biology’.¹⁰⁶ Peter Bowler regards it as the pursuit of harmonizing creationism’s commitment to the argument from design with the evolutionist assertion that nature is governed by constant laws rather than discontinuous miracles.¹⁰⁷ Most contemporary proponents of evolutionary theology prefer standard neo-Darwinian models of evolution including natural selection, the transmutation of species over time, and the statistics of variations of environments and genomes.¹⁰⁸ Although the specific definitions of evolutionary theology may vary,¹⁰⁹ they usually agree that evolutionary theology does not look for definitive traces of the divine in nature, such as design. According to Haught, evolutionary theology opposes creationism and intelligent design because such an idea is too static to grasp the dynamic and unpredictable (and for that reason perhaps disturbing) way in which the biblical God interacts with the world. Haught says about evolutionary theology:

Instead of trying to prove God’s existence from nature, evolutionary theology seeks to show how our new awareness of cosmic and biological evolution can enhance and enrich traditional teachings about God and God’s way of acting in the world. In other words, rather than viewing evolution simply as a dangerous challenge that deserves an apologetic response, evolutionary theology discerns in evolution a most illuminating context for our thinking about God today.¹¹⁰

Haught argues that evolutionary theology should consider all the difficulties that are evident in the post-Darwinian representation of nature.¹¹¹ Haught’s theology of evolution is therefore an attempt to derive a holistic approach in comparing Darwin’s

¹⁰⁶ Niels Henrik Gregersen, "Evolutionary Theology," in *Encyclopedia of Sciences and Religions*, ed. Anne L. C. Runehov and Lluís Oviedo (Dordrecht ; New York: Springer, 2013), 809.

¹⁰⁷ Peter J. Bowler, *Monkey Trials and Gorilla Sermons: Evolution and Christianity from Darwin to Intelligent Design, New Histories of Science, Technology, and Medicine* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007), 113.

¹⁰⁸ Gregersen, in *Encyclopedia of Sciences and Religions*, 810.

¹⁰⁹ Some evolutionary theologies have their roots in assumptions of non-Darwinian forms of evolution such as orthogenesis, the idea that organisms have an internal tendency to evolve in a ‘straight’ direction (e.g. Jean-Baptiste Lamarck and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin).

¹¹⁰ Haught, *God after Darwin: A Theology of Evolution*, 40.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, x.

main ideas and theses with those of Christianity, not simply an attempt to draw selectively from Darwinian evolutionary theory for theology's sake.

It should be noted that the term 'evolutionary theology' is not a unified term in the science–religion field; the theological response to evolutionary biology has often been called 'theistic evolution'. Claude Stipe defines theistic evolution as the idea 'which accepts that evolution occurred as biologists describe it, but under the direction of God'.¹¹² Robert John Russell defines theistic evolution more dynamically: 'God creates the world *ex nihilo* with certain fundamental laws and natural constants, and God acts everywhere in time and space as continuous creator (*creatio continua*) in, with, and through the processes of nature'.¹¹³ Both Stipe and Russell's definitions clearly show their acceptance of evolutionary biology as well as an affirmation of God's creating the universe in some manner.

Meanwhile, Mark Harris prefers the term 'evolutionary theologies' rather than 'theistic evolution' because there are many such responses, and these debates (should, in principle) offer ways 'to understand *God* in the light of *evolution* rather than the reverse'.¹¹⁴ Arthur McCalla names it a 'theology of science', and remarks that 'the theology of science draws on the biblical understanding of God to explain why the physical world is as modern science shows it to be' rather than looking for hints of God's existence in the design of the physical world.¹¹⁵ Harris and McCalla define their terms by focusing on *theology* rather than *evolution* or *science*. Similarly, Haught seems to prefer to use the term a 'theology of evolution', and defines it as 'a systematic set of reflections that tries to show how evolution, including those features that scientific sceptics consider to be incompatible with religious faith, illuminate the revolutionary image of God given to Christian faith'.¹¹⁶ His blueprint for a theology of evolution illuminates the revolutionary image of God that has been passed down to us.

¹¹² Claude E. Stipe, "Scientific Creationism and Evangelical Christianity," *American Anthropologist* 87, no. 1 (1985): 149.

¹¹³ Russell, *Cosmology, Evolution, and Resurrection Hope: Theology and Science in Creative Mutual Interaction*, 28.

¹¹⁴ Harris, *The Nature of Creation: Examining the Bible and Science*, 147.

¹¹⁵ Arthur McCalla, *The Creationist Debate: The Encounter between the Bible and the Historical Mind*, 2 ed. (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 266.

¹¹⁶ Haught, *Responses to 101 Questions on God and Evolution*, 49.

Based on the definitions of many scholars, I will use ‘evolutionary theology’ when I refer to theological responses to Darwin’s evolutionary biology as a way of Engagement rather than Opposition or Separatism. This is because, as Harris properly states, my thesis is focused on *theology* rather than *evolution* or *science*, and the term is helpful to use in terms of theodicy. This means that when I discuss the problem of evil in evolutionary theology, I will use the term ‘evolutionary theodicy’. Continuing my definitions of ‘evolution’ and ‘evolutionary theology’, I will now examine Haught’s thoughts on evolutionary theology specifically.

(2) The Evolution of Life and a Creator God

Most scientists agree that the world is constituted of self-organizing systems. The arrangement of physical ‘stuff’ into atoms, molecules, planetary systems, stars, galaxies, cells, organisms, persons and societies spontaneously takes place in a way that seems to need no apparent external intervention. Some scientists unabashedly maintain that modern science has rendered the idea of creation by God completely superfluous. How can we reconcile the claim that God’s creative power is metaphysically necessary for anything to exist with a universe that exists, persists and functions on its own and that ultimately produces life, including humans possessing freedom, thereby also being the sole source of their actions?

Haught answers that ‘the new scientific picture of a spontaneously self-organizing universe actually provides Christian faith with the opportunity to renew and deepen its unique understanding of divine power’.¹¹⁷ For Haught, the greatest display of divine power is that which respectfully allows something other than God to come into being. Modern science helps us to see more clearly that divine creativity and the self-renunciation of divine love share an indivisible relation. Almost paradoxically, the divine power to create *ex nihilo* is based on the divine humility (Chapter 3:3), so we can think of creation as the *ex nihilo* product of divine omnipotence.

Haught claims that humans possess souls but also that every other living being possesses a soul, in its own way. He explains this via the etymology of the word ‘soul’. ‘Soul’ is the English translation of the Latin *anima*, from which the word

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 116-17.

‘animal’ stems. Soul has always meant an ‘animating principle’, and so all living things must be ‘ensouled’ in some way.¹¹⁸ Haught therefore thinks that the emergence of the human soul would not be any exception to this animating process, but instead ‘a most intense exemplification of a general aspect of creation and evolution’.¹¹⁹

If all living beings have souls in their own way, how can evolution be harmonized with the biblical claim that humans are made ‘in the image and likeness of God’? Haught believes that human beings’ bearing of the image and likeness of God provides for the possibility of human moral consciousness and discrimination generally, and our consequent capacities for making and faithfully keeping promises and for compassionate love. This is because humans are ‘the only species on earth endowed with freedom, responsibility, and the capacity to love selflessly’.¹²⁰

Haught also attempts a reconciliation by means of the interrelationships present in an organic world bearing the imprint of its Creator. God, however, is the most intimately related and relatable One to the world, as implied in the Trinity, a doctrine which gives *relationship* or *substance* metaphysical primacy.¹²¹ In the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, God is revealed as Transcendent (Father), Incarnate (Son), and Immanent (Spirit), a conception of the divine which receives support from some evolutionary theologians. For example, Gloria Schaab argues, ‘if the triune God as Transcendent, Incarnate, and Immanent is understood in panentheistic terms, then no aspect of God is detached from the God–world relationship’.¹²² She understands that the being of the cosmos is integral to the Being of the Divine, and that all events in the cosmos are events in the life of God. Similarly, Arthur Peacocke says, ‘All that is created is embraced by the inner unity of the divine life of the Creator – Transcendent, Incarnate, and Immanent’.¹²³ Schaab and Peacocke argue that

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 27.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 28.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Robert Barron, *Exploring Catholic Theology: Essays on God, Liturgy, and Evangelization* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2015), 11.

¹²² Schaab, "The Creative Suffering of the Triune God: An Evolutionary Panentheistic Paradigm," 291.

¹²³ Arthur Peacocke, "The New Biology and Nature, Man and God," in *The Experiment of Life: Proceedings of the 1981 William Temple Centenary Conference*, ed. F. Kenneth Hare (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1983), 35.

evolutionary theology effectively demonstrates the triune nature of God in and through the close relationship between God and creatures.¹²⁴

Based on this triune interpretation of the divine, I think that humans have the capacity for intimate relationship with all creation just as God does, and Haught shows his support for this view in his conception of evolutionary theology. According to Haught, the fact that all living beings have souls in their own way proves that there is an intimate relation between humans and non-human beings, and therefore that evolution supports the biblical idea of human beings having been created in God's image and likeness.¹²⁵ Quoting Philip Hefner's term, 'created co-creators', Haught says that God's will is that we participate in the work of making things new in this unfinished universe.¹²⁶ This enables humans to have a responsibility for all creatures, as well as the protection of the natural environment.

Then, we may ask why God would allow evolution to bring about so many millions of kinds of living beings? Is the diversity of life indicative of the extravagance of divine creativity? Darwin's theory of evolution helped to illuminate and explain the incredible diversity of organisms present on Earth.

The evolutionary theology of Haught claims that divine creativity is always dissatisfied with the monotony of the status quo and the infinite God can never be fully represented by any one creature, or indeed, any one concept. God therefore continually creates a multiplicity of beings, 'so that what is lacking in one thing as far as representing God's infinite perfection is concerned can be supplied by something else, and that by yet something else, and so on'.¹²⁷ For Haught, only an awareness of the indefinite diversity of beings can guide us to a profound sense of

¹²⁴ Deane-Drummond examines the Trinity with the notion of 'Wisdom': 'The Wisdom of God is arrived at through revelation, rather than in the first place from reflection on the ordering in the natural world. Such revelation permits us to look more specifically at the Wisdom of God expressed in Christ, who is also named as cosmic wisdom. Such naming identifies Christ also with the creative activity of God through wisdom. The coming of Christ is Wisdom incarnate; divine Wisdom incarnate in the material world.... The Spirit of wisdom is also there, present at the creation of the world, and engaged particularly in its journey to completion in Christ'. [Celia Deane-Drummond, *Wonder and Wisdom: Conversations in Science, Spirituality, and Theology* (Philadelphia: Templeton Foundation Press, 2006), 112.]

¹²⁵ Haught, *Responses to 101 Questions on God and Evolution*, 29.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 67.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 56.

the infinite. In the next section, I intend to show how Haught believes Darwin's evolutionary theology can enrich our notions of divine creation and providence.

(3) Natural Selection and Divine Providence

What happens in and to individual members of a given species over the long periods of time involved in evolution? How do individuals change from generation to generation and what is responsible for these changes? According to evolutionary biology, individuals possessing any advantage over others would have a better chance in surviving and procreating and thereby preserving their kind. The preservation of favourable variations and the rejection of evolutionarily injurious variations Darwin called 'natural selection'.¹²⁸

The theory of natural selection became the foundation of the modern interpretation of evolution, and Mayr explains that Darwin's idea of natural selection is based on five observations.¹²⁹ First, every population has such high fertility that its size would increase exponentially if not restrained. Second, the size of populations remains stable over time except for temporary fluctuations. Third, the resources available to every species are limited, from which the inference that there is fierce competition among the members of a species is made. Fourth, any two individuals of a population are not exactly the same, from which the inference that individuals are different from each other in their potentialities of survival is made. Fifth, any of the differences among the individuals are partly heritable, from which the inference that natural selection through many generations results in evolution over time is made. We can summarize these five into the notion of 'the survival of the fittest',¹³⁰ and this is one of the main issues raised in the conversation between science and religion.

The theory of natural selection has caused much controversy in Christianity. The theory of natural selection seems to have ruined the basis for trust in a providential God because natural selection's pitiless disregard of vulnerable organisms makes us wonder whether God really cares for the weakest living beings in the universe. Recent theological perspectives that accept evolution must reconcile

¹²⁸ Darwin, 63.

¹²⁹ Mayr, 128.

¹³⁰ Herbert Spencer first used the phrase in his *Principles of Biology* (1864) after reading Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*.

the Creator's providence with the harsh realities of a world conditioned by natural selection. Denis Edwards says, 'I would want to argue that God is not to be understood as another factor operating alongside natural selection, or in addition to it, but is rather to be understood as acting through it'.¹³¹ For him, God acts in, with, and through natural processes, and continuously creates according to natural selection. Haught tries to reconcile the reality of such an evolving world with religious faith in divine providence in various ways.

First of all, Haught distinguishes philosophical language from scientific language. He insists that it is not a strictly scientific but a philosophical claim to say that natural selection leaves no room at all for divine providence. In other words, it is a not only a belief about the nature of scientific knowledge, but it is also a claim about the nature of reality more generally, and a claim about the nature of knowledge – its necessary and sufficient conditions, rooted in the belief system known as 'scientism'. Scientism is not a product of scientific research, but an assumption that arises from individual and social preferences that are neither logically inferred from nor relevant to the professional practice of science.¹³² Therefore, for Haught, the claim that natural selection is in conflict with the providential view of the world is a kind of belief that groundlessly assumes that there is no possible deeper way of understanding the generation and continued existence of life than that of biological science.

It should be noted that Haught approaches this issue by supposing a broader meaning of divine care. Providence is traditionally taken to be God's sustenance, support or provision together with special divine acts. Haught thinks of this providence of God as humble, self-giving, promising love. For Haught, the Christian God does not overpower the world but wills that it 'become itself' as fully as possible. This unfolding is seen as an expression of the love of God. God fully endows the world with freedom in order for it to experiment with its possibilities. Haught understands that 'the process of evolution is the story of the universe trying out various ways of becoming distinctively itself'.¹³³ Therefore, divine providence is

¹³¹ Denis Edwards, *The God of Evolution: A Trinitarian Theology* (New York: Paulist Press, 1999), 52.

¹³² Haught, *Responses to 101 Questions on God and Evolution*, 106-08.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 50.

manifested as loving self-restraint, that is, as a ‘letting be’ that permits the universe to come out as something other than God.

When Haught builds his evolutionary theology, he refuses a defensive way such as divine design and proposes the active way of using evolutionary theory to construct his wider theological system. Haught does not think of God simply as a designer. According to him, evolutionary theory makes us think of God in a more biblical way than before. He says, ‘Evolutionary biology now provokes theology to set forth in sharper relief than ever the biblically-based image of God as the compassionate and promising One who gives the divine self unreservedly to the cosmos’.¹³⁴ For him, evolutionary data are consonant with the image of God who is humble enough to permit something to emerge spontaneously. Therefore, evolutionary science never contradicts belief in God, whose compassionate providential care is such that the world emerges as sufficiently autonomous to make a partnership with God.¹³⁵

Third, natural selection is consonant with the biblical God when we think of God as ‘the One who makes all things new’.¹³⁶ Haught thinks of God as the source of ‘novelty’ – not just as the source of a humanly idealized order. Even the countless imperfect adaptations in natural selection can allow us to sense more explicitly that the whole world is still being created. Haught criticizes the idea of intelligent design because the notion of God as a designer is not in harmony with genuine novelty in the world, changes which are spontaneous and also self-sustaining. In other words, he understands God as the One who disturbs the status quo in order to cause something new. Haught says, ‘If God is the ultimate source of order, God is no less primordially the source of novelty that sometimes has to disrupt order so as to overcome triviality and monotony. The God of evolution is the inexhaustible wellspring of *new* forms of order’.¹³⁷ In short, Darwin’s idea of natural selection actually allows us to retrieve afresh the biblical God who ‘makes all things new’ (Isa. 43:19; Rev. 21:5), and therefore, the evolutionary theology of Haught reconciles both the evolutionary theory of Darwin and traditional Christian thought.

¹³⁴ Ibid., 49.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 102.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 91.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 87.

Finally, nature is in some sense self-creative, but for Haught, this affirmation is not a denial of God's creativity. The Spirit of God is hiddenly present in all instances of continuous creation, and is intimately involved in all that occurs in nature. He thinks that a creator who gives rise to a self-creating world is much more exalted than a creator who assertively produced everything directly and without involving creatures.¹³⁸ In other words, a creator who calls a self-organizing world into existence appears much more deserving of our worship than a creator who insists on making everything directly and complete at the outset. Therefore, the self-creativity of evolution through natural selection does not diminish the role of divine creativity or providence.

(4) Contingency, Law, Time and a Transcendent Personal God

Although there are intense debates among biologists, especially concerning exactly how evolution takes place,¹³⁹ most evolutionary biologists agree that three ingredients are enough for evolution of diverse living creatures. The first generic constituent of evolution is accidental, random, or 'contingent' occurrences. For example, these are the extremely improbable chemical coincidences demanded for the origin of life, the accidental genetic mutations that make possible diverse lives, and other unpredictable events in the natural world that form the course of evolution.

The second component is the necessity implied in the 'law' of natural selection and in the inflexible rules of physics and chemistry that pertain throughout the cosmos. The law mercilessly throws out the weaker organisms, such that those with traits that inhibit their survival in a competitive environment, die and eventually become extinct, allowing only the strong to survive, reproduce and over time, remain.

The third ingredient of biological evolution is a colossal span of 'time'. Evolution requires vast epochs of time to bring to fruition various random combinations in what is an altogether un-directed affair. In order to produce

¹³⁸ Ibid., 53.

¹³⁹ For example, some evolutionists believe that almost every feature of living organisms plays, or at some previous time has played, a purely adaptive role. However, others accept that there are characteristics in living organisms that just happen by chance to be there, without any adaptive function at all. (cf. Ibid., 33-34.)

survivors and reproducers, evolution requires enormous temporal amplitude. Without an enormous expanse of time the many improbable outputs of evolution could never have been actualized.¹⁴⁰

Evolutionary biology seems to prove that evolution can be fully explained with reference to contingency, law and time, and there seems to be no room for a transcendent and personal God. Moreover, contingency and chance in evolution appear to contradict the nature of the traditional Christian God who creates and maintains the world ‘orderly’. Many events in evolution seem to occur purely by chance, making us suspect that nature is at least highly undirected and unplanned, without teleologies. Third, because most evolutionists share the presumption that the law of natural selection is blind and impersonal, there are severe questions about how to think of divine providence in such an uncaring world. Finally, the requirement of long periods of time for evolutionary processes makes us wonder why an infinitely intelligent Creator would waste time – billions of years – before bringing about living beings. Why did not God create everything at once and finish it? These kinds of questions arise when we try to understand contingency, law and time in evolution in relation to the Christian God.

How can these difficulties be accepted in evolutionary theology? Haught endeavours to provide what sort of religious meaning he can make of the impersonality and cruelty of natural selection, and the fact that life seems to have appeared gradually over a period of around 3.8 billion years.

In the evolutionary theology of Haught, these difficulties can be reconciled and understood in various ways. First of all, he suggests that there is a ‘hierarchy of explanations’, that is, to learn to read things on different levels. We are inclined to prefer an ‘either/or’ rather than a ‘both/and’ way of thinking about natural and divine creativity. We thus are forced to choose either natural evolution or divine creation in explaining the diversity of life. However, Haught suggests a hierarchy of explanations, and explains it analogically.¹⁴¹ To paraphrase, when someone is driving your car down the street, you ask, ‘Why is my car moving?’ The question could be answered at different levels, which differ in their appropriateness: the car is moving

¹⁴⁰ Haught, *God after Darwin: A Theology of Evolution*, 21-22; Haught, *Responses to 101 Questions on God and Evolution*, 60.

¹⁴¹ Haught, *Responses to 101 Questions on God and Evolution*, 57.

because the wheels are turning: because internal combustion has set the pistons, drive-shaft and so forth in motion; because Jim is driving it; because Jim has to go to the shop. For Haught, just as all these explanations can coexist without contradicting one another, theology can claim that the ultimate explanation of evolution is God's creativity without disturbing the integrity of the various sciences and the evidence they gather. In other words, the fact that the universe is unfolded by God in an extremely creative way does not revoke the genetic, chemical and evolutionary accounts of life.¹⁴² The Bible can provide us with profound religious truths without having to be scientifically accurate. If the Bible had been written using the standards of modern science, most people in the past might never have got anything out of it. Doubtless, its teachings would also lose much of their moral, spiritual and poetic significance. Therefore, according to Haught, sensing a 'hierarchy of explanations' will make us realize that we are not pushed into a narrow choice between exclusively theological and scientific explanations.

Haught's hierarchy of explanations is criticised by McCalla because it 'requires assent to the metaphysical postulate of the deeper, religious level of explanation, thereby transgressing methodological naturalism'.¹⁴³ McCalla points out that Haught's harmonisation between science and religion demands either the presupposition or agreement that such a metaphysical level of explanation is an acceptable postulate. But such a position is also bound to biblically-based metaphysics, which would almost certainly regard God to be that Ultimate Reality which is the source and end of existing things, and thereby also the end or terminating point in explanation. Regardless of whether this position is a coherent or legitimate theological position, doubtless some scholars would decline Haught's offer to accept it as a presupposition in theories concerning all reality, as in metaphysics, cosmology, and evolution.

¹⁴² Ibid., 58. Haught's idea bears a remarkable similarity to Jacques Maritain's three 'degrees of abstraction', demonstrating that Haught stands in continuity with modern philosophy and theology and not outside of it. Maritain's epistemology is grounded in metaphysics, and all sciences have 'being' as their object in analogous fashions. At first degree, dealing in 'dianoetical' knowledge, there are the natural sciences. At the second degree, dealing in 'perinoetical' knowledge, there is quantity, number, and extension (psycho-mathematical objects). At the third level, there is metaphysics, dealing with 'being *as* being', 'ananoetic' knowledge. [Jacques Maritain, *Distinguish to Unite, or, the Degrees of Knowledge*, trans. G.B. Phelan (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1959).]

¹⁴³ McCalla, 274.

I think that Haught's hierarchy of explanations is persuasive as long as it enables us to provide theological explanations of the universe without conflict with scientific explanations of it. However, there is concern that it may unintentionally focus on the 'Separatism' model rather than 'Engagement' model mentioned earlier in virtue of the fact that he seems to posit that science and religion deal with separate problems and have qualitatively different modes of expression (Chapter 2:1).

Haught also expresses other important ways in answering the difficulties caused by evolution. Haught tries to explore the deeper theological meaning in the features of contingent happenings, invariant laws and the vast stretches of time that make evolution even possible. Evolutionary science, according to Haught, does not explain *why* the universe is set up in the first place, *why* such a mixture of contingency, law and vast stretches of time allowing for evolutionary processes come about. Haught thinks that describing at full length why the universe is arranged in this way is the task of evolutionary theology.

Haught brings both contingency and chance – essential factors of evolution – into his theology. For him, it is natural that there are strange and unpredictable events – including mutant forms of life – in natural history because our world is still unfinished and open to new creation. Without such unpredictable events, the universe would have become so strictly locked into a fixed order a long time ago that it would have remained lifeless and *mindless*. Therefore, such irregular events are not antithetical to a broad notion of a personal God. If we demand a perfectly ordered universe, for Haught, it implicitly means that the providence of God should take the form of 'dictatorship'. Haught claims that we should not expect that evolution will be smooth and steady, because such monotony would manifest a world very different to what we see – a world alive and always surprising in its novelty, be it in present lifeforms or the development of lifeforms over time as we piece together the fossil record. Evolution suggests that divine providence sees much deeper, which enlarges our sense of God.¹⁴⁴

Can this sense of God in evolution be harmonized with the traditional Christian God who is transcendent and personal? In the evolutionary theology of Haught, the God who permits evolution is personal. Haught agrees with Steven Weinberg's claim that a universe separated from the idea of a personal God would be inherently

¹⁴⁴ Haught, *Responses to 101 Questions on God and Evolution*, 103.

‘pointless’ as well as ultimately devoid of religious depth.¹⁴⁵ The reason Haught sticks to a personal God is that he thinks what he chooses to worship should at least be personal. For Haught, the notion of a personal God is transformative not only cosmically in the sense that the cosmos has a ‘meaning’ extrinsic to itself, but also personally, in the sense that, if there is a personal God who created the cosmos, then I am driven to seek out the ‘meaning’ of my life within that cosmos, and in relation to the character, intentions and plans of Ultimate Reality.

This, of course, does not mean that Haught’s ideas of God exclude non-personal aspects of God. Haught tries to combine God’s personal and impersonal aspects in his notion of God as a ‘transcendent personal divine power’: ‘There is no reason why we cannot take the extravagantly sacramental self-expression of a transcendent personal divine power of renewal’.¹⁴⁶ Haught regards cosmic evolution as the sacramental self-expression by which the reviving power of a personal God is manifested. Ann Michaud suggests that ‘expanding [Haught’s] articulations on the issue of a personal God would lend credence to Haught’s insistence that the entire cosmos must be considered in a Christian eschatological vision’,¹⁴⁷ but I think that when Haught talks of a ‘personal’ God, he means a ‘relational’ God who is related to all creatures rather than a God who is only related to human persons, or solely human beings. I believe this alternative idea of a personal God contains much that is beneficial to our understanding of ecology, our relationship to other forms of life, and our place in and use of the planet.

Moreover, while Haught emphasises the necessary novelty and spontaneity of the universe, he also claims that the regularity present in natural selection is fundamental to a universe open to the future. If there is not a certain amount of consistency in nature, everything would collapse again and again into utter disorder, rendering any future whatsoever impossible.

Finally, the requirement of vast durations of time for evolutionary processes to operate is unsurprising because the finite world cannot fully adapt to its boundless origin and goal. In other words, the Infinite is necessarily other than its creation, the finite, and the finite by definition exists and lives in time or temporality.

¹⁴⁵ Haught, *Deeper Than Darwin: The Prospect for Religion in the Age of Evolution*, 38.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 39.

¹⁴⁷ Michaud, 919.

Furthermore, the God of Haught does not decide all outcomes beforehand but allows the world to participate in shaping its own future. The immeasurable and extraordinary dissemblance between the finite and the infinite, Haught says, calls for a great drama of evolution across limitless eons of time.¹⁴⁸ Similarly, Michael Dowd writes: ‘Evolutionary Christianity is an integral formulation of the Christian faith that honors biblical and traditional expressions, conservative and liberal, while enthusiastically embracing a deep-time worldview’.¹⁴⁹ For him, evolutionary Christianity symbolises the entire history of the cosmos in God-glorifying, Christ-edifying, scripture-honouring ways.

In the evolutionary theology of Haught, time, essential to the evolutionary process, also makes important sense as the stage for God’s promise for the future. Time itself is a gift of the arriving future that biblical faith connects with the mystery of God. For Haught, Darwinian evolution requires plentiful expanses of time, but time must first be given as a gift.¹⁵⁰

In short, even though nature’s openness to accident may at first strike us as contrary to the notion of a creator-God, the law of natural selection as impersonal and as such contrary to a caring God, and the enormous time in evolution as apparently prodigiously wasteful, as we have examined so far, the three ingredients of evolution make very good sense to a theology that pictures God as humble, self-giving and promising love in the evolutionary theology of Haught.

(5) Cosmic Evolution and Divine Promise

Nature can be seen as irregular and even deadly while also benign and nurturing. The natural world revealed by evolution can seem to be inherently malicious when taken alongside belief in the caring providence of God and the comfort that can be had from believing in God’s existence. Cosmic evolution contains the random and maladaptive aspects of the process as well as order. What can we make theologically

¹⁴⁸ Haught, *Responses to 101 Questions on God and Evolution*, 113.

¹⁴⁹ Michael Dowd, *Thank God for Evolution: How the Marriage of Science and Religion Will Transform Your Life and Our World* (New York: Viking, 2007), 75.

¹⁵⁰ Haught, *Responses to 101 Questions on God and Evolution*, 62.

of all the mutations and other accidents that bring about suffering and death in evolution?

According to the creation stories of Genesis, creation is essentially *good*. However, after Darwin it has become hard for people to accept this literally. Haught, however, explains that nature's ambiguity is consistent with the unfinished state of the universe, the process of being created. Haught thinks that nature is neither completely chaotic nor clearly ordered. Nature's processes progress with ambiguity and promise. For him, even nature's ambiguity is in harmony with its being a 'promise', because 'If everything at the moment were perfectly clear, completely ordered or mathematically certain, there would be no promise of a future'.¹⁵¹ Haught claims that without nature's ambiguity there would be neither the boundless openness of the cosmos nor life itself.

We can find God's promise in the Bible. There is promise in ambiguity, and this is the message of Genesis. Trusting in a promise does suppose that chaos and confusion may not be final, because God will make all things new.

See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland (Isa. 43:19).

He who was seated on the throne said, 'I am making everything new!' Then he said, 'Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true' (Rev. 21:5).

In the biblical context, God is revealed as the world's future. In the Bible, God is a God of promise and creates and sustains the world continuously by opening up a future for the world. For Haught, it is the 'coming of this Future' that allows for the evolution of the world in the first place. God, the world's Absolute Future (Karl Rahner's term), is the ultimate explanation of evolution.¹⁵² Haught's explanation removes George Murphy's concern that:

¹⁵¹ Haught, *Deeper Than Darwin: The Prospect for Religion in the Age of Evolution*, 39.

¹⁵² Haught, *Responses to 101 Questions on God and Evolution*, 95-96.

The science–theology dialogue has often concentrated on matters closely related to the doctrine of creation. That is understandable, but it runs the danger of separating the dialogue from the message of salvation.¹⁵³

Haught’s theology interprets the history of biological evolution in light of hope, a vision of its future transformation. Evolutionary theology therefore proposes an enormous shift in our understanding of divine transcendence. Haught explains that God is not only ‘up above’, but also ‘up ahead’. Consideration of evolutionary processes helps theology recover a biblical sense of God as a giver of promises yet to be fulfilled. God comes into this world from the future and creates it anew from the future. In the evolutionary theology of Haught, God and God’s promise are regarded in terms of the ‘futuraity’ of being, rather than in terms of an immobile and eternal presence hovering ‘up above’. For him, this kind of understanding of God is not so much a qualitative change as a radical retrieval of forgotten biblical insights about God.¹⁵⁴

Haught’s ideas about the eschatological future bear the influence of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin.¹⁵⁵ Teilhard understood Christ as the pinnacle of evolutionary progress, the ‘Omega Point’.¹⁵⁶ For Teilhard, the evolutionary process is moving towards its consummation, Christ. He thought that God is the ultimate goal and source of the evolutionary processes in the world. It means that God focusses on the final promise, new creation. Teilhard’s central theses have been questioned by many scholars even of liberal and evolutionary theological leanings,¹⁵⁷ but his basic understanding of evolution can be correlated to the divine promise of Haught, which Haught himself recognises in developing Teilhard’s theological insights (Chapter 3:1).

However, Schaab points out two risks in the notion of God’s coming from the future:

¹⁵³ George L. Murphy, *The Cosmos in the Light of the Cross* (Harrisburg, PA.: Trinity Press International, 2003), 35.

¹⁵⁴ Haught, *Responses to 101 Questions on God and Evolution*, 50.

¹⁵⁵ I will explain Pierre Teilhard de Chardin’s theology and his effect on Haught in Chapter 3:1.

¹⁵⁶ Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man* (London: Collins, 1959), 293-94.

¹⁵⁷ Ian G. Barbour, *Religion and Science: Historical and Contemporary Issues* (New York: HarperOne, 1997), 247-49; Celia Deane-Drummond, *Christ and Evolution: Wonder and Wisdom* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2009), 36-40; McCalla, 265-66.

First, despite Haught's statements to the contrary, it devalues the present and the past that provide the limits and potentialities on which evolution and emergence depend. Second, it locates divine creativity in a future that some would contend has dubious ontological status in an evolutionary paradigm.¹⁵⁸

I find Schaab's critique of the notion of the arrival of God from the future is persuasive, and I will suggest a more detailed exposition of her critique and offer my own defence of it in chapter 3:3 ('A Metaphysics of the Future'). R. J. Berry, meanwhile, also disputes Haught's thesis, saying that creation should be understood as a gift rather than a promise: 'The Promised Land with everything needed for its inhabitants was a gift.... Creation is a gift; it is separate from God, rooted in history, and complete'.¹⁵⁹ However, Haught refutes Berry's argument in saying that God's promise is inseparable from God's self-gift.¹⁶⁰ I also think divine promise is one of the most significant gifts for all creatures that God gives.

In short, Haught insists that the reconciliation of science with religion can best be accomplished with the understanding that nature offers great promise in its sacred depths.¹⁶¹ Since evolutionary theology is closely related to the issues of suffering or pain in creation, it must include in-depth discussion about future promise or an eschatological hope for the whole universe. He calls the cosmic vision for the promise of the fulfilment of an Absolute future a 'metaphysics of the future'¹⁶² (Chapter 3:3). The temporal and spatial unfolding of a self-organizing world unceasingly moves through a field of promise. In respect of both the Bible and evolution, evolution accompanies promise, permitting believers to renew their hope for a final fulfilment in a new creation every day. When nature itself is regarded as promise rather than simply as design, the evidence of evolutionary biology appears to be not only consonant with faith, but also adds new depth to it. However, to the extent that creation is 'unfinished' it will inevitably involve a shadow side, namely, pain and suffering. This idea is connected with the very controversial issue of

¹⁵⁸ Schaab, "An Evolving Vision of God: The Theology of John F. Haught," 904.

¹⁵⁹ R. J. Berry, "The Lions Seek Their Prey from God: A Commentary on the Boyle Lecture," *Science & Christian Belief* 17, no. 1 (2005): 52-53.

¹⁶⁰ Haught, "True Union Differentiates: A Response to My Critics," 60.

¹⁶¹ Haught, *Deeper Than Darwin: The Prospect for Religion in the Age of Evolution*, 39.

¹⁶² Haught, *God after Darwin: A Theology of Evolution*, 90.

purpose or direction in evolution. So I will discuss these issues in detail in Chapter three.

(6) Evolutionary Science and Ecotheology

Pollution, climate change, ozone depletion, the poisoning of soil, air and water, and the loss of sources of freshwater threaten human and animal life. Environmental pollution has been discussed in various academic fields over the last five decades.

Present within such discussions, theologians started to focus on the interrelationship of theology and nature, and such widespread theological reflection on the relationship that human beings have with the earth is often called ecotheology. Since Lynn White Jr.'s well-known article 'The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis'¹⁶³ in 1967, ecotheology became an important field of theology. Although some scholars such as John Passmore¹⁶⁴ and Gerald Barney¹⁶⁵ argue that Christianity is incorrigibly anti-ecological, the Bible's creation theology and its injunction of sincere stewardship, along with the incarnational vision which endows human beings with a sacredness as creatures *of* the earth, provide substantial resources for an ecotheology.

Evolutionary theology likewise cannot escape the environmental issues that face us today because it is strongly linked with nature. Southgate claims that 'Uniqueness is given by God to humans in order to enable them to participate in God's saving purposes, not for their own status or for them to abuse'.¹⁶⁶ He suggests an eschatological ethic of Christian care for all creation based on the kenosis of Jesus and Romans 8:19–22.

According to Haught, Darwin's idea invites theology to consider the fact that we live in an unfinished universe. Evolution implies that creation is still occurring, with as much ontological, religious and moral significance as at its beginning. Haught remarks, 'An unfinished creation invites theology to extend our hope not just

¹⁶³ Lynn White Jr., *Science*, New Series, Vol. 155, No. 3767 (Mar. 10, 1967), pp. 1203-07.

¹⁶⁴ John Passmore, *Man's Responsibility for Nature* (New York: Scribner, 1974), 184.

¹⁶⁵ Gerald O. Barney, *Global 2000 Revisited: What Shall We Do?* (Arlington, Va.: Millenium Institute, 1993), xiv-xv.

¹⁶⁶ Southgate, "God's Creation Wild and Violent, and Our Care for Other Animals," 249.

to a heaven for humans hereafter, but ahead to a destiny that must somehow include the whole universe'.¹⁶⁷ His understanding of evolution brings out the ecological implications of a new awareness of living in an interconnected world.

For Haught, an evolutionary perspective expands our sense of God by making us perceive that divine care and providence extends to the whole cosmos. Evolution implies that humans are linked to the whole universe in a long-term process of becoming. For him, 'the fresh new sense of our "togetherness" with this cosmos provides our hope with a broad new horizon'.¹⁶⁸ Haught understands that evolution gives to human life a stronger meaning than ever of participation in the ongoing creative process of God. He also refers to promise as 'the culmination of the whole cosmic story, and not just of human history'.¹⁶⁹ In other words, Haught is not concerned only with the eventual fulfilment or destiny of human souls, but with that of the whole of creation.

Moreover, according to Haught, it is of special importance for ecotheology to take evolution seriously because stewardship in and of the world implies more than just caring for what has been present from the beginning. Stewardship means that 'we should nurture the process of creation so as to enable it to realize its inherent evolutionary potential for future unfolding'.¹⁷⁰ Haught believes that the Creator of this universe has a vision for it that exceeds human powers of calculation. One of the concluding positions that he reaches is that human destruction of life systems in the world is a strangling of its future evolutionary promise, a strangling which is sacrilegious and sinful.

Paul Helm criticises Haught's idea of cosmic promise, even though he does accept that the New Testament leads us to anticipate a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness based on 2 Peter 3:13:

Yet it is illegitimate (in my view) to relocate the idea of divine promise, which (though it permeates biblical literature) has chiefly to do with God's

¹⁶⁷ Haught, *Responses to 101 Questions on God and Evolution*, 48.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 51.

¹⁶⁹ Haught, *The Promise of Nature: Ecology and Cosmic Purpose*, 125.

¹⁷⁰ Haught, *Responses to 101 Questions on God and Evolution*, 49.

covenant of grace with Abraham and what follows from this, to the cosmos as a whole.¹⁷¹

Helm argues that there is no guarantee in Scripture for such an understanding of divine promise, nor any implication that entertaining the idea might be a profitable exercise. Again, however, Haught offers a rebuttal to Helm's argument, quoting Col. 1:17, 'all things hold together' in Christ. For Haught, God's word in the Bible often takes on undertones of promise, thus, he concludes that God's promise opens up the future to all of creation as well as to human beings.¹⁷² I think Haught's view is more persuasive, based as it is not only on the Bible but also on contemporary theologies such as process theology and ecotheology.

Maintaining that a major task of ecotheology is to ensure that looking toward the future 'coming of God' is a condition of ecological responsibility, Haught tries to connect evolutionary theology with ecology and eschatology. The benefits of this connection are as follows:

First, such an interpretation helps restrain the strong human temptation to worship or divinize either particular aspects of the natural world or the cosmic whole. And second, putting nature into an eschatological and evolutionary perspective allows us to accept realistically its limitations without letting these lead us to despair.¹⁷³

Haught's evolutionary theology effectively proves how evolutionary thought is related to ecology and eschatology.

(7) Summary

In this chapter, after defining what 'evolution' and 'evolutionary theology' are, I approached Haught's evolutionary theology from several angles: the evolution of life and a creator God, natural selection and divine providence, contingency, law, time and a transcendent personal God, cosmic evolution and divine promise, and finally evolutionary science and ecotheology.

¹⁷¹ Paul Helm, "Reflections on the Boyle Lecture," *Science & Christian Belief* 17, no. 1 (2005): 38.

¹⁷² Haught, "True Union Differentiates: A Response to My Critics," 60.

¹⁷³ Haught, *God after Darwin: A Theology of Evolution*, 163.

According to Haught, the claim that natural selection is in conflict with divine providence is indicative of an erroneous philosophical position known as ‘scientism’, and thus we should distinguish philosophical and theological language from scientific language. Divine providence is revealed as a ‘letting be’ that allows the universe to first come into existence and continue to be created in and through the actions and intentions other than those of God only. A Creator who made a self-organizing world is regarded by Haught as much worthier of our worship than a Creator who creates everything directly and makes them absolutely complete at the outset. Concerning the issues of nature’s openness to accident, the law of natural selection and the enormous time involved in the process of the evolution of organisms in the world, Haught argues that they are closely connected to theological ideas that portray God as humble, self-giving and promising love.

Haught also emphasizes divine promise in cosmic evolution. When nature itself is regarded as promise rather than as design, the evidence of evolutionary biology appears to add new depth to Christian faith as well as being compatible with it. Moreover, the evolutionary theology of Haught helps us to perceive that divine providence extends to the whole cosmos. It is important for ecotheology to take evolution seriously because stewardship in and of the universe on the part of creatures including human beings implies the ability of creatures to realise their inherent evolutionary potential in the future.

To sum up Haught’s theology of evolution, Darwin’s portrayal of the way the universe works is not contrary to Christian theology but rather invites us to think about God in a more meaningful and holistic way. For Haught, the God of evolution does not predetermine things in advance according to an eternal and immutable plan but shares with all creatures their own openness to an uncertain future. Haught says that ‘to avoid altogether the task of seeking out what the evolution of life means in terms of Christian faith is in my view a failure to embrace fully the doctrines of creation, incarnation and redemption’.¹⁷⁴ We should note that this does not mean that evolutionary theology gives us the final word about life and the cosmos. Haught thinks that Darwin’s vision is only a small piece of a much wider and still not fully manifested set of truths about the cosmos. His argument is that theology should take into account the well-grounded discoveries of biology, astronomy, geology,

¹⁷⁴ Haught, "True Union Differentiates: A Response to My Critics," 62.

palaeontology or any other science in presenting an integral vision of the truth about this reality.¹⁷⁵ Such a perspective will provide us with rich avenues for both scientific and religious exploration.

In the next chapter, I will explore Haught's evolutionary theology further by focusing on the problem of evil – Haught's 'evolutionary theodicy'. Haught's evolutionary theology (Chapter 2) and his thoughts on evil (Chapter 3) will be readdressed in the light of Zhuangzi's Daoist thought in the comparison part of the thesis (Chapters 6, 7 and 8).

¹⁷⁵ Haught, *Responses to 101 Questions on God and Evolution*, 63.

Chapter 3

The Problem of Evil and Theodicy in Haught

In discussing the problem of evil and theodicy in Haught, it is necessary to define relevant terms first: evil, sin and suffering.

St. Augustine (354–430) had thought that evil is simply the diminishing of the good to the point where nothing at all is left.¹⁷⁶ For him, evil is the ‘absence of being’ or the ‘privation of being’. Augustine also understood the problem of evil through the doctrine of original sin: ‘Original sins are said to be the sins of others for the reason that people derive them from their parents. But not without cause are they also called ours, since, as the apostle says, “in that one all sinned” (Rom. 5:12)’.¹⁷⁷ Augustine’s doctrine of original sin has been both supported and criticised by many scholars throughout Christian history, with modern theories of evil often being in stark disagreement over where and when evil originates.

Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646–1716) marked a milestone in theodicy in his claim that this is ‘the best of all possible worlds’,¹⁷⁸ attempting a division and classification of evils metaphysically, physically and morally. For him, metaphysical evil consists in mere imperfection, physical evil in suffering, and moral evil in sin.¹⁷⁹ The concept of ‘theodicy’ originated with Leibniz.

French Philosopher Paul Ricoeur (1913–2005) said of the notion of original sin:

[It is] Not that original sin is a gnostic concept; on the contrary, it is an anti-gnostic concept. But it belongs to the age of gnosis in the sense that it

¹⁷⁶ Augustine, *Confessions*, III. 7. 12.

¹⁷⁷ Augustine, “On Reprimand and Grace,” In *On the Free Choice of the Will, on Grace and Free Choice, and Other Writings* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 191.

¹⁷⁸ In *The Monadology*, Leibniz outlines a simple argument of ‘the best of all possible worlds’: ‘53. Now, as in the ideas of God there is an infinity of possible worlds, and as only one can exist, there must be a sufficient reason for the choice of God, which determines him to one rather than another. 54. And this reason can be no other than fitness, derived from the different degrees of perfection which these worlds contain, each possible world having a claim to exist according to the measure of perfection which it enfolds. 55. And this is the cause of the existence of that Best, which the wisdom of God discerns, which his goodness chooses and his power effects’. [Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz and F. H. Hedge, "The Monadology," *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 1, no. 3 (1867): 133.]

¹⁷⁹ Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, *Theodicy: Essays on the Goodness of God, the Freedom of Man, and the Origin of Evil*, trans. E.M. Huggard (Charleston, SC: BiblioBazaar, 2007), 139.

tries to rationalize the Christian experience of radical evil in the same way as gnosis set up as “knowledge” its pseudo-philosophic interpretation of primordial dualism, of the fall of Sophia, and of every other entity prior to man.¹⁸⁰

Ricoeur refuses to begin with original sin in talking about evil, and explains that ‘evil is supremely the crucial experience of the sacred’,¹⁸¹ that the threat of the dissolution of the bond between the human and the sacred makes people most intensely aware of the dependence that human beings have on the powers of the sacred. Ricoeur divides the symbol of evil into three: defilement, sin, and guilt. For him, the difference between defilement and sin is phenomenological rather than historical, and the category that controls the notion of sin is the category of ‘before’ God.¹⁸² It means that there is a prior Covenant which is significant for the development of the consciousness of sin, and a violation of such a Covenant comes to be known as sin. He goes on to explain the difference between sin and guilt: ‘Guilt designates the *subjective* moment in fault as sin is its *ontological* moment. Sin designates the real situation of man before God, whatever consciousness he may have of it... Guilt is the awareness of this real situation, and if one may say so, the “for itself” of this kind of “in itself”’.¹⁸³

The contemporary theologian David Bentley Hart claims that theodicy is both impossible and contemptible, for the reason that if we could identify why God permitted suffering and death in the world – reproducing what would amount to a divine plan – then God would not be omniscient because we would be attaining the same heights of ultimate knowledge as Him, and He would not be kind of God that views evil as a monstrosity in the world because evil would be merely regarded as a necessary instrument in bringing about a greater good. The familiar theory of a ‘greater good’, says Hart, is an abomination for those who suffer the worst kinds of

¹⁸⁰ Paul Ricoeur, *The Symbolism of Evil*, trans. Emerson Buchanan (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), 4-5.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 6.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, 50.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, 101.

horrors, prolonged, intractable and utterly pointless insofar as they cannot be justified in terms of moral character-building.¹⁸⁴ Hart writes:

Ours is, after all, a religion of salvation. Our faith is in a God who has come to rescue his creation from the absurdity of sin, the emptiness and waste of death, the forces – whether calculating malevolence of imbecile chance – that shatter living souls; and so we are permitted to hate these things with a perfect hatred.¹⁸⁵

Bearing in mind the varying definitions of evil by scholars in and throughout the Christian tradition as described above,¹⁸⁶ I will investigate the concept of evil, distinguishing between ‘natural’ and ‘moral’ instantiations. John Hick explains that natural evil is the evil that originates independently of human actions such as in disease, earthquakes, droughts and tornadoes, and moral evil is evil that human beings originate themselves, such as cruel, unjust and perverse thoughts and deeds.¹⁸⁷ Similarly, Layman classifies natural evil as ‘the suffering (and loss) due to non-human causes’, and moral evil as ‘the wrongdoing for which humans are responsible and the suffering (and loss) that results from it’.¹⁸⁸

Some theologians, such as David Griffin, follow different classifications: moral evil is used only for malevolent intentions and natural evil is used to refer to all forms of suffering.¹⁸⁹ In the latter classification, ‘sin’ is used as a synonym for moral evil, and natural evil means physical evil or the suffering which occurs within the realm of physical events, such bodily disease.¹⁹⁰

I will follow Hick’s classification of natural evil and moral evil even though this division is, admittedly, sometimes ambiguous when so-called ‘natural’ disasters arise

¹⁸⁴ David Bentley Hart, *The Doors of the Sea: Where Was God in the Tsunami?* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2005), 86.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 101.

¹⁸⁶ Stephen Layman defined evil into ‘badness in general, including such items as moral wrongdoing, suffering, loss, and being under systematic illusion about important matters’. [C. Stephen Layman, "Natural Evil: The Comparative Response," *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 54, no. 1 (2003): 10.]

¹⁸⁷ Hick, 12.

¹⁸⁸ Layman, 10.

¹⁸⁹ David Ray Griffin, *God, Power, and Evil: A Process Theodicy* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976), 28.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

from humans' wrong doing, such as flooding or landslides. Throughout this thesis, then, the term 'natural' will be used to refer to that 'existing or present by nature'¹⁹¹ and not as a result of human action.

When I divide evil into natural evil and moral evil, there are important things to be considered. First, I do not believe that natural phenomena – such as earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, hurricanes, tornados, tidal waves, mudslides, avalanches, diseases, and birth defects – are evil in themselves. Layman defines natural evil as the suffering and loss due to non-human causes.¹⁹² When I use the term 'natural evil' in this thesis, it does not refer to natural disasters directly but rather suffering or pain caused by them.¹⁹³

Mark Harris questions whether the category of 'natural evil' is internally coherent. He understands that speaking of 'natural evil' is 'to gather up the destructive and dangerous aspects of the natural world, label them with the theologically emotive category of evil, and pin the blame for them on God'.¹⁹⁴ He finds an ambiguity here that 'those very laws of nature which precipitate an unexpected earthquake killing thousands are the same laws which have provided stable, temperate and fertile landmasses for the flourishing of land creatures over millions of years'.¹⁹⁵ For Harris, then, natural processes cannot be 'evil' as some malevolent, freely willed human actions are 'evil'. Natural processes are, put simply, 'amoral', and therefore natural evil is a category best avoided.¹⁹⁶

That said, the suffering that occurs as a result of natural processes is the root and crux of the problem of evil, and though this category 'natural evil' is, as has been shown, very much debatable, I will use the term, at least for now, to initiate the conversation between Haught and Zhuangzi for the purpose of building an integral theodicy. I will also employ the term when referring to natural phenomena (death,

¹⁹¹ *Oxford English Dictionary*, Oxford University Press, 2015. (www.oed.com)

¹⁹² Layman, 11.

¹⁹³ Southgate uses the term 'evil' as 'connoting the suffering of sentient beings (both human and nonhuman), and the infliction of such suffering by conscious, freely choosing agents', conceiving theodicy in light of the suffering brought about by natural processes as 'cosmic theodicy'. [Southgate, "Cosmic Evolution and Evil," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Problem of Evil*, 147.]

¹⁹⁴ Harris, *The Nature of Creation: Examining the Bible and Science*, 149.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

disease, and natural disasters) in an East Asian religious context for purposes of continuity – this despite the fact that the writers in question (predominantly Zhuangzi and Laozi) would also not employ the term.

In this chapter, I will elucidate the thoughts of the evolutionary theologian John Haught on the problem of evil and theodicy. For context, I will first outline how theodicy is related to the wider theology of Haught; second, I will expound how evil is regarded in his evolutionary theology; finally, I will explore the evolutionary theodicy of Haught proper – how Haught aims to reconcile God’s existence with the existence of pain and suffering both moral and natural.

(1) Christian Theodicies related to Haught

Process Theodicy

Process theology considers God and nature in the light of ideas developed mainly by Alfred North Whitehead (1861–1947) who emphasised that *all* the cosmos is in a process of becoming. John Cobb, David Griffin, Marjorie Suchocki and Whitehead are well-known representatives of this perspective. To approach the problem of evil from the perspective of process metaphysics is called ‘process theodicy’. According to this idea, God is the eventual source of both the order and the novelty in the cosmos. That the world is in the process of becoming means that God is persuasive rather than coercive because it means that God did not merely fix all of creation according to His own designs in the beginning. It also means that God is interested not so much in maintaining the present order as in the novelty of the evolutionary process.

Process theodicy also tries to solve the problem of evil by acknowledging a restriction in divine power, or rather redefining omnipotence as it relates to immutability. Process theodicy regards random events in the cosmos as essential characteristics of the unfinished world. Without random events, the natural world would have been lifeless and mindless, and such a world would not be with the creation of a God who is always open to novel possibilities of becoming in the cosmos. Whitehead says:

The wisdom of subjective aim prehends every actuality for what it can be in such a perfected system – its sufferings, its sorrows, its failures, its triumphs, its immediacies of joy – woven by rightness of feeling into the

harmony of the universal feeling, which is always immediate, always many, always one, always with novel advance, moving onward and never perishing.¹⁹⁷

Every moment in evolution converges into the divine experience in an intensifying aesthetic pattern. All the sufferings, sorrows, failures, and triumphs in evolution are endowed with ultimate meaning. Anything that happens in the world can lead to the final beauty that is brought into being in the compassionate embrace of God. Therefore, apparent chaos in the evolving world is not to be identified with evil because ‘harmony requires the due coordination of chaos, vagueness, narrowness, and width’.¹⁹⁸

Process theodicy also tries to solve the problem of evil by a restriction in divine power. Any suffering in creation is also experienced by God, and creation itself is seen as cooperation between God and all creatures. Whether this cooperation takes place is thus up to humanity. In other words, God cannot force humans to do God’s will, but can only influence them. God does not have, and never has had, a monopoly on power. God cannot prevent natural disasters, atrocities like the Holocaust, or human disease. Although God is responsible for evil because God has created the world having the potential not only of great good but also of great evil, God is not *morally blameworthy* because ‘God always intends the good and always shares the suffering of the creatures in a world in which beauty and tragedy are interwoven’.¹⁹⁹

Process theodicy seems to reject God’s sovereignty and omnipotence, but Haught argues that persuasive power is more powerful than coercion if power means ‘the capacity to influence’.²⁰⁰ This is because God’s persuasive love can make a much more substantial, self-actualizing and autonomous world.

Process theodicy is one of the most important determining ideas for the evolutionary theodicy of Haught. Haught is convinced that process theology deals with the difficult problems of evolution more directly and efficiently than other theologies have, even though he does not accept all the ideas held by process

¹⁹⁷ Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology*, ed. David Ray Griffin and Donald W. Sherburne (New York: Free Press, 1978), 346.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 112.

¹⁹⁹ Daniel L. Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans, 1991), 112.

²⁰⁰ Haught, *Responses to 101 Questions on God and Evolution*, 138.

theologians.²⁰¹ Haught also claims that process theodicy can be more consonant with the Christian image of God as suffering love when it integrates the insights of evolutionary science within itself.²⁰²

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881–1955) was a French Jesuit and palaeontologist who pursued the Christian meaning of evolution during his lifetime. *The Human Phenomenon* (1955) is his most important book and his essays were published after his death: *The Future of Man* (1959), *Activation of Energy* (1963), *The Divine Milieu* (1957) and *Christianity and Evolution* (2002).

Teilhard's main ideas are that there is a clear direction to the evolving universe, that this direction consists in increasing organized complexity, and that the ultimate goal of this advance is referred to as 'Omega', Omega being God. For Teilhard, creation is a process of gathering the manifold strands of universal evolution into a final future unity. Teilhard relates his understanding of evil in the following:

A primary disorder cannot be justified in a world which is created fully formed: a culprit has to be found. But in a world which emerges gradually from matter there is no longer any need to assume a primordial mishap in order to explain the appearance of the multiple and its inevitable satellite, evil.²⁰³

For Teilhard, evil is not an unexpected accident in the world. '[Evil] is an enemy, a shadow which God inevitably produces simply by the fact that he decides on creation. New being, launched into existence and not yet completely assimilated into unity, is a dangerous thing, bringing with it pain and oddity'.²⁰⁴ In other words, creating the world is no simple task, but an adventure and a risk to which God completely commits himself.

Therefore, Teilhard's theodicy can be summarized like this: evolution means that the creation of God is not finished. If creation is unfinished, then we cannot

²⁰¹ Ibid., 135.

²⁰² Ibid., 139.

²⁰³ Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *Christianity and Evolution*, trans. René Hague (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1969), 83-84.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 84.

expect a perfect universe at present. An evolving universe unavoidably has a dark side,²⁰⁵ but we can also anticipate the ‘Omega Point’, the revealed universal Christ, i.e. the Christ of evolution: the end of evolution and the summit of creation.

Although Teilhard’s idea is criticized because of his focus on the good sides or aspects of evolution,²⁰⁶ his argument of evolutionary theodicy has had a great effect on Haught’s own theodicy. Haught emphasizes the direction of evolution and the importance of the future (I will explain these in detail in the following sections) and he does indeed have a high opinion of Teilhard, saying that Teilhard has emerged as the most important Christian thinker of the twentieth century and will permanently be a hero for those who believe that religion must get to grips with evolution.²⁰⁷

Hans Jonas

Haught is also influenced by the kenotic theology of Hans Jonas (1903–1993). Jonas was an eminent Jewish philosopher, and wrote a number of relevant books, including: *The Gnostic Religion: The Message of the Alien God & the Beginnings of Christianity* (1958), *The Phenomenon of Life: Toward a Philosophical Biology* (1966), *The Imperative of Responsibility: In Search of Ethics for the Technological Age* (1979), *Mortality and Morality: A Search for Good after Auschwitz* (1996).

Jonas thinks that theology should accept a scientific vision of the cosmos, that is, a spatially enormous and temporally prolonged universe, necessary in order to

²⁰⁵ The notion of a ‘dark side’ or ‘shadow side’ of evolution, supported by many evolutionary theologians such as Peacocke, Southgate, Tracy and Rolston, usually refers to the fact that pain, violence and suffering in evolutionary process are *inevitable* features in God’s creation of such a rich variety of life. This is often referred to as the ‘only way argument’ (Southgate’s term, see footnote number 236). However, Messer claims that this argument is contradictory to the biblical belief in an all-powerful and perfectly good God, and argues that the material world should be understood as God’s good creation, that the struggle for existence is not the most fundamental reality, and that God’s promised future is a deeper reality than the struggle for existence. [Neil Messer, "Natural Evil after Darwin," in *Theology after Darwin* ed. Michael S. Northcott and R. J. Berry (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2009), 139-54.] I will discuss this issue about the dark side in Chapter 7:3 ‘The Harmony Defence’ in detail.

²⁰⁶ Moltmann claims that Teilhard overlooked the ambiguity intrinsic to of evolution itself and did not pay attention to evolutionary victims (the weak and the unfit), such that Teilhard’s conception of evolution, Moltmann argues, contradicts the whole idea of evolution containing ‘universal reconciliation’. [Moltmann, *The Way of Jesus Christ: Christology in Messianic Dimensions*, 294.] Meanwhile, whether extinct creatures like dinosaurs are regarded as ‘victims’ of evolution is also controversial if we recognise that we do not experience what God experiences or know the contents of His mind. [Edwards, 36-37.]

²⁰⁷ Haught, *Responses to 101 Questions on God and Evolution*, 133.

allow life and mind to bring about. According to Jonas, mind can experience itself in the diversity of its possibilities only in the inexhaustible supply of chance, in the boundless play of the finite, in the suffering arising from mortality, and in the surprises of the unplanned.

At the same time, Jonas accepts that life and mind were intended by God, the primordial mind. God renounced himself in order to leave room for such an immense and protracted universe. Jonas writes that ‘the deity had to renounce His own power. Be that as it may, from then on things proceeded only in an immanent manner, with no further intervention of transcendence’.²⁰⁸

Jonas highlights divine non-interference in the ongoing evolutionary process. He points out, ‘Only a universe colossal in space and time, in accordance with the rule of mere possibilities and with no intervention of divine power, offered any chance at all for mind’s coming to pass at any time or place whatsoever’.²⁰⁹ The reason why he emphasizes divine non-intervention is that he wants to make room for a notion of God that would be consistent with horrendous events in history such as the Holocaust. A God who is impotent to the extent of being unable to affect the process of natural or human history beyond the initial creation, Jonas thinks, cannot be blamed for the contingent evils in the world. Therefore, God for Jonas is the One who relinquishes all power at the minute of creation and is hereafter helpless concerning the evil uses of human free will, unable to intervene. For Jonas, God sympathizes with all that occurs in the world and is thereby given a particular identity of a suffering God, the kenotic God.

Jonas’s theodicy is different from other evolutionary theologians, such as Peacocke, Haught and Harris in that he does not demand continuous interaction between God and the world during the process of evolution. I do not think that his conception of God actually serves to help those in the face of pain, however, for if God created the human beings with all our attendant sufferings but then as it were, relinquishes any power to influence what happens, then it seems that God is nothing other than a mad scientist who either cannot comprehend or does not care about the

²⁰⁸ Hans Jonas, *Mortality and Morality: A Search for the Good after Auschwitz* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1996), 190.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

consequences of his experiments – in this case, the creation of creatures with free will and consciousness, not only able to feel pain but experience it subjectively.

Jonas's theodicy has had an influence on the kenotic and 'letting be' ideas of Haught, but only up to a certain point. Although Haught emphasizes ongoing divine intervention in *creatio continua*, he acknowledges his kenotic theology is similar to Jonas's idea of God and evolution.²¹⁰ Jonas's theodicy leads us to think differently about theodicy after the Holocaust. As Haught points out, Jonas's theodicy seems to be attractive in justifying God in the face of evil, in virtue of the fact that God cannot be said to have 'permitted' or 'allowed' this particular horror to occur, but it cannot expound on how *subjectivity* emerges in the natural world at first.²¹¹ Moreover, Jonas's theodicy makes it harder for us to identify or anticipate a Christian hope for the future. Without God's continuous intervention, can creatures hope for future redemption? If God cannot influence the world or human lives in any way after its and their initial creation, how can we make sense of the eschatology so paramount in Christianity? This is the reason why Haught emphasizes the importance of the future in his theodicy (see below 'A Metaphysics of the Future').

(2) Haught on Evil

After having given a brief exposition of Christian theodicies related to Haught, I will now move to a theodicy specifically for a scientific age: evolutionary theodicy as developed by Haught. Haught raises insightful ideas in which to speak about the problem of evil in a scientific context while remaining steadfast to the Christian tradition.

Before expounding the evolutionary theodicy of Haught, in this section, however, I will examine how Haught understands original sin – still one of the important elements of Christian doctrine – and what evil means in his evolutionary theology.

²¹⁰ Haught, *God after Darwin: A Theology of Evolution*, 182.

²¹¹ According to Haught, a cosmos without any actual 'subjective' aspects prior to the appearance of life results in two insufficient ways of understanding the relationship between divine action and prebiotic process: 'A cosmic domain completely opaque to internal relationship with God would either have to be manipulated externally by the deity ... or ... God would be helpless to influence the world at all'. [ibid., 185.]

Original Sin

‘Original sin’, the Christian doctrine that people have inherited sin or a tendency toward sin from Adam, constitutes one of the principal challenges for Christians in harmonizing doctrine with evolutionary biology, especially in Western Christianity with its Augustinian heritage. What exactly original sin means has never been made perfectly clear. According to Augustine who coined the term ‘original sin’ (*peccatum originale*), it means a biologically-transmitted tendency to disordered desire and ignorance. Augustine says:

For we all were in that one man, since we all were that one man [Adam], who fell into sin by the woman who was made from him before the sin. For not yet was the particular form created and distributed to us, in which we as individuals were to live, but already the seminal nature was there from which we were to be propagated; and this being vitiated by sin, and bound by the chain of death, and justly condemned, man could not be born of man in any other.²¹²

Modern evolutionary biologists do not accept that the first man appeared fully formed at the beginning, along the lines of a literalist reading of Genesis. However, Augustine’s notion of original sin was long taken for granted by Western Christianity as the actual condition of the human being, and some evangelical Christians still claim that if evolutionary theory is true, there could have been no ‘Fall’ of humanity, which is apparently required for the doctrine of original sin, and in virtue of this that there is no necessity for a Saviour to save humankind from sin. For example, George McCready Price claimed, ‘No Adam, no Fall; no Fall, no Atonement; no Atonement, no Savior’.²¹³ In virtue of their philosophical and hermeneutical presuppositions, they deny evolution in order to preserve what they believe is core to Christian teaching.

Recent scholars have interpreted original sin to mean the present, general state of human estrangement from God, from each other and from the natural world – not resulting from a particular act committed by Adam and inherited therefrom, as

²¹² Augustine, *The City of God*, XIII.14.

²¹³ Ronald L. Numbers, *The Creationists* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 373.

Augustine held.²¹⁴ Harris points out that the writers of the Bible did not strongly assert the historical Fall except in Romans 5, and considerable reliance on the Fall originated from the dominance of Augustinian thought in Western theology.²¹⁵ According to Southgate, evolutionary history does not start with the story of sin and the Fall of human beings, rather its history is that of millions of years in which the bright and shadow sides of creation coexist together²¹⁶ – in moral consciousness, selfishness and generosity, malevolence and forgiveness.

I think that it is barely possible to posit a historical Adam while accepting the main theses of evolutionary biology, without contradicting traditional Christian belief. It seems that something needs to give, if we are to reconcile modern scientific views of the world with the biblical view of the world (according to its most essential meanings, or spirit, if not to the literal letter). Evolutionary theologians, then, can only suggest the best plausible alternatives, choosing among different emphases in their interpretations of biblical narratives and the exigencies imposed upon thought by modern science.

Haught tries to harmonize the idea of original sin and modern evolutionary biology. He first presupposes that fundamentalists' interpretation of sin and redemption is immensely shallow. For Haught, evolutionary biology only contradicts a superficial biblical literalism, not the substance of Christian teaching concerning sin and redemption.

Haught argues that evolutionary science cannot and should not be reconciled with a literal reading of the story of Adam and Eve.²¹⁷ For him, Augustine's literal interpretation of original sin, the genetic flaw inherited biologically (seminally),

²¹⁴ Another possible interpretation of recent scholars goes like this: The Fall is the theological name for the beginning of human consciousness. The story of the Garden of Eden could be regarded as an aetiology of the human conscience, where Adam and Eve's eating of the tree of knowledge is the moment of awakening. Even though humans must have previously committed a lot of selfish acts, the Fall appeared in the evolving world when they first felt guilt about their bad behaviour.

This evolutionary interpretation of the Fall solves the scientific problems of the traditional model, but it appears that Christ is somewhat unnecessary because it does not regard the Fall as a fatal mistake that is only able to be redeemed by Christ. I think that this idea also brings up these questions: How is it that human ancestors could suddenly have a sense of guilt and responsibility? How can this be made into a coherent view concerning moral realism? There is no responsibility for immorality if immorality is just an evolutionary function, no need for a Saviour.

²¹⁵ Harris, *The Nature of Creation: Examining the Bible and Science*, 143-45.

²¹⁶ Southgate, "Re-Reading Genesis, John, and Job: A Christian Response to Darwinism," 383.

²¹⁷ Haught, *God after Darwin: A Theology of Evolution*, 146.

misses deeper meanings intrinsic in biblical stories about our origin. He therefore tries to find underlying meanings rather than the superficial, and that deeper meaning for Haught is the turning away of human beings from God.

First of all, Haught attempts to understand original sin from an ‘aesthetic-evolutionary’ perspective. He explains, ‘Original sin consists of all the forces that lead us away from participation in this most essential and vitalizing pursuit (maximizing beauty)’.²¹⁸ Note the dynamism in Haught’s definition. Based on his view, original sin does not denote actual disordered acts or intentional neglect; rather it implies the difficult situation that has been prevalent as a result of the humans’ callous disinterest in their creative mission in the world. Thus, Haught’s notion of original sin implies that we are conditioned by a whole history of evil as well as by what is life-affirming, simply on the ground of our being born into this changeable world.

Moreover, Haught suggests that original sin is not the reverse side of an unfinished universe being created. For him, original sin is ‘the aggregation in human history and culture of all of the effects of our habitual refusal to take our appropriate place in the ongoing creation of the universe’.²¹⁹ It is this sort of corruption by which humans are stained, not the defilement of an original cosmic perfection. Haught argues that there is the accumulated history of humans’ ‘Fall’, in a backward movement that is toward disunity, but past evolutionary achievement also provides a reason for having confidence that the forces of unity will be revealed to be victorious in the future. Evolution has brought about moral consciousness, civilisation, and religion that gives meaning in the cosmos where previously there was none.

In short, according to Haught, there is no contradiction between evolution and what he considers to be a more realistic notion of original sin, ‘the complex of social and cultural pressures that channel our native impulses in destructive directions’.²²⁰ His point is that an awareness of evolution may lead us to a deeper and more significant understanding of original sin than we had before, allowing us to avoid exclusivist dichotomies of fundamentalists on either side of the science and religion debate.

²¹⁸ Ibid.

²¹⁹ Haught, *Deeper Than Darwin: The Prospect for Religion in the Age of Evolution*, 175.

²²⁰ Haught, *Responses to 101 Questions on God and Evolution*, 82.

Haught's idea about original sin leads us to understand the inner meaning of original sin without conflict with evolutionary science. More importantly, by saying that the 'ideal' world is not a past paradise to which some Christians seek to return but the new creation of the Absolute Future,²²¹ not only does his idea not give up the necessity of future atonement and salvation, it also gives significance to present cosmic evolution. According to his argument, spiritual life can be shaped by expectation of what might be through the process of evolution, without being controlled by nostalgia for what has been lost.

However, Haught's idea can only explain original sin in terms of human beings' own moral evil in act and thought, and cannot explain the existence and experience of natural evil and suffering (such as predation, starvation, and extinction) in the pre-human world. Moreover, Haught does not connect original sin with evolution directly, focusing only on the inner meaning of original sin. In other words, he is not interested in the questions that evolutionary theologians have been trying to answer, such as when original sin materialised or where or how it originated.

The Refusal to Participate in the Ongoing Creation

In the evolutionary theology of Haught, God does not push the universe down a predetermined path or according to a certain trajectory, but compassionately persuades the world to shape itself toward ideal forms of order. However, the universe does not always respond fully to God's persuasion, especially when it arrives at the human stage of its unfolding given the indeterminacy necessarily involved in freedom of the will. Therefore, the risk of evil remains and even becomes greater with the emergence of human freedom.²²² If so, how does human freedom cause evil, and how can evil be specifically defined in a world in which evolution is intrinsic to its processes?

Haught believes that sin or moral evil should be regarded as the consequence of the free submission on the part of human beings to the past and the past state of the world, whose ultimate unity has actually yet to be realised. In an unfinished universe, humans still exist as accomplices of evil and this complicity in evil is interpreted by

²²¹ Haught, *God after Darwin: A Theology of Evolution*, 148.

²²² Haught, *Responses to 101 Questions on God and Evolution*, 138.

Haught as their systematic refusal to take part in the world's continuous creation rather than as a cessation of primordial innocence. The creative process is one in which the naturally dispersed elements of an emerging cosmos are being drawn toward unity. Haught says:

Our own sin, then, is at least in some measure that of spurning the invitation to participate in the holy adventure of the universe's being drawn toward the future (the God-Omega) upon which it leans as its foundation. Here sin means our acquiescence in and fascination with the lure of the multiple. It is our resistance to the call of "being more," our deliberate turning away from participation in what is still coming into being.²²³

Haught's understanding of evil respects the traditional emphasis on humans' personal responsibility for evil. Moreover, based on process theology's interpretation, Haught understands evil as anything that obstructs the world's ongoing evolution as a world-in-the-making. This may include the obsession humans have with order (up to a certain point).

Haught identifies two forms of evil in an evolving universe.²²⁴ The first is the evil of disorder. For example, this is the evil caused by suffering, war, famine and death. The second is the evil of monotony. This means sticking to trivial forms of order, refusing to accept new things even when it is reasonable to do so. Because the acceptance of novelty may interfere with a present sense of order, Haught suggests that people set up walls around their cultural and economic lives so as to rule out what is fresh and different. So, the way to avoid the evil of monotony is risking substantial change, the potential evil of chaos.

Therefore, according to Haught, 'Whatever else we may understand by "sin", in an evolving universe it means our refusal to participate in the ongoing creation and renewal of the cosmos'.²²⁵ His understanding of sin suggests that some of the attitudes we considered holy at one time may now be revealed as abetting in monotony. He insists that reflecting on the notions of evil and sin in respect to

²²³ Haught, *Deeper Than Darwin: The Prospect for Religion in the Age of Evolution*, 175.

²²⁴ Haught, *Responses to 101 Questions on God and Evolution*, 141.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*

evolution helps us recover in a fresh way what the biblical prophets meant by justice and what Jesus meant by love.

(3) The Evolutionary Theodicy of Haught

According to evolutionary biologists, most of the species that evolution has produced, over ninety-nine percent, are now extinct. The extinction of species, with the necessary pain and suffering of creatures involved, seems to provide evidence against the goodness and wisdom of the Christian Creator God. Why has such suffering and waste existed throughout the millions of years of evolutionary processes? How can we understand all the suffering and loss lying under the surface of nature's present order?

In this section, I will examine how Haught understands this specific manifestation of the problem of evil engendered by evolution. First, Haught mentions creation as 'letting be'; second, he accepts that there is purpose or direction in evolution and refers to God's suffering with all creatures as 'divine kenosis', and finally, he develops an argument concerning a 'metaphysics of the future', providing eschatological hope.

Creation as 'Letting Be'

According to Haught, if God is intimately related to the world, we should expect an aspect of randomness or indeterminacy in nature. The reason is that love typically operates not in a coercive but in a persuasive manner. Love refuses to impose itself upon the beloved (all creatures in this context), but instead allows the beloved to freely remain themselves.²²⁶ This evolutionary portrait of nature implies that God somehow intends the world, in like manner, to 'become itself'.

God's creation as 'letting be' is understood by Haught as God taking the risk of allowing the cosmos to exist in relative liberty. The random variations or genetic mutations that compose the raw material of evolution are living proof of the world's inherent freedom.

²²⁶ Haught, *Science and Religion: From Conflict to Conversation*, 61.

However, the ‘freedom’ of evolution leaves room for evil and suffering. Haught understands the problem of suffering in evolutionary processes to be illuminated by the love of God. According to Haught, God reveals his love to the whole world in the way that He creates and maintains the world as ‘letting be’. If God is truly love, then this love would persuade the cosmos to reach beyond itself toward new modes of being rather than compel it to do so. If God is love, then it is natural that there is chance and indeterminacy in the world, including the random mutations that offer the material for evolution’s wasteful processes.²²⁷ A demand for a perfectly ordered universe is also, Haught reckons, an indirect demand that God should exercise a coercive kind of power over creation.

For Haught, the Christian God is the One who wishes to share creative life with all creatures. Such a God declines from the start any strict control over the process of creation, and regards all creatures as creative partners. Such a gracious self-denying love would be quite consistent with a world open to all the surprises in the process of evolution, and the suffering and struggle of life accompanying it. God cannot be anything other than a love that honours the freedom and spontaneity of the whole world. This implies there must be room for random events:

As the divine Love gives itself to creation, the world’s independence and freedom do not decrease but intensify. And when humans emerge in this most fascinating story, evolution becomes endowed with an unprecedented freedom and consciousness. But this freedom brings with it a capacity for sin. Faith in God, however, entails faith in redemption. Evil, suffering and sin can be conquered by new creation.²²⁸

For Haught, the divine love that allows all creation to ‘become itself’ gives unprecedented freedom to all creatures, and that freedom includes a capacity for sin. In other words, creatures bring about evil in the misuse of their freedom; evil does not emerge from God’s own will. If we understand evil and suffering based on this idea of Haught, we can conclude that the only sort of culpability that God has in the existence of evil is his endowing of such freedom to the whole of creation. Such freedom, even while it contains the possibility of the world falling into natural and moral evils, is an expression of God’s endless love. By analogy, we cannot claim that

²²⁷ Haught, *Responses to 101 Questions on God and Evolution*, 127.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, 128.

the inventor of electricity is morally blameworthy for fires or electric shocks just because these sometimes occur as a result of the misapplication of the flow of electric charge. We cannot, for example, blame Benjamin Franklin for the death of Thomas Merton, who died of electric shock when an electric fan fell into his bath.²²⁹

It often seems that Haught proposes an Open Theistic approach to divine knowledge, Open Theism affirming what is known by contemporary theologians to be the ‘great-making’ properties of omnipotence and omniscience, but redefining those terms for the purpose of acknowledging the radical unpredictability of human free will.²³⁰ God, for Haught, bears an analogical relationship to a kind of author that the writer George R. R. Martin calls a ‘gardener’, as opposed to that of the ‘architect’. The writer who is an architect plans every point of the development of the story before actually writing the story, thereby giving very little role to improvisation other than in specific scenes. The gardener, on the other hand, only has a very opaque idea of the kind of story that he or she will write, ‘planting’ the seeds at the beginning, letting the story write itself thereafter, with the assistance of vague hints and intuitions of what should come.²³¹

For Haught, then, God is not morally blameworthy for the evil and suffering caused by the evolutionary processes for God must have endowed creation with freedom that is by definition unpredictable. God is divine love, and is a creator of the whole cosmos, itself possessing boundless freedom.

We may question why natural selection – an important means of creation as ‘letting be’ – works blindly, indiscriminately and impersonally. Haught also raises

²²⁹ This analogy obviously implies a different conception of God’s omniscience, given that Benjamin Franklin discovered electricity *accidentally*, and its potential to harm or even kill was identified after the fact. This is contrary to the traditional conception of divine omniscience, in which God is claimed to know all possible events, all counterfactuals. According to Thomas Aquinas: ‘God knows all things; not only things actual but also things possible to Him and creature; and since some of these are future contingent to us, it follows that God knows future contingent things’. [Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I, 14, 13, co.]

²³⁰ The natural partner of ‘libertarianism’ in the free will debate (that being human free will is metaphysically absolute and that a free decision cannot have physical or psychological antecedents), Open Theism posits for human beings to be genuinely free and for God to be a God who respects that freedom as the highest value in the cosmos God cannot know counterfactuals of creaturely freedom. In a word, what a human being might freely decide to do is not a ‘fact’ and thus cannot logically be said to be *knowable* by God, even if omniscient. Open Theists claim that it is logically impossible for God to know counterfactuals of creaturely freedom. [William Hasker, *Providence, Evil, and the Openness of God* (London: Routledge, 2004), chap. 6.]

²³¹ Interview with George R. R. Martin, available via: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DDIZnKujSa4>, accessed 22/10/17.

the question of what life would be like today if evolution had preferred weak organisms rather than strong ones.²³² If this had been the way evolution proceeded, life would have listlessly disappeared from the earth long ago, and humans surely would not exist. In other words, there are no better alternatives than the law of natural selection, i.e. the world is operated by the best *possible* principle (natural selection) even though it *inevitably* causes pain, suffering and death.

Moreover, the laws of nature should be predictable in order that for nature not to collapse into utter caprice and chaos. Gravity is an important law of nature cosmologically, but it may be regarded as unfortunate for some people who happen to be falling from a dangerous height. Haught suggests that natural selection, then, is no more an obstacle to Christian theology than any other law of nature.²³³ Besides, Haught argues that, if God insisted on being in total control of things, the world would be a pallid and impoverished world. It would be devoid of all the drama, adventure, diversity, and intense beauty that evolution has actually produced. He says:

A world of human design might have a listless harmony to it, and it might be a world devoid of pain and struggle, but it would have none of the novelty, contrast, danger, upheaval, and grandeur that evolution has brought about over billions of years.²³⁴

A world devoid of pain and suffering is not all roses. For Haught, the grandeur and novelty of the cosmos is much more significant than pain and suffering, and is worth much more attention. We intuitively see the truth of this when considering the life of a moral exemplar who has undergone much pain. The focus is not so much on how much pain the person was able to endure, but rather the character that they were able to cultivate *in spite of* horrendous pain and suffering. As Haught says, ‘Since such [heroic] stories involve the narrative patterning of struggle, suffering, conflicts and contradictions into a complex unity, they stand out as one of the most obvious examples of beauty’.²³⁵ We must not isolate the pain and suffering that are intrinsic to evolution, but rather take them as necessary ingredients of the whole. Therefore,

²³² Haught, *Responses to 101 Questions on God and Evolution*, 104.

²³³ *Ibid.*, 104-05.

²³⁴ Haught, *Science and Religion: From Conflict to Conversation*, 62.

²³⁵ John F. Haught, *What Is God? How to Think About the Divine* (Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1986), 73.

we cannot assign blame to God for the pain and suffering involved in evolutionary processes in the theology of Haught. This idea seems to be similar to Leibniz's idea of the best of all possible worlds, and Southgate's 'only way' argument.²³⁶ However, people who are experiencing suffering may find little comfort in the explanation that this present state of the universe with all its pain and suffering, is a necessary constituent for its overall beauty or harmony.

Haught's idea about creation as 'letting be' may be possibly regarded as a sort of deism. The general idea that God refrains from direct intervention or direct providential ordering of the world in order for nature to be creative on its own course of evolution is seemingly identical to deistic notions of God and his relation to creation, a God who does not intervene with the functioning of the world but rather permits it to operate according to autonomous laws of nature.

Haught, however, demonstrates that God is not like the unnecessary and remote 'first cause' of deism because, for him, it is out of a personal eagerness to relate deeply to the world that God foregoes any direct presence to the world.²³⁷ Paradoxically, for him, God's withdrawal is not due to apathy but rather a most extreme form of involvement.²³⁸ Because God intends the evolving world to become more and more independent and to deepen its own sense of freedom, the 'absent' God is, contrary to appearances, united with the world by virtue of permitting it to achieve genuine autonomy.

Haught sets out to defend himself from accusations of deism, saying 'The divine Spirit is poured out into the world and is interior to the process of creation'.²³⁹ However, it is my recommendation that we understand divine action and the providential ordering of the universe differently: evolution itself is the process of God's continuous creation, the laws of nature being understood as channels whereby

²³⁶ Christopher Southgate accepts that the pain, suffering, death, and extinction are intrinsic to an evolving creation, and says, 'This was the only, or at least the best, process by which creaturely values of beauty, diversity, and sophistication could arise'. [Southgate, *The Groaning of Creation: God, Evolution, and the Problem of Evil*, 48.]

²³⁷ Haught, *God after Darwin: A Theology of Evolution*, 122.

²³⁸ Similarly, Polkinghorne says, 'Modern science, properly understood, in no way condemns God, at best, to the role of a Deistic Absentee Landlord, but it allows us to conceive of the Creator's continuing providential activity and costly loving care for creation'. [Polkinghorne, *Belief in God in an Age of Science*, 75.]

²³⁹ Haught, *Responses to 101 Questions on God and Evolution*, 119.

God is always creating. This does not contradict the idea of creation as letting-be. This not only emphasizes God's intervening in creation but is also consonant with evolutionary biology.

With further regard to God's relationship to the world, we can infer the relationship between God and creatures in Haught's thought by calling to attention God's will for creatures, purpose or direction in evolution and the divine kenosis, wherein God is present with the creatures, sharing their suffering. I will examine these themes in the following sections.

Purpose or Direction in Evolution

Another way that Haught approaches the problem of pain and suffering is to try to find purpose or direction in evolution. Haught believes that suffering may have a transformative quality, and says, 'if we frame the whole of nature within the scheme of hope and promise of resurrection, Christian faith allows the evolutionary process to be redemptive as well'.²⁴⁰ This would mean that if we become accustomed to the conviction that pain and suffering can lead to something higher, then we will not be shaken by the Darwinian picture of life.

Haught does attempt to explain why human beings are not able to *entirely* understand the ultimate purpose of the universe. Based on scientific ideas on the hierarchical structures of the laws of physics and chemistry, Haught suggests that creatures inhabiting lower levels do not always comprehend higher levels. He says, 'This principle insists that the higher comprehends the lower and dwells in it but is not capable of being grasped in a controlling way by the lower'.²⁴¹ Each level can only control what lies below it. In other words, humans would not be able to easily identify divine purpose in the universe. Therefore, for Haught, even if purpose in the universe is not obvious for humans, it does not follow that the universe is purposeless. Does Haught's epistemic position, that we cannot fully comprehend divine purpose in the universe answer Hart's criticism of theodicies, that were we to

²⁴⁰ Ibid., 123.

²⁴¹ John F. Haught, *The Cosmic Adventure: Science, Religion, and the Quest for Purpose* (Ramsey, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1984), 93.

know for certain why and how God permits evil and suffering, God's omniscience and omnibenevolence would be undermined?

Even though we may affirm the existence of purpose or direction in the universe, we may question why God would want a world that is not completed and perfected immediately, and why the universe has to evolve in the uncompromising and dramatic way that evolutionary biology claims it does. Haught answers that it might be because God wants all creatures to take part in the divine joy of creating novelty that the cosmos is left unfinished and is to some degree self-creative.²⁴² Moreover, for Haught, an initially perfect design would almost certainly imply the end of evolution before it even began, and would imply the end of creaturely aspiration and hope, given that human actions are always performed for some intended *potential* end, that is, *in principle* not yet in existence but is attainable. Were there a perfect universe, there would arguably be nothing left to live for. In Haught's words: 'Perfectionism is a sure way to close off the future and prevent the world and our lives from ever becoming new'.²⁴³ The God of Haught's theology encourages creatures to participate in the continuous creation of the universe.

Divine Kenosis

In stating his views on theodicy, Haught is first interested in how the sense of God 'as operative in actual religious awareness' is consonant with recent scientific views. In other words, the discourse about God's relation to the world must be closely related to the connotations of actual religious experience. This would imply seeking to understand the evolving world with regard to the outpouring of compassion and the corresponding meaning of world renewal associated with the 'Christ-event' – the crucified and risen Christ.²⁴⁴ Christians perceive the *kenosis* of God in the Christ-event as Paul explains it: 'who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but *emptied himself* (ἐκένωσεν), taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human

²⁴² Haught, *Science and Religion: From Conflict to Conversation*, 63.

²⁴³ Haught, *God and the New Atheism: A Critical Response to Dawkins, Harris, and Hitchens*, 107.

²⁴⁴ Haught, *God after Darwin: A Theology of Evolution*, 117-18.

form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death – even death on a cross’ (Phil. 2:6–8).

Some evolutionary theologians think of God as kenotic love when they examine the relationship between evolutionary science and theology. George Murphy says:

In natural selection God is not understood as a deity who forces millions of generations through suffering and extinction without himself being affected by the process, but rather as a God who participates in the processes and shares in the suffering and death of the world. The price for the development of life is paid not only by God’s creatures but also by God himself.²⁴⁵

Murphy applies the Christ-event to creation, and interprets suffering and death in nature in light of the kenosis of God. Southgate understands the notion of divine kenosis as both God’s permitting of processes that involve the co-existence or mutual arising of the unfit or weak *and* the fit or strong and God’s participation in the sufferings of the weak. Southgate also examines the notion of kenosis in the light of the Trinity: ‘The Father whose self-abandonment begets the Son, the Son whose self-emptying gives glory to the Father, these in the power of the Spirit give rise to living selves’.²⁴⁶

Similarly, Haught argues that Christian theology should inquire into how evolution might be reasonable when it takes place in a universe formed by God’s kenotic compassion, and tries to answer the problem of evil and suffering with respect to divine kenosis. Haught believes that ‘only the notion of God as self-emptying love makes sense after Darwin’,²⁴⁷ and many scholars in science and religion have supported this view.²⁴⁸ This is the God who suffers along with all creatures and saves them by taking all of their evolutionary pain and triumph into the

²⁴⁵ George L. Murphy, "Cosmology, Evolution, and Biotechnology," in *Bridging Science and Religion*, ed. Ted Peters and Gaymon Bennett (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2003), 211.

²⁴⁶ Southgate, *The Groaning of Creation: God, Evolution, and the Problem of Evil*, 59.

²⁴⁷ Haught, *Responses to 101 Questions on God and Evolution*, 124.

²⁴⁸ For example, Barbour, Peacocke, Southgate, Deane-Drummond, Rolston III and Moltmann maintain the kenotic love of God. [Ian G. Barbour, "God's Power: A Process View," in *The Work of Love*, ed. John Polkinghorne (Mich. ; Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2001); Peacocke, "The Cost of New Life," in *The Work of Love*; Southgate, *The Groaning of Creation: God, Evolution, and the Problem of Evil*; Deane-Drummond, *Christ and Evolution: Wonder and Wisdom*; Rolston, "Kenosis and Nature," in *The Work of Love*; Moltmann, *The Crucified God: The Cross of Christ as the Foundation and Criticism of Christian Theology*.]

continuous divine compassion. The struggle and pain in evolution are in consonance with a Christian interpretation of the world with regard to the cross of Christ; for Christians, all suffering in the world is transformed because of Christ. Evil is no longer meaningless and suffered alone, but redeemed and shared by Christ. Christ can be seen in those who suffer.

Haught claims that this is not a God that evolutionary theology just created to accommodate Darwin. This is the empathetic God revealed in the Bible: the God of Israel who shared the pain of the oppressed in Egypt, the God who identifies with the crucified Jesus, and the God that Christian faith hoped in long before scholars discussed nature's evolutionary birth pains.²⁴⁹

The suffering of the innocent and the weak in evolution is indivisibly united with the divine eternity. For Haught, Christian theology cannot allow a deity who simply creates and then abandons the world. The same God who creates the world to evolve by its own means is also intimately engaged in and with the evolutionary process. He says, 'God struggles along with all beings, participating in both their pain and enjoyment, ultimately redeeming the world by an infinite compassion – so that in the end nothing is ever completely forgotten or lost'.²⁵⁰ Darwin's evolutionary ideas can lead Christian theology to a new sense of God, more in touch with the whole of creation than previous Christian ideas of God.

In the evolutionary theodicy of Haught, the passion and resurrection of Jesus mean that God fully shares the pain and suffering of this world. Haught says, 'The self-emptying God of religious faith does not stand aloof from evolution, but enters into it, taking all of its suffering and creativity into the divine life'.²⁵¹ In other words, the suffering of living beings is not in vain – does not dissipate – in virtue of an isolation from God, but becomes an important part of God's continuous work, which is, as we previously said, analogous to a novel which has not been meticulously planned beforehand, but which is being written even while the events in the story unfold. In virtue of the encompassing context of the infinite compassion of God, all the suffering of the world will be carried away and the redemption of whole creation will be finally accomplished. Therefore, for Haught, the real obstacle to reconciling

²⁴⁹ Haught, *Responses to 101 Questions on God and Evolution*, 124.

²⁵⁰ Haught, *Science and Religion: From Conflict to Conversation*, 69.

²⁵¹ Haught, *Responses to 101 Questions on God and Evolution*, 102.

faith and evolution is not the pain and suffering in the world, but our failure to have acquainted ourselves fully with the astonishing image of a God who pursues the world's freedom as the highest value and who shares in the world's suffering.²⁵²

According to Haught, a vulnerable love of God allows the world to experience its own internal power of self-creativity. In contrast, coercive power can never substantially and positively affect beings from within, only superficially affect them from without. God's power is revealed most fully in His self-emptying empowerment, not in coercive power.²⁵³ Thus we can say that evolutionary science helps us to give up tyrannical images of God as a mere monarch, ordering His creation to perform according to His own whims.

For Haught, God's kenosis is the paradigmatic instance of relational power. Even though Berry claims that the extent of kenosis has limits, due to the obvious exhibition of Jesus' authority over natural forces (winds and waves) in the Gospels,²⁵⁴ Haught refutes him, believing that this is a misconception of divine kenosis: 'kenosis should be understood to mean that there are no limits to the outpouring of divine love, and love should never be associated theologically with weakness'.²⁵⁵ Haught's view is that God, by his nature, does not intrude into the world in the manner of dictatorial power, and therefore that neither God's kenosis nor his power, which can only be properly understood in reference to His love, is to be judged according to exhibitions of brute power (as with Christ controlling the Sea of Galilee). Again, for Haught, to talk of God's power is to talk of 'relational power'. This relational power is positive rather than negative, that is, indicative of immeasurable strength rather than indicative of impotence, and is clearly implied by the central Christian doctrines and narratives of, for example, finding freedom in slavery to God, and life in death. Kenosis, signified most clearly by God's own positive self-giving of himself on the Cross, then, is not to be confused with weakness other than the heroic weakness intrinsic to selflessness and sacrifice. Haught is persuasive in arguing that God's intimate relationship with the cosmos implies that He is also affected by everything occurring in the world.

²⁵² *Ibid.*, 127.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, 115.

²⁵⁴ Berry, 45.

²⁵⁵ Haught, "True Union Differentiates: A Response to My Critics," 65.

Not everybody agrees over Haught's conception of divine kenosis, however. First, the concept of kenosis in Philippians 2:7 was not, presumably, introduced in order to point out the Creator's self-limitation to permit the rivers of blood inevitable in nature as 'red in tooth and claw', as Peters argues:

Rather than identify kenosis with divine self-limiting to permit suffering and death, it would be better to say that in the incarnation God limits his eternity to enter into time, limits his infinity to become finite, limits his divine life to enter into creaturely death, limits self to ingress into the other. The theology of the cross points to a present God who is at one with our weakness, not to an absent omnipotent God.²⁵⁶

According to Peters, 'divine identification with the unfit' is the key that unlocks the door to eternal life because God becomes one with the unfit – the weak, destitute and marginalised – on the cross. Celia Deane-Drummond also claims that the image of God should be that of a co-suffering creator who identifies with the victims of evolutionary processes rather than the process itself.²⁵⁷ However, Haught seems to connect the notion of kenosis with God's allowing suffering and pain in creation even while He permits them in order for His creatures to achieve a deeper autonomy. As Peters and Deane-Drummond mentioned, divine kenosis is better understood, without contradicting Christian doctrine, when it is understood as divine participation in creatures' suffering rather than God's permission of suffering for the autonomous self-creation by those creatures. I do not think that Haught explicitly considers divine kenosis to be mere permission of suffering, for he argues for the existence of God who suffers with creatures as I expounded above. That said, Haught could make his position clearer so as not to risk identifying kenosis with mere permission of suffering in creation.

Now, we should also consider another issue, which is that if God is in intimate relationship with creatures in virtue of divine kenosis, how does God build a relationship with the fittest, those who survive without much suffering in the natural world? If evolution is a theory and narrative of the fittest creatures surviving best and 'God's creative Spirit is the ultimate explanation of evolution',²⁵⁸ we may infer from

²⁵⁶ Peters, "Constructing a Theology of Evolution: Building on John Haught," 932.

²⁵⁷ Celia Deane-Drummond, *Creation through Wisdom: Theology and the New Biology* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2000), 236.

²⁵⁸ Haught, *Responses to 101 Questions on God and Evolution*, 119.

this that the fittest are the ones intended by God to maintain and perpetuate His creation in progression. How are the fittest and the God-who-was-crucified-and-resurrected for the *unfit* related? If God is an ever-active creator in the process of evolution, his salvific designs should focus on the fittest that adapt themselves to the process rather than on the unfit. Many evolutionary theologians as well as Haught overlook this contradiction. The Christian God, of course, is a saviour for the whole world, and it is natural that the unfit have a place in God's salvific mission. But then what does His crucifixion and resurrection mean for the fittest? If we primarily apply the Christ-event to only God's suffering with and for the unfit, we may overlook matters about the salvation of the fittest.

It is impossible that divine kenosis should clearly explain or resolve the problem of evil with reference to evolution. Like Hart, Murphy argues, 'The only real Christian theodicy is the passion of Christ. This is not an explanation of evil but a claim that God suffers *with* the world from whatever evil takes place.... The world's pains are God's stigmata'.²⁵⁹ Haught also acknowledges that there is no easy theoretical solution to the problem of suffering, but he nonetheless hopes for final consolation: '[God] will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away' (Rev. 21:4). This eschatological vision will be made manifest for the whole of creation and not just for humans. By regarding evolutionary suffering as God's own suffering, Haught hopes for an eventual victory of love and life over pain and death, even though people initially cannot comprehend why suffering is so prevalent.

A Metaphysics of the Future

The metaphysics of 'being' in which Plato and Aristotle were interested was adopted in Christian theology, and it still shapes the intellectual setting of Western religious thought. However, due to the development of new evolutionary ideas from the eighteenth century onwards, the notion of 'becoming', of permanent or unceasing movement or change returned to the fore of Western intellectual life, after having had only brief hints of interest after Heraclitus.

²⁵⁹ Murphy, *The Cosmos in the Light of the Cross*, 87.

In the evolutionary theology of Haught, the future is paramount. He claims that the novel possibilities that evolution has available to it derive from the imminent and *immanent* arrival of the future. The persistent coming of an unrehearsed future enables both the present and the past to open onto a path of transformation, the novelty that is manifested in evolution.²⁶⁰ Haught calls this a ‘metaphysics of the future’, and explains:

A metaphysics of the future is rooted in the intuition, expressed primordially in the biblical experience of what is ‘really real’, that the abode of ultimate reality is not limited to the casual past nor to a fixed and timeless present ‘up above’. Rather, it is to be found most characteristically in the constantly arriving and renewing future.²⁶¹

Haught’s vision of the future can properly accommodate both the data of evolutionary biology and the claims of Christianity about how a promising God relates to the world.

Obviously, Haught is not the only one who focuses his theology on the future. Teilhard de Chardin claims that only a God who is functionally and totally ‘Omega’ can satisfy us. For Teilhard, evolution occurs because the world is drawn into God, and God-Omega is the ultimate end of evolution (Chapter 3:1).

Since Teilhard de Chardin, many theologians, such as Moltmann,²⁶² Rahner,²⁶³ Pannenberg²⁶⁴ and Peters,²⁶⁵ have emphasized the importance of the future in their respective theological systems. Moltmann expresses the significance of eschatological future in Christianity:

Hence eschatology cannot really be only a part of Christian doctrine. Rather, the eschatological outlook is characteristic of all Christian proclamation, of every Christian existence and of the whole Church. There

²⁶⁰ Haught, *God after Darwin: A Theology of Evolution*, 94.

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 94-95.

²⁶² Jürgen Moltmann, *Experiment of Hope*, trans. Douglas Meeks (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), 48.

²⁶³ Karl Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, trans. Karl and Boiface Kruger, vol. 6 (Baltimore: Helicon, 1969), 59-68.

²⁶⁴ Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Faith and Reality*, trans. John Maxwell (London: Search Press, 1977), 58-59.

²⁶⁵ Ted Peters, *God - the World's Future: Systematic Theology for a Postmodern Era*, 2 ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000).

is therefore only one real problem in Christian theology, which its own object forces upon it and which it in turn forces on mankind and on human thought: the problem of the future.²⁶⁶

In the evolutionary theodicy of Haught, the past is gone and is irretrievable, and the present disappears before we can see it, slipping through our fingers as we try to grasp it. The future is always arriving with the possibility of new being. Haught believes that what has already been entrusted to the past is not itself enough to express the novelty of evolutionary events. So only in the future (or in reference to the future) can reach the eventual source from which new species of life originate.²⁶⁷ For Haught, the future endows new meaning to a world which appears hopelessly lost and even unreasonable in the present arbitrariness of events and the prevalence of suffering. The hope for future redemption can be an answer to the problem of suffering and evil.

But how do we know that cosmic processes ultimately lead to meaningful outcomes? Haught answers that we do not know because the ambiguity of an unfinished world remains. Because of the fact that we live in a still unfinished universe, we must always rely on trust rather than clear vision. Haught believes that there would be no room for doubt in God's goodness or purposes in a finished or perfected world.²⁶⁸ We can walk by faith and not by sight because our status is as part of a world still in the process of being created.

Therefore, theodicy after Darwin is best understood as new creation with eschatological hope. As Paul says in Romans 8, our hope is for liberation from suffering and the renewal of the whole cosmos, not just the salvation of human souls. In the evolutionary theodicy of Haught, the suffering and pain necessarily involved in evolutionary processes will disappear in the future as a result of the consummation of creation.

I think that Haught's idea on 'a metaphysics of the future' is a plausible approach to the problem of evil, but it is not free from criticism.

²⁶⁶ Jürgen Moltmann, *Theology of Hope: On the Ground and the Implications of a Christian Eschatology*, trans. James W. Leitch (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, [1967] 1993), 16.

²⁶⁷ Haught, *God after Darwin: A Theology of Evolution*, 98.

²⁶⁸ Haught, *Responses to 101 Questions on God and Evolution*, 129.

First, the theory of ‘a metaphysics of the future’ essentially consists in casting the dice on the uncertain future. We do not know the future in any degree of certainty whatsoever, but, in light of faith, must believe that the future is one in which we can hope. Haught’s view, then, also invites doubt about the future eschatologically, and it must be restated that the promised future compensation of pain and suffering in the world cannot reduce the present experience of such by humans here and now, despite conscious affirmation of Christian belief and doctrine. The problem of evil, whether on a subconscious or conscious level, remains. Haught’s view may be regarded as an uncritical natural optimism for a stronger doctrine of providence, as Alister McGrath argues.²⁶⁹

Second, as Schaab mentioned,²⁷⁰ Haught’s theology may depreciate the present and the past that provide the potentialities on which evolution depends. Again, the pain and suffering that is experienced is invariably experienced by persons *now*. How can we say God is working in creation? To emphasize the imminent and immanent new creation too strongly may lead to the emptying of divine significance in this creation, for if God no longer plays a part in the development of the world or in human events, then why is God important for us now? In addition, if the emphasis is on the future to the extent that the future absorbs and transforms all that went before, can the so-called ‘past’ actually be significant at all? Indeed, it seems that Haught also views time as something of an incessant ‘push’ to the future, both metaphysically and phenomenologically. Can the past or present really be said to be real on this basis?

Third, the evolutionary theology of Haught pursues the conversation between theology and science, but whether an eschatological future, called the new creation, can be explained or accommodated by evolutionary creation is unclear. To be persuasive, a conception of the new creation should not be qualitatively different to continuous creation in regard to divine intervention. If God intervenes ‘naturally’ in continuous creation (i.e. the evolutionary process), a supplementary explanation is needed for the new creation, one that accommodates the possibility that God seems to intervene ‘supernaturally’.

²⁶⁹ Alister McGrath, "A Blast from the Past? The Boyle Lectures and Natural Theology," *Science & Christian Belief* 17, no. 1 (2005): 32.

²⁷⁰ Schaab, "An Evolving Vision of God: The Theology of John F. Haught," 904.

Finally, it seems that evolutionary theologians, in virtue of the fact that they put more weight on the eschatological future, downplay the *objective* atoning significance of the cross. And this seems to apply to Haught. So we are left with this question: How does the future salvation of all reality – and not just human beings in a state of sin – relate to the atonement of the cross? In Christianity, the Christ-event on the cross acquires objective importance as much as the future promise, or perhaps more, because the Incarnation, according to Christian belief, makes the future intelligible in the first place.²⁷¹ Evolutionary theologians should therefore clarify the relationship between the atonement of the cross and the future salvation of the evolving universe at large.

(4) Summary

In this chapter, I provided an exposition of Haught's thoughts on the problem of evil and his conception of theodicy in light of evolutionary theory. In the first section, I briefly summarized Christian theodicies related to Haught: process theodicy and the ideas of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin and Hans Jonas. In the second section, I expounded what evil is in the evolutionary theology of Haught. We saw that Haught understands original sin as humanity's habitual refusal to take its appropriate place in the ongoing creation of the universe, and this understanding helps us to comprehend the inner meaning of original sin without conflict with evolutionary science. Haught divided evil into two forms: the evil of disorder (caused by suffering, war, famine and death) and the evil of monotony (refusing to accept new things).

In the third section, I explored the evolutionary theodicy of Haught in its four aspects: creation as 'letting be', purpose or direction in evolution, divine kenosis and a metaphysics of the future. For Haught, the divine love that permits all creation to 'become itself' gives unprecedented freedom to all creatures, and that freedom includes a capacity for evil. Haught also argues that God wants all creatures to participate in the divine joy of creating novelty, and this is why God would want a world that is not completed and perfected immediately. Moreover, for Haught, the passion and resurrection of Jesus mean that the self-emptying God fully participates

²⁷¹ The Pauline perspective helps here (although many Protestants, with their emphasis on the atoning powers of the cross, overlook it), since he sees the whole Christ-event of cross and resurrection as pointing to the new creation which constitutes human salvation. In other words, humans are not saved yet, according to Paul, and will not be until the last day.

and shares the pain and suffering experienced in this world. Finally, Haught believes that theodicy after Darwin is best understood as new creation with eschatological hope, and calls this idea a ‘metaphysics of the future’.

To sum up Haught’s evolutionary theodicy: Darwin’s idea of evolution leads Christian theology to penetrate more deeply into the fundamentals of the Christian faith. Haught thinks that the Christian faith already implies something like the Darwinian picture of life. Paradoxically, God’s creative power becomes known precisely in such a self-effacing relationship to His creatures. God’s creative power would become clear in such a self-effacing fashion. The idea of an almighty God who is untouched by the world’s suffering is hard to harmonize with Christology. Moreover, Haught’s vision of the future can accommodate both the data of evolutionary biology and the claims of Christianity, even though it does have the unresolved problems mentioned above. Therefore, for Haught, an evolutionary theological understanding of the problem of evil is the most plausible theodicy in a scientific age.

The most pressing issue for Haught’s theodicy is how understanding evil on the intellectual level (its causes and solutions) can be applied to the personal and emotional level, that, to the experience of pain and suffering. Not only Haught’s theodicy but many Christian theodicies still face the same problem. I hope to address this most serious concern by a thorough dialogue between Haught’s evolutionary theology and the Daoist philosophy of Zhuangzi in the comparison part of the thesis (Chapters 6, 7 and 8).

PART II. THE DAOIST PHILOSOPHY OF ZHUANGZI

In Part I, I explored the evolutionary theology of John Haught. I expounded how evolutionary science and Christian theology can be harmonized in Haught in chapter 2, and the problem of evil and theodicy of Haught in chapter 3.

Now we move to Part II, the Daoist philosophy of Zhuangzi. I will examine Daoism and Zhuangzi's philosophy in general in chapter 4, and Zhuangzi's conception of evil in chapter 5. These two chapters will present information about the Daoist philosophy of Zhuangzi for the purpose of comparative study between the evolutionary theology of Haught and the Daoist philosophy in Zhuangzi in Part III, for the wider purpose of developing a comprehensive Christian theodicy.

Chapter 4

Daoism and Zhuangzi's Philosophy

Daoism consists in a number of indefinable characteristics and diversities. The difficulty of defining the notion of 'Dao' is shown in the main Daoist text, the *Daodejing*, beginning with this passage: 'The Dao that can be told of is not the eternal Dao'²⁷² – to select only one translation of this enigmatic verse. In addition, 'Dao' has been used in many religions in China in virtue of its many possible shades of meaning. Daoism not only has obscure beginnings, multiple scriptures and denominations, it is also mixed with other religions such as Confucianism and Buddhism in beliefs and practices. Thus we can agree with Herrlee Creel's saying: 'I shall not be so foolish as to try to propound a single, sovereign definition of what Taoism is'.²⁷³ Creel claims that Daoism is a conglomeration of doctrines rather than a school of thought. Joachim Gentz refers Daoism as 'the most complex and indefinable of the great religious traditions in China'.²⁷⁴

Keeping in mind this basic understanding of Daoism as a religion or way of life, I will explore Daoism and Zhuangzi's philosophy in this chapter. To begin with, I will examine in detail what Dao and Daoism are, and next, the Daoist philosophy of Zhuangzi, as the successor of Laozi in the development of early, 'philosophical' Daoism. Finally, I will try to compare the notions of Dao in Daoism and God in Christianity with specific regard to these topics: Ultimate Reality as the origin and provider of all beings, the transcendence of Dao and God, the omnipresence of Dao and God, the incomprehensibility of Dao and God, and the personal and impersonal characterisations of Dao and God. This chapter will provide the basic information about Daoism needed for comparative study between Daoism and Christianity.

²⁷² *Daodejing*, chap. 1. (道可道非常道.) own translations when another translation is not cited.

²⁷³ Herrlee Glessner Creel, *What Is Taoism? And Other Studies in Chinese Cultural History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 1.

²⁷⁴ Joachim Gentz, *Understanding Chinese Religions* (Edinburgh: Dunedin Academic Press, 2013), 70.

(1) What are ‘Dao’ and ‘Daoism’?

Daoism is both a philosophical and religious tradition that originated in ancient China from around the 6th to the 4th century BCE. Daoism has influenced Chinese life and thought ever since, in conjunction with other faiths and philosophical systems: Confucianism, which also originated in China at the same period as Daoism, and Buddhism, which came to China from India around the second century CE. Daoism spread amongst East Asian countries such as Korea, Vietnam and Japan. While Daoism may not be a popular religion in East Asia today, it has had a strong influence on all aspects of society, from ethics, medicine, literature and martial arts.²⁷⁵

Daoism has traditionally been divided into two discrete traditions: philosophical Daoism and religious Daoism. Daoism generally gives preference to obscurity and relates its teachings in parables and riddles. As a religion, Daoism is esoteric and many of its secrets are open only to the initiated.²⁷⁶ The root ideas of both traditions emerged from the *yijing* (易經), or the Book of Changes, which is approximately 2,900 years old. The *yijing* is both a summary of ancient Chinese cosmology and a manual for rulers predicated upon its cosmology, presented in two principles essential to Daoism: the positive (*yang*) and negative (*yin*).

It is upon this foundation that philosophical Daoism emerged. The first of the two foundational texts of philosophical Daoism is the *Daodejing* (The Book of the Way and its Power). Traditionally ascribed to Laozi, the origin of the *Daodejing* and the date of its compilation have been much disputed.²⁷⁷ As such, it is also often referred to simply as the *Laozi*.

²⁷⁵ Paula Hartz, *Daoism*, 3rd ed., *World Religions* (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 2009), 8.

²⁷⁶ Küng and Ching, 131.

²⁷⁷ Among several versions of the *Daodejing*, the standard version that many scholars have used is ‘Wang Bi Version’. In 1973, another version was excavated in Mawangdui, and this is similar to the standard version except for the different order of ‘Dao part’ and ‘De part’. In 1993, what is thought to be the earliest version was excavated in a tomb in Guodian. The volume of this version (around 2,000 characters) is smaller than Wang Bi’s and it does not contain certain features of the latter, such as what some scholars regard as implicit criticisms of Confucianism subsequently added to the original. Nonetheless, for this thesis, I use the Wang Bi version. See: Robert G. Henricks, *Lao-Tzu: Te-Tao Ching - a New Translation Based on the Recently Discovered Ma-Wang-Tui Texts* (New York: Ballantine, 1989); Robert G. Henricks, *Lao Tzu’s Tao Te Ching: A Translation of the Startling New Documents Found at Guodian* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000).

A summary of Daoist cosmology and moral principles for the guidance of rulers, the *Daodejing* is composed of 81 short chapters (about 5,000 characters), and is a combination of poetry, philosophical ideas and mystical images, and focuses on the life of *wuwei* (non-action). It also explains the operating principle of the cosmos as that of Dao and the sage's life as that of having Dao's virtue.

The *Daodejing* has greatly influenced East Asian countries. Wing-Tsit Chan explains the leverage of the text: 'No one can hope to understand Chinese philosophy, religion, government, art, medicine – or even cooking – without a real appreciation of the profound philosophy taught in this little book'.²⁷⁸ I think that no other Chinese historical text of such small a size has influenced so much in East Asian countries. These days, the interest of the book is worldwide: it has been translated more than 300 different versions (more than 80 of them into English).²⁷⁹

The other text is the *Zhuangzi*, presumably written in the fourth and third centuries BCE. It is composed of several essays which are written in anecdotes, parables, paradoxes and allegories. The ideas of the *Zhuangzi* are presented in a different style from those in the *Daodejing*, making much use of humour and focussing on unity with nature (*wuwei-ziran*). Arthur Waley referred to the *Zhuangzi* as 'one of the most entertaining as well as one of the profoundest books in the world'.²⁸⁰

In the *Zhuangzi*, only the Inner Chapters (內篇, chap. 1–7) are thought to be written by Zhuangzi himself, and the Outer Chapters (外篇, chap. 8–22) and the Mixed Chapters (雜篇, chap. 23–33) were presumably written by Zhuangzi's disciples and followers. Because the authorship and date of compilation of the *Zhuangzi* are still debated, I follow the custom of referring to the work as the *Zhuangzi* rather than the author when I quote texts from the Outer and Mixed Chapters.

Over the centuries, followers of Laozi and Zhuangzi developed Daoist ideas and practices, adopting them ritual and worship practices to form what is now known as 'religious' Daoism. There were two prominent early Daoist movements: Taiping Dao

²⁷⁸ Wing-tsit Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1969), 136.

²⁷⁹ Gentz, 77-78.

²⁸⁰ Arthur Waley, *Three Ways of Thought in Ancient China* (London: Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1939), 163.

(Dao of the Great Peace, 太平道) and Wudomi Dao (Dao of the Five Pecks of Rice, 五斗米道). Taiping Dao was led Zhuang Jiao during 160s and 170s, and he led the Yellow Turban movement, a resistance movement of farmers against the government. Around the same time, Zhang Ling founded Wudomi Dao (also called Tianshi Dao, 天師道), and his followers donated five pecks of rice for their membership. Religious Daoists have characteristically pursued the achievement of ‘immortality’ through inner self-cultivation, occupied with alchemical practices, *qi* (spirit), sexual practices, and also breathing techniques.

Regardless of the differences between philosophical and religious Daoism, Dao is the key concept in both Daoist traditions. The term Dao was used in diverse philosophical schools in ancient China, including Confucianism, and was adopted in Chan and Zen Buddhism,²⁸¹ but received its first systematic treatment in the *Daodejing*. According to the *Daodejing*, Dao is the One which is natural, spontaneous, nameless, indescribable and eternal. Whether Dao can be discussed at all is a question raised by the very first verse in the *Daodejing*, which, if we recall, was ‘The Dao that can be told of is not the eternal Dao’. This passage itself has been the focus of much debate in Chinese scholarship. Dao (道) means ‘way’, ‘path’, ‘road’, ‘principle’, ‘flow’, ‘course’ or ‘doctrine’, as both a noun and a verb such that the characters 道可道 can be interpreted to mean ‘The Way that can be Way-ed’ (followed, as a method) and also ‘The Way that can be spoken of’ (named, defined).²⁸² Together, 道可道非常道 seems to imply that the Dao is utterly indefinable and incomprehensible, and Laozi expresses this sentiment in another well-known verse: ‘He who knows does not speak, and he who speaks does not know’.²⁸³

Yet the *Daodejing* was written and the philosophical schools multiplied. Whatever the experience of ultimate reality in any part of the world, and however inexpressible it may, we must be able to convey something of it. What follows is my attempt to outline the doctrine of Dao.

²⁸¹ Chan and Zen (禪) Buddhism are schools of Mahayana Buddhism originated in China, combined with Daoism.

²⁸² Alan Watts, *Tao: The Watercourse Way* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1975), 38-39.

²⁸³ *Daodejing*, chap. 56. (知者不言, 言者不知.)

First, Dao is the origin of all beings.²⁸⁴ Dao is the beginning of all changes in the world and the ultimate cause of them. Dao is present before the manifestation of all the things of the world, and there is no time that Dao did not or does not exist, and therefore the categories of existence and non-existence, strictly speaking, do not apply to it. Laozi explains the operation of Dao:

Dao produces them [the myriad creatures]; virtue rears them; things shape them; circumstances perfect them. This is why the myriad creatures all revere Dao and honour Virtue. Dao is revered and Virtue honoured not because this is decreed, but because it is natural. And so Dao produces them and Virtue rears them; raises and nurtures them; settles and confirms them; nourishes and shelters them. To produce without possessing; to act with no expectation of reward; to lead without lording over; such is Enigmatic Virtue!²⁸⁵

Laozi says that Dao produces, raises, and shapes all creatures. Similarly, in the *Zhuangzi*, Dao is the origin of all things: ‘Before Heaven and earth existed, Dao was there, firm from ancient times. It gave spirituality to the spirits and to God; it gave birth to Heaven and to earth’.²⁸⁶ Zhuangzi understands that Dao alone was present in the beginning, and created the whole universe, including spiritual beings. Due to Dao’s movement, all things are given birth to and are maintained in the world. Zhuangzi explains this: ‘It is Dao of heaven to keep moving and to allow no piling up – hence all things come to completion’.²⁸⁷ Dao thus is the beginning of the universe and the way by which all things pursue their route. In other words, Dao is the origin of existence in all possible modes. Dao is the starting point of all changes and the ultimate cause of human and non-human beings’ growth.

Second, as mentioned earlier, Dao contains both the positive and negative aspects of reality. For Laozi, the nature of Dao is expressed in opposite poles: *yin*

²⁸⁴ Ibid., chap. 4. (萬物之宗)

²⁸⁵ Ibid., chap. 51. (道生之, 德畜之, 物形之, 勢成之, 是以萬物莫不存道而貴德。道之尊, 德之貴, 夫莫之命而常自然。故道生之, 德畜之, 長之育之, 亭之毒之, 養之覆之。生而不有, 爲而不恃, 長而不宰, 是謂玄德。) Cited by Philip J. Ivanhoe and Bryan W. Norden, *Readings in Classical Chinese Philosophy* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2005), 187. In virtue of the myriad interpretations of ‘Dao’ and the fact that ‘Dao’ or ‘Tao’ (as is still used in popular publications on Daoism from the earlier Wade-Giles translation system) has entered the English language, I do not, unlike Ivanhoe and Norden, translate Dao into ‘Way’.

²⁸⁶ *Zhuangzi*, chap. 6. (未有天地, 自古以固存。神鬼神帝, 生天生地。) Watson, 45.

²⁸⁷ Ibid., chap. 13. (天道運而無所積。故萬物成。)

(the shadow side) and *yang* (the bright side), being and non-being, something and nothing. Laozi says, 'To have and to lack generate each other. Difficult and easy give form to each other. Long and short offset each other. High and low incline into each other. Note and rhythm harmonize with each other. Before and after follow each other'.²⁸⁸ Zhuangzi similarly says, 'For this reason, whether you point to a little stalk or a great pillar, a leper or the beautiful Xishi, things ribald and shady, or things grotesque and strange, Dao makes them all into one. Their dividedness is their completeness; their completeness is their impairment'.²⁸⁹ Dao is the interchange of *yin* and *yang*, good and bad, or something and nothing.

Third, Dao has a circular movement, which is immanent in all creatures and the cosmos. Dao is the origin and final source of all things, that from which they come and that to which they return. Laozi says, 'Turning back is the action of Dao. Weakness is the operation of Dao'.²⁹⁰ Dao is the origin of all beings and their natural habitat. Dao becomes the cause not only of the formation of all things but also the destruction and dissolution of all things. Destruction and dissolution are ways to become the unity of all things in Dao, so they do not contain a negative meaning but have positive directivity. Similarly, in the *Zhuangzi*, turning back is eventual movement of all things: 'The principle of following one another in orderly succession, the property of moving in alternation, turning back when they have reached the limit, beginning again when they have ended – these are inherent in things'.²⁹¹ The turning back of things at the limit of their development sustains the circular movement of created reality originated by Dao.

Finally, Dao transcends space and time. Dao exists everywhere and at every time. According to the *Daodejing*, 'There is a thing [Dao] confused yet perfect, which arose before Heaven and earth. Still and indistinct, it stands alone and unchanging. It goes everywhere yet is never at a loss'.²⁹² For Laozi, Dao existed

²⁸⁸ *Daodejing*, chap. 2. (故有無相生, 難易相成, 長短相較, 高下相傾, 音聲相和, 前後相隨.) Ivanhoe and Norden, 163.

²⁸⁹ *Zhuangzi*, chap. 2. (故爲是舉莛與楹, 厲與西施, 恢恠憭怪, 道通爲一. 其分也, 成也. 其成也, 毀也.) Watson, 11.

²⁹⁰ *Daodejing*, chap. 40. (反者道之動, 弱者道之用.)

²⁹¹ *Zhuangzi*, chap. 25. (隨序之相理, 橋運之相使, 窮則反, 終則始, 此物之所有.) Watson, 224-225.

²⁹² *Daodejing*, chap. 25. (有物混成, 先天地生. 寂兮寥兮, 獨立不改, 行而不殆.) Ivanhoe and Norden, 174-175.

before the formation of the universe, and it exists without the limitations of space and time. According to the *Zhuangzi*, Dao exists in all things, even in urine and excrement,²⁹³ while invisible: ‘Dao has its reality and its signs but is without action or form. You can hand it down, but you cannot receive it; you can get it, but you cannot see it’.²⁹⁴ Dao operates everywhere and at all times ‘spontaneously’, ‘without (conscious) action’ (*wuwei-ziran*) – notions which I will develop in detail in the next section. However, let us say something briefly about the limitations of our metaphysical categories when applies to Dao.

Western philosophy and theology usually applies the concepts of ‘dualism’ or ‘monism’ to express the most general aspects of a school of thought or a religion. Whereas dualism is usually used to express the view that reality consists in two fundamentally opposing or qualitatively different forces or substances (matter and spirit, good and evil, wisdom and illusion), monism is used to express the view that whatever differences may be apparent in the world for us, these differences are *merely* apparent, and at bottom, reality is constituted by one entity, substance or force. Dualism is perhaps exemplified by Zoroastrianism, Gnostic Christianity, and more recently in the history of ideas, the philosophy of Descartes. Monism is exemplified by the Parmenidean notion of the immutable One, the Neo-Platonism of Plotinus, and in the modern era, Spinoza and, later, Hegel.

Given that Dao is the unifying principle at work in the manifestations of *yin* and *yang*, would we be correct to apply the Western philosophical term of monism to describe Daoism? Perhaps the most well-known saying of Laozi is that ‘The Dao which can be spoken of is not the true Dao’, suggesting that it is absolutely impossible to define or even conceive of Dao, given that Dao contains, underlies and transcends all reality – even words. As such, it cannot be *captured* in a thought, word, or concept. To illustrate this further, we note that to say something exists is to contrast existence with (at least possible) non-existence. In like manner, to say something is ‘one’ is also to contrast ‘one’ with ‘multiple’, or, philosophically ‘the many’. If Dao both contains and transcends these concepts, we surely cannot call it ‘the One’, for Dao also includes, and is manifest in, ‘the many’. We cannot, therefore, describe Daoism as a monism according to such Western philosophical

²⁹³ *Zhuangzi*, chap. 22. (See Chapter 4:3 ‘The Omnipresence of Dao and God’.)

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, chap. 6. (夫道，有情有信，無爲無形。可傳而不可受，可得而不可見。) Watson, 45.

categories. And while *yin* and *yang* are opposites in appearance, because they are inseparable in any and all circumstances, they are in a conspiracy, in agreement, in unity. For this reason, and for the previous reason that Dao contains all concepts, we also cannot call Daoism a 'Dualism' either.

However, despite all this, we can affirm that Daoism is *closer* to an ontological monism than an ontological dualism in virtue of the very fact that we refer to one principle, one force, one reality underlying all things. In order for Daoism to be intelligible for us in the Western philosophical tradition, then, we have to apply the term of monism, even if it is, strictly speaking, not accurate.

(2) The Daoist Philosophy of Zhuangzi

Wuwei (無為, non-action)

Wuwei and *ziran* are the major concepts in Daoism, and they are clearly revealed in the *Daodejing* and the *Zhuangzi*. *Wuwei* (無為), literally 'non-action', 'non-striving', 'not doing', 'absence of doing', 'without doing' or 'effortless action', is a central concept of Daoist philosophy. The simplest explanation is that *wuwei* means 'acting spontaneously'. Sung-Peng Hsu interprets *wuwei* as 'not-having wilful action'.²⁹⁵ According to Gentz, *wuwei* is 'a kind of action that does not force things against their nature' and is a way to act in accordance with Dao.²⁹⁶ *Wuwei* does not mean literally inactivity but rather 'taking no action that is contrary to Nature'.²⁹⁷ In other words, *wuwei* is letting nature take its own route, best illustrated in the difference between intuition and analysis, or intuitive knowledge and analytical knowledge: direct, wordless knowledge, and contrived, aggregative knowledge.

Wuwei is the most important notion for the art of rulership in the *Zhuangzi* and the *Daodejing*.

The Virtue of emperors and kings takes Heaven and earth as its ancestor,
Dao and its Virtue as its master, inaction as its constant rule. With
inaction, you may make the world work for you and have leisure to spare;

²⁹⁵ Sung-Peng Hsu, "Two Kinds of Changes in Laotzu's Thought," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 4, no. 4 (1977): 333.

²⁹⁶ Gentz, 79.

²⁹⁷ Chan, 136.

with action, you will find yourself working for the world and never will it be enough. Therefore the men of old prized inaction.²⁹⁸

This is why sages abide in the business of nonaction, and practice the teaching that is without words. They work with the myriad creatures and turn none away. They produce without possessing. They act with no expectation of reward. When their work is done, they do not linger. And, by not lingering, merit never deserts them.²⁹⁹

According to the texts, *wuwei* is Dao's constant rule and the world works for oneself, that is, becomes an extension of oneself for the performance of actions without strenuous effort, when one rests in non-action. Thus the sage deals with affairs without contrived action and teaches virtue without words.³⁰⁰ Logically speaking, it is impossible to manage affairs without action and to share doctrine without words. This paradox can be understood when we truly grasp the notion of *wuwei*.

In Daoism, *wuwei* does not mean to live in seclusion, and is defined as 'do nothing', 'prefer stillness', 'engage in no activity', and 'be without desires'.³⁰¹ Laozi says:

The more taboos and prohibitions there are in the world, the poorer the people. The more sharp implements the people have, the more benighted the state. The more clever and skilful the people, the more strange and perverse things arise. The more clear the laws and edicts, the more thieves and robbers. And so sages say, 'I do nothing and the people transform themselves; I prefer stillness and the people correct and regulate

²⁹⁸ *Zhuangzi*, chap. 13. (夫帝王之德, 以天地為宗, 以道德為主, 以無為為常. 無為也, 則用天下而有餘. 有為也, 則為天下用而不足. 故古之人貴夫無為也.) Watson, 100.

²⁹⁹ *Daodejing*, chap. 2. (是以聖人處無為之事, 行不言之教. 物作焉而不辭, 生而不有, 為而不恃, 功成而弗居. 夫唯弗居, 是以不去.) Ivanhoe and Norden, 164.

³⁰⁰ This is very similar to St. Francis of Assisi's exhortation: 'Preach the Gospel. Use words [only] if necessary.'

³⁰¹ *Wuwei* means not only non-action, but also practical tactics for action for Laozi. People who never dare to be ahead of the world can become leaders of the various offices: 'I have three treasures that I hold on to and preserve: The first I call loving kindness; the second I call frugality; the third I call never daring to put oneself first in the world. The kind can be courageous. The frugal can be generous. Those who never dare to put themselves first in the world can become leaders of the various officials' (*Daodejing*, chap. 67. Ivanhoe and Norden, 196-197).

themselves; I engage in no activity and the people prosper on their own; I am without desires and the people simplify their own lives'.³⁰²

In other words, all things go well if human beings do not engage in calculated or contrived activity. 'Preferring stillness', 'engaging in no activity', and 'being without desires' allow one to 'transform' and 'prosper'. Similarly, in the *Zhuangzi*, humans can know Dao, rest in Dao, and get to Dao, when they stay in *wuwei*: 'Only when there is no pondering and no cogitation will you get to know Dao. Only when you have no surroundings and follow no practices will you find rest in Dao. Only when there is no path and no procedure can you get to Dao'.³⁰³

In short, as the *Zhuangzi* states, *wuwei* is one of the principles of Dao: 'Emptiness, stillness, quietude and non-action are the root of the heaven and the earth and the principle of Dao and Virtue'.³⁰⁴ As such, *wuwei* is one of the virtues which every person – common or noble – must cultivate in order to become a sage or wise ruler. If people rest in non-action, all things will manage themselves,³⁰⁵ and things will go well.

Ziran (自然, spontaneity)

Ziran is another very important concept in the Daoist philosophy of Zhuangzi. *Zi* (自) literally means 'from...' or 'self-...', and *ran* (然) means 'like this'.³⁰⁶ *Ziran* is generally understood as 'spontaneity', 'nature', 'self-becoming', or 'being so of itself', but each English translation, as with so many Chinese words, does not contain the exact meaning of *ziran*.³⁰⁷

³⁰² Ibid., chap. 57. (天下多忌諱，而民彌貧，民多利器，國家滋昏，人多伎巧，奇物滋起，法令滋彰，盜賊多有。故聖人云。我無為而民自化，我好靜而民自正，我無事而民自富，我無欲而民自樸。) Ivanhoe and Norden, 191.

³⁰³ *Zhuangzi*, chap. 22. (無思無慮始知道，無處無服始安道，無從無道始得道。) Watson, 176.

³⁰⁴ Ibid., chap. 13. (夫虛靜恬淡寂漠無為者，天地之本，而道德之至。)

³⁰⁵ Ibid., chap. 11. (汝徒處無為，而物自化。)

³⁰⁶ Qingjia Wang, "On Lao Zi's Concept of Zi Ran," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 24, no. 3 (1997): 292.

³⁰⁷ Qingjia Wang points out several problems of common English translations of *ziran*: 'First, the translation of "*ziran*" as "nature" may misread it as a noun which refers to an entity rather than to a process of growing and becoming; second, the translation of "spontaneity" may miss the "active" meaning of the term "*ziran*"; third, "self-so-ing" or "self-becoming" may mislead our understanding of the term to fall into some egoistic trick, i.e., to make the naturalistic process "personalized"'. [ibid.,

Both *wuwei* and *ziran* are important ideas in the *Daodejing* and the *Zhuangzi*, and they are inseparable from one another, or mutually immanent: we can see that effortless action (*wuwei*) is also that which ‘of itself’ (*ziran*), and therefore it would be a mistake to reify the concepts as though they were ‘parts’ about which we speak of a certain relation. Rather, it is wiser to speak of instances of the two; that is, define by way of example.

The best example of *ziran* is the operation of Dao. Dao creates, maintains and recreates all creatures of itself, with no teleology.

No thing is either complete or impaired, but all are made into one again. Only the man of far-reaching vision knows how to make them into one. So he has no use [for categories] but relegates all to the constant. The constant is the useful; the useful is the passable; the passable is the successful; and with success, all is accomplished. He relies on this alone, relies on it and does not know he is doing so. This is called Dao.³⁰⁸

Dao operates of itself above human recognition, and being thoroughly constant, in itself, it is successful without effort or design. According to the *Zhuangzi*, the state of *ziran*, even though it seems to be a state of chaos from the perspective of a human being, is the state of perfect unity with Dao:

The men of old dwelled in the midst of crudity and chaos; side by side with the rest of the world, they attained simplicity and silence there. At that time the yin and yang were harmonious and still; ghosts and spirits worked no mischief; the four seasons kept to their proper order; the ten thousand things knew no injury; and living creatures were free from premature death. Although men had knowledge, they did not use it. This was called the Perfect Unity. At this time, no one made a move to do anything, and there was unvarying spontaneity (*ziran*).³⁰⁹

When humans do not get caught up in self-conscious over-thinking and machination, all beings will be harmonized with Dao, and this harmony is the state of

312.] I think that ‘spontaneously becoming’ is the best translation, but I will translate it into ‘spontaneity’ or ‘being so of itself’.

³⁰⁸ *Zhuangzi*, chap. 2. (凡物無成與毀，復通爲一。唯達者知通爲一，爲是不用而寓諸庸。庸也者，用也。用也者，通也。通也者，得也。適得而幾矣。因是己。己而不知其然，謂之道。) Watson, 11.

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, chap. 16. (古之人，在混芒之中，與一世而得澹漠焉。當是時也，陰陽和靜，鬼神不擾，四時得節萬物不傷，群生不夭，人雖有知，無所用之，此之謂至一。當是時也，莫之爲而常自然。) Watson, 122-123.

the perfect unity. However, it perhaps need not be said that this unity in spontaneity cannot be achieved by conscious effort; much as one cannot relax if one is ‘forced’ or commanded to do so. If human beings do attempt to ‘force’ themselves into relaxation, their self-conscious, wilful actions will disrupt the constant state of harmony and this in turn disrupts the harmony in the world.

He who holds to True Rightness does not lose the original form of his inborn nature. So for him, joined things are not webbed toes; things forking off are not superfluous fingers; the long is never too much; the short is never too little. The duck’s legs are short, but to stretch them out would worry him; the crane’s legs are long, but to cut them down would make him sad. What is long by nature needs no cutting off; what is short by nature needs no stretching. That would be no way to get rid of worry. I wonder, then, whether benevolence and righteousness are part of man’s true form. Those benevolent men – how much worrying they do!³¹⁰

According to the *Zhuangzi*, the world that is made by the operation of *yin* and *yang* is perfect of itself because Dao does not discriminate among all things in terms of what is more ‘real’ (i.e. the distinction between nature and supernature, men and angels – that is, higher ontological statuses or ‘degrees of being’), and also does not distinguish between what classical Western philosophy would call degrees of ‘perfection(s)’ or qualities: ‘The Great Dao is capable of embracing all things but not of discriminating among them’.³¹¹ Human benevolence and righteousness only brings worry or sorrow, for we become fixed upon an image or ideal of what we must, when that image bears no relation to the real world. We become concerned with ‘acting the part’ and worry about failing short of it – and, because we worry, we worry about worrying, *ad infinitum*. In the philosophy of the *Zhuangzi*, the unity or harmony between all beings is a key idea, and it is only possible when humans rest in *wuwei-ziran*.

The *Zhuangzi* shares the important ideas of *wuwei-ziran* with the *Daodejing*, but it is different in both style and content. Whereas the *Daodejing*, like similar manuals

³¹⁰ Ibid., chap. 8. (彼至正者, 不失其性命之情. 故合者不為駢, 而枝者不為岐. 長者不為有餘, 短者不為不足. 是故鳧脛雖短, 續之則憂. 鶴脛雖長, 斷之則悲. 故性長非所斷, 性短非所續, 無所去憂也. 意仁義其非人情乎. 彼仁人何其多憂也!) Watson, 61.

³¹¹ Ibid., chap. 33.

for the nobility,³¹² serves primarily as a metaphysical treatise whose broad principles are to be comprehended at the most general level and applied first to one's attitude, the *Zhuangzi* focuses on how Dao and its principles are applied at the most practical level and is therefore a work for common people as well as the ruler.³¹³ Moreover, The *Zhuangzi* emphasises Dao's eternality and all-encompassing presence in cosmic and biological transformations, including the birth, life and death of human beings. According to P. Skogemann, Zhuangzi's deep contact with the eternal 'enables him to see the relativity of things and he loves to make fun of man's prejudices and tendencies to judge everything from his own standpoint'.³¹⁴ The relativity of things and suspension of judgment between right and wrong, of preferable and undesirable are significant and repeated themes in the *Zhuangzi*.³¹⁵

Concerning training methods to be a 'true man' (真人) or a 'sage' (聖人), the highest state that Daoists pursue, *zuowang* (坐忘, sitting in forgetfulness), *wuhua* (物化, the transformation of things) and *xianjie* (縣解, freeing of the bound) feature as significant phases in the *Zhuangzi*. I will expound the details of these phases necessary to be undergone in becoming a sage for Zhuangzi in Chapter 5. The important notions in the *Zhuangzi* of *qi* (氣, vital energy), *yin-yang* (the shadow and bright sides of Dao's operation), the omnipresence and hiddenness of Dao, and the

³¹² For comparison, see the political manual by Han Fei (韓非, c.280–233 BCE), in which he applies Daoist principles at the broadest possible level for the benefit of the attitude of the ruler: 'Though right and wrong swarm about him, the ruler does not argue with them. Be empty, still, inactive, for this is the true nature of the Way. Study, compare, and see what matches, for this will reveal how much has been accomplished. Compare with concrete results, check against empty assertions. Where the root and base of the affair are unshaken, there will be no error in movement or stillness'. [Burton Watson, *Han Feizi: Basic Writings* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 38.]

³¹³ Gentz, 79.

³¹⁴ P. Skogemann, "Chuang Tzu and the Butterfly Dream," *Journal of Analytical Psychology* 31, no. 1 (1986): 75.

³¹⁵ For example, Zhuangzi argues: 'Suppose you and I have had an argument. If you have beaten me instead of my beating you, then are you necessarily right, and am I necessarily wrong? If I have beaten you instead of your beating me, then am I necessarily right, and are you necessarily wrong? Is one of us right and the other wrong? Are both of us right, or are both of us wrong? If you and I don't know the answer, then other people are bound to be even more in the dark. Whom shall we get to decide what is right? Shall we get someone who agrees with you to decide? But if he already agrees with you, how can he decide fairly? Shall we get someone who agrees with me? But if he already agrees with me, how can he decide? Shall we get someone who disagrees with both of us? But if he already disagrees with both of us, how can he decide? Shall we get someone who agrees with both of us? But if he already agrees with both of us, how can he decide? Obviously, then, neither you nor I nor anyone else can know the answer. Shall we wait for still another person?' (chap. 2. Watson, 17.)

unity of heaven and human being(s) (天人一通, *tianrenyitong*) will be discussed in detail in Chapters 6, 7 and 8 in comparison with Haught's ideas.

Zhuangzi and Natural Science

It seems anachronistic to read the *Zhuangzi* through the lens of modern science because of the vast separation in time between Zhuangzi and the scientific (modern) era, and also because the *Zhuangzi* is of an entirely different genre, not being anything like a scientific text. We can nevertheless examine the *Zhuangzi in the light of* modern natural science for the following reasons.

First, both the *Zhuangzi* and natural science are interested in the essence of nature. Natural science is concerned with understanding natural phenomena in terms of their essence and causes, and this is not in fact different from the *Zhuangzi*. The *Zhuangzi* consists of vagaries and abstruse stories, but as Thomas Merton says, it is profound in its directness and its simplicity in that it seeks, 'as does all the greatest philosophical thought, to go immediately to the heart of things'³¹⁶ Although there are differences in methodology and approach between the *Zhuangzi* and natural science,³¹⁷ their primary concern is the nature: the origin of the world and the operating principle of nature.

Second, the *Zhuangzi* contains what we could call what is closest to the scientific knowledge of the time, including an emphasis on the operations of *qi*, even while this prescientific cosmology seems quite immature in comparison to modern science. The *Zhuangzi* has an understanding of the law(s) of nature.

When wood rubs against wood, flames spring up. When metal remains by the side of fire, it melts and flows away. When the yin and yang go awry, then heaven and earth see astounding sights. Then we hear the crash and roll of thunder, and fire comes in the midst of rain and burns up the great pagoda tree.³¹⁸

³¹⁶ Thomas Merton, *The Way of Chuang Tzu* (New York: New Directions, 1969), 11.

³¹⁷ There is the very real difference concerning empiricism, i.e. natural science proceeds by a testable and revisable methodology, which is different to a more metaphysical philosophy like Daoism.

³¹⁸ *Zhuangzi*, chap. 26. (木與木相摩則然, 金與火相守則流. 陰陽錯行, 則天地大絃. 於是乎有雷有霆, 水中有火, 乃焚大槐.) Watson, 227.

Not only does the *Zhuangzi* demonstrate understanding of natural phenomena, it also reveals proto-evolutionary thinking about the natural world: spontaneous generative change, for example, from microorganisms, to moss, to plantain ... to leopards, to horses, and finally to humans.³¹⁹ Considering the text's time of compilation, this idea of 'transmutation' (or 'evolution' in modern scientific parlance) can indeed be evaluated from the perspective of modern science (Chapter 6:1).

Finally, Daoist ideas formed the basis of the development of Chinese science. According to Joseph Needham, the contribution of Confucianism to science was almost naught, but Daoist speculations about nature 'fully equalled pre-Aristotelian Greek thought [as in the West], and lie at the basis of all Chinese science'.³²⁰

In religious Daoism, the ultimate goal of Daoist discipline is to be a *shenxian* (神仙), one who achieves immortality. To this end, Daoists experimented with 'inner' and 'outer' 'alchemic' practices and these led to the development of Chinese science.

For these reasons, it is worth looking at the *Zhuangzi* in the light of science. I will do this comparative work in Chapters 6, 7 and 8 in conjunction with the ideas of John Haught.

(3) Dao in Daoism and God in Christianity

Does Dao have similar attributes to the Christian God? If the sages of non-Christian traditions have access to knowledge of Ultimate Reality through observation of the cosmos, the natural world and human history, we may find similar methods and perspectives among them. Concerning the relationship between Dao and the Christian God, Hans Küng understands that if Dao is everything and if it can be understood as 'being in becoming', Dao would eventually be identical with God in the differentiated way of the Western philosophical and theological tradition.³²¹

³¹⁹ Ibid., chap. 18. 'Among the various species, there is a microorganism which propagates in water. It becomes moss on the water margin and it becomes plantain on the highlands.... The *yangxi* grass lives with the bamboo that no longer sprouts, which gives birth to an insect by the name of *qingning*, which in turn gives birth to the leopard, and which again in turn gives birth to the horse, which again in turn gives birth to the man' (Wang Rongpei, 295).

³²⁰ Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China: History of Scientific Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956), 1.

³²¹ Küng and Ching, 173.

In this section, I will briefly compare Dao of the *Daodejing* and the *Zhuangzi* with the God of the Bible. Through this comparison, I will reveal that Dao and God may be said to have similar properties as well as markedly distinguishing properties. This comparison aims will provide the basis for my comparative study between the evolutionary theology of Haught and the Daoist philosophy of Zhuangzi.

The Origin and Provider of All Beings

In the Bible, whether initial creation is out of nothing (*ex nihilo*) is debatable. According to Genesis, ‘In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters’ (Gen. 1:1–2). Whether the creation in Genesis is the creation out of nothing or out of pre-existent material is not clear, but many Church fathers posited the idea of creation out of nothing. The key point about which most theologians agree is that God is the origin of the natural world that we know and as such all creatures come from God.

Dao in Daoism is the origin of the manifold world and all its creatures as well. Dao created all creatures out of non-being. Although the notion of non-being in Daoism does not exactly correspond with the notion of nothingness in Western thought, researching nothingness in connection with non-being is a good way to understand creation synthetically.

The activity of Dao can be compared to God’s providence. The Psalmist says about God’s providence:

These all look to you to give them their food at the proper time. When you give it to them, they gather it up; when you open your hand, they are satisfied with good things. When you hide your face, they are terrified; when you take away their breath, they die and return to the dust. When you send your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the earth (Psa. 104:27–30).

According to the Psalmist, God feeds and raises all creatures; their life and death are ordained by God as the origin and sustainer of all beings.

How is Dao’s activity revealed in Daoist metaphysics? Laozi says, ‘Dao produces them [the entities and creatures of the world]. [Dao] raises and nurtures

them, settles and confirms them and nourishes and shelters them'.³²² Dao produces, rears, settles, confirms, nourish and shelters all creatures but does not restrict them. Dao produces them 'without possessing', acts 'without expectation of reward' and leads them 'without lording over'.³²³

Similarly, in the *Zhuangzi*, Dao is the origin of all things, including spiritual entities: 'The bright and shining is born out of deep darkness; the ordered is born out of formlessness; pure spirit is born out of Dao. The body is born originally from this purity, and the ten thousand things give bodily form to one another through the process of birth'.³²⁴

I believe that the conception of Dao as expressed by Laozi and Zhuangzi is something between the traditional notion of the Christian God who is providential in His activity and the God of deism. As with the Christian providential God, Dao is the origin and provider of all things. As with deism, Dao rears all beings without possessing or lording over them. The notion of Dao is therefore similar to the God of Christian process theology (Chapter 3:1).

The Christian God is the creator of all beings in the world, and creativity is one of the major attributes of God. Whitehead expounds creativity in Western terms.

Creativity is without a character of its own in exactly the same sense in which the Aristotelian 'matter' is without a character of its own. It is that ultimate notion of the highest generality at the base of actuality. It cannot be characterized, because all characters are more special than itself. But creativity is always found under conditions, and described as conditioned.³²⁵

Whitehead understands that creativity is the universal of universals. It is that ultimate principle from which the many emerge and by which the many, in time, become the universe conjunctively.³²⁶

³²² *Daodejing*, chap. 51. (故道生之, 德畜之, 長之育之, 亭之毒之, 養之覆之.) Ivanhoe and Norden, 187.

³²³ *Ibid.*

³²⁴ *Zhuangzi*, chap. 22. (夫昭昭生於冥冥, 有倫生於無形, 精神生於道, 形本生於精, 萬物以形相生.) Watson, 180.

³²⁵ Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology*, 31.

³²⁶ *Ibid.*, 21.

In Daoism, creativity is also an important attribute of Dao. The creativity of Dao is revealed in the process in which Dao is diversified from unicity into multiplicity, *yang* and *yin*, and in turn, into particulars, that is, all objects, creatures, events, etc. Like the Creator in Christianity, the creativity of Dao is one of the important properties of Dao.

The Transcendence of Dao and God

‘Transcendence’ means to go beyond or to be beyond. In Christian theology, God is portrayed as possessing transcendent qualities and being transcendent in Himself ‘insofar,’ as Taliaferro and Marty write, ‘God is not identical to (and is thus beyond) the cosmos’.³²⁷ Transcendence is an important quality of Ultimate Reality, or rather, its relationship to us. To discuss Dao and the Christian God, some consideration of the transcendence of Dao as understood by Laozi and Zhuangzi is necessary. Laozi says, ‘But talk about Dao – how insipid and without relish it is! Look for it and it cannot be seen; listen for it and it cannot be heard; but use it and it will never run dry!’³²⁸ Dao transcends sensual perception. Dao cannot be seen or heard, but it works or flows and never runs dry. Laozi puts stress on Dao’s transcendence over and above sensory experience:

Looked for but not seen, its name is ‘minute’. Listened for but not heard, its name is ‘rarefied’. Grabbed for but not gotten, its name is ‘subtle’. These three cannot be perfectly explained, and so are confused and regarded as one. Its top is not clear or bright. Its bottom is not obscure or dark. Trailing off without end, it cannot be named. It turns to its home, back before there were things. This is called the formless form, the image of nothing. This is called the confused and indistinct. Greet it and you will not see its head; follow it and you will not see its tail. Hold fast to the way of old, in order to control what is here today. The ability to know the ancient beginnings, this is called the thread of Dao.³²⁹

³²⁷ Charles Taliaferro and Elsa J. Marty, eds., *A Dictionary of Philosophy of Religion* (New York: Continuum, 2010), 228.

³²⁸ *Daodejing*, chap. 35. (道之出口, 淡乎其無味. 視之不足見, 聽之不足聞, 用之不足既.) Ivanhoe and Norden, 180.

³²⁹ *Ibid.*, chap. 14. (視之不見, 名曰夷. 聽之不聞, 名曰希. 搏之不得, 名曰微. 此三者, 不可致詰. 故混而爲一. 其上不暲, 其下不昧. 繩繩不可名. 復歸於無物. 是謂無狀之狀, 無物之象. 是謂惚恍.)

As we can see in this passage, Dao cannot be defined in clear language and transcends the range of sensual cognition. Dao is ‘not seen (不見)’, ‘not heard (不聞)’, ‘not gotten (不得)’, and ‘cannot be named (不可名)’, and therefore, it is ‘the formless form (無狀之狀)’, ‘the image of nothing (無物之象)’, and ‘the confused and indistinct (惚恍)’.

Similarly in the *Zhuangzi*, Dao is described as transcendent: ‘Dao has never known boundaries from the beginning’.³³⁰ Dao does not only not have boundaries but also is eternal: ‘Dao is without beginning or end, but all other things have their life and death’.³³¹ Dao in the *Zhuangzi* also transcends human sensory experience: ‘Dao cannot be heard; heard, it is not Dao. Dao cannot be seen; seen, it is not Dao. Dao cannot be described; described, it is not Dao’.³³²

Transcendence is also essential in the presentation of God in the Bible. But we also see the doctrine of ‘immanence’³³³ just as clearly emphasised. St. Paul says: ‘One God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all’ (Eph. 4:6). God is not only transcendent of all things but is also ‘omnipresent’ in all things. In addition, St. John says, ‘The one who comes from above is above all; the one who is from the earth belongs to the earth, and speaks as one from the earth. The one who comes from heaven is above all’ (John 3:31). The attribute of transcendence is shared by Dao and God, and it provides a clue for a deeper dialogue between Daoist thought and Christian theology.

The Omnipresence of Dao and God

Dao flows everywhere and cares for all creatures. Laozi says, ‘How expansive is the great Dao! Flowing to the left and to the right. The myriad creatures rely upon it for

迎之不見其首，隨之不見其後。執古之道，以御今之有。能知古始。是謂道紀。) Ivanhoe and Norden, 169.

³³⁰ *Zhuangzi*, chap. 2. (道未始有封.)

³³¹ *Ibid.*, chap. 17. (道無終始，物有死生.)

³³² *Ibid.*, chap. 22. (道不可聞，聞而非也。道不可見，見而非也。道不可言，言而非也。) Watson, 184.

³³³ Immanence means ‘to inhabit’ from the Latin *immanere*. According to *A Dictionary of Philosophy of Religion*, ‘The immanence of God is God’s presence throughout the creation. Immanence is a feature of God’s omnipresence or ubiquity’. [Taliaferro and Marty, 120.]

life, and it turns none of them away'.³³⁴ Zhuangzi discusses the omnipresence of Dao with his disciple Dongguozi:

Master Dongguo asked Zhuangzi, 'This thing called Dao – where does it exist?' Zhuangzi, said, 'There's no place it doesn't exist'. 'Come', said Master Dongguo, 'you must be more specific!' 'It is in the ant'. 'As low a thing as that?' 'It is in the panic grass'. 'But that's lower still!' 'It is in the tiles and shards'. 'How can it be so low?' 'It is in the piss and shit!' Master Dongguo made no reply. Zhuangzi said, 'Sir, your questions simply don't get at the substance of the matter. When Inspector Huo asked the superintendent of the market how to test the fatness of a pig by pressing it with the foot, he was told that the lower down on the pig you press, the nearer you come to the truth. But you must not expect to find Dao in any particular place – there is no thing that escapes its presence! Such is the Perfect Way, and so too are the truly great words. "Complete", "universal", "all-inclusive" – these three are different words with the same meaning. All point to a single reality'.³³⁵

Like in the *Daodejing* and the *Zhuangzi*, the omnipresence of God is revealed in the Bible. Other than in Ephesians and the Gospel of John quoted above, we might also point to Jeremiah: "Can anyone hide in secret places so that I cannot see him?" declares the LORD. "Do not I fill heaven and earth?" declares the LORD' (Jer. 23:24). The Christian God exists everywhere, so no one can hide from him. In short, omnipresence, one of the important properties of Ultimate Reality or its relationship to human beings, is found in both the Daoist Dao and the Christian God.

The Indefinability of Dao and God

When we discuss Ultimate Reality, we generally assume that it can be described with language, even if our attempts certainly fall short, and our words do not, and cannot, represent or recreate experience of the Absolute. Let us remember, however, how Laozi pictures the indefinability of Dao in the *Daodejing*:

A Dao that can be told of is not a constant Dao. A name that can be named is not a constant name. Nameless, it is the beginning of Heaven and earth;

³³⁴ *Daodejing*, chap. 34. (大道汜兮, 其可左右, 萬物恃之而生而不辭。) Ivanhoe and Norden, 179.

³³⁵ *Zhuangzi*, chap. 22. (東郭子問於莊子曰, 所謂道惡乎在? 莊子曰, 無所不在。東郭子曰, 期而後可。莊子曰, 在螻蟻。曰, 何其下邪? 曰, 在稊稗。曰, 何其愈下邪? 曰, 在瓦甃。曰, 何其愈甚邪? 曰, 在屎溺.... 汝唯莫必, 无乎逃物。至道若是, 大言亦然。周遍咸三者, 異名同實, 其指一也。) Watson, 182.

named, it is the mother of the myriad creatures. And so, always eliminate desires in order to observe its mysteries; always have desires in order to observe its manifestations. These two come forth in unity but diverge in name. Their unity is known as an enigma. Within this enigma is yet a deeper enigma. The gate of all mysteries!³³⁶

Similarly, Zhuangzi says, 'The Great Dao is impossible to describe.... If Dao is manifest, it is not Dao'.³³⁷ This means that any name, definition, or positive knowledge of Dao is in fact illusory. Put simply, if we think we have it, we don't. Robert Elliott Allinson regards Laozi and Zhuangzi as 'contributors from Chinese philosophy that both discuss the transcendence of the limits of language'.³³⁸ Most ancient Chinese philosophical schools believed that the act of naming is necessary, and that names do correspond to realities in the world. However, Laozi and Zhuangzi reject this as it concerns Dao and certain aspects of life such as *wuwei*, *de* and *ziran*, precisely because concepts are static and Dao and the world are not. This is the revolutionary and distinct character of Daoism.

Daoism conveys the reality of Dao apophatically, or by way of negation: what Dao is *not*. Dao is described negatively as *nameless*, *effortless*, *formless*, in other words, has no definition. The *Daodejing* and the *Zhuangzi* focus on what Dao is not, in order to explain what Dao is. For this reason, Daoist philosophy is generally regarded as a negative philosophy. Küng summarizes the negativism of Daoism and perhaps surprisingly, Christianity:

What must also be kept in mind is that, for both Taoist and Christian thought, *the innermost essence of the Tao, like that of God, remains hidden to human beings. Whoever thinks he or she can sneak inside the mystery of God to get a kind of inside view of God suffers from the greatest self-*

³³⁶ *Daodejing*, chap. 1. (道可道非常道, 名可名非常名. 無名天地之始, 有名萬物之母. 故常無欲以觀其妙, 常有欲以觀其徼. 此兩者同, 出而異名. 同謂之玄. 玄之又玄, 衆妙之門.) Ivanhoe and Norden, 163.

³³⁷ *Zhuangzi*, chap. 2. (大道不稱.... 道昭而不道.)

³³⁸ Robert Elliott Allinson, "Wittgenstein, Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu: The Art of Circumlocution," *Asian Philosophy* 17, no. 1 (2007): 98. In this article, Allinson claims that where Western philosophy ends with the limitations of language marks the point of departure for Eastern philosophy, comparing Wittgenstein's reflections to the *Daodejing* and the *Zhuangzi*. In his *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein's reflections end at the limitations of language: '[W]hereof one cannot speak thereof one must be silent'. [Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, trans. C. K. Ogden (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 1999), 27.] As we see in Laozi's *Daodejing*, however, Daoist philosophy, begins with the limitations of language: 'The Dao which can be spoken of is not the true Dao'. The common theme here is the limits of language and the necessity of transcending it in experience.

delusion. Whoever thinks he or she has comprehended God has already misapprehended him. Whoever thinks he or she has God in hand comes up empty-handed! His or her grasp extends literally into nothingness. On the basis of mystical theology and negative theology, Christians can therefore also understand completely why Taoists refuse all definitions, all naming of the Tao, whether positive or negative.³³⁹

We need to keep in mind Küng's suggestion. Specific definitions about Ultimate Reality are misleading. According to the Book of Isaiah, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways", declares the LORD. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isa. 55:8–9). St. Paul also says, "Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! "Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counsellor?" (Rom. 11:33–34).

Apophatic or negative theology is theology that attempts to apprehend or comprehend God through negation or in terms of what may *not* be said about the perfect goodness that is God. Apophatic theology is an attempt to pursue unity with the Divine through seeking knowledge of what God is not, rather than by pursuing what God is. The method of *via negativa* of Thomas Aquinas stands as an exemplar of apophatic theology, and stands in contrast to cataphatic or positive theology, which deals in analogy and simile, describing what ultimate reality is *like* figuratively or by relation – for example that God is love is comprehensible by analogy with human love; that God is a father with qualities that we value is comprehensible by analogy with human fatherhood. Both methods seem similar or at least analogous to the ways employed in speaking of Dao in the writings of Laozi and Zhuangzi, as well as others. However, the differences in how Western and Chinese philosophers and theologians write are such that whereas Western thinkers tend to aim at conceptualisation and systematisation, Chinese philosophers tend to write in images or parables (especially as found in the *Zhuangzi*). Thus the two traditions constitute different conceptions of philosophy and theology altogether. Nevertheless, the two traditions share the view that ultimate reality can never be reconstructed conceptually by the human intellect.

³³⁹ Küng and Ching, 178.

The indefinability of Dao and God is of great importance for developing an integral theodicy, for the problem of evil arises out of the apparent logical conflict between evil, pain or suffering and pre-conceived notions of love and goodness – and therefrom, pre-conceived ideas about what God can and should do or permit and prevent. If, as the Bible says, God is Love ontologically, but we cannot give a positive conceptualisation of that Love in virtue of God's indefinability, then we surely cannot make moral demands of God, claiming to know what 'loving' actions (love as a verb) are required of God as Love (love as a noun). In short, even if there is analogous relationship between the activities and properties that we see in the world and those of God, because of their infinitude in the Divine, it seems that we are in no position to make moral judgements upon God on the basis of the conditions that we perceive in the world.

It is this line of thinking that leads theologians, writing in the tradition of Job, to argue that no amount of knowledge of human love or fatherhood can let us second-guess the reasons as to why God allows for the horrendous suffering in the world. Even the famous and oft-employed 'Good father analogy' breaks down. The indescribability of ultimate reality, which is characteristic of Dao and God, provides an alternative way of doing theodicy, albeit in a passive and defensive way.

The Personal and Impersonal Characterisations of Dao and God

One of the important differences between Dao and God is that of personal and impersonal characterisations. The God of the Bible is clearly personal. Despite the problem of analogous relationships that we point out above, God is what we may call a 'main character' in the Bible, who affects the plot of the narrative and who has a stake in what occurs. In the Bible God exhibits many of the feelings that human beings exhibit: repentance (Gen. 6:6), jealousy (Exod. 34:14), anger (Isa. 57:17) and pleasure (Lev. 4:31).

On the other hand, Dao is generally regarded as impersonal. Dao is considered as the principle or the way inherent in all things. Laozi says, 'I do not know its name; I call it Dao. If forced to give it a name, I shall call it Great'.³⁴⁰ Because Dao is not

³⁴⁰ *Daodejing*, chap. 25. (吾不知其名. 字之曰道. 强爲之名曰大.) Ivanhoe and Norden, 175.

seen as personal, at least in the *Daodejing* and the *Zhuangzi*, Dao is not the subject of worship: 'The Great Dao does not admit of being praised'.³⁴¹

Although the Daoist Dao is generally regarded as impersonal and the Christian God is personal, we need to consider this further before jumping to conclusions for theodicy. What does it mean to say that ultimate reality is personal or impersonal, for Western philosophy? I think the reason why the Christian God is described as personal and in personal terms is to picture the relationship between God and creation, and indeed, God and creatures, that is so evident in the Bible. In other words, the term 'personal God' may be used for purposes of relating the notion that God created all things and is continuously related to them. However, in Eastern philosophy, the term 'personal' or 'impersonal' is not needed. The Daoist Dao itself is seen as impersonal, but its operation is poetically described in personal terms, for example as creating and caring for all things ('of itself so'). In Eastern philosophy, the boundary between personal and impersonal is ambiguous, unimportant, and perhaps even meaningless. We see the same phenomenon in the 'wisdom beyond wisdom' of the Mahayana's *Heart Sutra*, in which *sunyata* (emptiness or boundlessness) is at first glance highly impersonal, but which is in unity with *karuna*, of loving-compassion, manifest in the Bodhisattva.³⁴² In Tibetan Buddhism, ultimate reality is sometimes referred to as the Mother. Dao in Daoism is similarly described as the Mother:

There is a thing confused yet perfect, which arose before Heaven and earth. Still and indistinct, it stands alone and unchanging. It goes everywhere yet is never at a loss. One can regard it as the mother of Heaven and earth. I do not know its proper name; I have given it the style 'Dao'.³⁴³

Dao, the One that existed before heaven and earth and operates everywhere, is called the Mother of the universe. Elsewhere, Laozi says, 'The world had a

³⁴¹ *Zhuangzi*, chap. 2.

³⁴² Kazuaki Tanahashi, *The Heart Sutra: A Comprehensive Guide to the Classic of Mahayana Buddhism* (Boston: Shambhala, 2014).

³⁴³ *Daodejing*, chap. 25. (有物混成，先天地生。寂兮寥兮，獨立不改，行而不殆。可以爲天下母。吾不知其名。字之曰道。) Ivanhoe and Norden, 174-175.

beginning; this can be considered the mother of the world'.³⁴⁴ Dao's operation of creation and care for creation is described as the presence of a mother.

The traditional Christian God, on the other hand is pictured as the 'personal' 'Father'. This difference is quite obviously due to cultural differences between the West and the East. Nevertheless, the idea is similar: God and Dao are closely related to all things in the world. Therefore, the question of whether God and Dao are personal or impersonal does not constitute a problem in comparative study between Daoism and Christianity. In fact, some theologians have begun to regard God as 'impersonal' in order to emphasize his universal features, rather than risk anthropomorphism and anthropocentrism brought about by an over-emphasis on characteristics or properties that God only possesses in analogical relationship to human beings. For example, claiming that 'ground-of-being theism' can effectively handle the problem of suffering in nature rather than 'determinate-entity theism' or 'process theism', Wildman says:

This God [as the ground of being] is not good in a humanly recognizable way, nor personal in character, yet when we assert God's goodness despite its incongruity with our anthropocentric ways of thinking, our minds are led higher to larger patterns and wider virtues in which suffering is no longer merely an unwanted side effect of otherwise wondrous physical processes but a creative source in its own right.³⁴⁵

This image of God as ground of being, as the One who transcends easy recognition and which is impersonal or apersonal, is in harmony with the image of Dao in Daoism as I mentioned above, especially when it concerns the problem of evil, which I will discuss in the following chapters.

(4) Summary

In this chapter, I explored Daoism and Zhuangzi's development of Daoist philosophy in particular. To begin with, I examined what Dao and Daoism can be taken to be, and next, the Daoist philosophy of Zhuangzi. Daoism is both a philosophical and

³⁴⁴ Ibid., chap. 52. (天下有始, 以爲天下母.) Ivanhoe and Norden, 187.

³⁴⁵ Wildman, in *Physics and Cosmology: Scientific Perspectives on the Problem of Evil in Nature*, 293.

religious tradition that originated in ancient China, and the *Daodejing* and the *Zhuangzi* are the two foundational texts of philosophical Daoism.

In Daoism, Dao is the origin of all beings, containing both the positive and negative aspects of reality, having a circular movement immanent in all creatures and the cosmos, and transcending space and time. In the Daoist philosophy of Zhuangzi, *wuwei* (non-action), *ziran* (spontaneity), and the relativity of things are the major themes.

In this chapter I also expounded how the *Zhuangzi* can be viewed from a scientific perspective: the *Zhuangzi* is interested in the essence of nature as is natural science, containing what is closest to the scientific knowledge of the time. We saw that Daoist ideas form the foundation of Chinese science.

In the third section, I tried to compare Dao in Daoism to God in Christianity with regard to these topics: ultimate reality as the origin and provider of all beings, the transcendence of Dao and God, the omnipresence of Dao and God, the indefinability of Dao and God, and personal and impersonal characterisations of Dao and God. As I related, there are several similar properties in God and Dao, and these provide clues for meaningful dialogue between Christianity and Daoism. Based on these ideas, I will now explore the conception of evil found in the *Zhuangzi* in the next chapter.

Chapter 5

Zhuangzi on Evil

In this chapter, I will examine the conception of evil found in the *Zhuangzi*. To begin with, I will explore what the origin of evil is and how evil can be understood in East Asian religious philosophy in comparison to Christianity. In order to examine the problem of evil in the *Zhuangzi*, we first need to have an understanding of evil in East Asian religions more generally. I then will focus on the ideas of the *Zhuangzi*. In this I will first try to explain the *Zhuangzi*'s conception of evil and its origins, secondly to relate the *Zhuangzi*'s perception of evil as a phenomenon, and finally to relate how the *Zhuangzi* believes evil can be overcome.

(1) East Asian Religions on Evil: Confucianism, Daoism, Buddhism

Confucianism, Daoism, and (*Mahayana*) Buddhism have been dominant religions in East Asian countries, especially, in China, Korea, Japan and Vietnam.³⁴⁶ For convenience I will call these three collectively as 'East Asian Religions' and their ideas 'East Asian philosophy' in this thesis. Because of their similarities and differences, the conceptions or understandings of evil in other East Asian religions help us to understand evil as found in the *Zhuangzi*, in turn allowing us to employ Zhuangzi's thought for our larger aim in this thesis.³⁴⁷

In examining evil in East Asian religions, there are some difficulties. It first needs to be said that what we call 'the problem of evil' is either non-existent or at most not a great threat in East Asian philosophy because of its understanding or conception of evil. For example, Laozi asks, 'How much difference is there between

³⁴⁶ Confucianism and Daoism originated in China. Buddhism spread to China from India by the first century BCE, but was not recognised as a foreign religion because Chinese Buddhism shared much with Daoism, including doctrinal emphases on reincarnation and practical emphases on meditation as the primary means to attain liberation. Chinese Buddhism was therefore considered to be another Daoist sect in the first years of its introduction in China. [Gentz, 92-93; Robert H. Sharf, *Coming to Terms with Chinese Buddhism: A Reading of the Treasure Store Treatise* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2002), 22.]

³⁴⁷ As far as Daoism is concerned, I will focus on Laozi's ideas of evil in this section. The Daoist philosophy of Zhuangzi on evil will be expounded in detail in the following section.

good and evil?’³⁴⁸ For Laozi, the differentiation between good and evil is metaphysically and logically meaningless because the ontology and experience of Ultimate Reality is expressed in an entirely different framework from the Western framework in which the problem of evil is posed. So I will instead use an indirect way to explore the problem of evil, i.e. the opposite of so-called ‘good’ in East Asian religions. Second, and to elaborate on what was said above, in contrast to traditional Christian belief which has held on to the infinite goodness and omnipotence of God, East Asian religions have different ideas about Ultimate Reality. In East Asian religions, omnipotence, omniscience and infinite goodness are not regarded as properties of Ultimate Reality. As we consider John Hick’s argument that ‘The problem of evil arises only for a religion which insists that the object of its worship is at once perfectly good and unlimitedly powerful’,³⁴⁹ what I have called the problem of evil in East Asian religions (that concerning what is considered by them as wrong or undesirable in life and how it should be dealt with), in which Ultimate Reality is not referred to as perfectly good or powerful should be discussed in a different manner to that of Western philosophy and theology. Third, there are various sects or divisions in Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism. This means that there is not one unified system of thought in any one of the traditions, and their ideas depend on diverse interpretations of core texts by religious scholars or sects that do not place high value on historical dating or chronological recording of authorship as in the West. The main religious texts of the East Asian religions, such as the *Analects*, the *Daodejing* and the *Zhuangzi*, are generally thought to be compilations of writings of several authors or to have been edited by disciples or later scholars. It means that it is not easy to infer the original ideas of the founders of the religions. I will therefore focus on the texts rather than the alleged founding thinkers, and I will thus give attention to selecting the representative scholars and main themes and tenets in each religion.

With these difficulties in mind, I will examine how evil can be understood in East Asian religious philosophy in this section, first exploring the origin of evil, second looking at how these religions have understood evil as a *natural phenomenon* – a key point which they share and which very clearly distinguishes them from

³⁴⁸ *Daodejing*, chap. 20. (善之與惡 相去若何?)

³⁴⁹ Hick, 4.

Christianity. As far as the origin of evil is concerned, I will focus on ‘moral evil’ because ‘evil’ in East Asian philosophy mostly means moral evil. In the third part, I will explore and compare how East Asian religions counsel their followers in living with the reality of evil as experienced.

The Origin of Evil

In East Asian philosophy, the reality of evil is inextricable from its theory of human nature rather than that of a God or of supernatural beings.³⁵⁰ Especially in Confucianism the standard position on the origin of evil is that *jen* (仁, humanity) is thwarted or corrupted by selfishness.³⁵¹ There are two traditions of Confucianism accounting for selfishness: Mencius (c.370–c.290 BCE) and Xunzi (c.300–c.230 BCE). Mencius insists on the innate goodness of the individual.

As for their essence, they can become good. This is what I mean by calling their natures good. As for their becoming not good, this is not the fault of their potential. Humans all have the heart of compassion. Humans all have the heart of disdain. Humans all have the heart of respect. Humans all have the heart of approval and disapproval.³⁵²

For Mencius, the mind of pity, commiseration, shame, dislike, respectfulness, reverence, right and wrong is possessed by all human beings, and this means that human nature is inherently good. Bad moral character is caused by society’s influence, thus, in Mencius, ‘The way of learning is none other than seeking for the lost mind’.³⁵³

Xunzi, by contrast, believes that human nature is originally bad, and the purpose of moral cultivation is to develop humans’ nature into a state of goodness. ‘Humans’ nature is evil, and their goodness is the result of their activity’.³⁵⁴ According to him,

³⁵⁰ Julia Ching, "The Problem of Evil and a Possible Dialogue between Christianity and Neo-Confucianism," *Contemporary Religions in Japan* 9, no. 3 (1968): 164.

³⁵¹ Neville, *Boston Confucianism: Portable Tradition in the Late-Modern World*, 102.

³⁵² Mencius, *The Mencius*, 6. A. 6. (乃若其情則可以爲善矣, 乃所謂善也。若夫爲不善, 非才之罪也。惻隱之心 人皆有之, 羞惡之心 人皆有之, 恭敬之心 人皆有之, 是非之心 人皆有之。) Ivanhoe and Norden, 147.

³⁵³ *Ibid.*, 6. A. 11. (學問之道 無也, 求其放心而已矣。)

³⁵⁴ Xunzi, *Xunzi*, chap. 23. (人之性惡, 其善者僞也。)

a human is born with a fondness for profit, and tends to towards conflict and evil. The principles of ritual (*le*, 禮) and music (*yue*, 樂) are ways by which human beings develop virtue and order, and humans' conscious effort toward their cultivation is needed to overcome their evil nature.³⁵⁵ Whether selfishness comes from social influence or human nature, selfishness is considered the origin of evil in Confucianism.³⁵⁶

As already indicated, in Daoism, discussing the origin of evil may be misguided. Laozi did not divide reality in terms of good and evil, and discussions of evils are denounced and avoided by both. Nevertheless, we can identify evils in Laozi by an indirect method. Even though Laozi did not differentiate evil from good dualistically, it is possible to infer the origin of evil in the core of their writings. We can find the opposites of the good that he pursued. Laozi emphasizes *wuwei*, and he rejects contrived or intentional action. For him, the notion of human will is of human origin and is unnatural, and intentional or deliberate actions create division, conflict and evil – evil being understood as disharmony. Laozi reveals the essence of *wuwei* understood as non-action: 'Dao [of heaven] does not contend but is good at victory, does not speak but is good at responding, does not call but things come of their own accord, and is not anxious but is good at laying plans. Heaven's net is vast. Its mesh is loose but misses nothing'.³⁵⁷ The life of non-action wins without fighting, responds without speaking, comes without calling, and plans good without anxiety. They are possible because heaven's net is loose but misses nothing. In other words, the world untouched by human machinations and manipulation is its most perfect condition, and we should therefore leave the world, including human nature, as it is. If human beings perform actions intentionally, or rather over consciously, the world loses its natural state, and evil comes about. Laozi even recommends: 'Cut off sageliness, abandon wisdom, and the people will benefit one-hundred-fold. Cut off benevolence, abandon righteousness, and the people will return to being filial and

³⁵⁵ Ibid., chap. 20. (禮樂之統, 管乎人心矣.)

³⁵⁶ In neo-Confucianism, the origin of evil can be explained by the interaction between *li* (principle) and *qi* (vital energy). For Zhu Xi, the two Ethers (yin and yang) and the Five Elements (water, fire, wood, metal and earth) were perfect in the beginning but they lose their perfection because of being rolled and swished back and forth. This operation causes lack of harmony, or what may be called evil, in the world. (Zhu Xi, *The Conversations*, 4. 13.)

³⁵⁷ *Daodejing*, chap. 73. (天之道, 不爭而善勝, 不言而善應, 不召而自來, 繹然而善謀. 天網恢恢, 疏而不失.) Ivanhoe and Norden, 199.

kind'.³⁵⁸ For him, 'sageliness', 'wisdom', 'benevolence' and 'righteousness' are discarded because Daoism rejects any non-spontaneous actions. Laozi refuses all actions that bring about artificiality because artificial acts cause artificial division, saying:

Everyone in the world knows that when the beautiful strives to be beautiful, it is repulsive. Everyone knows that when the good strives to be good, it is no good. And so, to have and to lack generate each other. Difficult and easy give form to each other. Long and short off-set each other. High and low incline into each other. Note and rhythm harmonize with each other. Before and after follow each other.³⁵⁹

According to Laozi, all things in the world are relative and complement one another. There is no distinction originally. The notions of long and short, high and low, and before and after are derived from intentional comparison. Intentional or deliberate behaviour causes division, and these bring about evil as a result.

In Buddhism, the origin of evil lies in ignorance (*avidya*), which means not knowing the true nature of the self.³⁶⁰ Evils are easily explained in Buddhistic metaphysics if we understand the word '*karma*'.

Karma is a Sanskrit word from the root '*kri*', which means to do or to make. So, *karma* literally means 'doing', 'making' or more widely, 'action'. As Christmas Humphreys explains, '*Karma* is the law of moral retribution, whereby not only does every cause have an effect, but he who puts the cause in action suffers the effect'.³⁶¹ In other words, it means that life becomes what one does. In the *Samyutta Nikaya*, one of the most important of the Buddhist scriptures, *karma* is described thus: 'Whatever sort of seed is sown, that is the sort of fruit one reaps: the doer of good reaps good; the doer of evil reaps evil. By you, dear, has the seed been sown; thus you will experience the fruit'.³⁶² Charles Keyes points out that *karma* is a 'theory of

³⁵⁸ Ibid., chap. 19. (絕聖棄智, 民利百倍. 絕仁棄義, 民復孝慈.) Ivanhoe and Norden, 171.

³⁵⁹ Ibid., chap. 2. (天下皆知美之爲美, 斯惡已. 皆知善之爲善, 斯不善已. 故有無相生, 難易相成, 長短相較, 高下相傾, 音聲相和, 前後相隨.) Ivanhoe and Norden, 163.

³⁶⁰ Mysore Hiriyanna, *The Essentials of Indian Philosophy* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1949), 75.

³⁶¹ Christmas Humphreys, *Karma and Rebirth*, New ed. (Richmond: Curzon Press, 1994), 12.

³⁶² *Samyutta Nikaya*, Part1. c.11. v.903. in Bhikkhu Bodhi, *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya*, 2 vols. (Somerville, MA: Wisdom Publications, 2000), 328.

causation that supplies reasons for human fortune, good or bad, and that can at least in theory provide convincing explanations for human misfortune'.³⁶³ Understood in a popular manner, *karma* is often talked about in conjunction with the notion of reincarnation or rebirth, together constituting a sort of system of moral retribution for one's own actions.

However, this popular understanding is rejected by most scholars and senior practitioners of *Mahayana* and Tibetan Buddhism. It should be said that the Buddha repeatedly claims that the question of reincarnation is unprofitable because it leads in no way to the heart's enlightenment.³⁶⁴ It should also be pointed out that the *Mahayana* understands *karma* in a cosmic or metaphysical fashion, which when taken with the *Mahayana*'s fundamental notion of *sunyata* or emptiness, is not to be understood in the same manner as the *Theravada*'s individualistic understanding of *karma*. Broadly speaking, for the Theravadists, *karma* is understood individualistically, such that the focus of spiritual practice is to purge oneself of negative *karma* through spiritual discipline; hence the Buddha is reported to have said 'Be ye a light unto yourselves'. In contrast, the *Mahayana* understands *karma* supra-individualistically, because reality is of the nature of emptiness, or boundlessness. Actions are not events performed by isolated agents, but are performed by all, and affecting all; hence, the work of the *bodhisattva* is to liberate all from *avidya* and the cycle of birth and death (*samsara*), which is caused precisely by the *ignor-ance* (ignoring) of the identity between oneself and cosmos, foregoing *nirvana* for themselves until this goal is reached. From the above considerations, we can generally say that Buddhism locates the origin of evil in humans' distorted perception of themselves and the world, and their consequently distorted behaviour, which causes suffering.

The Perception of Evil

In Confucianism, natural evil is accepted as fate or as the will of Heaven. People are encouraged to accept natural evil rather than ask the reason for it. The representative

³⁶³ Charles Keyes, "Merit-Transference in the Kammic Theory of Popular Teravada Buddhism," in *Karma: An Anthropological Inquiry*, ed. Charles Keyes and Valentine Daniel (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 167.

³⁶⁴ Humphreys, 51.

word is *ming* (命) or *tianming* (天命). *Ming* literally means fate or destiny, and *tianming* means Heaven's fate which is pictured by Heaven's moral decree, pure fatalism, or total agnosticism.³⁶⁵ *Tianming* can also mean Mandate of Heaven, decree of Ultimate Reality, personal destiny, and course of order. Because it can be explained diversely, what *tianming* is depends on one's own philosophy. This is because, in the *Analects*, as Joachim Gentz writes, 'there is hardly any thematic order, no unified teaching system and no coherent definition of the same term'.³⁶⁶ Early Confucianists understood it to mean either the decree of Ultimate Reality or the rise and fall of the moral order. However, Neo-Confucianist Zhu Xi used *tianming* to mean the operation of nature that is endowed in things and allows them to be as they are.³⁶⁷ According to Wing-tsit Chan, *tianming* generally means fate or personal order of God in religion, but it is practically always understood as moral destiny or moral order in philosophy.³⁶⁸ For modern writers, *ming* is interpreted as fatalism, naturalism, theism, atheism, and both theism and naturalism.³⁶⁹

Confucius (551–479 BCE) understands disease as *ming* rather than evil in the *Analects* (*Lunyu*).³⁷⁰ When Boniu fell ill, Confucius went to ask after his health. Grasping his hand through the window, Confucius sighs and says, 'That we are going to lose him must be due to fate! How else could such a man be afflicted with such an illness? How else could such a man be afflicted with such an illness?'³⁷¹ Zixia, a disciple of Confucius, says, 'Life and death are governed by *ming*, wealth and honour are determined by Heaven (*tian*)'.³⁷² Zixia understands that people cannot do anything about life and death and should accept them as fate. For Zixia, wealth and honour are settled by Heaven.

³⁶⁵ Ning Chen, "Confucius' View of Fate (Ming)," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 24, no. 3 (1997): 324.

³⁶⁶ Gentz, 54.

³⁶⁷ Chu Hsi, *Lunyu Chichu*, 2. 4. (天命 即天道之流行而賦於物者, 乃事物所以當然之故也.)

³⁶⁸ Chan, 22.

³⁶⁹ Chen, 323.

³⁷⁰ The *Analects* is the collection of dialogues between Confucius and his contemporaries edited c.150–140 BCE.

³⁷¹ Confucius, *Analects*, 6. 10. (亡之, 命矣夫! 斯人也而有斯疾也! 斯人也而有斯疾也!)

³⁷² *Ibid.*, 12. 5. (死生有命, 富貴在天.)

This understanding about life and death does not imply a total fatalism. In the *Analects*, we can see Confucius' emphasis on life. When Zilu asked about death, Confucius answered, 'You do not yet understand life – how could you possibly understand death?'³⁷³ The reason why Confucius did not want to speak about death was not because he did not understand it well, but because he thought that it was less important than life. Confucius thought that Zilu's question was only remotely related to practical concerns, so he avoided answering directly. Edward Slingerland mentions that we clearly see Confucius' practical orientation here: '[T]he aspiring gentleman [the exemplary person] is to focus his energy on virtuous conduct and concrete learning rather than empty speculation'.³⁷⁴ In this passage, we can learn much about Confucius' humanism.

Even if Confucius did not speak about death directly, we can perceive his ideas about death indirectly through other passages. For Confucius, death has always been with us.³⁷⁵ Death is neither evil nor special. Death is natural and is a part of *tianming*. Confucius understands that a person cannot become the exemplary person (君子) if he or she does not understand fate. 'One who does not understand fate lacks the means to become the exemplary person. One who does not understand ritual lacks the means to take his place. One who does not understand words lacks the means to evaluate others'.³⁷⁶ The exemplary person is the one who knows fate and follow it.

In Confucianism, natural evils arising from the earth's movement (e.g. earthquake, tsunami and hurricane) are understood as *ming*, as are disease and death. Confucius does not directly speak about natural disasters. I would suggest that we understand Confucius' thinking on disasters arising from the natural world in the context of his understanding of the role that Heaven plays in the natural world. When Confucius said that he would not speak, Zigong asked, 'If the Master does not speak, then how would we your follows receive guidance from you?' Confucius responded, 'What does Heaven ever say? Yet the four seasons are put in motion by it, and the

³⁷³ Ibid., 11. 12. (未知生, 焉知死?)

³⁷⁴ Confucius and Edward G. Slingerland, *Confucius Analects: With Selection from Traditional Commentaries* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Pub. Co., 2003), 115.

³⁷⁵ Confucius, 12. 7. (自古皆有死.)

³⁷⁶ Ibid., 20. 3. (不知命, 無以爲君子也, 不知禮, 無以立也, 不知言, 無以知人也.)

myriad creatures receive their life from it. What does Heaven ever say?’³⁷⁷ Confucius understands that the four seasons and the myriad creatures move by Heaven – yet Heaven does not say anything even while it accomplishes many important things. This suggests that Confucius accepts all operations of Heaven naturally.

Whether *ming* means blind fate or not is controversial. Guo Moruo and Fung Yu-ran think that Confucius played down the importance of spiritual beings in events, and his *tian* was not an anthropomorphic deity but a naturalistic force, so *ming* and *tianming* should be understood as blind fate.³⁷⁸

In contrast, Hall and Ames disagree with the idea that *ming* is understood as impersonal and immutable fate. They suggest three cases in the *Analecets* to support their opinion. The first one is that ‘Zigong will not accept his *ming*, and so engages in business speculation. His conjectures, though, are always on the mark’.³⁷⁹ The second is, ‘But must a complete person today be exactly like this? When seeing a chance for profit he thinks of what is right; when confronting danger, he is ready to take his *ming* into his own hands’.³⁸⁰ The final is the conversation between Zixia and Sima Niu about brotherless Sima Niu: ‘Life and death are governed by *ming*... In this way, everyone within the Four Seas is his brother. How could the exemplary person be concerned about not having brothers?’³⁸¹ Based on these passages, Hall and Ames claim that *ming* cannot be accepted as blind fate because a person without biological brothers can alter their condition by understanding what it means to have brothers, being able instead to have many *fraternal* brothers, such that what ‘fate’ is is in fact subject to changes in attitude.³⁸² In other words, they reject Confucius’ acceptance that *ming* is blind fate.

The opinion of Hall and Ames is comparatively new and while it may be persuasive, it is not above criticism. Above all, they use three passages to support their opinion, saying nothing about other passages, which cannot be interpreted in the

³⁷⁷ Ibid., 17. 19. (天何言哉? 四時行焉, 百物生焉, 天何言哉?)

³⁷⁸ Guo Moruo, *Shi pipan shu* [Ten critical articles] (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 1966), pp. 89–92; Fung Yu-lan. *Zhongguo zhhexueshi xinbian*, pp. 103–105. (In Chen, 327.)

³⁷⁹ Confucius, 11. 19. (賜不受命, 而貨殖焉, 億則屢中.)

³⁸⁰ Ibid., 14.12. (今之成人者何必然? 見利思義, 見危授命.)

³⁸¹ Ibid., 12. 5. (死生有命 ... 四海之內, 皆兄弟也, 君子何患乎無兄弟也?)

³⁸² David L. Hall and Roger T. Ames, *Thinking through Confucius* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1987), 214–15.

same manner. Moreover, Chen asserts that they have mixed changes in conception with changes in reality in their interpretation of 12:5, and explains this passage with the distinction of two realms between the transcendent and the human.³⁸³

To settle the problem of the inconsistency in Confucius' *ming*, I suggest that there were two different sorts of *ming*, and Confucius did not use this term with the same meaning every time. The two different meanings are 'life' and 'fate'. Currently, *ming* is used with these meanings. According to Shanghai Jiaotong University Press' *Chinese Characters Dictionary*, the first meaning of *ming* is life and the second is fate, lot, fortune or destiny.³⁸⁴ Other dictionaries show very similar results.³⁸⁵ *Ming*, in the *Analects* 11:19 and 14:12, means 'life', so Hall and Ames' interpretation cannot stand. I believe that all examples of *ming* concerning natural evils in the text refer to fate. Therefore, the contention that *ming* does not mean fate aside, I will focus on the property of *ming* as fate. To understand *ming* clearly, we should comprehend *tian* and the relationship between *ming* and *tian*; whether *tian* means moral Heaven and personal deity – in which case, all passages in the *Analects* should be interpreted in light of the issue of theodicy – or amoral fate and impersonal force; depending upon whether *ming* means blind fate or teleological term of Heaven.

In Daoism, Laozi seems to understand that death itself is not an evil. Laozi says, 'People model themselves on the earth. The earth models itself on Heaven. Heaven models itself on Dao. Dao models itself on what is natural (*ziran*)'.³⁸⁶ For him, people should eventually live according to what is natural, which means to comply with the order of nature. Dao models itself on the order of nature and death is a part of natural phenomena. Moreover, Laozi understands that all things were derived from Dao and are turning back to Dao. He says, 'Turning back is the action of Dao. Weakness is the operation of Dao. All things in the world arise from being, and being arises from non-being'.³⁸⁷ Since all creatures come from non-being, death is to

³⁸³ Chen, 331.

³⁸⁴ Guanghai Wu, *Chinese Characters Dictionary with English Annotations* (Shanghai: Shanghai Jiaotong University Press, 2002), 734.

³⁸⁵ See <http://www.mdbg.net> and <http://www.mandarintools.com/worddict.html>

³⁸⁶ *Daodejing*, chap. 25. (人法地, 地法天, 天法道, 道法自然.) Ivanhoe and Norden, 175.

³⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, chap. 40. (反者道之動, 弱者道之用. 天下萬物生於有, 有生於無.)

follow the law of Dao. Laozi even says that ‘What helps life along is called “inauspicious”’.³⁸⁸ Laozi recommends accepting *ming* just as Confucius does.

Attain extreme tenuousness; preserve quiet integrity. The myriad creatures are all in motion! I watch as they turn back. The teeming multitude of things, each returns home to its root; and returning to one’s root is called stillness. This is known as returning to one’s destiny [*ming*]; and returning to one’s destiny is known as constancy. To know constancy is called ‘enlightenment’. Those who do not know constancy want only produce misfortune. To know constancy is to be accommodating. To be accommodating is to work for the good of all. To work for the good of all is to be a true king. To be a true king is to be Heavenly. To be Heavenly is to embody Dao. To embody Dao is to be long lived, and one will avoid danger to the end of one’s days.³⁸⁹

Laozi understands that returning to one’s root is returning to fate, in accord with Dao, and is everlasting. Since he sees all things from the point of view of eternity, death is not evil. Confucius perceives death as fate, but Laozi understands it from a cosmic perspective. Even though Laozi does not talk about afterlife or Heaven as in Christianity, it could be argued that understanding death through the lens of eternity is similar to a Christian understanding of death.

Laozi thinks that death is a part of Dao’s movement, not good or bad, but he does not put the same importance on life and death. His philosophy is focused on life rather than death. For him, Dao is the principle of life, and Dao helps people have long lives. Laozi repeatedly says, ‘Whatever is not in accordance with Dao will soon die (perish)’,³⁹⁰ in chapters 30 and 55 of the *Daodejing*. Since Dao is life-centred, death is inferior to life, metaphorically speaking. For instance, Laozi says, ‘When alive human beings are supple and weak; when dead they are stiff and strong.... The strong and the mighty reside down below; the soft and the supple reside on top’.³⁹¹ For Laozi, tenderness and weakness like life are superior because they come from a

³⁸⁸ Ibid., chap. 55. (益生曰祥) Ivanhoe and Norden, 189.

³⁸⁹ Ibid., chap. 16. (致虛極, 守靜篤. 萬物竝作, 吾以觀復. 夫物芸芸, 各復歸其根. 歸根曰靜, 是謂復命. 復命曰常, 知常曰明. 不知常, 妄作凶. 知常容. 容乃公. 公乃王. 王乃天. 天乃道. 道乃久. 沒身不殆.) Ivanhoe and Norden, 170.

³⁹⁰ Ibid., chap. 30; 55. (不道早已.)

³⁹¹ Ibid., chap. 76. (人之生, 也柔弱. 其死也堅強 ... 強大處下, 柔弱處上.) Ivanhoe and Norden, 200.

lack of will, and strength and greatness like death are inferior because they come from assertive will.

In Daoism, Laozi does not consider natural disasters as evil and in fact seems to regard evils caused by human agency and will as more important. In the *Daodejing*, Laozi says that natural disasters derive from nature and not from human action. ‘To be sparing with words is what comes naturally. And so, a blustery wind does not last all morning; a heavy downpour does not last all day. Who produces these? Heaven and earth!’.³⁹² For Laozi, natural movements such as whirlwinds and rainstorms are the operations of Heaven and earth, i.e. the those of Dao, so they cannot be regarded as evil. Laozi thinks those who have virtue (德, power of Dao) are in a specific sense free from natural disasters. He says, ‘Those who are steeped in Virtue are like newborn children; poisonous creatures will not strike them; fierce beasts will not seize them; birds of prey will not snatch them away’.³⁹³ In another part of the *Daodejing*, Laozi says, ‘I have heard that those good at nurturing life, on land do not meet with rhinoceroses or tigers.... Rhinoceroses find no place to thrust their horns; tigers find no place to sink their claws’.³⁹⁴ Those who have virtue or are good at nurturing life are free from death in the sense that they no longer identify themselves as a self occupying the limited space of the physical body, but rather identify themselves with the cosmos or *Dao*. Through such harmony, it could be said that such a person does not ‘die’ as long as this is understood not to be the dissolution of the body (which is inescapable) but rather the dissolution of a body which is regarded as the beginning and end of the person. Evidenced by the fact that he does not regard natural disasters as evil but as natural processes, we can conclude that Laozi does not think that natural evil even exists. Laozi understands that evil in the strict, moral sense, derives from humans’ assertive will.

Death in Buddhism is also not regarded as evil or punishment for wrong because it is required for *karma*’s operation. Death is just the causal and neutral mechanism of *karma* because if there is no death, there is neither *karma* nor rebirth. Moreover,

³⁹² Ibid., chap. 23. (希言自然. 故飄風不終朝, 驟雨不終日. 孰爲此者, 天地.) Ivanhoe and Norden, 174.

³⁹³ Ibid., chap. 55. (含德之厚, 比於赤子. 蜂虻蛇不螫, 猛獸不據, 攫鳥不搏.) Ivanhoe and Norden, 189.

³⁹⁴ Laozi, *Daodejing*, Chapter 50. (善攝生者, 陸行不遇虎兕.... 無所投其角, 虎無所措其爪.) Ivanhoe and Norden, 186.

death is sometimes understood as the means to reach greater rewards in the next life, even though this understanding of death draws the counterargument that ultimate reward is to enter into *nirvana* by a release from the cycle of *samsara* (rebirth). Therefore, death is an indispensable part of maintaining rebirth, and also the possibility of attaining *nirvana*. In Buddhistic mechanisms, natural evils are easily explained, and bodily death and disease are not evils.

In Buddhism, evil is of human origin, and humans suffer from their choices and use of their own free will. We should be clear on what this means. Buddhism would not claim that ‘natural disasters’ and evils such as bodily disease arise from a disruption consequent upon misuse of human freedom. Rather, the term ‘evil’ is used in a qualified, perhaps metaphorical sense, not relating to physical events *per se*, but rather to a psychological state of ‘suffering *about* suffering’, or suffering over physical or mental pain, as we might worry about worrying. *Karma* should therefore be interpreted psychologically to mean the law of cause and effect pertaining to previous psychological states and attitudes that influence current and future psychological attitudes. Pain and suffering caused by natural phenomena such as earthquakes and rainstorms cannot be considered evils or detested as such because they are simply a part of the law of *karma*.

A question about the law of *karma* is raised. How can we accept occasional accidents? Is there some reason that we may discover? Perhaps most directly: do people deserve all that happens to them? Humphreys explains that: ‘There must equally be unmerited happiness, for which in due course we must compensate with suffering, and that on balance the cosmic harmony, within and by the Law of *karma*, would be restored’.³⁹⁵ He thinks that ‘time’ is the key to the problem. It would be incredibly difficult, if we took a literalistic understanding of reincarnation, to comprehend the guidance of an incoming soul to a body and to a set of exact circumstances it deserves, that is, along karmic lines as they are manifest for each person. But even if *karma* is not taken on individualistic lines, it is nonetheless the law of the cosmos, and each of our actions influences the future for all human beings in some way or other, however undetectable at present. For Humphreys, all that does not *apparently* accord with the law of *karma* at present, therefore, would perhaps be the object of later payment of *karmic* debt.

³⁹⁵ Humphreys, 65.

Comparison

I have tried to relate how evil is understood and integrated in human experience in East Asian philosophy. We found that while there are similarities, such as between the Confucian and Daoist notions of harmony and disharmony, there are also clear differences, even if only in emphasis; for example, whereas Buddhism would speak of ‘atonement’ for the ‘sin’ of *avidya*, Daoism would not. Here, I will briefly compare the above approaches to evil to that of classical, biblical Christian thought in order to reveal the broader, shared characteristics of East Asian philosophy.

The biblical Christian tradition of natural evil is informed by biblical stories such as the Flood, or the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, where divine judgement is wrought through the natural world. That is, the whole natural world enacts God’s punishment for sin or disobedience of his will. On the other hand, there are exceptional cases in the Bible. In the Book of Job, Job suffers horrendously, despite the fact that he is ‘blameless and upright’ (Job 1:1). In addition, as Jesus’ disciples asked him, ‘Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?’ Jesus answered. ‘Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life’ (John 9:3). These kinds of natural evils cannot be explained by the punishment of God.

For Buddhism, the theory of *karma* can explain the problem of natural evils not in terms of its origin but in terms of its acceptance, integration in human experience and its remedy for human consciousness. Christian thought by comparison has much difficulty, because of its literalistic interpretation of evil – evil not as a mental state of *avidya* and consequent suffering about suffering, but as a positive reality created by some agent, whether it be by human beings or God, or even by other supernatural beings like the Devil or unclean or evil spirits in the Bible.

In Buddhism, evil, that is, psychological suffering arises from human behaviour – sin, or *avidya*. Natural evils may be seen as punishment for human sin in both Buddhism and biblical Christianity, but in vastly different ways. In the Bible, human sin is sometimes punished in this life by God, and in Buddhism, human sin is punished in the next life, even if it be the next stage in our psychological makeup or development, by the law of *karma*. *That which a man soweth, he will reap.*

That said, the theory of *karma* is not beyond criticism. Kaufman points out five problems with the law of *karma*: the memory problem, the proportionality problem, the infinite regress problem, the problem of explaining death, and the free will problem.³⁹⁶ Henry Wright claims that *karma* proposes no solution to evil, and what it amounts to is only a proposal for pessimism and surrender.³⁹⁷ I do not agree with Wright. The law of *karma* is only pessimistic if taken as something analogous to predestination, whereby even physical evil, pain or suffering is the result of karmic causal lines from an infinity of previous lives. In actual fact, the law of *karma* is optimistic from the point of view that the present life, or one's present state of mind (including attitudes and conceptions about oneself and the world) completely decides what one experiences in the future, however distant. Buddhism claims that people can decide the quality of their next life, or perhaps state of consciousness, through their own effort. Therefore, I think the law of *karma* is something of an oxymoronic 'pessimistic optimism'.

In many religions, as in philosophy, the tension between fatalism and 'libertarianism' (absolute freedom of the will) is a live issue. The main reason is that scriptures can be interpreted in many ways because of different authors, times, and compilations of texts. In Confucianism, it is controversial whether supernatural force (*tian, shangdi*) means personal and moral agency or blind and impersonal fate. Again, in Buddhism, *karma* seems to be fatalistic because it encourages people to accept their present life. However, in the sense that people's present life is the result of their previous life, people can decide their future life through their own will, and this supports libertarianism in Buddhism. Throughout Christian history, there has been a controversy over free will and predestination.³⁹⁸ St. Paul says, 'For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified' (Rom. 8:29–30). However, the Psalmist says, 'Surely you will reward each person

³⁹⁶ Whitley R. P. Kaufman, "Karma, Rebirth, and the Problem of Evil," *Philosophy East and West* 55, no. 1 (2005): 19-27.

³⁹⁷ Henry W. Wright, "The Problem of Natural Evil and Its Solution by Christianity," *The American Journal of Theology* 13, no. 1 (1909): 50-51.

³⁹⁸ This issue forms a major point of doctrine in at least one important tradition since the Reformation, i.e. Calvinism. For Calvinists, predestination generally refers to the belief that God has absolute power over human's salvation and damnation.

according to what he has done' (Ps. 62:12), and there are other passages to support humans' free will (Deut. 12:28; John 13:17, 2 Cor. 11:15; Jam. 1:25). Therefore, there has been tension between fatalism and libertarianism in both Christianity and East Asian philosophy, and this tension helps us to see several aspects of these religions.

According to the *Analects*, natural evils are sometimes constitutive of punishment for human wrongdoing, and Confucius understands natural evils as events that occur merely part and parcel of what he calls 'fate'. However, we cannot conclude this because, in Confucian texts earlier than the *Analects*, such as the *Shangshu* and the *Shijing*, natural evils are not described as a result of human behaviour sent down by heaven as punishment. Earlier, significant Confucian texts focus on moral evils, such that calamities, which are sent down by heaven, are always human-made – like invasion, rebellion and usurpation, rather than natural disasters.³⁹⁹ Laozi also insists on non-action and leading a life which follows Dao, or the Way of nature. However, differently from biblical Christianity and Buddhism, Confucianism and Daoism understand natural evils from a more natural and cosmological viewpoint: fate rather than punishment, and a present life rather than a future life.

When it comes to understanding natural death, classical Christianity, Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism all take a neutral attitude. Death itself is not evil. In particular, death can be explained from the perspective of eternity in Christianity, Daoism and Buddhism. In other words, death does not mean the end but the beginning of the next life in these religions. The kingdom of heaven in Christianity, perpetuity of Dao in Daoism, and the next life through *karma* in Buddhism commonly imply that death is a rite of passage. Layman suggests a hypothesis to settle the problem of natural evil: 'If any purposes that an almighty and perfectly good being has for its creatures have not been achieved prior to their death, then such purposes will be achieved – to the extent possible – after the death of the creatures'.⁴⁰⁰ He thinks that this hypothesis can provide an assurance that people who have died due to natural evils will have opportunities to reclaim the fulfilment once

³⁹⁹ Joachim Gentz, "Confucius Confronting Contingency in the Lunyu and the Gongyang Zhuan," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 39 (2012): 63.

⁴⁰⁰ Layman, 14.

denied them.⁴⁰¹ His explanation is one way to understand natural death in Christianity and Buddhism which emphasize an afterlife in some manner.

Dao, in Daoism, is the origin of creation and extinction. Laozi says, ‘Turning back is the action of Dao. Weakness is the operation of Dao. All things in the world arise from being, and being arises from non-being’.⁴⁰² Although Laozi does not mention an afterlife directly, he understands death from a cyclical or eternal perspective. Therefore, natural death in Christianity, Buddhism, and Daoism, is understood from not just this world but also the next life, so death itself is not evil.

Laozi says, ‘The myriad creatures are all in motion! I watch as they turn back. The teeming multitude of things, each returns home to its root; and returning to one’s root is called stillness. This is known as returning to one’s destiny [*ming*]’.⁴⁰³ For Laozi, returning to *ming* is being called to eternity and is in accord with Dao. The writer of the Book of Ecclesiastes similarly says, ‘The dust returns to the ground it came from, and the spirit returns to God who gave it’ (Eccl. 12:7). For the writer, all things return to their roots, so what has been will be again.

I know that everything God does will endure forever; nothing can be added to it and nothing taken from it. God does it so that men will revere him. Whatever is has already been, and what will be has been before; and God will call the past to account (Eccl. 3:14–15).

For Ecclesiastes, whatever is has already been, and what will be has been before, and therefore there is nothing new under the sun (Eccl. 1:9). In Buddhism, the law of *karma* pervades all reality, manifest in this case in that all things die and are born again repeatedly. Since all things are connected, there is nothing new under the sun in Buddhism. Laozi says, ‘Heaven is long lasting and earth endures’.⁴⁰⁴ For Ecclesiastes, the Buddhist tradition and Daoism, human life, and each of our lives, is only a phase of or episode in the life of the earth and earth, or the world, is itself eternal.

⁴⁰¹ Ibid., 15.

⁴⁰² *Daodejing*, chap. 40. (反者道之動, 弱者道之用. 天下萬物生於有, 有生於無.)

⁴⁰³ Ibid., chap. 16. (萬物竝作, 吾以觀復. 夫物芸芸, 各復歸其根. 歸根曰靜. 是謂復命.) Ivanhoe and Norden, 170.

⁴⁰⁴ Laozi, *Daodejing*, Chapter 7. (天長地久.) Ivanhoe and Norden, 166.

Laozi explains an ideal world free from natural evils as follows:

I have heard that those good at nurturing life, on land do not meet with rhinoceroses or tigers, and in battle do not encounter armoured warriors. Rhinoceroses find no place to thrust their horns; tigers find no place to sink their claws; soldiers find no place to drive in their blades. Why is this? Because such people have no place for death.⁴⁰⁵

Isaiah portrays paradise poetically:

The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them. The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. The infant will play near the hole of the cobra, and the young child put his hand into the viper's nest (Isa. 11:6-8).

St. John hears a loud voice from the throne saying, 'There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away' (Rev. 21:4). The focus is a new heaven and a new earth following the end of the world. In contrast, for Buddhism, the end of death and suffering neither lies in a new or different world, objectively, nor a better life or rebirth in the future. Rather, the end of suffering and death is *nirvana*, awakening.⁴⁰⁶ What all three religions share here is the belief that in this ideal state, be it an ideal world or an ideal state of consciousness, there are no evils or suffering whatsoever.

(2) Zhuangzi on Evil

The Origin of Evil

As I explained in the previous chapter, non-action (*wuwei*) and spontaneity (*ziran*) are core notions in Daoist thought. To forego wilful or self-conscious action, allowing oneself to follow or flow with the direction of nature without attempting to control events or other people's actions is, for the Daoist, the ideal life, the life of *wuwei-ziran*. This life is required not only for the common people but also political

⁴⁰⁵ Laozi, *Daodejing*, Chapter 50. (善攝生者, 陸行不遇虎兕, 入軍不被甲兵. 無所投其角, 虎無所措其爪, 兵無所容其刃. 夫何故? 以其無死地.) Ivanhoe and Norden, 186-187.

⁴⁰⁶ Keown, 42.

leaders.⁴⁰⁷ According to the *Zhuangzi*, ‘If the exemplary persons find they have no other choice than to direct and look after the world, then the best course for them is non-action. As long as there is non-action, people rest in the true form of their nature’.⁴⁰⁸

Based on this philosophy of Zhuangzi, we can infer what his ideas on the origin of evil or suffering are. First, wilful action (breaking *wuwei*) causes evil. Because in Daoist thought the notions of ‘good’ and ‘wrong’ seem to be synonymous with ‘natural’ and ‘unnatural’ respectively, it follows that any action that breaks the natural harmony of things is wrong, and one does this by attempting to control life. There is an insightful story in the *Zhuangzi* concerning the attempt to control what is given by nature.

The emperor of the South Sea was called Shu [Brief]; the emperor of the North Sea was called Hu [Sudden]; and the emperor of the central region was called Hundun [Chaos]. From time to time, Shu and Hu came together for a meeting in the territory of Hundun, and Hundun treated them very generously. Shu and Hu discussed how they could repay his kindness. ‘All men’, they said, ‘have seven openings so they can see, hear, eat, and breathe. But Hundun alone doesn’t have any. Let’s try boring him some!’ Every day they bored another hole, and on the seventh day Hundun died.⁴⁰⁹

In this last story of the Inner Chapters, Zhuangzi emphasizes the importance of a state without effortful or self-conscious action. Hundun died because of his friends’ ‘favour’, demonstrating that good intentions certainly do not always entail good outcomes, and that our attempts to improve what is already given can in fact backfire, because we are acting against the principle of *wuwei*.⁴¹⁰

Intriguingly, the word *hundun* (混沌) literally means ‘chaos’, which is also the state before creation as narrated in Genesis 1:2. The Christian God commenced the creation of the universe in this state of chaos at the very beginning, setting about to

⁴⁰⁷ We note that the *Daodejing*, like many Daoist texts, also functions as a manual for ruling.

⁴⁰⁸ *Zhuangzi*, chap. 11. (故君子不得已而臨莅天下, 莫若無爲. 無爲也而後安其性命之情.)

⁴⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, chap. 7. (南海之帝爲儻, 北海之帝爲忽, 中央之帝爲混沌. 儻與忽, 時相與遇於混沌之地, 混沌待之甚善. 儻與忽謀報混沌之德. 曰, 人皆有七竅, 以視聽食息, 此獨無有, 嘗試鑿之. 日鑿一竅, 七日而混沌死.) Watson, 59.

⁴¹⁰ The English maxim of not ‘Gilding the lily’ and the Zen maxim of not ‘Putting legs on a snake’ express this sentiment of avoiding unnecessary change, improvement or adornment very well.

create order, but in the *Zhuangzi*, a pristine state of chaos is regarded as most desirable. While ‘chaos’ almost always has negative denotations and connotations in English, it has many more in Chinese, some good and bad, including ‘innocent’ and ‘muddled’. Doing anything to this primordial first state in the cosmos and consciousness causes evil, according to Zhuangzi.

While *wuwei* and *ziran* cannot be talked about independently of each other, we may identify slightly different emphases in either concept. While *wuwei* emphasises the attitude or state of ‘letting go’, literally meaning ‘not pushing’, the emphasis of *ziran*, being ‘self suchness’ is that of something acting *of* itself, and *in* itself, without extrinsic cause or necessity, which is how Daoism characterises nature as a whole (*ziran* also being the word to denote ‘nature’ in Mandarin). We might therefore look at how breaking *ziran*, the *way* of nature, is regarded by Zhuangzi, too. Zhuangzi argues the importance of following the order of nature with the famous sword of antiquity ‘Moye’.

When a skilled smith is casting metal, if the metal should leap up and say, ‘I insist on being made into a Moye!’ he would surely regard it as very inauspicious metal indeed. Now, having had the audacity to take on human form once, if I should say, ‘I don’t want to be anything but a man! Nothing but a man!’ the Creator would surely regard me as a most inauspicious sort of person. So now I think of heaven and earth as a great furnace, and the Creator as a skilled smith. Where could he send me that would not be all right? I will go off to sleep peacefully, and then with a start, I will wake up.⁴¹¹

With the parable of the Moye, Zhuangzi accounts for the life of *ziran*. Heaven and earth are both compared to a great furnace and the Creator, Dao, to a skilled smith. All things in the world are in the process of being made by the Creator, being sustained and preserved in existence without any effort or control on their part. Thus, the most natural thing to do is to acknowledge this fact *in our being*, to *feel* and not merely *know* that our beginning, middle and end are all in the hands of the Ultimate, and not under our own control. If we do not feel this fact, we will not allow ourselves to flow with nature, through want of control (itself in virtue of being anxious about

⁴¹¹ *Zhuangzi*, chap. 6. (今大冶鑄金, 金踊躍曰, 我且必爲鑊, 大冶必以爲不祥之金. 今一犯人之形, 而曰人耳人耳, 夫造化者, 必以爲不祥之人. 今一以天地爲大鑪, 以造化爲大冶, 惡乎往而不可哉! 成然寐, 籩然覺.) Watson, 48–49.

ourselves and our lives) and want to be something specially crafted like Moye – bringing about evil in the world.

Third, for Daoism, all things arise mutually, are mutually dependent – this being known as *xiangsheng* (相生, being-born-together). The paradigmatic instance of this principle is *yin-yang*, of positive and negative aspects in all reality, extending to inside and outside, the singular and the plural, and even existence and nonexistence, meaning that it is, at bottom, impossible to isolate any object of the world as a self-subsisting entity or fact. Daoism shares this perspective with Hinduism and Buddhism, according to which entities have no *svabhava*, or self-existence.⁴¹² Dividing or discriminating between things – defining and positing them as objects of human consciousness to the exclusion of others – causes evil, according to Zhuangzi:

Everything has its ‘that’, everything has its ‘this’. From the point of view of ‘that’, you cannot see it; but through understanding, you can know it. So I say, ‘that’ comes out of ‘this’, and ‘this’ depends on ‘that’ – which is to say that ‘this’ and ‘that’ give birth to each other. But where there is birth, there must be death; where there is death, there must be birth. Where there is acceptability, there must be unacceptability; where there is unacceptability, there must be acceptability. Where there is recognition of right, there must be recognition of wrong; where there is recognition of wrong, there must be recognition of right. Therefore, the sage does not proceed in such a way but illuminates all in the light of Heaven (Nature). He, too, recognizes a ‘this’ but a ‘this’ that is also ‘that’, a ‘that’ that is also ‘this’. His ‘that’ has both a right and a wrong in it; his ‘this’, too, has both a right and a wrong in it. So, in fact, does he still have a ‘this’ and ‘that’? Or does he, in fact, no longer have a ‘this’ and ‘that’? A state in which ‘this’ and ‘that’ no longer find their opposites is called ‘the hinge of Dao (*daoshu*, 道樞)’.⁴¹³

According to Zhuangzi, distinctions between this and that, between death and birth, between acceptability and unacceptability, and between right and wrong, are meaningless, and are in fact, harmful. Dao operates without distinctions or divisions and following the Dao in *wuwei-ziran* is what Zhuangzi regards as the good life. That

⁴¹² Alan Watts, *The Way of Zen* (New York: Vintage Books, 1989), 63.

⁴¹³ *Zhuangzi*, chap. 2. (物無非彼, 物無非是. 自彼則不見, 自是則知之. 故曰彼出於是, 是亦因彼. 彼是方生之說也, 雖然, 方生方死, 方死方生. 方可方不可. 因是因非, 因非因是. 是以聖人不由, 而照之於天, 亦因是也. 是亦彼也, 彼亦是也. 彼亦一是非, 此亦一是非. 果且有彼是乎哉? 果且無彼是乎哉? 彼是莫得其偶, 謂之道樞.) Watson, 10.

Dao has no divisions and operates without divisions is made evident in the following passage.

The ten thousand things are really one. We look on some as beautiful because they are rare or unearthly; we look on others as ugly because they are foul and rotten. But the foul and rotten may turn into the rare and unearthly, and the rare and unearthly may turn into the foul and rotten. So it is said, 'You have only to comprehend the one breath that is the world'. The sage never ceases to value oneness.⁴¹⁴

For the *Zhuangzi*, beauty and ugliness are ultimately *relative* values – relative to a person, a time, and a place, always changing and only 'true', if that can ever be said, at *this* particular instance when one uses the word, and for the particular person using it. But in virtue of *xiangsheng*, they are also inevitably *false* values for someone else. Bearing in mind that Dao transcends even number or quantity and is, as such, beyond the singular and plural, I maintain that 'yi (一)' is better understood as something along the lines of 'fundamental boundless'.⁴¹⁵ Because all things are boundless, Zhuangzi believes that the only value to be held dear is that of boundlessness. Dividing between beauty and ugliness, right and wrong, and good and evil is the origin of evil (if we name it 'evil') in the philosophy of Zhuangzi.

The Perception of Evil

Zhuangzi said much about natural evil, including death, while Confucius and Laozi did not. The *Zhuangzi* connects the origin of death with Dao: 'Dao is the origin of all things in the universe. Without Dao, everything will die; with Dao, everything will live'.⁴¹⁶ For the *Zhuangzi*, life and death are a part of the operation of Dao. Zhuangzi also understands death as *ming*: 'Life and death are fated – constant as the succession

⁴¹⁴ Ibid., chap. 22. (故萬物一也, 是其所美者為神奇. 其所惡者為臭腐. 臭腐復化為神奇, 神奇復化為臭腐. 故曰, 通天下一氣耳. 聖人故貴一.) Watson, 177.

⁴¹⁵ While Watson translates the character '一' as 'one', this is in fact its simplest meaning, and at a deeper level, denotes fundamentally Daoist intimations of 'focus', 'unity' and 'holistic'. Palmer translates it as 'unity'. [Martin Palmer, *The Book of Chuang Tzu* (London: Penguin Books, [1996] 2006), 188.]

⁴¹⁶ *Zhuangzi*, chap. 31. (道者, 萬物之所由也, 庶物失之者死, 得之者生.)

of dark and dawn, a matter of Heaven. There are some things that man can do nothing about – all are a matter of the nature of creatures'.⁴¹⁷

Since life and death are beyond the power of human beings, Zhuangzi believed that we ought to stop making valuations about death. When Zhuangzi's wife died, Huizi saw that Zhuangzi was squatting on the ground, singing and beating time on a basin. Huizi said, 'You lived with her, she brought up your children and grew old... But pounding on a tub and singing – this is going too far, isn't it?' Zhuangzi said:

You're wrong. When she first died, do you think I didn't grieve like anyone else? But I looked back to her beginning and the time before she was born. Not only the time before she was born, but the time before she had a body. Not only the time before she had a body, but the time before she had a spirit. In the midst of the jumble of wonder and mystery, a change took place and she had a spirit. Another change and she had a body. Another change and she was born. Now there's been another change and she's dead. It's just like the progression of the four seasons: spring, summer, fall, winter. Now she's going to lie down peacefully in a vast room. If I were to follow after her bawling and sobbing, it would show that I don't understand anything about fate. So I stopped'.⁴¹⁸

Zhuangzi's answer well illustrates the text's view of life and death. In the *Zhuangzi*, death is a return to our roots; we become a part of nature as we always were, and this allows us to see now that we are indeed inseparable from nature, that we are nature, and to accept the operations of Dao and *ming*. Therefore, death itself is not evil, and even getting wildly upset over death is unnatural.

The *Zhuangzi* also states:

For example, hunger, thirst, cold and heat, and poverty and destitution – these all come from the operation of the heaven and the earth and from the movement of things. To escape from the afflictions by Heaven (*tian*) means to change with the operation of heaven and earth and with the movement of things.⁴¹⁹

⁴¹⁷ Ibid., chap. 6. (死生命也, 其有夜旦之常, 天也. 人之有所不得與, 皆物之情也.) Watson, 44.

⁴¹⁸ Ibid., chap. 18. (不然. 是其始死也, 我獨何能无慨然! 察其始 而本无生, 非徒无生也 而本无形, 非徒无形也 而本无氣. 雜乎芒物之間, 變而有氣, 氣變而有形, 形變而有生, 今又變而之死, 是相與爲春秋冬夏四時行也. 人且偃然寢於巨室, 而我嗷嗷然 隨而哭之, 自以爲不通乎命, 故止也.) Watson, 140–141.

⁴¹⁹ Ibid., chap. 20. (飢渴寒暑, 窮桎不行, 天地之行也. 運物之泄也, 言與之偕逝之謂也.)

For the *Zhuangzi*, because pain and suffering such as hunger, thirst, cold and heat, are all caused by the operation of Dao (heaven and earth), trying to change them is to challenge the operation of Dao itself.

Moreover, the problem of evil as both experienced and conceived is explained by the word ‘*yin*’ in Daoism. *Yin* literally means the ‘shadow side’ or ‘gloomy side’, and *yin* always and inextricably exists with *yang*, the positive – hence the notion of *yinyang*. Hsiao-Lan Hu and William Allen expound the interaction of *yin* and *yang*: ‘*Yin* and *yang* stand for the two opposites that are contradicting each other and encroaching upon each other, and yet the two are also receding from each other and moving toward each other, supplementing each other, balancing each other, and also containing each other’.⁴²⁰ *Yin* and *yang* are bound up each other and they are in complementary relations.

Laozi and Zhuangzi express their philosophy based on the harmony of *yin* and *yang*. Laozi says:

To have and to lack generate each other. Difficult and easy give form to each other. Long and short off-set each other. High and low incline into each other. Note and rhythm harmonize with each other. Before and after follow each other.⁴²¹

All things in the world exist in a harmonizing relationship and supplement each other whether we can discern those relations for ourselves or not. Discrimination between having and lacking, between easy and difficult, between long and short, and between high and low is meaningless. Even differentiation between good and evil is insignificant and is actually harmful according to both Laozi and Zhuangzi.

Dao in the *Zhuangzi* contains the bright side (*yang*) and the shadow side (*yin*), good and evil, something and nothing, and life and death. *Yin* and *yang*, which compose Dao, cannot exist independently. Suffering and death, which are manifestations of *yin*, cannot be excluded from the operations of Dao because *yin* and *yang* move interdependently. According to the *Zhuangzi*, ‘The sage harmonizes with both right and wrong and rests in Heaven the Equalizer. This is called “walking

⁴²⁰ Hsiao-Lan Hu and William Cully Allen, *Taoism, Religions of the World* (Philadelphia: Chelsea House, 2005), 31.

⁴²¹ *Daodejing*, chap. 2. (故有無相生, 難易相成, 長短相較, 高下相傾, 音聲相和, 前後相隨.)
Ivanhoe and Norden, 163.

two roads (*liangxing*, 兩行)”.⁴²² Therefore, the shadow side of Dao, *yin*, is indispensable according to the philosophy of Zhuangzi.

Overcoming of Evil

The question of how evil can be overcome in Daoist philosophy is a difficult (perhaps even absurd) question, but I will try to answer this based on the teachings of the *Daodejing* and the *Zhuangzi*.

In Laozi and Zhuangzi, the highest good is non-action. The most important way to overcome the problem of evil is to live by acceptance of the laws of nature. This ideal life consists in living without intentional action. Laozi portrays the life of sages:

Those who would gain the world and do something with it, I see that they will fail. The world is a spiritual vessel and one cannot put it to use. Those who use it ruin it. Those who grab hold of it lose it. And so, sometimes things lead and sometimes they follow; sometimes they breathe gently and sometimes they pant; sometimes they are strong and sometimes they are weak; sometimes they fight and sometimes they fall; this is why sages cast off whatever is extreme, extravagant, or excessive.⁴²³

Attempts to manipulate the world according to our image or ideas about how it should be will always fail. Whether it is the self-defeating attempt to force ourselves to be good, to right the world's wrongs, to force oneself to bear any amount of physical or emotional pain without mental suffering, or to create a world without suffering, both Laozi and Zhuangzi teach that such efforts amount to disruption of the flow of Dao because we are getting in our own way. In the end, such attempts amount only to self-strangulation. When we give it up, when we let it go, and, as it were, let ourselves be carried by Dao, we no longer experience evil.

In like manner, Laozi believes that when rulers attempt to control the lives of their subjects, that is, to rule overbearingly, their actions bring about evil in the world:

⁴²² *Zhuangzi*, chap. 2. (是以聖人和之以是非. 而休乎天鈞. 是之謂兩行.) Watson, 11.

⁴²³ *Daodejing*, chap. 29. (將欲取天下而爲之, 吾見其不得已. 天下神器, 不可爲也. 爲者敗之, 執者失之. 故物或行或隨, 或歔或吹, 或強或羸, 或挫或隳. 是以聖人, 去甚去奢去泰.) Ivanhoe and Norden, 177.

The people are hungry because those above eat up too much in taxes; this is why the people are hungry. The people are difficult to govern because those above engage in action; this is why the people are difficult to govern. People look upon death lightly because those above are obsessed with their own lives; this is why the people look upon death lightly. Those who do not strive to live are more worthy than those who cherish life.⁴²⁴

Laozi says that rulers have trouble ruling people because they engage in doing something other than letting the world and human nature be as they are. Endeavouring to live, or rather, endeavouring to force life to become what we imagine it should be so that we can be happy, is no more worthy than cherishing life – precisely because cherishing life brings about anxiety, attachment, and therefrom, the intention to control. For Laozi, the most extreme evil is war because it is an extreme example of an attempt to control people, events and the world, arising from anxiety and attachment. Laozi criticizes the waging of war: ‘One who serves a ruler with Dao will never take the world by force of arms. For such actions tend to come back in kind. Wherever an army resides, thorns and thistles grow. In the wake of a large campaign, bad harvests are sure to follow’.⁴²⁵ A war is a deliberate action for the sake of a king or nation’s desires for conquest.

According to Chapter 53 of the *Daodejing*, the gap between rich and poor is a manifestation of radical deviance from Dao. All people have success and enjoy a share in nature’s bounty, but some people get more than their share through selfish, that is, controlling, behaviour:

The court is resplendent, yet the fields are overgrown, and the granaries are empty. Yet some wear elegant clothes; fine swords dangle at their sides; they are stuffed with food and drink; and possess wealth in gross abundance. This is known as taking pride in robbery. Far is this from Dao!⁴²⁶

⁴²⁴ Ibid., chap. 75. (民之饑, 以其上食稅之多. 是以饑. 民之難治, 以其上之有爲. 是以難治. 民之輕死, 以其上求生之厚. 是以輕死. 夫唯無以生爲者, 是賢於貴生.) Ivanhoe and Norden, 199–200.

⁴²⁵ Ibid., chap. 30. (以道佐人主者, 不以兵強天下. 其事好還, 師之所處, 荊棘生焉, 大軍之後, 必有凶年.) Ivanhoe and Norden, 177.

⁴²⁶ Ibid., chap. 53. (朝甚除, 田甚蕪, 倉甚虛. 服文綵, 帶利劍, 厭飲食, 財貨有餘, 是謂道夸, 非道也哉.) Ivanhoe and Norden, 188.

According to Laozi, people who possess abundant wealth when others are starving to death are robbers. This is because this striving for accumulation of material wealth to the detriment of others is not the way of Dao.

Similarly, for Zhuangzi, flowing with Dao is the way by which one overcomes evil. Zhuangzi believes that the *yin* and *yang* as instantiated in life and death is the pattern of Dao in our world.

I received life because the time had come; I will lose it because the order of things passes on. Be content with this time and dwell in this order, and then neither sorrow nor joy can touch you. In ancient times this was called the ‘freeing of the bound (*xianjie*, 縣解)’.⁴²⁷

If one dwells in this pattern of the world, of the pulse or rhythm of *yin* and *yang*, neither sorrow nor joy can restrain him or her, for we let go of holding onto the positive (*yang*) and, indeed, trying to help it be victorious over the *yin*. This is called *xianjie* (freeing of the bound), and therefore this is the state in which and by which evil, as defined in the Daoist tradition, is overcome.

It should be noted at this point, however, that in the *Zhuangzi*, the overcoming of evil can be approached and explained in much more variety than the *Daodejing*. This includes, for example, religious training or meditative practice.

I began explaining and kept at him [Buliang Yi] for three days, and after that he was able to put the world outside himself. When he had put the world outside himself, I kept at him for seven days more, and after that he was able to put things outside himself. When he had put things outside himself, I kept at him for nine days more, and after that he was able to put life outside himself. After he had put life outside himself, he was able to achieve the brightness of dawn, and when he had achieved the brightness of dawn, he could see his own aloneness. After he had managed to see his own aloneness, he could do away with past and present, and after he had done away with past and present, he was able to enter where there is no life and no death.⁴²⁸

⁴²⁷ *Zhuangzi*, chap. 6. (且夫得者時也，失者順也。安時而處順，哀樂不能入也。此古之所謂‘縣解’也。) Watson, 48.

⁴²⁸ *Ibid.* (告聖人之才，亦易矣。吾猶告而守之，三日而後能外天下。已外天下矣，吾又守之，七日而後能外物。已外物矣，吾又守之，九日而後能外生。已外生矣，而後能朝徹。朝徹而後能見獨。見獨，而後能無古今。無古今而後能入於不死不生。) Watson, 46.

At the final step, one transcends time and space, and therefore there is no boundary between life and death. If there is no boundary between life and death, we can also say that it is meaningless to make a distinction between good and evil. The final step recalled by Zhuangzi is the step of transcending all boundaries, and this is the step by which evil is overcome. Both the process and the final step related by Zhuangzi can be expounded by the term *zuowang* (坐忘). Zhuangzi puts this into the mouth of Confucius himself.

Yan Hui said, 'I'm improving!' Confucius said, 'What do you mean by that?' 'I've forgotten benevolence and righteousness!' 'That's good. But you still haven't got it'. Another day, the two met again, and Yan Hui said, 'I'm improving!' 'What do you mean by that?' 'I've forgotten rites and music!' 'That's good. But you still haven't got it'. Another day, the two met again, and Yan Hui said, 'I'm improving!' 'What do you mean by that?' 'I can *sit down and forget everything (zuowang)*!' Confucius looked very startled and said, 'What do you mean, sit down and forget everything?' Yan Hui said, 'I smash up my limbs and body, drive out perception and intellect, cast off form, do away with understanding, and make myself identical with the Great Thoroughfare. This is what I mean by sitting down and forgetting everything'. Confucius said, 'If you're identical with it, you must have no more likes! If you've been transformed, you must have no more constancy! So you really are a worthy man after all! With your permission, I'd like to become your follower'.⁴²⁹

Even though Zhuangzi expounds *zuowang* through the mouth of Confucius, this passage regards benevolence, righteousness, rites and music that are regarded as positive and conducive to virtue in Confucianism as low levels of spiritual or meditative discipline. The ultimate step is the step of forgetting everything. This is the step that transcends feelings such as suffering and pain. Therefore, in the step of *zuowang*, the problem of evil is overcome.

Comparison

⁴²⁹ Ibid. (顏回曰, 回益矣. 仲尼曰, 何謂也? 曰, 回忘仁義矣. 曰, 可矣, 猶未也. 他日復見曰, 回益矣. 曰, 何謂也? 曰, 回忘禮樂矣. 曰, 可矣, 猶未也. 他日復見曰, 回益矣. 曰, 何謂也? 曰, 回坐忘矣. 仲尼蹴然曰, 何謂坐忘? 顏回曰, 墮肢體, 黜聰明, 離形去知, 同於大通, 此謂坐忘. 仲尼曰, 同則無好也, 化則無常也. 而果其賢乎! 丘也請從而後也.) Watson, 52–53.

Based on the understanding of evil in the *Zhuangzi*, I will briefly explore how Zhuangzi's philosophy compares with that of Christianity, Confucianism and Buddhism when it comes to evil.

First, concerning suffering or pain that comes about as a result of natural disasters and disease, can we hope for a better life? Of course, hope for a better life cannot reduce pain in this world, but it can empower us in overcoming suffering. Whether it is a different world, as in Christianity, or a change in consciousness as in Daoism, our experience of ourselves and reality in general changes. The *Zhuangzi* relates the ideal state that Daoists pursue: 'So I will take leave of you, to enter the gate of the inexhaustible and wander in the limitless fields, to form a triad with the light of the sun and moon, to partake in the constancy of Heaven and earth'.⁴³⁰ Similarly, Jesus relates that upon the arrival of the Kingdom of Heaven 'the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father' (Matt. 13:43). Both for people who attain Dao in the *Zhuangzi* and for righteous people in the Bible, a transcendent future, free of the sufferings that we presently experienced, is promised.

Second, concerning fear of death, it is important to rid oneself of the obsession with maintaining, preserving and extending life. The *Zhuangzi* states, 'Death does not exist for the one who kills life, and life does not exist for the one who lives life'.⁴³¹ It means that the one who obsesses over life will die, and the one who sacrifices life will live. Jesus similarly says, 'For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it' (Luke 9:24). In Buddhism, the origin of human suffering is located in desire and attachment.⁴³² In Christianity, Daoism, and Buddhism, desire for life precedes loss, and that is the starting point of suffering.

Finally, and most importantly, when it comes to living a life free of evil and suffering, I would suggest 'unity between the human being and Ultimate Reality' or 'unity between the human being and the universe' is a theme repeated throughout the religions. There is a familiar anecdote about Zhuangzi and a butterfly.

⁴³⁰ Ibid., chap. 11. (余將去女, 入无窮之門, 以遊無極之野. 吾與日月參光, 吾與天地爲常.) Watson, 79.

⁴³¹ Ibid., chap. 6. (殺生者不死, 生生者不生.)

⁴³² Keown, 31.

I, by the name of Zhuangzi, once dreamed that I was a butterfly, a butterfly fluttering happily here and there. I was so pleased that I forgot that I was Zhuangzi. When I suddenly woke up, I was astonished to find that I was as a matter of fact Zhuangzi. Did Zhuangzi dream of the butterfly or did the butterfly dream of Zhuangzi? Between Zhuangzi and the butterfly there must be some distinctions. This is called ‘the transformation of things (*wuhua*)’.⁴³³

Wuhua (物化) literally means ‘the transformation of things’ or ‘things transform’. I think this is the final stage that humans can reach in terms of one’s awareness of the interconnection of all things. In this stage, awareness of oneself disappears, and I and things, I and the universe become one. According to the Buddhist conception of the universe, the universe is divided into 31 levels. In level 30, there emerges the notion of ‘nothingness’, and in level 31, abandoning even the thought of nothingness, ‘There arises the ineffable state of mind known as “neither perception nor non-perception”’. This is the highest state in which anyone can be reborn’.⁴³⁴ This final state is similar to *wuhua* in the *Zhuangzi*.

Wuhua can be seen to be analogically related to the Biblical notion of denying oneself. Jesus says, ‘If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me’ (Matt. 16:24; Mark 8:34; Luke 9:23). Denying oneself is to surrender one’s desire and become one with Jesus. Paul describes this specifically: ‘I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me’ (Gal. 2:20). At this stage, then, there is no boundary between myself and Jesus. I maintain that this is the same state as *wuhua* in the *Zhuangzi* and as the 31st stage in the Buddhist concept of the universe. It is at this stage that, since ‘I’ do not exist, I cannot feel pain or fear of death. If a typhoon hits me, it means that I and the typhoon have become one. Although this conception of natural evil and overcoming suffering over it seems to be metaphysical rather than referring to felt experience, it does in fact help Christians, Buddhists, and Daoists to focus on the final and ideal stage of their respective religions: ‘unity between human and Ultimate Reality’ or ‘unity between human and the universe’.

⁴³³ *Zhuangzi*, chap. 2. (昔者 莊周夢為胡蝶, 栩栩然胡蝶也, 自喻適志與! 不知周也. 俄然覺, 則蘧蘧然周也. 不知周之夢為胡蝶與, 胡蝶之夢為周與? 周與胡蝶, 則必有分矣. 此之謂物化.) Wang Rongpei, *Zhuangzi*, 1999, 39-41.

⁴³⁴ Keown, 34.

Chinese Neo-Confucian Philosopher, Zhang Zai (張載, 1020–1077), reveals what it means to live together harmoniously with all creatures in the world in ‘Western Inscription (西銘)’.

Heaven is my father and Earth is my mother, and even such a small creature as I find an intimate place in their midst. Therefore that which fills the universe I regard as my body and that which directs the universe I consider as my nature. All people are my brothers and sisters, and all things are my companions. The great ruler (the emperor) is the eldest son of my parents (Heaven and Earth), and the great ministers are his stewards. Respect the aged – this is the way to treat them as elders should be treated. Show deep love toward the orphaned and the weak – this is the way to treat them as the young should be treated. The sage identifies his character with that of Heaven and Earth, and the worthy is the most outstanding man. Even those who are tired, infirm, crippled, or sick and those who have no brothers or children, wives or husbands, are all my brothers who are in distress and have no one to turn to.⁴³⁵

According to Zhang Zai, heaven and earth are our parents. All people are our brothers and sisters, and all things are our companions. Thus we should treat the suffering and the weak with deep love. This means to live in harmony with all creatures. This also means the unity between humanity and the universe containing heaven and earth, and this unity is an important way to overcome evil.

(3) Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to present the conception of evil found in the *Zhuangzi*. To begin with, I explored what the origin of evil is and how evil can be understood in East Asian religious philosophy in comparison to the understanding of evil in Christianity. To summarize, in Confucianism, selfishness is considered the origin of moral evil, although it is debatable whether selfishness arises out of social influence or is essential to human nature itself. In Daoism, intentional or deliberate behaviour causes division, and this brings about moral evil as a result. In Buddhism, the origin of evil is the distorted perception that human beings have of themselves and their consequently distorted behaviour causes suffering. Regarding natural evils arising from the earth’s movement (earthquakes), Confucianism accepts them as fate

⁴³⁵ Zhang Zai, “Western Inscription (西銘),” (Wing-Tsit Chan, 497).

(*ming*) or as the will of Heaven. Laozi does not think that natural evil exists, evidenced by the fact that he does not consider natural disasters as evil. In Buddhism, natural phenomena such as earthquakes and tsunamis cannot be considered as evils because these are simply a part of the law of *karma*, the law of cause and effect running throughout this reality in both the natural and moral realms.

I then focused on the ideas of Zhuangzi specifically regarding the origin of evil, the perception of evil, and the overcoming of evil. In the philosophy of Zhuangzi, moral evil is the disharmony brought about by controlling or self-conscious action. Controlling and self-conscious activity attempts to run against the direction or flow of Dao, for it breaks the principles of effortless action (*wuwei*), spontaneity (*ziran*), and oneness (*daoshu*). The *Zhuangzi* looks at evil as integral to the world, as the other side of the coin, or the trough of the wave, along with the positive force, which is *yang*. As such, the occurrence of evil, be it moral or natural, is brought under the notion of fate (*ming*) and harmony of *yin* and *yang* (*liangxing*). For the *Zhuangzi*, evil is overcome in following this flow of Dao. In the step of sitting in forgetfulness (*zuowang*), and in the step of transformation of things (*wuhua*), there is a cessation of distinctions, and with that both the experience and problem of evil will also cease.

PART III. COMPARISON

In order to carry out comparative work between the ideas of John Haught and Zhuangzi, I expounded the evolutionary theology of Haught in Part I, and I explored the Daoist philosophy of Zhuangzi in Part II by focusing on the problem of evil.

Now we move to Part III, the comparison between the evolutionary theodicy of Haught and the Daoist philosophy of Zhuangzi based on my methodology: description, comparison, generalisation, differentiation and supplementation. I will examine the comparison from the perspective of ‘evolution and natural/moral evil’ in chapter 6. To be specific, I will compare the ideas of Haught and Zhuangzi on the basis of the following topics because they display the most plausible theodicies between Christianity and Daoism: (1) information and *qi* with regard to evolution and the emergence of life, (2) the natural state defence, comprising a synthesis of the notions of the grace of God and *ziran* with respect to natural evil, and (3) the free action defence, comprising a synthesis of the notions of free will and *wuwei* as they pertain to moral evil.

In chapter 7 I will examine my comparative work from a ‘continuous creation’ point of view on the basis of the following topics: (1) the suffering God defence, comprising a synthesis of the notions of the kenotic God and the omnipresence of Dao, (2) the hidden God defence, comprising a synthesis of the notions of the self-absenting of God and the hiddenness of Dao as they pertain to the problem of responsibility for evil in the world, and (3) the harmony defence, a synthesis of the notions of the ‘dark side’ and the *yin* (shadow side), which Haught and Zhuangzi refer to as integral to cosmic harmony.

In chapter 8 I will explore the comparison from the point of ‘new creation’. To put it concretely, I will do comparative work based on the following topics: (1) the progress defence, understood on the basis of purpose or direction of evolution and (2) the final fulfilment defence, a synthesis of the notions of new creation and *tianrenyitong* (the unity of heaven and human being).

Throughout this comparative part of the thesis, I will try to develop plausible theodicies for both East and West in a scientific age. The aim of my thesis is to demonstrate that the evolutionary theodicy of Haught can provide a better understanding of the problem of evil through dialogue if it employs the ideas of the

Zhuangzi. I also expect that we can see in this thesis how Western evolutionary theodicy can be restated and supplemented with the help of classical East Asian ideas.

Chapter 6

Evolution and Natural/Moral Evil

In this chapter, I will expound the evolutionary theodicy of Haught and the Daoist philosophy of Zhuangzi with regard to evolution and the problem of natural and moral evils. Information and *qi* with regard to evolution and the emergence of life, the grace of God and *ziran* with respect to natural evil (the natural state defence), and free will and *wuwei* (the free action defence) will be the topics of each section. With these topics, I will reveal the similarities and differences between the evolutionary theodicy of Haught and Daoist philosophy of Zhuangzi, and I will develop plausible theodicies in a scientific age.

(1) Evolution and the Emergence of Life: Information and *Qi* (氣, vital energy)⁴³⁶

Description

Uncovering the process by which life emerges from inanimate matter has been a formidable challenge for Darwinians. Darwin speculated that ‘all the conditions for the first production of a living organism ... [could be met] ... in some warm little pond with all sorts of ammonia and phosphoric salts, light, heat, electricity, etc. present’.⁴³⁷ Most Evolutionists⁴³⁸ infer that the building blocks of self-replicating life began to coalesce by an improbable chain of accidents about 3.8 billion years ago.⁴³⁹

⁴³⁶ An abridged edition of this section will be published as a chapter in *Issues in Science and Theology: Are We Special? Human Uniqueness in Science and Theology*, ed. Michael Fuller, Dirk Evers, Anne Runehov and Knut-Willy Sæther (ESSSAT & Springer, 2017).

⁴³⁷ Darwin’s letter to his friend Joseph Hooker in 1871. [in Mayr, 44-45.]

⁴³⁸ Not all evolutionists regard life as arising by ‘an improbable chain of accidents’. For example, Kauffman claims that life is not a result of accident and chance, but ‘a natural property of complex chemical systems’, arguing that ‘when the number of different kinds of molecules in a chemical soup passes a certain threshold, a self-sustaining network of reactions – an autocatalytic metabolism – will suddenly appear’. [Stuart Kauffman, *At Home in the Universe: The Search for Laws of Self-Organization and Complexity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 47.]

⁴³⁹ Mayr and Haught think that life was established on the earth about 3.8 billion years ago, and Conway Morris also believes that life began at least 3.5 billion years ago. Research into the origin of life is still very speculative, but advances are slowly being made. [Mayr, 43; Haught, *Is Nature Enough? Meaning and Truth in the Age of Science*, 57; Simon Conway Morris, "Evolution and the Inevitability of Intelligent Life," in *The Cambridge Companion to Science and Religion*, ed. Peter Harrison (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 155.]

This biological conjecture may seem completely hostile to the age-old Christian conviction that God is the origin of life as its creator. In Genesis 1, God is usually regarded as creating all kinds of living beings as well as the whole world in the what we may capitalise as the ‘Beginning’. However, Haught claims that there is no necessary conflict between these accounts of the generation of life. According to Haught, the Darwinian conception of origins does not diminish God’s providential role, ‘if the natural world is so extravagantly gifted that, at relevant moments in its unfolding, random events open the door abruptly to a creativity that gushes forth in astonishingly new and unpredictable ways’.⁴⁴⁰ Haught argues that the emergence of life can be portrayed not so much as something grafted on from outside as the sudden budding of a flower, embryonically present from the outset.

How can these sudden changes, including the emergence of life, be understood without conflict between religion and science? It is useful at this point to bring in Haught’s idea of ‘hierarchy’, which he draws from the classical Greek tradition. Based on the Greek roots of the notion of hierarchy, Haught focuses on the idea that all things have their origin of being (*arche*) in the field of the sacred (*hier*). According to him, hierarchy is necessary if some phenomena like life and mind are to be regarded as more valuable than others. For him, hierarchical thinking means that lower levels of creation can be quietly informed by the higher, and it is essential here to state the fundamentally religious intuition that reality and human values have a sacred origin beyond what biology can perceive and/or describe.⁴⁴¹ In other words, if religious and ethical realities do have an irreducible basis and permanent importance in our world, there is need of hierarchical thinking, given its ontological and epistemological explanatory power.

To explain and justify such hierarchical thinking without conflict between science and theology, Haught focuses on the notion of ‘information’. Polkinghorne understands information as ‘the specification of dynamical patterns of behaviour and energy flow’,⁴⁴² and proposes the concept of *active information*: ‘a dynamical pattern-forming propensity that operates in a holistic way on totalities rather than

⁴⁴⁰ Haught, *Responses to 101 Questions on God and Evolution*, 23.

⁴⁴¹ Haught, *God after Darwin: A Theology of Evolution*, 78.

⁴⁴² Polkinghorne, *Theology in the Context of Science*, 78.

separable on constituents’.⁴⁴³ Peacocke understands God’s interaction with the world in the light of a continuing process of input of information, whereby ‘God’s intentions and purposes are implemented in the shaping of particular events, or patterns of events, without any abrogation of the regularities discerned by the sciences in the natural order’.⁴⁴⁴ Although Polkinghorne and Peacocke acknowledge that the notion of ‘information’ is not yet fully defined⁴⁴⁵ and apparently abstract,⁴⁴⁶ – Haught in fact thinks that ‘Information’s inaccessibility to empirical scrutiny or mechanical analysis makes it seem “mystical”’⁴⁴⁷ – their speculations about information nonetheless shed light on how God may work in the world and contribute to our knowledge about how God relates to all creatures without any conflict with science.

Haught suggests that God’s powerful but scientifically undetectable influence on the world can be compared with the way ‘information’ is seen in semiotics.⁴⁴⁸ To paraphrase, then, as you read a book, you are looking at blotches of black ink fixed onto a white page. If you do not know how to read, all you see would be unintelligible black marks, missing the informational content embedded within it. But if you are literate, the informational content of the marks is apparent. We can see, Haught argues, that information emerges suddenly – which cannot be explained with ink and paper alone.

Allow me to recapitulate and reinforce Haught’s argument. Let us imagine the English sentence ‘Zhuangzi walking in woods’ written on a sheet of paper. According to the logic of Haught’s argument, the meaning of the sentence cannot be explained by the physical constituents of the state of affairs – the ink and paper;

⁴⁴³ Polkinghorne, *Science and the Trinity: The Christian Encounter with Reality*, 83. Polkinghorne expounds the possible consequences of *active information*: ‘(i) Holistic laws of nature which facilitate the coming-to-be of certain kinds of complexity.... (ii) There might here be a glimmer (no more) of how one might begin to conceive of the relationship between mind (intention – like pattern forming) and brain (physical activity – like energetic exchange). (iii) Theology is offered the possibility of beginning to understand its discourse of God’s special providential action, often expressed in terms of the Spirit’s guiding creation, in terms of a divine interaction within the world through active information’. [Polkinghorne, *Faith, Science and Understanding*, 166.]

⁴⁴⁴ Peacocke, *Theology for a Scientific Age: Being and Becoming - Natural, Divine and Human*, 295.

⁴⁴⁵ Polkinghorne, *Theology in the Context of Science*, 78.

⁴⁴⁶ Peacocke, *Theology for a Scientific Age: Being and Becoming - Natural, Divine and Human*, 296.

⁴⁴⁷ Haught, *God after Darwin: A Theology of Evolution*, 81.

⁴⁴⁸ Haught, *Responses to 101 Questions on God and Evolution*, 94; Haught, *God after Darwin: A Theology of Evolution*, 78-81.

rather, they are instances of ‘information’, which is a higher-order reality. Now, we know that ‘Zhuangzi walking in woods’ is an incomplete sentence, but we cannot know that from the ink and paper alone; we know it is incomplete because we know the grammatical or syntactic rules of the English language, and we see that lacking the requisite words, there is a semantic error in the sentence. The rules of the language themselves seem to be of an order higher than that of the physical markings on the page. There is obviously more to say here, and philosophers will be able to see its relationship to the phenomenon of ‘intentionality’ – that of ‘aboutness’ – but I hope this is sufficient to illustrate Haught’s idea of information.

Haught intends his analogy to shed some light on how God can create life without violating the laws of physics and chemistry. He claims that evolutionary biology and biochemistry cannot detect what we might call any ‘deeper informational’ level that might be present in the universe with an ultimate (or immanent) origin providing that meaning. The emergence of life and conscious beings can be actualized without their informational content ever showing up at the level of physical or chemical analysis. Their emergence does not require the violation of scientific laws as the inscribing of information in a book does not violate the chemistry of ink and paper.⁴⁴⁹

In Daoism, Dao is the origin of all creatures, the beginning of all changes and the ultimate cause of all changes. Dao is without beginning or end, and there is no time that Dao did not or does not exist.⁴⁵⁰ According to the *Zhuangzi*, Dao alone existed in the beginning, and all creatures are produced by Dao out of non-being, including spiritual beings (Chapter 4:1).

To understand Dao’s creation, we first need to know about the Daoist notion of *qi*. *Qi* (氣) literally means the breath of life, and it signifies physical energy, vital energy or the essence of life.⁴⁵¹ According to the *Zhuangzi*, ‘Everything in the world stems from the one *qi*’.⁴⁵² *Qi* has a primordial role in the origin of the world and its many entities. The life and death of human beings are also determined by the

⁴⁴⁹ Haught, *Responses to 101 Questions on God and Evolution*, 94.

⁴⁵⁰ *Zhuangzi*, chap. 17.

⁴⁵¹ Hartz, 140.

⁴⁵² *Zhuangzi*, chap. 22. (通天下一氣耳.)

operation of *qi*: ‘The birth of a man is the convergence of *qi*, which in turn forms life. The dispersion of *qi* causes death’.⁴⁵³

How is Zhuangzi’s idea of *qi* connected with the idea of information in Haught? In the following parts, I will examine what similarities and differences between the two are, and how the idea of *qi* can supplement the idea of information.

Comparison and Generalisation

Haught’s idea of information and the idea of *qi* in the *Zhuangzi* have several similarities concerning their conception of the emergence of life. First of all, the creative work of information and the creative work of *qi* can be in harmony with the distinctiveness of human beings because of what we may call ‘gradational creation’. For Haught, information has the capacity to bring about hierarchical ‘discontinuity’ among various levels of creation in terms of complexity of entities, living and inanimate.⁴⁵⁴ Haught understands ‘information’ in a broad and general sense: ‘the overall ordering of entities – atoms, molecules, cells, genes, etc. – into intelligible forms or arrangements’.⁴⁵⁵ According to him, although it is neither energetic nor massive, information is quietly stationed in nature, and it powerfully orders subordinate natural elements into hierarchically distinguished fields. In short, Haught’s informational conception of life allows that life emerged from the evolutionary process and, at the same time, that life holds a more sacred position than inanimate matter in their being specially created by God with purposes, which is consonant with the traditional Christian narrative of human beings occupying a special place in the cosmos, in virtue of their possessing the image of God, itself traditionally regarded as consisting in self-knowledge and free will – integral aspects of consciousness.

Similarly, in the *Zhuangzi*, the emergence and subsequent stages of the development of life are portrayed in gradational terms:

There was no life originally. Not only was there no life, but there was also no shape (body) originally. No shape; only *qi*. In the middle of the chaos, a

⁴⁵³ Ibid. (人之生，氣之聚也。聚則爲生，散則爲死。)

⁴⁵⁴ Haught, *Responses to 101 Questions on God and Evolution*, 26.

⁴⁵⁵ Haught, *God after Darwin: A Theology of Evolution*, 74.

change took place and *qi* appeared. *Qi* itself changed and shape appeared. Shape changed and life appeared.⁴⁵⁶

According to the *Zhuangzi*, some mysterious change⁴⁵⁷ brought about the emergence of *qi*, and *qi* in turn generated inanimate matter, and next, animate life. This evolutionary process involved in the operations of information and *qi* can accommodate and engender distinctiveness of the higher levels of creation such as that of human beings (the level of consciousness) because those higher levels contain the information of lower levels, despite not being reducible to them. In short, this gradational understanding of evolution can serve to explain and preserve the uniqueness of human life and consciousness.

Second, the gradational process in which information and *qi* are involved can also be in balance with evolutionary science. As we saw for Haught, information operates in the universe without in any way violating lower-level laws of physics and chemistry. It means that information does not interfere with ordinary physical regularities but instead utilizes them for its ordering work.⁴⁵⁸

Haught suggests that information can structure the universe, and endow it with hierarchically distinguished features in a non-invasive manner. In other words, information enables and operates all of this without interrupting the successive continuum of basic elements at atomic and subatomic levels from a scientific perspective. Based on this informational understanding of life, Haught thinks that God could be regarded as ‘the ultimate source of the novel informational patterns’⁴⁵⁹ available to evolution.

Similarly, the process for the emergence of humans in the *Zhuangzi* bears rough resemblances to evolutionary processes posited in biology.

Among the various species, there is a microorganism which propagates in water. It becomes moss on the water margin and it becomes plantain on the highlands.... The *yangxi* grass lives with the bamboo that no longer sprouts, which gives birth to an insect by the name of *qingning*, which in

⁴⁵⁶ *Zhuangzi*, chap. 18. (而本無生. 非徒无形也, 而本无氣. 雜乎芒物之間, 變而有氣, 氣變而有形, 形變而有生.)

⁴⁵⁷ Big Bang can also be regarded as ‘some mysterious change’ even though it is more accurately described as a cosmological evolutionary model.

⁴⁵⁸ Haught, *God after Darwin: A Theology of Evolution*, 75.

⁴⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 77.

turn gives birth to the leopard, and which again in turn gives birth to the horse, which again in turn gives birth to the man.⁴⁶⁰

Considering that the *Zhuangzi* was written in the fourth and third centuries BCE, this transmutation or proto-evolutionary thinking that we find here is worth being evaluated. Although, as Roel Steckx states, this transmutation does not seem to be the expression of a teleological striving for biological fulfilment but rather the essential process of generation itself,⁴⁶¹ we need to concentrate on the fact that here the *Zhuangzi* expounds a conception of the transmutation of life in the animal world from microorganisms to moss, from plantain to creatures that have fully-fledged powers of locomotion such as leopards and horses, finally arriving at creatures with consciousness – to humans.

That the *Zhuangzi* provides a conception of gradational creation is significant for us because on the basis of previous considerations, the idea of gradational evolution as found in Haught does not conflict with the central ideas of evolutionary biology, and now we can see that this is also the case with the *Zhuangzi*, revealing affinity between the two.

Finally, information and *qi* operate undetectably. For Haught, the operation of information is hidden, and it weaves the world, as it were, silently.

Information subtly weaves the world into patterns, then gathers these into still more comprehensive wholes, and always slips silently out of our grasp. It hides itself, even while performing its integrative and hierarchical chores. We murder it whenever we dissect it.⁴⁶²

It should be observed that as information works imperceptibly at all levels of evolution, for the *Zhuangzi*, Dao's operation cannot be articulated in any clearly defined way. According to the *Zhuangzi*, 'The Great Dao exceeds description.... If Dao is clearly manifested, it is not Dao'.⁴⁶³ As information cannot be dissected, so

⁴⁶⁰ *Zhuangzi*, chap. 18. (種有幾, 得水則爲繼, 得水土之際... 羊奚比乎不筭, 久竹生青寧. 青寧生程, 程生馬, 馬生人.) Wang Rongpei, 295. We might note that the author of the *Zhuangzi* would, of course, not have used the Chinese equivalent of 'microorganism' given its modern origin. *Ji* (幾) originally refers to a creature so small as to be invisible to the naked eye, but this is rather clumsy in modern English and the tendency nowadays is in fact to use the word 'microorganism' to refer to the phenomenon. Rongpei's translation of 幾 is apt for this reason.

⁴⁶¹ Roel Sterckx, *The Animal and the Daemon in Early China* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), 168.

⁴⁶² Haught, *God after Darwin: A Theology of Evolution*, 81.

⁴⁶³ *Zhuangzi*, chap. 2. (大道不稱.... 道昭而不道.)

Dao cannot be detected or analysed physically or conceptually. Nevertheless, Dao's operation in the world can be explained or at least conveyed by reference to the operations of *qi*. If, for Haught, information is the medium of the emergence of life, *qi* is the medium of it in the *Zhuangzi*. Because both information and *qi* operate in the world without detection, their activity can make connections between species *but also* provide for the distinctiveness of higher levels of reality. Why? Because if the operations of information and *qi* were clear, we would be able to easily map the development of species. In other words, there would be nothing mysterious about the emergence either of life or consciousness, and we could not have argued for distinctive higher levels, for there would be no *essential* difference between species.

Based on this comparison between the operations of information and *qi*, we can generalise these two ideas about the emergence of life as 'abrupt but continuous change from the previous level'. The media of the change(s) for both philosophies are information and *qi* respectively. This generalisation of the ideas of information and *qi* helps us to understand that life emerged from the evolutionary process at work at all levels and, at the same time, that living things enjoy a special position in contrast to inanimate matter or lower level species. This idea also helps us to understand the problem of evil. We can begin to comprehend that the things which we may call 'natural evil' (such as earthquakes, cancer, and death generally) emerge from the operation of information or *qi* during the process of evolution, just as the emergence of life and human beings as a specific lifeform did. In this case, the emergence of natural evil is not to be regarded as being in contrast to God's good creation because God is not the first cause of natural evil. *Moral* evil, or what is commonly called 'sin' is of course yet to be addressed, and we shall look at the insights of Haught and the *Zhuangzi* pertaining to sin in Section 3 of this chapter.

Differentiation and Supplementation

Haught's explanation of the emergence of life via information operating throughout evolutionary levels allows for the endowment of animate life and human life in particular with the sacredness that Christianity demands, without conflict with evolutionary science, but I want to further supplement Haught's ideas about information, based on the differences between those ideas and *Zhuangzi*'s notion of *qi*.

As I explained above, the *Zhuangzi* reveals one conception of evolution from microorganisms to human beings. However, we need to focus on the following part concerning what occurs after the emergence of human beings in the book: ‘The man, in his turn, reverts to the microorganism. Everything in the world comes out of a microorganism and goes back to it’.⁴⁶⁴ The idea of evolution in the *Zhuangzi* seems to be a very early precursor to that of modern science, but for it, evolution is not linear but cyclical. In other words, human life is not, as it is sometimes construed in popular theological interpretations of evolution, the final or ‘highest’ stage of evolution, and human life reverts back to the form of a microorganism. Although the evolutionary process seems to have levels (or rather, phases) of development of complexity, all things return to the form of microorganisms. Let us clarify this thought. In the *Zhuangzi*, evolution comprises levels, phases or elements manifest by the operation of *qi*, and these levels do not mean or exhibit hierarchy typically pictured vertically – unlike in Haught. In this cyclical structure, whatever we might (arbitrarily) regard as ‘final’ phase of evolutionary development returns to the first.

Haught’s idea of information grants a unique and theologically desired special status to human life. However, if his conception of evolution is linear, we may suppose that there will be a further stage in the development of life over and above that of human beings, even though Haught might not have considered or even conceived of this possibility in his idea of information. Indeed, theories abound concerning the hypothesis of a higher level of life beyond that of human beings, such as the emergence of what we might call super-conscious or supra-conscious beings. I do believe that the continuous operation of information may generate something of a higher order than individualised consciousness as manifest in human beings. This may also mean that human beings are not special as such because the lifeform that is the human being would be regarded as just another stage or level in the linear development of life in general. In contrast, it seems that in the Daoist cyclical structure as exhibited in the *Zhuangzi*, postulating a ‘higher’ stage in the development of life than human beings is meaningless. If we interpret Haught’s hierarchical understanding of life and evolution – utilising information – in light of the idea of *qi* in the *Zhuangzi*, therefore, the uniqueness of human beings in the evolving world will be revealed more fully.

⁴⁶⁴ Ibid., chap. 18. (人又反入於機. 萬物皆出於機, 皆入於機.) Wang Rongpei, 295.

Second, if we over emphasize the distinctiveness of humans based on Haught's hierarchical understanding of the emergence of conscious life, we may be susceptible to overestimating ourselves, or committing speciesism – valuing this human lifeform to the detriment of others. I believe that we need to listen to the *Zhuangzi*: 'But I [Zhuangzi] have never, for this reason, prided myself on it. I take my place with heaven and earth and receive breath [*qi*] from the *yin* and *yang*. I sit here between heaven and earth as a little stone or a little tree sits on a huge mountain'.⁴⁶⁵ Because humans received *qi* from the *yin* and *yang* (the negative and positive principles of Dao's operation), the fact that humans share much with other creatures and entities in the world – most obviously their basic constituents – cannot be overlooked.

I claim, then, that the fundamental Daoist idea of harmony with nature in the *Zhuangzi* can supplement and develop Haught's idea of information for the following reasons. I suggest we can understand that information originated from one root and is itself immanent in all creatures in the world. This understanding leads us to ecotheology, for the human species is endowed with a higher level of information by means of the process of evolution which God oversees, and this uniqueness – together with what is shared with other creatures – entails the special responsibility to care for other species in the world.

Finally, the difference between information and *qi* outlined offers us a source of inspiration in approaching the problem of evil that so pervades theology and religious life generally. As I explored above, for Haught and the *Zhuangzi*, information and *qi* appeared in virtue of the creative power of God and Dao respectively. Because of the great differences in the properties of the Christian conception of God and those of Dao, there are in fact marked differences between information and *qi*. Dao's operation is revealed in the operation of both *yin* and *yang*. As the *Zhuangzi* says, 'I received *qi* from the *yin* and *yang*'.⁴⁶⁶ If we consider the moral tragedies caused by human beings, up and down human history, it seems that the higher level of information⁴⁶⁷ that made humans special brings about both the capacity for moral goodness and the capacity for moral evil. From the Daoist

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid., chap. 17. (而吾未嘗以此自多者, 自以比形於天地, 而受氣於陰陽. 吾在天地之間, 猶小石小木之在大山也.) Watson, 127.

⁴⁶⁶ Ibid. (而受氣於陰陽.)

⁴⁶⁷ Haught accepts the notion of levels of information because hierarchy is both *essential* and *intrinsic* to reality 'if something is to be considered more valuable and more real than others'. [Haught, *God after Darwin: A Theology of Evolution*, 78.]

perspective, we need to take into account the negative or shadow side of information, if we are to adopt the term.

If we accept that information involves both positive and negative principles – as with *qi* – we can say that the higher the level of information a species attains, the deeper or wider their capacity for both good and evil behaviour. Humans are special because they are endowed with a higher level of information. Being human is to have the capacity for moral action – good and evil. God allows us the freedom to choose as part of the ongoing evolution of the universe. Therefore, if we accept both the positive and negative sides of informational work, the problem of evil as manifest in such phenomena as animal pain⁴⁶⁸ (predation) or human crime will be transformed and made more amenable to an integral theodicy.

In this section, I aimed to develop the evolutionary theology of Haught and the Daoist philosophy of Zhuangzi as they pertain to the emergence of life. Both information in Haught and *qi* in the *Zhuangzi* provide for the distinctiveness of life in balance with evolutionary science because of ‘gradational creation’, the concept of which we have given considerable space to explore. Based on this similarity, I generalised gradational creation as the ‘abrupt but continuous change from the previous level’. This generalisation of the similar ideas of information and *qi* leads us to understand that living beings arise from and in virtue of the evolutionary process and that they simultaneously hold a special position in contrast to inanimate objects.

However, I described how the understanding of information or *qi* is different between the two thinkers, and these differences can supplement the evolutionary theodicy of Haught. First, Haught’s conception of evolution seems to be linear, but it is cyclical in the *Zhuangzi*. If Haught’s idea of information contains the cyclical structure of evolution, the uniqueness of human beings in the evolving world will be revealed more fully. Second, Haught’s hierarchical understanding of the emergence of humans may actually become a source of arrogance for humans to overestimate their place in their cosmos. If we can understand that information originated from one root and is itself immanent in all creatures in the world like the operation of *qi* in the *Zhuangzi*, Haught’s idea may provide a guiding light that eventually leads us to the very modern notion of ecotheology. Finally, Dao’s operation is revealed in the

⁴⁶⁸ Concerning animal pain as a major problem to be addressed in modern theodicy, see Michael J. Murray, *Nature Red in Tooth and Claw: Theism and the Problem of Animal Suffering* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

operation of both *yin* and *yang*. If we accept that information involves both positive and negative principles as *qi* does, then the evolutionary theology of Haught can be extended to various fields including animal pain and human crime. We begin to see the foundations of a new theodicy.

(2) The Natural State Defence: The Grace of God and *Ziran* (自然, spontaneity)

Description

Darwin's theory of natural selection is one of the most important theories that involves the notion of evolution. Darwin called '(the) preservation of favourable variations and the rejection of injurious variations'⁴⁶⁹ 'natural selection'. The principle of natural selection is that 'each slight variation, if useful, is preserved'.⁴⁷⁰

The theory of natural selection seems to present several problems to traditional Christian theology (Chapter 2:3). The first problem is the relationship between God's creation and natural selection. William Murry points out:

The theory of evolution by natural selection has important implications for theology and religious belief. At the most obvious level it undermines a literal interpretation of the Genesis account of creation. At the next level it throws doubt on the notion of divine purpose in creation, since natural selection maintains that the only purposes of organisms are to survive and reproduce. And finally, it questions whether a divine creator is necessary at all.⁴⁷¹

To reiterate what was said in previous chapters, it looks as if there is some difficulty in harmonizing natural selection and traditional Christian theology, primarily because of the Christian view that organisms – especially human beings – possess intrinsic value.⁴⁷² 'Cosmic pessimists' – among whom Haught lists Carl Sagan, E. O. Wilson and Stephen Jay Gould – believe that 'the universe, the earth, life and human consciousness originate accidentally out of a process of

⁴⁶⁹ Darwin, 63.

⁴⁷⁰ Ibid., 50.

⁴⁷¹ William R. Murry, "Natural Faith: How Darwinian Evolution Has Transformed Liberal Religion," *UU World* Spring (2009): 27.

⁴⁷² Genesis seems quite clear on the idea that created beings, as creation itself, have an intrinsic dignity in being designed and created by God, hence God calls creation 'good' (see Genesis 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31).

unintelligible, random events worked over by an impersonal process known as natural selection'.⁴⁷³ How can natural selection, seen as a conglomeration of unintelligible and random events, be connected with God's continuous creation?

Evolutionary theologians often approach natural selection in terms of God's continuous creative work. In evolutionary theology, God's creation is not complete at the moment of its coming into being, but in fact continues every day and every moment. Natural selection is usually seen by many scholars as one of the most important ways that God's continuous creation can be revealed. Denis Edwards says, 'I would want to argue that God is not to be understood as another factor operating alongside natural selection, or in addition to it, but is rather to be understood as acting through it'.⁴⁷⁴ For him, God acts in, with, and through natural processes. For evolutionary theologians, God continuously creates according to natural selection, which means God's continuous creation is compatible with evolutionary biology.

The second problem is the pain, suffering and death generated by natural selection. If God participates in continuous creation through natural selection, is God responsible for this natural evil? Gloria Schaab understands that 'Pain, suffering, and death appear to be necessary conditions both for the survival of life and for the transition of life to novel and emergent forms'⁴⁷⁵ in the evolutionary process. Peacocke also says, 'Pain and suffering are present in biological evolution as a necessary condition for survival of the individual'.⁴⁷⁶ In other words, dying and predation are inevitable for new forms and patterns to emerge. Robert Russell says, 'Natural evil itself is a necessary consequence of the evolutionary processes which even God could not eliminate'.⁴⁷⁷ He calls this idea 'cosmic theodicy', which means 'God created our universe *ex nihilo* with the specific laws of physics and constants of nature which make Darwinian evolution possible'.⁴⁷⁸ For evolutionary theologians,

⁴⁷³ Haught, *The Promise of Nature: Ecology and Cosmic Purpose*, 17.

⁴⁷⁴ Edwards, 52.

⁴⁷⁵ Schaab, "The Creative Suffering of the Triune God: An Evolutionary Panentheistic Paradigm," 292.

⁴⁷⁶ Peacocke, "The Cost of New Life," in *The Work of Love*, 31-32.

⁴⁷⁷ Russell, "Recent Theological Interpretations of Evolution," 178.

⁴⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 179.

natural evil is inevitable. It comes as a feature of the processes of nature necessary to maintain the world.

Within the broader context of *creatio continua*, Haught understands natural selection as the grace of God. He says, ‘If there is any truth to the central religious intuition that God loves the world with an unbounded love, then God’s “grace” must also mean “letting the world be itself”’.⁴⁷⁹ God’s grace has the character of ‘letting it be’, and God influences the world in a persuasive way rather than in a coercive way – that is, dialectically rather than by command. Because genuine love is by definition and necessity not coercive, continuous creation through natural selection is an expression of God’s love. Ruth Page similarly argues that ‘Divine self-limitation, then, is not a withdrawal of God, not even a withdrawal as a prelude to a return. It has more to do with how God relates to what is not-God’.⁴⁸⁰ For Page, divine freedom cannot be separate from divine love, and both divine freedom and love form and maintain God’s relationship with all the creatures.

My belief is that Haught’s understanding of natural selection in no way contradicts either the traditional Christian image of God as One who revealed his boundless love on the cross or evolutionary biology whose evidential support cannot be denied. However, we also need to pay attention to Moltmann’s argument about evolution: ‘What has to be called eschatological is the movement of *redemption*, which runs counter to evolution. If we want to put it in temporal terms: this is a movement which runs from the future to the past, not from the past to the future’.⁴⁸¹ For Moltmann, evolution itself needs to be redeemed, and Christ is the redeemer of evolution. This understanding contradicts Teilhard’s idea of God as the ultimate goal of evolutionary process (Chapter 3:1) and it is also different from Haught’s idea that an evolutionary process taken to be natural selection is the most perfect expression of God’s boundless love.

Haught attempts to reconcile the pain and suffering that result from natural selection and God’s love which the Christian must affirm: ‘The long creative struggle of the universe to arrive at life, consciousness, and culture is consonant with our faith’s conviction that real love never forces any state of affairs but always

⁴⁷⁹ Haught, *God after Darwin: A Theology of Evolution*, 43.

⁴⁸⁰ Ruth Page, *God and the Web of Creation* (London: SCM Press, 1996), 52.

⁴⁸¹ Moltmann, *The Way of Jesus Christ: Christology in Messianic Dimensions*, 303.

allows for freedom, risk, adventure – and also suffering – on the part of the beloved'.⁴⁸² Haught claims that the gracious, self-denying love of God is consistent with a world open to all the events in the physical dynamism of evolution. Therefore, Haught's idea about natural selection can be seen to reduce God's responsibility for natural evil without contradicting either science or Christian theology.

In Daoism, natural selection is compatible with *ziran*. *Zi* literally means 'from...' or 'self-...', and *ran* means 'like this', so *Ziran* is generally understood as 'spontaneity', 'nature', 'self-becoming', or 'being so of itself' (Chapter 4:2). I think that the reason *ziran* is interpreted as both nature (noun) and self-becoming (gerund) is rooted in the Daoist understanding of nature. For Daoists, 'nature' is 'becoming itself' 'spontaneously'. In other words, all things in the cosmos exist spontaneously (*ziran*), and they are becoming themselves (*ziran*). The best example of *ziran* is the operation of Dao. Dao not only created all creatures but also maintains them. Dao maintains and recreates all creatures spontaneously. According to the *Daodejing*, 'People model themselves on the earth. The earth models itself on Heaven. Heaven models itself on Dao. Dao models itself what is natural (*ziran*)'.⁴⁸³ For Laozi, people have to ultimately live according to what is natural, which means to comply with Dao. Spontaneity is the way that Dao works, and we cannot speak of Dao as having designs or as contriving in its operations. The *Daodejing* repeatedly says in chapters 10 and 51 that 'Dao produces without possession of things; it acts without relying on their ability; it leads without mastering'.⁴⁸⁴ In other words, Dao continuously creates and leads all creatures, but it does not rule them.

In Daoism, natural evil is unimportant. According to Sung-peng Hsu, a modern interpreter of Laozi, there are no natural sufferings in Laozi's view. Hsu says, 'There cannot be any physical or mental pains in the universe where the assertive will is not operative. It means that all the sufferings in the world are supposedly man-made'.⁴⁸⁵ Hsu does not mean that all *natural* phenomena, such as whirlwinds and earthquakes result in some way from human action. Such natural phenomena are not evils in the philosophy of Laozi. Laozi even accepts physical pain or anxieties as valuable,

⁴⁸² Haught, *Science and Religion: From Conflict to Conversation*, 62-63.

⁴⁸³ *Daodejing*, chap. 25. (人法地, 地法天, 天法道, 道法自然.) Ivanhoe and Norden, 175.

⁴⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, chap. 10, 51. (生而不有, 爲而不恃, 長而不宰.)

⁴⁸⁵ Sung-peng Hsu, "Lao Tzu's Conception of Evil," *Philosophy East and West* 26, no. 3 (1976): 307.

saying: ‘What does it mean to revere calamity as you revere your own body? I can suffer calamity only because I have a body. When I no longer have a body, what calamity could I possibly have?’⁴⁸⁶ For Laozi, physical pain or anxieties are reasonable because we are embodied humans. Therefore, in Laozi, the pain and suffering that are part and parcel of the continuous creation of the cosmos are not themselves evils precisely because they are necessary aspects of the work of Dao, bringing the world into being naturally, or spontaneously.

In the *Zhuangzi*, there are a number of sayings about natural evil, in contrast to the relatively few of the *Daodejing* (Chapter 5:2). The *Zhuangzi* connects the origin of death to Dao: ‘Dao is the origin of all things in the universe. Without Dao, everything will die; with Dao, everything will live’.⁴⁸⁷ In the *Zhuangzi*, life and death are both integral parts of the operation of Dao. The *Zhuangzi*’s understanding of life and death becomes clear as we read a conversation between Qin Shi and Laozi’s disciples in the book.

When Laozi died, Qin Shi went to mourn for him, but after giving three cries, he left the room. ‘Weren’t you a friend of the Master?’ asked Laozi’s disciples. ‘Yes’. ‘And you think it’s all right to mourn him this way?’ ‘Yes’, said Qin Shi. ‘At first I took him for a real man, but now I know he wasn’t. A little while ago, when I went in to mourn, I found old men weeping for him as though they were weeping for a son, and young men weeping for him as though they were weeping for a mother. To have gathered a group like *that*, he must have done something to make them talk about him, though he didn’t ask them to talk or make them weep for him, though he didn’t ask them to weep. This is to hide from Heaven, turn your back on the true state of affairs, and forget what you were born with. In the old days, this was called the crime of hiding from Heaven. Your master happened to come because it was his time, and he happened to leave because things follow along. If you are content with the time and willing to follow along, then grief and joy have no way to enter. In the old days, this was called being freed from the bonds of God’.⁴⁸⁸

⁴⁸⁶ *Daodejing*, chap. 13. (何謂貴大患若身? 吾所以有大患者, 爲吾有身. 及吾無身, 吾有何患?) Ivanhoe and Norden, 168.

⁴⁸⁷ *Zhuangzi*, chap. 31. (道者, 萬物之所由也, 庶物失之者死, 得之者生.)

⁴⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, chap. 3. (老聃死, 秦失弔之, 三號而出. 弟子曰, 非夫子之友邪? 曰, 然. 然則弔焉若此, 可乎? 曰, 然. 始也吾以爲至人也, 而今非也. 向吾入而弔焉, 有老者哭之, 如哭其子. 少者哭之, 如哭其母. 彼其所以會之, 必有不蘄言而言. 不蘄哭而哭者. 是遁天倍情, 忘其所受,

Through the mouth of Qin Shi, Zhuangzi emphasizes the virtue of a life adapted to the changes of nature and time. This life is the life beyond grief and joy. I maintain that on reflection, we can see that in the *Zhuangzi*, the pain, suffering and death caused by what we would today call natural selection is understood as the rule of nature. If a person understands this, then ‘grief and joy have no way to enter’. In short, Dao creates all creatures continuously and maintains them according to this rule. This rule is characterized by *ziran*. Because all natural evils arise out of the spontaneous work of Dao, they are not challenges that must be overcome for the *Zhuangzi*.

Comparison and Generalisation

Evolution through natural selection bears a greater similarity to Haught’s and the *Zhuangzi*’s ideas of creation than it does to the traditional Christian understanding of creation. In contrast to traditional Christian theism, which places an emphasis on the transcendence, or *otherness* of God, Haught and the *Zhuangzi*, while affirming divine transcendence, place more emphasis on divine *immanence*. This makes it easier to perceive the hidden workings of Ultimate Reality, given that we are less likely to be looking for external ‘signs’. The grace of God in Haught and the spontaneity of Dao for the *Zhuangzi* are both very different from divine command and direct intervention. For Haught and the *Zhuangzi*, God and Dao maintain and create all creatures continuously. This maintenance is partly described or explained as natural selection in evolutionary science, as the grace of God (letting the world be itself) in Haught, and as spontaneity (being so of itself) in the *Zhuangzi*.

On the basis of this similarity, both the thought of Haught and that of the *Zhuangzi* can be utilised in order to express a theodicy accounting for natural evil caused by natural selection. In the evolutionary theology of Haught, God’s continuing creation is based on creation as ‘letting be’. Continuous creation would be less the consequence of God’s eternal ‘plan’ than of God’s humble and loving ‘letting be’.⁴⁸⁹ Haught understands ‘Love by its very nature cannot compel, and so any God whose very essence is love should not be expected to overwhelm the world

古者謂之遁天之刑。適來，夫子時也，適去，夫子順也。安時而處順，哀樂不能入也，古者謂是帝之懸解。) Watson, 20–21.

⁴⁸⁹ Haught, *God after Darwin: A Theology of Evolution*, 120.

either with a coercively directive “power” or an annihilating “presence”⁴⁹⁰ He thinks that his idea would be consonant with the Christian experience of God, ‘If God is essentially self-giving love, and if love in turn entails “letting the other be”’.⁴⁹¹ If God permits natural selection as an expression of boundless grace and love, and if natural evil is inevitable during natural selection, then, we cannot blame God as the One orchestrating natural evil.

Similarly, the *Zhuangzi* understands natural evil caused by natural selection as natural phenomena. Through an anecdote about Zhuangzi’s wife’s death, we can see how Zhuangzi accepts both life and death as two ends of the same spectrum.

When she first died, do you think I didn’t grieve like anyone else? But I looked back to her beginning and the time before she was born. Not only the time before she was born, but the time before she had a body. Not only the time before she had a body, but the time before she had a spirit. In the midst of the jumble of wonder and mystery, a change took place and she had a spirit. Another change and she had a body. Another change and she was born. Now there’s been another change and she’s dead. It’s just like the progression of the four seasons: spring, summer, fall, winter’.⁴⁹²

In this anecdote, Zhuangzi accepts human life and death in the same manner as the changing of the four seasons. Just as the progression of the four seasons is natural, life and death are also natural. And both are inevitable. Although Zhuangzi grieved like anyone else when his wife first died, he became free from sorrow after thinking of the principle of life and death.

If we accept natural selection as the grace of God (letting the world be itself) like in Haught or spontaneity (being so of itself) like in the *Zhuangzi*, the problem of evil caused by natural selection is less of a challenge to the traditional attributes of God and Dao, and the explanation can exempt God and Dao of responsibility with regard to natural evil.

⁴⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁹¹ John F. Haught, "Evolution, Tragedy, and Hope," in *Science and Theology: The New Consonance*, ed. Ted Peters (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1998), 234.

⁴⁹² *Zhuangzi*, chap. 18. (是其始死也, 我獨何能无概然! 察其始, 而本无生. 非徒无生也, 而本无形. 非徒无形也, 而本无氣. 雜乎芒笏之間, 變而有氣, 氣變而有形, 形變而有生, 今又變而之死, 是相與爲春秋冬夏四時行也.) Watson, 140–141.

Here, I believe that we can generalise the evolutionary theodicy of Haught and the Daoist philosophy in the *Zhuangzi* regarding natural evil as the ‘natural state defence’. The ‘natural state defence’ means that the idea of natural selection in evolutionary biology can be harmonized with Haught’s idea of grace and the *Zhuangzi*’s idea of spontaneity. This idea is similar to Polkinghorne’s ‘free-process defence’, that ‘all of created nature is allowed to be itself according to its kind, just as human beings are allowed to be according to our kind’.⁴⁹³ According to this argument, for example, genes may mutate and cause cancer during multiplication and their overall process of evolution. For Polkinghorne, God permits the physical world to become itself in that ‘independence which is Love’s gift of freedom to the one beloved’.⁴⁹⁴ If Polkinghorne’s free-process defence focuses on each kind’s ‘self-becoming’, my natural state defence emphasizes that those kinds of becoming are ‘natural’ states of affairs. To embrace Daoist philosophy, I think that the term ‘natural (*ziran*)’ is preferable to ‘free’ because the latter may connote or imply wilful action.

In short, as implied by the natural state defence, God for Haught and Dao in the *Zhuangzi* both create the world continuously, not ruling from without, but letting the world be itself. In Haught and the *Zhuangzi*, because God and Dao give boundless freedom to all creatures, natural evil derived from natural selection is a part of the natural process, and therefore, natural evil is not a big conundrum to be overcome in either thinker.

Differentiation and Supplementation

One of the important differences between the evolutionary theodicy of Haught and the Daoist philosophy of the *Zhuangzi* regarding natural evil is the way one should address pain and suffering. Both thinkers understand natural evil as a feature of natural processes, and therefore, natural evil as less of a challenge. Nevertheless, creatures still experience actual pain and suffering from this natural process, and this is an escapable fact that has to be dealt with by a holistic theodicy.

⁴⁹³ Polkinghorne, *Exploring Reality: The Intertwining of Science and Religion*, 143; Polkinghorne, "Reflections of a Bottom-up Thinker," in *God and the Scientist: Exploring the Work of John Polkinghorne*, 9.

⁴⁹⁴ Polkinghorne, *Science and Providence: God's Interaction with the World*, 77.

One solution of many theologians is to defer an explanation to an eschatological future. Evolutionary theologians such as Denis Edwards, Colin Gunton, Jürgen Moltmann, Ted Peters, John Polkinghorne and Robert Russell connect creatures' pain and suffering to an eschatological vision. Gunton says, 'Creation is a project. As created, it is perfect, because it is God's project. But it is not perfect in the sense of being complete. It has somewhere to go'.⁴⁹⁵ Russell says, '[Jesus'] Resurrection signals the beginning of the transformation of the universe into the New Creation, our eschatological hope'.⁴⁹⁶ Like these theologians, Haught tries to understand that pain and suffering can lead to something higher and can frame the whole of nature within the scheme of the hope of the resurrection, of new life.⁴⁹⁷ He argues that the most effective way to conquer evil is to trust in the future and the ultimate value of our lives within this universe. Haught says, '[O]nly a passionate conviction that the whole cosmic journey is leading somewhere important will adequately energize our ethical lives to work toward the good'.⁴⁹⁸ It should be said here that these explanations may mean a great deal to creatures like us who suffer, but these concepts are based on a far-off and unidentified future. This is treated in more detail in Chapter 8, 'New Creation and the Theodicy of the Metaphysical Future'.

On the other hand, the redemption of present pain and suffering is not delayed to the future in Daoism. Daoists accept pain and suffering as *ming*. As I explained in Chapter 5:1 in detail, *ming* literally means fate or destiny. For Laozi, returning to each one's root is returning to *ming*, and the returning of all things to *ming* is itself eternal. Laozi says:

Attain extreme tenuousness; preserve quiet integrity. The myriad creatures are all in motion! I watch as they turn back. The teeming multitude of things, each returns home to its root; and returning to one's root is called stillness. This is known as returning to one's destiny [*ming*]; and returning

⁴⁹⁵ Colin E. Gunton, *The Triune Creator: A Historical and Systematic Study* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1998), 202.

⁴⁹⁶ Russell, "Recent Theological Interpretations of Evolution," 181.

⁴⁹⁷ Haught, *Responses to 101 Questions on God and Evolution*, 123.

⁴⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 128.

to one's destiny is called 'enlightenment'. ... To embody Dao is to be long lived, and one will avoid danger to the end of one's days.⁴⁹⁹

Laozi understands that returning to each one's root is returning to *ming*. For Laozi, death is to return to human origins, to become a part of nature as we always were, and to accept the operation of Dao and *ming*.

Zhuangzi also understands natural evil as *ming*. Zhuangzi says 'Life, death, preservation, loss, failure, success, poverty, riches, worthiness, unworthiness, slander, fame, hunger, thirst, cold, heat – these are the alternations of the world, the workings of fate [*ming*]'.⁵⁰⁰ Natural evils are caused by the alternations of the world and are the workings of *ming*, so people have no power to control them as such. He says, 'Life and death are *ming* just like the eternal succession of day and night – a natural course of events. Humans do not have the power to control it: this is true of everything in the world'.⁵⁰¹ Because people cannot control natural evil, they should be content with it, and that is the way of becoming a man of virtue. As Zhuangzi states, 'To know what you can't do anything about and to be content with it as you would with fate [*ming*] – only a man of virtue can do that'.⁵⁰²

In short, for the *Zhuangzi*, pain and suffering are beyond humanity's control, so humans must accept them as *ming*. Even though *ziran* and *ming* connote the opposite meaning, both are good terms to understand natural evil or pain and suffering in Daoism. *Ziran* is connected to Dao because Dao is, as it were, the principle of all other principles in the world. *Ming* is related to Heaven (*tian*) because *ming* is to follow the order of Heaven. I propose to use *ziran* to understand natural evil, and *ming* to accept practical pain and suffering that occur in virtue of natural evil.

The eschatological vision of Haught may offer meaning for and in present pain and suffering, but it suggests that the present is only important in the light of the future. In other words, present pain and suffering cannot be addressed satisfactorily in the here and now in which we suffer. On the other hand, Zhuangzi tries to understand present pain and suffering as *ming*. Even though this idea of *ming*, or fate,

⁴⁹⁹ *Daodejing*, chap. 16. (致虛極，守靜篤。萬物竝作，吾觀其復。夫物芸芸，各復歸其根。歸根曰靜，是謂復命，復命曰常 ... 道乃久。) Ivanhoe and Norden, 170.

⁵⁰⁰ *Zhuangzi*, chap. 5. (死生存亡，窮達貧富，賢與不肖，毀譽飢渴寒暑，是事之變，命之行也。) Watson, 39.

⁵⁰¹ *Ibid.*, chap. 6. (死生命也，其有夜旦之常，天也。人之有所不得與，皆物之情也。)

⁵⁰² *Ibid.*, chap. 5. (知不可奈何，而安之若命，唯有德者能之。) Watson, 36.

sounds like pessimism, it has actually been a practical way for Daoists to overcome pain and suffering in the present, as experienced.

Christian parallels to *ming* may be found in the familiar phrases ‘God’s will’ or ‘God’s mandate’. How can the concept of *ming* supplement evolutionary theodicy? In Christian theodicy, accepting God’s will is often one of the central themes, as implied by the biblical book of Job,⁵⁰³ but theologians have tried to find more specific reasons to prove the righteousness of God, that is, to vindicate God’s goodness despite the evil and suffering experienced by so many in the world. When Christian theologians accept pain and suffering as God’s will, they inquire further about the nature of God’s will. Zhuangzi, on the other hand, does not seem to need to ask when or whether something is Heaven’s will, but he accepts fate as a given, or brute fact without need of further investigation or justification. For example, Zhuangzi says, ‘Heaven covers all without partiality; earth bears up all without partiality – heaven and earth surely wouldn’t single me out to make me poor. I try to discover who is doing it, but I can’t get the answer. Still, here I am – at the very extreme. It must be *ming*’,⁵⁰⁴ and also says, ‘I was born on the dry land and felt safe on the dry land – that was what I was used to. I grew up with the water and felt safe in the water – that was my nature. I don’t know why I do what I do – that’s *ming*’.⁵⁰⁵

These approaches to grace and fate respectively are rooted in the difference in the understandings of Ultimate Reality of Christianity and Daoism. I suggest that the evolutionary theodicy of Haught needs focus to help Christians accept pain and suffering in the present, rather than encouraging them to focus on finding the

⁵⁰³ The book of Job (38–42) approaches the problem of evil and suffering with an emphasis on the extremely limited understanding that we human beings can possess about God’s work and plan for creation. As Edwards expounds one of three points to comprehend nature’s cruelty in light of Christian revelation, we do not know about what the God of Job 38–42 thinks with respect to our place in the cosmos and what the outcome of His work of creation and the new creation will be. Because of our limited perspective and the necessarily parochial character of our knowledge, we cannot see the full picture of God’s intentions and plan. [Edwards, 36-37.] The human being, as only one creature in the vastness of the cosmos, despite its privileged place as the image of God, cannot fully understand the Creator’s will. A similar sentiment is expressed by the writer of Ecclesiastes: ‘He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end’ (Eccl. 3:11).

⁵⁰⁴ *Zhuangzi*, chap. 6. (天無私覆, 地無私載. 天地豈私貧我哉? 求其爲之者而不得也. 然而至此極者, 命也夫!) Watson, 54.

⁵⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, chap. 19. (吾生於陵而安於陵, 故也. 長於水而安於水, 性也. 不知吾所以然而然, 命也.) Watson, 152.

meaning of pain and suffering in the future.⁵⁰⁶ I also suggest that the relationship between *ziran* (being so of itself) and *ming* (Heaven's will) in the *Zhuangzi* will help us to revisit and re-imagine the relationship between natural selection (the process of nature) and God's will in Christianity.

Let us go deeper in our analysis of the Daoist worldview as expounded in the *Zhuangzi*. In Daoism, the terms of good and evil are used in a 'descriptive' sense rather than in an 'evaluative' sense as in Christianity.⁵⁰⁷ In classical Daoist philosophy, good and evil are terms to describe things or phenomena rather than to evaluate them. Because it does not speak of valuation, there is no cognitive preference between good and evil, although we must understand that the *Zhuangzi* deals in exaggeration as we see in its literary style and of the manner in which it relates stories. According to the *Zhuangzi*, deciding upon a good action to be performed *because* it is good morally or has the sanction of society is regarded as a wilful or contrived action, which is contrary to spontaneity. The *Zhuangzi* says:

The boundary between things is actually the boundary between specific things. A boundary without a boundary means that no boundary is an absolute boundary. People talk about fullness and emptiness, and decline and decay. Dao makes things full or empty, but it is not full or empty. Dao makes things on the decline and decay, but it is not on the decline and decay.⁵⁰⁸

For the *Zhuangzi*, there is no absolute boundary. Because there is no absolute boundary between good and evil, the terms 'good' and 'evil' are relative words that describe phenomena, and are not evaluative words, pointing to an objective, supra-conscious moral reality. It even claims that 'To be without partisanship is already a

⁵⁰⁶ Wildman's ground-of-being theism can assist the understanding of pain and suffering in the present as *ming*: 'To acknowledge the ground of our being in these terms is to accept suffering as our fate and the fate of all creatures, and also to do what we will with these circumstances, whether that means sitting idly by or launching into the world with banners waving and guns blazing'. [Wildman, in *Physics and Cosmology: Scientific Perspectives on the Problem of Evil in Nature*, 294.]

⁵⁰⁷ The utterances, 'This grape is sweet' or 'This grape is large and blue', are two possible examples of the descriptive sense. Obviously, the utterance, 'This is a good grape' is one instance of the evaluative sense. For more information and debates about descriptive/evaluative senses of words see: W. D. Hudson, *Modern Moral Philosophy* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1970), chap. 5 and 6; R. M. Hare, *The Language of Morals* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952).

⁵⁰⁸ *Zhuangzi*, chap. 22. (而物有際者, 所謂物際者也。不際之際, 際之不際者也。謂盈虛衰殺, 彼為盈虛非盈虛, 彼為衰殺非衰殺。) Wang Rongpei, 375.

kind of partisanship'.⁵⁰⁹ This is analogous to the concept of *wuwei* in that one cannot *try* to be spontaneous, or act without acting. For Daoism, people should at the very least refrain from engaging in wilful actions on the basis of a moral or social evaluation. People should stop performing wilful actions that accompany evaluation. Laozi suggests that people should discard 'humanity (*jen*, 仁)' and 'righteousness (*li*, 義)',⁵¹⁰ (the highest values in Confucianism), because they have an evaluative sense and contribute to contrived action. There is a famous dialogue conveyed by Zhuangzi between himself and Confucius in the *Zhuangzi* itself, in which Zhuangzi accuses Confucius of manifesting egocentricity in his very attempt to dispel it through a consciousness and wilful effort to be loving and generous.⁵¹¹

If judgment about good and evil is suspended, we cannot, strictly speaking, ask 'why' present evils come about, for such a question betrays normative bias and evaluative preferences based on an underlying notion of purpose and direction of nature as it pertains to my own self. Therefore, if evolutionary theodicy pays attention to the descriptive senses of good and evil, the term 'natural evil' itself may be discarded. This understanding is indirectly connected with the 'dark side' in evolutionary theodicy, and I will discuss this view in detail in Chapter 7:3.

In this section, I tried to develop the evolutionary theodicy of Haught and the Daoist philosophy of Zhuangzi focusing on natural evil. In Haught and the *Zhuangzi*, God and Dao created and are creating all creatures continuously according to the processes of nature without direct intervention. Based on the same understanding, I generalised it as the 'natural state defence'. The defence consists in the claim that natural evil derived from natural selection is a necessary aspect of the endowment of

⁵⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, chap. 13. (無私焉乃私也.) Watson, 104.

⁵¹⁰ *Daodejing*, chap. 19. (絕聖棄智, 民利百倍. 絕仁棄義, 民復孝慈.)

⁵¹¹ *Zhuangzi*, chap. 13. 'Lao Dan said, "May I ask your definition of benevolence and righteousness?" Confucius said, "To be glad and joyful in mind, to embrace universal love and be without partisanship – this is the true form of benevolence and righteousness". Lao Dan said, "Hmm – close – except for the last part. 'Universal love' – that's a rather nebulous ideal, isn't it? And to be without partisanship is already a kind of partisanship. Do you want to keep the world from losing its simplicity? Heaven and earth hold fast to their constant ways, the sun and moon to their brightness, the stars and planets to their ranks, the birds and beasts to their flocks, the trees and shrubs to their stands. You have only to go along with Virtue in your actions, to follow Dao in your journey, and already you will be there. Why these flags of benevolence and righteousness so bravely upraised, as though you were beating a drum and searching for a lost child? Ah, you will bring confusion to the nature of man!"' (Watson, 104).

boundless freedom to all creatures on the part of Dao and God in both philosophies. Natural evil, therefore, no longer presents itself as ubiquitous.

I expounded the differences between Haught and Zhuangzi when it comes to their approach to actual pain and suffering. First, Haught understands that pain and suffering can lead to something higher and can frame all creation within the scheme of the hope for new creation. On the other hand, the redemption of present pain and suffering is not deferred to the future in the *Zhuangzi*, accepting pain and suffering as fate (*ming*). Second, in the *Zhuangzi*, good and evil are used in a ‘descriptive’ sense rather than in an ‘evaluative’ sense as in Christianity, and thus judgment about good and evil is suspended in the *Zhuangzi*. These differences can, indeed, supplement the evolutionary theodicy of Haught: the *Zhuangzi*’s ideas here can be used to modify Haught’s thinking to render it able to accept pain and suffering *in* the present and *for* the present. Next, the evolutionary theodicy of Haught can instead focus on the descriptive sense when discussing good and evil when supplemented with the alternative perspective that the *Zhuangzi* provides.

(3) The Free Action Defence: Free Will and Wuwei (無為, non-action)

Description

Moral evil generally refers to humans’ wrongdoing or bad behaviour and the pain and suffering that come from it. Traditional Christian theologians have explained moral evil as the distortion of the free will that God gave human beings in the beginning. This, Richard Swinburne relates, is based on the idea that ‘He [God] cannot give us very serious free will, i.e. the free will to choose between good and wrong, without the natural possibility (unprevented by God) that we will do wrong’.⁵¹²

The reason that is traditionally given in Christianity as to why people choose to do wrong is closely related to Adam and ‘original sin’. St. Paul says, ‘Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned’ (Rom. 5:12). Mark Harris claims that Augustine misunderstood this text that Adam’s sin passed down from generation to

⁵¹² Richard Swinburne, *Providence and the Problem of Evil* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 133.

generation based on a faulty Latin translation,⁵¹³ and this misinterpretation has been handed down to us as the doctrine of ‘original sin’. Nevertheless, causal connection between present human death and Adam’s original violation of the Law of God still remains a live issue of debate.

The existence of the historical Adam and the hereditary transmission of original sin seem to fly in the face of evolutionary science. Conservatives and traditionalists such as Stephen Lloyd,⁵¹⁴ Henri Blocher,⁵¹⁵ J. H. Morrison,⁵¹⁶ and C. J. Collins⁵¹⁷ require the historical Adam, but many evolutionary theologians such as John Walton,⁵¹⁸ Patricia Williams,⁵¹⁹ and Mark Harris⁵²⁰ refer to Adam as an ‘archetype’ or a ‘symbol’. Actually, except for Romans 5 and 1 Corinthians 15, the Bible is largely indifferent to the historical Adam.

Still, even according to some evolutionary theologians, human free will is inclined to immoral behaviour because of the doctrine of the Fall. In other words, human nature prefers what is evil to what is good because of an inherited corruption of the will manifested in a tendency to sin. Other evolutionary theologians understand the doctrine of original sin in relation to entropy. Because entropy draws all things into a state of dilapidation and deterioration, it seems to correlate to original sin, given that in the Bible, God is the great unifying force whereas evil, sin, or the diabolical is the great dividing force (*διάβολος* comes from the Late Greek *diaballein*, which means to ‘throw across’ or ‘cast apart’, from *dia-* ‘across, through’ and *ballein* ‘to throw’). David Bradnick claims, ‘Both describe the “fallen” state of creation, the unceasing tug of a “mysterious power” towards despair, and the

⁵¹³ Harris, *The Nature of Creation: Examining the Bible and Science*, 140.

⁵¹⁴ Stephen Lloyd, "Christian Theology and Neo-Darwinism Are Incompatible: An Argument from the Resurrection," in *Debating Darwin. Two Debates: Is Darwinism True and Does It Matter?*, ed. Graeme Finlay et al. (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2009), 5.

⁵¹⁵ Henri Blocher, "The Theology of the Fall and the Origins of Evil," in *Darwin, Creation and the Fall: Theological Challenges*, ed. R. J. Berry and Thomas A. Noble (Nottingham: Apollos, 2009).

⁵¹⁶ J. H. Morrison, "Physical Indeterminacy and Human Free Will," *Expository times* (1934).

⁵¹⁷ C. John Collins, *Did Adam and Eve Really Exist? Who They Were and Why You Should Care* (Nottingham: IVP, 2011), 130.

⁵¹⁸ John H. Walton, "Human Origins and the Bible," *Zygon* 47, no. 4 (2012): 880.

⁵¹⁹ Patricia A. Williams, *Doing without Adam and Eve: Sociobiology and Original Sin* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress Press, 2001).

⁵²⁰ Harris, *The Nature of Creation: Examining the Bible and Science*, 142.

inability of creation to pull itself out of this destructive grip'.⁵²¹ In evolutionary theology, creatures incline towards degeneration, and therefore, human action which utilises free will does not tend to produce morally good outcomes in the world overall.

As I explained in Chapter 3:2 'Haught on Evil', Haught thinks that evolutionary science is irreconcilable with a literal reading of the traditional story of Adam and Eve. He instead focuses on the inner meaning of the story, and understands it as humans' turning away from God in virtue of their free will. For Haught, the notion of original sin is still relevant for reminding us not only of our estrangement from our Origin, but also of our incapacity to save ourselves from this state of a natural tendency to sin.⁵²² The story helps us to realize that only God can rescue us, and so the need for a saviour is in no way diminished in Haught's evolutionary theology. In Haught's evolutionary theodicy, moral evil comes from humans' turning away from God, and it is the human refusal to take an appropriate place in the ongoing creation of the universe in a scientific sense (Chapter 3:2). Thus, this explanation is not in conflict with either traditional Christian doctrine or evolutionary science.

For Daoist philosophy, discussing the origin of evil is misguided. Daoists do not distinguish between good and evil, and act of naming things or persons as evil is denounced by them (Chapter 5:1). We can, however, identify moral evil in Daoism by an indirect method of locating the opposite of the so-called 'good' or 'virtue' that Daoists pursue. *Wuwei* is an important concept for understanding moral evil in Daoism. *Wuwei* means 'non-action', 'non-striving', 'not doing', 'absence of doing', 'acting spontaneously', or 'flowing with the moment' (Chapter 4:2). In other words, *wuwei* means letting nature take its own course. As Laozi says, 'This is why sages abide in the business of nonaction, and practice the teaching that is without words'.⁵²³ It does not mean doing nothing and saying nothing, but means doing all things according to the course of nature. Laozi also says, 'Those who would gain the world and do something with it, I see that they will fail. For the world is a spiritual vessel and one cannot put it to use. Those who use it ruin it. Those who grab hold of

⁵²¹ Bradnick, 74.

⁵²² Haught, *Responses to 101 Questions on God and Evolution*, 81.

⁵²³ *Daodejing*, chap. 2. (是以聖人處無爲之事，行不言之教。) Ivanhoe and Norden, 164.

it lose it'.⁵²⁴ We can see here that Laozi regards wilful or self-conscious action as at least counter-productive, and at worst, calamitous in virtue of the fact that it will likely eventually bring about not only failure, but also ruin or loss.

Similarly, *wuwei* is one of the most important values of life in the *Zhuangzi*: 'If you rest in non-action, things will transform themselves'.⁵²⁵ Without wilful or conscious action, the world goes on unimpeded. The same applies to the running of a country: 'The sovereign of dark antiquity ruled the world through inaction, through Heavenly Virtue and nothing more'.⁵²⁶ According to the *Zhuangzi*, discrimination, wisdom and desire did not exist in the age of perfect virtue. What did exist, however, was a *tabula rasa* as far as human beings are concerned, an uncarved simplicity:

In this age of Perfect Virtue, men live the same as birds and beasts, group themselves side by side with the ten thousand things. Who then knows anything about [the exemplary person] or [the nasty person]? Dull and unwitting, men have no wisdom; thus their Virtue does not depart from them. Dull and unwitting, they have no desire; this is called uncarved simplicity. In uncarved simplicity, the people attain their true nature.⁵²⁷

In the philosophy of the *Zhuangzi*, wilful actions break the natural harmony that is normally present in the world. If the harmony of the world is thus violated, Dao and Virtue (*de*) will disappear. The *Zhuangzi* even says, 'Grief and joy are perversions of Virtue; pleasure and anger are violations of Dao; like and hate are offenses against Virtue'.⁵²⁸ Thus we can infer from the *Zhuangzi* that wilful actions on the part of human beings are unnatural and they are the origin of moral evil.

Comparison and Generalisation

Human free will in the evolutionary theology of Haught and *wuwei* in the *Zhuangzi* have some similarities in explaining moral evil.

⁵²⁴ Ibid., chap. 29. (將欲取天下而爲之, 吾見其不得已。天下神器, 不可爲也。爲者敗之, 執者失之。) Ivanhoe and Norden, 177.

⁵²⁵ *Zhuangzi*, chap. 11. (汝徒處無爲, 而物自化。)

⁵²⁶ Ibid., chap. 12. (玄古之君天下, 無爲也, 天德而已矣。) Watson, 84.

⁵²⁷ Ibid., chap. 9. (夫至德之世, 同與禽獸居, 族與萬物竝, 惡乎知君子小人哉! 同乎無知, 其德不離。同乎無欲, 是謂素樸。素樸而民性得矣。) Watson, 66.

⁵²⁸ Ibid., chap. 15. (悲樂者德之邪。喜怒者道之過。好惡者德之失。)

First, both free will and non-action attribute the blame for moral evil to human action. For Haught, moral evil comes from human free will regardless of how we might understand or apply the doctrine of original sin. Recall that Haught believes that sin or moral evil should be regarded as the consequence of the voluntary submission on the part of human beings to the past state of the world, rejecting participation in the ongoing creation of the world (Chapter 3:2). In the *Zhuangzi*, moral evil originates from unnatural or wilful human action. As such, Zhuangzi recommends that we should not allow ourselves not to be gripped by fleeting emotions or feelings:

Joy, anger, grief, delight, worry, regret, fickleness, inflexibility, modesty, wilfulness, candor, insolence – music from empty holes, mushrooms springing up in dampness, day and night replacing each other before us, and no one knows where they sprout from. Let it be! Let it be! [It is enough that] morning and evening we have them, and they are the means by which we live. Without them, we would not exist; without us, they would have nothing to take hold of.⁵²⁹

The phrase ‘Let it be’ sums up the notion of *wuwei* quite well. That wilful action causes evil is clearly revealed in the last story of the Inner Chapters about Hundun (chaos) and his friends. In the story, when Hundun’s friends bored seven holes into him in their kindness, Hundun died (Chapter 5:2). We can see here that wilful actions, even if borne from good intentions, can bring about calamity. To put it as Zhuangzi would, how much better to leave nature well alone!

Second, both free will and *wuwei* are best defined as capacities for spontaneous action, though *wuwei* is also used a verb (to *do* something without conscious effort, such as breathing) and an adjective describing action. Both capacities of free will and *wuwei* can work well when they are not distorted. Both are one of the best gifts of human nature, and humans can cultivate a bond with God or Dao through free will or non-action. In the evolutionary theodicy of Haught, humans’ turning away from God distorts human free will, that is, refusing the novelty of creation corrupts the freedom of the will.

⁵²⁹ Ibid., chap. 2. (喜怒哀樂，慮嘆變熱，姚佚啓態。樂出虛，蒸成菌。日夜相代乎前，而莫知其所萌。已乎已乎！旦暮得此，其所由以生乎！非彼無我，非我無所取。) Watson, 8.

In the *Zhuangzi*, non-action does not mean ‘doing nothing’ but ‘following one’s nature’. Admittedly, here we cannot avoid a logical contradiction, but the non-action of Heaven and earth creates and maintain all things in the world.

The inaction (*wuwei*) of Heaven is its purity, the inaction of earth is its peace. So the two inactions combine, and all things are transformed and brought to birth. Wonderfully, mysteriously, there is no place they come out of. Mysteriously, wonderfully, they have no sign. Each thing minds its business, and all grow up out of inaction.⁵³⁰

All things emerge from non-action, as a poet must first rest in quiet contemplation to be able to be inspired for the writing of verses. For the *Zhuangzi*, it is not possible for evil to result from non-action. Evils arise from human wilful action, and human action is perverted when humans will, or decide upon doing something, intentionally. Therefore, without distortion, free will and *wuwei* for Haught and Zhuangzi respectively are good in virtue of retaining their naturalness, as capacities for spontaneous action.

Traditional Christian theodicy explains moral evil and attempts to reconcile God’s existence with it on the basis of the ‘free will defence’. The free will defence usually claims that moral evil emanates from the action emanating from the free will of human beings. For example, John Hick says, ‘It seems to me that once you ask God to intervene to prevent some specific evil you are in principle asking [God] to rescind our human freedom and responsibility’.⁵³¹ Evolutionary theologians, including Haught, do not seem to be much different from traditional Christian theologians in explaining moral evil, even though they usually do not understand the historical Fall literally, unlike some traditional theologians.

Based on the similarities between the ideas of Haught and Zhuangzi about moral evil, I would like to generalise them as the ‘free action defence’. The ‘free action defence’ comprises the explanation that moral evil arises from humans’ distorted free will in the evolutionary theodicy of Haught and from the violation of non-action in the *Zhuangzi*. Therefore, in both Haught and Zhuangzi, evil can be

⁵³⁰ Ibid., chap. 18. (天無爲以之清, 地無爲以之寧. 故兩無爲相合, 萬物皆化生. 芒乎芴乎, 而無從出乎! 芴乎芒乎, 而無有象乎! 萬物職職, 皆從無爲殖.) Watson, 140.

⁵³¹ John Hick, "An Irenaean Theodicy," in *Encountering Evil: Live Options in Theodicy*, ed. Stephen T. Davis (Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark Ltd., 1981), 70.

located not in God or Dao, but in the free action of human beings. As such, the problem of moral evil can be expounded without laying the blame on God and Dao.

Here it is absolutely crucial to distinguish between responsibility and blameworthiness. In creating and sustaining the world, including and especially human beings who are capable of doing evil, God, we can see, is in fact *responsible* for evil. God is the origin of the possibility for evil to come into existence in the world through human action, because of His creating human beings. That said, is God *blameworthy*? To be blameworthy is to be morally culpable, that is, to be *guilty* of malicious intent. To borrow from the ‘good father analogy’ in theology, just as a father does not *intend* his child to undergo the inevitable suffering that occurs in life, we might say that God in this case does not create human beings with the intention that they do evil and create suffering in the world. God, as it were, does not have malicious intent.

Differentiation and Supplementation

Free will in the evolutionary theodicy of Haught and *wuwei* in the *Zhuangzi* do have some differences.

First, free will in Haught can bring about moral evil when it is distorted. Regardless of our acceptance that human free will is affected by original sin, it is absolutely obvious that not all free action does bring about evil. There are many decisions that we can make regarding the good and the morally wrong, and we generally presuppose that those decisions are free decisions.

In contrast, all human action emanating from the free will, that is, self-conscious action, causes moral evil in the *Zhuangzi*. Because all intentional actions bring about evil, humans should rest in and rely on non-action (*wuwei*). That humans rest in non-action does not mean that all things remain undone, or that nothing happens at all. According to the *Zhuangzi*, ‘All things in the world grow up out of non-action. So, as the saying is, the Heaven and the earth do nothing, and there is nothing that is not done’.⁵³²

⁵³² *Zhuangzi*, chap. 18. (萬物職職, 皆從無爲殖. 故曰, 天地無爲也, 而無不爲也.)

Second and more importantly, the understanding of human nature is different in the two thinkers. Haught does not accept a literal meaning of original sin, but he accepts its underlying meaning of humans' audacious disregard for their creative mission in the world. Haught claims that there is the accumulated history of the 'Fall' of human beings in a backward movement toward disunity from their distorted free will (Chapter 3:2). For him, human nature tends towards refusing to join in God's continuous creation.

In contrast to this, in Daoism, human nature tends toward good and spontaneous action always brings about good behaviour. *Wuwei* generally means not to wilfully or consciously act, or act upon pre-conceived intentions that might be used to retroactively justify actions. *Wuwei*, therefore is genuinely spontaneous or effortless action. Hans Küng explains the importance of non-action:

It is only when the human person, in 'emptiness' and freed of passions and desires, allows the Tao to rule his or her life; only when he or she lets himself or herself be filled by the Tao and quietly abides in purposeless action or 'doing nothing' (*wuwei*) – only then will he or she attain unity with the Tao.⁵³³

Küng regards non-action as the way (or non-way) to unify oneself (or *be* unified) with Dao, but a certain paradox should be pointed out, which is the notion of attainment *by* non-action. By 'attain', Küng certainly does not mean 'consciously achieve', but rather *enter into* a new mode of consciousness. In Christianity, it is impossible for people to become one with God solely by their free will or effort alone. Theosis or deification is only possible with the help of God's grace. This difference comes from different understandings of human nature between Christianity and Daoism.

These differences between Haught and Zhuangzi can provide valuable insights into the evolutionary theodicy of Haught. Based on the Daoist philosophy of Zhuangzi concerning human nature, we can raise these questions: why was human nature created to be inclined to moral evil in Christianity? Why do only humans, among all creatures, violate the rules of nature and create evil?

⁵³³ Küng and Ching, 171.

The Daoist conception of human nature could lead theologians to conclude that human free will can itself be a part of the ‘very good’ (Gen.1:31) creation of God, and that therefore we cannot regard any particular action emerging from the use of free will as unnatural or evil, analogous to the fact that animals are neither morally upright nor morally deviant for their particular diets. The ‘very good’ creation that Genesis speaks of is, in virtue of God’s omnibenevolence and omniscience, good in the sense of *suitability* or *aptness*, as a design or tool is apt for the intended purpose or plan. It is also good in the moral sense because God, as the Good, cannot be, do or conceive anything that is the privation of the good. Therefore, to use scholastic language, creation is imbued with the ‘transcendental’ of the good, leading, as it were to its source, the Good itself – God. Creation, just like its source, then, is *perfect*, but we should not understand perfection here as ‘complete’.⁵³⁴

If the evolutionary theodicy of Haught concentrates on God’s good creation more than humans’ tendency to sin, human free will may not be the origin of moral evil and it may have a meaning similar to spontaneous action (non-action) in the *Zhuangzi*. It is present as a self-developing process in the cosmos, just as a tree grows a branch. In other words, it is incorrect to label humans’ selfishness and aggression as ‘sin’, since these arise from their evolutionary heritage, and as such were created that way. Looking further ahead, the term ‘moral evil’ itself may, from this perspective, be discarded. Surely, though – and no doubt the reader will have formulated this objection already – grotesque and deeply disturbing moral evils such as rape and child abuse on the level of particular actions and the Holocaust on the level of events somehow defy this ‘levelling out’ of moral categories, somehow reach out to us as *unacceptable* occurrences. No doubt the worst sorts of moral evils need further discussion.

In this section, I examined the evolutionary theodicy of Haught and the Daoist philosophy of Zhuangzi with respect to moral evil. Moral evil emerges from the distorted free will of human beings in the evolutionary theodicy of Haught and from the violation of non-action (*wuwei*) in the *Zhuangzi*. Moreover, both free will in Haught and non-action in the *Zhuangzi* are good capacities when they are not

⁵³⁴ We can think of many examples in which incompleteness is essential to the perfection of a thing in art and relationships. There is a sense that an incomplete knowledge about a person, or the mysterious ending of a novel that keeps people thinking, can be *that which* makes something valuable or memorable.

distorted by a turning away from novelty or self-conscious contriving. I generalised these similar ideas as the 'free action defence', which claims that moral evil can be identified and explained without attributing responsibility for it to God and Dao in both philosophies respectively.

However, I claimed that the understanding of moral evil is different in both Haught and Zhuangzi, and these differences can supplement the evolutionary theodicy of Haught. First, free will in Haught can bring about moral evil when it is distorted, but freedom of the will manifest in self-conscious action brings about moral evil in the *Zhuangzi*. Second, in the evolutionary theology of Haught, human nature inclines to what is evil rather than what is good because of human's inherited corrupt tendency to sin, but in the *Zhuangzi*, spontaneous action always brings about good behaviour. If the evolutionary theodicy of Haught can focus more on God's good creation than humans' tendency to sin, human free will will no longer be thought of as the origin of moral evil and instead be thought of as something similar to the capacity of spontaneous action (non-action) in the *Zhuangzi*. If this happens, the term 'moral evil' itself may eventually be discarded.

Chapter 7

Continuous Creation and the Theodicy of Harmony

Along with *creatio ex nihilo* (creation from nothing), *creatio continua* (continuous creation) is an important term in Christian theology. If *creatio ex nihilo* reveals God's transcendence with respect to the world, *creatio continua* expresses God's immanence in the world in an actively creative sense.⁵³⁵ The notion of continuous creation is not a prominent theme either the Bible or traditional Christian theology. Some notable theologians, such as Aquinas and Schleiermacher, understood continuous creation as God's supporting and preserving the world. However, when evolutionary biology found new forms of organisms that were previously not known to not exist, the term 'continuous creation' started to be frequently used in the conversation between theology and science. Peacocke emphasises this: 'Any notion of God as Creator must now take into account, that God is continuously creating, continuously giving existence to, what is new; that God is *semper Creator*; that the world is a *creatio continua*'.⁵³⁶ Haught understands that an instantaneously complete creation would be 'a frozen universe, one without a future and one incapable of supporting life',⁵³⁷ and claims that temporal duration is an intrinsic aspect of creation that originates life.

Even though evolutionary theologians offer very different interpretations of *creatio continua*, many of them understand God's continuous creation as compatible with evolution and that natural selection is an important way of interpreting continuous creation. As David Fergusson explains, '[T]he apparently free movement of natural forms is consonant with a God who is present and active within the creative process, in a manner analogous to God's same involvement with human history'.⁵³⁸ Developments in evolutionary science can help theologians to understand God's continuous creation more fully. Haught thinks that evolutionary biology is a great gift for us to understand and develop the idea of continuous creation more fully: '[O]ne of the great gifts of post-Darwinian thought is that it makes the notion

⁵³⁵ Harris, *The Nature of Creation: Examining the Bible and Science*, 114.

⁵³⁶ Peacocke, "The Cost of New Life," in *The Work of Love*, 23.

⁵³⁷ Haught, *Responses to 101 Questions on God and Evolution*, 51.

⁵³⁸ Fergusson, "Darwin and Providence," in *Theology after Darwin*, 81.

of ongoing creation much more immediate and understandable than at any other time in the history of Christianity'.⁵³⁹

In this chapter, I will expound the evolutionary theodicy of Haught and the Daoist philosophy of Zhuangzi with regard to continuous creation. The kenotic God and Dao's omnipresence (the suffering God defence), the self-absenting of God and the hiddenness of Dao (the hidden God defence), and the 'dark side' (Haught) and *yin* (Zhuangzi) (together enabling the construction of what I will call the harmony defence), will be topics of each section. With these topics, I will reveal the relationship between the evolutionary theodicy of Haught and the Daoist philosophy of Zhuangzi, and I will endeavour to develop plausible theodicies in a scientific age.

(1) The Suffering God Defence: The Kenotic God and Dao's Omnipresence

Description

As I expounded in Chapter 3:3, 'Divine Kenosis', the *kenosis* of God signifies the self-emptying of God through the 'Christ-event'. For some evolutionary theologians, the notion of a kenotic God is a good way to understand the relationship between God and creatures in evolution. Peacocke, for example, argues that 'God suffers in, with, and under the creative process of the world'.⁵⁴⁰ Peacocke understands that God suffers from the natural evils of the world together with human beings even as He intends to lead humans, and all creation, to a greater good.

Similarly, Haught says, 'God struggles along with all beings, participating in both their pain and enjoyment, ultimately redeeming the world by an infinite compassion – so that in the end nothing is ever completely forgotten or lost'.⁵⁴¹ For Haught, the passion and resurrection of Jesus imply that God fully shares the pain and suffering of the world. He understands that the kenotic God enters into the process of evolution taking all of its suffering into the divine life.

This aspect of kenosis of God can be compared to the omnipresence of Dao in the philosophy of Zhuangzi. In the *Zhuangzi*, Dao exists everywhere and all creatures rely on it for life (Chapter 4:3). In the conversation between Zhuangzi and

⁵³⁹ Haught, *Responses to 101 Questions on God and Evolution*, 52.

⁵⁴⁰ Peacocke, "The Cost of New Life," in *The Work of Love*, 37.

⁵⁴¹ Haught, *Science and Religion: From Conflict to Conversation*, 69.

Dongguozi, Zhuangzi gives some examples to enlighten his disciple about the omnipresence of Dao.⁵⁴² As the dialogue relates, Dao exists in the ants, in the barnyard grass, in tiles and bricks, and even in the excrement. This conversation shows Dao's manifest property of omnipresence well. The *Daodejing* also states that Dao exists everywhere: 'How expansive is the great Dao! Flowing to the left and to the right. The myriad creatures rely upon it for life, and it turns none of them away'.⁵⁴³ In Daoism, Dao is so expansive, and it flows everywhere.

Comparison and Generalisation

The kenotic God and the omnipresent Dao are similar in the following ways. First, the kenotic God and the omnipresent Dao are immanent in all creatures and care for them. Because God suffers in creatures and with creatures, the meaning of divine kenosis implies divine immanence. This view is often identified with 'panentheism', or even 'pantheism', (the latter being a more familiar idea) but as I will now show, Haught's evolutionary theodicy implies the former and not the latter.

'Panentheism' is the belief that everything is in God but ontologically distinct from God.⁵⁴⁴ The belief that all creatures exist in God is different from 'pantheism', pantheism being the belief that the world is essentially identical with God, or that all things possess the same divine status. Panentheism seems to be accepted by a greater number of theologians than pantheism today, and passages from early and medieval Christianity that are consonant with a belief in panentheism can be found with relative ease.⁵⁴⁵ For instance, according to the apocryphal *Gospel of Thomas*, Chapter 77, Jesus says, 'Saw wood into pieces, and I am there. Lift a stone, and you can find

⁵⁴² *Zhuangzi*, chap. 22.

⁵⁴³ *Daodejing*, chap. 34. (大道氾兮, 其可左右, 萬物恃之而生而不辭.) Ivanhoe and Norden, 179.

⁵⁴⁴ Joseph A. Bracken, "Contributions from Philosophical Theology and Metaphysics," in *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Science*, ed. Philip Clayton and Zachary Simpson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 350.

⁵⁴⁵ The psalmist says, 'Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast' (139:7–10). The psalmist understands that God is in the heavens and in the depths of the earth. Because God exists everywhere and all creatures are in God, the psalmist confesses, 'Where can I flee from your presence?'

me there'. Thomas Aquinas similarly argues that 'God is in all things as the cause of the being of all things'.⁵⁴⁶

Schaab contends that panentheism best exemplifies God's creative relationship to the world in a manner that is at least conceptually consistent with modern evolutionary theories, and she conceives 'this panentheistic relationship in Trinitarian terms that lead to a triune distinction in the One God as personally Transcendent, personally Incarnate, and personally Immanent in relation to the cosmos'.⁵⁴⁷ Jeffrey Pugh also understands that all particles, even quarks, interact with God when he writes: 'Every quark, every particle, every aspect of matter and energy is connected to God's desire and hope for the world'.⁵⁴⁸

For Haught, panentheism implies that 'God's mode of being is wide, deep, and compassionate enough to embrace all creation – including the undeserved suffering of nonhuman life which Darwin himself found so excessive'.⁵⁴⁹ He believes that panentheism, meaning divine immanence, is completely consistent with the affirmation of divine transcendence.

In the *Zhuangzi*, Dao is the origin of all creatures, and all creatures can exist because of Dao. *Zhuangzi* asks, 'How can Dao leave and not exist?'.⁵⁵⁰ Laozi similarly says about Dao's role: 'Dao produces them (all things) and *de* (virtue) rears them; Raises and nurtures them; Settles and confirms them; Nourishes and shelters them'.⁵⁵¹ According to Laozi, Dao produces, raises, nurtures, settles, confirms, and shelters all creatures.

Because the kenotic God and the omnipresent Dao exist in all creatures and support them, we can say that God and Dao in both philosophies are intimately involved in and with creatures' lives, including the pain and suffering that they endure.

⁵⁴⁶ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I, 8, 1, ad. 1.

⁵⁴⁷ Schaab, "The Creative Suffering of the Triune God: An Evolutionary Panentheistic Paradigm," 291.

⁵⁴⁸ Jeffrey C. Pugh, *Entertaining the Triune Mystery: God, Science, and the Space Between* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2003), 53.

⁵⁴⁹ John F. Haught, "The Suffering of God," *Commonweal* 138, no. 11 (2011): 15.

⁵⁵⁰ *Zhuangzi*, chap. 2. (道惡乎往而不存?)

⁵⁵¹ *Daodejing*, chap. 51. (故道生之, 德畜之, 長之育之, 亭之毒之, 養之覆之.)

Second, the kenotic God and the omnipresent Dao both establish a bi-directional relationship with creatures, rather than a merely one-directional relationship. It means God and Dao are both intimately involved in and with creatures. In evolutionary theology, God influences creatures and is also influenced *by* creatures. Schaab claims that her model of divine interaction in terms of whole-part influence is inspired by that of Peacocke.⁵⁵² In her model, '[T]he system-as-a-whole influences its constituent parts and, conversely, the constituent parts influence the system-as-a-whole'.⁵⁵³ The movement of influence in this model is bi-directional, and this comprises both the 'top-down' aspect and the 'bottom-up' aspects of a model of interaction that we are searching for. This model emphasizes both the creativity and receptivity of God. For Haught, God's kenosis is the condition of dialogical intimacy. God suffers along with creation and takes all of the evolutionary travail of the world into the divine compassion.⁵⁵⁴

Similarly, Dao in Daoism encompasses both the nature of creativity and the nature of receptivity. Laozi says, 'Dao produced the One. The One produced two. Two produced three. Three produced all creatures',⁵⁵⁵ and also says, 'Turning back is the action of Dao. Weakness is the operation of Dao'.⁵⁵⁶ In the *Zhuangzi*, 'Dao does not falter before the huge, is not forgetful of the tiny; therefore the ten thousand things are complete in it. Vast and ample, there is nothing it does not receive. Deep and profound, how can it be fathomed?'⁵⁵⁷ In Daoism, all creatures came from Dao, and Dao is the origin of all things. At the same time, the return to the opposite of creation – dissolution – is also moving with the principle of Dao. The regression that is also manifest in the movement of Dao can also be regarded as receptivity in the analogical sense of being receptive to new things, new beings coming into existence

⁵⁵² Peacocke, *Theology for a Scientific Age: Being and Becoming - Natural, Divine and Human*, 53-61.

⁵⁵³ Schaab, "The Creative Suffering of the Triune God: An Evolutionary Panentheistic Paradigm," 296.

⁵⁵⁴ Haught, *Responses to 101 Questions on God and Evolution*, 124.

⁵⁵⁵ *Daodejing*, chap. 42. (道生一, 一生二, 二生三, 三生萬物.)

⁵⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, chap. 40. (反者道之動, 弱者道之用.)

⁵⁵⁷ *Zhuangzi*, chap. 13. (夫道, 於大不終, 於小不遺. 故萬物備, 廣廣乎其無不容也, 淵乎其不可測也.) Watson, 105-106.

– new beginnings. In other words, because Dao is metaphysically *ultimate*, there is nothing it does not receive, give, or contain.

In the evolutionary theodicy of Haught and the Daoist philosophy of Zhuangzi, the relationship between the Creator and creatures is not one-directional but bi-directional. The bi-directional model draws the Creator closer to creatures, meaning that the Creator shares all things with creatures, including pain and suffering.

Third, the kenotic God of Haught and the omnipresent Dao in the *Zhuangzi* are self-humbling rather than omnipotent. The traditional Christian God rules all creatures, as it were, from without and in a top-down fashion. For instance, the Psalmist confesses, ‘Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures through all generations’ (Psa.145:13), and ‘The Lord reigns forever, your God, O Zion, for all generations’ (Psa.146:10). God commands Adam and Eve, ‘Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground’ (Gen.1:28). In traditional Christianity, there is a hierarchy among creatures, and God reigns over all creatures and human beings rule other living creatures. However, the evolutionary theology of Haught reveals the self-effacing, self-limiting and empathetic qualities of God. The kenotic God does not rule those creatures in the manner of a monarch, and God exposes His Own Self as self-humbling. Similarly, Dao does not rule creatures. According to the *Zhuangzi*:

Dao gave birth to Heaven and to earth. It exists beyond the great ultimate, but does not regard itself as high; it exists beneath the nadir, but does not regard itself as deep. It existed before Heaven and earth, but does not regard itself as long ago; it is earlier than time immemorial, but does not regard itself as old.⁵⁵⁸

Dao is the source of the creation and preservation of all creatures, but does not rule and interfere with them. Dao is higher, deeper, longer and older than any *thing* in the universe, including the universe itself, and cannot be considered to be like any created thing, or indeed any item or category of thought, because Dao embraces all extremes and subsists as the ground of all that is and can ever be, including the very thoughts and concepts we think.

⁵⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, chap. 6. (生天生地. 在太極之上而不為高, 在六極之下而不為深. 先天地生而不為久, 長於上古而不為老.)

As neither God in Haught nor Dao in the *Zhuangzi* govern creatures monarchically and do not try to change creatures artificially from without, the implication is that God and Dao do not have direct responsibility for the problem of evil for either philosophy.

In the philosophies of Haught and Zhuangzi respectively, God and Dao cannot be divided from creatures in the life they live, and they therefore share all the pain and suffering that creatures experience. From this perspective, then, we cannot ask the suffering God and the inextricably immanent Dao to take responsibility for evil. Let us call these cumulative arguments, then, the ‘suffering God defence’. The ‘suffering God defence’ means that God cannot be accused of evils in the world because God participates in the pain and suffering of all creatures. The kenotic God is closely related to all the lives and processes of creatures just as the omnipresent Dao is.⁵⁵⁹

Differentiation and Supplementation

The kenotic God and the omnipresent Dao are different in the following ways. First, while the kenotic God is personal, the omnipresent Dao is non-personal. When Haught says that God is ‘personal’, he means that God pays attention to what goes on in the world, and that ‘God must have the capacity to form deep relationships, to care, to love, to make and keep promises’.⁵⁶⁰ Based on this understanding of ‘personal’, the kenotic God is often spoken of in personal terms, possessing emotions like or analogous to human beings, feeling the pain and suffering in all creatures. For Haught, the opening up a new future for all creatures is most indicative of *personal* care. God *is* the world’s future, and this theological picture does not contradict

⁵⁵⁹ It should also be said here that the distinction between responsibility and blameworthiness *helps those who suffer here and now*. Perhaps it is not enough for a theodicy to merely offer speculations about a promised future that will render present sufferings small, or even of a theory of divine reality that means God suffers with us because He is immanent. For I can cause and be responsible for evil and suffering but still suffer because of it, as does an alcoholic, for example – and this recognition helps no one in their suffering. However, could the same be said for a theodicy that offers a view of God as not only suffering *with* but also *morally blameless*? We might begin to see God as He who does indeed love us as a Father.

⁵⁶⁰ Haught, *Science and Faith: A New Introduction*, 30.

science if we understand that science has shown the universe to be a still unfinished drama, or better, *event*.⁵⁶¹

In contrast, the omnipresent Dao operates as an impersonal principle in all creation and all creatures. According to the *Zhuangzi*:

It is Dao of heaven to keep moving and to allow no piling up [stasis] – hence the ten thousand things come to completion. It is Dao of the emperor to keep moving and to allow no piling up – hence the whole world repairs to his court. It is Dao of the sage to keep moving and to allow no piling up – hence all within the seas bow to him.⁵⁶²

All creatures have their own Dao as the principle of existence, and it is expressed in the *Zhuangzi* texts as ‘Dao of Heaven’, ‘Dao of the emperor’ or ‘Dao of the sage’. In contrast, the kenotic God is the same personal One who exists in all creatures.

This difference can supplement the evolutionary theodicy of Haught and point towards a new chapter in evolutionary theology. Can we understand that the God existing *in* all creatures has different properties manifested in each creature, just as the *Zhuangzi* says of Dao? The question here is simply whether we can claim that God works differently in each creature while retaining His ontological unity. Can we say that the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob (Exod. 3:6; 3:15, 16; 4:5; Matt. 22:32, Mark 12:26; Luke 20:37; Acts 3:13; 7:32) are the same God, but have a different relation to each human person? In other words, all events in the world can be understood as the events that occur in terms of the relation between God and each creature. For example, earthquakes and tsunami are phenomena which manifest that ‘*God-in-the-earth*’ is related to the earth. Suffering and death are also phenomena which manifest that ‘*God-in-each-creature*’ is related to each creature and their life cycles. The crucial point is this: that there is then no absolute standard of evil, i.e. the problem of evil should only be said to be manifest in each particular God–creature case, each having a limited range, as opposed to a universal problem of evil and suffering that could be answered by tools found within one religious tradition alone. Looking further ahead, we may say that evils in our view may not be

⁵⁶¹ Ibid., 33.

⁵⁶² *Zhuangzi*, chap. 13. (天道運而無所積. 故萬物成. 帝道運而無所積. 故天下歸. 聖道運而無所積. 故海內服.) Watson, 98.

evils from the perspective of the relation between God and each creature. This understanding based on the Daoist ideas presented in the *Zhuangzi* helps the evolutionary theodicy of Haught to be able to approach the problem of evil from various angles.

Second, the kenotic God seems like a God who is affected by creatures in so far as God suffers with creatures. If God suffers from evils along with human beings, God seems to be subjected by the same order of creation which He Himself has made, which, as noted earlier, is a view which is unpopular with traditional theologians. Because evolutionary theodicy focuses on the harmony between evolutionary science and Christian theology,⁵⁶³ however, it tends to understand God as One who is indeed affected by His own creations and by the principles underlying creation generally, such as life and death and physical laws.

The omnipresent Dao is the independent One in the sense that it is the immutable ground of Being, but like the God of Haught, it is also closely related to creatures. Dao is transcendent as well as immanent (Chapter 4:3). According to the *Zhuangzi*, 'Dao has never known boundaries from the beginning'.⁵⁶⁴ As stated previously, Dao also cannot be defined and named in relation to creatures. *Zhuangzi* says, 'The Great Dao is impossible to describe.... If Dao is manifest, it is not Dao'.⁵⁶⁵ Dao exists in all creatures, but Dao transcends them at the same time, and unlike the God of Haught, is impersonal, or rather, supra-personal. Dao in the *Zhuangzi* also goes beyond form and voice: 'When you try to look at Dao, it has no form. When you try to listen to Dao, it has no voice'.⁵⁶⁶ Laozi similarly says about the transcendent property of Dao: 'But talk about Dao – how insipid and without relish it is! Look for it and it cannot be seen; listen for it and it cannot be heard; but

⁵⁶³ This idea of God presented in evolutionary theology can indeed be harmonized with the traditional Christian God who is immutable, omnipotent, and impassible. Schaab tries to harmonize the two kinds of understanding of God, emphasizing the creative suffering of the triune (transcendent, incarnate and immanent) God. Her understanding of God comprises 'both temporal and atemporal, both free and freely self-restrained, both subject to and subject beyond the vagaries of the created order'. [Schaab, "The Creative Suffering of the Triune God: An Evolutionary Panentheistic Paradigm," 298-99.]

⁵⁶⁴ *Zhuangzi*, chap. 2. (道未始有封.)

⁵⁶⁵ *Ibid.* (大道不稱.... 道昭而不道.)

⁵⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, chap. 22. (視之無形. 聽之無聲.)

use it and it will never run dry!’⁵⁶⁷ Dao is transcendent, so it cannot be seen or heard, but is also immanent, so that it is bottomless and never exhausted.

This fundamental idea of the undivided relationship between the transcendence and immanence of Dao allows for a better understanding of the evolutionary theodicy of Haught. We see that it is possible to emphasize both the transcendence and immanence of God in evolutionary theology. In his book *The Nature of Creation*, Mark Harris explores their harmony in expounding God’s creation. He claims that both *creatio ex nihilo* and *creatio continua* describe God’s creative work, the former as transcendent, and the latter as immanent. According to him, ‘the two categories complement each other, describing how God is both present in creation and transcendent with respect to it’.⁵⁶⁸ If evolutionary theodicy can accept the transcendence and immanence of God at the same time, the kenotic God can be understood as the One who will redeem the suffering and pain of creatures in a ‘transcendent’ way in the future, as well as the One who suffers in solidarity with creatures in an ‘immanent’ way now.

In this section, I tried to develop the evolutionary theodicy of Haught and the Daoist philosophy of Zhuangzi with regard to the immanence and care of God and Dao respectively. The kenotic God and the omnipresent Dao interact with creatures and they are pictured as self-humbling and passible. Moreover, both the kenotic God and the omnipresent Dao establish a bi-directional relationship with creatures rather than a merely one-directional relationship. Based on this understanding, I generalised it as the ‘suffering God defence’. The ‘suffering God defence’ means that God cannot be deemed *blameworthy* for evils in the world because God takes part in the pain and suffering of all creatures. The same can be said of the omnipresent Dao.

However, I examined the differences between the two thinkers here. First, while the kenotic God is personal, the omnipresent Dao is non-personal. Second, the kenotic God seems like a God who is affected by creatures, but the omnipresent Dao cannot be defined or named in relation to creatures, and as impersonal, Dao’s being is unaffected by creatures. These differences can supplement the evolutionary theodicy of Haught in the following ways. First, if we understand that God, as He

⁵⁶⁷ *Daodejing*, chap. 35. (道之出口, 淡乎其無味. 視之不足見, 聽之不足聞, 用之不足既.) Ivanhoe and Norden, 180.

⁵⁶⁸ Harris, *The Nature of Creation: Examining the Bible and Science*, 120.

exists in all creatures, has different properties in each creature as with the non-personal Dao, there is no absolute standard of evil. In other words, the problem of evil is only applicable to the limited range of each God–creature case. Second, if evolutionary theodicy can accept the transcendence and immanence of God as with Dao, the kenotic God can be understood as the One who will redeem the suffering and pain of creatures in a new creation which transcends all that has gone before, and at the same time, suffers with creatures in the present in virtue of divine immanence.

(2) The Hidden God Defence: The Self-Absenting of God and the Hiddenness of Dao

Description

David Hume says that Epicurus’ old questions about God and the problem of evil are yet unanswered: ‘Is he willing to prevent evil, but not able? then is he impotent. Is he able, but not willing? then is he malevolent. Is he both able and willing? Whence then is evil?’⁵⁶⁹ As we can see in the classic formulation of the problem of evil by Epicurus and Hume, both the omnipotence and omnibenevolence of God seem to be incompatible because it would seem that an all-powerful and all-good God would by necessity create a world without suffering, precisely because that suffering is *unnecessary*, as God could conceive of states of affairs and *want* to manifest them for his creatures, *were He* to create them freely and without their prior consent. Thomas Aquinas formulates the problem thus:

It seems that God does not exist; because if one of two contraries be infinite, the other would be altogether destroyed. But the word ‘God’ means that He is infinite goodness. If, therefore, God existed, there would be no evil discoverable; but there is evil in the world. Therefore God does not exist.⁵⁷⁰

If we frame the problem like this, it first seems that the problem of evil can only be settled if we are able to give up one of the two properties of God.

In evolutionary theology, God is sometimes pictured as self-absenting. Evolutionary theologians, such as John Polkinghorne, John Haught, Keith Ward, Gloria Schaab, and Denis Edwards, see God as stepping back from the creative

⁵⁶⁹ Dorothy Coleman, ed. *Hume: Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion and Other Writings* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 74.

⁵⁷⁰ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I, 2, 3, arg. 1.

process, essentially letting the creatures create themselves. According to Polkinghorne, divine providence will not be rendered identifiable to us by scientific experiments but it may be discernible through eyes of faith, such that ‘God is indeed a *deus absconditus*, a hidden deity’.⁵⁷¹ This idea is equivalent to a self-limitation on God’s part, i.e. that God limits his omnipotence and activity in the world out of love. Evolutionary theologians insist upon the self-limitation of God in order that creatures might unfold their potentialities in continuous creation.⁵⁷²

Haught regards God’s self-limitation as highly characteristic of God’s love. It means that ‘This love might take the form of a self-withdrawal, precisely as the condition for allowing the world to emerge on its own so as to attain the possible status of being capable of a deep relationship with God’.⁵⁷³ God’s love, as it were, prevents God from forcefully imposing the divine presence upon the world. This is analogous to the case of a loving relationship, in the sense that a genuine relationship is one of mutual discovery, and a *sharing-and-creating with* between two people who are irreducibly *other*, even while they love one another. Just as one who really loves does not attempt to shape another into their own image, God refrains from such, out of love.

Let us recall that if we understand God as ‘letting the world be itself’, the problem of evil can be settled because evil and suffering are necessary constituents of a world always evolving, and can only evolve if God refrains from controlling it from without. We saw that in light of Haught’s evolutionary theology, we cannot blame God for evil.

While Haught settles Epicurus’ question by way of repressing the traditional concept of ‘divine omnipotence’ (that being unlimited power, or a limitlessly efficacious will) even while he argues that divine self-limitation is the most powerful expression of love, Zhuangzi deals with the question in the manner of denying even ‘divine benevolence’. The philosophy of Zhuangzi, unlike traditional Christian theodicy based on the goodness of God, does not set Dao’s goodness forth as a

⁵⁷¹ Polkinghorne, *Science and the Trinity: The Christian Encounter with Reality*, 84.

⁵⁷² Some scholars, such as Peacocke (2001: 37), see God as working intimately within the evolutionary process, and see God as acting fully in the world through evolution. In contrast, Haught focuses on God’s self-withdrawal from the creative process and understands this withdrawal from the perspective of God’s true love (Chapter 6:2).

⁵⁷³ Haught, *God after Darwin: A Theology of Evolution*, 43.

premise. For Zhuangzi, the distinction between good and evil is meaningless. We see that saintliness ends up in either the pursuit of impossible ideals or in hypocrisy, that being ‘good’ or ‘holy’ actually causes just as much harm in the world as being ‘not good enough’. Zhuangzi says, ‘Great Benevolence is not benevolent. Great integrity is not humble’.⁵⁷⁴ Laozi similarly emphasizes the importance of harmony attained without conscious striving:

Heaven and earth are not benevolent. They treat the myriad creatures as straw dogs. Sages are not benevolent. They treat the people as straw dogs. Is not the space between heaven and earth like a bellows? Empty yet inexhaustible! Work it and more will come forth. An excess of speech will lead to exhaustion. It is better to hold on to the mean.⁵⁷⁵

For Laozi, holding to the middle way, i.e. harmony, is more important than being benevolent, such that neither ‘heaven and earth’ or even sages can be called benevolent. The expression ‘heaven and earth’ is a different expression for Dao.⁵⁷⁶ Thus, in my view, Dao cannot be regarded as morally benevolent in Daoist philosophy.⁵⁷⁷

Dao is also described as weak or humble rather than powerful or self-assertive. Zhuangzi says, ‘If Dao is manifest, it is not Dao’.⁵⁷⁸ Dao’s operation as well as Dao’s property cannot be described as clear or evident because Dao works namelessly and in *wuwei*. According to the *Zhuangzi*, ‘All things are different in principle, but Dao does not show partiality among them, and thus they are nameless. Because they are nameless, they rest in non-action, and because they rest in non-action, there is

⁵⁷⁴ *Zhuangzi*, chap. 2. (大仁不仁. 大廉不嗛.) Watson, 14.

⁵⁷⁵ *Daodejing*, chap. 5. (天地不仁, 以萬物爲芻狗. 聖人不仁, 以百姓爲芻狗. 天地之間. 其猶橐籥乎. 虛而不屈, 動而愈出. 多言數窮, 不如守中.) Ivanhoe and Norden, 165. This chapter does not exist in the earlier version of the *Daodejing*, excavated in 1993. About four versions of the *Daodejing*, see Chapter 4:1, ‘What is Daoism?’.

⁵⁷⁶ According to Moeller, the term ‘heaven and earth’ is frequently used synonymously with ‘Heaven’. [Hans-Georg Moeller, *The Philosophy of the Daodejing* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 47.] Chang claims that Heaven represents the highest divinity. [Chung-Yuan Chang, *Creativity and Taoism: A Study of Chinese Philosophy, Art and Poetry* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), 59.]

⁵⁷⁷ *Jen* (benevolence) is the basic spirit of inner morals and social norms in Confucianism. The sentence, ‘Heaven and earth are not benevolent.’, critiques Confucius’ thought represented by the concept of *jen*. Laozi attacks the artificiality of Confucianism.

⁵⁷⁸ *Zhuangzi*, chap. 2. (道昭而不道.)

nothing they cannot accomplish'.⁵⁷⁹ Laozi says, 'Weakness is the operation of Dao'.⁵⁸⁰ As Dao works by non-action, Dao is the paradigmatic example of humility.

Comparison and Generalisation

Understanding God as self-absenting deity and Dao as non-benevolent and weak are similar ways to exempt Ultimate Reality of responsibility for evil. First, the evolutionary theology of Haught and the Daoist idea of Zhuangzi can settle Epicurus' questions about the omnipotence and benevolence of Ultimate Reality. In the Bible and traditional Christian theology, God's omnipotence and benevolence are essential properties that cannot be easily abandoned, and therefore the problem of evil arises. However, the evolutionary theology of Haught and the Daoist philosophy of Zhuangzi, with similar ways of dealing with the problem, can supply a possible solution.

For Haught, God does not reveal His Self as divine omnipotence. Instead, God's self-limitation for the purpose of empowering creatures' self-creativity reveals God's nature as Love and absolves God concerning the existence of evil. As Schaab similarly says, 'If, in God's nature as Love, God created both the cosmos and humanity as free and autonomous, then God, in God's nature as Love, has chosen not to exercise coercive power over the cosmos and its creatures'.⁵⁸¹ If we accept that God may sometimes exercise self-letting love rather than omnipotent power, the problem of evil can be less of a challenge because God allows the processes of nature to follow their course, and when it comes to human beings, the exercise of free will – itself necessary for any good to be done by us.⁵⁸²

Daoism also can overcome the problem of evil as set out by Epicurus by returning to the amoral nature of Dao. For Zhuangzi, moral goodness is not an essential property of Dao. In the *Zhuangzi*, great benevolence does not make itself

⁵⁷⁹ Ibid., chap. 25. (萬物殊理, 道不私, 故無名. 無名故無爲, 無爲衛無不爲.)

⁵⁸⁰ *Daodejing*, chap. 40. (弱者道之用.)

⁵⁸¹ Schaab, "The Creative Suffering of the Triune God: An Evolutionary Panentheistic Paradigm," 294.

⁵⁸² Haught's idea about the 'self-absenting of God' may be regarded as a kind of deism. Paradoxically, for him, God's withdrawal is not due to apathy or disinterest toward the creatures He has created but rather a most extreme form of involvement. See Chapter 3:3 for details.

known as benevolent, rather, the benevolent person is self-effacing. If benevolence has either itself or another object of utility (be it favour or praise) as its guiding motivation, it is not authentic.⁵⁸³ Therefore, as in the evolutionary theodicy of Haught, Daoism does not suffer from the philosophical constraints which make Epicurus' questions so problematic.

Second, for both thinkers, God and Dao are working secretly in the world and are thus called *hidden*. The reason that God seems to be self-limiting in evolutionary theology is that God is regarded as working in a hidden fashion, self-absenting and not directly intervening in the world. Thus, God's work is inconspicuous. The 'hiddenness of God' has been an important attribute of God in the Bible and Christian history. In the Bible, God sometimes purposefully hides his face because people disobey His will (Deut. 31:17–18, 32:20; Isa. 1:15; Jer. 33:5; Mic. 3:4). However, Job (Job 13:23–24) and the psalmist do not know why God hides his face from them. The psalmist desperately cries 'Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble?' several times (10:1, 13:1, 27:9, 44:24, 69:17, 88:14, 89:46, 102:2, 143:7). Isaiah understands the hiddenness of God as a divine attribute: 'Truly you are a God who hides himself, O God and Saviour of Israel' (Isa. 45:15). Martin Luther's theology of the cross emphasizes *deus absconditus* (the hidden God). For Luther, as Alister McGrath explains, 'God's strength is revealed under apparent weakness, and God's wisdom under apparent folly'.⁵⁸⁴

While the Bible exhibits God's hiddenness and theologians have often acknowledged the hiddenness of God to be the source of the difficulty in identifying and acknowledging God's work in the world, God's omnipotence receives more emphasis in traditional Christianity to safeguard the fundamental doctrines of God as a *metaphysically necessary* creator and sustainer, *even though* we cannot always join the dots and arrive at that necessary being philosophically. Nevertheless, for Haught, God's hiddenness is more important than His omnipotence because Haught regards God's self-effacing love as that which makes possible creatures' self-development. He says, 'Indeed, an infinite love must in some sense "absent" or "restrain itself" precisely in order to give the world the "space" in which to become something

⁵⁸³ Zhuangzi, chap. 2.

⁵⁸⁴ Alister E. McGrath, *Luther's Theology of the Cross: Martin Luther's Theological Breakthrough*, 2nd ed. (Malden, Mass. ; West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 220.

distinct from the creative love that constitutes it as “other”⁵⁸⁵. Therefore, the ‘hiddenness of God’ is an important concept in explaining God’s work without contradicting the discoveries in evolutionary science.

Similarly, in the *Zhuangzi*, Dao subsists and things are made manifest in concealment and in non-action. Paradoxically, all things are made manifest even while Dao rests in *wuwei*. The existence and activity of Dao is anything but evident.⁵⁸⁶ Like the God of Haught, Dao manifests itself in non-action and formlessness – granted language here becomes unavoidably paradoxical. Dao can be transmitted, or known and ‘seen’ by intuition and by the heart, but is beyond our vision and our analytical intellect, which utilises concepts based on what is experienced.⁵⁸⁷ Dao’s operation is hidden, but it is the ontological ground of all creatures in the *Zhuangzi*: ‘All things in the world find sustenance in Dao, which is never exhausted. This is the real Dao’.⁵⁸⁸ Again, in the *Daodejing*, ‘Dao does nothing yet nothing is left undone. Should barons and kings be able to preserve it, the myriad creatures will transform themselves’.⁵⁸⁹ Laozi accepts that all things come from Dao’s action, saying ‘yet there is nothing left undone’. According to yet another expression of Laozi, ‘Dao is hidden and without name. Only Dao is good at providing and completing’.⁵⁹⁰

Here, I claimed that the evolutionary theodicy of Haught and the Daoist philosophy of Zhuangzi can exculpate Ultimate Reality of responsibility for evil, as I claimed earlier, by challenging the historical Christian understanding of God. The divine attributes of omnipotence and benevolence have never been abandoned in Christian history. However, for Haught, God is pictured as self-letting and humble in his relationship to creatures in virtue of the fact that He purposefully hides His face

⁵⁸⁵ John F. Haught, *God after Darwin: A Theology of Evolution* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 2000), 120.

⁵⁸⁶ Laozi writes, ‘When the worst scholars hear about Dao, they laugh at it! If they did not laugh at it, it would not really be Dao’ (*Daodejing*, chap. 41. Ivanhoe and Norden, 182-183). Laozi’s point is that for the rational mind, the very idea of Dao, of an ultimate principle of the universe at the root of all things, is absurd, and something akin to a joke.

⁵⁸⁷ *Zhuangzi*, chap. 6.

⁵⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, chap. 22. (萬物皆往資焉而不匱, 此其道與.)

⁵⁸⁹ *Daodejing*, chap. 37. (道常無爲而無不爲. 侯王若能守之, 萬物將自化.) Ivanhoe and Norden, 180.

⁵⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, chap. 41. (道隱無名, 夫唯道, 善貸且成.) Ivanhoe and Norden, 183.

from creatures, to show his great love. In the *Zhuangzi*, Dao is described as hidden, nameless and weak because Dao takes care of all creatures secretly, and non-action and spontaneity are the ways of Dao's operation. Therefore, we can generalise the implications of both views here as the 'hidden God defence'. This 'hidden God defence' understands the nature of Ultimate Reality as self-absenting and *essentially* humble, which contributes to a cumulative solution to the problem of evil.

It should be said the idea of a 'hidden God' does not mean that God works inefficiently or ineffectively. Rather, it signifies the most effective way God works for creatures. Haught claims:

[I]t is the 'self-withdrawal' of any forceful divine presence, and the paradoxical hiddenness of God's power in a self-effacing persuasive love, that allows creation to come about and to unfold freely and indeterminately in evolution. It is in God's self-emptying humility that the fullest effectiveness resides.⁵⁹¹

The hidden God allows all creatures to unfold freely in the process of evolution. Although we cannot see or feel God's work directly in evolution, God does His work in the most effective way possible. Similarly, in the *Zhuangzi*, *Wuwei* is the surest way to care for the world: 'If the exemplary persons find they have no other choice than to look after the world, then the best course for them not direction of action but rather direction in non-action. As long as non-action abides, people rest in the true form of their nature'.⁵⁹² Moreover, non-action is the key to achieve perfect action: 'Perfect speech is absence of speech, and perfect action is absence of action'.⁵⁹³

In short, the 'hidden God defence' is a good way to approach the problem of evil as classically stated without denying God's work in the world. Because God works in the world in a self-effacing way with as Dao, we cannot impose the responsibility for evil on God as if He were the direct cause.

Differentiation and Supplementation

⁵⁹¹ Haught, *Science and Religion: From Conflict to Conversation*, 104.

⁵⁹² *Zhuangzi*, chap. 11. (故君子不得已而臨莅天下, 莫若無爲. 無爲也而後安其性命之情.)

⁵⁹³ *Ibid.*, chap. 22. (至言去言, 至爲去爲.)

For the ‘hidden God defence’, God sometimes reveals His creating work in unexpected ways, which is what is usually referred to as ‘chance’ in the cosmos. Chance in continuous creation is an important part of both evolutionary theology and Daoism. In the evolutionary theology of Haught, the claim that God’s self-effacing and humble qualities imply an answer to the problem of evil is reinforced by cosmic uncertainty. The emergence and evolution of life in evolutionary biology seem to be intrinsically unpredictable and the neo-Darwinian synthesis of genetics and molecular biology describes the history of the evolution of life as an extremely unpredictable process. How can this ‘chance’ or ‘cosmic uncertainty’ be harmonized with God’s continuous creation?

Chaos theorist Joseph Ford says, ‘God plays dice with the universe. But they’re loaded dice. And the main objective of physics now is to find out by what rules were they loaded and how can we use them for our own ends’.⁵⁹⁴ Ford accepts that there are chance occurrences in God’s creation, but for him, chance events are not totally random because they have certain rules, about which God alone knows. Thomas Tracy expounds two possible ways to connect the unpredictability of the development of the cosmos to God’s active creation of it. The first is that God does play dice with the universe. However, for Tracy, the theological integrity of the doctrine of divine providence will depend on the claim that ‘God designs the dice’, and that God builds into the world a ‘restricted range of potential pathways for life’.⁵⁹⁵ The second possible way to connect the unpredictability of the development of the cosmos with God’s active creation is to posit that ‘God acts as primary cause giving being to an entity with one or more properties that bear a probabilistic, rather than deterministic, relation to antecedent secondary causes’.⁵⁹⁶ This means that God uses chance as a means to give shape to the world’s continuous creation. Similarly, for Elizabeth Johnson, God uses chance to ensure variety, novelty, resilience, and freedom in the universe. She says, ‘Chance is not an alternative to law, but the very means whereby law is creative. The two are strongly interrelated and the universe evolves through their interplay’.⁵⁹⁷ If we accept that God works with chance, then

⁵⁹⁴ James Gleick, *Chaos: Making a New Science* (New York: Viking, 1987), 314.

⁵⁹⁵ Tracy, 111.

⁵⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 112.

⁵⁹⁷ Elizabeth A. Johnson, "Does God Play Dice? Divine Providence and Chance," *Theological Studies* 57, no. 1 (1996): 15.

unpredictable events can be thought of as a mode of divine creativity. Tracy's two options concerning God's relation to chance and Johnson's ideas about chance help us to understand that chance events in evolution do not contradict Christian theology concerning divine providence, although the boundary between chance and law seems to be somewhat ambiguous.

Haught tries to understand chance occurrences in evolution as doors to the ever-novel future: 'The very same events that appear purely random or absurd when viewed only in terms of a scientific method oriented toward the fixed causal past can be understood theologically as openings to the incoming of an indefinitely renewing future in this presently unfinished and perishable cosmos'.⁵⁹⁸ According to Haught, without the occurrence of contingent events, the laws of physics and of natural selection would freeze the universe into an everlasting sameness, or predictability that would be closed to the novelty of a genuine *future*. Haught does not regard contingency as a mere mask for a hidden necessity not yet completely understood. For him, contingent events are an essential part of the cosmos open to evolutionary novelty and to the future (new creation), breaking out of subordination to habitual routine.⁵⁹⁹ In the evolutionary theology of Haught, therefore, divine sovereignty and the chance involved in evolution do not compete.

In the *Zhuangzi*, even though there are few stories about unpredictable incidents, this particular story is noteworthy:

To hide a boat in a ravine and to hide a fishing-net in a swamp can be said to be safe enough. But 'at night a strong person' might come and carry them off on his back while the owner who is fast asleep knows nothing about it. To hide something small in something large is reasonable enough, but there is always the possibility of losing it. Hide the world in the world and the world will never be lost – this is the eternal truth.⁶⁰⁰

'At night a strong person (夜半有力者)' signifies the hidden power to be able to do something unexpected. Trying to hide something is foolish and meaningless. The phrase 'hide the world in the world' means not to try to hide anything because trying

⁵⁹⁸ Haught, *God after Darwin: A Theology of Evolution*, 108.

⁵⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 110.

⁶⁰⁰ *Zhuangzi*, chap. 6. (夫藏舟於壑, 藏山於澤, 謂之固矣. 然而夜半有力者負之而走, 昧者不知也. 藏小大有宜. 猶有所遯. 若夫藏天下於天下, 而不得所遯, 是恒物之大情也.) Wang Rongpei, 95.

to change something in the world with our will inevitably turns out to be a meaningless endeavour in the larger scheme of Mother Nature. In other words, the world is at bottom unpredictable and this unpredictability, an aspect of Dao's *wuwei* and nature of *ziran*, is the strong but hidden power, which human beings ought to keep in mind when considering their lives. According to the other part of the *Zhuangzi*, everything in the world changes on its own: 'The life of things is a gallop, a headlong dash – with every movement they alter, with every moment they shift. What should you do and what should you not do? Everything will change of itself, that is certain'.⁶⁰¹ The change of nature is fast and unpredictable, and it is out of human control. In short, Zhuangzi accepts indeterminism and chance in the cosmos, but he understands that chance is only a feature of Dao.

This understanding of Zhuangzi can supplement Haught's idea of chance. That the transcendent Creator operates in the cosmos through chance occurrences (including those involved in quantum indeterminacy) is abhorrent to traditional theologians because chance – in other words, randomness of events – seems to break the definitive rules of nature that the Creator has instituted in His creating nature, such as constancy or regularity. And yet, scientific developments force us to acknowledge indeterminacy in the universe, both at the microscopic (quantum) and macroscopic (organic) levels. For this reason, some evolutionary theologians attempt to retrospectively identify God's plan or purpose in an apparently unpredictable world (Chapter 8:1). If there still exists a divine plan or purpose in what is still an apparently unpredictable world, God's existence and Divine Providence can be compatible with the apparently unpredictable processes of biological evolution on Earth.

In the case of Haught, although he understands chance in terms of God's great love, his idea starts from the premise of a better future, i.e. new creation. I would like to suggest that we think about chance as somehow under the control of God, analogous to the operation of Dao in the *Zhuangzi*, manifest in the orderly creation of *ziran*, which is no less spontaneous or unpredictable. For Ultimate Reality itself, chance cannot be chance strictly speaking but a normal ordered and ordering process with metaphysical intelligibility. If we accept that there is no such thing as

⁶⁰¹ Ibid., chap. 17. (物之生也, 若驟若馳, 無動而不變, 無時而不移. 何爲乎, 何不爲乎, 夫固將自化.) Watson, 132.

indeterminacy from the perspective of the divine as in the *Zhuangzi*, demonstrating God's work or manifestations of God's work in what we perceive as an unpredictable world becomes easier.

Another difference in the approach to divine hiddenness in Haught and Zhuangzi is the divergence of properties of God and Dao respectively. God in Haught is explained as self-limiting and humble, and Dao is regarded as non-benevolent and weak. The reason why evil is a severe problem in Christian theology is that God is assumed to be benevolent. According to the *Zhuangzi* on the other hand, Dao is not constrained by any category, such as categories of good and bad, of beauty and ugly, and of right and wrong. Dao even goes beyond the boundary between being and nonbeing: 'Dao cannot be considered as being, nor can it be considered as nonbeing'.⁶⁰² This understanding of Dao forces us rethink whether we can actually ask God to account for evil.

Based on this difference, we can ask the question: is it possible for us to understand that the Christian God transcends human categorisation? I do not think that the notion of God being 'personal' only refers to the crude belief that 'God feels emotions like human being', for the reason that God may feel emotion in a different way from humans or have different standards of judgement for good and bad. The Christian tradition has often reflected upon the possibility that, while God must have some *analogical* relation to our moral categories of goodness and love, such that we *can* call God 'Love' or a kind of 'Father', God's standards of judgement may be very different from those of human beings, as illustrated in the book of Job.⁶⁰³

If we could accept that God's standards of judgement for good and bad may be different from those of humans, it is possible, metaphysically and epistemologically speaking, that evil, from our perspective, could be regarded as goodness from God's

⁶⁰² Ibid., chap. 25. (道不可有, 有不可無.)

⁶⁰³ We can see, from the very limited range of our own experience, that what we consider as bad when we are children may indeed be considered as good for our parents, who are older and wiser. To speak in scholastic terms, God bears an analogical relationship to human beings which allows us to speak *cataphatically* of Him as the 'Good', as 'Love' or as 'Father', but the analogical relationship, which is an ontological relationship, of a higher and more profound reality than the relationships of similarity that we can identify over the course of human life – for example, between that of father and son. For Christian theism to have any meaning at all, that is, for Christian theism to be what it is in the world – the religion which uniquely preaches a *personal* God of the most radical form of love conceivable – we have to speak *cataphatically* of God *as love*. At the same time, however, that love transcends our conceptual and logical frameworks.

perspective. Moreover, if we could accept that God exists on an ontological level beyond the ephemeral feelings of human beings like Dao, the problem of evil will not be a severe problem for evolutionary theodicy.

In this section, I examined the evolutionary theodicy of Haught and the Daoist philosophy of Zhuangzi with respect to the problem of whom or what it is that responsibility for evil in the world lies with. For Haught, God is pictured as self-absenting and humble in relation to creatures, and in the *Zhuangzi*, Dao is described as hidden, nameless and weak. Based on these similarities, I generalised them as the 'hidden God defence'. The 'hidden God defence' understands the nature of God as self-absenting or humble, who lets the world be while immanent and participating in it, such that we cannot assign blameworthiness for evil on God.

However, I argued that the conceptions of 'chance' in evolution and of the properties of God and Dao are different in the two thinkers. Haught believes that contingent events are an essential aspect of a cosmos open to evolutionary novelty, but in the *Zhuangzi*, chance is only one aspect of Dao's operation. Moreover, different from the Christian God, Dao goes beyond any category, such as categories of good and bad, of beauty and ugly, of right and wrong, even being and nonbeing and analogical or cataphatic categories of 'Love' or 'Father'. Dao bears no analogical relation to human beings in terms of morality or psychology – as emphasised earlier, Dao is not benevolent. These differences can supplement the evolutionary theodicy of Haught. First, if we accept that there is no chance from the perspective of the divine as in the *Zhuangzi*, demonstrating God's work in what we perceive as an unpredictable world becomes easier. Second, if we could accept that God's standards of judgement between good and bad may be different from those of human beings or that God exists on an ontological level beyond the ephemeral feelings of human beings like Dao, the problem of evil does not present itself as a pressing problem for evolutionary theodicy.

(3) The Harmony Defence: The Dark Side and Yin (陰, the shadow side)

Description

In the process of evolution, creatures can sometimes help each other to survive without any conscious intention of doing so. For example, an animal may maintain the right population levels of its prey, in turn preserving a delicate ecological

equilibrium that benefits a wider range of animals in the area. A well-known case is the re-introduction of wolves at Yellowstone National Park in the United States.⁶⁰⁴ The re-introduction of wolves has decreased the population of elks, allowing for recovery of aspen, willow and vegetation, in turn leading to a recovery in beaver numbers. Given the recovery of the aspen and willow at Yellowstone, beavers now have a reliable food source, and in their return they create dams which in turn help create stores of water for the willow – home to many birds. In this fascinating case, we see the natural process of *transaction* without intention of profit or gain in the animal and vegetable worlds.

At the same time, the transactional process at work in nature obviously creates incredible amounts of suffering and death (the elk had to be eaten by wolves for what we see at Yellowstone today to come about). Creatures, including human beings, of course, suffer from what is sometimes prolonged and excruciating pain and suffering in the evolutionary processes at work. Michael Ruse explains the human dilemma in the process of evolution: ‘We are made in the image of God, so we are naturally good. But we are fallen – this is now part of our nature – and so we are also bad. An uneasy hotchpotch of selfishness and altruism’.⁶⁰⁵

Here, we can raise the following questions: First, can pain and suffering which arise from evolution really be explained by and reduced to the natural process of nature (natural evil) or human free will (moral evil) as I wrote above? Second, is it possible to create the world in a less costly and painful way? That is, was it, or could it be, metaphysically possible for God to create this kind of world with just this amount of good but *less* evil and suffering? The second question implies a third, however, given we are looking for an ideal world: is this world the best of all possible worlds after all? What makes us think it might be?

It might strike one as obvious that in considering whether such an ideal world could be or could have been created by God, whatever that world is, it cannot be *perfect* in the sense of having no suffering whatsoever. I believe it strikes most people as self-evident that there must be some suffering alongside comfort and ease, and therefore some evil alongside the good. We can readily think of many examples

⁶⁰⁴ <https://www.yellowstonepark.com/things-to-do/wolf-reintroduction-changes-ecosystem>, accessed 22/10/17.

⁶⁰⁵ Ruse, in *The Cambridge Companion to Science and Religion*, 234.

in which what is good is only possible in virtue of, and perhaps in spite of, the contrary force, event or moral value of the good.

The 'dark side' is neither a commonly used nor well-defined term in evolutionary theology, unlike *yin* (the shadow side) in Daoism. Practically everybody is familiar with the symbol of the *yin-yang*, but not everybody, perhaps especially Christians, are familiar with notion of a 'dark side' inherent in God's creation. Some evolutionary theologians often use the term 'shadow side' to mean a negative aspect to things that breaks in during the process of evolution. It means that suffering and pain are inevitable by-products of God's continuous creation. Nicola Hoggard Creegan calls it the 'dark side', which allows for the possibility of there being evil forces at work in the world, pointing to the parable of the wheat and the tares (Matt. 13:24–30).⁶⁰⁶ Celia Deane-Drummond uses Bulgakov's term 'shadow sophia' to characterize nature's vulnerability to chaos and nonbeing (that is, traditionally speaking, the 'privation' of being).⁶⁰⁷ Sophia is both the wisdom of the incarnating Christ and the wisdom of creation, and this wisdom works through and comes to fruition in evolutionary history, also manifesting a necessary dark side to things. Each term has slightly different points of emphasis, but all are terms to express arguments helping us to approach the difficult problem of providing an adequate evolutionary theodicy. I will henceforth use the term 'dark side', which is also used by many evolutionary theologians, including John Haught. The dark side is an attempt to incorporate the moral ambiguities in evolution without accusing God of evil.

How do evolutionary theologians defend the righteousness of God as it pertains to the existence of the dark side of creation? First, some evolutionary theologians accept the dark side as 'unnecessary, but inevitable' for all other creatures in God's continuous creation. This argument focuses on the moral imperative to seek amelioration. Teilhard de Chardin says, 'God cannot create without evil appearing as a shadow'.⁶⁰⁸ For him, the dark side is woven into God's continuous creation, just as necessary as the messy underside of a beautifully knitted piece of fabric.

⁶⁰⁶ Nicola Hoggard, "Evolution and Evil," *Stimulus: The New Zealand Journal of Christian Thought & Practice* 17, no. 4 (2009): 20.

⁶⁰⁷ Deane-Drummond, *Christ and Evolution: Wonder and Wisdom*, 185-91.

⁶⁰⁸ Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *Christianity and Evolution*, trans. René Hague (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971), 134.

Polkinghorne understands the created world as a ‘package deal’, meaning that the bright side of the emergence of new lives is necessarily intertwined with the shadow side of extinction and malformation.⁶⁰⁹ Southgate claims that the violence, pain and suffering in evolutionary processes are necessary by-products of the way God brings about the amazing world in which we live.⁶¹⁰ What amounts to an ‘only way’ argument – that this is the only way our world could have come into being – implies that the processes that lead to the refinement of creatures’ characteristics are the same processes that lead to the suffering and extinction of creatures, and thus cannot be regarded as either desire nor undesirable.

Second, some evolutionary theologians posit that God puts constraints on manifesting His power for creaturely freedom. Peacocke points out that ‘there are inherent constraints on how even an omnipotent Creator could bring about the existence of a law-like creation that is to be a cosmos not a chaos’.⁶¹¹ Inherent constraints mean the self-limitation of God for a better world. For Peacocke, God suffers in, with, and under the process of continuous creation, and the process of creation is immensely costly to God. According to this theodicy, God is the suffering redeemer who *suffers-with*, rather than the benevolent yet aloof architect.

Third, some evolutionary theologians have an overtly Christian theological focus, emphasising the cross of Christ and the eschatological future. Although creatures live in a state of ambiguity while this future remains in potentiality, the temporariness of the ambiguity will be clear, as well as the fact that pain and suffering will disappear in the eschatological future, if we believe in the promises of the Christian faith. Holmes Rolston claims that ‘The abundant life that Jesus exemplifies and offers to his disciples is that of a sacrificial suffering through to something higher.... The cruciform creation is, in the end, deiform, godly, just because of this element of struggle, not in spite of it. There is a great divine “yes” hidden behind and within every “no” of crushing nature’.⁶¹²

⁶⁰⁹ Polkinghorne, "Reflections of a Bottom-up Thinker," in *God and the Scientist: Exploring the Work of John Polkinghorne*, 9.

⁶¹⁰ Southgate, "God's Creation Wild and Violent, and Our Care for Other Animals," 252.

⁶¹¹ Peacocke, "The Cost of New Life," in *The Work of Love*, 37.

⁶¹² Rolston, "Naturalizing and Systematizing Evil," in *Is Nature Ever Evil? Religion, Science, and Value*, 84.

Here, briefly, are three ways to understand the dark side of evolution: the first was ‘unnecessary, but inevitable’, the second, ‘the self-limitation of God’ in terms of the present, and the third, ‘the eschatological future’, understood in terms of the future. The evolutionary theodicy of Haught comes near to the third type. Haught claims that the idea of an originally completed creation is unthinkable in the evolving world because such a world would be a world without internal self-coherence, freedom, life, or a future, for all these presuppose the possibility of *change*. Based on the idea of an unfinished universe, Haught expounds the problem of evil:

If the universe is still unfinished, we cannot demand that it should here and now possess the status of finished perfection. And if the universe is not perfect, then this can mean only that it is now imperfect. Moreover, if ours is an imperfect world, the appearance of evil is not inconceivable. Evil and suffering could be thought of as the dark side of the world’s ongoing creation.⁶¹³

Haught understands evil and suffering as the dark side of the evolving world, without claiming that suffering is therefore morally tolerable. If we understand evil and suffering as the dark side of the world’s ongoing creation in an imperfect universe, God can be absolved from the problem of evil.

The dark side of the evolving universe is explained by the word ‘*yin*’ (陰) in Daoism. *Yin* literally means the ‘shadow side’ or ‘gloomy side’, and *yin* cannot exist without *yang*. Paula Hartz explains *yin* and *yang*, ‘*Yin* is passive; *yang* is active. *Yin* is cool; *yang* is warm. *Yin* is night; *yang* is day. *Yin* is female; *yang* is male’.⁶¹⁴ In fact, while in the West the two are most often referred to as *yin* ‘and’ *yang*, in ancient and traditional Chinese philosophy and literature, they are referred to as one: *yin-yang*, which underlines for us their inseparability. The doctrine of *yin-yang* is an important component in relating Daoism to the Christian notion of continuous creation because the world was created and is maintained by the interaction of *yin* ‘and’ *yang*.

According to the *Zhuangzi*, all things in the world come from the harmony present in *yin-yang*: ‘Perfect *Yin* is stern and frigid; Perfect *Yang* is bright and glittering. The sternness and frigidity come forth from heaven; the brightness and

⁶¹³ Haught, *God after Darwin: A Theology of Evolution*, 41.

⁶¹⁴ Hartz, 15.

glitter emerge from the earth; the two mingle, penetrate, come together, harmonize, and all things are born therefrom'.⁶¹⁵ In the philosophy of Zhuangzi, the best possible world is the best precisely because of the harmonization of *yin-yang*. Both the shadow side (*yin*) and the bright side (*yang*) play an important role in maintaining all things in the evolving world. Thus, the shadow side, containing pain and suffering, does not present a big challenge in the *Zhuangzi*.

Comparison and Generalisation

The dark side in the evolutionary theodicy of Haught and the shadow side in the *Zhuangzi* are similar in the following views.

First, both maintain something at least analogous to a monistic view of Ultimate Reality in explaining the problem of evil.⁶¹⁶ The problem of evil can be classified within dualistic or monistic frameworks. In a dualistic paradigm of the divine, such as Zoroastrianism and Manichaeism, good and evil exist in absolute conflict with each other and human beings and the world are affected by the movements of these two Realities which preside over good and evil respectively. Good–evil dualism may settle the problem of evil easily, because within this model, it is the evil force or entity that is responsible for evil. However, this dualistic interpretation⁶¹⁷ does not adequately represent the worldview of traditional Christian theology because Satan is never presented as having equal rank with God. The Bible's general perspective is that God is the only one who supervises every creature's life and death, and happiness and misery. Satan or the Devil, is of course, a creature of God, and only continues to exist because of God's sanction.

The monistic view on the problem of evil asserts that evil is not an independent substance such as a god or entity who subsists as the *source* of immoral action, but rather a privation or absence of being. According to Augustine, 'Everything that

⁶¹⁵ *Zhuangzi*, chap. 21. (至陰肅肅, 至陽赫赫. 肅肅出乎天, 赫赫發乎地. 兩者交通成和.) Watson 169.

⁶¹⁶ Recall that we acknowledged that the term 'monism' was not absolutely accurate when applied to Daoism but was the closest approximation possible in rendering Daoism intelligible for a Western audience. See Chapter 4:1 'What are Dao and Daoism?'

⁶¹⁷ The 'dualism' I refer to here means 'metaphysical dualism (God/Satan)' or 'cosmic dualism (good/evil), and not 'theological dualism (God/humanity, creator/creation)'. Christianity is certainly classically dualistic in its fundamental/ontological distinctions between supernature and nature, nature and grace, matter and spirit, the necessary (God) and the contingent (the material world), etc.

exists is good, then; and so evil, the source of which I was seeking, cannot be a substance, because if it were, it would be good'.⁶¹⁸ This perspective has been supported by the Church Fathers, the Reformers, Gottfried Leibniz, Karl Barth, and other many theologians.

The 'dark side' in the evolutionary theodicy of Haught retains this monistic perspective of traditional Christian theology, and at the same time it explains the problem of evil effectively. The dark side does not result from the activity of Satan but is rather a negative aspect or an inevitable by-product of God's continuous creation. Similarly, the 'shadow side' in the *Zhuangzi* is not an activity of an evil force but one of the two aspects of Dao's movement. Therefore, both Haught and the *Zhuangzi* understand the problem of evil in what we may (very) tentatively refer to as monotheistic perspective, rather than in dualistic or polytheistic perspectives, which easily settle the problem of evil but which are not theologically acceptable for us.

Second, the evolutionary theodicy of Haught and the Daoist philosophy of Zhuangzi both explain that the present world, with its shadow side, is the best *possible* world. As Rolston says, 'A world without blood would be poorer, but a world without bloodshed would be poorer too, both less rich in biodiversity and less divine'.⁶¹⁹ Bloodshed and death in the world actually contributes to the rich biodiversity that has evolved over millennia and has enabled the evolution of a more beautiful, 'divine' world, rather than a torpid and static world which would exist if there were no death. In other words, the present evolutionary system may be the best possible system for such a world as ours, and befitting of God's self-letting love. Haught claims that 'We should not think of God as ever having existed in any other way than as humble, self-giving, empowering, promising, redemptive love'.⁶²⁰ For Haught, the dark side that is revealed by God's self-limitation is inevitable, and furthermore, it is necessary for God to show his endless love for creatures, in virtue of his omnibenevolence.

⁶¹⁸ Augustine, *Confessions*, 7. 12. 18.

⁶¹⁹ Rolston, "Naturalizing and Systematizing Evil," in *Is Nature Ever Evil? Religion, Science, and Value*, 85.

⁶²⁰ Haught, *Responses to 101 Questions on God and Evolution*, 125.

Similarly, in the *Zhuangzi*, the shadow side is necessary for the world. In fact, it is the *disharmony* of *yin* and *yang*, the attempt to make one victorious over the other or one last longer than the other, that brings about evil and suffering:

If humans are extremely joyful, they lean toward *yang*. If humans are extremely angry, they lean toward *yin*. If both *yin* and *yang* are in disorder, the harmony of the four seasons will break, and the harmony of heat and cold will fail, and then, this will harm humans' bodies. It will make humans lose the sense of joy and anger, to be of no fixed abode, not to think properly, and not to take the golden mean.⁶²¹

In the philosophy of Zhuangzi, the harmony of *yin* and *yang* is certainly preferable to only *yang* existing – something we ordinarily seem to want, as the *Zhuangzi* implies. Both extreme joy and extreme anger ruin the order in the universe, for the universe provides a natural balancing of the two in some way and at some time, unbeknown to human beings. For the *Zhuangzi*, then, humans should abide in the harmony between *yin* and *yang* that is guaranteed when we rest in *wuwei*. This idea is also exposed in the *Daodejing*: ‘And so, sometimes things lead and sometimes they follow; sometimes they breathe gently and sometimes they pant; sometimes they are strong and sometimes they are weak; sometimes they fight and sometimes they fall’.⁶²² These kinds of differences are critical factors in creating harmony. Therefore, even though the world may not appear to us as the ‘best’ world in virtue of ubiquitous pain and suffering, we can say that it is the best ‘possible’ world for both Haught and Zhuangzi.

In short, the dark side and the shadow side are accepted by each thinker from the perspective of inevitability or the necessary harmony of the world. Based on this similarity, for the purpose of crafting an integral theodicy, I generalise this as the ‘harmony defence’. The ‘harmony defence’ consists in the claim that for the present world to be the best world actualisable by God, a fundamental harmony is necessary, and the dark side is an inevitable or necessary part in bringing about harmony in the universe and for creatures in their individual lives. Again, *yin* and *yang* are equally important and necessary in Daoism, but it is important to add here that *what* we may call an instance of either may not actually be an instance of one of them in virtue of

⁶²¹ *Zhuangzi*, chap. 11. (人大喜邪, 毗於陽. 大怒邪, 毗於陰. 陰陽竝毗, 四時不至, 寒暑之和不成, 其反傷人之形乎. 使人喜怒失位, 居處無常, 思慮不自得, 中道不成章.)

⁶²² *Daodejing*, chap. 29. (故物或行或隨, 或歔或吹, 或強或羸, 或挫或隳.) Ivanhoe and Norden, 177.

our limited knowledge and circumstances as individuals. According to the *Zhuangzi*, ‘The boundary between things is actually the boundary between specific things. A boundary without a boundary means that no boundary is an absolute boundary. People talk about fullness and emptiness, and decline and decay. Dao makes things full or empty, but it is not full or empty. Dao makes things decline and decay, but it is not itself decline and decay’.⁶²³ Zhuangzi denies the absolute boundary between things. The boundary of good and evil is, in an absolute sense for him, meaningless. In other words, the world *is harmony itself*. The ‘harmony defence’ addresses the problem of evil by utilising the dark side and the shadow side in both Haught and Zhuangzi.

Differentiation and Supplementation

The dark side in the evolutionary theodicy of Haught and the shadow side in the *Zhuangzi* are, however, different in the following ways. The dark side and the shadow side are accepted in different ways in the two philosophies. In Haught, the dark side is inevitable for the best possible world, but it has a negative meaning. The dark side is the unavoidable, uncomfortable or painful aspect of things as they *appear* to us, and it will disappear in the eschatological future.

In contrast, in the *Zhuangzi*, the shadow side is an important aspect of Dao in itself and its operations, but I emphasise that we are not to call this ‘evil’. Whereas the traditional Christian God is always understood as being perfectly good, without the dark side, Dao would not *be*, and this statement clearly extends beyond a mere statement concerning the *appearance* of a negative side of the things made manifest by the operations of Ultimate Reality. Dao operates when the bright side and the shadow side come together in harmony. The shadow side does not have a negative meaning and it is not evil. According to the *Zhuangzi*, *yin* and *yang* are mutually complementary.

There are left and right, there are summary and detail, there are division and discrimination, and there are emulation and competition and contention.... Therefore, where there is division, there is not division; where there is discrimination, there is not discrimination. What does this

⁶²³ *Zhuangzi*, chap. 22. (而物有際者, 所謂物際者也. 不際之際, 際之不際者也. 謂盈虛衰殺, 彼爲盈虛非盈虛, 彼爲衰殺非衰殺.) Wang Rongpei, 375.

mean? The sage embraces all things, but ordinary people discriminate among them to show off. As the proverb goes, where there is discrimination, there is something unseen [unenlightened].⁶²⁴

In the *Zhuangzi*, division or discrimination, *whether metaphysical or epistemological* is strongly rejected. If there is no shadow side, there is no bright side. *Yin* and *yang* are the two manifest aspects of Dao's operation.⁶²⁵ *Yin* is a necessary element in Daoism.

Another difference between the ideas of Haught and Zhuangzi is how they understand the dark or shadow side in overcoming the problem of evil. Haught believes that nature will inevitably bear a dark side in so far as it is not yet completely created. For him, the natural world is pregnant with promise, 'allowing us daily to renew our hope for a final fulfilment in a new creation'.⁶²⁶ In other words, what is a dark side to things for us will not remain as such in the new creation, the eschatological future.

In contrast, the shadow side is an extremely important element in Daoism, and it is an inextricable element in the world and its processes. Concerning the origin of creation, the *Zhuangzi* answers: '*Yin* and *yang* balance against each other, reverse each other, and regulate each other. The four seasons rotate each other, give birth to each other, and kill each other. Desire and dislike rise and fall in succession. The pairing of halves between male and female operate properly'.⁶²⁷ *Yin* is deeply involved in the existence of all things – from the creation of all beings, to the end of them. Thus, the shadow side is not something to be overcome in the future, but something which exists eternally.

⁶²⁴ Ibid., chap. 2. (有左有右, 有倫有義, 有分有辯, 有競有爭... 故分也者, 有不分也。辯也者, 有不辯也。曰。何也? 聖人懷之, 衆人辯之以相示也。故曰辯也者, 有不見也。)

⁶²⁵ Laozi also expounds the complementarity between *yin* and *yang* several times in the *Daodejing*: 'Those who are crooked will be perfected. Those who are bent will be straight. Those who are empty will be full. Those who are worn will be renewed. Those who have little will gain. Those who have plenty will be confounded (chap. 22)'; 'The heavy is the root of the light. The still rules over the agitated (chap. 26)'; 'What you intend to shrink, you first must stretch. What you intend to weaken, you first must strengthen. What you intend to abandon, you first must make flourish. What you intend to steal from, you first must provide for. This is called subtle enlightenment (chap. 36)'.

⁶²⁶ Haught, *Responses to 101 Questions on God and Evolution*, 80.

⁶²⁷ *Zhuangzi*, chap. 25. (少知曰。四方之內, 六合之裏, 萬物之所生惡起? 大公調曰。陰陽相照, 相蓋相治。四時相代, 相生相殺。欲惡去就, 於是橋起。雌雄片合, 於是庸有。)

Based on these differences, I would like to supplement the evolutionary theodicy of Haught with the ideas of Zhuangzi. However, let us recall the traditional Christian picture of the relationship between evil and creation as creation moves toward the future. In traditional Christian theology, the relationship between good and evil is considered exclusive. In Christianity, good and evil are thought of as opposites. According to the Bible, on the last day, at the dawn of the new creation, the kingdom of God will bring about the triumph of the good and the elimination of evil. St. John writes: ‘He [God] will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away’ (Rev. 21:4).⁶²⁸ Again, some evolutionary theologians understand the dark side as ‘unnecessary, but inevitable’ in God’s continuous creation. But it is important to understand that for Haught, as in traditional Christian theology, the dark side is an intrinsic part of the universe, but also *temporary*. In this regard, Haught’s evolutionary theology stands in continuity with traditional Christian theism, but it is in stark contrast to Daoism, for which we cannot make a separation in *yinyang*. Neither *yin* nor *yang* are separable from another and neither are temporary. They must always be present in any world whatsoever.

For Haught, if God is love, this love would persuade rather than command in order for creatures to reach new modes of being, and as a result there should be many instances of indeterminacy in the world as creatures utilise their freedom and choose to adhere or to turn away from the divine will.⁶²⁹ This indeterminacy contains the possibility for evil and suffering, but the ‘problem of evil’ will be answered for human beings and all creatures by the promise and manifestation of new creation. Do we have to understand the problem of evil from a future time (new creation) like Haught and many theologians? The idea of *yin* can give an insight in this.

In the *Zhuangzi*, all creatures arise from the interplay of *yin* and *yang*. Good and evil are also related to each other in this way. As *yin-yang* is indispensable to continuous creation, good and evil are also indispensable from the cosmological dimension of things. On the contrary, evolutionary theodicy accepts the dark side as

⁶²⁸ Isaiah similarly says, ‘Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy. Water will gush forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert. [...] and the ransomed of the Lord will return. They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away’ (Isa. 35:5–6, 10).

⁶²⁹ Haught, *Responses to 101 Questions on God and Evolution*, 127.

inevitable as far as the experience of creatures goes. We would certainly *think* that it would be best if the dark side did not exist because we, like other creatures, prefer comfort and peace, but as we know, the shadow side is inevitable during continuous creation, for it makes life cycles, progress of any sort and even existence possible.

I think that if the dark side is inevitable in an evolving world, evolutionary theology accepts it as absolutely necessary, even while it is temporary. As the harmony of *yin-yang* constitutes the necessary ingredient for a balanced world in the *Zhuangzi*, the dark side may reveal the highest good of God's creation when it is understood in terms of being necessary for an immanent harmony in creation.

Moreover, as in Haught, if we focus on God's 'letting-be' of creation out of love, then unexpected, random events in the world that bring about pain and suffering may afford testimony of God's continuous love. We may take this perspective on the basis of St. Paul's words (Rom. 5:20),⁶³⁰ where it is said that where pain and suffering increase, God's self-emptying love increases all the more. We can see, then, that the dark side may actually be regarded positively rather than merely negatively – positively for the reason that it is *proof* of the freedom of creation and creatures, the guarantee that creation is not fatalistically ordered and commanded in its progression by God. Here, we must remember that the shadow side in the *Zhuangzi* can only be accepted positively when it is harmonized with the bright side. Likewise, the dark side in Haught can also be accepted positively when it can be harmonized with the good effects caused by God's self-emptying love.

In this section, I strived to develop the evolutionary theodicy of Haught and the Daoist philosophy of *Zhuangzi* as they pertain to cosmic harmony. The dark side in Haught and the shadow side in *Zhuangzi* are accepted by each thinker respectively because of the inevitability of pain and suffering and the necessity of cosmic harmony. Based on this similarity, I generalised it as the 'harmony defence'. The 'harmony defence' implies that the present world is one of fundamental harmony, and the dark side is an inevitable or necessary aspect of things, giving rise to harmony in the world, enabling this world to be actualisable.

However, I described how the understanding of the dark side or shadow side is different in either thinker. In Haught, the dark side has a negative meaning for human

⁶³⁰ 'The law was added so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more' (Rom. 5:20).

beings and creatures as we perceive the suffering in the world, but which is no less inevitable in our experience for the purpose of actualising the best possible world until it disappears in the eschatological future. In contrast, in the *Zhuangzi*, the shadow side is not something to be overcome in the future, but something which exists eternally as an important element of Dao. This difference can supplement the evolutionary theodicy of Haught: if we could accept that the dark side may allow for what is good in God's creation (be it love, friendship or justice), as the harmony of *yin-yang* allows for what is good in the *Zhuangzi*, evolutionary theology can accept the dark side in the continuous creation of the cosmos more positively.

Chapter 8

New Creation and the Theodicy of the Metaphysical Future

There are several questions which arise when we reflect on ‘evolution’: why chance does not annihilate the possibility of the order that we see in evolutionary processes, why nature is ordered and yet open to disorder, and why natural selection can be explained by scientific laws and yet also be open to the theological explanation of an indeterminate, continuously created, new creation. For Haught, a metaphysics of the deterministic past or of an eternal present does not answer these questions. Haught is convinced that only within the framework of a theological metaphysics of the future will these kinds of questions concerning evolution be compatible with Darwinian science.⁶³¹ In the evolutionary theology of Haught, a metaphysics of the future is the central idea that settles the underlying tension between theology and science that is so often posited as a pressing issue for us today. Haught’s point of view on theodicy is also focused on hope in the future rather than present suffering. For Haught, the suffering that is presently and necessarily undergone in evolutionary processes is not a severe theological problem as long as it promises something better or higher in the future.⁶³²

In this chapter I will therefore develop Haught’s conception of the ‘future’ in relation to the notion of the completion of creation (as promised in Christianity) before comparing it to the cyclical notion of time in relation to cosmic completion in the *Zhuangzi*. In the first section, I will focus on purpose or direction in evolution in order to argue for what I will call the ‘progress defence’. In the second section, I will discuss new creation and the Daoist notion of *tianrenyitong* (the unity of heaven and human being) to build what I will call the ‘future reward defence’. Based on these two defences in conjunction with the previous five I have posited, I hope to offer an integral theodicy in a scientific age.

⁶³¹ Haught, *God after Darwin: A Theology of Evolution*, 103-04.

⁶³² Rolston similarly claims that ‘The question is not whether the world is, or ever was, a happy place. Rather, the question is whether it is a place of significant suffering through to something higher. [Holmes Rolston III, *Science and Religion: A Critical Survey* (PA: Templeton Foundation Press, 2006), 142.]

(1) The Progress Defence: Purpose/Direction of Evolution

Description

Whether there is a divinely ordained direction or purpose in natural processes for Haught and Zhuangzi is debatable. Darwin acknowledged progress in evolution in the first edition of *On the Origin of Species*,⁶³³ but he changed his mind in the later edition and most of his followers deny such a global direction or universal progress in nature (this is not to deny relative progress, relative to the evolutionary advantages of certain creatures).⁶³⁴ How can we know that there is purpose or direction in evolution? Most evolutionary biologists deny teleology in nature. American evolutionary biologist Stephen Jay Gould argues that no preordained purpose informs the history of life,⁶³⁵ and many scientists, such as Ernst Mayr,⁶³⁶ Steven Weinberg,⁶³⁷ Sandra Faber,⁶³⁸ Marc Davis⁶³⁹ and William Provine⁶⁴⁰ deny that the universe has a purpose. Peter Bowler, historian of biology, claims that Christians have traditionally presumed that history is not progressive. According to him, because humans have fallen from an initial state through original sin, the divine purpose that was primordially present in creation has been negated by humanity's intentional separation from God.⁶⁴¹

However, some evolutionary theologians argue that teleology, or more exactly an *intentional progress* in nature, is still important in order to maintain a coherent notion of divine providence for creatures, and they accept such purpose for creatures in their own ways. For example, Peters and Hewlett say, 'God provides a purpose for

⁶³³ 'As natural selection works solely by and for the good of each being, all corporeal and mental endowments will tend to progress towards perfection'. Darwin, 360.

⁶³⁴ It is very difficult to define *absolute* progress in evolution, since there is no fixed point of reference that creatures are either evolving away from or towards.

⁶³⁵ Gould, 41.

⁶³⁶ Ernst Mayr, "Evolution," *Scientific American* 239, no. 3 (1978): 50.

⁶³⁷ Steven Weinberg, *The First Three Minutes: A Modern View of the Origin of the Universe* (New York: Basic Books, 1977), 144.

⁶³⁸ Alan P. Lightman and Roberta Brawer, *Origins: The Lives and Worlds of Modern Cosmologists* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990), 340.

⁶³⁹ *Ibid.*, 358.

⁶⁴⁰ William B. Provine, "Evolution and the Foundation of Ethics," in *Science, Technology and Social Progress*, ed. Steven L. Goldman (Bethlehem: Lehigh University Press, 1989), 261.

⁶⁴¹ Peter J. Bowler, *Monkey Trials and Gorilla Sermons: Evolution and Christianity from Darwin to Intelligent Design* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007), 27-28.

nature but not *within* nature'.⁶⁴² They explain this with analogy to human purpose; when a person builds a chair with a tree, the chair did not exist in the tree but became a chair because of the design of the person with a purpose. Although evolutionary biologists cannot discern divine purpose within nature, theologians expect that God has a purpose for nature. Thus, for these theologians, we must distinguish between a general teleology or end of God's creating human beings and other creatures, and self-assigned teleologies of human beings with the free will to direct their own lives.

That said, Haught proposes to understand 'purpose' as the 'orientation of a process toward the realization of a value' rather than as 'heading straight toward a goal fixed from all eternity',⁶⁴³ in other words, distinguishing between *object* and *direction*. For him, the term 'purpose' cannot be discussed apart from the concept of *value* because nothing but orientation toward value makes a movement purposeful. Thus Haught regards purpose as 'the defining quality of any process aiming toward the realization of value'.⁶⁴⁴ Applying this distinction, then, we note that, according to the Big Bang model, the universe was a homogenous sea of radiation at the beginning, but now we see a wealth of plants, animals, humans and cultures on earth. There has been a gradual increase in organized complexity and in conscious awareness, and eventually the universe's evolution has produced intellect, or conscious mind. The existence of intelligent organisms shows that something of importance has been progressing in the universe. Haught therefore emphasises the fact that great complexity and beauty have appeared in this universe, and argues that these show that the universe has a purpose or direction. But I think that it is not clear whether increased complexity implies progression or teleology.

It is not easy to explore what Zhuangzi may and may not think about purpose or direction in evolutionary processes because the *Zhuangzi* does not discuss the matter directly, so we need to infer Zhuangzi's idea of purpose from what he says about the features of the natural world.

According to the *Zhuangzi*, there are indeed beauties, regularities and principles in the natural world: 'Heaven and earth have their great beauties but do not speak of

⁶⁴² Ted Peters and Martinez Hewlett, *Can You Believe in God and Evolution? A Guide for the Perplexed* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2006), 120.

⁶⁴³ Haught, *Responses to 101 Questions on God and Evolution*, 109-11.

⁶⁴⁴ John F. Haught, *Nature and Purpose* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1980), 70.

them; the four seasons have their clear-marked regularity but do not discuss it; the ten thousand things have their principles of growth but do not expound them'.⁶⁴⁵ In the *Zhuangzi*, the natural world is characterised by beauty rather than cruelty, and by evident regularities rather than chaotic or random events.

Moreover, the recognition that the world is changing continuously is revealed in the *Zhuangzi* even if it does not imply the notion of evolution. All things change on their own: 'The life of things is a gallop, a headlong dash – with every movement they alter, with every moment they shift. What should you do and what should you not do? Everything will change of itself, that is certain'.⁶⁴⁶ Everything in the world is moving and changing constantly, and these movements themselves operate with certain rules. One of the most obvious movements on earth for us is the changing of the four seasons.

When the breath of spring comes forth, the hundred grasses begin to grow, and later, when autumn visits them, their ten thousand fruits swell and ripen. Yet how could spring and autumn do other than they do? – Dao of Heaven has already set them in motion.⁶⁴⁷

The *Zhuangzi* states that Dao has already set all things in motion. The movement of the earth and the changing of the seasons are rooted in the movement of Dao, and so this particular series of movements cannot be regarded as merely 'random' or 'chance' events.

Comparison and Generalisation

Whether or not direction or purpose exists in the process of evolution is important for evolutionary theologians because this is a decisive point of contact between evolutionary biology and theology. If God is a Creator, we can expect that God has designs or has a purpose for his creation, based on Biblical teachings.⁶⁴⁸ Christian theology has a basic notion of providence, and so there is an expectation that, if God

⁶⁴⁵ *Zhuangzi*, chap. 22. (天地有大美而不言, 四時有明法而不議, 萬物有成理而不說.) Watson, 178.

⁶⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, chap. 17. (物之生也, 若驟若馳, 無動而不變, 無時而不移. 何爲乎, 何不爲乎, 夫固將自化.) Watson, 132.

⁶⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, chap. 23. (夫春氣發而百草生, 正得秋而萬寶成. 夫春與秋, 豈無得而然哉? 天道已行矣.) Watson, 188.

⁶⁴⁸ See Genesis 1 and Romans 8.

is the creator through evolution, then evolution must in some sense be providential too, rather than violent toward creatures and wasteful in terms of time and life. However, examining or inferring evidence of a divine ‘plan’ through the operations of nature actually encumbers effective conversation between Christian theology and evolutionary science because evolutionary theorists have been successful in demonstrating that it is immensely difficult to harmonize scientific narratives with the Christian notion(s) of a divine design or plan. It would seem, according to such theorists, that the ‘law of the jungle’, which implies immense suffering and pain of weaker or ill-adapted creatures, as well as nature’s apparent inefficiency as it relates to the amount of time and suffering in evolutionary history it has taken for nature to manifest the human form, is incompatible with the notion of divine providence or design – especially by a loving, omnipotent God.

Such cases, however, mean that, for Haught, there is no point or purpose to the universe. Haught argues that ‘Purpose is a much wider notion than plan or design, and it can live much more comfortably with chance, disorder, and the abyss of cosmic time than can the all too simple notion of design’.⁶⁴⁹

Haught understands ‘purpose’ minimally as that which is ‘oriented toward a goal or toward a value’ or ‘at least vaguely directional lines’.⁶⁵⁰ In this sense, Haught claims that there is direction or purpose to evolution, but it does not mean ‘heading straight toward a goal fixed from all eternity’ but ‘a gradual rise in organized complexity, in sentience, and eventually in conscious awareness’.⁶⁵¹

This kind of understanding of purpose does not conflict with evolutionary science because the evolution of life works to increase levels of complexity overall, with the exception of the great extinctions, including what is referred to as the Holocene or Anthropocene extinction today, even while both human and artificial intelligence become more advanced and complicated – suggesting the emergence of new forms of life concurrent with the eradication of many others. Haught furthermore connects purpose or direction to the notion of beauty: ‘In an even broader sense there has been an ongoing cosmic trend toward complexity, and

⁶⁴⁹ Haught, *God after Darwin: A Theology of Evolution*, 114.

⁶⁵⁰ Haught, *Science and Religion: From Conflict to Conversation*, 164-65.

⁶⁵¹ Haught, *Responses to 101 Questions on God and Evolution*, 109-10.

toward more and more intense versions of ordered novelty – that is, toward *beauty*'.⁶⁵²

Haught understands that 'putting things this way allows us to affirm cosmic purpose without having to deny the realities of evolutionary struggle, innocent suffering and moral evil'.⁶⁵³ Although there is suffering and struggle in the evolving world, they are not unbearable evils if the world is approaching more ordered novelty or beauty.

Similarly, in the *Zhuangzi*, the natural world moves toward increasing harmony and beauty if harmony and beauty are not encumbered by self-conscious human actions which inevitably distort the order of the cosmos. We cannot say that the world has an externally given special purpose in Daoism, but it is possible to say that the world is always moving toward harmony and beauty in and through the operation of *yin* and *yang*.

Based on this rather general similarity between the two systems, I will formally generalise the idea of purpose between Haught and the *Zhuangzi* as what I will henceforth call the 'progress defence'. Both Haught and the *Zhuangzi* understand that there is direction in the natural world as long as that direction means reaching toward 'beauty'. If we can accept that the natural world moves for the sake of reaching a better state, that is, a better world, beautiful and free from of pain and suffering, the problem of evil and suffering in its present state can be seen to be a far less severe issue because we can live in the well-founded hope for a better future.

Differentiation and Supplementation

According to our methodology, it is beneficial for us to also highlight the differences between Haught and *Zhuangzi* in their understanding of purpose or direction in the process of evolution. Most of all, in the *Zhuangzi*, changes or movements of nature are not by any means 'intentional' or 'purposive' movements of Dao even if those movements do culminate in metaphysical beauty. We can see how the movement of heaven and earth do not require external direction or purpose in the *Zhuangzi*:

⁶⁵² Ibid., 110.

⁶⁵³ Haught, *Deeper Than Darwin: The Prospect for Religion in the Age of Evolution*, 40.

Does heaven turn? Does the earth sit still? Do sun and moon compete for a place to shine? Who masterminds all this? Who pulls the strings? Who, *resting inactive* himself, gives the push that makes it go this way? I wonder, is there some mechanism that works it and won't let it stop? I wonder if it just rolls and turns and can't bring itself to a halt? Do the clouds make the rain, or does the rain make the clouds? Who puffs them up, who showers them down like this? Who, *resting inactive* himself, stirs up all this lascivious joy? The winds rise in the north, blowing now west, now east, whirling up to wander on high. Whose breaths and exhalations are they? Who, *resting inactive* himself, huffs and puffs them about like this?⁶⁵⁴

In this passage, 'resting inactive (無事)' is repeated three times. Again, it means that all operations of heaven and earth are not *intentionally* governed by Ultimate Reality but are the natural process of Dao, operating in and of themselves (*ziran*). It also means that the system operates 'inactively' (*wuwei*). All things in the world grow up out of non-action:

The inaction of Heaven is its purity, the inaction of earth is its peace. So the two inactions combine, and all things are transformed and brought to birth. Wonderfully, mysteriously, there is no place they come out of. Mysteriously, wonderfully, they have no sign. Each thing mends its business, and all grow up out of inaction.⁶⁵⁵

In the *Zhuangzi*, the world moves with non-action, and thus direction or purpose is not presented as an important subject for discussion. Dao does its work spontaneously, and notions of direction or purpose cannot be assessed in Daoism because Dao's action has no purpose. Joachim Gentz characterises Dao as 'an eternal creative force or principle that is the unintentional generative source of all things, including heaven and earth'.⁶⁵⁶ In his understanding, Dao is an 'unintentional' generative source having nothing to do with direction or purpose. It does not mean

⁶⁵⁴ *Zhuangzi*, chap. 14. (天其運乎? 地其處乎? 日月其爭於所乎? 孰主張是? 孰維綱是? 孰居無事而推行是? 意者其有機緘而不得已邪? 意者其運轉而不能自止邪? 雲者爲雨乎? 雨者爲雲乎? 孰隆施是? 孰居無事淫樂而勸是? 風起北方, 一西一東, 在上彷徨, 孰噓吸是? 孰居無事而披拂是? 敢問何故?) Watson, 108.

⁶⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, chap. 18. (天無爲以之清, 地無爲以之寧. 故兩無爲相合, 萬物皆化生. 芒乎芴乎, 而無從出乎! 芴乎芒乎, 而無有象乎! 萬物職職, 皆從無爲殖.) Watson, 140.

⁶⁵⁶ Gentz, *Understanding Chinese Religions*, 78.

that the process of continuous creation is characterized by randomness, which some evolutionists argue based on the random mutation alongside natural selection.

Now, because Dao creates all creatures ‘spontaneously’ (*ziran*), there are indeed no goals to be attained in Dao’s creation of anything. Moreover, because all creatures ‘become themselves’ (another meaning of *ziran*) in and with Dao’s operation, there is no randomness in Daoism. On the one hand, Dao does not lead all creatures into the process of ‘red in tooth and claw’ as if with the design of weeding out the weaker species and cultivating stronger species, and on the other hand, to reiterate, Dao does not lead them to any special cosmic end or goal.

For the *Zhuangzi*, continuous and spontaneous creation of Dao can produce order without direction, which the central concept of *wuwei* conveys. The *Zhuangzi* says, ‘Heaven does not give birth, yet ten thousand things are transformed; earth does not sustain, yet ten thousand things are nourished’.⁶⁵⁷ The *Zhuangzi* also says that ‘To act through non-action is called Heaven’.⁶⁵⁸ Even though Dao creates all things spontaneously, the world has its own order: ‘Spring and summer precede, and autumn and winter follow – such is the sequence of the four seasons.... If you speak of Dao and not of its sequence, then it is not Dao’.⁶⁵⁹

The theological debate about direction or purpose in the process of evolution, which is important in evolutionary theodicy, is premised upon the notion that God has an intimate relationship with all creatures. Surely, many evolutionary theologians, including Haught, exclude God’s direct intervention in natural selection in trying to harmonize God’s existence and creation of the natural order with evolutionary science. At the same time, what can still properly be called God’s purpose for all creatures is not abandoned easily. Haught’s conviction, which is also my conviction, is that discussion of God’s purpose for all creatures ought to be harmonized with natural selection that seems to deny progress in nature. In the evolutionary theology of Haught, there is purpose and direction towards better states of the world and the cosmos in and through evolution, but it does not exhibit flawless

⁶⁵⁷ *Zhuangzi*, chap. 13. (天不產而萬物化, 地不長而萬物育。) Watson, 100.

⁶⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, chap. 12. (無為為之謂天。)

⁶⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, chap. 13. (春夏先秋冬後, 四時之序也.... 語道而非其序者, 非其道也。) Watson, 101-102.

‘design’; rather, it is validated by its carrying the promise that the cosmos *finds* its fundamental ‘purpose’.

In contrast, harmonizing a divinely-ordained teleology with the observable processes of nature is less a problem for Daoism in virtue of the benefits of the Daoist way of thinking. I believe that evolutionary theodicy does not need to be tied to purpose or direction in the natural world and the theses of Bowler and Ted Peters make for a good case as to why. Bowler insists that Darwinism has no built-in trend, and that it is ‘an open-ended, haphazard, and largely unpredictable model of progress’.⁶⁶⁰ He argues that the Christian tradition assumes that history is not progressive because of original sin.⁶⁶¹ Peters also accepts that teleology is no longer persuasive and recommends that ‘theologians affirm a divine purpose *for nature*’⁶⁶² not ‘*within nature* itself’. For him, a divine purpose for nature is not located in a built-in *telos* but located in the will of God, and this goal is the new creation.⁶⁶³

Receiving and utilizing these transformative ideas from Zhuangzi, Bowler and Peters, I want to supplement the evolutionary theodicy of Haught for this new era of inter-religious and inter-disciplinary collaboration. Overall, Haught’s works suggest a good understanding of purpose without conflict between Christian theology and evolutionary biology. However, I think that evolutionary theology does not need to retain the notion of a purpose of nature that involves a trajectory toward a better state.

Although many Christians would respond that there must be divine purpose in the evolution of human beings in virtue of the fact that we are made in the ‘image of God’, which itself implies teleology, the very notions of ‘purpose’ and ‘progress’ are only conceivable within a framework that presupposes the linearity, or linear progression, of time. God’s divine purpose for nature and humans may not have such a direction if we accept not only that God exists beyond time and space, but also that the notion of the linearity of time as we experience it is also false. Just as direction does not have an important meaning in Daoism, which holds a cyclical understanding

⁶⁶⁰ Bowler, *Monkey Trials and Gorilla Sermons: Evolution and Christianity from Darwin to Intelligent Design*, 223.

⁶⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 27.

⁶⁶² Peters, "Constructing a Theology of Evolution: Building on John Haught," 929.

⁶⁶³ *Ibid.*

of time, the purpose of God who exists beyond time does not need to be revealed in the progression of time.

According to Haught's understanding of purpose, the natural world should become 'better' – that is, freed from pain and suffering – as time goes by, or at or by a certain time in the future (though we cannot predict this). However, if we accept that God does have a purpose or direction *for* nature in Himself beyond space and time, we can still claim that God is closely related to creatures and their pain and suffering, regardless of the future of the world as it is observed by us. Concerning purpose, the evolutionary theology of Haught can be supplemented by the ideas of purpose (or rather, *lack thereof*) in the *Zhuangzi* for a more integral response to the problem of evil and suffering.

In this section, I tried to develop the evolutionary theodicy of Haught and the Daoist philosophy of *Zhuangzi* in the light of purpose or direction of evolution. Haught accepts direction or purpose in evolution, but it does not mean 'heading straight toward a goal fixed from all eternity'. Rather, it means 'a gradual rise in organized complexity'. In the *Zhuangzi*, the natural world moves toward increasing harmony and beauty through the operation of *yin-yang* if uninterrupted by self-conscious human actions. Based on these similar ideas, I generalised them as the 'progress defence'. The 'progress defence' implies that there is direction in the natural world as long as that direction means progression towards 'beauty' in both Haught and the *Zhuangzi*, thereby giving us hope a better future and a partial solution to the problem of evil.

It was quite clear, however, that the notions of purpose or direction in Haught and *Zhuangzi* are not identical. The differences can be used to supplement the evolutionary theodicy of Haught. To be specific, in the *Zhuangzi*, changes or movements of nature are not 'intentional' movements of Dao even if those movements culminate in a richer beauty of the cosmos. Moreover, 'direction' (a notion which implies or includes the linear progression of time) does not have an important meaning in Daoism because Daoism holds a cyclical understanding of time and Dao subsists beyond time in an eternal present. Therefore, if evolutionary theology accepts that God does have a purpose or direction *for* nature in Himself, beyond space and time, it can still argue that God is closely related to the world, the lives and destinies of its creatures, including all their suffering and pain, regardless of

the ‘future’ or new creation of the world, which Haught regards as important for redemption of pain and suffering.

(2) The Final Fulfilment Defence: New Creation and *Tianrenyitong* (天人一通, the unity of heaven and human being)

Description

As I expounded in Chapter 3:3 in detail, a ‘metaphysics of the future’ is one of the most important ideas in the evolutionary theodicy of Haught. In a metaphysics of the future, God draws the universe toward future fulfilment:

Evolution, to put it as directly as I can, seems to require a divine source of being that resides not in a timeless present located somewhere ‘up above’, but in the future, essentially ‘up ahead’, as the goal of a world still in the making. The term ‘God’ in this revised metaphysics must once again mean for us, as it did for many of our biblical forbears, the transcendent future horizon that draws an entire universe, and not just human history, toward an unfathomable fulfilment yet to be realized.⁶⁶⁴

Haught understands that God exists ‘up ahead’ rather than ‘up above’, or to put it differently, he focuses on the journey toward the future rather than juxtaposing God’s design to present or past states of the world. To experience the ontological power of the future, Haught argues, we should dwell in a specific narrative or history, wherein the future unexpectedly invades the present and leads the world to formerly undreamed potentials.

According to Haught, if we only pay attention to an ever-expanding cosmic past, we can never discover intelligibility in the world. Haught claims that ‘[A] metaphysics of the future not only allows scope for the hopes of religion but also provides an open-ended and realistic framework for the ongoing adventure of scientific discovery’.⁶⁶⁵ For him, a metaphysics of the future helps us to make better sense of evolutionary science than does a completely mechanistic framework constructed in terms of causal sequences and which impedes the novel creation of the evolutionary process.

⁶⁶⁴ Haught, *God after Darwin: A Theology of Evolution*, 91.

⁶⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 101.

Haught's metaphysics of the future is closely connected to the Christian notion of 'new creation' because his expectation of the future completion of all creation can only be realised in the eschatological future. For Haught, authentic faith affirms that 'God's initial creation (*creatio originalis*) continues even now (*creatio continua*) and will be brought to fulfilment in the future (*creatio nova*)'.⁶⁶⁶ In the evolutionary theology of Haught, eschatology is the extension into the future of a basic Christian faith that God is still creating the world.

The reason why a metaphysics of the future is important in Haught's theology is that it provides a clue to the more comprehensive answer to the problem of evil that we have alluded to. If we accept that the universe is still unfinished and it is in a process of progression directed to the future, we cannot expect that it should appear to possess finished perfection at this time. For Haught, if the universe is imperfect (at least for now), the appearance of evil and suffering is not inconceivable because it can be regarded as the dark side of the world's continuous creation.⁶⁶⁷ The problem of evil will be totally settled in the eschatological future, i.e. new creation in Haught's evolutionary theology.

The expectation of an ultimate cosmic future is difficult to find in the *Zhuangzi*, because the *Zhuangzi*'s understanding of time is different to that of Haught. In the *Zhuangzi*, all differentiations are rejected. For example, the sun at noon is the sun setting, and a thing born is a thing dying.⁶⁶⁸ Time is no exception: 'I set off for Yue today and came there yesterday'.⁶⁶⁹ This seems to be illogical because it is impossible to arrive yesterday after leaving today. Burton Watson understands that these paradoxes express the relativity of space and time.⁶⁷⁰ Clear distinctions between the past, present and future are foreign to classical philosophical Daoism as present in the *Zhuangzi*. The Daoist position regarding such differentiations between periods of time, and indeed causes and effects is very apparent in the text:

⁶⁶⁶ Ibid., 156.

⁶⁶⁷ Ibid., 41.

⁶⁶⁸ *Zhuangzi*, chap. 33.

⁶⁶⁹ Ibid. (今日適越而昔來.) Watson, 297.

⁶⁷⁰ Burton Watson, *The Complete Works of Zhuangzi* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 297.

There is a beginning. There is a not yet beginning to be a beginning. There is a not yet beginning to be a not yet beginning to be a beginning. There is being. There is nonbeing. There is a not yet beginning to be nonbeing. There is a not yet beginning to be a not yet beginning to be nonbeing. Suddenly there is being and nonbeing. But between this being and nonbeing, I don't really know which is being and which is nonbeing.⁶⁷¹

According to Zhuangzi, if there is a 'beginning', there is before 'the beginning', and also a 'before' 'the before the beginning', and this has infinite retroactivity. In other words, tracing a beginning to its origin is meaningless because that beginning can never be identified.

For Zhuangzi, there is also no way to distinguish between being and nonbeing. This is first of all because Daoism sees the phenomenal world as much more of a Heraclitean flux than a stratum of static Aristotelian essences. Heraclitus famously posited that reality consists of an ever-changing flux or flow, extending not only to our subjective experience but also to the very qualities or properties of things, such that we can never identify an object at all – destroying, like Zhuangzi, the foundations of philosophy and thought itself by refuting the first principles of logic (the laws of identity, non-contradiction and sufficient reason).⁶⁷²

Zhuangzi stands diametrically opposed to such realism and the theory of the 'correspondence' between mind and objects that we find in classical philosophy from the Socratics onward. For Zhuangzi as for Heraclitus in ancient Greece, it is impossible to distinguish between an object or event's beginning or end and between their boundaries and 'inner essence'. The *Zhuangzi* relates this perspective very clearly with regard to the relativity of ascriptions of 'being' and 'non-being' to statements of fact, given that almost everything can be disputed philosophically or linguistically as to its truth or meaning at the most basic level – illustrated and perhaps made most explicit in modern time by Heidegger's 'philosophical

⁶⁷¹ *Zhuangzi*, chap. 2. (有始也者, 有未始有始也者, 有未始有夫未始有始也者. 有有也者, 有無也者, 有未始有無也者, 有未始有夫未始有無也者. 俄而有無矣, 而未知有無之果孰有孰無也.) Watson, 12-13.

⁶⁷² This is in stark contrast to the philosophy of Aristotle, who posits a basic 'realism' in which objects stand in existence independent of the human mind but which nevertheless are identifiable in their essences and properties through intentional analysis. For Aristotle and the Aristotelian tradition leading all the way to high medieval Christianity, concepts are the tool by which the mind makes intelligible basic sense data, *corresponding* to given objects. [Gay Watson, *A Philosophy of Emptiness*, 63.]

hermeneutics' which questions the very notions of 'being' and all other such fundamental terms that we ordinarily employ in philosophy and theology.⁶⁷³

The famous story that Zhuangzi became a butterfly in his dream and became confused as to whether he became a butterfly or a butterfly became Zhuangzi (Chapter 5:2 'Zhuangzi on Evil') is a good illustration of the recognition of the impossibility of defining objects running throughout the book. The deeper point, however, is that for the *Zhuangzi*, the 'truth' of the matter is actually beside the point, because of the limits of language in ascribing truth to events and reality to objects in a binary fashion, despite the demands of everyday life.

However, this does not mean that Daoists do not have a conception of change or movement or indeed the 'flow' of time. At that time when the clock did not exist, the change of four seasons was the primary means by which human beings and Daoists in particular measured time, in virtue of the fact that they lived in an agrarian society. Thus in the *Zhuangzi*: 'Heaven at least has its fixed times of spring and fall, winter and summer, daybreak and dusk',⁶⁷⁴ and 'It's just like the progression of the four seasons: spring, summer, fall, winter'.⁶⁷⁵

In the *Zhuangzi*, the state of the transcendence of time and space is that which we might call enlightenment, or 'sagehood' (the sage being known as *shengren*). If the new creation is the point at which all imperfection in the world is transformed in perfection in Haught, becoming a sage in the *Zhuangzi* means to overcome evil and suffering in the world, transforming *oneself*. This is illustrative of the fundamental difference present in Christian theology and Chinese Daoist philosophy concerning what we may call 'liberation' or 'salvation': for Christianity, salvation is only achievable in and through divine *agape*, the giving of oneself over to God's love, which transforms the universe. In contrast, for Daoism and Buddhism, salvation consists in achieving a certain 'liberative' *knowledge (gnosis)* about the nature (or lack thereof) of oneself and the universe.⁶⁷⁶ We also find, corresponding to the

⁶⁷³ Gay Watson, 76-79.

⁶⁷⁴ *Zhuangzi*, chap. 32. (天猶有春夏秋冬夏旦暮之期。) Watson, 283.

⁶⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, chap. 18. (是相與爲春夏秋冬夏四時行也。) Watson, 141.

⁶⁷⁶ Aloysius Pieris, "Christianity and Buddhism in Core-to-Core Dialogue," *CrossCurrents* 37, no. 1 (1987): 47-48.

Christian and Daoist pictures of cosmic unity, two terms: *heping* (和平, universal peace) and *pinghe* (平和, inner peace).

Becoming a sage in the *Zhuangzi* means to live in a state of unity with heaven.

And what do you mean by saying, ‘man and Heaven are one’? Confucius [Zhuangzi] said, ‘Man exists because of Heaven, and Heaven, too, exists because of Heaven. But man cannot cause Heaven to exist; this is because of [the limitations of] his inborn nature. The sage, calm and placid, embodies change and so comes to his end.’⁶⁷⁷

It should be noted that in Chinese, ‘heaven’ can mean anything from ‘sky’, heaven in a sense of a spiritual realm, and also ‘universe’ in the sense of that which is indifferent to individual human actions. Therefore, the phrase ‘humans and heaven are one’ also means that ‘humans and the whole universe are one’. To repeat, contradictory to classical Western understandings of discrete essences, in Daoist philosophy, all things in the world come from the same origin, and they are one.

In this world, the ten thousand things come together in One; and if you can find that One and become identical with it, then your four limbs and hundred joints will become dust and sweepings; life and death, beginning and end, will be mere day and night, and nothing whatever can confound you.⁶⁷⁸

The Daoist sage teaches that if humans realize that all things come together in one, any change on earth cannot, in fact, disturb them. Pain, suffering and death are not to be regarded as a problem that should be solved because they are also parts of the one. My life, if I am a Daoist, does not consist in the 70 or 80 years between the commencement of consciousness manifest in this particular organism that I am and the degeneration back into what is unconsciousness, namely, the earth, for again, I am that *of which* and *from out of which* consciousness both comes and goes. In other words, I am Dao, and Dao contains and transcends both consciousness and unconsciousness.

⁶⁷⁷ *Zhuangzi*, chap. 20. (何謂人與天一邪? 尼曰. 有人, 天也. 有天, 亦天也. 人之不能有天, 性也. 聖人晏然體逝而終矣.) Watson, 164.

⁶⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, chap. 21. (夫天下也者, 萬物之所一也. 得其所一而同焉, 則四肢百體將為塵垢, 而死生終始將為晝夜而莫之能滑.) Watson, 170.

For achieving unity with the rest of nature and with heaven, *zuowang* is one of the most important methods for the Daoist. As I expounded in Chapter 5:2, the term *zuowang* ('sitting in forgetfulness') is an important method in overcoming the experience of overwhelming evil or suffering. Zhuangzi expounds *zuowang* through the mouth of Yan Hui: 'I smash up my limbs and body, drive out perception and intellect, cast off form, do away with understanding, and make myself identical with the Great Thoroughfare. This is what I mean by sitting down and forgetting everything'.⁶⁷⁹ The ultimate state in Daoist training is that of forgetting everything, i.e. the transcendent state of the cessation of arbitrary distinctions between things and events, between the cosmos and myself, between happiness and suffering and between comfort and pain. The problem of evil is overcome in the step of *zuowang*. What comes about is not merely happiness, but peace; *pinghe*.

Comparison and Generalisation

There are several similarities between Haught and Zhuangzi in understanding the problem of evil from the perspective of new creation. I identify three.

First, for both Haught and the *Zhuangzi* time is understood or experienced *qua* subjectivity. The subjective experience of time – its 'duration' – is more important than the objectivity of time – 'clock time' – as Henri Bergson famously argued. Both Zhuangzi and Haught focus on the experience of time rather than an 'objective' nature of time.

The time of God in the Bible is sometimes pictured in a relative sense. For example, the Psalmist says, 'For a thousand years in your sight are like a day that has just gone by, or like a watch in the night' (90:4), and Peter similarly says, 'With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day' (2 Peter 3:8). From the perspective of God who is regarded as the One who is transcendent of time and space, the quantitative difference between a day and a thousand years is meaningless. Moltmann claims that the linear time implied by evolution will drop away for the revelation of the eternity of the new creation: 'Eschatological future is to be understood *diachronically*: it is simultaneous to all the times, and in being so it

⁶⁷⁹ Ibid., chap. 6. (墮肢體, 黜聰明, 離形去知, 同於大通, 此謂坐忘.) Watson, 53.

represents eternity for all things'.⁶⁸⁰ Haught similarly gives priority to the future rather than the past and the present because 'without the consistent and faithful coming of the future there would be no pushing of the present into the past, and consequently no temporal sequence of moments in which evolution could occur'.⁶⁸¹

For Zhuangzi, the passage of time is comprehended by a change of season, and the length of time depends on the perception of each being relatively. Zhuangzi says:

South of Chu there is a caterpillar that counts five hundred years as one spring and five hundred years as one autumn. Long, long ago there was a great rose of Sharon that counted eight thousand years as one spring and eight thousand years as one autumn.⁶⁸²

It is common sense that one spring or one autumn cannot exceed a year, but these are, of course, human conventions and need not map onto the universe as a whole (for example, a year on Jupiter is different to a year on Earth) or indeed lifeforms whose experience of time, or duration, is different to ours. We can metaphorically understand that the year of a dog is much 'shorter' than that of a human, but a year for a human is much shorter than that of a blue whale, despite the fact that 'objectively', a year is the same for all creatures globally. We can notice that Zhuangzi also understands time relatively, and for him, anyone who is bound to the absoluteness of time as quantified by human beings cannot arrive at complete knowledge: 'The reason why a summer insect cannot understand ice is that it is bound to a single season'.⁶⁸³ In short, time is the essential topic that runs throughout both Haught and Zhuangzi and they understand time analogously.

The second similarity between Haught and Zhuangzi, which we have already implied, is the provision of salvation or liberation (or at least the possibility of such for all creatures, and not just human beings). For Haught, new creation means the fulfilment of creation, void of any pain and suffering of all creatures (Chapter 2:6). Similarly in the *Zhuangzi*, human beings and nature cannot be distinguished in this

⁶⁸⁰ Moltmann, *The Way of Jesus Christ: Christology in Messianic Dimensions*, 303.

⁶⁸¹ Haught, *God after Darwin: A Theology of Evolution*, 112.

⁶⁸² *Zhuangzi*, chap. 1. (楚之南有冥靈者, 以五百歲為春, 五百歲為秋. 上古有大椿者, 以八千歲為春, 八千歲為秋.) Watson, 2.

⁶⁸³ *Ibid.*, chap. 17. (夏蟲不可以語於冰者, 篤於時也.)

regard: ‘Heaven and earth were born with me, and the all things are one with me’⁶⁸⁴
The understanding that humans and heaven (or nature) are one is an oft-repeated and thus important theme in the *Zhuangzi*.

Finally and most importantly, the unity between human beings and Ultimate Reality is significant in both new creation (Haught) and the stage of sagehood (Zhuangzi). In the Bible, the unification between human beings and God often appears as the core teaching. For example, Jesus says, ‘I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing (John 15:5)’, and Paul says, ‘I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me’ (Gal. 2:20). The doctrine of ‘incarnation’ also means that God became human to save the world. Just as God clothed himself with a human body and entered into human history, humans will clothe themselves with a divine body in the time of new creation: ‘Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed – in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed’ (1 Cor. 15:51–52). These teachings confirm and deepen the doctrine of the *imago dei* that humans are made in the image of God.

Although Haught does not seem to speak directly about the unification of humans and God in this new creation, his expectation of a final fulfilment of all creation – a world without pain and suffering – is essential for the state of all creatures to be transformed, that is, essential for his evolutionary theology to have apologetic value, and for a theodicy based on his wider evolutionary theology to come to a point of culmination relevant for those posing the problem of evil here and now. The rule of survival of the fittest will disappear at that time, and the wolf will live with the lamb (Isa. 11:6; 65:25). I believe that this kind of world without pain, suffering and death may only be possible when all creatures are endowed with fully divine properties, as we hear about in the Biblical stories of a new heaven and a new earth, and the notion of a ‘resurrection body’.⁶⁸⁵ I think that a world free of the dark

⁶⁸⁴ Ibid., chap. 2. (天地與我竝生, 而萬物與我爲一.)

⁶⁸⁵ According to Deane-Drummond, the newness of the new creation implies that ‘the new time, space and matter will be radically transformed, entering perhaps new dimensions of reality’. This infers that humanity is not a dominator but a server of creational community, and that the redeeming work of

side we have been speaking of is possible for Haught when he presupposes that God and all creatures unify in one, when the divine properties afforded to human beings reach their perfection.

Similarly, the unity between human beings and heaven (Dao) or the unity between humans and the universe is a theme repeated throughout the *Zhuangzi* (recall the story of Zhuangzi and butterfly illustrating *wuhua*, the seamlessness of human reality and cosmic or natural reality). *Wuhua* (物化) literally means ‘the transformation of things’ or ‘things transform’. In the state of *wuhua*, humans can reach an awareness of the interconnection of all things: I and the universe become one in the state of *wuhua*. To become one with the universe or Ultimate Reality, humans should forget all conventional knowledge afforded by language and practical concerns – the breaking up of the world between subject and object, thing and event. The *Zhuangzi* argues, ‘Forget things, forget Heaven, and be called a forgetter of self. The man who has forgotten self may be said to have entered Heaven’.⁶⁸⁶ This is the same principle that we can see in the Bible: ‘If anyone would come after me, he must *deny himself* and take up his cross daily and follow me’ (Matt. 16:24; Mark 8:32; Luke 9:23). Forgetting or denying oneself is a prior condition for someone to unify with Ultimate Reality or the entirety of nature.

Based on these similarities concerning the experience of time and the possibility of a redemptive cosmic unification achieved either through *agape* or *gnosis*, I want to generalise the ideas of Haught and Zhuangzi for what I will call the ‘final fulfilment defence’. For Haught, ‘Eschatology seeks to arouse complete trust in the God who makes promises, who is faithful to these promises, whose “reign” will bring about a “new creation,” and who comes to meet us out of an always surprising and ultimately fulfilling future’.⁶⁸⁷ Haught’s theological vision of nature as promise helps us to face up to the suffering and pain inevitable in evolution. Haught says, ‘Eschatology and hope are broad-minded enough to acknowledge the ugliness and unresolved cruelty in any present state of evolution without requiring that we accept these conditions as final’.⁶⁸⁸ We can and do expect a final fulfilment in virtue of a

Christ connects with all creatures, not just for humanity. [Deane-Drummond, *Wonder and Wisdom: Conversations in Science, Spirituality, and Theology*, 131-32.]

⁶⁸⁶ *Zhuangzi*, chap. 12. (忘乎物, 忘乎天, 其名爲忘己, 忘己之人, 是之謂入於天.) Watson, 89.

⁶⁸⁷ Haught, *God after Darwin: A Theology of Evolution*, 156.

⁶⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 166.

promise, rather than merely stagnate in present conditions. For Haught, ‘Evil, suffering and sin can be conquered by new creation’.⁶⁸⁹ In the *Zhuangzi*, through Daoist training (*zuowang*, *wuhua*) people can arrive at final fulfilment, i.e. the state of forgetting everything and unifying with heaven (nature). In this state of the unity of the human and the cosmic, discussing good and evil or placing values on events based on mere feeling is meaningless because this state is a state of consciousness beyond discrimination, beyond the susceptibility of being caught by feelings and their colouring of the world. Therefore, the final fulfilment defence helps us to endure nature’s inherent limitations that bring about inner suffering and the conscious formulation of the problem of evil.

Differentiation and Supplementation

Based on our methodology, I will highlight the differences between Haught and Zhuangzi in their understanding of a future or at least possible liberation, salvation or redemption and supplement Haught’s ideas based on those differences.

First, in discussing the final fulfilment of creation Haught focuses on the notion of ‘time’ and Zhuangzi focuses on that of ‘fulfilment’. For Haught, a final fulfilment will be accomplished in and by the coming eschatological ‘future’. In contrast, in the *Zhuangzi*, a final fulfilment is possible in the near future or even now, attainable by the withdrawal into Dao, and not in the end of the world. Zhuangzi says:

Your master happened to come because it was his time, and he happened to leave because things follow along. If you are content with the time and willing to follow along, then grief and joy have no way to enter.⁶⁹⁰

What Zhuangzi aims to point out here is that, contrary to the notion that ‘all things happen for a reason’ – the principle of sufficient reason – that is taken for granted in everyday language, events in life need not happen for a cause, and certainly have no overarching narrative or chain of causes or preceding events. It is by acknowledging this flowing nature of events – we might even say the ‘floating’ nature of the world and things that happen in it – that inner peace (*pinghe*) is

⁶⁸⁹ Haught, *Responses to 101 Questions on God and Evolution*, 128.

⁶⁹⁰ *Zhuangzi*, chap. 3. (安時而處順, 哀樂不能入也.) Watson, 21.

possible. People also do not need to wait for the future to overcome pain and suffering.

Focusing on the ‘future’ redemption such as in Haught leaves us vulnerable to the charge that a future completion or fulfilment of creation is only persuasive for people who have the clear conviction of that coming future, and therefore not for those undergoing present sufferings without such a conviction. I recommend that if Haught’s idea of a metaphysics of the future focuses on ‘fulfilment’ rather than ‘future’ and it is continuously reinterpreted in the ‘present’ perspective, it will be more persuasive. In other words, we can instead come to understand that the final fulfilment of creation is already happening, it is already here and now, and we are on the way as we travel in the present toward the future.

Second, the agent that overcomes evil and suffering is different in Haught and Zhuangzi. Haught confirms that all pain and suffering will be eliminated by *God* in the time of the new creation, bringing universal peace from a top-down ordering. In contrast, the problem of evil in the *Zhuangzi* is overcome by *human beings* for themselves through training for sagehood and for *pinghe*. If we believe the final fulfilment will be brought about only by God, we are apt to think that the responsibility that humans have in the problem of evil in terms of their committing moral evil may be weakened to the extent that God becomes solely culpable. If humans have a role in bringing about a final redemption, attaining liberation or entering into salvation, we will become more truly responsible for unity and peace among ourselves and between human beings and the cosmos in a larger scope.

Finally, Haught and Zhuangzi have different ideas of time. Haught’s idea of a metaphysics of the future is premised upon a linear understanding of time. Creation is the process of the fulfilment of creation (new creation) leading from an initial creation. For Haught, then, this new creation is the peak of God’s creation.

In contrast, the *Zhuangzi* demonstrates a conviction in the cyclical nature of time:

All things in the world have different origins, and they succeed one another in different forms. Their beginning and end are elements of a constant gyration, and people cannot know its order.⁶⁹¹

⁶⁹¹ Ibid., chap. 27. (萬物皆種也, 以不同形相禪. 始卒若環, 莫得其倫.)

In such an endless cycle, discussing beginning and end are illogical: ‘There is no past and no present, no beginning and no end’.⁶⁹² In the *Zhuangzi*, each entity exists in the cycle that birth (beginning) and death (end) constitute together as its two aspects. There is, as it were, a constant gyration between beginnings and endings, life and death, and the whole universe containing the earth is no exception. The beginning and end of the universe should be understood as the process of eternal cycle or gyration. Because end means new beginning in the *Zhuangzi*, there is no idea of a *future* redemption, that is, the harmonization of the human and the cosmic in and by an event that takes places beyond the present.

Although Haught’s idea of new creation implies the linear understanding of time, we can see the cyclical understanding of time in Ecclesiastes:

Generations come and generations go, but the earth remains forever. The sun rises and the sun sets, and hurries back to where it rises. The wind blows to the south and turns to the north; round and round it goes, ever returning on its course. All streams flow into the sea, yet the sea is never full. To the place the streams come from, there they return again (Eccl. 1:4–7).

Ecclesiastes describes the movement of the earth as the endlessly repetitive cycle of time and seasons. Based upon this cyclical and essentially recycling understanding of the world, William Brown claims that ‘Ecclesiastes offers much that resonates with science’.⁶⁹³ Although the theory of natural selection through cycles of endless competition seems to imply an ultimate futility of life, Mark Harris does argue that ‘the author of Ecclesiastes acknowledged the same sense of futility thousands of years before, but concluded that it made religion and the confession of God, who is above everything, all the more important (Eccl. 12:13)’.⁶⁹⁴

While Ecclesiastes first emphasises the futility of life, it goes on to posit an intrinsic felicitousness or aptness of everything that occurs – in other words, a proper time of things as they happen:

⁶⁹² Ibid., chap. 22. (無古無今, 無始無終.) Watson, 186.

⁶⁹³ William P. Brown, *The Seven Pillars of Creation: The Bible, Science, and the Ecology of Wonder* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 186.

⁶⁹⁴ Harris, *The Nature of Creation: Examining the Bible and Science*, 67.

There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven: a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot, a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to tear down and a time to build, a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance, a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them, a time to embrace and a time to refrain, a time to search and a time to give up, a time to keep and a time to throw away, a time to tear and a time to mend, a time to be silent and a time to speak, a time to love and a time to hate, a time for war and a time for peace (Eccl. 3:1–8).

This poem has attracted much attention from scholars, poets and ordinary people reading the Old Testament.⁶⁹⁵ My interest in this poem is that its structure, forming in the manner of a dialectic, with first a thesis and then an antithesis, is very similar to the method of description based on the harmony of *yin* and *yang* found in Daoist texts.⁶⁹⁶ Employing this poetic pattern, Ecclesiastes says that there is the proper time for everything. Living at the time of *kairos*⁶⁹⁷, then, can also be said to be living in an eternal present in Daoism. In the cyclical perspective of time, the cyclic past and future are less important, and only the present has significance and meaning. If we accept that God exists beyond time, every moment from God's perspective may be regarded as the eternal present.

With this help of cyclical understanding of time or change from the *Zhuangzi* and Ecclesiastes, we can rethink what we mean by the 'time' of the new creation which is so important in Haught's thought. Although the final redemption at the new creation is often regarded for many evolutionary theologians as an important answer that cannot be given up when facing the problem of evil,⁶⁹⁸ we can understand the notion

⁶⁹⁵ Although Martin Luther interpreted this poem to be suggestive of God's control of all the events constitutive of human life around 1532, some modern scholars, poets and lyricists understand it in the manner of John Cassian (360–432) to be suggestive of the freedom that human beings have to choose their moment of action or decision. For detailed discussion, see Eric S. Christianson, *Ecclesiastes through the Centuries* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 164–73.

⁶⁹⁶ For example, according to the *Daodejing* Chapter 22, 'Those who are crooked will be perfected. Those who are bent will be straight. Those who are empty will be full. Those who are worn will be renewed. Those who have little will gain. Those who have plenty will be confounded'. We can also see this pattern in the *Daodejing* Chapters 2, 14, 26, 27, 29, 33, 36, 38, 40, 41, 45, 47, 77 and 81.

⁶⁹⁷ Kairos (καίρος) means 'a propitious moment for decision or action'. [Angus Stevenson, ed. *Oxford Dictionary of English*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 954.]

⁶⁹⁸ Not all evolutionary theologians argue future-oriented theodicy as I expounded three types of theodicies in Chapter 7:3. For example, confer these: Murray, *Nature Red in Tooth and Claw: Theism and the Problem of Animal Suffering*; Robin Attfield, *Creation, Evolution and Meaning* (Hants, UK: Ashgate, 2006).

of a new creation differently through a new metaphorical conception of time. In this alternative, cyclical understanding of time, the end also means the start. New creation may not mean totally 'new' but the fruit of something we (or our ancestors) experienced or we are experiencing now. In other words, we can now understand that new creation has 'always already'⁶⁹⁹ begun and is 'always already' headed toward its completion. If we can recognise that the new creation is the commencement of a new revolution in this cyclical cosmic movement, rather than a severance from the past, we can give more importance to the present, as well as the past in its becoming the present for us.

In this section, I explored the evolutionary theodicy of Haught and the Daoist philosophy of *Zhuangzi* in the light of the notion of new creation. Haught and the *Zhuangzi* do not understand time chronologically, and the passage of time is understood *qua* subjectivity. There is also shared conviction in the possibility of the salvation or liberation of all creatures, not just human beings. Based on these similarities, I formulated what I called the 'final fulfilment defence', meaning that we can hope for a final fulfilment that resolves the problem of evil in virtue of a promise (Haught) or through Daoist training (*zuowang*, *wuhua*) in the *Zhuangzi*.

However, I examined the differences between Haught and *Zhuangzi* in their understanding of this final fulfilment, and these differences can be used to supplement the evolutionary theodicy of Haught. First, regarding the 'final fulfilment', Haught focuses on the notion of 'time' and *Zhuangzi* focuses on that of 'fulfilment'. If Haught's idea of a metaphysics of the future focuses on 'fulfilment' rather than 'future', it can be reinterpreted in the 'present' perspective, i.e. the final fulfilment is already in commencement and we are on the way. Second, Haught understands that all pain and suffering will be eliminated by *God* at the time of the new creation, but the problem of evil in the *Zhuangzi* is overcome by *human beings* for themselves through training for sagehood. If we find that humans do have a significant role in a final redemption, humans will become more responsible in bringing about unity and peace among all creatures, including reducing or trying to cease their pain and suffering. Finally, Haught and *Zhuangzi* have different emphases when it comes to time. As end implies new beginning in the *Zhuangzi*, if

⁶⁹⁹ I borrow Martin Heidegger's term here to convey necessary relation(s) which may or not be consciously recognised. See Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, ed. Dennis J. Schmidt, trans. Joan Stambaugh (Albany: SUNY Press, 2010), 84.

evolutionary theology can accept that the new creation is the commencement of a new revolution in this cosmic cyclical movement, we can give both the present and the past more importance.

Chapter 9

Conclusion

Throughout this thesis, I have tried to develop Christian theodicies for both the East and the West in a scientific age by comparing the evolutionary theodicy of Haught and the Daoist philosophy of Zhuangzi. Now I will summarize my main ideas of this thesis, and explore the meaning and importance, as well as the limitations of this study. I will also provide suggestions for future comparative study between science and religion and between Christianity and Daoism.

In chapter 1, the introduction, I examined the need for and purpose of my study. The need for this study is raised by the question of whether science and religion are clearly distinct in Asian religions because of their different understandings of Ultimate Reality and its manifest properties in each religion, and of the different understandings of the problem of evil among religions. Based on these divergences, I pointed out that the predominantly Western conversation between science and religion has limitations in application to East-Asian religions. The main purpose of my study is therefore to develop a Christian theodicy to inform both the West and the East in a scientific age by comparing the evolutionary theology of Haught and the Daoist philosophy of Zhuangzi for a holistic synthesis. In order to do this, I suggested the necessity of a new methodology, and proposed five steps for the comparative work between religion and science and between Christianity and Daoism: description, comparison, generalisation, differentiation and supplementation.

In chapter 2, 'Evolutionary Science and Christian Theology in Haught', I expounded Haught's evolutionary theology from several angles: the evolution of life and a creator God, natural selection and divine providence, contingency, law, time and a transcendent personal God, cosmic evolution and divine promise, and finally evolutionary science and ecotheology.

To summarize the evolutionary theology of Haught: Darwin's theory of evolution is not contrary to Christian theology but rather serves as a guide for us to think again about God's nature and His relationship to us and the cosmos in a more meaningful way. To be specific, Haught thinks that philosophical language should be distinguished from scientific language, and he most certainly rejects any dogmatic

‘scientism’. For him, a God who made a self-organizing world is considered as much worthier of our worship than a God who creates all things directly, once-and-for-all, in a top-down fashion, in the manner of a monarch. Regarding the issues of nature’s openness to accident and randomness, the law of natural selection and the enormous time involved in the process of evolution, Haught claims that they are compatible with theological ideas that portray God as humble, self-giving and promising love. The self-creativity of evolution through natural selection does not diminish God’s role of providence. As long as divine promise is concerned, Haught believes that the evidence of evolutionary biology can develop and add new depth to Christian faith when nature itself is regarded as promise rather than as static design. Finally, the evolutionary theology of Haught makes us rethink the importance of ecotheology. It is important for ecotheology to take evolution seriously because human stewardship of the universe makes it possible for all creatures to realise their inherent evolutionary potential for future unfolding.

In chapter 3, ‘The Problem of Evil and Theodicy in Haught’, I provided elucidation of Haught’s thoughts on the problem of evil and his idea of theodicy in light of evolutionary science. First, I briefly summarized Christian theodicies related to Haught: process theodicy and the ideas of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin and Hans Jonas in particular. Next, I examined what evil means for Haught. We saw that original sin meant humanity’s habitual refusal to take its appropriate place in the continuous creation of the universe, and this understanding helps us to comprehend the inner meaning of original sin in consonance with evolutionary science. Haught divided evil into two types: the evil of disorder (caused by suffering, war, famine and death) and the evil of monotony (refusing to accept novelty). Finally, I expounded the evolutionary theodicy of Haught in its four aspects: creation as ‘letting be’, purpose or direction in evolution, divine kenosis and a metaphysics of the future. For Haught, the love of God that permits all creation to ‘become itself’ gives unlimited freedom to all creatures, and this even contains a capacity for evil. Haught also claims that God hopes that all creatures participate in the divine joy of creating the novel, so God does in fact want an uncompleted world for the sake of its completion together with His creatures. Moreover, for Haught, the passion of Jesus implies that God takes full part in the pain and suffering of the world. Haught develops his idea into a ‘metaphysics of the future’, arguing that theodicy after Darwin is best understood in the perspective of new creation with eschatological hope.

According to Haught, Darwin's theory of evolution allows Christian theology to penetrate more deeply into the fundamentals of the Christian faith. Haught's vision of the future can accommodate both the data of evolutionary biology and the claims of Christianity. Haught understands that an evolutionary understanding of the problem of evil, including the nature and origin of evil, is the most plausible theodicy in a scientific age.

In chapter 4, 'Daoism and Zhuangzi's Philosophy', I expounded Daoism and Zhuangzi's philosophy. First of all, I explored what Dao and Daoism are: Dao is the origin of all beings, Dao contains both the positive and negative aspects of reality, Dao has a circular movement, which is immanent in all creatures and the cosmos, and Dao transcends space and time. Next, I examined the Daoist philosophy of Zhuangzi as pertaining to the central concepts of *wuwei* (non-action), *ziran* (spontaneity) and the relativity of names and definitions of things. Moreover, I expounded how the *Zhuangzi* can be understood from a scientific perspective: like natural science, the *Zhuangzi* is interested in the essentials of nature and the *Zhuangzi* contains ideas related to the scientific knowledge of the time of the author. We recall that Daoist ideas became the backbone of Chinese science.

In the third section, I compared Dao in Daoism to God in Christianity in terms of ultimate reality as the origin and provider of all beings, the transcendence of Dao and God, the omnipresence of Dao and God, the indefinability of Dao and God, and personal and impersonal characterisations of Dao and God. As I related in this section, there are several similar manifest properties between God and Dao, and these provide clues for constructive dialogue between Christianity and Daoism.

In chapter 5, 'Zhuangzi on Evil', I examined the conception of evil found in the *Zhuangzi*. I explored what the origin of evil is and how evil can be integrated in human experience for East Asian religions in comparison to Christianity. To sum up, in Confucianism, selfishness is considered the origin of moral evil, although it is debatable whether selfishness comes from social influence or human nature. In Daoism, intentional behaviours cause division, and these cause moral evil as a result. In Buddhism, evil arises from humans' distorted perception of themselves; distorted behaviour arising from ignorance of the true nature of reality causes suffering. As far as natural evil is concerned, Confucianism accepts natural evil as fate (*ming*) or as the will of Heaven. Laozi does not consider natural disasters as evil, i.e. natural evils do not exist for him. In Buddhism, natural phenomena such as landslides and

earthquakes cannot be considered as evils because these are just a part of the law of *karma*.

According to the philosophy of Zhuangzi, moral evil is the disharmony brought about by self-conscious action, and evil comes about when breaking the principles of non-action (*wuwei*), spontaneity (*ziran*), and oneness (*daoshu*). The *Zhuangzi* understands natural evil as the interaction between fate (*ming*) and harmony (*liangxing*). For the *Zhuangzi*, evil seems to be overcome when becoming one with the flow of Dao. Being one with Dao is to live in harmony with all beings. In addition, in the step of 'sitting in forgetfulness' (*zuowang*), and in the step of 'transformation of things' (*wuhua*), the distinctions between things cease, and therefore the problem of evil will be overcome.

After an overview of the understanding of evil in East-Asian religions and the *Zhuangzi*, I moved to the main part of the thesis, which was the 'Comparison'. I tried to suggest the most plausible theodicies in a scientific age comparing the evolutionary theodicy of Haught and the Daoist philosophy of Zhuangzi in Chapters 6, 7 and 8. In chapter 6, 'Evolution and Natural/Moral Evil', I expounded the ideas between Haught and the *Zhuangzi* with regard to the emergence of life and natural/moral evil. To be specific, in the first section, I strove to develop the evolutionary theology of Haught and the Daoist philosophy of Zhuangzi as they pertain to the emergence of life. Both 'information' in Haught and *qi* in the *Zhuangzi* account for the distinctiveness of life, in balance with the facts known from evolutionary science, in virtue of 'gradational creation'. Both information and *qi* allowed for the emergence of genuinely novel lifeforms and properties in the universe (consciousness being the pre-eminent property) in virtue of a gradational process. Based on this similarity, I generalised it as the 'abrupt but continuous change from the previous level'. This generalisation of the similar ideas of information and *qi* leads us to understand that living beings emerge out of the evolutionary process and that they simultaneously hold a more privileged position than inanimate objects in terms of cosmic history and divine providence.

I did, however, also describe how the understanding of information or *qi* is different in either thinker, and these differences can in fact supplement the evolutionary theodicy of Haught. First, Haught's conception of evolution seems to be linear, but it is cyclical in the *Zhuangzi*. If Haught's idea of information contains the cyclical structure of evolution, the uniqueness of human beings in the evolving world

will be revealed more fully. Second, Haught's hierarchical understanding of the emergence of humans in the cosmos may be a tempting source upon which humans could pride themselves, and overestimate their position in the universe. If we can understand that information originated from one root and is itself immanent in all creatures in the world like the operation of *qi* in the *Zhuangzi*, Haught's idea leads us to ecotheology. We saw that ecotheology provides a remedy for human egotism in the world, precisely because it places us within the same history as all other creatures and objects in this reality. Dao's operation was finally revealed in the operation of both *yin* and *yang*. If we accept that information involves both positive and negative principles as *qi* does, then the evolutionary theology of Haught can be extended to various fields including animal pain and human crime.

In the second section, I tried to expound the evolutionary theodicy of Haught and Daoist philosophy of Zhuangzi by focusing on natural evil. In both Haught and the *Zhuangzi*, neither the grace of God and spontaneity (*ziran*) of Dao are synonymous with direct intervention, and both God and Dao create creatures continuously according to the processes of nature. Based on these similar understandings, I generalised them as the 'natural state defence'. The 'natural state defence' suggests that natural evil emerging from natural selection is a part of the natural process and in part allows the boundless freedom of all creatures that a genuine theodicy aims to provide. Natural evil ceases to be a problem to be solved.

However, I explored the differences between Haught and Zhuangzi in understanding actual pain and suffering, that is, pain that is actually experienced by creatures in the real world, which is of course the main issue confronted by Christianity and any theodicy. First, Haught understands that pain and suffering can lead to something higher if we look at that pain and suffering in light of a promised and imminent in the perspective of new creation. In contrast, the redemption of present pain and suffering is not postponed to the future in the *Zhuangzi*, with pain and suffering accepted as part and parcel of fate (*ming*). Second, good and evil are used in a 'descriptive' sense in the *Zhuangzi* rather than 'evaluative' sense unlike in Christianity, and thus judgment about good and evil is abandoned in the *Zhuangzi*. These differences can supplement the evolutionary theodicy of Haught: the *Zhuangzi*'s idea can help Haught to understand pain and suffering in the present perspective and the evolutionary theodicy of Haught can be modified to also concentrate on the 'descriptive' with the help of the *Zhuangzi*.

In the third section, I expounded the evolutionary theodicy of Haught and Daoist philosophy of Zhuangzi with respect to moral evil. Moral evil arises from humans' distorted free will in Haught and from violation of non-action (*wuwei*) in the *Zhuangzi*, and both free will and non-action are regarded as morally and cosmically 'good' if they are manifest without distortion. I generalised this similarity between the two as the 'free action defence'. The 'free action defence' implies that moral evil comes from humans' distorted free will in Haught and from violation of non-action in the *Zhuangzi*, and therefore moral evil cannot be closely related to God and Dao in terms of any direct creation.

I argued, however, that the ideas of moral evil are different in both Haught and Zhuangzi, and these differences can be used to supplement the evolutionary theodicy of Haught. First, free will in Haught brings about moral evil when it is distorted by selfishness or egotism, but all self-conscious actions in the *Zhuangzi* bring about moral evil. Second, some evolutionary theologians claim that human nature inclines to evil rather than good due to humans' inherited tendency to sin, but in the *Zhuangzi*, spontaneous action always results in good behaviour. If the evolutionary theodicy of Haught focuses on God's good creation more than humans' tendency to sin, human free will can have a similar meaning to non-action in the *Zhuangzi*, and thus the term 'moral evil' itself may become meaningless.

In chapter 7, 'Continuous Creation and the Theodicy of Harmony', I examined the evolutionary theodicy of Haught and the Daoist philosophy of Zhuangzi in the light of the notion of continuous creation. In the first section, I expounded the ideas between Haught and Zhuangzi with regard to immanence and care of God and Dao respectively. The kenotic God and the omnipresent Dao closely interact with creatures and they are both portrayed as self-humbling and passible. Moreover, both the kenotic God and the omnipresent Dao cultivate a bi-directional relationship with creatures, not just one-directional. Based on these similarities, I generalised them as the 'suffering God defence'. The 'suffering God defence' argues that God cannot be accused of evils in the world because God participates in the pain and suffering of all creatures.

Meanwhile, I examined the differences of the two thinkers. First, while the kenotic God is personal, the omnipresent Dao is non-personal. Second, the kenotic God seems to be affected by creatures, but the omnipresent Dao seems to be the independent being or principle of reality which cannot be defined in relation to

creatures, or affected by them. These differences can supplement the evolutionary theodicy of Haught. First, if we understand that God, existing in all creatures, has different properties in each creature as does the non-personal Dao, there is no implicit standard of evil and the problem of evil should be only referred to within the limited range of each God–creature condition. Second, if evolutionary theodicy can accept both the transcendence and immanence of God as is the case with Dao, the kenotic God of Christianity can be regarded as the One who will redeem the suffering and pain of all creatures in a ‘transcendent’ way in the future, and at the same time, suffer with creatures in an ‘immanent’ way now.

In the second section of the chapter, I tried to develop the evolutionary theodicy of Haught and the Daoist philosophy of Zhuangzi with respect to the problem of the responsibility for evil. God in Haught is portrayed as self-absenting and humble to creatures, and Dao in the *Zhuangzi* is understood as hidden and self-effacing power of the cosmos. Based on this similarity, I generalised it as the ‘hidden God defence’. The ‘hidden God defence’ means that the nature of God is regarded as self-absenting or humble as is the case with Dao, such that we cannot blame God for the existence of evil, especially the voluntary introduction of it into the world.

However, I claimed that the understandings of ‘chance’ in evolution and of the properties of God and Dao respectively are different in Haught and the *Zhuangzi*. Haught believes that chance events in evolution are an intrinsic element of the cosmos and its capacity for novelty. In the *Zhuangzi*, chance is only regarded as an aspect of Dao’s operation. Moreover, Dao is not constrained by category, such as the categories of good and bad, of right and wrong, of beautiful and ugly, and for this reason it is quite different from the Christian God. These differences can supplement the evolutionary theodicy of Haught. First, if we think that there is no chance in the cosmos from the perspective of the divine, as in the *Zhuangzi*, demonstrating God’s ‘unpredictable’ (in our perspective) work becomes easier. Second, if we accept that God’s yardstick for judgement between the good and the bad may be different from that of humans or that God goes beyond subjective and circumstantial feelings of fair and unfair, desirable and undesirable as does Dao, the problem of evil will no longer be a tricky question in evolutionary theodicy.

In the third section, I expounded the evolutionary theodicy of Haught and the Daoist philosophy of Zhuangzi in the light of cosmic harmony. The ‘dark side’ in Haught and the ‘shadow side’ in the *Zhuangzi* both pointed to a picture of cosmic

harmony and balance in virtue of the necessity of pain, evil and destruction for there to be comfort, goodness and creation. Based on this similarity between Haught and the *Zhuangzi*, I generalised it as the ‘harmony defence’. The ‘harmony defence’ means that the present world is one that is fundamentally in balance even if we cannot or do not want to perceive it as such. The dark side is an inevitable or necessary part of the functioning of the universe.

However, while they are obviously conceptually similar, there are some differences between the dark side and the shadow side. In Haught, the dark side is associated with a negative meaning that is unavoidable for the best possible world and will be removed in the eschatological future. In contrast, in the *Zhuangzi*, the shadow side exists and will exist in the future as an important aspect of Dao. This difference can supplement the evolutionary theodicy of Haught: if we accept that the dark side may reveal the highest good of God’s creation (that is, the moral good that is made possible out of and surmounts suffering in contrast to it) and can be harmonized with the good effects caused by God’s self-emptying love, just as the harmony of *yin* and *yang* constitutes the highest good in the *Zhuangzi*, evolutionary theology can embrace the dark side in evolution more positively.

In chapter 8, ‘New Creation and the Theodicy of the Metaphysical Future’, I explored the evolutionary theodicy of Haught and the Daoist philosophy of Zhuangzi with regard to new creation. In the first section, I examined the evolutionary theodicy of Haught and the Daoist philosophy of Zhuangzi in the perspective of purpose or direction in the process of evolution. We recall that Haught accepts purpose in evolution, if it means ‘a gradual rise in organized complexity’ rather than ‘heading straight toward a goal fixed from all eternity’. According to the *Zhuangzi*, the natural world proceeds toward increasing harmony and beauty through the operation of *yin* and *yang* if they are not hindered by humans’ wilful actions. Based on these similar ideas, I coined the ‘progress defence’. The ‘progress defence’ means that there is direction in the natural world as long as that direction implies going toward ‘beauty’ in Haught and the *Zhuangzi*, which means that we can hope for a better future regarding the problem of evil.

Again, I pointed out the differences which remain between Haught and Zhuangzi in their understanding of purpose or direction, and I argued that these differences can supplement the evolutionary theodicy of Haught. In the *Zhuangzi*, changes of nature are not ‘intentional’ movements of Dao, and ‘direction’ which

implies progression of time and in time does not refer to anything significant because Daoism maintains a cyclical understanding of time and Dao obviously transcends time. Therefore, if evolutionary theology accepts that God does have a purpose or direction *for* nature in Himself beyond space and time, it can still hold that God closely enters into a relation with all creatures, including their pain and suffering, without the need for invoking future redemption as in Haught.

In the second section, I explored the evolutionary theodicy of Haught and the Daoist philosophy of Zhuangzi from the perspective of new creation and the final fulfilment of creation. First, in both Haught and the *Zhuangzi*, the lapse of time is experienced *qua* subjectivity. Second, both Haught and Zhuangzi provide for the salvation of all creatures, not just human beings. Based on these similarities, I generalised their ideas together as the ‘final fulfilment defence’. The ‘final fulfilment defence’ implies that we can expect a final fulfilment to settle the problem of evil by virtue of a promise in Haught or through Daoist meditative training (*zuowang*, *wuhua*) in the *Zhuangzi*.

However, I expounded the differences between Haught and Zhuangzi concerning the final fulfilment of creation, and these differences can supplement the evolutionary theodicy of Haught. First, with regard to the ‘final fulfilment’ Haught concentrates on the concept of ‘time’ and Zhuangzi concentrates on that of ‘fulfilment’. If Haught’s idea focuses on ‘fulfilment’ rather than the ‘future’, it can be reinterpreted in the ‘present’ perspective, i.e. the final fulfilment has already started – in fact, it is here and now, in an eternal present. Second, Haught believes that all pain and suffering will be removed by *God* in the time of the new creation, but the problem of evil in the *Zhuangzi* is overcome by *human beings* through their meditative training for sagehood. If we find our role in a final redemption, humans will assume more responsibility for unity and peace among the creatures of the world, including their pain and suffering. Finally, different from Haught, the *Zhuangzi* presents different ideas of time, and implies new beginnings in a cyclical cosmic movement. If evolutionary theology accepts that the new creation is the commencement of a new revolution, we can endow more importance to the present.

Through the ‘Comparison’ part (Chapters 6, 7 and 8), I endeavoured to develop Christian theodicies to be persuasive in both the West and the East in a scientific age by comparing the evolutionary theology of Haught and the Daoist philosophy of Zhuangzi. I also tried to supplement the ideas of Haught with the ideas of the

Zhuangzi based on differences between the two. Now I want to propose the importance and limitations of this study, and I will finish this thesis by providing some suggestions for future comparative work between Christianity and Daoism pertaining to science and religion and theodicy.

The Importance of This Study

There have been many comparative studies between science and religion, but the religion has usually been Christianity in isolation from other world religions. I believe that it is time to move this comparative study to include different religions, worldviews and systems of thought in order for us to find out whether comparative study between religion and science can be applicable to other religious traditions.

As I mentioned in the introduction, my interest in the problem of evil and theodicy arose from my practical experience as a military chaplain in South Korea, a country which is divided and often risks military crises. As a Korean, I felt that I had to explain the problem of evil to Koreans in their own religious terms, and I perceived that Daoist philosophy was the most suitable of the world's systems of thought in persuading Korean Christians in virtue of the fact that it is a traditional religion of Korea and the wider East-Asian area that can be met without cultural or political resistance.⁷⁰⁰ I also thought that a contemporary theodicy comprising ancient Daoist principles with modern evolutionary theology might not only be heard by modern people but also be open to their assent when discussed in modern scientific terms. Thus my research question was this: *how can I develop the most relevant Christian theodicy for both the West and the East in a scientific age?* My study of theodicy became the comparative study between Christianity, Daoism and science. This multi-comparative study can, of course, provide more resources to deal with the problem of evil than the comparative study between theology and science as I provided in Chapters 6, 7 and 8.

I think that Western evolutionary theodicy can very much benefit from engagement with Daoist philosophy. I also believe that the Daoist philosophy of *Zhuangzi* can be seen in a new light through conversation with the evolutionary theology of Haught and evolutionary science generally. I hope that this study can be

⁷⁰⁰ Concerning the relationship between Korean Christianity and Daoism, see footnote number 13.

a stimulant for future comparative study between religion and science and between Christianity and Daoism.

My comparative study between evolutionary science, Christianity and Daoism is not totally new, however mainstream studies in comparative religious studies have generally not featured dialogue between science and religion until recent years. I hope what I have offered helps to diagnose the present situation and further benefit the purposes of the academic discussion across Western and Eastern traditions. This study is not just for East-Asian Christians for the enrichment of their own faith. Rather, comparative studies in East-Asian philosophy also enrich the conversation between science and theology globally, and will provide new currents of thought for the engagement between science and theology, and approaches to the ever-present the problem of evil.

The Limitations of This Study

In the parts dedicated to comparative study, I suggested what amounts to several theodicies to be adopted for both Christianity and Daoism, utilising concepts and developments in contemporary evolutionary biology. However, this comparative study is by no means comprehensive or final, of course. There are points that will inevitably require elaboration and questions will be raised that will need to be answered as the thesis meets the desks (or computers) of my interlocutors. Here is a brief list of the limitations of the present study that I recognise.

First of all, science and religious studies (or theology) are different academic fields having different methodologies and research skills. The dialogue between science and religion that we see today surely penetrates into the deep mysteries of God in a scientific age – mysteries which would otherwise perhaps be beyond our reach. That said, we should admit the limitations of the conversation and have reasonable expectations of its results. For example, because of the difference in methodologies, the natural sciences cannot posit or defend the notion of a future promise, a qualitative, moral and spiritual notion that many evolutionary theologians, including Haught, place at the heart of their theology and religious perspective.

Second, comparative study between Christianity and Daoism often meets with difficulties because of the great differences between the two religions. In particular, Christian theology does not compare well with East Asian philosophy because it has

different conceptions of ultimate reality and the good life. In addition to the general intention of comparing two very different religions, we need to select particular topics for comparative study. However, each religion uses different terms to express its ideas. For example, I chose the wide-ranging topic of ‘the problem of evil’ for this comparative study. As already recognised, the term ‘problem of evil’, is not, technically speaking, applied in Daoism directly because evil is not a problem in Daoism, and what Westerners understand to be ‘evil’ may not in fact exist for Daoism. Consequently, this comparative study had to be conducted in an ‘indirect’ or negative fashion, approaching evil in Daoism as that which is the opposite of ‘good’.

Third, there are very obviously big linguistic differences between English and Chinese. It is impossible to convey the exact meaning of many Daoist concepts in English, and all translations are only approximate. In this thesis, I translated *wuwei* into non-action, *ziran* into spontaneity, *yin* into the shadow side, and *qi* into vital energy. Admittedly, people who are proficient in Chinese may find these translations cumbersome, despite their common use ever since the first translations of the texts in the West.

Again, whatever English term or phrase that one employs in translating the Chinese words of Daoist philosophy, they cannot contain or express the whole meaning of the word, and in some cases may be regarded as distorting the original meaning. This is a problem facing all translators, and the natural consequence is a variety of sometimes differing interpretations and translations, affecting how the overall philosophy is conveyed. Chinese characters can have a surprising number of meanings due to the ‘radicals’ of which they are composed and the vast number of composite words which they themselves can compose.

Finally, there are currently very few published studies in this field, which can admittedly give it the image of a ‘fringe’ study or area of research. There are several books and articles that compare Western philosophy and religion with Daoism,⁷⁰¹ but most of them seem to be concerned with the moral life, of practical intelligence, and as such are not concerned with the problem of evil (Chapter 1:1), which in my estimation is a ‘foundational’ and deeper ‘existential’ topic to be investigated.

⁷⁰¹ See footnote number 50.

Due to the limitations of my study as outlined above, some elements of my argument may strike my readers as merely speculative and without much relevance to our experience of suffering, but I believe that this kind of comparative study (between different academic fields, different times and different religions) affords us great insights which cannot be gained within the confines of our own narrow fields of expertise. And of course, the wider and deeper our knowledge is, the more our experience is itself informed and transformed.

Suggestions for Future Study

Many scholars of science and religion have focused on how science and religion can fruitfully engage in dialogue, or indeed, whether it is even possible that the two fields can dialogue. The hope is that by engaging in inter-disciplinary dialogue we can develop ideas and methodologies that are applicable in both science and religion.

However, I think it is time to ask more fundamental questions: not only concerning the necessity of conversation between science and religion, but also how these conversations can contribute to each research area. How can these conversations, for example, practically contribute to discourse in and between physics and biology? How can we revitalise theology with the help of science, to meet the scientific age? Without these most pressing questions, the conversation between science and religion will be merely a fashion, not a continuous and intellectually beneficial discourse.

Therefore, the conversation between science and religion should focus on practical advantages for both fields and their practitioners. Haught's final category of 'confirmation' is a good example in demonstrating the usefulness of religious ideas for science (Chapter 1:2). My categories of 'generalisation' and 'supplementation' also put the focus on practical interests in the conversation between science, theology and East-Asian religions. The more we are interested in the reasons for the inter-disciplinary dialogue, the better conversations between science and religions will go in the future.

Second, I explored the problem of evil focusing on how Daoism contributes to the existing discussion between science and religion. This means that other religions such as Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Shintoism can also provide important ideas for the dialogue between science and religion, research that is not yet

to attract many scholars in the science-religion field.⁷⁰² Considering the fact that each religion reflects a cultural system within a certain geographical area accumulated over a prolonged period of time, the dialogue between science and religions will enrich the existing conversation between science and religion, which has hitherto largely been restricted to reconciling Christianity and breakthroughs in our scientific understanding of the universe.

Third, as I tried to develop the evolutionary theology of Haught with the Daoist philosophy of Zhuangzi in this thesis, I think that other religious ideas can provide significant ideas for evolutionary theology. This goes beyond the conversation between Islam and science or between Buddhism and science, and this conversation asks how the dialogues between Islam and science or between Buddhism and science can improve the current dialogue between theology and science more generally, and with wider ramifications. One is hard pressed to find studies looking at how other religious ideas and doctrines can contribute to the development of the relatively new field of evolutionary theology, and I hope that such studies will eventually be provided by other scholars.

Now, I claimed several theodicies based on the similarities between the evolutionary theology of Haught and the Daoist philosophy of Zhuangzi: ‘the natural state defence’, ‘the free action defence’, ‘the suffering God defence’, ‘the hidden God defence’, ‘the harmony defence’, ‘the progress defence’ and ‘the final fulfilment defence’. These theodicies may provide answers to the problem of evil in both Christianity and Daoism in a scientific age, and especially for East Asian Christians, but as there is no theodicy that is persuasive to or meets both the intellectual and pastoral needs of everyone, my theodicies should also be reviewed by other religious scholars (including atheists) as well as by Christian theologians and Daoists.

It should be said, finally, that my study cannot by itself comprise a comparative study between evolutionary theology and Daoism because Daoism, as both a

⁷⁰² Such comparative work has already begun, of course, but does not as yet enjoy a wide audience. The reader is invited to explore the following works by eminent scholars in the field: Philip Clayton and Zachary Simpson, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Science* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); Nidhal Guessoum, *Islam's Quantum Question: Reconciling Muslim Tradition and Modern Science* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2011); Taner Edis, *An Illusion of Harmony: Science and Religion in Islam* (Amherst, N.Y.: Prometheus Books, 2007); Donald S. Lopez, *Buddhism & Science: A Guide for the Perplexed* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008); Yitzhak Berger and David Shatz, *Judaism, Science, and Moral Responsibility* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2006).

philosophical and religious tradition, includes many more thinkers than Zhuangzi and the work we have been focussing on here, that of the *Zhuangzi*. A study of the developments in Daoism, of the development of scientific ideas in East-Asia and a comparative study between the two would, in my estimation, require many volumes. This thesis is by no means an exhaustive study of the thought of John Haught, either. Nevertheless, I hope the present work serves as a catalyst for future comparative study of Daoism and evolutionary theology in broader terms, and I expect that such a kind of comparative study can be fruitfully expanded to other religions, other academic fields and other philosophical-theological issues, such as the relationship between mind and body, free will and necessity, and the object of right worship.

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