Oneness and Particularity in Chinese Natural Cosmology: The Notion tianrenheyi

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The sensibilities suggested by the notion tianrenheyi have pervaded the Chinese philosophical narrative since, at the earliest, the Spring and Autumn Period, triggering ever novel and enriching interpretations. This paper, far from searching for some ostensible essence of the notion, engages tianrenheyi philosophically from a contemporary perspective. Investigating, inter alia, the kind of unity stipulated by the notion, its moral and spiritual entailments, as well as its relation to transcendence clears the way – now freed from some metaphysical barriers – to a fresh outlook on the interplay of oneness and particularity in Chinese natural cosmology. The relation between oneness and particularity will thereby emerge as necessarily vague and as mutually co-implicative, and resist any assertion of a preference for the one over the other.

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