

From “Governance” to “Non-Intervention”: An Ecological Interpretation of “Reversal is the Movement of the Dao” in *Through the Arc of the Rain Forest*

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Abstract

The current world ecological crisis is rooted in the logic of “human governance” dominated by the Western linear developmentalism, which is objectifying nature and controlling it through technological interventions. Academics believe that such logic can be traced back to Western Christian anthropocentrism, and the tragedy of Matacao rainforest development presented by Karen Yamashita in *Through the Arc of the Rain Forest* profoundly reveals the ecological evils of such linear thinking: the colonizers’ forced transformation of the rainforest ecosystem through “progressive” initiatives such as road construction and resource extraction, which eventually led to the spread of plague and cultural collapse, is a perfect illustration of the ancient warning of “Acting rashly leads to misfortune (Chapter 16 of the *Tao Te Ching*)”, that human-induced changes to the natural process will ultimately result in a reversal of the consequences. Although the idea of “Deep Ecology” put forward by Arne Naess in 1973 criticized anthropocentrism, it has not yet transcended the linear logic of “human management of nature” and is unable to solve the problem at all. In the novel, the tenacious vitality of the rainforest system for self-repair, the survival wisdom of the aboriginal people of “adapting to the natural cycle and retreating at the right time,” and Kazumasa Ishimaru’s eventual choice of “returning to the nature” exactly echoes the Taoist cycle philosophy of “Reversal is the movement of the Dao (Chapter 40 of *Tao Te Ching*)”, which points out the fundamental way out of today’s

ecological governance with the wisdom of cyclicality, transformation of opposites, and reversal to the roots. The core revelation is that ecological governance does not lie in more powerful technological interventions, but rather in the way of returning of “Attain utmost emptiness; preserve deepest stillness (Chapter 16 of *Tao Te Ching*)”-----recognizing the subjective status of nature, respecting its ability to self-regulate, and not going against what nature has done. The way to solve the contemporary ecological crisis may lie in the reverse thought of this millennium classic.

Key words: Reversal is the movement of the Dao; *Tao Te Ching*; *Through the Arc of the Rain Forest*; ecological philosophy; Western linear development thought

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The ecological crisis is one of the major challenges facing mankind at present, and its root cause lies not only in technological or economic limitations, but also in the attitude of mankind towards the basic knowledge of nature. The traditional linear development concept simplifies nature to a calculable and manipulable object, and tries to realize ecological governance through technological progress and economic expansion, but ultimately makes human beings fall into the cyclical paradox of “governance---destruction---regovernance”. Although deep ecology criticizes anthropocentrism, it has not yet transcended the management logic of “technological restoration of nature”, and its holistic framework still harbors the inertia of subject-object dichotomy at the practical level. Because of this theoretical dilemma, it is of urgent practical significance

to review the reverse ecological wisdom of Eastern philosophy. In Chapter 40 of *Tao Te Ching*, Laozi once proposed that “Reversal is the movement of the Dao”, which reveals the subjectivity and self-healing mechanism of nature through the triple dialectic rules of circularity, oppositional transformation, and return to the roots, and Karen Yamashita’s magical realism *Through the Arc of the Rain Forest* provides a literary footnote for this philosophy. The purpose of this paper is to analyze the ecological narratives in *Through the Arc of the Rain Forest* within the theoretical framework of the triple connotation of “Reversal is the movement of the Dao,” and to explore the path of ecological governance that transcends anthropocentrism and technological hegemony, so as to provide a paradigm shift for the contemporary ecological crisis that is both humbly and sustainably developed. This study not only promotes interdisciplinary dialogues between ecological philosophy and literature, but also activates the contemporary vitality of ancient wisdom through literary narratives. In the predicament of the Anthropocene, Taoism’s reverse thinking of “returning to the roots” may be the key to the survival of civilization.

THE ECOLOGICAL VIOLENCE CARTOGRAPHY OF THE WESTERN DEVELOPMENTALISM: LINEAR GOVERNANCE AND TECHNOHEGEMONY IN THROUGH THE ARC OF THE RAIN FOREST

In the face of the current global ecological crisis, ecophilosophers have argued that the roots of the crisis may be found as far back as human history. In 1967, Lynn White, in *The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis*, points out that the roots of the ecological crisis can be traced back to the anthropocentrism of Western Christianity, in which God created man in his own image in *Genesis* and gave mankind the power to rule over nature. In the work of *Through the Arc of the Rain Forest*, Karen Yamashita satirizes the “technological omnipotence” of modern society by portraying the character Jonathan B. Tweep, an embodiment of technological arrogance. Tweep mines and manufactures plastics without restraint, convinced that mankind can reprogram nature with technology. It is not just the technology itself that is condemned here, but also the human attitude towards nature. Lynn White similarly suggests that “how humans act on ecological issues depends on how we view the relationship between humans and nature.” (1967).

Following this question, it is not difficult to find the following concepts that are ecologically harmful: first, human beings are diametrically separated from nature; second, human beings always assign a value to themselves that is higher than that of nature (Weisheng Tang, 2021).

When we look at the history of the development of human societies, in which humans have always played the role of masters, viewing nature as a reservoir of resources that passively serves human needs, who exactly has given humans such power? In the classic essay *The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis*, Lynn White pinpointed the ideology of the ecological crisis in the West as originating from the Christian doctrine of “man’s dominion over nature”: “God created man in His own image.... and God blessed them, and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and rule it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.’” (1967). This religious mandate provided the ethical basis for the subsequent scientific and industrial revolutions, which saw deforestation, land reclamation, and mineral exploitation as “doing God’s will.”

This linear developmentalism and anthropocentric technological hegemony, rooted in Western philosophy, is deeply and specifically exposed and criticized in the literary narrative, which is one of the core issues that Karen Yamashita focuses on in *Through the Arc of the Rain Forest*. In the magical realist narrative of *Through the Arc of the Rain Forest*, Karen Yamashita uses the character of J.B Tweep to profoundly deconstruct the Western linear developmentalism: the so-called “progress” is nothing but a deadly illusion woven by anthropocentrism and technological hegemony. At the same time, she uses the imagery of the “sphere” to question the revision of the “wholeness” of deep ecology, and to ask whether humans have lost their reverence for nature when they see it as an “encompassing whole”? Deep ecology’s conception of “human beings as stewards of the whole” may not have essentially escaped the anthropocentric framework.

The Technological Incarnation of the Myth of Linearity: Tweep’s Practice of “Governance”

Tweep’s first show-up was accompanied by the departure of the previous leader of GGG. Because of his natural leadership skills in business, Tweep quickly rose to leadership within GGG. Upon hearing about the discovery of “feathers” by Mane Pena in Matacao and its claimed healing properties, Tweep quickly recognized the opportunity and could not wait to go to Brazil and work with Mane Pena. In addition, he joined forces with the “pigeon couple” Batista and Tania to expand the breeding of pigeons, so that more feather products could reach the market. The value of feathers has risen sharply, and the Matacao region is experiencing a “feather fever”. In the novel, Karen Yamashita writes with irony: “Feather distributors could see the future heaped in gold feathers, speculating that it could be the biggest rush on Brazilian resources since gold was discovered in Serra Pelada region back in the eighties. (Karen Yamashita)” However, the bodies of two feather worshippers falling from the sky began to cast doubt on feathers. And as

more and more feather lovers died of typhoid fever, many began to believe that this was a clear sign of retaliation, that the destruction of the beautiful birds could no longer be tolerated, and that it was nature’s warning to mankind. In this case, Tweep’s solution was to replace real feathers with plastic ones, and so turned his attention to natural plastic mining in the Matacao region.

It can be noted that Tweep’s logic of action is based on an instrumentalized imagination of nature. In his view, nature is like a malfunctioning system that needs to be debugged, and technology is the only effective tool for fixing it. Even when scientists later discovered that the cause of typhoid fever was the ease with which feathers spread lice, he still believed in artificial plastic feathers as the answer: “You don’t understand, I tried. The artificial plastic feathers are the answer. It’s a problem of removing the magnetism, with proper marketing, plastic feathers could work again,” he adds, “It’s a problem of technology, and plastic feathers wouldn’t harbor lice. (Karen Yamashita)”. This instrumentalized logic that reduces nature to physical principles is a direct reference to the philosophical legacy of Bacon’s “torture of nature”. In his *Novum Organum: Sive Indicia Vera de Interpretatione Naturae* (1620), Francis Bacon, under the influence of the dominant worldview of the modern era, declared that “knowledge is power” and that nature should be “tortured” through experimentation and induction, forcing nature to be interrogated like a prisoner to give up its secrets. In *New Atlantis* (1627), he constructed “Solomon’s Palace,” a scientist-driven research facility that depicted his ideal scientific utopia (Schulman Ari, 2023): a laboratory in a mine 3,000 meters below the ground to simulate geological changes, an optical instrument in a tower to observe celestial bodies, and a giant ice cellar to study the effects of hypothermia and so on. In Bacon’s view, nature is a beast that needs to be tamed and he declared that mankind would restore its dominion over nature through science (Miner Robert, 2023). He even used the analogy of ants, spiders, and bees to suggest that scientists should take the initiative in harvesting the essence of nature like bees: “The empiricist is like the ant, who only gathers and uses; the rationalist is like the spider, who spits out silk and makes webs from itself alone; and the bee takes the middle way—it gathers material from the flowers of the garden and field, but uses its own from which it gathers material, but transforms and digests it with its own power. (1627)”. In the novel, the rainforest is reduced to a “malfunctioning system” to be debugged, and technology becomes a scepter for the conquest of nature, not for the purpose of understanding or harmonizing with it, but rather for the purpose of “wishful thinking” to control, modify, and exploit it. The solution of plastic feathers proposed by Tweep is the absurd manifestation of this deep-rooted worldview of “governance” in concrete action.

The Myth of Subject-Object Dualism: Ecological Objectification in Tweep’s action

At the same time, it should be noted that Tweep’s goals always follow the logic of “bigger, faster and stronger”. Together with the “pigeon couple” Batista and Tania, he has developed pigeon breeding from a family workshop into a global company, and the slogan of the feather industry has also changed from “exploring the healing value of feathers” to “reshaping the global fashion industry pattern”. Tweep’s promotion of the feather business has led to the presence of people carrying feathers in the Matacao region. On top of that, he imprisoned Kazumasa Ishimaru to use his frontal sphere to search for exploitable plastics in the Matacao region, in order to create his plastic kingdom to produce more plastic feathers to solve the typhoid problem caused by the misuse of natural feathers. “Every industry from construction to fashion would jump into Matacao plastics. (Karen Yamashita).” Such an obsession with efficiency and scale fits perfectly with the industrial-era ideology of pursuing infinite growth. At the same time, Tweep’s logic of believing that technology can eliminate ecological evils is a direct descendant of the distant Cartesian subject-object dualism: nature becomes a passive object, and humans, through reason and technology, become omniscient subjects. In 1637, Descartes, following Bacon’s spiritual thread of “torturing nature”, put forward the idea of “separation of subject and object” in his *Discourse on Method*, severing the symbiotic relationship between human beings and nature from its philosophical foundation (Frans Svensson, 2024). The famous “Cogito, ergo sum (I think, therefore I am)” establishes human reason as the absolute subject, while nature is passively reduced to an object to be analyzed. “I think” is the unique ability of human beings, even if the animals, such as high-level creatures in this metaphysical worldview also seems to be powerless. Since animals do not have the ability to “think for themselves”, they are regarded as “soulless automatons”. Animals are regarded as incapable of venting their pain or having any desires, but simply growing senselessly. Regardless of their behavior, since there are no such things as worldly desires, human beings do not need to think carefully about what to do with them (Ayumu Tamura, 2025).

Descartes’ philosophical framework invariably cloaks Tweep’s behavior in a cloak of “ethical immunity”. According to Descartes’ logic, since nature is defined as a silent, senseless object, it seems that human beings, as the only subjects with the ability to “think for themselves,” are naturally justified in taking from nature. In Tweep’s eyes, the rainforests, mineral deposits and other non-human life energies in Matacao, such as the small sphere in front of Ishimaru’s forehead, are a huge and silent resource pool, whose significance of existence is for the development of human beings, especially for the realization of his

blueprint for his own personal “Plastic Kingdom”. This subject-object dualism logic directly leads to his response to the typhoid problem. He did not reflect on his own abuse of natural feathers plundering behavior, but to try to solve the ecological backlash through another plundering - the mining of plastic. The creation of plastic feathers essentially replaces one direct exploitation of nature with another, more insidious, systemic exploitation with a longer chain. Instead of bridging the rift between humans and nature, this behavior deepens the Cartesian subject-object dichotomy. The “plastic kingdom” that Tweep attempts to create thus becomes an ecological paradox, attempting to create new problems such as resource depletion and the enslavement of Kazumasa Ishimaru, in order to repair old problems such as the misuse of natural feathers and the outbreak of typhoid fever, embodying the logic of the industrial age that is solving technological evils with technology. The scene of “Every industry from construction to fashion would jump into Matacao plastics.” written by Karen Yamashita also reveals the consequences of this logic. When the mining of plastic becomes the solution to ecological problems, Descartes’ subject-object dualism is pushed to an even more extreme situation, and nature is completely reduced to an object that can be infinitely dismantled, reorganized, and consumed by human beings.

The Dilemma of Correction: The “Wholeness” Metaphor of the Sphere

Both Bacon’s “torture of nature” and Descartes’ dualism point directly to a central idea: nature has been downgraded from an organic life-form to a passive resource base, and it is therefore philosophically legitimate for mankind to plunder the earth in order to develop industrial civilization. This almost brutal coupling of theories forms the DNA of the Western linear developmentalism, and Tweep’s behavior is fully in line with the traditional linear developmentalism, which reduced nature to a mechanical system that can be manipulated in the form of a single chain of “resource extraction---expansion of production---waste discharge” process. It is this underlying logic of “anthropocentrism” that “perfectly” meets the zeitgeist of industrial civilization, which flourished after the Industrial Revolution. It cannot be denied that the development of the western world has benefited from such an ideology, but what is frightening is that human beings seem to hope to cover up the finiteness and fragility of the ecosystem with “unlimited economic growth”, and after the destruction of nature, they simply believe that all damages are reversible, and fantasize about realizing the recycling of resources through technological upgrading. This anthropocentric technological hegemony has become one of public enemies of ecologists in their fight against ecological breakage. At the same time, they are actively

looking for other ways to try to repair the limitations of linear thinking. Against this background, there have been reflections and revisions within Western ecological thought. Among them, the idea of “Deep Ecology” put forward by Arne Naess in 1973 is an important critique of traditional anthropocentrism and technological omnipotence, and a more profound inquiry into a series of issues such as the relationship between humans and nature (Yayli & Yaslikaya, 2015).

In order to further analyze the relationship between human beings and nature, Ness emphasizes the adoption of a “holistic image” to replace the original idea of a strong personal color, trying to transcend the Cartesian subject-object dichotomy. In this understanding, the entire ecosystem is viewed as a whole, both human and non-human. This “wholeness” is presented in the novel in a magical way. The mysterious sphere suspended in front of Kazumasa Ishimaru’s forehead, as a non-human being, is bound to Kazumasa Ishimaru at the beginning of the novel, both as a medium of communication with the rainforest and as a metaphor for ecological networks, echoing the deep ecologists’ idea of identifying with the world in “interrelationships”. Deep ecologists believe that humans will take better care of the world if they identify themselves with the world in their interrelationships (Meurs Boris van, 2019). This idea of wholeness integrates humans and nature in an attempt to move away from the idea of “anthropocentrism.”

The idea of “wholeness” strengthens the connection between human beings and the natural world, and reflects Ness’s “self-actualization”, which is at the heart of deep ecology. It is important to note that the “self” emphasized by deep ecology here is not the same as the traditional sense of self, but the “self” that is connected to the natural world, and the process of self-realization is the self-realization in which human beings realize that they are part of a larger whole (Department of History & Philosophy, Virginia State University, Petersburg, VA, USA, 2020). Nature then becomes an extension of the human body into another whole, and to protect and respect the human “self” is to protect and respect nature. But such an argument focuses on the awakening of individual consciousness and underestimates the destructive power of structural forces such as economic development. When non-human beings are viewed as an extension of the human body, this provides an even stronger justification for the destruction and appropriation of the human body. According to this logic, nature is inevitably embedded in the human “self,” and the ending inevitably leads to the homogenization of linear thought, i.e., the “self-actualization” emphasized by deep ecology is still a narrative from a human standpoint. In the novel, the sphere and Ishimaru Kazumasa always keep a certain distance from each other, suspended in front of his forehead, which is not only a part of his body but also has independent consciousness. This kind

of relationship between the sphere and Ishimaru is a metaphor for the contradictory state of "embeddedness and detachment" between human beings and nature. At the end of the novel, the sphere finally separates from Kazumasa Ishimaru and floats alone to the depths of the rainforest, which completes the metaphorical reversal of the plot. As a non-human being, the sphere chooses to temporarily attach itself to human beings just to reveal the ecological truth, and the whole text does complete the narrative from the perspective of the sphere. The human beings' belief that the orb belongs to "themselves" is a ridiculous misunderstanding.

Through the imagery of the "sphere", Karen Yamashita also questions deep ecology: when humans see nature as an "embracing whole", have they also lost their reverence for it? The fact that the little ball ultimately chooses to leave suggests that true ecological wisdom may be far beyond the framework of human understanding, just as Ness's theory of "self-actualization" is ultimately a narrative constructed from the standpoint of humans, and the rainforest remains silent. Deep ecology's quest for wholeness is inspiring, but it has not been able to escape the logic of technological intervention and the limits of its understanding of natural inclusiveness (Boris, 2019). Although it criticizes the violent technological solutions of the Tweeps, its holistic theoretical framework can easily lead to a different kind of extreme ecological management in practice. Just as Tweep attempts to repair the disaster caused by the misuse of natural feathers with plastic feathers, the underlying logic of deep ecology's conception of "human beings as stewards of the whole" has not yet escaped the linear logic of technological intervention, and the manipulation of nature in the name of "governance" is actually accelerating the collapse of nature, and the technological restoration that fits human beings' wishful thinking is only killing the foundation of their own survival.

THE PRICE OF ILLUSION: THE ECOLOGICAL COLLAPSE IN MATACAO

Tweep's logic of "human management of nature" escalates a localized ecological disorder, typhoid fever, to an irreversible collapse of the ecosystem, and the tragedy of the Matacao rainforest presented by Karen Yamashita in *Through the Arc of the Rain Forest* reveals the ecological evils of such linear thinking in a profound way.

The "feather fever" that Tweep initiated in Matacao did not last as long as he expected. As the bodies of two feather worshippers fell from the sky, people began to doubt their fervor for feathers. More typhoid fever then swept through Matacao, and more and more feather enthusiasts died in the sudden outbreak. Then people realized with horror that this must be the revenge of the birds. Beautiful birds were being stripped alive of their

feathers and now feather lovers were dying one by one in bizarre ways, which must be a warning from nature to mankind. And in the face of nature's warning, Tweep is unusually calm that the solution is hidden in Matacao's plastic deposits. He says: "You don't understand, I tried. The artificial plastic feathers are the answer. It's a problem of removing the magnetism, with proper marketing, plastic feathers could work again, (Karen Yamashita)." The logic of his action centered on reducing nature to a technical fault that could be fixed, and even though he later learned that the real cause of typhoid was the tendency of feathers to carry lice, he insisted: "It's a problem of technology, and plastic feathers wouldn't harbor lice. (Karen Yamashita)." Yet the novel reveals the absurdity of this Cartesian dichotomy of subject-object thinking with sharp irony. Instead of solving typhoid fever, the plastic feathers that Tweep is so proud of have caused genetic mutations in rats and accelerated the collapse of the ecosystem because of the exploitation of Matacao plastic. At the same time, this logic of reducing ecological problems to technological malfunctions has become a literary footnote to Deep Ecology's critique of "technological omnipotence". While multinational corporations GGG tries to solve the problem of lice transmission by producing plastic feathers, the rainforest mocks technological rationality with such surreal backlash as the genetic mutation of rats and the mutation of human limbs (Tweep's three arms, Michelle's trinitamia), echoing Ness's warning about technological rationality overstepping the complexity of ecosystems.

At the same time, Tweep joins forces with Batista and Tania to expand the breeding scale of pigeons, expanding the feather industry from a family workshop to a globalized industry, and attempting to further upgrade the value of feathers from "healing" to "reshaping the global fashion landscape". In order to solve the typhoid fever caused by the misuse of feathers, he expanded the production of plastic feathers and imprisoned Kazumasa Ishimaru to search for more plastic resources in the Matacao region to create his "plastic kingdom". People wearing feathers can be seen everywhere in Matacao, and "Every industry from construction to fashion would jump into Matacao plastics. (Karen Yamashita)". This idea of pursuing economic growth at the expense of ecological carrying capacity is also criticized by deep ecology. However, although theorists of deep ecology criticize this model of development and advocates "biosphere egalitarianism," it is still a bit weak when confronted with the structural forces of economic expansion (Weisheng Tang, 2021). In the end, the novel ironically reveals the futility of such fantasies through the allegory of the plastic deposits in Matacao: when human beings, in the pursuit of development, treat plastics which were once regarded as garbage, as "natural deposits" and exploit

them frantically, causing irreversible damage to the ecosystems, the so-called creation of resources is nothing more than the acceleration of the cycle of destruction.

More philosophically, the novel subverts Tweep's linear thinking with a cyclical view of time. Plastic, once considered garbage in Matacao, is now treated as a mineral in the pursuit of economic development, and ultimately becomes a deadly toxin that pollutes the rainforest through uncontrolled exploitation and utilization. Mineral deposits become the main culprits in destroying the ecology, and in order to solve the ecological problems, human beings have to continue to take from nature, and the ecology is damaged even worse, so that the boundary between the past, the present and the future is broken. This contrasts sharply with the linear logic of "identifying problems --- solving problems --- realizing progress" on which Tweep always relies. Such a narrative structure also shows that nature always follows the law of cyclic and symbiotic time, while the linear progress pursued by human beings is just a futile attempt to measure the spiral with a straight line.

And the abuse of feathers eventually leads to an outbreak of typhoid fever, where thousands die in despair and Matacao becomes the center of suffering. Technological arrogance eventually collapsed in the face of the mystery and complexity of the ecosystem. Meanwhile, as typhoid fever spreads across the globe, birds, the vectors that spread the disease and pose a serious threat to human life, unfortunately become the center of attention. In an attempt to kill typhoid fever once and for all, the Matacao government carried out a controversial act. Officials burned feathers and various birds were sprayed with chemical poisons. Such an act completely tears off the salvific pretense of the linear developmentalism and exposes the face behind the mask: the intention of defending one's own interests by transferring the crisis. Through the tragedy of Matacao, Karen Yamashita calls for a radical paradigm to save the ecology, that is, the only way to break out of the cycle of linear myths is to reject the logic of human beings' exploitation of nature and to embrace the symbiotic thinking of nature in the style of the aboriginal people, and if we try to illuminate everything with the light of technology, we will be stifling our own possibilities of existence. The collapse of the governance model means the bankruptcy of the anthropocentric paradigm. The logic of Tweep and the GGG group behind him which sees the ecological crisis in Matacao as a "technological malfunction" that can be manipulated, and even plundered further to turn it into another development opportunity, can never escape from the cycle of "objectifying nature--- transferring the crisis---

expanding further". The truth that the ecological collapse of the rainforest reveals to the reader is that when human beings try to govern the ecology and override the complexity of nature with the arrogance of technology, the end will inevitably be the disintegration of the whole system. In the face of this crisis, ecologists are eager to repair the correlation between human beings and nature as a whole, and the relationship between human beings and nature should be more than mere "anthropocentrism" or overkill "eco-centrism" (Marland, 2013).

Is there an ecological view that proves that the world is non-dualistic, and that everything constitutes a whole in mutual transformation and cyclic movement? Following this clue, the metaphysical thinking of Taoism entered their vision. Beginning in the twentieth century, Chinese and foreign scholars engaged in a campaign that continues to this day to reread *Tao Te Ching* and other writings with an ecological eye (Shuttleworth, 2025).

It is worth mentioning that while western scholars in the twentieth century attempted to break through the Cartesian dichotomy of subject and object, such as Stacy Alaimo's proposal of "Trans-corporeality", which advocated the dissolution of the boundaries of the species, Taoist thought had gained insight into the non-dualistic wisdom of the oneness of all things more than two thousand years ago. Compared to western ideas such as dualism or deep ecology, the Taoist school represented by Laozi offers a more moderate view of nature and provides new ideas for solving the contemporary global ecological crisis. In chapter 40 of *Tao Te Ching* Laozi once proposed that "Reversal is the movement of the Dao", which is based on the perception of circularity, revealing that the core law of movement of all things is cyclical and emphasizing the dialectical rule that things will inevitably return to their origin when they reach extremes (Liu, 2024). If "Dao" is the core of Laozi's philosophical system, then "Opposite" is the center of Laozi's dialectics. According to this ontology, the operation of things follows the cyclical law of "occurrence---development---extremity---decline---recovery" (Michael, 2024). When this logic is projected to ecological issues, it will be manifested that ecosystem succession is not a straight line forward, but a spiral change, which is fundamentally different from the western traditional linear thinking. The linear developmentalism respects the principle that time never returns, and ecological restoration relies on human technology, while the Taoist idea of "Opposite" recognizes the subjective position of nature in self-restoration. This means that the development of all things must go through a process of cyclical, antagonistic transformation and then return to its roots, reflecting the wisdom of the reverse.

C O U N T E R - H E A L I N G : A CONTEMPORARY INTERPRETATION OF "REVERSAL IS THE MOVEMENT OF THE DAO" IN *THROUGH THE ARC OF THE RAIN FOREST*

Lynn White pointed out in *The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis* that "how human beings act on ecological issues depends on how we look at the relationship between human beings and nature (1967)", i.e., the ecological crisis is, in the final analysis, a crisis of attitudes ----- human beings' attitudes towards nature. The western Christian admonition of "govern this place" puts human beings on top of nature, making nature a passive objectification and an object to be dominated, thus laying down the template of "domination---utilization", which has become the ethical premise of the modern industrial civilization's wanton exploitation of nature. This unidirectional thinking is visualized in *Through the Arc of the Rain Forest* through the "plastic omnipotence" of the "technomaniac" Tweep: he tries to solve the ecological problem of typhoid fever by inventing the "plastic feather" when typhoid fever is sweeping through the area, which is exactly what Laozi said: "What is truly great moves onward; in moving onward it reaches far. (Chapter 25 of *Tao Te Ching*)", a linear rampage that demands the ecosystem indefinitely in order to push it to the extreme point of development. Through the tragedy of the development in Matacao, Karen Yamashita intends to show that when mankind oversteps the limits of the ecosystem and tries to reconstruct the natural order with technological violence, it will certainly trigger the ancient warning of Laozi: "When things reach their prime, they begin to age. (Chapter 30 of *Tao Te Ching*)".

In sharp contrast, the novel is characterized by a continuous surge of "rainforest consciousness", i.e., the ancient wisdom of the rainforest aborigines resonating with the original forest: Mane Pena, the aborigine who does not want to wear shoes, and Chikpak's mother, who adheres to the primitive lifestyle even after she moves to the big city, are in line with the Taoist principle of "Reversal is the movement of the Dao". This phrase reveals that all things are in a cycle of intergeneration, and that human beings are not the masters of nature, but only a link in the ecological network of "Bearing the yin and holding to the yang". Laozi's idea of "opposite" implies that the solution to the ecological crisis does not lie in technological advances, but rather in a return from the attitude of "conquering nature" to the attitude of "following the Dao" (Yiming Wang, 2025). While Tweep is lost in the dream of nothingness brought about by plastic, the rainforest is quietly repairing its own trauma by the law of "What is truly great moves onward; in moving onward it reaches far and in reaching far it returns

to its source. (Chapter 25 of *Tao Te Ching*)". In the novel, Karen Yamashita skillfully demonstrates the opposition of two cognitive paradigms through the narrative structure of "cycle", in which the linear view of progress represented by Tweep's objectification towards nature, while the rainforest's own symbiotic network of "Bearing the yin and holding to the yang" confirms Laozi's wisdom of self-cultivation: "When Heaven and Earth are in harmony, sweet dew descends; without coercion, the people regulate themselves in equality. (Chapter 32 of *Tao Te Ching*)". This narrative reveals to the reader that ecological governance does not lie in technological manipulation, but rather in regaining the humility of "following the Dao" ----- only by recognizing that human beings are merely participants in the long development of the universe and respecting the ability of nature to self-regulate can we avoid the problem of "When things reach their prime, they begin to age. (Chapter 30 of *Tao Te Ching*)".

Justice in Cycles: The Resonance between Narrative Structure and Ecological Laws

As a representative of Taoist thought, the core of Laozi's philosophy lies in revealing the laws of the Dao, one of whose profound insights is that the Dao is cyclical. According to Laozi, the nature of things is cyclic, "Dao" is not fixed but constantly in motion. It is not some kind of static and unchanging absolute entity, but a dynamic existence with inner vitality, flowing endlessly, running more than to promote the growth and destruction of all things in the universe (Yiming Wang, 2025). As Laozi said: "What is truly great moves onward; in moving onward it reaches far and in reaching far it returns to its source. (Chapter 25 of *Tao Te Ching*)", these words succinctly summarize the way in which the Dao moves ----- from the infinitely expanding "greatness" to the outwardly running "moves onward", then to the extremely remote distance, and finally return to the original. The endless "Dao" seems to have infinite vitality, moving and not stopping.

In Laozi's philosophy, such as "The Dao produced One; One produced Two; Two produced Three; Three produced All things. All things carry the yin while embracing the yang, and it is through the interaction of these forces that harmony is attained. (Chapter 42 of *Tao Te Ching*)", "Dao" is the origin and law of the universe, everything is born in "Dao". "Dao" is everything. It is invisible, but it is also omnipresent (Yiming Wang, 2025). Laozi emphasized that "Dao has of all things the most honoured place. (Chapter 62 of *Tao Te Ching*)", explaining that the Dao is at the same time the inner law of the operation of all things, and since its central characteristic is eternal movement and circulation, then all things are also in this state of circulation. This cyclical movement is not simply repetitive, but spirals upward and back again. The phrase of "What is truly great moves onward; in moving onward it reaches far and in reaching far it returns to its source.

(Chapter 25 of *Tao Te Ching*)” is to illustrate the operation of all things must go through the spiral process of “birth --- bloom --- decline --- restoration”, and any expenditure of energy and matter will eventually return and reconstruct the balance, which is not only the spiral trajectory of the movement of matter, but also the ontological cycle of “Dao”. This cycle is just like the heavenly operation of “It moves in cycles without peril. (Chapter 25 of *Tao Te Ching*)”, the essence of which is the eternal return of “All things alike go through their processes of activity, and then we see them return to their original state (Chapter 16 of *Tao Te Ching*)”. If ecological governance ignores this cyclical law and follows the linear thinking of “take --- discard” mode, it will inevitably break through the system threshold and incur the backlash of “Acting rashly leads to misfortune. (Chapter 16 of *Tao Te Ching*)”, that is, when the system is pushed to the extremes of “big, dead, and far”, the forced retracement of “opposite” often appears in the form of ecological collapse, which is the modern echo of “Ignorant of the constant, rash action leads to misfortune. (Chapter 16 of *Tao Te Ching*)”.

In the spiral cycle of “Greatness---Flowing onward---Reaching far---Return”, the chapter titles of *Through the Arc of the Rain Forest* show a striking philosophical resonance with Laozi’s thought. The novel’s narrative progresses from “the Beginning” through “the Developing World” and “More Development”, step by step towards the critical point of “Loss of Innocence” and “More Innocence”, and finally completes the circular trajectory with “Return”, showing readers the cycle of the rainforest from its initial discovery to its exploitation, then to its destruction, and finally to its rebirth in self-repair. This structure coincides with the dynamic interpretation of Laozi’s saying, “Though the myriad things are diverse and numerous, each ultimately returns to its origin. (Chapter 16 of *Tao Te Ching*)”. When economic development breaks through the reasonable boundary of “growth --- prosperity”, it will trigger the system’s own “decline --- reversion” retracement. Just like the tragedy of typhoid triggered by outsiders’ frantic exploitation of plastics in the rainforest that punctured the membrane of the ecology, the “moves onward” linear rampage will eventually turn back under the rule of “opposite”.

The intertextualization of the novel’s cyclical narrative and Taoist thought in *Through the Arc of the Rain Forest*, under the superimposition of “Loss of Innocence” and further “More Innocence”, reveals a contemporary ecological warning. When “More Development” breaks through the limit of the ecosystem’s tolerance, “Loss of Innocence” is not only the disappearance of the ecological innocence of the primitive rainforest, but also the collapse of the morality of human ecological civilization. The progression of “Loss of Innocence” and the further “More Innocence” is also a concrete expression of “Ignorant of the constant, rash action leads to misfortune.” from

chapter 16 of *Tao Te Ching*. The misuse of feathers leads to the outbreak of typhoid fever, and the one-way demand of human beings triggers the violent repercussions of “opposite”. The novel eventually moves towards “Return”, which is not the ending, but the fundamental meaning of “Reversal is the movement of the Dao” in chapter 40 of *Tao Te Ching*, and after the ecosystem collapses, the regenerative power is always surging. This also provides a literary metaphor for modern ecological governance. Laozi emphasized that heaven’s principle is to reduce excess and make up for what is lacking, which means that the law of nature pursues balance and harmony. The symbiosis of “More Development” and “Loss of Innocence” also confirms the law of balance of “diminish superabundance and supply deficiency (Chapter 77 of *Tao Te Ching*)”. The real circular economy should establish the mechanism of “Return” and “Balance”, and it should also be the wisdom of water. In chapter 8 of *Tao Te Ching* Laozi explained that the highest good is like water, that is, water conserves everything without competition, but forms the cycle of “valleys --- rivers --- clouds and rain”. For example, cutting down the woods and then replanting, taking water and then replenishing the source, and so on. These practices are not only technical restoration, but also respect for the natural cycle.

At the same time, the “Return” in the ending of the novel is not the end, but the hibernation of the rainforest in the midst of the collapse, waiting for regeneration, echoing the cyclic reconciliation of “All things carry the yin while embracing the yang, and it is through the interaction of these forces that harmony is attained. (Chapter 42 of *Tao Te Ching*)”. This conformity to the cyclical laws of nature is in fundamental opposition to Tweep’s linear logic and obsession with “bigger, stronger, faster” efficiency in the novel. And Tweep’s behavior disregards the law of “Greatness---Flowing onward---Reaching far---Return” and ends up in the “Loss of Innocence” tragedy confirms the ancient warning from chapter 16 of *Tao Te Ching* of “Acting Rashly leads to misfortune”, staged mutant rats, three-armed, three-milked absurd drama. The circular thinking of Laozi’s philosophy of “It moves in cycle without peril (Chapter 25 of *Tao Te Ching*)”, as the source of oriental ecological wisdom, provides a paradigm that transcends time and space for breaking the limitations of linear development and governing contemporary ecosystems. In contemporary ecology, the cyclical movement of all things is visualized in natural mechanisms such as the water cycle and the carbon cycle. For example, tropical rainforests convert carbon dioxide into organic matter through photosynthesis, which is then returned to the soil through the work of decomposers. Such an operational mechanism perfectly illustrates the wisdom of the cycle of “All things alike go through their processes of activity, and then we see them return to their original state. (Chapter 16 of *Tao Te Ching*)”. The endless cycle

of life is neither mechanical repetition nor disorder, but rather a spiral of self-renewal. When human beings truly learn to move forward in the dynamic balance of “Moving onward” and “Returning”, they will be able to realize the sustainable development of “It moves in cycle without peril” in chapter 25 of *Tao Te Ching*.

Power of Gentleness: Symbiotic Wisdom of Resilient Equilibrium

At the same time, within the midst of the laws of ecosystem operation and the philosophical wisdom of *Tao Te Ching*, Karen Yamashita uses the literary narrative of *Through the Arc of the Rain Forest* as a bridge to form a dialectical resonance with Laozi’s philosophy that transcends time and space. In the preface of the novel, Karen Yamashita uses the imagery of “the arc of a rainbow” to allude to the connotation of “Reversal is the movement of the Dao.” in chapter 40 of *Tao Te Ching*, which is the law of the transformation of opposites. Laozi stated that when things reach their prime, they begin to age, which is a profound insight into this law, and it summarizes the core logic of “Reversal is the movement of the Dao. (Chapter 40 of *Tao Te Ching*)”.

When things reach their peak state of development, they will turn to aging. In this world, things grow to the extreme will then turn to the opposite, which is the natural law of the development of things. Laozi pointed out that, “Calamity and blessing are intertwined; each depends on and conceals the other. (Chapter 58 of *Tao Te Ching*)”, “Weight is the root of lightness; stillness is the master of agitation. (Chapter 28 of *Tao Te Ching*)”, and “What is straight becomes bent; what is good becomes evil. (Chapter 58 of *Tao Te Ching*)”, and “Some things are harmed yet benefit; some are benefited yet harmed. (Chapter 42 of *Tao Te Ching*)”. All the phrases here are to say that all things have two opposing sides, blessing and misfortune, lightness and heaviness, positive and odd, loss and gain, and good and evil and so on, but because there is a conflict between the two, once the conflict reaches a certain peak, it will be converted to the side of the opposing side, so it is not surprising that softness can overcome hardness, and that weakness can overcome strength (Michael, 2024).

In the preface of *Through the Arc of the Rain Forest* Karen Yamashita wrote “I have heard Brazilian children say that whatever passes through the arc of a rainbow becomes its opposite...”, which means whatever passes through the arc of a rainbow becomes its opposite. This is an intertextualization of the Taoist transformational logic of “Things grow to the extreme will then turn to the opposite”. The abuse of feathers in the novel ultimately leads to a plague that spreads throughout the Matacao region, which precisely confirms Laozi’s ecological allegory of “When things reach their prime, they begin to age. (Chapter 30 of *Tao Te Ching*)”, that is, when human greed pushes the exploitation of natural resources to the extreme, the prosperous virgin rainforest will collapse

into a decaying desert. When seeing scenes such as “when plants and trees reach their fullest vigor, they wither; when rivers and lakes overflow, they flood”, one can understand Laozi’s profound warning in chapter 30 of *Tao Te Ching*, that is, “What is strong will eventually grow old-----this is called the way’s reversal. The way’s reversal comes swiftly.”, which means when anything develops to the extreme of power, the next step is to go into decline. The next step is its demise. Such literary narratives in *Through the Arc of the Rain Forest* also recur in the reality of ecological governance, where mono-crops lead to the exhaustion of the earth’s power, and over-exploitation brings about economic prosperity, all exposing the unsustainability of mankind’s rigid control over nature.

The solution is addressed in the phrase “All things carry the yin while embracing the yang, and it is through the interaction of these forces that harmony is attained. (Chapter 42 of *Tao Te Ching*)”, which suggests that opposites can be transformed into each other under certain conditions. As Karen Yamashita wrote in the preface of *Through the Arc of the Rain Forest*, Laozi emphasizes “softness overcomes hardness”, and advocates that a new balance be struck between the two sides of a conflict in the midst of tension and relaxation, which is also true of ecological governance. Laozi tried to use the idea of balance and moderation to remind future generations to treat everything with the principle of “stopping at the right time”. He used the phrase of “Awareness of limits ensures safety.” in chapter 44 of *Tao Te Ching* to stress that if people know when to stop, they will not be in danger. He also used the example of “Sustaining an excessive fullness” to warn of the consequences of excessive pursuits: the water is full of overflow, the moon is full of losses, excessive pursuit of success but will lead to failure; things reach the peak of the active convergence, this is the wisdom of the Dao. The blind pursuit of linear economic growth in Tweep’s behaviour eventually led to what Laozi called “Ignorance of moderation”, the vicious consequences of genetic mutation in rats, human limb mutation (Tweep’s three arms, Michelle’s three breasts) and so on. The tragedy of the rainforest written by Karen Yamashita and the aphorism of Laozi that when things reach their prime they begin to age point to the fact that ecological protection and utilization, economic growth and ecological destruction are not absolute opposites, and the key to balance them lies in the scheduling of tension and relaxation. The limitations of traditional linear developmentalism have proved that those who try to conquer nature through strong control will eventually fail, while the theory of “self-actualization” in deep ecology advocates that human beings and nature are integrated as a whole, but this advocate regards nature as a part of the human “self” extension, which is a part of the human “self”, which inadvertently places humans at the center (Boris, 2019).

This theory underestimates the breaking power of capital-driven and may provide an excuse for potential human intervention on the grounds of “managing the extended self”, which is contrary to Laozi’s emphasis on a phrase of “Awareness of limits ensures safety”. On the other hand, the gentle way of following the natural elasticity and guiding the self-regulation of the system can achieve the lasting effect of “By embracing the principle of non-intervention, one achieves the natural fulfillment of all things without forced effort. (Chapter 48 of *Tao Te Ching*)”.

Non-Intervention: the Ultimate Transcendence of “Human Restoration”

In addition to this, the connotation of “Reversal is the movement of the Dao (Chapter 40 of *Tao Te Ching*)” also lies in the word “opposite”. The word “opposite” is “return”, which means that the development of things will ultimately return to their origin. Kazumasa Ishimaru’s choice to return to the field is a vivid interpretation of this reversion. When the technological illusion is shattered, life will return to its original state of resonance following the laws of nature. Laozi said that all living things, in their multitude, return to their root, which is called stillness; this is what is meant by returning to one’s destiny. In his view, all things in the world have to return to their roots, and follow the process of “opposite --- returning to the roots --- restoring life”. This means that only when the ecosystem returns to its original state can it realize its true stillness, and this stability is the embodiment of ecological vitality. However, this “stillness” here is not absolute stillness, but tends to be a kind of dynamic balance free from human intervention and conforming to the rhythm of nature, which is the embodiment of everything returning to the true nature of life and following the laws of nature. In the philosophical system of Taoism, Dao produced one and one produced two; Two produced three and three produced all things, which means “Dao” is the origin and operation law of everything in the universe, and “returning to the root” is to return to the domination of “Dao”. The ecosystem will rely on its own vitality and regulation mechanism to obtain a better and more stable ecological system in the absence of excessive intervention by human beings, that is, “Non-intervention”, which is very different from anthropocentrism that emphasizes “human intervention” and “technological restoration” (Shuttleworth, 2025).

The traditional linear developmentalism attempts to fix ecological problems through the development of technology, and this over-idealized thinking highlights its limitations in modern ecological governance. The paradox of “technological restoration” demonstrated by Karen Yamashita in *Through the Arc of the Rain Forest* is all the more alarming when one witnesses the drastic reduction of biodiversity due to planted forests and the pollution caused by the transfer of industries as

a result of mandatory emission reductions in modern society. Although the plastic sphere in front of Kazumasa Ishimaru’s forehead is capable of accurately detecting plastic deposits, the process of instrumentalizing this technology by the GGG company, represented by Tweep, precisely exposes the fatal flaws of anthropocentrism: the objectification of nature as a resource pool that can be claimed by human beings as they please. And the attempt of Tweep to solve the problem of typhoid fever by replacing the natural feather with a plastic feather is essentially the violent intervention of technological hegemony in the ecosystem. Laozi’s warning is deafening at this point. Once in chapter 64 of *Tao Te Ching* he claimed that to impose action upon things is to bring them to ruin; to grasp them with attachment is to forfeit them, which means the more intentionally forceful the intervention is, the more counterproductive it tends to be. Tweep’s obsession with the use of plastic feathers to solve the typhoid problem caused by the abuse of natural feathers ultimately fails to curb the disaster, but further triggers the genetic mutation of rats, accelerating the collapse of the entire ecosystem, which is the complete bankruptcy of linear technological intervention thinking, and is a vivid example of the “acting rashly leads to misfortune (Chapter 16 of *Tao Te Ching*)”.

At the same time, the small sphere in the novel, which is a metaphor for the “wholeness” of deep ecology, eventually breaks away from Kazumasa Ishimaru and chooses to float deep into the rainforest on its own. This shows that any attempt to treat nature as “a whole that can be understood and managed by humans” can hardly avoid usurping the independence of nature, and that humans cannot truly own or represent nature. And when the sphere disappears, the novel’s storytelling reveals a thought-provoking ecological revelation. Humans lose the technological support of the small plastic sphere to explore the plastic, but the rainforest does not collapse as expected, but instead regains its vitality through self-regulation, which also echoes the wisdom of Laozi’s “non-intervention”, that sometimes nature has its own way of fixing things without the intervention of human beings who think that they are doing it. In the Taoist view, the key to maintaining ecological balance lies not in external intervention, but in following the ecosystem’s inherent mechanism of self-regulation and self-balance. Laozi once said: “When Heaven and Earth act in harmony, nourishing dew descends; without any human directive, it is distributed in balanced measure by its own accord. (Chapter 32 of *Tao Te Ching*)”, which indicates that nature has the ability to regulate itself without external forces. “Non-intervention” is sometimes more important than “Government”. Current human ecological practices are often characterized by an “action bias”, a belief that something must be done to solve a problem (Wang, 2025).

Deep ecology tries to transcend the Cartesian subject-object dichotomy, but its management orientation reverts to a binary framework in practice, and its implicit orientation of "wholeness" easily reverts to the logic of human restoration and technological intervention in concrete practice. The final departure of the small sphere in *Through the Arc of the Rain Forest* is a metaphor for the dilemma of deep ecology. When humans attempt to incorporate nature into their own holistic understanding and implicitly manage it, the subjectivity and independent will of nature reveals this delusion. Whereas deep ecology fails to completely relinquish any form of human "restorative" superiority to become a pure "participant", Taoism makes a genuine attempt to realize this transcendence. When human beings do not regard themselves as "masters" but as participants in the ecosystem, the contradiction between subject and object is naturally dissolved.

Human cognition of nature breaks through the mode of "governance" and leads to the supreme realm of "non-intervention", which opens up a new dimension for contemporary ecological governance. This seemingly contradictory statement actually reveals the profound principle that, for ecological governance, the most effective governance is to activate the system's self-healing ability (Shuttleworth, 2025).

Tweep's obsession with solving typhoid fever with plastic feathers contrasts with the quiet self-healing of the rainforest, as a modern footnote to the saying of "When Heaven and Earth act in harmony, nourishing dew descends; without any human directive, it is distributed in balanced measure by its own accord. (Chapter 32 of *Tao Te Ching*)". Both the linear developmentalism and the failed logic of deep ecology's "restoration of nature" are improved by the literary dimension that the most brilliant governance is not to fight against the laws of nature, but rather to respect the laws of nature to achieve the goal of governance, taking "non-intervention" rather than "government" and realizing the delicate balance. In Taoist view, governing a great state is like cooking a small fish. It requires minimal interference to avoid spoiling the whole. However, it should be noted that "Non-intervention" does not mean passive inaction, but rather "not acting against nature" and "not forcibly interfering with ecological autonomy", allowing the ecosystem to operate according to its own laws. Taoist thought does not negate all human behaviors, and moderate intervention is necessary when the ecosystem has been seriously damaged and has lost its autonomy. At the same time, however, Laozi's philosophy reminds us that the goal of such intervention should be to restore ecological autonomy, not to take over the responsibility for its operation. The best way to treat a good ruler, so that the wise shall not mess up its degree and the brave shall not take away its knots, is to respect the restorative capacity of nature itself.

CONCLUSION

Lynn White suggests that "how humans act on ecological issues depends on how we view the relationship between humans and nature. (1967)". Tracing back to the source, the essence of the contemporary ecological crisis is the usurpation and deviation of anthropocentrism and technological hegemony from the laws of nature. The reverse wisdom of *Tao Te Ching*, "Reversal is the movement of the Dao", with its triple philosophical kernel of circularity, oppositional transformation and returning to the roots, provides profound insights into the myths of the traditional linear developmentalism. Western linear thinking reduces nature to an object that can be manipulated, and tries to cover up the limited nature of the ecosystem with technological interventions, which ultimately leads to the tragedy of "Plastic Omnipotence" of Tweep, as demonstrated by Karen Yamashita in *Through the Arc of the Rain Forest*, and falls into the backlash of "when things reach their prime, they begin to age. (Chapter 30 of *Tao Te Ching*)". In contrast, Taoist philosophy, centered on the cyclical concept of "Things move in cycle without peril (Chapter 25 of *Tao Te Ching*)", advocates the wisdom of "non-intervention" and emphasizes respect for the subjectivity and self-healing capacity of nature, opening up a path for contemporary ecological governance to humble itself and develop sustainably.

The tragedy and rebirth of the rainforest in *Through the Arc of the Rain Forest* is precisely a literary interpretation of "Reversal is the movement of the Dao (Chapter 40 of *Tao Te Ching*)". When human beings forcibly measure the spiral ecological law with linear logic, it will trigger the tragedy of "acting rashly leads to misfortune (Chapter 16 of *Tao Te Ching*)"; in the end, the rainforest will return to its roots through the cycle of self-repair, which confirms Laozi's saying that "When Heaven and Earth act in harmony, nourishing dew descends; without any human directive, it is distributed in balanced measure by its own accord. (Chapter 32 of *Tao Te Ching*)". If contemporary ecological governance wants to break out of the vicious cycle, it needs to first abandon the arrogance of conquering nature, and instead stimulate the inherent vitality of the ecosystem itself with a "non-intervention" attitude, following the same path as the Dao. The real power is not to override nature with technological hegemony, but to follow the elasticity of nature, and to realize sustainable development in the dynamic balance of "moving onward" and "opposite". The reverse healing *Tao Te Ching* is not only a philosophical response to the ecological problem, but also a reflection on the paradigm of human civilization so far. Only by regaining the wisdom of "Attain utmost emptiness and maintain profound stillness. (Chapter 16 of *Tao Te Ching*)" can we find the answer to the harmonious coexistence of man and nature in the spiral cycle.

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