Beyond Modernity and Tradition: a Third Way for Development?[i]

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INTRODUCTION

The basic thesis of the present paper may be set out as a threefold claim:
(a) how we understand the world (our metaphysical premise) determines, to a large degree, how we treat it
(b) how we treat our world constitutes our basic modality
(c) our basic modality colours everything we do – our entire culture takes its cue from it.

The metaphysical premise of *modern* societies is *materialist*. By materialism I understand the view of physical reality that sees reality as in itself lacking any inner principle, any attribute analogous to mentality - subjectivity, spirit, sentience, agency or conativity. Matter, from the materialist perspective, is sheer externality; it is accordingly devoid of the meanings, purposes, values and communicative capacities that inhere in mentalistic attributes: there is nothing akin to mind in basic matter. Matter, moreover, or the larger manifold described by physics, is the sum total of reality. It is all there is.

This materialist premise entails an *instrumental* modality that seeks to replace what it finds in the world ("the given") with its own idea of what is useful or good. This instrumentalism gives the basic tone to modern culture – it flavours the mood of everything we think and do, driving issues of identity and sociality and politics as well as science, technology and environment. If we adopt a new metaphysical premise however, then this will entail a new modality. When the new metaphysical premise is post-materialist, in the sense that it ascribes to matter meanings and ends and communicative capacities of its own, then the entailed modality

is, as I shall explain, a modality of letting be ("*wu wei*") and, by extension, synergy.[ii]

In the context of this new metaphysical premise then, synergy becomes our new modality, the modus operandi that dictates the forms of our culture. Relative to this modality, practices of "sustainability" will be as natural and inevitable as instrumental practices are to the materialistic cultures of modernity.

In order to unpack this thesis about the relation between metaphysical premise and the basic modalities of different societies, I wish to offer a schema for identifying ideal types of state society. (I specify state societies because this schema does not apply to indigenous societies of the hunter-gatherer type: the distinction between pre-materialist (religious) and post-materialist (post-religious but not secular) metaphysics does not apply in a clear-cut way to them.) The schema is as follows:

pre-materialist = traditional
materialist = modern
post-materialist = prospective/in the future

Let us see how this schema works and how it might help us to conceptualize an alternative to both modernity and tradition.

THREE TYPES OF SOCIETY

(1) Pre-materialist - traditional
Pre-materialist societies are typically *religious* societies ie their metaphysical premises are encoded in religion. By "religion" here I mean a system of metaphysical beliefs or teachings which have been arrived at by extra-rational means (for example, by revelation) and recorded in scriptures or other sacred texts which are then mediated by religious authorities. The metaphysical premises of such a religious belief system are highly normative – they entail "truths" about the nature of the good and the meaning and purpose of life. These prescriptive "truths", interpreted by the relevant religious authorities – sometimes in ways that are life-giving but sometimes in ways that are patently self-serving – are sanctioned by the state and imposed on the populace, or the portions of it that fall under the moral jurisdiction of the religion in question. The

religious authorities serve as the source of authority for the religious state. Examples include the monarchies of Medieval Christendom, political systems based on caste in traditional India and some of the contemporary regimes of the Middle East. Generally speaking, the religious state is authoritarian. The populace is ruled – it may be benignly and paternalistically or it may be oppressively and discriminatively – by a political class deriving its legitimacy from a religious metaphysics.

Although religion has unquestionably been inextricable from the evolution of human culture everywhere, there are many ways in which, historically, religion contributed to the injustice that was a feature of many pre-materialist societies. Reliance on revealed religious "truths" stifled open-minded inquiry into the way the world actually works. Natural phenomena were explained in terms of divine intentions and interventions rather than in terms of causal mechanisms. Reliance on religious authority as the source of knowledge thus blocked the development of science. Ignorance of the actual mechanics of nature entailed a lack of technical control over the environment and consequently entailed susceptibility to poverty and disease, at least for the majority of the people. Lack of control over the world, and people's vulnerability to hardship and danger in the face of such lack of control, led to increased reliance on petitioning the supernatural/divine or the institutional representatives of the supernatural/divine on earth. Reliance on petitioning representatives of the divine in turn strengthened the political grip of religious institutions on the state, with all the potential for arbitrary exercise of power that flowed from this.

On the other hand however, there was in pre-materialist societies a depth of meaning, a feeling for the profound mystery and poetry of human existence, that tends to be lacking in materialist societies. Despite widespread disease, poverty and oppression, members of pre-materialist societies evinced a certain confidence and largesse that came from a sense of being plugged into the sources of Creation. Praise and gratitude animated their basic attitudes, resulting in everyday cultures of great beauty and grace. They enjoyed a state of effortless connectedness and belonging that moderns lack.

*The basic existential modality of pre-materialist state societies then – the basic orientation of pre-materialist peoples to their world – was one of gratitude and praise, but also of **importuning**. Individuals and societies*

of course acquired a rudimentary knowledge of natural processes in order to secure a livelihood, but by and large they depended upon assistance from supernatural sources.

(2) Materialist – modern

There are of course innumerable analyses of modernity, but the classic analysis defines modernity in terms of "instrumental reason".[iii] To adopt an instrumental stance is to value things only as means to our ends rather than as ends in themselves. Instrumental reason is the form of rationality that seeks to know the world only in order to utilize it for human purposes. This form of reason is usually equated with scientific method and is described as scientific reason. The world it discloses is a world of mere objects, devoid of intrinsic normative significance. To see the world this way is to empty it of religious significance. Instrumental reason is thus understood, by apologists for modernity, as emancipating humanity from the false metaphysics of religion, indeed from metaphysics generally.[iv] At a political level this emancipation from metaphysics leads to emancipation from religious authority. At an epistemological level it enables us to understand the world in causal rather than supernatural terms and thereby gain mastery over nature.

I would argue, however, that no society can reject metaphysics. Without some conception of the basic inclination of the universe towards us – favorable, unfavorable or neutral – it would be impossible for societies to orient their collective agency: metaphysics frames the fundamental expectations of a culture.[v] In light of this it is inappropriate to construe modernity in terms of emancipation from metaphysics. An alternative account of modernity must be found. The account I am proposing here is that modernity can be identified in terms of the unique (and historically unprecedented) metaphysical premise on which it rests, namely *materialism*, as defined above.

The argument for this view that materialism, rather than instrumental reason, constitutes the premise of modernity is as follows. Scientific method combines rationalism with empiricism; that is to say, it involves inductive and deductive inference from observation. Since the data-base of science is thus by definition exclusively empirical, science can discover only those aspects of the world that are in principle observable, namely the material aspects. There can then be no justification for assuming that

the world lacks unobservable dimensions on the basis of a method of investigation which is designed to reveal only its observable dimensions. In other words, materialism, as the metaphysical theory that the world lacks unobservable dimensions, could not have been established by scientific method. On the contrary, the privileged role that the empirical method of science came to play in the modern period, and its equation with reason per se, can only be explained on the assumption that materialism itself had been presupposed. In other words, scientific reason is not the root of modernity, from the present point of view; rather, the ascendancy of scientific reason is itself to be explained by reference to the materialist premise.

Similarly, if reason was "instrumentalized" in modern societies, this was because it was subsumed under empiricism, where, as we have seen, empiricism could only be justified on the assumption that the world was amenable to materialist explanation. In other words, it is, again, the materialist premise which justifies the instrumentalization of reason: a world of mere matter, devoid of intrinsic normative significance, invites us to use it as we see fit, without moral limit. In the absence of a materialist premise however, there is nothing inherently instrumental about reason.

It is important to identify modernity in terms of its materialist premise rather than in terms of reason because if scientific empiricism is allowed to usurp the role of reason, and modernity is then defined in terms of reason, this suggests that any alternative to modernity must be irrational, or less rational than modernity. This cooption of reason prejudices the prospects for any acceptable alternative to modernity, since reason is surely a prerequisite for the kind of critical inquiry and debate that are presumably necessary for any healthy non-authoritarian society.[vi]

Modernity may then be defined in terms of its materialist premise. As a metaphysic, materialism is normatively neutral - the materialist universe is indifferent to human concerns and has no concerns of its own. Humanity has therefore to invent its own reasons for living – its own meanings and values. In the absence of religious revelation, human nature itself becomes the sole source of meaning and value: *humanism* replaces religious value systems and human self-reliance replaces the importunate attitude, as well as the gratitude and praise, that prevailed in religious societies.

In materialist societies that developed along liberal lines (see below), a distinction was drawn between the public and the private sphere. Belief systems opposed to materialism, such as those offered by religion, were tolerated in the private but not in the public sphere. Decision making in public life was (and still is) dictated by humanism: policy is addressed to people's material, as opposed to any supposed spiritual, needs. Public life, in other words, is *post-religious*, that is, *secular*, in tenor.

Since explanation of natural phenomena in materialist societies excludes reference to divine intention or other supernatural factors, knowledge is no longer acquired through religious revelation. Rather, observation of the actual mechanics of things takes the place of religious intuition in explaining the world. The way is thus opened for empirical inquiry and causal explanation, and hence for that form of knowledge that historically came to be known as *science*. Scientific method leads to ever increasing understanding of natural phenomena, where this in turn makes possible ever increasing technical control of the environment. Such control allows for an ever-increasing capacity to satisfy people's material needs and desires. Moreover since there are, as we have seen, no moral constraints, from a materialist perspective, on the use humanity may make of the natural environment, and since we are therefore morally free, with the help of science, to exploit nature to the limit, we are enabled to "*progress*" and "*develop*". That is to say, we are enabled to increase our "standard of living" indefinitely.

Discovery of this new ethos of progress produces the distinctive profile of modernity: a imperious and chronic dissatisfaction with "the given", or what already exists, resulting in a regime of perpetual change. This takes the form of an unceasing quest to improve the world, to make it over in accordance with our own latest abstract conception of the good. Modernity is a restless condition, a condition of disconnection from the past and from tradition. Modern civilization turns its face to the future, reaching beyond the given for new and ideal forms of life.[vii]

The basic existential modality of materialist societies – their basic way of being in the world - is instrumental: this involves humanity taking control of things with a view to remaking the world in accordance with human desire.

The political implications of materialism are two-edged. On the one hand, its reliance on reason as opposed to religiosity is emancipatory. Reason, unlike religious ways of knowing, is equally available to all human beings. No individuals or castes can claim special access to rational truth; hence nor can they claim special authority over others. Societies premised on materialism thus tend towards *liberalism* in their politics: each individual is free to work out their own conception of the good in their own way, subject only to the requirement that their doing so does not compromise the right of others to do the same. On the other hand, when instrumentalism becomes the basic attitude of society, it is likely eventually to encompass not only the natural world but the human sphere as well: selected human groups may become objectified and treated as means to the ends of more powerful groups.[viii] Such an instrumental attitude towards humanity itself may be expressed in *totalitarian* regimes, most notably the fascist regime in Germany that inspired the Frankfurt School's original analysis of modernity in terms of instrumental reason.[ix]

There are thus conflicting political tendencies latent in materialism – liberalizing tendencies that flow from the reliance on reason and totalitarian tendencies that flow from the attitude of instrumentalism. I shall not try to resolve this tension here. Which tendencies prevail in any given society at any particular historical moment may depend on particular conjunctions of historical circumstances. What is perhaps important to note is that in a materialist society, whether liberal or totalitarian, there will be strong currents running counter to the prevailing polity: in liberal-modern societies a tendency to objectify human beings and treat them as resources may lurk beneath the liberal surface - in economics, for instance, as in the economic neoliberalism of the contemporary Western world. Similarly, liberal tendencies may lurk in the depths of totalitarian-modern societies – flowing, for instance, from the social improvements (eg universal education) that result from technological progress.

In addition to the social and political consequences of materialism, there are of course spiritual consequences. The most visible such consequence is the loss of a sense of shared deeper life-meanings in a materialist society. Materialism, as we have seen, entails humanism: since the universe appoints no meanings and values for us, we are obliged to invent contingent meanings and deeper life-values for ourselves. This gives rise, at least in liberal-modern societies, to a benign tolerance of religious

diversity in the private sphere: religious belief systems are recognized as a vehicle for the life-meanings and values that individuals are obliged to invent for themselves. Thoughtful individuals however can't fail to notice that acquiescence in all life-meanings is endorsement of none, and that this withholding of endorsement is the deeper truth of liberal-modern societies. The pluralism of liberal-modern societies does indeed then rest on an implied negation of the objective validity of any life-meanings, and this negation of meaning may create a sense of moral or spiritual lack in society. This sense of lack may persist even though those who feel it have no taste for political systems based on religious authority.

In sum, the instrumentalism that is a consequence of materialism is complex in its effects: on the one hand it allows for material progress and social development but on the other hand it entrains a loss of shared values and meanings and can also be used to provide ideological justification for the subordination of human minorities and cultures. The one effect that is common to the various outcomes however is the catastrophic impact of materialism on non-human species and the natural environment.

In light of the mixed consequences of materialism, a process of popular inquiry and exploration born of disenchantment with the existential limitations of modernity is now under way in Western societies. This process takes the form of a restless interest in non-Western religions and meditational traditions, alternative therapies and remedies, new age theories and speculations, magic and pagan traditions. A more or less spiritual attitude to "nature" and a mystical emphasis on direct experience of spirit, even in the context of religions, are insistent features of this inquiry.[x] When this is combined with the equal insistence on the irreducible plurality of approaches to questions of deeper life-meaning in liberal-modern societies, we can see an anticipation of the ineffability of meaning already taking shape. At the same time, most of the "new seekers" in Western societies take the verities and amenities of science for granted; they are looking to supplement science with further meanings, not replace it. So it would seem that what I am about to describe as post-materialism is already an emerging, if minority, zeitgeist in Western societies.[xi]

(3) Post-materialist – prospective/in the future

Post-materialist societies are *post-religious* but *not secular* societies; that is, they are *not post-spiritual*. The metaphysical premise of these societies, namely post-materialism, does have normative implications. However, these implications do not derive from immaterial entities posited in addition to material reality (entities such as the gods or spirits of religion), but rather from an inner dimension of matter itself. In other words, post-materialism does not posit the supernatural – in the sense of a realm that lies beyond nature - but discovers normativity within material reality itself. This normativity emanates from a dimension of material reality that is in principle unobservable, and hence cannot be revealed by science. It is in principle unobservable in the sense that it consists of the interior aspect of matter. "Interiority" is understood here not as the inner physical workings of things but as a psychic or mentalistic aspect of physicality generally. (This interior dimension of material reality is thus unobservable in the same way that the inner life of a self is unobservable to others.) Such interiority might be described as a kind of subjectivity or mentality or inspiritment or conativity - or in some other terms. (I shall here adopt the descriptive framework of conativity, where conativity is understood as the will or striving of things towards existence or self-increase.[xii]) The way this inner dimension of reality is expressed in the world will be *consistent* with the findings of science but will not be *exhausted* by them.

Importantly however this normative aspect of reality cannot be definitively named/described/pinned down in any literal way. Thus it cannot be co-opted by religion: it is metaphysical or spiritual or cosmological rather than religious. There can be no canonical sacred texts or prescribed forms of worship. There is thus no possibility of religious mediation, nor hence of religious institutionalisation or authority, where such authority could lead to a resurgence of political authoritarianism. (Priests or other religious hierarchies do not figure in a post-materialist society. Individuals and local groups in such a society are loath to delegate their spirituality; they prefer instead to discover their relationship with reality through communicative channels of their own devising, using the aesthetic and poetic resources of their culture.) Any metaphysical namings of the unobservable normative aspect of reality are understood to be provisional and open to revision and negotiation. What is agreed upon however, in a post-materialist society, is that the universe itself is *sacred* and that its sacredness derives not from any relation to

spiritual entities over and above matter but from matter's own inner principle.

Acknowledging that the universe is sacred, while not being able to articulate in any definitive way the dimension of its sacredness, means that our response to its sacredness cannot be prescribed or legislated. No set of rules for behaviour will follow from acknowledging this sacredness. Since we avow the normativity of this universe, but can never definitively anticipate what its "ends" are, we must simply try to accommodate ourselves to its "givenness" in any particular situation. This means trying in every situation to detect the contours of its unfolding and accommodating our agency to these contours. Our task will be to develop modalities that enable us to pursue our ends while leaving the world intact. This means that in post-materialist societies we will not be entitled simply to do as we please - there will be constraints on individual and social freedom that did not obtain in materialist societies. However, it is not so much our ends that will need to be constrained, as the means, or more generally the modalities, we assume in pursuit of those ends. These modalities will be outlined below.

Despite the normativity of its metaphysical premise then, the post-materialist society will not harbour the authoritarian tendencies of pre-materialist or religious societies. This is because, as has already been explained, the normativity of post-materialism has to be decoded afresh in every situation and cannot be anticipated by rules or mediated by authorities. And precisely *because* of the normativity of the post-materialist premise, the post-materialist society will not treat the world (including its human inhabitants) in the instrumental way that materialist societies do. In both these respects then, the political tenor of the post-materialist society will be nonauthoritarian, despite the additional restrictions on individual and social freedom its respect for the integrity of the world entails.

Of course, in characterizing the post-materialist society as nonauthoritarian, I am assuming that it has evolved by consensus from liberal versions of the materialist society. I am assuming, in other words, that the deficits of a society based on a materialist premise have created disaffection that has led to the development of a post-materialist alternative. Latent disaffection is, as I have mentioned, already evident in contemporary Western societies, and is currently expressed via counter-

cultural movements. There is clearly no hankering, in counter-cultural movements, for authoritarian alternatives to liberal-modernity, whether these are based on religious or other forms of ideological authority. Conformity with the norms of post-materialism will have to evolve as value change in society rather than taking effect by any kind of dogmatic enforcement.

It is important to note that the scope of post-materialism is not merely environmental (ie ecological) but *cosmological*. That is to say, it is not merely the *living* world that is conceived as having an inner dimension that makes a normative claim on us, but reality generally. In consequence, our thought and action in *every* context of life, not merely in the environmental context, must be consistent with the conativity of reality, and must leave the world intact. Whether we are sitting quietly in meditation or conversing with friends, addressing an audience or driving a car, ploughing a field or manufacturing clothing or mounting a political campaign or even waging a war of self-defence, there will be ways of acting and thinking, inquiring and debating, persuading and fighting, that will be consistent with the conative unfolding of the larger Creation. In this sense the ethos of post-materialism in no way reduces to the ethos of ecology, though its consequences will be broadly consistent with ecological aims, since they will be consistent with the ends of the larger systems which subsume ecosystems. In other words, if we adopt the post-materialist ethos in every department of life, we will not need any special department of environmentalism.

A fully post-materialist culture, in the present sense, has never yet existed, despite the fact that certain indigenous traditions have included metaphysical beliefs that strikingly anticipate the beliefs of post-materialism. (See 3.2, for instance.) The reason a fully post-materialist culture has not existed to date is that the post-materialist relationship with the universe is discovered in the context of science. Post-materialism doesn't reject science, or the innumerable benefits for humanity that science has delivered. Rather, it looks beyond science, not by embracing the supernatural, but by seeking the subjectival interior of the natural.

3.1   contrast between post-materialism and postmodernism
Although post-materialism is, in a literal sense, posterior to modernity, it should be clear by now that it is *in no way* equivalent to postmodernism,

at least in the broad deconstructive sense in which "postmodernism" is used in contemporary philosophical, literary and sociological discourse.

Like post-materialism, postmodernism does disclaim the metaphysical premise of modernity, viz materialism, but it embraces instead metaphysical possibilities from across the entire spectrum of cultures, in a spirit of epistemological inclusiveness. However, since disparate metaphysical possibilities, taken together, contradict one another, the postmodernist has to concede that there is no actual objective fact of the matter where metaphysics is concerned. There are just the appearances of things – the way things present to us in experience – and the various ways that different individuals and societies make sense of those appearances. At the level of metaphysics, no particular individual or society is in a position to legislate truth or meaning for others. However, it is fairly self-evident that postmodernism, understood in this way, is functionally equivalent to liberal modernity. This is true at both national and global levels:

(a) at the level of the nation state, the postmodernist will revert to a basically liberal position on public policy. Metaphysical diversity will be welcomed at the private level, but when metaphysical outlooks do indeed differ at this level in a given society, public policy will be guided by considerations of material interest: the responsibility of the state will not be to implement a spiritual agenda but to look after people's economic and material security.

(b) at the level of global society, the postmodernist again affirms metaphysical diversity. In cases where the majority of a population subscribes to a particular metaphysical premise, the postmodernist will allow that the state in question ought to govern in accordance with that premise. (This position does however create notorious tensions for the postmodernist when a polity based on a particular religious or cultural premise involves the systematic subordination of minority – or consenting majority - groups within that population.) At the level of the global "society of societies" however, the postmodernist again reverts to a basically liberal stance: each state should be free to pursue its own conception of the good in its own way, providing only that its doing so does not compromise the like entitlement of other states. Whether the postmodernist is considering society at a local or global level then, he is assuming that the good of human beings can be realized independently of the "good" of the material world and that the "good" of the material world can make no moral claim on the state. Such a position clearly

colludes with materialism, and is inconsistent with a post-materialist premise.

3.2 parallel between post-materialism and Daoism:

As a metaphysic that entails a particular kind of ethos, post-materialism was anticipated by certain spiritual traditions that had currency in the pre-materialist era - at least to the extent that those traditions were not converted into religions. This is particularly true of the ancient Chinese tradition of Daoism.

The Dao of Daoism (as opposed to the Dao of Confucianism, for instance[xiii]) is understood here as the spiritual principle of the universe. It is unobservable and normative, and it cannot be defined or named[xiv]. It is not something in addition to the material world, but is the primal impulse that expresses itself as materiality.

"Dao" of course means "the Way", and the Way in question is the Way of nature, where nature is understood as the *spontaneous*, that which occurs of itself when it is free of our interventions. This Way of nature is a Way of flow. The root metaphor for reality, in this scheme of things, is water.[xv] The elements of nature (the Ten Thousand Things) are really patterns in an underlying flow. These patterns form and reform under the influence of the patterns forming and reforming around them. This is, in other words, an order of mutual arising, a symbiosis of form/pattern in which no particular form/pattern can arise independently of the forms/patterns resolving and dissolving all around it. Moreover, when individuals are left to arise spontaneously in this way, under the mutual influences of one another, the universe assumes *its* proper pattern or form – it stays on its proper course.[xvi]

The kind of order that Dao manifests then (or which manifests Dao) is an order of flow patterns (*li* in Chinese, where *li* originally meant the grain in jade or wood). *Li* is the way that things, left to themselves, configure themselves. The flow patterns observable in water or wind or indeed in any field of energy are always graceful and somehow effortless, regardless of whatever obstacles or disturbances might be introduced into the field of flow. Why is this? It is because such flows always follow the lines of least resistance. Water always flows downhill. It fills the lowest (easiest) places first. It flows around obstacles rather than contending

with them. If trapped it waits until an opening occurs and then it continues on its way again. It makes no value judgments or discriminations about where it will go – it travels with the bad as unquestioningly as it travels with the good. The only end is the travelling itself: through this travelling the work of the universe is accomplished. Water makes no effort, which is why the idea of flow is equated with effortlessness.

Daoism was eventually turned into a religion in pre-materialist China, but the original texts (Laozi and Zhuangzi) were cosmological rather than religious: they described the way the universe unfolds when left to itself, and they speculated that human beings could learn to live by observing these cosmological dynamics.[xvii] (In this sense when I refer to Daoism in the present discussion, I am really intending to refer to Laoism, or the ideas outlined in the *Daodejing* and elaborated in the *Zhuangzi*.) So although the Dao of Laozi has normative significance, this significance was arguably not intended to be understood religiously. Nor should it necessarily be understood ethically: acting in accordance with Dao is not necessarily acting morally, if morality is understood in terms of Confucian rules of benevolence. Acting in accordance with Dao is nevertheless, from a Laoist point of view, in some deeper sense *right*. It fits in with the larger scheme of things and contributes to the general *cohering* of the larger system. In contributing to the general cohering of things, it helps to ensure the ongoing conditions for life and existence generally. In other words, there is, from the viewpoint of Daoism, a kind of conativity in the world that ensures that the conditions for the world's self-increase are eternally reproduced and sustained. The task for humanity is to understand that larger conativity and orient our agency to it. To fail to orient ourselves to the normative direction of the cosmos is to risk things falling apart, not merely on a practical level, but in terms of our grip on the purpose of life.

 So Daoism need not emanate in a conventional ethics, environmental or otherwise. (The very idea of ethics is, after all, anathema to Laozi.) Daoism emanates rather in *appropriate* behaviour.

3.2.1   *wu wei*
The character of this appropriate behaviour is summed up in the Laoist notion of *wu wei*: *wu wei* is that form of action (or "inaction") which proceeds by taking the path of least resistance, harnessing forces or

patterns of energy already at play in the world, and letting them carry us to our destination. *Wu wei* denotes activity taken with rather than against the grain of existing conativities. One who is committed to *wu wei* in this sense seeks to solve problems not by confronting them head-on but by allowing herself to be carried along by ambient conativities. In this sense the practitioner of *wu wei* is a kind of metaphysical hitchhiker, catching a ride in a vehicle that is already bound for her destination.

Zhuangzi illustrates *wu wei* via a story of a butcher whose knife is unblunted after many years of use. So well does the butcher know the anatomy of the beasts he carves, his knife follows the path of least resistance through the carcass, finding the fine spaces between joints and bones, never losing its sharpness. Another of Zhuangzi's illustrative stories concerns an old man who falls into a river and is carried by the rapids to emerge downstream unscathed, having rolled with the waves and currents.

One might achieve many kinds of ends in this way, by fellow-travelling with things-as-they-are rather than seeking to impose one's own designs on them. An economic praxis based on *wu wei* would eschew the goals of consumerism, commodification, productivity, progress, efficiency, industry (industriousness), business (busy-ness), profit and property that define the praxis of modernity.[xviii] It would instead favour practices of conserving and cherishing "the given"- that which already exists - replenishing the sources of renewal in natural cycles so that "production" is accomplished largely by the world itself, without our having to direct and design the process. Power, for instance, would be drawn from sources, such as solar, wind and methane, that tap existing energies without fracturing their pre-existing flow-patterns or cycles. Food would be gathered from productive ecosystems or grown in accordance with organic principles that rely on natural processes of fertilization, pollination, germination, pest control and so on, thereby minimizing the human input required and preserving the ecological integrity of soils, waters and landscapes. Buildings would exemplify passive design, being sited and structured so as to trap natural light and energy while making best use of existing topography, rather than topography having to be reshaped to serve the requirements of buildings.[xix]

Wu wei then enables us to dwell in the world without significantly disrupting it. But it also, to a certain extent, enables us to resist those

who do seek to disrupt it – those who seek forcibly to take over the world, to dominate and control it for their own purposes and in accordance with their prejudices. Although the practitioner of *wu wei* will refrain from meeting force with force, she may harness the prejudices of those who would reshape the world and turn those prejudices back on themselves. So, for instance, in the face of domination driven by racism, she will not seek to refute racism, but will *appeal* to it. Suppose the racism in question is white racism directed at black peoples. Instead of contradicting the racist, the practitioner of *wu wei* might "concede" his supposed "superiority", but define that superiority in terms of the ideals of equality and reason that came out of the European Enlightenment. In other words, she might demonstrate that this superiority consists precisely in the recognition of the equal worth and dignity of all peoples. Similarly, in the face of domination driven by sexism, the practitioner of *wu wei* might appeal to masculine pride. Yet she will represent masculinity as an ideal of worthiness/nobility, so that men are defined as most manly when they are most noble, and nobility will involve honouring and behaving justly towards all people, including women. In the face of domination of the environment, driven by anthropocentrism, the practitioner of *wu wei* will not dispute, but again appeal to, human superiority. However, her definition of human superiority might be in terms of our human capacity to grasp the metaphysical unity of nature – the deep interconnectedness of all things. In light of this, we are never more human than when we are recognizing our kinship with all life. To adopt the stance of *wu wei* then is not to stand by while others ruin the world. *Wu wei* does enable us to oppose others, but not by contradicting them; rather we harness their beliefs in order to arrive at conclusions that preserve the world's integrity.

In sum, if the universe is sacred, if it is indeed a "spirit thing", then we should as far as possible allow the Ten Thousand Things to unfold in their own way; we should *let them be*. That is, we should show them respect by not interfering with them unnecessarily. This does not imply that we are reduced to mere quietism. Rather, we can pursue our ends - including the end of resisting those who would impose themselves on the world - by following the practice of *wu wei*.

However, although *wu wei* is supremely consistent with the spirit of letting-be, its potential as a modality that could fully meet the needs of contemporary mass societies, irreversibly wedded as they are to

advanced industrialism, might still be doubted. The human population has now far exceeded the natural carrying capacity of the earth's ecosystems, even were these ecosystems still intact. The fact that these systems have been so largely adulterated and degraded further weakens the capacity of the earth to provide for us unaided, even if we were prepared to revert to the material simplicity that *wu wei* would entail. For this reason I think the modality of post-materialist societies needs to include an element of proactivity – an element that allows us actively to change the course of events, without however compromising the world's integrity. I call this mode of agency *synergy*.

3.2.2   synergy

Synergy is here defined as a form of relationship between two or more parties who engage with each other in such a way that something new and larger than either of them, but true to the inner principle of each, is born. Synergy then is a modality not so much of letting be as of *engagement*. In synergizing with the world, we are still following the path of least resistance but not merely by hitching a ride with ambient energies or processes already unfolding towards their own ends; rather, in synergy we engage the world in such a way that it spontaneously adapts or enlarges its ends in response to our encounter with it. This adaptation or enlargement occurs *with* the grain of its conativity and is, in that sense, a further elaboration of that conativity. Yet this new end is not one towards which the world would have moved if we had not engaged with it. By way of synergy then we *do* change the course of events, yet we do so while still letting the world be, in the sense that we are still allowing it to follow its own inner principle: we are simply eliciting conative potentialities that had hitherto not been manifest. It is of the utmost importance to remember however that in any instance of synergy *our* ends as well as those of the other party to the engagement will be transformed. Synergy is not a one-way street: it elicits from us potentialities that had not hitherto been manifest just as it elicits such potentialities from the world.

The distinction between synergy and *wu wei* in its classical Daoist sense can perhaps be elucidated by the hitchhiker analogy. A hitchhiker in the *wu wei* mode hopes that the driver of some vehicle already on the road, travelling in the general direction of the hitchhiker's own destination, will offer her a ride. A hitchhiker in the synergistic mode however will engage with the driver in such a way that both her plans and those of the driver might change. Their respective desires for their original, separate

destinations might give way to a new desire for a destination they can share. Although their destination has changed as a result of their encounter, this new destination is as fully, if not more fully, in accordance with their desire than were their original separate destinations. Synergy is thus an essentially creative mode: it draws forth the new without contradicting the old, and hence without compromising the cohering of the world.

Other personal examples of synergy include (i) forms of dance, like tango, in which partners take their cue from each other, moving in ways which express the shared impulse of their two bodies. (ii) forms of cross-species musical jamming, as for instance between humans and birds, in which entirely new patterns of music emerge. Such patterns could not have been created by either humans or birds independently, yet once constellated seem true to the musical signature of both humans and birds.[xx] Signature is in fact a useful metaphor for explaining synergy. In a synergistic interaction, two signatories join to create a new signature which is larger and calligraphically richer than either of the original signatures yet feels true to the essence of each of the signatories.

Synergy in the present sense must be distinguished from both (i) mere conjunction and (ii) mere cooperation.
(i) When hydrogen and oxygen, for instance, come together to form H2O, a new thing definitely comes into the world, namely water. But let us assume that hydrogen atoms and oxygen atoms are not in themselves possessed of any inner principle of their own, though they are participating in larger systems, up to the level of the cosmos as a whole, which do. Let's assume, in other words, that atoms lack an active impulse towards self-realization, though they are part of larger conative systems.[xxi] In this case the coming together of hydrogen and oxygen atoms to produce water is not an instance of synergy. Synergy has been defined here not merely as the coming together of two parties to create something new, but their coming together to create something new which is nevertheless true to the inner principle of each. To speak of such an inner principle implies a directedness, a normativity, a conativity, in the original parties, such that some changes that occur to them will count as being consistent with that directedness, that normativity, and some changes will not. In the case of hydrogen and oxygen atoms (or any other entities which do not constitute self-realizing systems, such as rocks or lumps of metal or piles of sand), any action of other entities upon them –

including actions that destroy the original atoms or break them down into smaller particles - might indeed occasion new formations. But these new formations will not count as synergistic because there is no meaningful distinction between changes which express the inner principle of atoms and changes which do not. There is no such distinction insofar as it is assumed that atoms (or rocks or lumps of metal, etc) lack conativity – an active principle of self-configuration and self-increase.

(ii) In cooperative interactions, two or more parties agree on an external and often purely instrumental end and pool their efforts to achieve it. The end in question might even be externally imposed and in no way emanate from the conativity of either party. It might, for instance, be a task imposed on prisoners for the purpose of punishing them rather than providing an occasion for conative expression. Yet the prisoners can still cooperate to lighten the load imposed on them. In other words, to cooperate with another is generally to agree on an external end and work together to achieve that end; it is not to discover new ends, or assume new forms, that neither party would have discovered or assumed independently. [xxii]

The template for synergy is the act of procreation: two parties join their essences to create a third entity which elicits and embodies potentialities that pre-existed in each of the original parties but could only become actualized in the event that those parties joined with each other. As a basic modality then – an existential modality – synergy in fact recapitulates the underlying principle of creation itself, a principle which was, in early European and Chinese cultures, represented as a principle of *fertility*. For in joining together two or more existing patterns of energy to create a new pattern, synergy allows for the emergence of new form in the world, but this is new form which, like the offspring of two parents, carries within it the story of the old, the story of those from whom the new has arisen. In this sense, the new that springs from synergistic interactions is, as I remarked earlier, a new which in no way rests on a repudiation or destruction of the old. As an existential modality then, synergy, like its precursor, fertility, ensures that the world continues to cohere, to hold together as a unity through creative change.

In procreation the yin-yang aspect of synergy is explicit: the creation of new form depends upon *difference* in the original parties. If these parties were qualitatively the same, nothing new would emerge from their union. The greater their difference, the potentially more creative the outcome.

To adopt synergy as our basic modality then is in no way to depart from Dao, even though it cannot be subsumed under *wu wei,* and can be conceptualized independently of Daoism. Indeed, to practise synergy is, I would venture to speculate, perhaps to enter more fully into the spirit of Dao than even *wu wei* does. For in practising *wu wei* we are carried by Dao; we ride the currents of Dao as a boat rides the currents of a stream. But in practising synergy we actually embody and enact the dynamics of creation, joining our conativity with the conativity of the Ten Thousand Things to give birth to new form, new possibilities, new phases of coherence. We are no longer merely riding the river; we actually become the river. To become Dao in this sense ensures that our lives help to sustain the ongoing fertility of Creation, weaving our own signature into the enduring fabric of reality. To adopt synergy as our basic modality thus in effect enables us to achieve the immortality – the eternal implicatedness in reality – that Daoists have always craved.

Like *wu wei*, synergy is a modality that can be adopted in any sphere of human activity: we can revise all our interactions with one another and with world along lines of synergy rather than self-imposition and control. The sphere of application I wish to examine here however is that of environmental design, which provides a model for economic *development* in the synergistic mode – development that will not only be truly *sustainable* but culturally and ecologically *creative*.

3.2.3   environmental design in synergistic mode

Achieving a form of development which is not merely sustainable but ecologically and culturally creative will not be a matter only of reining in industry and construction, in accordance with the principle of letting-be. Nor will it be a matter only of powering industry and construction by alternative energies, such as solar, wind and methane, in accordance with the principle of *wu wei*. It will rather be a matter of joining human conativity – in this case the desire of so-called "consumers" – with ecological conativity to create new opportunities for both humans and nature.

This synergistic principle is at work in new design philosophies currently going under the name of biomimicry or cradle-to-cradle design, in which products and the built environment are designed to create opportunities for nature while satisfying needs of ours. They do this by imitating nature

in their functions. So, for instance, buildings are designed to generate more energy than they consume and release purer air and water into the environment than the air and water they took in. In the case of large structures, such as industrial plants, and large engineered systems, such as sewerage treatment plants, the water purification processes can provide wetland habitat for birds and other wildlife. Likewise, manufactured products are designed so that their eventual disposal will not pollute but enrich the environment, as, for example, with packaging that is designed to fertilize the soil when it is thrown away.

Architect William McDonough is an advocate of such a design philosophy. His aim is not to contradict the desires of "consumers". Indeed, he is not uncomfortable with the capitalist ethos of consumerism, as the traditional environment movement, committed to restraint and frugality, is.[xxiii] Rather, McDonough seeks to turn the desires of consumers to ecological advantage: productive output should not be reduced but products should be designed to give the environment what it wants while also satisfying the wants of consumers. McDonough offers many examples of products that satisfy consumer demand but at the same time nourish and support biological systems. The key to his design philosophy is the elimination of waste, or the conversion of "waste" into resource. Products are designed so that they, and the by-products of the production process, can either be returned to the ecosystem as biological nutrient or recycled back into the industrial system as manufacturing "nutrient".

As his model of such "nutritious" design, McDonough cites the tree, specifically a cherry tree. Does the cherry tree have to reduce its output in order to exist in harmony with the ecosystem, McDonough asks. Is it committed to frugality and maximal "efficiency" in its utilization of resources? No! "Thousands of blossoms create fruit for birds, humans and other animals, in order that one pit might eventually fall to the ground, take root and grow."[xxiv] Looking at the ground littered with cherry blossoms, do we complain, how inefficient and wasteful? We don't. The cherry tree creates a superabundance of blossoms and fruit without depleting its environment because everything it produces in turn nourishes everything else in its environment. This is the core of McDonough's message: the problem is not human production and consumption in themselves. It is not human conativity. The problem is that we do not design our products and our systems of production so that they support the conativity of the natural environment.

McDonough emphasizes that products should be designed for return not only to "the environment", in a generic sense, but to the particular local environments in which they will be used. So, for example, if a manufacturer is designing a hair gel, he should ask himself not only "what does the consumer want from this hair gel?", nor only "what does the environment want from this hair gel?", but "what does the river into which this hair gel will eventually be discharged want from it?" In other words, the designer should think about where the hair gel will eventually end up, and how the hair gel can make a positive contribution to this site of disposal.

Clearly, this design philosophy which converts "waste" into "nutrient" anticipates the philosophy of synergy. Instead of either restraining human desire, for the sake of letting nature be, or sacrificing nature for the sake of letting humans follow their desire, MacDonough seeks to make human desire serve the interests of nature, as well as vice versa. But although his visionary approach to design anticipates synergy, it does not quite actualize it, and this shortfall is important. For in the scenario that MacDonough proposes, the parties to the interaction – consumer and environment – are not *changed* by the encounter. The consumer wants hair gel; the river wants a pollutant-dispersing agent. Each may get what it wants but their ends have not been enlarged as a result of their exchange; nothing new has come into the world. The question we should be asking of the river is not merely, what does it want from this hair gel, but what does it want from *us*? Is hair gel – or even pollution-dispersing agents - all it wants from us, or are there far larger attentions that a river wants from its people? When we ask this question, we might find that the kind of people the river wants us to be and the kind of culture it wants us to create make us forget about hair gel altogether. New, larger possibilities of fulfilment begin to take shape when we join our conativity with that of the river, and in the light of these enlarging possibilities our desire for trivial consumer items such as hair gel might be left far behind: we cease to identify as mere "consumers" and become agents of metaphysical "procreation" instead, initiating new registers of cohering in the ongoing actualisation of the river's world.

So synergy is not merely a paternalistic matter of rendering our exploitation of the environment relatively harmless. Synergy is a two-way street. Yes, we will seek to satisfy our needs and desires in ways that do

not harm, but rather positively enhance, natural systems. But at the same time our needs and desires will themselves be transformed by our participatory involvement with these systems.

Finally then we are ready to state the basic modality of post-materialist societies:

The basic modality of a post-materialist society is letting be or wu wei and, by extension, synergy.

3.3   Cosmic renewal

In post-materialist societies then, every aspect of praxis may be conceived as an opportunity to contribute to, and enlarge, the conativities of the universe. The activities that have hitherto been described under the headings of industry and economics will be designed with this sacred goal in mind. Indeed, if economics is defined as the study of the deployment of energy required for the satisfaction of human needs, as Peter Kropotkin suggested more than a century ago, then it is through its economics that a society will demonstrate its basic relation to the world.[xxv]   In this sense economics becomes the premier vehicle of our engagement with Dao because it is through our economics that we are most implicated in materiality. As the tool of economics, industry could take on the aspect, in a post-materialist society, of the great rituals of cosmic renewal performed in many pre-materialist societies. (Interestingly, Daoism itself offers one of the most impressive examples of this kind of ritual.[xxvi]) In these rituals human beings cast themselves as co-creators of the cosmos. They intuit that human conativity and cosmic conativity are not ultimately distinct but that human conativity can enhance and renew cosmic conativity and vice versa. In effect these rituals enact a ceremonial synergy between humanity and cosmos. However, they traditionally took place within the space of religion – a space of supernaturalism that existed in addition to, even if it also permeated, the space of the natural and the everyday. The challenge for post-materialist societies is to make the space of the natural - as opposed to the supernatural - the arena for cosmic renewal, for daily synergy with the universe, enlarging the scope and meaning of fertility and generating abundance for all life. "Development", in this context, becomes a spiritual path for society as well as a path towards material improvement. One key to development as a spiritual vocation then is not simplicity, the small-is-

beautiful or minimal-is-best approach, but synergy. The aim is not to keep technologies and economic practices as rudimentary as possible but to make them vehicles of cosmic renewal. This may be achieved by highly sophisticated technologies and economies as much as by simple ones. As vehicles of cosmic renewal they will assume an aesthetic and communicative aspect as well as a utilitarian one: their poetic significance, as vehicles of creative engagement with a conative universe, will be expressed in their design and operation. Industry will in this sense assume a speaking – poetic and communicative - face, as at home in the landscapes of mythopoetics as were the windmills and waterwheels of yesteryear.

Mythopoetic industry may be the stuff of visions and dreams, but there is nothing to stop us taking small steps now in that direction. We might, for instance, consecrate our alternative technologies on the occasions of their installation, dedicating them to wind or sun or whatever elemental power they are intended to engage, so that they become altars to the elemental power in question, designed with this aesthetic as well as functional end in view. At these altars we could make small votive offerings, such as poems or pictorial inscriptions. By adding such a poetic dimension to our economic and industrial praxis, we would stand a chance of remaining mindful of the larger sacred context in which this praxis was taking place, and thus adapting our ultimate ends as well as our means to it.

In conclusion, in a post-materialist society, the conativity of the cosmos is acknowledged, and we adapt ourselves, at every level of our lives, to that larger unfolding. It is possible for us to do this while still pursuing a path of social "development", provided development is understood in terms of synergistic engagement with reality rather than mastery and makeover. As a social modality then, synergy *allows for change* – and thereby departs from the *stasis of tradition* – but it does so *without resorting to domination and control,* the modality of modernity. It thereby offers a "third way" for development.

i Many thanks to Deborah Rose for comments on an earlier draft of this paper and to Andrew Brennan for quizzing me on some of the implications of the notion of synergy.

ii I have introduced the philosophy of synergy in Freya Mathews, *Reinhabiting Reality: towards a Recovery of Culture*, SUNY Press, Albany NY, 2005.

iii This kind of definition goes back to Max Weber and was developed by the Frankfurt School, particularly Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer. See their *Dialectics of Enlightenment*, Herder and Herder, New York, 1932.

iv See Charles Taylor, "Two Theories of Modernity", *International Scope Review*, 3, 5, 2001. There is no need, by the way, to resolve here Taylor's question whether modernity constitutes a particular form of culture or an operation that can be made on different cultures. In the sense in which I am using the term "modernity" it probably refers to a family of cultures, all resting on a shared metaphysical premise but drawing out the implications of that premise in different ways.

v For further argument on this point see Freya Mathews, *The Ecological Self*, Routledge, London, 1991.

vi For a brief reflection on the role of critical inquiry in educating prospective citizenry for a non-authoritarian society, see Freya Mathews, "The Art of Discovering Values", *Eureka Street*, Jan/Feb 2006.

vii The dedication of modernity to novelty is reflected in the word "modern", which is derived from "mode", meaning "of the present", keeping up with the latest.

viii An excellent contemporary account of the far reaching ramification of instrumental reason in the social and political life of modern societies is offered by Val Plumwood, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*, Routledge, London and New York, 1992.

ix See *Dialectics of Enlightenment*, op cit

x See, for instance, Rachael Kohn, *The New Believers: Reimagining God*, HarperCollins, 2005; and David Tacey, *The Spirituality Revolution: the emergence of contemporary spirituality*, HarperCollins, 2003

xi It is worth noting here that I am not using the term "post-materialist" in the sense that has recently become current in sociological discourse. "Post-materialist" in this sense means post-consumerist. It denotes an ethos that values community and ecology and spirituality alongside or above wealth and social status. Although post-materialism in this latter sense may indeed in some cases be an expression of a metaphysical premise that is post-materialist in the present sense, there is no necessary link, in the sociological literature of post-materialism, between such a premise and the values that are taken to define post-consumerism.

xii I have used this framework elsewhere to develop a version of a post-materialist cosmology. See *The Ecological Self*, Routledge, London, 1991 and *For Love of Matter*, SUNY, Albany NY, 2003.

xiii The Dao of Confucianism is a way of accommodation, whereby the sage seeks not a fixed truth but a breadth of perspective that enables him to respond fittingly and appropriately to all the

different circumstances in which he might find himself. See, for instance, Francois Jullien, "Did Philosophers Have to Become Fixated on Truth?", *Critical Inquiry*, 28, 4, 2002

xiv "The Dao that can be told is not the eternal Dao" is, of course, the first line of Laozi's *Daodejing*.

xv This is why commentators such as Alan Watts describe Dao as the "watercourse Way". See Alan Watts, *The Watercourse Way*, Pantheon, New York, 1975
On the idea that water is the "root metaphor" of Chinese culture, see Sarah Allan, *The Way of Water and Sprouts of Virtue*, Suny, Albany NY, 1997

xvi The best version of this – very systems-theoretic – interpretation of Dao that I know of is Roger Ames, "Putting the Te back into Taoism" in J. Baird Callicott and Roger Ames (eds), *Nature in Asian Traditions of Thought*, SUNY Prss, Albany New York, 1989

xvii Admittedly there are readings of Laozi and Zhuangzi that deny that these texts are cosmological. (For one account of the sceptical school of interpretation, see online article "Relativistic Sceptism in the Zhuangzi", www.hku.hk/philodep/ch/Skeptic.htm.) This is not the place to try to justify my choice of the usual, cosmological interpretation, particularly of Laozi. More serious for the present project perhaps is the fact that some commentators deny that Dao, even understood cosmologically, has ends of its own. (See, for instance, Francois Jullien, *The Propensity of Things*, Zone Books, New York, 1999 and Wei Wu Wei, *All Else is Bondage*, Hong Kong University Press, Hong Kong, 1964.) To this one might reply that if the point of Daoism is to teach us to live in accordance with Dao then Dao must has normative significance. But if it has normative significance, mustn't it have normative direction of its own, where this implies something like what I am calling conativity? Against this one might say that the reason Dao has normative significance is just that when we align with its dynamics we find that this is the most effective way to live, even though those dynamics are not in themselves directed to some larger good. But if expediency were the only reason for following Dao – if we followed it only because doing so served our interests best - then the normativity of Dao would only be conditional. If there came a time when we could serve our interests more successfully by way of technology, for instance – a technology that cut across the flow patterns of nature - then there would be no reason to continue following Dao. Yet the commitment of Daoists to Dao is *not* conditional in this way. I conclude that Dao must indeed be understood as unfolding towards some larger "good", even though the good in question is one which cannot be known or named.

xviii See Freya Mathews, "Letting the World Do the Doing", *Australian Humanities Review*, 33, 2004

xix Alan Watts offers some foresightful examples of the implications of *wu wei* for environmental design in *The Watercourse Way*, op cit.
xx See David Rothenberg, *Why Birds Sing*, Allen Lane, 2005.

xxi For a full account of conativity and which systems count as possessing it and which do not, see my books, *The Ecological Self* and *For Love of Matter*, op cit.

xxii In a book entitled *Nature's Magic: Synergy in Evolution and the Fate of Humankind*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2003, systems scientist Peter Corning argues that synergy is the basic principle driving the universe. However, his definition of synergy is

extremely loose, and includes any kind of association between elements or parties. In particular, he doesn't distinguish between synergy and co-operation. Synergy, he says, "refers to the combined, or cooperative, effects produced by the relationships among various forces, particles, elements, parts, or individuals in a given context – effects that are not otherwise possible." (p. 2) Thus his normative prescriptions do not differ from codes of mutual aid that have been current for centuries if not millennia – from the assertion in Ecclesiastes, for instance, that two are better than one, through Petr Kropotkin's *Mutual Aid* to contemporary feminist theories of the cooperative and affiliative modalities of women. ("Two are better than one, because they have good return for their work: if one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no-one to help him up. Also, if two lie down together, they can keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken." Ecclesiastes 4:9-11)

[xxiii]   See Emma Rush, *Consume with Care*, PhD thesis, University of Melbourne, 2005.

[xxiv] See William McDonough and Michael Braungart, *Cradle to Cradle: Remaking the Way We Make Things*, North Point Press, New York, 2002. p. 73

[xxv] See Peter Kropotkin (1974). *Fields Factories and Workshops Tomorrow*, George Allen and Unwin: London: 17.

[xxvi] See Michael R. Saso, *Taoism and the Rite of Cosmic Renewal*, 2nd ed, Washington State University Press, Pullman, 1990. Also Martin Palmer, *The Elements of Taoism*, Element, Shaftesbury Dorset, 1991. According to Palmer, the main function of contemporary Taoist priests is "that of ensuring the continued cycle of cosmic renewal liturgies. These try to make sure that the balance of yin and yang, the action between Heaven, Earth and Humanity, and the eternal struggle between order and chaos are kept going along the lines of the Way……these liturgies carry a basic message about the relationship between human beings and the rest of creation, both spiritual and material. The message is that the role we have to play is that of tending the balance and maintaining the harmony. If we fail to do this, then chaos and disorder break out on the Earth, and the world as we know it will collapse. It is within these vast, cosmic, liturgical and ritualistic roles that Humanity finds its true destiny according to Taoism." P. 125-126

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