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WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE SELF-SO?

A METAPHYSICAL READING OF GUO XIANG'S CONCEPT OF *ZIRAN*

ABSTRACT

This article aims to understand Guo Xiang's concept of self-so in the perspective of the metaphysical agenda of the *Xuanxue* movement. After reviewing the core features of this metaphysical agenda, I show that Guo Xiang's original use of self-so could be understood as an exegetical tool to deal with the challenges addressed to language in the *Zhuangzi*, as well as with its conception of reality as ever-transforming. I attempt to show that although Guo Xiang dismisses the metaphysical quest for a first principle, his philosophy can nevertheless be read as an enquiry into the most fundamental feature of reality.

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