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Concerning TREE

*Twelve propositions*¹

1. TREE is a chant poem that sings the tree. As a tree itself is a harp that plays itself by itself in and on the wind, so TREE plays on and along the human voice and breath to sing the tree.²
2. TREE is a chant poem that treats trees as treasures. A single large tree can provide a day's supply of oxygen for four people.
3. TREE implicitly advocates and defends trees in a spirit of reciprocity for their defence of us by perpetuating our air. TREE is a *panoply* ('a complete suit of armour') of and for trees.³ TREE treats trees as the friends, allies and protectors of humans.
4. TREE constitutes a plea for more trees, for plantings of richer, larger and more and more attentively cared-for and lovingly protected trees and clusters of trees – in yards, gardens, arbours, parks, spinneys, orchards, woods, forests, jungles; and along, beside, lining, and bordering alleys, lanes, streets, avenues, boulevards, highways, byways, plots, fields, canals, rivers, and deserts. Trees limit deserts and shrink wastes. TREE invokes the defence of trees by trees.
5. TREE treats trees as protectors of all life. Creating arbours and gathering in them, trees harbour millions of living species – of all families, orders, classes, domains, etc. TREE is a call to reverse the mass-destruction of trees. Trees in their wild woods ('Walden')⁴ widen, deepen and strengthen fertile wildnesses. Trees chime: *arbour* : *harbour* : *armour* : *amour* : *amor* : *amore*.
6. TREE celebrates *all* trees: all individual trees and all species and varieties of trees. Trees themselves, and in and for and of themselves, are beautiful, noble, and inspirational: 'breathful'.⁵
7. TREE celebrates trees *because* they are beautiful. Reclamation of spaces for trees and their planting means reclaiming beauty. TREE reaffirms, reconfirms, reiterates, reasserts *beauty*.
8. The tree that TREE celebrates, calls and recalls is a tree that is definite and indefinite, particular and abstract, real and symbolic, physical and theoretical, tangible and intangible, above and below, here and there, nowhere and everywhere. This is a tree that is one and many; it is *this* tree and *that* tree; it is any tree and every tree.

9. The tree that is TREE is your tree (whether *you* means one or many) and my tree, his tree and her tree, their tree and our tree. It belongs to everyone and no-one. It is a tree that is both a tree and no tree: a not-tree and not-a-tree, a tree that is nevertheless still and always a tree and no more than a tree.
10. The tree that is TREE is ancient and modern, past, present, and future, deciduous and evergreen, durable and transient. Oscillating between implicate and explicate conditions,⁶ this is a tree that is fragile and flexible yet strong and stable, unyielding and unchanging yet ever-moving and self-transforming. This is a tree of life and death, and of birth and rebirth; of creation, destruction, and re-creation; a tree of being and becoming, and not-being and being again.
11. TREE is a chant-poem *about* a tree, *for* a tree, and addressed *to* a tree. TREE is a chant-poem that is itself a tree.
12. TREE is a tree that sings itself and itself sings.

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NOTES

- ¹ This set of propositions is dedicated to Silvia Pio and Attilio Ianniello. It is written to be published at the same time as the performance of Silvia's Italian translation of the 365-line chant poem *Tree (Albero)* at the *Festa degli Alberi (Festival of Trees)* in Mondovì, Piedmont, Italy, on October 1st 2017. The text is also designed to accompany the publication in *Margutte* of versions of *Tree* in ten languages, thus inaugurating the *Tree / Albero* multilingual translation project. The number nine (the translations done to this day), three to the power of two, invokes the Muses.
- ² The name of the wind-harp that is the tree is 'Aeolian'. *Αἰολος* was the god of the wind who blew from the Aeolian Islands or Aeolian coastline in the north-west of Asia Minor.
- ³ Greek *πανοπλία* meant 'the full armour of the hoplite' (*ὀπλίτης*, 'foot-soldier, i.e. 'armoured person'): from *ὄπλον*, 'weapon, piece of armour, heavy shield, plural *ὄπλα*'). *Oxford English Dictionary* online.
- ⁴ See Henry D. Thoreau, *Walden; or, Life in the Woods*, Anchor Books, USA, 1973.
- ⁵ From Latin *spirare*, 'to breathe'. Consider our words *respire*, *respiration*, etc.
- ⁶ The adjectives 'implicate' and 'explicate' derive from the holistic theory of reality proposed by the quantum physicist David Bohm in his book *Wholeness and the Implicate Order* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995 [1980]). Both these terms, which are intended here in the precise senses deployed by the physicist, derive from the Latin verb *plicare* ('to fold'). Bohm advocates the idea that reality consists

of multiple potentials or 'regions' which are 'folded' ('pleated') both within and around one another, and hence are 'implicit' or 'implicate', in such a way that "a *total order* is contained, in some *implicit* sense, in each region of space and time" He elaborates: "Now, the word 'implicit' is based on the verb 'to implicate'. This means 'to fold inward' (as multiplication means 'folding many times'). So we may be led to explore the notion that in some sense each region contains a total structure 'enfolded' within it" (p. 149). When these region or layers are *unfolded*, the 'implicit' or 'implicate' order becomes 'explicit' or 'explicate', as a multiplicity of apparent phenomena. Bohm's theory thus confronts and counters reductive and particulate models of reality by a relational vision of "undivided wholeness" (p. 143), in which each part both reproduces and contains the whole – as in a hologram. In this respect, his theory bears a close relationship to Mandelbrot's discovery of fractals (see Benoit B. Mandelbrot, *The Fractal Geometry of Nature*, New York: W. H. Freeman and Co., 1977). It also bears comparison with C. G. Jung's theory of the collective unconscious; and insofar as it includes *change*, it is consonant with the philosophy of the ancient Chinese classic, the *Yijing* or *I Ching*.