

“I” as Relating:

The Self-Undoing of Metaphysical Foundations

Abstract : This paper challenges a persistent assumption in mainstream philosophy: that the self must be conceived as a substantial entity or an ultimate metaphysical ground. To move beyond this impasse, it constructs a new model through a rigorous synthesis of three seminal Chinese concepts: Confucian relational actuality (you), Daoist generative negativity (wu), and Buddhist empty openness (kong). From this synthesis emerges a central thesis: the “I” is most fundamentally not a being but the active process of relating itself (“I” as Relating).

This redefinition triggers a metaphysical self-undoing, dissolving the quest for a foundational subject. The argument culminates not in abstraction, but in a decisive turn to immediate present-moment awareness—the very site where this non-substantial self enacts its freedom. The essay’s radical 300-word classical form performs its philosophy, embodying the disciplined, present-focused cognition it advocates.

Keywords: Self; Metaphysics; Relational Self; Comparative Philosophy; Confucianism; Daoism; Buddhism; Phenomenology of Presence; Classical Chinese Philosophy

自我存在与消解：

论儒 “有”、道 “无”、佛 “空”

大千我在，对空而存。
空不自空，存不自存。
相对而生，即存即空。

相对既在，对谁而存？
相对相对，是名非对。
相对为存，非对即空。
无非对即无对，无空亦无存。

我既对空，我即偏有。
我即相对，相对偏有。
以我为有，同入虚无。

无为真空，以对全有。
既无全有，何来真空？
偏有为存，对空不真，
以偏概全，以存论真，
纵谷迷津，辨我方清。

我是存，是空，是相对。
我非存，非空，亦非对。
我既已存，空存确在。
何空何存，因我而成。

即空而自由，即有而担当。
即空即存处，无寄无藏中。
无空亦无存，是谓大逍遥。

逍遥非知解，当下一念彰。
念迷觉醒时，念觉境即转。
念知即是行，非学亦非得。
即物即分明，分明在当下。

文本非文，因汝成文。

汝在当下，文即非文。

凡尘（Mundane Dust）

乙巳年戊子月癸酉日（December 30, 2025）