



OF EXPERIENCE AND BEING: APOPOS OF
THIS AND THAT
AN ANALYSIS FROM DAOISM TO HEIDEGGER

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§ 1: TO BE

“God is absolute nothingness. God is not, however, mere nothingness. An immovable unifying activity clearly functions at the base of the establishment of reality, and it is by means of this activity that reality is established.”

—Nishida Kitarō 西田 幾多郎 in *An Inquiry Into the Good*

善の研究

§ 1.1: YELLOW-RED-BLUE

I AM. Just two words. Two words so important, though, that they have come to mean God in one of the largest religions in the world.¹ The idea of Being², of the I-am-ness, the you-are-ness, and the it-is-ness underlies the premises of philosophy in a few different ways. On one hand, much of language is structured implicitly around Being, the type of Being that lets humans describe things and people; it is the Being that says a certain cat *is* brown, or she *is* intelligent. Inasmuch as philosophy rests on the shoulders of language, it is thus subject to Being. Alternatively, there are also more subtle questions that define a more tacit manifestation of Being. What makes a being a being? How does a being be? Or, is the Being of different beings the same fundamental Being? Questions like these are, in part, the foundation of religion and philosophy. Consequently, it is reasonable to desire firm answers to the questions of Being, or at the very least, to inquire for a deeper understanding of Being. The man who perhaps spent the longest time addressing these questions of Being was Martin Heidegger, a twentieth-century philosopher who laid the groundwork for most of modern philosophical discourse. By first explicating the context Heidegger arose in, then the philosophy he constructed, in addition to important ideas in classical Daoism, I will soon show how classical Daoist ideas like wuwei and equipmentality³ seeped deeply into the works of Heidegger. Contrary to popular belief on the subject, I intend to demonstrate that Daoist sources had a clear influence on Heidegger's *early* work, including *Being and Time*.

¹ This refers to the use of “Εγώ εἰμι” in the New Testament of the Christian Bible. The phrase builds off of Exodus 3:14 in the Torah where God claims “I Am that I Am”, or in Hebrew, “Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh”. Hence, at a very early point in the development of Western culture, inasmuch as that term is applicable, the idea of Being was at the forefront of religious and philosophical thought. See “Christianity” by Hogg et al or “‘I Am Who I Am’? The meaning of God’s Name in Exodus” by LeFebvre for a more in depth discussion of this topic.

² From here on, I am going to use Heidegger’s convention of capitalizing Being, primarily because of its centrality to ontology and existence. The convention of capitalizing Being is remarkably similar to the convention for writing “God”; and to this end, Dr. Michael Sugrue’s lecture “Heidegger: Being and Time” on YouTube raises a fascinating point on how Heidegger’s treatment of the word “Being” mirrors a Christian’s treatment of the word God. See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MaobMHescwg>.

³ Equipmentality is not in itself a classical Daoist idea. However, the paradigm of equipmentality that is later shown to be present in classical Daoism is the same paradigm Heidegger uses.

§ 1.2: WANDERER ABOVE THE SEA OF FOG

Born in the late nineteenth century, Martin Heidegger grew up in a Roman Catholic family in Meßkirch, Germany, whereupon he began training to be a priest in 1903. After leaving the program due to health issues, he shortly thereafter began to study the questions of Being. Heidegger found himself reflecting on the ontology of Aristotle, traditional Catholic theology, modern Protestant thinkers including Søren Kierkegaard and Martin Luther, as well as many other Western philosophical thinkers. By 1927, he published *Being and Time* (Sein und Zeit), and established himself as an important name in philosophy.

A cursory glance through *Being and Time*, however, will raise some issues. Despite his elaborate education, we immediately see a stark contrast between his education and his philosophy. Consider the following quote:

This undifferentiated character of Dasein's everydayness is *not nothing*, but a positive phenomenal characteristic of this entity.⁴

Where did this diction and syntax come from? For Heidegger to have such a learned vocabulary in ontology, one would certainly assume he had an education which made him proficient in such terms. And in part, he *did* have some education in ontology, especially as he was a pupil of Edmund Husserl. Yet, if we follow the narrative of Martin Heidegger as a Catholic-turned-philosopher, it comes off as a non-sequitur for him to have such an emphasis strictly on Being. Although figures like Saint Augustine come from a Catholic tradition and discuss ontology, Heidegger approaches ontology from a paradigm completely opposed to Christian education, rejecting and changing many premises Augustine would consider fundamental. To emphasize my point:

⁴ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, ed. by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (108 Cowley Road, Oxford OX4 1JF, UK: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 1962), 69, <http://pdf-objects.com/files/Heidegger-Martin-Being-and-Time-trans.-Macquarrie-Robinson-Blackwell-1962.pdf>. The excerpt essentially means that Dasein, which translates roughly as Being-there, is not less relevant because of how worldly it is, rather it is more defined. However, the quote was only provided to demonstrate the vocabulary of Martin Heidegger.

The Interpretation in which the “not-yet—and with it even the uttermost “not-yet”, the end of Dasein—was taken in the sense of something still outstanding, has been rejected as inappropriate in that it included the ontological perversion of making Dasein something present-at-hand. Being-at-an-end implies existentially Being-towards-the-end.⁵

Again, there is room for a reasonable amount of creativity and ingenuity on Heidegger’s part; nevertheless, his turn toward the ideas and concepts of Being and Time appears out of left field. However, this is only surprising under the paradigm highlighted thus far of Heidegger as a Christian-turned-philosopher—and yet this is precisely the wrong paradigm. Although Heidegger commonly wrote on traditionally “Western” dialogues,⁶ he did have significant Eastern influences, especially Daoism. For instance, “Heidegger’s ‘A Dialogue on Language between a Japanese and an Inquirer’ (1959) confirms that this engagement [with Daoism] goes back to as early as 1921,”⁷ which is far before the publishing of Being and Time. Furthermore, at a dinner party in the 1930s, Heidegger asked his host for *Parables of Zhuangzi (Reden und gleichnisse des Tschuang-Tse)*, which he then gave a garrulous speech on.⁸ In some of Heidegger’s later works, he created the word *Weg* to mean a path or way, and it has striking similarities to the Chinese *Dao* (note that Heidegger himself compared *Weg* to the Greek *hodós*).⁹ Additionally, he cited the *Laozi* 老子 many times throughout his papers. Not only this, but he was so well acquainted with Daoist texts that he intentionally utilized parallelism between his writing and early Daoist texts. In one text, “Heidegger’s ‘Geheimnis aller Geheimnisse’ is a reference to *xuan zhi you xuan*

⁵ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 293. Here, Heidegger is discussing how Dasein relates with Being-towards-death and Being-towards-the-end, which is a bit out of the scope of this paper. Like the above excerpt, this is included strictly to emphasize the writing style of Martin Heidegger.

⁶ In terms of published works, Heidegger directly addressed Western philosophers in *Kant and The Problem of Metaphysics* in 1929, *Nietzsche* in 1961, *Hegel’s Concept of Experience* in 1970, *Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit* in 1988, *Parmenides* in 1992, *Plato’s Sophist* in 1992, *Heraclitus Seminar* in 1993, *Phenomenological Interpretation of Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason* in 1997, and *Phenomenological Interpretations of Aristotle* in 2001.

⁷ Eric S. Nelson, “Heidegger’s Daoist Turn,” *Research in Phenomenology* 49, no. 3 (2019): 363, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26843235?seq=5>.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Tobias Keiling, “Way (Weg),” in *The Cambridge Heidegger Lexicon*, ed. Mark A. Wrathall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 813-814; Nelson, “Heidegger’s Daoist Turn,” 363.

玄之又玄”¹⁰ from the *Laozi*. All in all, there is significant evidence developing the connection between Martin Heidegger and Daoism, especially classical Daoism (to the extent that the *Laozi* and *Zhuangzi* 莊子¹¹ are pillars of classical Daoism).¹²

§ 1.3: THE SCREAM OF NATURE

With an understanding of Martin Heidegger’s academic background, I will now give a selection of passages from *Being and Time* that are useful in later understanding how he may have had “hidden” sources.¹³

Heidegger believed that the question of Being was central to philosophy. Thus, the primary concern for his philosophy was the primordial question of Being and the lack of an authentic approach to this question. To understand this exigence:

The question of Being aims therefore at ascertaining the *a priori* conditions not only for the possibility of the sciences which examine entities as entities of such and such a type, and, in so doing, already operate with an understanding of Being, but also for the possibility of those ontologies themselves which are prior to the ontical sciences and which provide their foundations. *Basically, all ontology, no matter how rich and firmly compacted a system of categories it has at its disposal, remains blind and perverted from its*

¹⁰ Nelson, “Heidegger’s Daoist Turn,” 365. “Geheimnis aller Geheimnisse” means the “mystery within the mystery”, however the meaning changes significantly depending on the base language.

¹¹ It may be worth noting here that although the *Zhuangzi* is historically said to be written by a figure named *Zhuangzi*, historians actually consider it an anthology with many sections by different authors. I will herein refer to the authors of the *Zhuangzi* as the single person named *Zhuangzi*, because this is useful in discussing the book and is valid insofar as the authors can all be approximated by a single name.

¹² It is worth noting that my use of Daoism, and even classical Daoism, in reference to Heidegger could be too broad. Explicitly, Heidegger interacted with the *Laozi* and *Zhuangzi* exclusively, leading Graham Park on page 13 of “Thoughts on the Way” to refer to Heidegger’s Daoist influences as the works of Lao-Zhuang. So, although I may reference Daoism and classical Daoism, when referring to Heidegger, I am more so talking about the Lao-Zhuang authors.

¹³ This is an allusion to an interesting book about Heidegger’s relationship with East-Asian philosophy called *Heidegger’s Hidden Sources, East-Asian Influences on his Work* by Reinhard May.

*ownmost aim, if it has not first adequately clarified the meaning of Being, and conceived this clarification as its fundamental task.*¹⁴

Essentially, the *Being of beings* is a concern for Heidegger, and the attempt to understand this is a nearly impossible task; as each approximation of true Being is coming from a being and a web of presuppositions surrounding Being. Thus, an authentic mode or system of ontology is concerned with the Being of beings, while an inauthentic one would pervert the meaning or purpose of ontology, often resulting in onticology.¹⁵

The lack of a sufficient answer to the questions of Being has, in Heidegger's account, been due to the lack of bias-free approaches to the question. The pre-Socratic philosophers such as Anaximander, Heraclitus, and Parmenides had discourses in ontology which (at least in Heidegger's opinion) were free from negative linguistic and cultural assumptions.¹⁶ Thus, in ontology, this meant that the pre-Socratics started from the point of view that we exist and built out what that means from there. However, following Socrates, and especially following Plato with his Theory of Forms, the assumptions philosophers made in ontology began to shift. Instead of considering what it means to exist *right now*, many philosophers started from the assumption that there is an afterlife, and found the meaning of existence to be a combination of the afterlife with the current life, the divine with the sublime, or something of that sort. This was only magnified by the growth of religions such as Christianity

¹⁴ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 31. The emphasis in this quote is directly from the source, it is not mine.

¹⁵ The term "onticology" is a play on Heidegger's distinction between the ontological and the ontic. Contrary to its popular use, Heidegger used ontic to relate something to a being, while ontology regarded the Being of a being. Thus, I am presenting onticology as the study of being, rather than Being.

¹⁶ See Glenn W. Most, "Heidegger's Greeks," (n.d.), 85, <https://www.bu.edu/arion/files/2010/03/Greeks-Most.pdf>. Most highlights Heidegger's pre-Socratic influence by describing the nature in which Heidegger adopted specifically non-Platonic and non-Aristotelian ideas from the ancient Greeks, going as far as calling the Greeks as Heidegger's "Pagan Gospel".

and Islam, which both further propagated this mode of ontology.¹⁷ For Heidegger, Being-towards-divinity or Being-towards-transcendence was *necessarily* skewing ontology; as he believed that ontology should start from the most fundamental aspects of Being, then build up. Due to the historical prevalence of the aforementioned religions (and their proselytizing nature), Western philosophers often interpreted divine and out-of-this-world notions as being fundamental aspects of Being - even when a more fundamental aspect would stem from simply Being-in-the-world, thus “polluting” Western ontology.

Hence, the starting place of Martin Heidegger’s philosophy is his rejection of most of Western ontology and the need for a completely new foundation of ontology. First, Heidegger’s philosophy requires a new word—*Dasein*.¹⁸ *Dasein* roughly translates as “Being-there,” which represents the fact that a human’s understanding of Being only exists insofar as they understand Being through the lens of a human being’s Being. As a construct, Being itself is inaccessible.¹⁹ Thus, *Dasein* represents this underlying sense of Being-as-experienced, in contrast to Being proper:

Dasein is an entity which does not just occur among other entities. Rather it is ontically distinguished by the fact that, in its very Being, that Being is an *issue* for it. But in that case, this is a constitutive state of *Dasein*;

¹⁷ *The Six Enneads* by Plotinus began the thought-system of Neoplatonism, which led to the Western focus on forms of ontology which do not prioritize Being itself. *Neoplatonism in Relation to Christianity: An Essay* by C. Elsee is a good resource for understanding how Neoplatonism affected Christian theology during Christianity’s formative years. For Islam, see *Neoplatonism and Islamic Thought* edited by Parviz Morewedge to understand this dynamic. More precisely, John 3:16 of The Bible is a good example of Being-towards-divinity in Christianity; and for Islam, The Qur’an 29:64 likewise endorses Being-towards-divinity. In both cases, the holy texts advocate for the afterlife being the purpose of this life, and thus ontology from these frameworks starts with framing humanity’s existence in terms of pursuing the afterlife, when in fact there is a current life we could frame ontology in.

¹⁸ Though *Dasein* can be translated as “Being-there”, and it is translated as such once in the above text, I will leave it untranslated for the majority of the essay because a translation only serves to misrepresent the context for which Heidegger invented the word.

¹⁹ The inaccessibility of Being is still a topic in contemporary literature, as the incredible work of Thomas Nagel in *What Is It Like to Be a Bat?* emphasizes the limitations of ontology. No amount of scholarship could uncover the similarities in the Being of a human and the Being of a bat. As a fact, there is no basis for understanding what it is like to have wings, what echolocation as a sensory perception feels like, etc.

Being, and this implies that Dasein, in its Being, has a relationship towards that Being—a relationship which itself is one of Being.²⁰

Referring back to his critique of historical Western ontology, Heidegger would argue (and to an extent did argue this in other places)²¹ that the object of Being, whose subject is Being (Dasein), was omitted from most of Western tradition in exchange for studying ontic entities, simple modes of Being, and Being-towards-divinity.²²

Being and Time, in addition to creating the framework for understanding Dasein, also highlights complementary concepts in ontology, including Thrownness (*Gerworfenheit*), ready-to-hand (*zuhandenheit*), as well as present-at-hand (*vorhanden*). Thrownness²³ refers to the human condition in which a human being is “thrown” into existence without proper consent on entering this life and with no choice in where they are born, when they are born, their personality, etc. Given the magnitude of this condition and its universality, it is a key aspect of Dasein and is alluded to in context here:

Dasein has forgotten itself in its ownmost thrown potentiality-for-Being. This forgetting is not nothing, nor is it just a failure to remember; it is rather a 'positive' ecstatic mode of one's having been—a mode with a character of its own.²⁴

Thus, one consequence of the intensity of Thrownness is that Dasein integrates the Thrownness to such an extent that it forgets to remember its more authentic Being, or as Heidegger says, potentiality-for-Being takes precedence. The concept of Thrownness also corresponds well with the classical Daoist text entitled the *Zhuangzi*, and that correlative will assist in deepening our understanding of Thrownness later.

²⁰ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 32.

²¹ See Heidegger's *Philosophy of Religion: From God to Gods* by Ben Vedder for more details.

²² For the sake of brevity, I will have to skip over much of the characterization of Dasein given by Heidegger, and will assume this background is sufficient.

²³ *Geworfenheit* is referred to as Thrownness because this is the academic consensus for the best translation of it. Some other translations include dereliction and dejection.

²⁴ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 339.

Next, the idea of ready-to-handness is also similar to ideas in the *Zhuangzi*, and thus a discussion of it is warranted. First, consider a person about to locomote to their nine to five job. They step into their car, presumably listen to music or a podcast, or perhaps just enjoy the present moment while driving, and they soon arrive at work. The car's Being, though on one level is simply an ontical expression of car-ness, manifests to the person as an instrument of the immanence of soon being at work. The *phainesthai* (φαίνεσθαι) of the car's Being to the person is hence not as a car-in-itself ontically but rather as the ready-to-be-usedness of a tool. This ready-to-be-usedness is what Heidegger calls ready-to-handness:

The ready-to-hand is not grasped theoretically at all, nor is it itself the sort of thing that circumspection takes proximally as a circumspective theme. The peculiarity of what is proximally ready-to-hand is that, in its readiness-to-hand, it must, as it were, withdraw (*zurückzuziehen*) in order to be ready-to-hand quite authentically. That with which our everyday dealings proximally dwell is not the tools themselves (*die Werkzeuge selbst*). On the contrary, that with which we concern ourselves primarily is the work—that which is to be produced at the time; and this is accordingly ready-to-hand too.²⁵

By this, he means that the most authentic ready-to-handness (thus the best definition for the term) is an object which is fully withdrawn from one aspect of itself (namely the aforementioned ontic being) to be used as the essence of a tool.

Meanwhile, present-at-hand also coincides with ready-to-handness. While something ready-at-hand is currently available as a tool, an object present-at-hand exists in the world simply as a being but is able to become ready-to-hand if an instrumental paradigm sees it. This is because once someone with an instrumental view sees this present-at-hand object, it is no longer just ready to be or exist; *instead, it is now ready to be used*. Regarding objects present-at-hand:

²⁵ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 99.

To entities such as these, their Being is 'a matter of indifference' or more precisely, they 'are' such that their Being can be neither a matter of indifference to them, nor the opposite.²⁶

Hence, the principal focus of an object present-at-hand is the isness of itself. More precisely, it is the pure isness, to such an extent that neither Being nor non-Being is a concern.

With an understanding of a few Heideggerian concepts from *Being and Time*, I will now give a similar background of classical Daoism.

§ 2: OR NOT TO BE?

“Those who know do not speak, those who speak do not know.”

— *Laozi* 老子 in *Laozi* 老子

§ 2.1: THE GOD OF SPINOZA

Classical Daoism²⁷ (4th century B.C.E to 9 C.E.)²⁸ refers to the very beginning of the Daoist belief system in China. In this period, classical Daoism was subject to two separate segments of Chinese history, existing during the Warring States Period 戰國時代 (from the birth of Daoism until 221 B.C.E.) then the Former Han dynasty 漢朝 (from 206 B.C.E. until the end of classical Daoism in 9 C.E.)²⁹ During these two eras, classical Daoism is well- characterized by the wealth of literature coming from this epoch, where essential texts included the *Laozi*, *Zhuangzi*, *Guanzi* 管子, *Huainanzi* 淮南子, *Lüshi Chunqiu* 呂氏春秋, and the *Huangdi sijing* 黃帝四經.³⁰

Hereupon, I will take any practice or thought system focused on the cosmological idea of the *Dao* 道 to be relevant to our discussion

²⁶ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 68.

²⁷ In the discussion of Daoism, the topic of translation is at the forefront of the conversation. For consistency, I will use the Hanyu Pinyin translation style over the Wade-Giles translation style for this essay. However, for the sake of clarity, I will also include any important terms from Daoism in Chinese the first time I use them.

²⁸ Adrien Stoloff, “HU 3900 Mysticism Nei-yeh (Inward Training),” Worcester Polytechnic Institute, Worcester, MA, 2024.

²⁹ Stoloff, “HU 3900 Mysticism Nei-yeh (Inward Training),” 2024.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

and moreover to be a reasonable approximation for Daoism.³¹ The Dao is often translated as “the Way” or “the Path”; however, to best avoid projecting preconceived notions for interpreting the Dao, I will simply leave it as “the Dao.” Hence, emphasis will be placed on how the early Daoist texts characterized the Dao and not on a linguistic translation. To this end, we can now characterize the Dao:

The One is the most valued of all things. No one knows its source. No one knows its manifestations. No one knows where it starts or where it ends. Yet the myriad things take it to be their progenitor. The sage-king imitates it to keep his nature intact, to fix his life span, and to issue orders.³²

Thus, as the Dao is one, any following characteristics will importantly be one aspect of a whole part, which when analyzing Heidegger, will be relevant. There is also a normative claim made here implying that a “good” person has a nature imitating the Dao, inasmuch as a sage-king is a good person. Additionally, the Dao is ineffable³³ as seen in the *Laozi* here:

The way that can be spoken of
Is not the constant way;
The name that can be named
Is not the constant name.³⁴

In this context, the Dao is not only ineffable, but its ineffability implies its divine essence, which connects well with the conception of the Dao as both transcendent and immanent. Next, the Dao has intimate connections with the concepts of nothingness and creation. To begin to see this, consider the passage from the *Laozi*:

Its upper part is not dazzling;
Its lower part is not obscure.
Dimly visible, it cannot be named

³¹ The idea of trying to separate Chinese concepts of religion and philosophy is yet another controversial issue; because there may be a tendency of Western academia to superimpose Western concepts (like religion and philosophy) onto Eastern belief systems, I will avoid characterizing Daoism and related concepts where it is unnecessary, and will choose more broad terms such as “belief systems”. This is all to say that the categorization of Daoism is not as important as the ideas present in Daoism, so Daoism is going to be conceived of as a belief system in pursuit of authenticity.

³² Lüshi Chunqiu, 111 as quoted in Adrien Stoloff, “Laozi 1,” Worcester Polytechnic Institute, Worcester, MA, 2024.

³³ Stoloff, “Laozi 1,” 2024.

³⁴ Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching*, tr. by D.C. Lau (London: Penguin, 2003), chap. 1.

And returns to that which is without substance.
This is called the shape that has no shape,
The image that is without substance.
This is called indistinct and shadowy.
Go up to it and you will not see its head;
Follow behind it and you will not see its rear.³⁵

First, notice how the shape is characterized as the shape that has *no shape*. Ontologically the Dao is the ontological entity that is comprised of the negation of ontological value; as in Being.³⁶ The Dao is the manifestation of the Being of non-Being. It is a real thing; it does have a head and tail, but the head and tail are not visible. If the Dao's meaning is unclear, the idea of a shadow is illuminating. In many ways, a shadow is not a tangible thing, it is simply an absence of a tangible thing, that is light. Thus, in the same way that a shadow is a being distinguished by and composed of non-Being, so too is the Dao the Being of non-Being. Although a philosophy or religion of nothingness, or the Nothing,³⁷ could seem to be in vain, the *Laozi* also addressed this:

Thus what we gain is Something, yet it is by virtue of Nothing that this can be put to use.³⁸

In Daoism, the concern is not the uselessness of Nothing because of the existence of Something; rather, the concern is that Something is useless without Nothing. Insofar as an essence for the Dao is uselessness, uselessness is affirmed as being a positive thing in the paradigm of the useless tree in the *Zhuangzi*:

After Carpenter Shi had returned home, the oak tree appeared to him in a dream and said, 'What are you comparing me with? Are you comparing me with those useful trees? The cherry apple, the pear, the orange, the citron, the rest of those fructiferous trees and shrubs - as soon as their fruit is ripe, they are torn apart and subjected to abuse.

³⁵ Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching*, chap. 14.

³⁶ Even when outside the Heideggerian framework, I am still going to capitalize Being to denote the context that the idea of Being requires as an ontological entity, and emphasize the difference between Being and the everyday use of being.

³⁷ Similar to the convention for Being, I will capitalize terms like Nothing and Nothingness to emphasize their different meaning from everyday use, even when not discussing them directly in relation to Daoism or phenomenology. Furthermore, Nothingness as a concept can be likened to a religious ideal of God in the same way Being can, which is in part why the concept meontology exists.

³⁸ Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching*, chap. 11.

Their big limbs are broken off, their little limbs are yanked around. Their utility makes life miserable for them, and so they don't get to finish out the years Heaven gave them, but are cut off in mid-journey. They bring it on themselves - the pulling and tearing of the common mob. And it's the same way with all other things.'

'As for me, I've been trying a long time to be of no use, and though I almost died, I've finally got it. This is of great use to me. If I had been of some use, would I ever have grown this large? Moreover you and I are both of us things. What's the point of this - things condemning things? You, a worthless man about to die - how do you know I'm a worthless tree?'³⁹

Here, the text carefully establishes the merit of uselessness while also taking care not to conflate worthiness with usefulness—*part of the value of the Dao is in uselessness*. Meanwhile, as the Dao is transcendent and immanent, it is paradoxically useful and useless. Thus, the usefulness of Nothingness is made manifest in Daoist cosmogony, which is explained by:

The way begets one;
One begets two;
Two begets three;
Three begets the myriad creatures.⁴⁰

The Dao ("the way" in this passage) has already been shown as a cosmological force that relates to Nothingness, so the fact that the Dao is the center of Daoist cosmology means that Nothingness is a pivotal part of Something; that non-Creation is a center of Creation; and later, that non-Being is a pivotal aspect of Being. We furthermore see it characterized as *xu* 虛 (empty), *yuan* 淵 (deep), *zhan* 湛 (dark), *jing* 靜 (still), *yao* 窈 (dim), *ji* 寂 (silent) and *liao* 廖 (void); leading to the realization of the Dao's essential action being *wuwei* 無為 (non-action).⁴¹

§ 2.2: THE CREATURES OF PROMETHEUS

Now engaged in the Daoist paradigm, we are prepared to begin tackling the core concept of *wuwei*. As mentioned earlier, *wuwei* is the

³⁹ Zhuangzi, *Zhuangzi Basic Writings*, tr. by Burton Watson (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), chap. 4.

⁴⁰ Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching*, chap. 42.

⁴¹ Stoloff, "Laozi 1," 2024.

essential action of the Dao, which leads to many implications for the meaning of *wuwei*. First, *wuwei* is traditionally translated as “effortless action” or as “non-action,” both of which may necessitate some explanation. Although it more closely translates in English to “non-action” from a linguistic perspective, the phrase non-action has the wrong connotation for the meaning of *wuwei* (which is why I will leave *wuwei* untranslated). Instead, “effortless action” better depicts the idea that *wuwei* is still an action, but it is an action that is not forced and is in harmony with the Dao. Although *wuwei* will be left untranslated, it can be thought of as connotationally meaning effortless action and denotationally meaning non-action.

In most of the aforementioned classical Daoist texts, *wuwei* is a staple for understanding the Daoist worldview and the relation of the Dao to humanity and existence. Similar to the Dao, *wuwei* is better understood by seeing all the ways it is characterized rather than trying to fit it into a one-sentence definition. For instance, Xunzi 荀子 discusses *wuwei* as “an ideal way to ‘walk the path.’”⁴² From this definition alone, there is the interesting conclusion that the essential action of the Dao is the manifestation of the ideal way of experiencing the Dao (calling back to the definition of the Dao). Hence, using *wuwei* as an intermediary step, we learn that the Dao as a cosmological and mystical idea has an essential action of interacting with itself, further compounding its mystical nature. The *Laozi* also describes *wuwei* by describing the never-acting of the Dao:

“The way never acts, yet nothing is left undone.”⁴³

At face value, this is a characterization of the Dao (the Way). However, as the way never acts, the text is characterizing the Dao as having *wuwei*, and by virtue of having *wuwei*, nothing is left undone. Thus, returning to the discussion of effortless action versus no action, *wuwei* must be associated with some action as nothing is left undone; however, it is also not excessive action - again lending credibility to the translation of *wuwei* as effortless action. Furthermore, *wuwei* is a virtue present in the sage:

Hence the sage says, I take no action and the people are transformed of themselves; I prefer stillness and the people are rectified of themselves; I am

⁴² Adrien Stoloff, “Mind Like a Mirror: Toward a Modern Understanding of Classical Daoist Wuwei,” PhD diss., (Brown University, 2019), 115, <https://repository.library.brown.edu/studio/item/bdr:918791/>.

⁴³ Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching*, chap. 37.

not meddlesome and the people prosper of themselves; I am free from desire and the people of themselves become simple like the uncarved block.⁴⁴

Here, there is an emphasis placed on the lack-of-action aspect of *wuwei*, or more appropriately, the lack of improper action, insofar as adjectives like meddlesome are included to develop the nuance of *wuwei* advocating for a lack of improper action and not a lack of any action. This aspect of *wuwei* is present in sages, and thus the *Laozi* is making a normative argument for the value of acting in harmony with the Dao via *wuwei*. This harkens back to the passage on the Dao, which asserts that sage-kings are in tune with the Dao; thus, having a nature imitating the Dao is both good and *wuwei*.

To leave the realm of abstractions, contemplate a more palpable illustration of *wuwei*. Suppose you are a Daoist, and there is a loud argument on the train you are riding.⁴⁵ The fight is actively escalating, and it appears increasingly likely that the man in the fight is going to physically hit the woman he is fighting. Only a few options come to your mind. For one, there are plenty of other people on the train, and this argument is not your problem, so let the fight happen and move on with your day. Conversely, be a hero! Imagine the news clips showing a valiant paragon saving a woman from domestic abuse by gallantly fighting the abuser! But, what is the most Daoist way to react? How could you react with *wuwei*? In this exact scenario, a New York man responded by eating potato chips to de-escalate the scenario.⁴⁶ Rather than reacting in a forced way (as in by picking a fight), which could put more people in danger, the bystander decided to step between the two people fighting; confusing the potential abuser enough to fully quell the situation. Furthermore, the bystander did not choose to do nothing, mirroring the fact that *wuwei* is *not* “doing nothing”. Instead, the man took action, but not excessively, and in turn, this man exemplified acting with *wuwei*.

Briefly returning to *wuwei* as classical Daoists described it, *wuwei* is the action of *Tiān* 天 (Heaven) and *Di* 地 (Earth), and therefore, it is the optimal life path, which is vital to lifelong health and happiness.⁴⁷ With such a broad definition, there are countless valid explanations and

⁴⁴ Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching*, chap. 57.

⁴⁵ Stoloff, “Laozi 1,” 2024. The idea of the ensuing narrative warrants full credit to Professor Stoloff.

⁴⁶ See the video “Man breaks up subway fight while eating potato chips” by WPTV News - FL Palm Beaches and Treasure Coast at <https://youtu.be/hR5cfTVkf-0?si=rHAreMgFQVEebTea>.

⁴⁷ Adrien Stoloff, “Wuwei in the Zhuangzi 2” Worcester Polytechnic Institute, Worcester, MA, 2024.

understandings of *wuwei*, not limited to the definitions provided herein.

§ 3.1: HOW MUCH LAND DOES A MAN NEED?

The confluence of *Being and Time* with classical Daoism is a topic that has largely been both understudied and unacknowledged. Given the breadth of ideas I would like to incorporate in this section, I will first make explicit the general formatting of this chapter. By and large, I aspire to unveil places where *Being and Time* exhibits direct proof of Daoist influence *and* to begin an open discussion on the similarity of certain concepts in *Being and Time* and classical Daoism. This will be accomplished by directly presenting the praxes of my argument in the implied order, where the beginning arguments are direct proofs of Heidegger's Daoist influences, and later arguments become nuanced discussions showing how classical Daoist ideals arise in *Being and Time*, regardless of the intentionality on Heidegger's part. To that end, the preponderance of evidence suggesting direct Daoist sources in *Being and Time* ought to establish the plausibility of the similarities between the Heideggerian and Daoist worldviews as stemming from Heidegger's direct inspiration from Daoist manuscripts.

§ 3.2: TWICE TWO MAKES FOUR

To set the stage for the magnitude of Daoist ideas in *Being and Time*, I will first present an excerpt which, even if hyperbolic, should help understand the view some of Heidegger's colleagues had on his work:

Ito Kichinosuke [伊藤吉之助], one of my teachers at university, studied in Germany in 1918 immediately after the First World War and hired Heidegger as a private tutor. Before moving 20 back to Japan at the end of his studies, Professor Ito handed Heidegger a copy of *Das Buch vom Tee*, the German translation of Okakura Kakuzō's *The Book of Tea*, as a token of his appreciation. That was in 1919. *Sein und Zeit (Being and Time)* was published in 1927 and made Heidegger famous. Mr. Ito was surprised and indignant that Heidegger used Zhuangzi's concept without giving him credit. Years later in 1945, Professor Ito reminisced with me and, speaking in his Shonai dialect, said, 'Heidegger did a lot for me, but I should've laid into him for stealing'. There are other indications that

Heidegger was inspired by Eastern writings, but let's leave this topic here. I have heard many stories of this kind from Professor Ito and checked their veracity. I recounted this story at a reception held after a series of lectures I gave in 1968 at the University of Heidelberg at the invitation of Hans-Georg Gadamer. Japanese exchange students attended these lectures, and I explained that there were many other elements of classical Eastern thought in Heidegger's philosophy and gave some examples. I must have said too much and may even have said that Heidegger was a plagiarist...⁴⁸

For context, the quotation above is from the point of view of a Japanese university student whose professor had hired Martin Heidegger as a private tutor. The student recounts that his professor gave Heidegger a copy of *The Book of Tea*. When *Being and Time* was published, the professor was certain that Heidegger had used Kakuzō's analysis of Daoism as the foundation of his philosophy, with the student later giving a lecture on this issue at an academic conference in Japan. In *The Book of Tea*, we directly read: "Taoism [is] the 'art of being in the world.'"⁴⁹ The implication here regarding Heidegger is clear as day, as there is no proof of Heidegger using the term "Being-in-the-world" before he had read the German version of *The Book of Tea*. With the publication of *Being and Time* in 1927, Heidegger had already had access to this translation as well as a copy of the *Zhuangzi* for many years. This fact has held up in contemporary philosophy, as the few modern scholars discussing this issue all say something along the lines of "he has been suspected of borrowing the expression 'being-in-the-world' (*in-der-welt-sein*) from the 1919 German translation of Okakura Kakuzō 岡倉覚三, *The Book of Tea* (*Cha no Hon* 茶の本)."⁵⁰

Calling back to chapter one, recall that the majority of *Being and Time* is a characterization of *Dasein* in one way or another. Yet, the very term *Dasein* (Being-there) is derivative of Being-in-the-world, which itself is from the characterization of Daoism by Kakuzō. What then? Is not the entire web of Heideggerian concepts built outwards from the point of stolen intellectual property? As the evidence is presented, Heidegger *did* find a niche concept, wrote it off as his own, and

⁴⁸ Tomonobu Imamichi, *In Search of Wisdom; One Philosopher's Journey*, (Tokyo, Japan: International House of Japan, 2004), 123-124.

⁴⁹ Kakuzō Okakura, *The Book of Tea* (Global Grey, 2014), 16, <http://pdf-objects.com/files/Book-Of-Tea.pdf>.

⁵⁰ Eric S. Nelson, "Martin Heidegger and Kitayama Junyū: Nothingness, Emptiness, and the Thing" *Asian Studies* 11, no. 1 (2023): 30, <https://journals.uni-lj.si/as/article/view/10594>.

then wrote a book on the concept. Thus, the most logical position maintains the existence of Heidegger's Daoist influences; any objection must first develop proof of Heidegger's conception of this concept before he interacted with East Asian culture. Moreover, Being-in-the-world from *The Book of Tea* attempts to describe the state of humanity as presented in early Daoist literature. Insofar as Dasein is the Being-there of consciousness, then Dasein in the setting of the world is best described as Being-in-the-world.

Now, from an understanding that Heidegger assuredly took influence from Daoism, it is reasonable to look at specific instances of Daoist ideas shining forth in *Being and Time*. In particular, the Dexterous Butcher of the *Zhuangzi* bears remarkable similarities to Heideggerian ideas:

Cook Ting laid down his knife and replied, "What I care about is the Way, which goes beyond skill. When I first began cutting up oxen, all I could see was the ox itself. After three years I no longer saw the whole ox. And now — now I go at it by spirit and don't look with my eyes..."

"A good cook changes his knife once a year — because he cuts. A mediocre cook changes his knife once a month — because he hacks. I've had this knife of mine for nineteen years and I've cut up thousands of oxen with it, and yet the blade is as good as though it had just come from the grindstone. There are spaces between the joints, and the blade of the knife has really no thickness. If you insert what has no thickness into such spaces, then there's plenty of room — more than enough for the blade to play about it. That's why after nineteen years the blade of my knife is still as good as when it first came from the grindstone..."⁵¹

On a more fundamental level, Zhuangzi uses this parable to characterize *wuwei* by referencing scenarios any layperson could understand. However, in doing so, he presents a novel view of tooling. The tool is not simply used and separate from the user; it ebbs and flows to and from the user in this passage. The tool's Being as part of the user is made manifest through its inability to break, as the durability of the equipment mirrors the continued Beingness of the being using it, signifying a lack of distinction between the two. This characterization is nearly

unparalleled, not only due to the uniqueness of the idea but also the

⁵¹ Chuang Tzu, *Chuang Tzu: The Basic Writings* (Columbia University Press, 1964), Section 8, quoted in *Bureau of Public Secrets, Chuang Tzu: "The Dexterous Butcher,"* (n.d.), Section 8, <https://www.bopsecrets.org/gateway/passages/chuang-tzu.htm>.

specificity. Furthermore, up until modernity, there was really no impetus to prompt philosophers to think extensively about the relationship between a tool and its user. And yet, we see for Heidegger that:

Equipment can genuinely show itself only in dealings cut to its own measure (hammering with a hammer, for example); but in such dealings an entity of this kind is not *grasped* thematically as an occurring Thing, nor is the equipment-structure known as such even in the using. The hammering does not simply have knowledge about the hammer's character as equipment, but it has appropriated this equipment in a way which could not possibly be more suitable. In dealings such as this, where something is put to use, our concern subordinates itself to the "in-order-to" which is constitutive for the equipment we are employing at the time; the less we just stare at the hammer-Thing, and the more we seize hold of it and use it, the more primordial does our relationship to it become, and the more unveiledly is it encountered as that which it is - as equipment. The hammering itself uncovers the specific 'manipulability' ("Handlichkeit") of the hammer.⁵²

He takes special care to characterize the nature of the equipment precisely. His characterization likewise strays away from the convention of conceiving of equipment, tooling, or technology as external to humans. Rather, it is by the use of a hammer that the hammer's Being is revealed. Although Heidegger elaborates his theories concerning instrumentality and technology later in his career, especially in *The Question Concerning Technology*, he has already laid the groundwork for the discussion at this point in *Being and Time*, presumably taken from classical Daoism. The emphasis on equipment as not existing outside of humans continues for much of the book:

The ready-to-hand is not grasped theoretically at all, nor is it itself the sort of thing that circumspection takes proximally as a circumspective theme ... That with which our everyday dealings proximally dwell is not the tools themselves (die Werkzeuge selbst). On the contrary, that with which we concern ourselves primarily is the work - that which is to be produced at the time; and this is accordingly ready-to-hand too. The work bears with it that referential totality within which the equipment is encountered.⁵³

The tool becomes such a part of the person that only its ready-to-handness is present, again painting an artistic flow between the user and the equipment. The equipment's Being in conjunction with the user has no

⁵² Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 98.

⁵³ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 99.

medium, similar again to the *Zhuangzi*: “Confucius said, ‘A good swimmer will get the knack of it in no time —that means he’s forgotten the water ... he sees the water as so much dry land.’”⁵⁴ What could we infer about a good tradesman? Perhaps, he has forgotten the tool, and sees the tool as much as his hand.

Moving forward, the paradigm Heidegger and classical Daoist authors share regarding equipment is most clear if we only take Heidegger’s excerpts in a vacuum. In reality, much of Heidegger’s writing in *Being and Time* is in the context of Dasein, which turns out to be intricately related to *wuwei*. As already displayed, Dasein is an object of Being whose subject is Being. Likewise, considering *wuwei* under an ontological lens, we can make a few observations. First, *wuwei* is *not* an ontic entity because even if it is not necessarily an object of Being, it is undoubtedly closer related to Being than being. Whereas an ontic entity would be a statement of isness; an ontological entity is a statement of the isness of isness (deriving from the definition of ontology versus onticology). Furthermore, towards which direction does the ontological entity of *wuwei* turn? Given that it is the ideal path of following the *Dao*, *wuwei* orients itself towards the *Dao*. And, inasmuch as the *Dao* has been characterized as both transcendent and immanent, as well as Nothing and Something, then *wuwei* is left with no *physical* direction to turn. This fact is only magnified as the *Dao* and *wuwei* get better and more precisely defined, because better definitions increase the mystical and ineffable perception of them. Hence, *wuwei*, in its possible ontological Beingness, must turn to itself as an essential action of the *Dao*, leading to its potential ontological Beingness shining forth in its subject of Being. Physically, this statement manifests in the idea that *wuwei* is generally accepted as being capable of occurring in nearly every hobby or work. Because *wuwei* has a subject of Being, or alternatively is a concept outside of the paradigm of means and ends (or even within that paradigm, *wuwei* would have *wuwei* as its own ends), it can be as attainable in sports as it is in a trade as it is in an art.⁵⁵ The only limitation on *wuwei* as an ontological Being exists in the classical Daoist emphasis of *wuwei* manifesting in action. Then, whereas Dasein is simply Being-there, *wuwei* is a way of confronting Being-there authentically. Further, the relationship of *wuwei* to the *Dao* is that of Dasein to Being, where the former acts as a collapse of the potential ontological essence of the latter.

Not only does Dasein exist as a relative of *wuwei*, but Heidegger

⁵⁴ Zhuangzi, *Zhuangzi: Basic Writings*, section 19.

⁵⁵ Stoloff, “Wuwei in the Zhuangzi 2,” 2024.

also more implicitly incorporates *wuwei*:

Circumspection operates in the involvement-relationships of the context of equipment which is ready-to-hand. Moreover, it is subordinate to the guidance of a more or less explicit survey of the equipmental totality of the current equipment-world and of the public environment which belongs to it. This survey is not just one in which things that are present-at-hand are subsequently scraped together. What is essential to it is that one should have a primary understanding of the totality of involvements within which factual concern always takes its start.⁵⁶

Here, the transformation of both the person and the equipment created because of the inherent goal of a ready-to-hand tool is similar to *wuwei*. Compared with the aforementioned “The Dexterous Butcher” section of the *Zhuangzi*, in both cases, the user of a tool becomes more intertwined with their tool as they become better at using it. From this, a psychological flow state is produced, and given that a psychological flow state is similar to *wuwei*, Heidegger is at least demonstrating the production of an idea approximating *wuwei*.

Next, there are strong parallels between Heidegger’s characterization of Dasein using Thrownness and the motif of fate in Daoist works. In the *Zhuangzi*, we read:

“I was born on the dry land and felt safe on the dry land - that was what I was used to. I grew up with the water and felt safe in the water - that was my nature. I don’t know why I do what I do - that’s fate.”⁵⁷

Here, the Being of the narrator is not justified as reasonable. There is no metaphysics presented to justify *why* they were born on the dry land, why they grew up with water, or why this is their nature. Instead, the narrator chalks this up to fate. Similarly, Heidegger’s ontology avoids normative ethics and metaphysical judgments. In the provided excerpts from *Being and Time*, none advocate for the reader to do anything (although one could argue his presentation of Dasein implies a method of living authentically). Hence, Heidegger too, does not care if there is an answer to the questions of Thrownness. Instead, he presents his argument as a truism about the world, saying, “this is just how it is.” Thus, both Heidegger and *Zhuangzi* address the origins of certain deterministic mechanisms in life by illuminating the existence of said mechanisms

⁵⁶ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 410.

⁵⁷ *Zhuangzi*, *Zhuangzi Basic Writings*, tr. by Burton Watson (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), Section 19.

but ignoring why the mechanisms exist.

Having considered both Dasein and Thrownness in the context of Daoism, it is

imperative to realize that the majority of *Being and Time* is focused on Dasein, let alone the even larger spotlight given to both concepts together. So, to rephrase, a majority of *Being and Time* is derivative of classical Daoist texts. Not only this, but the derivative aspects of Daoism in Heidegger's work are not simply details, rather, they are entire metaphysical, epistemological, and ontological structures underlying the thought upon which the book is built. The shining forth of Thrownness from classical Daoism, for example, is not a trivial detail; it is an entire ontological structure, a web of presuppositions, which Heidegger and Zhuangzi both take for being true. As such, to say Daoism underlies *Being and Time* is not saying that Heidegger directly discusses Daoist ideals. On the contrary, he is extracting a more fundamental influence from Daoism in the form of the structures through which he views philosophy—these are: fate/Thrownness as a condition of Being, Dasein as a complex relationship with *wuwei*, and the relation of humans with the world as fundamentally integrated into the world lacking emphasis on instrumentality and equipmentality.

However, there are limits to my arguments presented. First, the idea of Dasein being similar to *wuwei* is new, and thus, although its validity should be seen in this paper, there certainly are important differences between Dasein and *wuwei*. For instance, *wuwei* is first and foremost part of the Daoist belief system and is best understood in reference to the Dao. By taking *wuwei* away from the Dao, so too does it lose meaning. Furthermore, Dasein is fundamentally a description of the world, whereas *wuwei* entails much more in a normative sense; it tells you how to act. So, although I was careful to avoid conflating the two ideas directly, this is still worth considering. Another limitation of my arguments lies in the possibility that Heidegger took Being-in-the-world from classical Daoism and then came up with all other ideas independently. But this is highly unlikely for a few reasons. First, Heidegger took the idea of being in the world and passed it off as his own; there is no denying this. His willingness to do so implies he had no qualms about taking ideas from Daoism and repurposing them as his own, and he may not have realized people would find his source. Second, the similarities I presented between Heidegger and classical Daoist texts were not minor details that could be recreated; they were entire philosophical structures of viewing the world. The best chance for Heidegger *not* stealing from

Daoism lies in the slight chance that he simply had the same epistemological, metaphysical, and ontological presumptions as classical Daoists had.

In the case a reader could still write off the connections between Martin Heidegger and Daoism as coincidental, then it is important to note that there are *many more* philosophical assumptions shared by Heidegger and Daoists. First, a significant connection between Heidegger and classical Daoist authors has already been developed regarding a few points. The discussion of utility's relationship to usefulness, the interdependence of things on relationships, and the revelation of Nothingness in the world have all been discussed in David Chai's *Daoist Resonances in Heidegger*, especially in the first chapter by Graham Parker.

Furthermore, more connections still need to be discovered. For instance, Heidegger stems from the Husserlian tradition of phenomenology.⁵⁸ In this tradition, there is a focus on studying consciousness by understanding the first-person point of view of experience.⁵⁹ For Heidegger specifically, "The interconnectedness of Experience serves as the point of departure for methodical study."⁶⁰ Clearly, then, there is a primacy of experience central to Heidegger's philosophy. In comparison, the Daoist cosmology emphasizes the primacy of experience by claiming:

The Way begets one;
One begets two...⁶¹

From the Dao comes oneness, and from oneness comes Yin and Yang, and everything else comes to Yin and Yang. Or, assuming that *wuwei* as the essential action of the Dao implies experience is present in this cosmology, then this short passage from the *Laozi* is an expression of the primacy of experience in the world. This is yet another structure underlying the worldview of Daoists and Heidegger alike. After this short digression, it should be easy to see the reasoning that can be utilized elsewhere in *Being and Time* to identify even more Daoist influences.

§ 3.3: WHERE DO WE COME FROM? WHAT ARE WE?

⁵⁸ David Woodruff Smith, "Phenomenology," Stanford.edu, Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, November 16, 2013, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/phenomenology/>.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 75.

⁶¹ Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching*, chap. 42.

WHERE ARE WE GOING?

In conclusion, the blatant plagiarism shown in Martin Heidegger's use of the phrase Being-in-the-world (derived from Daoism) opens the door for *Being and Time* being inspired by

classical Daoism. From this position, a nuanced analysis of *Being and Time* reveals that Heidegger approaches philosophy from a similar worldview as Daoists approach the world, not limited to epistemological, metaphysical, and ontological presuppositions. The more analysis of *Being and Time* that is conducted, the more evident the similarities are. Some ideas I showed as derivative of Daoism include Dasein, Thrownness, and Equipmentality. Thus, in the context of Heidegger's confirmed reading and use of Daoist terms, I conclude it is more likely than not that Heidegger's presentation of Daoist ideas is due to his adoption of them, not mere coincidence. The recognition of Daoist sources in Heidegger's work is imperative not only for historicity but also because it allows for future scholarship surrounding syncretism. Given the connections between *wuwei* and Dasein, could *wuwei* represent the most authentic Clearing in Heideggerian philosophy? Or is *wuwei* truly the most authentic experience for Dasein? In either case, discussions like these are essential for future scholarship in the history of philosophy and religious studies.

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