

Review of: "The Chinese View on Time – A Reflection on The Concept of Time in Dao/Yijing And Modern Science"

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Review of The Chinese View on Time

I enjoyed reading and re-reading Leong's manuscript, "The Chinese View on Time—A Reflection on The Concept of Time in Dao/Yijing And Modern Science." It's long, broad, and ranges over vast topics such as time, free will, human consciousness, causality, quantum physics, entanglement, and the Dao. While these topics appear far-flung and sweeping on first reading, they coalesce in the second reading. This mirrors one of the author's points about quantum time and relativity: that future events potentially affect past events depending on the observer's context.

The artwork on the first page is eye-grabbing, beautiful, and appropriate for the article's title. It needs both a caption and artist credit attached to it. It's stunning.

I found myself wondering well into the manuscript when the Chinese view of time would be probed deeply. While there are mentions of the Dao in the early pages, page 11 is where the author goes deeply into this in a 19-page manuscript. I recommend providing an overview of the two primary sources used to talk about the Chinese view of time, the Dao and yijing, at the beginning of the article. I don't know much about the yijing (I Ching), so some historical contextualization of both the Dao and yijing would set the paper up to support the title. I recommend noting whether these ancient texts reflect the contemporary Chinese view of time or are reflections of ancient sensibilities, both contemplative and mystical, and no longer hold in the modern Chinese view of time.

I appreciated Chai's description of the Dao as "ineffable,*indescribable*, and timeless" (p. 4). The Dao's ineffable and mystical nature is somewhat overlooked in an attempt to understand its mysterious riddle-like chapters such as Chapter 25 on p. 5 and Chapter 16 on p. 13. The author reflects on the enduring mystery of time as many things, such as a felt experience, motion, an arrow, a cycle, as nothingness. I recommend reflecting on the Dao's enduring mystery despite various translations and interpretations through the ages.

I recommend including stanzas from the Dao in key areas that reference particular concepts from the Dao for a better context of the technical ideas being discussed. The Dao may never be fully understood; hence its enduring sense of mystery. Same for quantum mechanics; we may never fully understand how superposition happens (p. 7). Accepting the limits to human understanding is an epistemic challenge in the modern era. Are we up for this challenge of accepting limits to our understanding?

I remain somewhat cloudy on how free will comes into the Chinese view of time. I get how a prior unconscious event affects our conscious sense of decision making (p. 11). This relates to the enigmatic potentiality of the Dao, described by the author as nothingness and located in our unconsciousness.

There's a lot going on in this paper. I wonder if the section on free will and consciousness can be condensed for the purpose of this paper, and then later expanded upon in a different paper altogether. However, I see why the author chose to include free will and consciousness, as these speak to agency, causality, motion, and relationality. Condensing this section will allow me to focus more on the Chinese view of time.

I recommend tightening and shortening the manuscript by about a third and reducing repetitious descriptions of entanglement or declarations about the paper's aim.

Please consider locating the figures on the same page they are discussed.

Overall, I found this a stimulating and challenging read, well worth the time it took to read it through multiple times. Thank you for the invitation to read this intriguing manuscript. I would welcome reading more by this author.