

becoming increasingly obsolete with the rise and growth of Muslim communities in Europe and North America). The Quran, Islam, and Muslims stand poised to teach us about the existential and aesthetic dynamics of a religiosity that we might never have suspected and that adds glory and sympathy, beauty and dignity to the idea of being human. With Kermani's book as a guide, the message will be that much more easily absorbed.

Much of that message centers on the distinctive importance to Islam of the word of God and the voice of Muhammad. While we have never been unsure of the first, we are made acutely aware of the reality of the second through Kermani's very interesting petitioning of *hikāya* "mimesis" in his theoretical discussions of Quran recitation. Though he does not mention it, the pioneering and prolific French scholar of Islamic thought, Henry Corbin (d. 1978), was the first "Westerner" to have noticed, in several publications, the literary-cum-existential power of this mode of reading/being and its instrumentality in spiritual transformation. After all, in Islam a believer is a reader who sees the signs of God everywhere in the cosmos and the soul, including, of course, the Quran (which resides in both). It makes perfect sense that in a culture of the *sunna* of the Prophet, Muhammad's originary and blessed cantillation of the divine word would become an object of imitation.

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In the Shadows of the Dao: Laozi, the Sage, and the Daodejing. By Thomas Michael. State University of New York Press, 2015. 332 pages. \$90.00 (hardcover), \$29.95 (paperback), \$85.50 (e-book).

In the Shadows of the Dao presents itself as an academic study of the *Laozi* (*Lao-tzu*; Book of Venerable Masters), also known by its honorific title of the *Daode jing* (*Tao-te ching*; Scripture on the Dao and Inner Power). Although traditionally attributed to the pseudo-historical Laozi (*Lao-tzu*; "Master Lao"), the *Daode jing* is actually a multi-vocal anthology with a variety of historical and textual layers that most likely dates from the fifth to second centuries BCE.

I received the present book in hopes of finding solid scholarship and interpretive sophistication. Unfortunately, the book is filled with systemic misinterpretations, misrepresentations, and unsupported opinions.

Lest readers take my introductory comments as a sufficient review, let me point towards relevant, reliable scholarship that might be consulted as alternatives to Michael's study. Interested readers would benefit from reading Michael LaFargue's *The Tao of the Tao Te Ching* (1992) on the contextual meaning of the text; Harold Roth's *Original Tao* (1999) on the defining characteristics, foundational views, and primary practices of classical Daoism (Michael's "early Daoism"), that is, the social milieu in which the *Daode jing* was composed, preserved, and transmitted; Isabelle Robinet's various publications (1977, 1998,

1999) on Daoist commentaries on and traditions of reading the *Daode jing*; and my own *The Daoist Tradition* (2013) and *Daoism: A Guide for the Perplexed* (2014) on the larger Daoist tradition.

In the event that others still wish to read Michael's book, it consists of the following chapters: (1) Reading the *Daode jing* Synthetically; (2) Modern Scholarship on the *Daode jing*; (3) Traditions of Reading the *Daode jing*; (4) The Daos of Laozi and Confucius; (5) Early Daoism, *Yangsheng*, and the *Daode jing*; (6) The Sage and the World; (7) The Sage and the Project; (8) The Sage and Bad Knowledge; and (9) The Sage and Good Knowledge. A minority of individuals may find some interesting insights in Michael's translation of the *Daode jing* (contained in the appendix), though this too is tainted by mistranslations informed by the author's idiosyncratic and untenable interpretation of classical Daoism. Some more historically, linguistically, and hermeneutically sound translations include those of Stephen Addiss and Stanley Lombardo, Robert Henricks, Louis Komjathy, D. C. Lau, Michael LaFargue, Victor Mair, and Moss Roberts. Interested readers may consult *Lao-tzu and the Tao-te-ching* (1998) and *Religious and Philosophical Aspects of the Laozi* (1999) for guidance on the history of translation and (mis)interpretation of the *Daode jing*.

Turning to *In the Shadows of the Dao* as a whole, it is actually a work *in the shadows* of colonialist, missionary, and Orientalist legacies. Although Michael suggests that his imagined Daoism is a "hidden tradition" (xvi–xix, 9–14, 22, 28, 93–103, 222–23 *passim*), it is rather *hidden from* historical accuracy, interpretive sophistication, and nuanced understanding of the Daoist tradition in general and classical Daoism in particular. The book is largely an imaginary construction of the *Daode jing*, a modern way of reading the text infused by popular misinterpretations. Thus, the first major issue with this book is the subtitle: *Laozi, the Sage, and the Daodejing*. While Michael does address the central importance of the "sage" (*shengren*) in the text (139–233), the book is not a contextual and historically accurate study of "Laozi" and the *Daode jing* or their place in the Daoist tradition. Part of the persistent confusion of the book is that Michael wants to make an argument about hermeneutics (1, 47, 49, 129), but consistently conflates supposed "traditions of reading," especially his own, with socio-historical realities and actual Daoist interpretations. A better subtitle might have been something like *Towards a Radical (Re)Reading of the Daode jing*. In addition, the author inexplicably perpetuates the "legend of Laozi," claiming that this pseudo-historical figure not only existed, but also probably wrote the *Daode jing* (9–10, 62, 67–92 *passim*). Going against the authoritative, revisionist work of A. C. Graham, D. C. Lau, and others, Michael thus perpetuates a conventional and unsupportable mythology, albeit one in line with modern Chinese attachments and popular Western desires. The second major issue with the book is its organizational structure. As Michael himself acknowledges, the work does not address one of its major topics, the contents of the *Daode jing*, until chapter 6. The author also tellingly explains, "Starting from this chapter onward, the scholarly works presently available have less and less to say for my own purposes. My footnotes reflect this, dwindling to just one or two by the time of the penultimate chapter, and zero by the time of the final chapter" (xix). While it is tempting to read this in

terms of “innovation,” it is rather a movement away from accurate scholarship and into the author’s own imagination. Given the apparent radicalness of the book’s claims about classical Daoism and its interpretations of the *Daode jing*, it should have begun with opening chapters on these topics and then moved on to discuss the supposed “hidden tradition of early Daoism” (47–51, 93–137). As it is—and as I will show—the reader is forced to take Michael’s various claims largely on faith, which is unfounded.

Before addressing the two central theses and fundamental misinterpretations of the book, a few other general deficiencies must be pointed out. Michael makes a variety of amateurish mistakes. For example, he misidentifies Scott Cook (Yale-NUS College, Singapore) as “Brian Cook” (7), mistranslates *wu* as “Being” and *you* as “Nonbeing” (9, correct on 20), uses the wrong Chinese character for *wang* (“to forget”) (13, correct on 111), and attributes the *Laozi xiang’er zhu* (Commentary Thinking Through the *Laozi*; DH 56; S. 6825) to Zhang Daoling (fl. 140s CE), the first Celestial Master, rather than his grandson Zhang Lu (d. 215), the third Celestial Master (17, slightly correct on 49–50, 56). The latter detail is significant, because this is one of the few texts potentially associated with the early Tianshi (Celestial Masters) movement, one of the earliest forms of organized Daoism. Michael also commits a number of category and logical mistakes. The former includes taking the bibliographic/taxonomic category of *daojia* (lit., “family of the Dao”) and the text of the *Daode jing* as designating actual movements (xvi–xviii, 1–3, 5, 10, 17, 23–39, 47–51, 60–61, 100–1, 132 passim) and taking types of practice like *yangsheng* (lit., “nourishing life”) and *zuowang* (lit., “sitting and forgetting”) as lineages of classical Daoism (12–14, 30, 62, 96–97, 100–3, 111–14, 131 passim). With respect to logical fallacies and interpretive mistakes, the book frequently relies on *argumentum ad ignorantiam* and *argumentum novitatis* (xiii, xix, 1, 3, 10, 15, 22, 27, 51, 65–66, 100, 108–9, 127–28, 131–32 passim). We will return to this momentarily. Finally, the book is filled with systematic misinterpretations of both Chinese historical materials and modern scholarship. For example, Michael cites Stephen Bokenkamp on the dating and authorship of the *Laozi xiang’er zhu* (17; also 49, 55–57), but Bokenkamp actually questions the traditional attribution to Zhang Lu (see his *Early Daoist Scriptures* 1997). Similarly, the book mentions Harold Roth’s work on the inner cultivation lineages of classical Daoism, but claims that Roth identifies a “distinctive lineage” that corresponds to Michael’s “early Daoism.” In fact, Roth’s argument is that there were *many* lineages in an emerging tradition, and the Syncretic lineage in question, which has some connections to “Huang-Lao Daoism,” may have been responsible for the various redactions of the classical Daoist textual corpus (see his *Original Tao*). This would actually challenge one of the central theses of *In the Shadows of the Dao*, including its dismissal of the political dimensions of the *Daode jing* (xvi, 53–55, 105, 111). One of the most problematic misrepresentations is the citation of chapter fifteen of the *Zhuangzi* (*Chuang-tzu*; Book of Master Zhuang) (113), a text that Michael erroneously claims has little connection to the *Daode jing* (14, 16, 25, 31, 100), to suggest that the practices of *daoyin* (lit., “guided stretching”; often referred to as “calisthenics” or “gymnastics”) and *yangsheng* are central to classical Daoism; in fact, the passage in question is

critical of such practices and instead emphasizes apophatic meditation (see my *The Daoist Tradition*). This does not necessarily mean that contemporaneous Daoists were not practicing health and longevity techniques, but rather that there was *intra*-Daoist debate about the most efficacious “techniques of the Dao” (*daoshu*), methods for attaining mystical union with the Dao. All of the texts of classical Daoism emphasize the central importance and transformative effects of dedicated and prolonged meditation.

The two most problematic and unsustainable (and primary) claims of the book center on the supposed “hidden tradition of early Daoism” and its attendant practice of *yangsheng*, allegedly contained in the *Daode jing*. Bewilderingly, throughout the discussion Michael repeatedly says that there is *no supporting evidence* for either of these viewpoints. For example, “The *Daodejing* appears to assume a tradition of early Daoism without demonstration” (100; also xv–xvi, xix, 10, 22, 65–66, 108–9, 127–28, 132). One of the keys for understanding how the author became so lost in this interpretive thicket is the opening epigraph from and subsequent discussion of Ge Hong (287–347) (1, 13, 52–54, 61, 116–18), one of the major representatives and systematizers of the early medieval Taiqing (Great Clarity) movement. That is, it appears that Michael uses a fourth-century CE Daoist to understand a fourth-century BCE Daoist text, although he also misrepresents the former’s views (see Robert Campany’s *To Live as Long as Heaven and Earth* 2002). Further hints are found in the book’s reliance on the absurd claims of Zhang Rongming: “What Laozi has written [*sic*] is a concise outline of the physical training methods of ancient *qigong*” (cited on 62; also 108, 114). Michael, like so many others, mistakenly associates this practice with Daoism, and also obfuscatingly invokes the non-Daoist martial art of *taiji quan* (Great Ultimate Boxing) (132–33, 136). So, what we are dealing with is an anachronistic therapeutic interpretation projected back on the text of the *Daode jing* and on the classical Daoist community.

Michael in turn not only utilizes the categories of *daojia* (*tao-chia*; lit., “family of the Dao”), or so-called “philosophical Daoism,” and *daojiao* (*tao-chiao*; lit., “teachings of the Dao”), or so-called “religious Daoism,” but adds further layers of confusion. He claims, without supporting historical evidence or convincing arguments, that these terms should be retained, but should be understood as “traditions of reading” (23–27, 34–35, 47–51). Usage of these terms and the associated “bifurcated” or “Leggean view of Daoism” should be taken *ipso facto* as inaccuracy and misunderstanding concerning Daoism, even in Michael’s case of hermeneutical categories. This is solely a modern construction. Part of the issue here is that the book takes aim at the “truncated” or “Strickmannian view of Daoism” (only so-called “religious Daoism” is Daoism) (xiii, 13, 27, 32–34, 93) and fails to engage more recent revisionist scholarship in a satisfactory way. In addition, he goes farther and adds “early Daoism” as a third tradition (47–51, 93–137), thus advancing an unconvincing tripartite construction of the Daoist tradition. Simply stated, his “early Daoism” is a fiction. Rather, there was a Daoist religious community during the Warring States period (480–222 BCE) that consisted of loosely related master-disciple lineages and that gradually composed an emerging

textual corpus, of which the *Daode jing* is a key work. This, in turn, became a foundation for the subsequent emergence of a fully developed and integrated Daoist tradition, which included more complex forms of social organization.

Closely connected with this imagined “hidden tradition of early Daoism” is the book’s claim about the central practice of *yangsheng*, which usually refers to health and longevity techniques. At first encounter, readers familiar with the *Daode jing* can only assume that Michael is using the term in some idiosyncratic way, perhaps in a manner paralleling “self-cultivation” in the work of Russell Kirkland, Michael LaFargue, and Harold Roth. Unfortunately, due to the deficient organization of the book, one must wade through endless sentences like “This specifically early Daoist worldview, however, is precisely that in which the *Daodejing* anchors its ideas of the program of *yangsheng*” (xvi; also xix, 2, 10, 13, 15, 51) before the author finally mentions the actual technical meaning (62). And then one must wait even longer before any “evidence” is provided (108–18; also 132–37, 201–11). Here we learn that Michael does indeed believe that *yangsheng* practices like *daoyin*, dietetics, *qi* circulation, and even sexual arts are the foundation of “early Daoism” in general and the *Daode jing* in particular (108). Unfortunately, this too is unsupported. In addition to the absence of the technical terms of *daoyin* and *yangsheng* in the *Daode jing* (109), one also does not find any related terms like *fuqi* (“ingesting *qi*”), *tu’na* (“expelling and ingesting”), and *xingqi* (“circulating *qi*”). In fact, even *qi* only appears three times in the text (chs. 10, 42, 55), and not in a *yangsheng* sense, and there is no evidence for *daoyin* practice. Moreover, the following line might give one sufficient pause: “If I did not have a *shen* (body/self), what calamities would I have?” The various technical praxis-based terms like *baoyi* (“embracing the One”; chs. 10 and 22), *shouci* (“guarding the feminine”; chs. 6 and 28; also ch. 52), and *shouzhong* (“guarding the Center”; ch. 5) rather point toward what Harold Roth has referred to as “apophatic meditation,” that is, meditation that is primarily contentless, nonconceptual, and nondualistic. There was thus a shared repertoire of contemplative praxis, referred to as *shouyi* (“guarding the One”) in the “Neiye” (Inward Training) chapter of the *Guanzi* (Book of Master Guan) and as *xinzhai* (“fasting the heart-mind”; ch. 4) and *zuowang* (“sitting-in-forgetfulness”; ch. 6) in the *Zhuangzi*, among members of the inner cultivation lineages of classical Daoism.

In sum, Michael’s study resembles a work of nineteenth-century Orientalist scholarship (see Norman Girardot’s *The Victorian Translation of China* 2002) and/or a modern popular construction: interestingly, the two are intricately related. It not only does not advance our understanding, but also actually represents a major step backward. Rather than build on major revisionist work by scholars like A. C. Graham, Russell Kirkland, Michael LaFargue, Harold Roth, Kristofer Schipper, and myself, Michael has taken the inexplicable step of presenting alternative (“innovative”) arguments that lack evidence and are thoroughly unconvincing. The book thus provides a model for how *not* to conduct research on Daoism and how *not* to understand classical Daoism, including the *Daode jing*. *In the Shadows of the Dao* leaves its subject in the shadows and the understanding of its readers dimmed.

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New Monasticism and the Transformation of American Evangelicalism. By Wes Markofski. Oxford University Press, 2015. 364 pages. \$99.00 (hardcover), \$35.00 (paperback), \$34.99 (e-book).

Who are American evangelicals and how do they vote? For decades, many analysts have grouped Protestant evangelicals together in a single category. Treating evangelicalism as a monolith, they have drawn a straight line between religious and political conservatism. For many journalists and scholars, the word evangelical is a synonym for the new Christian Right.

Thanks to a new crop of books, such lumping is no longer tenable. Recent works on the evangelical left, the emerging church, the “new evangelical social engagement” (the title of another book from Oxford University Press), and multi-ethnic evangelicalism have complicated scholarly understandings of this diverse subculture.

Joining the conversation, sociologist Wes Markofski has produced the first major scholarly work on Protestant neo-monasticism, a movement that brings the insights of Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, and Anabaptist communities into American evangelicalism. Highlighting neo-monasticism’s radical communitarianism, Markofski challenges the narrative of monolithic evangelical conservatism.

Drawing on thousands of hours of ethnographic fieldwork, in-depth interviews, and content analysis, *New Monasticism and the Transformation of American Evangelicalism* focuses on four small communities, paying special attention to a group Markofski calls the Urban Monastery. Through his detailed observations and lively prose, readers will encounter the art galleries, food pantries, homes, and pubs where the new monastics congregate.

They will also encounter a sophisticated theoretical argument. According to Markofski, “American evangelicalism is a field of agreement and struggle between agents holding competing visions of the legitimate representation of biblical Christianity in the United States” (115). Markofski provides the most satisfying map of evangelicalism to appear in years. Analyzing neo-monasticism’s place within the American evangelical field, he compares it with four other evangelical movements: megachurch evangelicalism, the Christian Right, the evangelical left, and the emerging church.

To be sure, previous studies have mapped the multiple movements within American evangelicalism. In *The Young Evangelicals* (1974), Richard Quebedeaux identified five distinct expressions of conservative Protestantism: separatist fundamentalism, open fundamentalism, establishment evangelicalism, new evangelicalism, and the charismatic renewal. Others have compared mainstream evangelicalism with its challengers on the right and the left. Still others