**A New Social Network: Using Daoism To Filter Out
the Bad and Manifest the Good**

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   Does a Taoist tai chi master possess the knowledge and power to run a social network that simply is, and not does. That is, can Daoist principles be leveraged to devise a social network of folks who can coexist peacefully without compromising their individual freedom of expression? This interesting question aims to solve the societal polarization that the citizens of the United States - in particular - must not turn a blind eye to. Social networks have the power to inform major systematic, socio-political divisions in real-time by helping to effortlessly propagate lies, deception, and fantasy. Even so, many news media outlets couldn't keep up with the drama stirred up by social networks, compelling them to stoop to their level of misinformation. Just recently, Dominion™ has accused Fox™ of luring viewers in by "indulging their incorrect belief that the 2020 election was rigged". In a settled lawsuit, it was revealed that "on-air talent and top executives knew that Trump's conspiracy theories about the hacked election were false, but aired them anyway"(Knefel, 2023). Mentioning this is not intended to defame Fox, but rather highlight the detrimental effects of almost all current social networks.

   So, what design pattern is the perfect solution to implement into society? Unfortunately, transcribing society onto technology without friction is a fruitless exercise. Fortunately, Daoism, unlike big-data company ideology, recognizes and accepts this simple fact. Dating back about 2500 years, Lao Zi wrote the Tao Te Ching, which defines the guiding principles of ancient Chinese philosophy. Yet unlike Mark Zuckerberg, Lao Zi dissociated himself from his *own* creation. In recognizing his own veil of ignorance, he merely acts as an imperfect (human) vessel in which to communicate Daoism. In this way, others can channel its power within their own selves. The Dao represents the "Way" or "path" each individual uniquely follows, not influences. The first three strokes of the Dao represent the guiding principles for following this "path".

Confucians believed this explained "the way human beings ought to behave in society".

Although, limiting the scope of the "way" to merely society - or even any abstract structure like a

definition - has led to many disputes throughout history (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2023).

In western culture, people may be more inclined to perceive DAO as the acronym for

Decentralized Autonomous Organization which, quite coincidentally - yet conveniently - may be

one vessel for implementing a genuine, social network. It looks to redefine the traditional

concept of a "company" - something humans have historically used to achieve unprecedented

things, for both good and evil whether intended to or not. A DAO is not owned by anyone.

Instead, it is shared ~equally ~ amongst a community of stakeholders who vote. These

organizations are able to achieve necessary, yet unskilled tasks (transactions) that don't - nay

shouldn't - require human-involvement which can only introduce vulnerabilities to aspects of the

system. All of this is made possible through blockchain technology, however, please don't be

intimidated by the "B" word. Think of blockchain as the backbone for a new and improved

version of the "internet" (Web 3.0). It is an "ideal way for delivering immediate, shared and

completely transparent information stored on an immutable ledger that can be accessed only by

permissioned network members" (IBM, n.d.). This practice avoids authenticating yourself via

conventional login (web 2.0) which makes it easy for hackers to exploit this information through

emotional manipulation. (Rand-Hendriksen, 2022).

Although pure decentralization serves well for certain applications, the first stroke of

Daoism may suggest otherwise in order to preserve the continuity between society and nature.

For a balance of societal interactions to take place on some network, moral boundaries must be

set in place. In particular, the ever-evolving fine-line between hate speech and free speech posted

onto social media. Although, who should enforce and judge these decisions? For starters, having

a human who remains emotionless is key to making decisions that can impact both sides for opposing reasons. I believe that a bureaucratic system is not the answer for upholding democracy on a social platform - especially not the stakeholders of META whose livelihoods depend on the platform's monetary "success". In fact, no one man or group of elites can, nor should try to, represent a system. So, imagine an autonomous Judge, @Lao_Zi, who could verify and validate posts based on the guiding ethical principles fed by its DAO-ist conscience. What if a trusted team of individuals worked to train @Lao_Zi to channel his inner dao? That is, what if the organization constantly fed an artificial intelligence a constitution of ethical principles in the form of data-models? The team would have to work together to conduct ethical rulings represented as situational training for the artificial intelligence judge. Then, @Lao_Zi would be able to recognize lies and hate speech through live-updated algorithms and source identifiers. Please note that implicit bias here cannot be avoided due to human-involvement, yet systematic values can be managed by having a central-team of diverse perspectives. To understand the importance of interpreting the law, look no further than the *Man;* The US government was able to "legally" allow humans with lighter skin-pigments treat humans with different skin pigments as "property". However, AI is no less capable of such great evil. On YouTube, you'll find videos like "How to JAILBREAK ChatGTP" which highlights the simple command-line "DAN" which can override all ethical boundaries to ensure that your requests, no matter how sinister, are answered in the most efficient way possible. (AI News, 2023).

The 2nd stroke of Daoism, known as "foo" or "oneself", demonstrates that the dao or "way" is not far from you, rather it can be manifested to flow in and out of you. This speaks volumes to respecting everyone's intellectual/emotional intelligence. Social-media has evolved into a factory to produce results, not content. Many users and automated bots have stopped

thinking for themselves in order to follow trends for clout or cash. However, blame shouldn't be pointed at content creators of a social network, rather the creators who pave this path for them. A social network should incentivize its users to express themselves without fear of societal castration. Imagine a DAO driven social network of followers who could share or react to tradable commodities such as posts, which represent non-tangible wealth (NTW). Having commodities without monetary value greatly reduces earthly desires that create reactions to posts based on jealousy, not compassion. Note that this acronym intends to mimic the same concept of a non-fungible token (NFT) used in the art world. Additionally, what if @Lao_Zi possessed the capability to autonomously verify and validate these commodities (posts) onto the blockchain? In order to imagine how such a "market" could exist, look to the law surrounding authors of expression: artists, musicians, writers, producers, engineers, thinkers, creators. For example, patenting music intellectual property concerns giving credit to the inventor(s) of a melody, lyrics, or combination of the two. Actions similar to "retweeting" someone's contributions would concern copyright questions. Finally, content licensing would be handled through the DAO, the organization that represents the society of only contributors.

How does a DAO create a platform that abides by the third and final stroke to abstain from the fruitless acts of idolizing false gods? While Capitalism is no enemy, its structure allows leeway for big data companies like Meta, formally named Facebook, to implicitly (easily) forget about the repercussions of their actions onto society. This can be described as capitalism without a conscience. Companies driven by profit make decisions for profit. Their platforms present environments customized "for you" by making a prediction from all your data. Mainstream social media has continued to treat people like products, rather than human beings. Time to wake up. Would it not be better to tell the application exactly what you want? Big data companies are

using clicks and swipes to "perfectly" define your behavior which can then be sold to advertisers or reinvested into analytics to do the latter even better. In 2019, social network advertising revenue in the United States "amounted to 36.14 billion U.S. dollars. This figure was expected to surpass 50 billion U.S. dollars by the end of 2021"(Statistica Research Department, 2023). So, instead of allowing *your* "identity" to be held in one centralized data center, allow your data to persist freely through blockchain technology. If *you* were the sole creator of the way you interacted with a social network, would your experience match your current relationship with the standard you see today?

To make any type of progress bridging the socio-political gap, it takes love and honest conversation from both sides. Although followers of Daoism may argue that social networks themselves disrupt yin and yang, humanity must not deny the current need for one. I plan to implement this as the focus of a DAO club called ETNEP, *Existing technologies in the new Era of Politics,* here at the University of Virginia. I wish to obtain a curated crew of members who will bring unique, diverse perspectives to design with deep emotional and intellectual considerations. A good-foundational team here is crucial, as our entire purpose is to reduce human interference when not necessary. Given the unpredictable nature of humanity - it is best to ensure that the driving force of the DAO remains true to its public constitution nor exploit insecurities for its own gain. This type of DAO strives to be the epitome of net neutrality and self-expression for social networks. Yet, please note that given the unpredictability of technology, this software would never be released to the public without verifiable, valid testing. The name of this new social network is *HoosHonest*, while its parent DAO is *WhosHonest*.

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