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Heidegger and East Asia: Continuing the Dialogue

MCDOUGALL, UISDEAN,EDWARD,GEORGE

Abstract of *Heidegger and East Asia: Continuing the Dialogue*, a thesis submitted by

Edward McDougall for the degree of Ph.D. in Philosophy, University of Durham, 2012

This thesis explores and extends the dialogue between Martin Heidegger and East Asia. It asks whether East Asian thought, particularly philosophical Daoism, can adequately address the problem of modern nihilism as conceived by Heidegger. It aims to clarify the vague prospect: which Heidegger termed the 'new beginning' by showing how East Asian thought offers a distinctive model of the sacred that can antidote modern nihilism.

   Chapter One grounds the overall thesis by outlining the basic phenomenological principles of Heidegger's thought, particularly his notions of Being (*Sein*) and world. This basis is extended by Chapter Two which examines the Later Heidegger's notions of earth and *Seyn*. Chapter Three sets out modern nihilism as it is understood in Heidegger's philosophy. Chapter Four looks at the basic hermeneutical difficulties of Heidegger's dialogue with East Asia. Building on this introduction to Heidegger's thought, Chapter Five discusses Daoism and Shintoism as models for the sacred, comparing them with Heidegger's notion of dwelling. Chapter Six examines what it means for the *Dao* to be ineffable, comparing the *Dao* with *Seyn* and showing how the poetic mysticism of Heidegger and the Daoist thinkers differs from both esoteric knowledge and quietism. Chapter Seven considers the interplay between *yin* and *yang* in relation to Heidegger's thought, comparing the dichotomy with Heidegger's earth and world and looks at the history of Western metaphysics in the light of this comparison. Then, moving away from ontology to applied philosophy, Chapter Nine discusses the Daoist *ethos* of *wu wei* and to what extent this can provide Heideggerian thought with a model for living in the modern Western world. The final section brings the other chapters together, arguing that Heidegger's later thought sets out a non-doctrinal-religious ethos in response to modern Western nihilism.

Heidegger and East Asia: Continuing the Dialogue

A thesis submitted by Uisdean George Edward McDougall in accordance with the requirements of the University of Durham for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Declaration

I declare that no part of this work has been submitted by me for any degree in this or any other university. All work presented was conducted by me, expect where otherwise stated.

Edward McDougall

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Introduction

Heidegger's later thought is often presented as being deeply pessimistic and negative in that it is held to recommend an attitude of bleak, passive resignation towards the nihilism of the modern world. This commonly held view of Heidegger sees him as holding that technocratic nihilism is a fixed law determined by the modern epoch which cannot be altered or even affected by the actions of any particular individual. This way of reading Heidegger's thought thereby presents it as being even more pessimistic than that of Schopenhauer in that it does not even allow for the possibility that the individual might obtain a kind of salvation through personal ascetic renunciation. From the point of view of such a reading, modern humanity is trapped in a nihilistic state, with nothing to hope for. This view of Heidegger's work is presented by several writers, including Herman Philipse, in *Heidegger's Philosophy of Being*.

According to this interpretation of Heidegger's later thought, the only positive point outside the bleakness of modern nihilism would be a nostalgic longing for an idealised view of pre-Socratic or Homeric Greece, which Heidegger held as both the beginning of Western thought and a model towards which all Western thought ought to aspire and, if possible, seek to restore. This would make Heidegger's thought appear simply as a continuation of Hölderlin's Romantic Hellenism, viewing Ancient Greece as a means through which to show how the modern Western world has declined. Such a view of Heidegger's work is advanced by John D Caputo, who states in his later writings that Heidegger aims to construct a 'myth of the Great Greek Beginning' and that Western thought has fallen from the state of this 'Great Greek Beginning'. [1] The aim of Western thought, therefore, ought to be to return to this pre-Socratic ancient Greek state. Such Greco-centrism appears to implicitly exclude any alternative traditions of thought. According to Caputo, it is not only the case that Heidegger's thought has no room for any input from other traditions of thought external to Greece,

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[1]   J. D Caputo *Demythologizing Heidegger*: Indiana University Press: Bloomington Indianapolis 1993 Page 184

such as Jewish, Persian, Indian or Far Eastern thought: the very aim of Heidegger's thought is precisely to purify Western thought by eliminating all non-Greek influences.

At the same time, the practical possibility of a return to the Greek *Polis*, such as Athens before Socrates, seems deeply unlikely in that the only realistic role for the ancient Greek World in Heidegger appears to be to stand in contrast to the modern western world, thus highlighting the latter's shortcomings. Heidegger himself would certainly acknowledge that it is no longer possible to live, for example, as a Homeric hero in the modern world; and while a Greek temple existing as a ruin may still provide a sense of the divine outside of the dominant doctrinal understanding of religion in modern and medieval Europe, in order to restore such a sense of the sacred, it appears necessary to have a return of the Greek gods. As such, ancient Greece, from a Heideggerian perspective, can only appear as a faint trace of light on the horizon from a past golden age, to which it is impossible to return and which can be only sensed in contrast to the gathering gloom of the modern world.

According to such a reading, therefore, since the decline of ancient Greece, humanity has effectively been trapped in unalterable and progressively increasing nihilism. This makes Heidegger's later thought appear as distanced from any practical application within the modern world. It also makes Heidegger's thought appear potentially self-defeating since, by adopting this resigned approach to the modern world, the later Heidegger would only be reinforcing the modern nihilism and thereby would seem to undermine the purpose of any critique. Such readings, therefore, appear to be counter productive to Heidegger's own purpose in writing. In so far as technocratic nihilism is ordained as the fate of modern humanity to the extent that no human action can make any difference to it, Heidegger's personal endeavour is futile.

However, such a position, although widespread, represents a fundamentally one-sided and thus misguided reading of Heidegger's thought in that it focuses on his critique of modernity combined with his reading of the history of Western thought, but disregards the positive aspect of

his writing as an effort to rediscover that which is lost or suppressed within modern technocratic nihilism.

This thesis will challenge such a pessimistic reading of Heidegger's philosophy by focusing on his thought as a response to the crisis in Western modernity. I will argue that the view of Heidegger as simply nihilistic is one-sided because it fails to take into account Heidegger's work as a response to nihilism. Although Heidegger's interest in ancient Greece obviously cannot be denied, the exclusively Greco-centric reading of Heidegger is too narrow in that it fails to take into account its potential for dialogue with other traditions to develop a response to Western nihilism. This thesis will show how it is possible to understand the 'new beginning' as something more than merely a vague or nebulous prospect and that it is rather a response to the modern Western world. The central question of this thesis is, therefore, "What does such a response entail?" Thus, overall, the main endeavour is to show how it is possible to create a Heideggerian alternative to modern nihilism.

In order to do this, it is necessary to explore further the possibility of a new beginning. Such a notion in Heidegger's writings, described in *Contributions to Philosophy* as 'Crossing to the Other Beginning',[2] can easily appear vague or messianic. This is because it is hard to see in practice what such a transformation would entail. The 'Other Beginning' in itself, therefore, does not appear to offer a practical response to the modern world. The apparently messianic nature of the Other Beginning has often led to its neglect in studies of Heidegger's thought which have tended to concentrate on either a reading of the history of Western philosophy or the interpretation of technology and nihilism. Thus, even sympathetic readings of Heidegger's thought have tended to avoid discussion of his conception of a new beginning, almost seeing it as an embarrassment, while unsympathetic readings have tended to hold it up as an alleged example of mystical obscurantism. However, in order to assess the implications of the later Heidegger's thought as a response to the modern world, and thereby clarify the notion of what an 'other beginning' could mean, this thesis

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[2]   M. Heidegger *Contributions to Philosophy (from Enowning*). Translated by Pravis Emad and Kenneth Maly, Indiana Press Bloomington Indianapolis 1999 p 124.

will look at Heidegger's dialogue with the East Asian world as one possible route to this new beginning.

What is the East Asian World?

The East Asian world in the 'Dialogue on Language Between a Japanese and An Inquirer' designates a region marked out by a particular tradition of thought and religion. While the dialogue itself does not directly define the East Asian world, roughly speaking it might be said to encompass China, Old Korea, Japan and Vietnam, though it is not possible to draw strict boundaries. East Asia in this context should therefore not be equated with a broad notion of Eastern or Oriental regions as simply encompassing everything that is not Western or European. Such a position remains ambiguous and risks the grouping together of traditions that have little or nothing in common. For example, as will be shown in the section 'The Basis of Heidegger's Dialogue', the Islamic world has more in common with the Western world than with the East Asian world. The East Asian world therefore remains distinct from other traditions, such as European, Islamic or Indian traditions, which will be discussed in more detail later on in this section. The delineated region is understood here in a specific Heideggerian sense, which gives priority to thought and religion in defining the nature of East Asia as a distinct area, while aspects such as social or political customs are given secondary importance.

By focusing in this way on the centrality of religion and thought, the Heideggerian understanding of the distinction between East Asia and the West thus implicitly rejects a commonly held position that Asian values are collectivist, whereas western values are individualist, primarily on the grounds that such an interpretation focuses heavily on social relationships while being neglectful of underlying religious and philosophical differences. In any case, this view can clearly be shown to be one-sided and flawed when comparing the organic notions of state and society found in Plato or Hobbes with the individualist anti-institutionalism expressed in the writings of

Zhuangzi, or the Japanese Zen monk, Ikkyū. This thesis will, therefore, reject such superficial and simplistic explanations of the contrast between the East Asian World and the Western world. Instead, the focus will be on various philosophical and religious traditions that will be referred to collectively as the East Asian world. It will seek to show the various ways and instances in which these traditions differ from ways of thinking and religion found in the West.

While it is clear that this tradition of religious and philosophical thought has been influenced by traditions external to East Asia, in particular India, it still remains a distinct tradition. This differentiation can be observed, for example, in certain strands of Hindu thought, which come close to a notion of the divine that is absolute, personal and completely transcendent along the lines of the role of Vishnu in Vaishnavism, in a way that appears alien to analysing classical indigenous East Asian philosophical and religious traditions. Indeed, it seems difficult, for example, to translate the notion of 'God', as it is widely understood within the western Christian tradition, into classical Chinese. Historically, Western missionaries have used *Shen,* rendered 'benevolent spirit', or *Tian* meaning heaven*,* both as attempts to present the Christian notion of God in Chinese. However, in both cases, such terms already have strong nuances within Chinese religion and thus do not appear adequate for conveying a sense of a singular absolute, transcendent and omnipotent divinity.

A further point of distinction might be the emphasis put on the relationship with landscape that is found in traditions such as Chinese Daoism and Chan Buddhism as well as the importance of natural phenomena to Japanese Shrine-Shintoism, but this is not paralleled by other mystical or religious traditions, including the Indian Vedānta. Hence, while the East Asian tradition clearly should not be taken as completely isolated or unique, it is still fair to say that it does represent a distinctive area of thought. While, as indicated, the area influenced by East Asian tradition is much wider, in practice, the Chinese and Japanese traditions both exemplify what Heidegger means when he refers to the East Asian world. Hence, these traditions will be focused on in this thesis.

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This tradition of East Asian thought or religion itself covers a wide variety of different areas, including Daoism, both religious and philosophical, Confucianism, alongside other ancient schools of Chinese thought, such as Mohism (*Mo Jia*) and Legalism (*Fa Jia*), as well as different schools of Mahāyāna Buddhism, Chinese folk religion, Korean Shamanism and various forms of Japanese Shintoism. These traditions themselves passed through various historical developments, including the rise of Neo-Confucianism as a syncretic movement in later Chinese history, particularly the Ming Dynasty as well as in Japan during the early Edo Period. The East Asian tradition of thought should, thus, not be thought of as a philosophically or religiously homogeneous entity. These different religions and philosophies, however, are in themselves interconnected and have influenced each other through a history of interaction and dialogue. For example, the way that Buddhism and Confucianism have both developed in East Asia has been deeply influenced through their interaction with each other: they would not have become as they are without such encounters. The same might also be said of Daoism and indeed Shintoism, which also had to respond to the influence of Buddhism as well as Confucianism. Thus, it is possible to refer broadly to an East Asian tradition of thought and religion in the same way that it is possible to refer to a Western tradition of philosophy: While the latter encompasses a wide variety of schools of thought, including Existentialism, post-modernism, Romanticism, Positivism, Marxism, seventeenth-century Empiricism, Catholic scholasticism, Greco-Roman Stoicism or Neo-Platonism, it should be noted that it can also be said to include thinkers from outside of what might more conventionally be referred to as 'the West', such as the Islamic scholar Avicenna or the Jewish Rabbi Maimonides in Islamic Spain and later Egypt. Both thinkers were influenced by Greek thought, particularly Aristotle, and had a deep influence over medieval European philosophers, notably Aquinas, while Islamic thought has played a more ubiquitous role in the history and development of the Western tradition. At times, therefore, in both Western and East Asian thought, different schools may appear to take seemingly mutually opposed positions, as in Rationalism and Empiricism in Europe during

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the seventeenth century or, at certain times in Chinese history, Daoism and Confucianism. However, what links these diverse strands of thought both in East Asia and the West is a history of mutual influence and interaction. Yet, although there has been a degree of interaction between East Asia and the West for many centuries, such as, for example, when Nestorian Christian missionaries arrived in China during the early Tang dynasty, or when Leibniz became interested in the *Yijing* during the seventeenth century, the East Asian and Western worlds have remained largely distinct in terms of their underlying traditions.

Commencing with the basic question as to whether Heidegger was aware of various elements of East Asian traditions, Petzet states: 'anyone who knows a little about Heidegger's life will have to respond positively'.[3] While Heidegger's awareness of references to Far Eastern sources may not always have been made obvious or direct in his writings, it is clearly present, and his interest in aspects of East Asian thought and traditions, such as Zen, Daoism or Bushido is already well attested to in the work of Reinhard May and Graham Parkes, among others. Heidegger clearly was aware of a number of classical works of East Asian philosophy, such as Zhuangzi and the *Dao De Jing* (indeed, at one point he attempted to make a translation of Laozi's writings) as well as, possibly, the more modern works of writers including Kakuzo Okakura and D.T. Suzuki. However, the main focus in this work will be on continuing Heidegger's dialogue with the East Asian world. The aim is not, therefore, to answer the biographical or textual question as to which aspects of the East Asian World may have directly influenced Heidegger, and at which point, during his work. Instead of looking backwards biographically over Heidegger's work to see what elements may have been influenced by the East Asian world, this thesis will look at how aspects of East Asian thought and religion can provide an alternative to Western nihilism in Heidegger's view, by presenting different ways of relating to beings in the world. As such, this thesis will look further at those possibilities that are only hinted at in his work. Based on the potential alluded to in the work of Heidegger, this thesis will seek to show how the East Asian world can provide a way of living in the

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[3] H. W. Petzet *Encounters and Dialogues With Martin Heidegger* University of Chicago London 1993, p 166

modern Western world that Heidegger was searching for. This requires finding a way of living in the modern world that remains open to a sense of mystery and which does not endeavour to reinforce the reduction of all that is to resources.

A large body of work already exists on Heidegger and Zen Buddhism, while Korean Shamanism, although it may have had no direct impact on Heidegger's thought, can potentially be understood in Heideggerian terms. It will not, however, be possible to look at all these areas within this thesis. The main focus of this work will be on philosophical Daoism, *Dao jia*, as exemplified by the writings of Laozi and Zhuangzi, as well as aspects of Shrine Shintoism by way of comparison and contrast. It is important to note here that philosophical Daoism, *Dao jia*, will be treated as separate and distinct from religious Daoism, *Dao Jiao*, or Chinese folk Daoism, in that, while these traditions may have influenced each other, they differ on important points, particularly the significance of gaining personal immortality. From this point onwards, "Daoism" will therefore refer to *Dao Jia*, unless otherwise specified.

The old Chinese language and the *Dao De Jing* in particular are notoriously difficult to translate, resulting in a wide range of different translations. For this reason, there is no single accepted version. However, the Jonathan Starr rendering has been found useful for its clarity, as well as its commentary and provision of the original Chinese text. When referring to the classic Daoist text, the *Dao De Jing,* this thesis will generally use Jonathan Starr's translation, but at points, when there is a clearly an important ambiguity, it will also turn to Richard Wilhelm's translation. In cases of ambivalent translation, it has also been necessary to consult the original Chinese text.

While the main focus of this thesis is on Daoism, I will also look at Shintoism, an area which appears to have had no direct impact on Heidegger and which he may well not have been acquainted with. However, this thesis seeks to demonstrate that both Daoism and Shintoism are relevant to the aim of exploring further the possibilities of responding to Western nihilism presented by East Asian traditions. By continuing the dialogue with the East Asian world in this way, this

thesis endeavours to fulfil Heidegger's own view of his work, particularly his reading of the history of Western philosophy as preparation for a future 'dialogue with the East Asian World'.[4]

East Asia and Western Nihilism

The notion that the East Asian tradition might provide a resolution to the crisis of modern nihilism in Western thought was proposed by Heidegger's Japanese contemporary Nishitani Keiji. This redemption through the East Asian tradition was described by Nishitani in messianic tones, stating that 'the tradition must be rediscovered from the ultimate point where it is grasped in advance as "the end" (or *eschaton*) of our westernisation and of Western Civilisation itself'.[5] This reading presents traditional East Asian thought as a future possibility for both East Asia and the West. Nishitani Keiji suggests that the East Asian tradition of thought can offer a new beginning or radical transformation that appears similar to Heidegger's 'Other Beginning' by looking at an alternative way of understanding Western nihilism that is non-technocratic. For Nishitani, the crisis of nihilism in the modern Western world, as exemplified by Nietzsche's famous 'death of God',[6] represents, therefore, an opportunity to look again at previously neglected aspects of the East Asian world.

Central to this rediscovering of the East Asian tradition is Nishitani's notion of looking again at its understanding of the sacred. This is because East Asian traditions, such as Zen for Nishitani, but also Daoism and Shintoism as will be discussed in this thesis, appear to offer notions of religion that are not understood as a theistic doctrine, which was central to the tradition which Nietzsche was responding to. Hence, what both Nietzsche and Heidegger saw as the decline of traditional Western religious metaphysics provides the opportunity to re-examine previously neglected aspects of East Asian tradition, which can show alternative ways of understanding the

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[4]   M. Heidegger "Science and Reflection" in *Question Concerning Technology*. Translated by William Lovitt.: Harper and Row New York 1977, p 158 .
[5]   N. Keiji *Self Overcoming of Nihilism* Translated by Graham Parkes. State University of New York New York 1990 p 179.
[6]   E.M Ciroran *The Temptation to Exist*: Translated by Richard Howard University of Chicago ,Chicago 1956 p 37 .

nature of religion., This provides the capacity for moving beyond the nihilism that developed from what Nietzsche and Heidegger saw as the failure of Western metaphysics. It is this decline of Western religious metaphysics, based on the absolute transcendental notion of God as held by thinkers such as Thomas Aquinas, who for both Nietzsche and Heidegger is understood as the defining feature of modern nihilism. Accordingly, in order to provide an alternative to modern Western nihilism, East Asia must provide an alternative understanding of the religious or the sacred. The fundamental question therefore is: Can any East Asian tradition present an understanding of the sacred that is a viable alternative to the previous western understanding of religion?

While the main focus of Nishitani's work was on Zen Buddhism, his approach could be applied to other aspects of East Asian thought and religion. However, the danger of such an approach is that it could lead to a simple and direct appropriation of East Asian tradition by the modern Western world. This raises immediate practical questions, such as how it would be possible to live as a Daoist sage in the modern Western world. This project of looking to East Asian thought, or any other kind of Eastern tradition as a response to Western nihilism has already been challenged by another of Heidegger's contemporaries, Emil Cioran. He, like Heidegger, was concerned with modern Western nihilism, but declared instead:

> What recourse to China or India will heal us? There are certain forms of wisdom and deliverance which we can neither grasp from within nor transform into our daily substance, nor even frame in a theory. Deliverance if we insist upon it must proceed from ourselves: no use seeking it elsewhere, in a ready- made system or in some Oriental doctrine.[7]

Cioran sees the modern Western world as completely trapped in its own historic

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[7]   E.M Ciroran *The Temptation to Exist*: Translated by Richard Howard. University of Chicago, Chicago 1956 p 37 .

development, and as such beyond the reach of any alternative tradition. East Asian thought is, therefore, in effect rendered completely alien and beyond the comprehension of the West. hence it would be completely irrelevant to the problem of Western nihilism. In Cioran's view, therefore, even if East Asian thought was completely exempt from the crisis of modern Western nihilism, it could still provide no help to the Western world

For Cioran, if there can be any answer to the crisis that both Heidegger and Nishtani see within the modern world, it must come from the Western tradition itself. In this thesis, I will seek to counter Cioran's point from a Heideggerian position. In order to do this, I will extend Heidegger's dialogue with the East Asian thought by presenting such dialogue as means to challenge modern Western nihilism, thereby showing how aspects of East Asian thought and religion are relevant to the condition of the modern Western world. However, at the same time, I will look at issues of distance and interpretation of East Asian thought as they are raised in Heidegger's writings. Thus, this thesis will present Heidegger's approach to the East Asian world as mid-way between Cioran and Nishitani, in the sense that he sees the East Asian tradition as offering an alternative to modern Western nihilism while at the same time remaining in itself distant. This means that Heidegger would reject any wholesale appropriation or syncretism of East Asian and Western thought. Such a wholesale appropriation of East Asian thought would lead, in Heidegger's view, to misinterpretations, due to imposing Western notions onto traditions from East Asia. Hence, it is not possible standing within the modern Western world to gain direct access to the East Asian world. In this respect, Heidegger's project differs from others' such as that of Schopenhauer, a contrast which will be looked at directly in the section, 'The Basis of Heidegger's Dialogue'. However, this thesis will seek to show that, while Heidegger would reject a direct cultural appropriation, the East Asian world and East Asian thought can still provide a paradigm to the modern Western world. In particular, it will be shown that East Asian traditions can provide ways of responding to the modern world for Heidegger, and a sense of the sacred that is outside of the technocratic way of

understanding. This tension between distance and dialogue is something that underlies Heidegger's approach to the East Asian world, which is exemplified by the Japanese principle of *iki (*いき*),* which will be explained further in the thesis.

Hence, the thesis will show how Heidegger attempts to avoid a simple appropriation of East Asian traditions by the West, such as the method that may be associated with the work of Schopenhauer. However, at the same time, his position still allows for East Asian traditions to be relevant to living in the modern Western world, in that they can be helpful in responding to modern technological nihilism.

In Chapters One and Two of the thesis, I will firstly set out the later Heidegger's fundamental principles. Of crucial importance here is to distinguish the phenomenological notions of *Sein* and World, which will be dealt with in Chapter One, from the more mysterious *Seyn* and Earth that will be looked at in Chapter Two. In Chapter One, therefore, I will begin by looking at Heidegger's basic phenomenology, starting with the distinction that the early Heidegger makes in *Being and Time*, between beings-present-at hand (*Vorhanden*) and beings-ready-to-hand (*Zuhanden*).

Crucial to this distinction is that, for Heidegger, beings are given their ontological status (become what they are), through their overall relationships with each other and that this framework of underlying relations provides the basis for the notion of World. From this, I will go on to show how the later Heidegger extends the notion of World as a background framework in the 'Origin of the Work of Art' to include the complete historical order. Then, in Chapter Two, I will go on to look at the limits of the phenomenology of world, starting with the role of Earth as the mysterious and organic grounding that provides a limit to the openness and intelligibility of the world. From this, the chapter will go on to discuss *Seyn* as the more mysterious and fundamental element of Being in Heidegger, underlying the phenomenological *Sein* as the way that beings are disclosed.

Moving on from those basic principles, in Chapter Three I will look at the problem of

modern nihilism in Heidegger's thought. In particular, I will show how this condition is thought to emerge from the historical development of Western thought since Plato, culminating in Nietzsche's 'will to power' (*der Wille zur Macht*), and how this has led, in Heidegger's interpretation, to the reduction of beings in the world to simply standing as resources in reserve. This is tied to the loss of the sense of *Seyn*.

After this relatively brief outline of Heidegger's philosophical critique of the history of Western metaphysics, Chapter Four of the thesis will then look at and outline the basis of Heidegger's dialogue with the East Asian world. It will begin by tracing how the East Asian world potentially presents an alternative for Heidegger to modern nihilism, developed from the history of Western metaphysics. The next part of the chapter focuses on 'The Dialogue Between a Japanese and an Inquirer', which is a fundamental text in laying down the foundations for a Heideggerian approach for a dialogue between East Asia and the West. The chapter will look at the different ways in which the "Inquirer" figured in the dialogue seeks to gain entrance to the East Asian world, particularly and most crucially through the Japanese notion of *iki*, as well as a comparison between the film Rashomon and No-drama (*Nogaku*). This part of the thesis will show the basic ambiguity between distance and nearness that underlies Heidegger's dialogue with the East Asian world. The last part of the chapter features a brief introduction to Heidegger and Daoism.

With the basic foundations of a Heideggerian approach to encountering the East Asian world laid out, Chapter Five will then extend this dialogue further by looking into how the East Asian world can offer alternative understandings of the sacred. Central to this section will be issues such as transcendence and immanence in Daoism and Heidegger. I will begin by looking at the *Dao* in the world and then contrast it with Plato's Forms. I will then compare the immanence of the *Dao* with the organic notion of the sacred. This will be looked at via Heidegger's notion of the four-fold (gods, earth, sky and mortals) as shown particularly in essays such as *The Thing*, contrasting this emphasis on particularity and experience of the sacred with the uniform presence of *Dao* in

Daoism. Based on this discussion, the chapter will continue by looking at the Shrine in Shintoism as an alternative understanding of the sacred, which more closely parallels Heidegger's four-fold.

Moving on from the sacred, the topic of Chapter Six is the sense of ineffability in both Heidegger and Daoism. Key to this chapter will be the role of language and mystery in both Daoism and Heidegger. I will seek to answer whether, for Heidegger, Daoism can provide a sense of the ineffable which is lost in modern Western nihilism. I will first look at language and the *Dao*, followed by the role of language in Heidegger, particularly with regard to the importance of poetry as conveying a sense of what is beyond direct communication. From this, I will draw a distinction between three kinds of mysticism: first, the esoteric doctrine that seeks to express the nature of existence directly through language, even though its use of language is only intelligible to a select few: secondly, quietism, which completely denies the validity of language for expressing the mystery of existence: and, thirdly, poetic mysticism, which seeks to convey through language a sense of something that is thought to be in some sense beyond words. I will argue that both Heidegger and Daoism fall into this third grouping. The chapter will also look at some problems arising from such a relationship to language, assessing whether it can be meaningful to speak of the ineffable in this way.

In Chapter Seven, I will show how Heidegger's thought can be understood in terms of yin and yang. In order to do this, the first section of the chapter provides an introduction to the nature of *yin* and *yang* in Chinese thought. Based on this, the next part of the chapter will look comparatively at Heidegger's earth and world, or the concealment/unconcealment dichotomy. It will show that Heidegger's interpretation of the dominance of modern technology is in effect based on the loss of the *yin* in Western modernity and that Heidegger's thought can therefore be understood as an effort to rebalance the *yin* and *yang*, rather than as simply being Luddite in the sense of seeking to abolish modern technology.

Chapter Eight will discuss whether Daoism can present Heidegger with a model for living

within the modern Western world, by looking at the notion of *wu wei* in Daoism and *Gelassenheit* in Heidegger. From this, I will seek to show parallels between *wu wei* as practised by Daoist sages in the Warring States period of China and Heidegger's model for life in the modern Western world. Through such a comparison it will be illustrated how this Daoist approach can be relevant to providing a Heideggerian way of living in the modern world. Of central importance to this discussion is the role of fate in both Heidegger and Daoism. The chapter will begin by looking at *wu wei* in Daoist thought, contrasting Laozi's principles of government with the more individualist approach to *wu wei* in Zhuangzi. This will show the link between *wu wei* and *ziran* (naturalness) in Zhuangzi. Following that, I will focus on the problem of human action and fate in the later writings of Heidegger I will seek to show how Daoist *wu wei*, as exemplified by Zhuangzi's ideal of the sage, can present a Heideggerian way of responding to the modern world that is not simply fatalist, as Heidegger's thought is sometimes understood.

Chapter Nine will consider non-doctrinal religion and how the East Asian philosophy of Daoism and the religion of Shintoism can be understood as non-doctrinal religious ethos and how, as such, they can provide a model for a recognisably Heideggerian religious way of life. I will begin by outlining the nature of Heidegger's religious thought, starting with his interpretation of Pauline Christianity in his early pre-*Being and Time* writings, subsequently looking at his later, more radical, understanding of religion, particularly his rejection of religious doctrine. The chapter will then look at the nature of religious doctrine itself, seeking to show that not all religions are necessarily doctrinal. In this context, I will then present Zhuangzi's Daoism and Shrine-Shintoism as both being, although dissimilar, models of non-doctrinal religion. Finally, the chapter will seek to show how Zhuangzi's Daoism and Shintoism can in different ways provide a non-doctrinal ethos, which avoids both the modern secularism and over-arching dogma. In this way, such traditions will be shown to provide an overall understanding of what it means to take a Heideggerian approach to religion. Such a non-doctrinal approach will be shown to provide an alternative to both modern

secularism and nihilism, as well as to traditional church dogma. The final chapter brings together underlying central issues of the thesis concerning the nature of East Asian religion as exemplified by philosophical Daoism and Shintoism, through showing how they differ from Western traditions of religious belief, such as Aquinas' theology or the Platonic style of esoteric doctrine. It will be shown from a Heideggerian perspective how this religious approach can help to resolve the problem of life in the modern Western world

Thus, by adopting a multi-angled analysis, I aim to move beyond the crisis of nihilism in Western thought, as understood by Heidegger, by exploring the possibilities for dialogue with the East Asian world set out in Heidegger's philosophy, thereby continuing the project from the point at which Heidegger's account breaks off.

Chapter 1 Introduction to Being (*Sein*) in Heidegger's Thought

The Different Ways of Being in Heidegger's Thought

Heidegger's philosophy is often said to begin with the 'question of Being', and it is generally held that Heidegger continued to ask this question throughout his philosophical career. What, however, does Being in such a sense mean? It is clear that at different stages in his writing, Heidegger uses the word Being in different ways, which has often led to misunderstandings regarding the nature of his philosophical project.

Ready to Hand – Everyday Disclosure of beings in Heidegger's Early Writings

In order to begin to understand Heidegger's thought, it is first necessary to look briefly at the ordinary or *ontic* attitude towards beings as it is discussed in his early writings. The example that will be taken is that of 'a hammer' as referred to in *Being and Time*. The question is, "What does it mean to be a hammer?" At the most basic level, a hammer must be seen as an instrument that is used in a particular way. For someone to understand the nature of a hammer is therefore to understand it through a practical involvement with it, by using it. Without the possibility of such practical application, the designation of something as a hammer means it lacks specific significance. Hence a world with nothing to hit would therefore have no notion of a hammer and were hammer to be brought into such a world, it would only be a long piece of wood, with a lump of metal attached to it, lacking all function as a hammer. Put more basically, this kind of understanding is exhibited by the person who picks up the hammer and uses it towards an appropriate task, such as knocking a nail into wood. It is further exemplified by the skilled craftsman who applies the force of the hammer in a meticulous way for a specific purpose such as building a table, while the unskilled person who visits the craftsman's workshop may look at, touch, or even pick up the craftsman's

hammer, but still does not have the same understanding of the hammer. An unskilled person can appreciate the hammer's use and know what the hammer's function is. However, they cannot understand what it is like being able to apply a hammer in a specific way.

For Heidegger, this practical and functional way of relating to a being, defined as 'ready-to-hand' (*Zuhanden*), is disclosed in terms of its use or application in relation to everything else. Heidegger thus refers to items that stand out in such a way, through their use, as equipment (*Zeug*). As Hubert Dreyfus states, 'a piece of equipment like a chair [or a hammer] is defined by what it is used for'[8] and as such this use is always directed towards something else. This means that there is no 'such thing as 'an equipment'.[9] Thus, equipment can never be equipment outside a particular relationship of purpose towards which it is directed. Hence, the hammer as a hammer is defined by its relation to a nail that it knocks into a piece of wood, the nail in its turn also appearing as equipment used to hold the wood together in a table. Taken in isolation from each other, each of these items loses its significance of use. Thus, beings, in the same way as the hammer and nail, are defined through their relationship with each other, creating a general structure of equipment.

Within this structure, aspects such as the metal in the hammer or colour of the wood do not particularly stand out in themselves in so far as they are incidental to the main significance of the hammer as a hammer. This means that while the craftsman may still be aware of details such as the colour of the wood in his hammer, when he is focused on using the hammer to hit metal, the colour of its wood cannot be his primary concern. A replica of a hammer, which had the outward of appearance of wood and metal, but which broke each time it was used to hit a nail would be useless to the craftsmen and would thus have in effect failed to be a hammer. While a colour-blind craftsman may have a completely distorted view of his hammer, he could still have, in Heidegger's sense, an effective, skilled ready-to-hand understanding of how the hammer works. Hence, the

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8   H. Dreyfus *Being In The World: Commentary on Heidegger's Being and Time Division 1* MIT Press Cambridge Massachusetts London 1991 p 64 .
9   M. Heidegger *Being and Time* Translated by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson. Blackwell Publishers Oxford 1962 p 105.

hammer could lose its colour over time, but its ontological status as a hammer would not be changed. This is because the hammer instead reveals itself by, and is defined as, its function. Equipment, when it is functioning correctly, does not stand out in the sense of requiring direct attention. For example, someone cooking a meal is not required to pay attention to the frying pan unless something happens to the frying pan that makes it unfit for purpose. In such a project, the frying pan exists as ready-to-hand.

Given, therefore, that items of equipment when ready-to-hand are defined by their use in relation to other beings, in a different setting, a piece of equipment such as a hammer might disclose itself as something completely different: for example as the symbol of a god. All beings that are ready-to-hand thus exist in relation to the projects and purposes of Dasein (being there),[10] by which Heidegger means a being who is capable of asking the 'question of being'. This provides the central focus of Heidegger's early work and in particular, *Being and Time*. Beings that are ready-to-hand should not be thought of as objects in the sense that a Cartesian dualist would view them: that is, as existing completely independently of Dasein which would act as the subject in Descartes' sense. Rather, Dasein and beings ready-to-hand should be thought of as symbiotic. This means that Dasein becomes a being through those possibilities given by beings that are ready-to-hand. Put simply, the artist can only become an artist when there are paints and brushes available; the craftsman can only become a craftsman with a workshop of tools available. As will be shown later, Heidegger always sees human life as being defined by a wider relationship to beings and, crucially, to Being in general.

In Heidegger's thought, 'ready to hand' is not the only way in which beings can stand out. Throughout his writings he draws distinctions between different ways that beings can relate to each other. In *Being and Time*, he distinguishes those beings that are present-at-hand, in contrast to ready-to-hand, to denote items independent from their use. This means that a hammer that is

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10   Dasein in Heidegger loosely means the being who has the ability to ask questions- generally it might be said to be an entity with an awareness of itself.

present-at-hand stands out from other pieces of wood by having a certain length and shape with a lump of metal attached to it. Its status as a functional hammer is in effect put to one side: it may even be forgotten about. Under some circumstances, it may indeed be the case that investigating something as present-at-hand makes it no longer fit for purpose, such as dissecting the wood of the hammer so as to analyse its chemical structure. Hence, while relating to beings in a ready-to-hand way entails an involvement with their practical application, letting something stand as present-at-hand involves moving away from such immediate involvement to a more detached stance. The being that is 'present at hand' therefore becomes an object of contemplation; for example, a hammer viewed as present-at-hand appears essentially as metal and wood, so a scientist carrying out an investigation, though he may be aware of the hammer's original functional significance, has removed it from its usual context of application. It is even possible for an archaeologist to have a detailed 'present at hand' knowledge of a primitive artefact, having observed all its particular properties and chemical composition, while not knowing what its original 'ready to hand function' was.

Beings, when they are 'present at hand', thus have a radically altered significance from when they are 'ready to hand'. For the early Heidegger, 'present at hand' is understood as a secondary and derivative kind of disclosure. This is fundamental, since such a relationship cuts beings off from their usual significance and interaction with other beings. This can be shown by the scientist who analyses the wood from the hammer in his laboratory. It might even be said that a hammer looked at in a way that ignores its function is no longer a hammer, at least in so far as the word "hammer" is normally understood. Hence, a being that stands 'present at hand' is therefore effectively in Heidegger's terms 'deprived of its world-hood',[11] while the scientist who carries out the investigation of the hammer still remains embedded within a framework of equipment that is 'ready-to-hand'. Present-at-hand analyses of beings are, therefore, valid within certain projects. However,

[11]   M. Heidegger *Being and Time.* Translated by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson Blackwell Publishers Oxford 1962 p.117

in *Being and Time,* Heidegger does not hold it possible for Dasein to stand in a relation to beings that are completely 'present at hand', as detached from any involvement or practical concern. While in his later writings he may have moved away from 'ready to hand' and 'present at hand' as the primary categories through which beings are understood, Heidegger, continues to hold that existence is at a basic level a matter of involvement in the world.

What, however, is the nature of the framework that underlies particular beings such as the craftsman's hammer? This question can be rephrased as, 'What makes it possible for the hammer to be a hammer at all?'

Beings and World/ *Sein*

This leads on to some important distinctions in Heidegger's thought. Firstly, there are beings in the world, by which Heidegger means ordinary items that might be encountered in the world. Secondly, there is Being (*Sein*): this sense of Being for Heidegger is always present within the ordinary everyday involvement (the *ontic* in Heidegger's terms), but is overlooked by such involvement. It is in effect the way that ordinary beings are able to stand out. As will be noted later, Heidegger also has a third and final sense of Being that will be referred to as *Seyn,* which occupies a more mysterious position in his thought. This more mystical notion of Being will be looked at in the next section.

In order to begin to understand Heidegger's notion of *Sein* it is first necessary to note the significance of the shift, which, in Heideggerian terms, is from an ontic (ordinary concern for beings in the world), to the ontological attitude that looks at the question of what Being is as a whole. This ontological question for Heidegger always underlies everyday practice, although it is often overlooked and taken for granted by the ordinary ontic attitude. Individuals going about their daily lives generally do not call into question the nature of their existence. However, the fact that they live their lives in a particular way presupposes a particular setting and relationship to other

beings. Hence, for example, the craftsman in his workshop is not likely to question the nature of his relationship to the wood he works on; however, his actions already presuppose that he has a certain relationship to the wood. What is therefore at the basis of such a relationship?

At a basic level, in Heidegger's thought, thinking ontologically means seeking to understand that which forms the basis of beings that are themselves existing in relationship to other beings. This is central to how Being as *Sein* is understood in Heidegger's early writings. *Sein* acts as a general structure that interlinks beings and with which Dasein is always involved, but at the same time, it affects the way that Dasein relates to itself and to beings in the world.

It is this understanding of Being (*Sein*) that is generally held to form the central focus of the period of Heidegger's writings between *Being and Time* and 'The Origin of the Work of Art', commonly known as the Early Heidegger. Expressed in more Heideggerian terms, Being in this sense might be understood as "disclosure", as the way that beings are given over either to individuals (Dasein in *Being and Time*) or a community (in 'Origin of the Work of Art'). Overall, it is the way that beings are presented. In more simple terms, it might be thought of as a background to daily life, which acts like a stage-set in a theatre that is always present in the performance and which allows the possibilities of acting to take place.

Julian Young makes a comparison of this understanding of 'Being' in Heidegger with what Ernst Junger termed the 'visual field', since Being 'transcends beings, is above the physical, in the way which the visual field transcends the appearance of objects.'[12] As such, Being might be understood as a frame of reference within which everything can be understood: "The ever non objective to which we are subject as long as the paths of birth and death keep us transported".[13] It might therefore be said that Being in Heidegger is always prior to any notion of individual beings; and it is only because of this disclosure of 'being' that beings are revealed to the understanding of

[12]   J. Young *Heidegger's Later Philosophy*. Cambridge University Press Cambridge 2002 p 11 .
[13]   M. Heidegger "Origin of the Work of Art" in *Off the Beaten Track*. Translated by Julian Young and Kenneth Haynes Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2002 p 23 .

Dasein. In this way, Being is the basis against which Dasein lives out its daily life. Therefore, Being in this sense may be associated with the phenomenological notions of the 'Life World' (*Lebenswelt*) found in Husserl's phenomenology, in that, at least at first sight, it is an essentially everyday background that might easily be ignored because it is assumed to be understood, yet makes all experience possible and it is not possible to experience anything beyond it. Like Husserl's 'world horizon', Heidegger's Being as disclosure marks out the limits of what is disclosed (in general terms, what can be experienced). For Heidegger, however, it is important that there are different senses of Being depending on how beings are disclosed: for example, in *Being and Time*, the ordinary way that equipment is disclosed is as ready-to-hand, but in other contexts it can be present-at-hand.

This leads on to the crucial notion of world (*Welt*) in Heidegger, which means a referential totality in which beings stand out: For example, the ritual mask of an African tribe is given its significance by its context within the world of the tribe in which it is disclosed. Once the mask is taken out of this context, its significance is lost: and the same could be said of the hammer which has nothing to hit. These principles of world are found in *Being and Time* as the background to which Dasein organises his or her projects, as exemplified by the craftsman's workshop where the structures of equipment (e.g. hammer, nail, wood etc.) are all linked together and are given significance through the craftsman's projects.

However, in 'The Origin of the Work of Art', Heidegger extends the world's scope from a basic structure of inter-related items, such as the equipment in a workshop, to a complete historical understanding of beings. Hence, the classic example Heidegger used when talking about a world was the Greek world which had a unique way of understanding things and remains radically distinct from other worlds, such as the medieval European world. There are a wide variety of different historical worlds, including the Inca world, the pre-Islamic Persian world or the aboriginal Australian world. It is even possible that there are alien worlds disclosed to Dasein of other species

on other planets. What matters is that each of these worlds acts as a complete basis for an interpretation of what it means for beings to be. In non-Heideggerian terms, they provide a grounding for culture and way of life in a particular geographical and historical setting. Dasein's membership of a particular world therefore does more than act as a background for various projects and possibilities: rather, it fundamentally affects Dasein's understanding of his or herself and surrounding beings. As will be shown in greater detail subsequently, each world for Heidegger represents a unique historical insight into the nature of existence, and as such carries with it its own way of living.

It is this notion of world that is central to much of Heidegger's work, with each particular world in his philosophy representing a unique disclosure, meaning a particular way in which all beings are presented. World in Heidegger's later writings is therefore effectively equivalent to Being as *Sein:* it is the way in which beings are disclosed. Put more simply, the world is a basic way in which everything at a particular time and place is given its significance and structure.

Heidegger associates the notion of world in the 'Origin of the Work of Art' with his interpretation of the pre-Socratic Greek understanding of truth as *aletheia,* uncovering, the nature of which will be looked into further on in the thesis. The world is primarily that which is uncovered or made open to experience. For Heidegger, human beings always live within the context of a particular world; and, also, the world as disclosure can only occur when there is someone to disclose it to. If the last Dasein were to die out, then, in effect, there would no longer be any world in the sense that Heidegger understands it. Hence, 'presence needs an open clearing and remains as such through this dependence given over to human being'.[14] The 'world' is something unique to Dasein: hence 'the stone is worldless'[15] …. 'while plant and animal likewise have no world, but belong to the covert throng of a surrounding in which they are linked'.[16]

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[14]   M. Heidegger *Identity and Difference*. Translated Joan Stambaugh. University of Chicago, Chicago1969 p 16 .

[15]   M. Heidegger "Origin of the Work of Art" in *Off the Beaten Track*. Translated by Julian Young and Kenneth Haynes. Cambridge University Press Cambridge 2002 p.22 .

[16] *Ibid* p 23. However, elsewhere Heidegger refers to animals in a more ambiguous way, stating that animals 'are not suspended worldlessly in their environment', they are also the 'poor of world' in that they do not have a complete world in the human sense.

However, leaving the question of animals to one side, it is important to note that, for Heidegger, the world is central to all human existence and that in order for the individual to exist, he or she must necessarily exist within a world. Julian Young states that, in Heideggerian language, the world and human Dasein are 'equiprimordial',[17] meaning that human Dasein comes into existence together with the world, and the two cannot exist separately without each other. Heidegger, therefore, rejects the subject-object dichotomy of thinkers such as Locke, Kant and Descartes, who see the perceiving subject looking out from itself over the world that may or may not exist as it is perceived. For Heidegger, asking such a question rests on the false assumption that individual and world are separable: whereas, in his understanding, a Dasein cut off from his or her environment, like Descartes' *Res Cogitans*, would no longer be Dasein in any meaningful sense, literally in that it would no longer be, 'being there', because it would have no context to be set in. It is only possible to make sense of Dasein within the broader structure of meanings and practices within the world that is disclosed to Dasein. It is, therefore, not possible, for example, to make sense of Dasein's project to build a table without reference to the existence and significance of a wider context of purposes in the world. Dasein, although it may hold a particularly privileged role in the world in *Being and Time*, still remains like all other beings, in that it can only be truly understood within its world.

Individual and Community in the World

It is clear, therefore, that there must always be a 'who' in Heidegger's understanding of world that acts as the one to whom the world is disclosed. The question remains, however, to whom is the world disclosed? In *Being and Time*, it would appear that the main focus is on the *individual* Dasein: 'the 'being' of any such entity is in each case our own'. [18] It might, therefore, seem that the world is something disclosed privately to each Dasein, once they have an authentic understanding

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[17]   J. Young *Heidegger's Later Philosophy*. Cambridge University Press Cambridge 2002 p 12 .
[18]   M. Heidegger *Being and Time*. Translated by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson .Blackwell, Oxford 1962 p. 67

of their situation. However, even the authentic Dasein experiencing death as its own most uniquely individual possibility, still remains within *Mitsein* (literally "being with", as in being together with others). Furthermore, authentic Dasein must remain historical, acting within a given set of historical possibilities. Being authentic therefore means having an adjusted understanding of how one stands in relation to history based on one's own possibilities. Authentic Dasein cannot completely dissociate itself from its relationship with others: it still must exist within a community that affects its life possibilities. Hence, while, at least according to the early Heidegger in *Being and Time*, it appears possible for anyone existing at any point in history to achieve authenticity, the way this is done in practice is always determined by historical settings. This means that, for example, a eunuch at the court of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, a knight errant in twelfth century France, or a Buddhist monk in Japan during the Nara period, all may be able to attain authenticity. However, in each case, the ways they could attain authenticity as well as act authentically, would always be radically affected by how they stood in relation to others and their world in general. Hence, while the focus is generally on the individual and individuation, as well as on how aspects of individual moods such as angst can affect the way the world presents itself, world in *Being and Time* is still never a completely private matter.

This notion of a communal world, however, is taken further in 'The Origin of the Work of Art'. In this work, the world is no longer treated simply as the structure of concernful or practical involvement given over to each individual Dasein. The world is rather seen as a gathering of:

> those paths and relations in which birth and death, disaster and blessing, victory
> and disgrace, endurance and decline, acquire the shape of destiny for human being.
> The all-governing expanse of this open relational context is the world of this
> historical people.[19]

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[19]   M. Heidegger "Origin of the Work of Art" in *Off the Beaten Track*: translated by :Julian Young and Kenneth Haynes Cambridge University Press Cambridge 2002 p. 26

The world in 'The Origin of the Work of Art' still remains a structure of concern and meaning. However, the 'world' in this work is a social and historical disclosure to a particular people, and it is against this backdrop that the life of each individual within the 'people' takes place: 'being' in 'The Origin of the Work of Art' might be said to have been enriched from the still practical concerns (that are always based around ordinary life activities) of *Being and Time*. It is extended to contain within it an essentially natural background, which is not particularly mentioned in *Being and Time*. Hence, 'tree and grass, eagle and bull, snake and cricket first enter their distinctive shapes and thus come to appear as they are.'[20] This means that the way such things appear is governed by their relationship to the world that acts as a background. However, this interpretation of the 'world' also includes primarily moral concerns, such as 'blessing and curse';[21] each world therefore carries with it what in non-Heideggerian terms is a system of values.

The notion of world might therefore be seen as a complete understanding of life. Julian Young interprets the notion of world in Heidegger as 'a metaphysical map'[22] adopting a geographical metaphor which is to a certain extent in keeping with Heidegger's own style of referring to the world in terms of regions. Such a map might be thought of as similar to the World Tree in Norse or Central Asian mythology. Thus, the world in Heidegger's thought acts by laying out the different regions of reality. In the case of the Norse *Yggdrasill* (World Tree), there are nine regions, including the *midgard,* the place of humans, and *Vanaheim* and *Asgard,* the region of the gods. Each of these different regions of reality is given its significance through its relation to the other regions on the tree. Truly existing within a world, therefore, means having a deep grasp of such a map as well as being part of interrelationships with one's own self and one's place in the world. Hence, being a part of the Viking world, for example, would mean having a knowledge of various traditions, cosmology and sagas, as well as standing within a particular relationship to

[20]   *Ibid* p. 21
[21]   *Ibid*   p.23
[22]   J. Young *Heidegger's Philosophy of Art* Cambridge University Press Cambridge 2001 p. 24 .

certain beings such as the *Aesir* and *Vanir* gods. This relationship in turn affects the way that a Viking warrior lives his life by exemplifying certain virtues, such as strength and bravery, with the ultimate goal of seeking to die bravely to serve Odin. Thus, a world can be seen as both a particular ontology and way of life. Hence,

> the world is not the mere collection of countable, or uncountable, familiar
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> and unfamiliar things that are at hand. But neither is it a merely imagined
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> framework added by our representation to the sum   of such given things. [23]

A world might be said to be a complete way of life based on a way that 'being' is disclosed at a particular point in space and time, being related both to its historical epoch and also to its geographical surroundings. The world of the ancient Greeks was not the same world as the world of medieval Christianity in Europe, and the world of the Incas was different again. World might therefore be seen as being similar to Foucault's *epistemes* in *The Order of Things,[24]* as differing historical grounds for truth. These different grounds of truth fundamentally affect what it means for different beings to be, by giving them their meaning and significance. For example, the well-preserved statue of the ancient Egyptian Goddess Isis being discovered by a modern European archaeologist may still have the same set of physical properties in terms of colour and material as it did in ancient Egypt, but it can never have the same ontological significance as it did then. The statue has shifted from having deep religious significance to being merely an item of historical curiosity and investigation. Such a radical ontological change in the status of the statue does not entail that anything physical (either via deliberate iconoclastic violence or natural decay) has happened to the statue (in Heideggerian terms such changes would only count as ontic). The cause of the ontological change for the statue is more precisely, the historical decay of the Ancient

[23]   M. Heidegger 'Origin of the Work of Art' in *Off the Beaten Track*. Translated by Julian Young and Kenneth Haynes. Cambridge University Press Cambridge 2002 p.23.

[24]   M. Foucault *The Order of Things An archaeology of the human sciences* Routledge London New York 1989

Egyptian world and rise of the modern Western world in its place. Therefore, while the statue in terms of its physical properties (colour and shape) may seem identical, it is no longer understood as the presence of a god, but instead stands as a museum exhibit. Thus, two beings might appear identical in terms of their ontic properties, but they will nonetheless stand out in different ontological ways, because what beings are ontologically speaking is given to them by their world.

In the *'Origin of the Work of Art',* however, Heidegger adds an important historical dimension. In Iain D. Thomson's words, 'Heidegger rethinks "truth" ontologically as the historically dynamic disclosure of intelligibility in time'.[25] As such, the world in Heidegger is something that is always tied to a particular historical setting and can therefore only present itself in a particular way in a particular time. Hence, there is a sense in which each particular world for Heidegger can only be thoroughly understood from inside. This is central to the claim in the 'Origin of the Work Art' that 'the work belongs, as work uniquely within the realm that it has opened up'.[26] In reality, it is not possible for us to completely understand a work of art, such as a Greek temple or a medieval cathedral, because they are cut off from their world. Hence, 'when for instance, we visit the temple in Paestum at its own site or the Bamberg Cathedral on its own square- the world of that work that stands there has perished'.[27] A being such as a work of art situated in and existing as part of a particular world that is disclosed will appear differently when it is transferred to a distinct world in the same way that a hammer, when taken out of its normal frame of reference, might only appear as a lump of metal and wood. However, as noted, were the hammer to be transferred to a different 'world', it might appear not as a mere tool of ordinary practical use, but as a symbol of a god, invested with deep meaning and power. Hence, what might stand out as a museum relic on display in one world, would be the manifestation of a 'god' in another. It therefore seems that in Heidegger's view, in order to definitively experience a great work of art as it was originally

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[25]   I. D.Thomson *Heidegger, Art, and Post Modernity*. Cambridge University Press Cambridge 2011 p.44
[26]   M. Heidegger "Origin of the Work of Art in *Off the Beaten Track*. Translated by Julian Young and Kenneth Haynes. Cambridge University Press Cambridge 2002 p.40 .
[27]   *Ibid* p. 41

intended, one must already be a part of the world in which it was constructed. Human practices and beliefs might therefore be said to relate inseparably to the world in which they exist. Whether it can ever be possible to gain entry into another 'world' in the Heideggerian sense has to remain unresolved at this point.

In 'The Origin of the Work of Art', Heidegger lends particular significance to the act of founding a world. He sees this as central to the purpose of a truly great work, as being the setting up of a world in the sense of a foundation myth. Hence, for example, the biblical Exodus provides a legendary epic account of how the ancient Israelite world came into existence, which at the same time was foundational to the Israelite world's own foundational understanding of itself and its relationship to the divine. While in a comparable way, the temple at the Parthenon and Homer's epic poetry both make manifest the relationship between gods and mortals central to the ancient Greek, a similar claim may also be made of the Ziggurat of Ur together with the epic of Gilgamesh in ancient Sumeria or Babylon. These worlds are what they are by virtue of such works of art, to the extent that if, say, the Ziggurats were destroyed, the Sumerian world would no longer have been able to exist in the way that it did. What each of these great works of art does is to make manifest a world's basic understanding of itself, and in doing so, they are subsequently foundational to the world.

More generally, for Heidegger, history might be seen as the creation, transition and decay of different worlds, each of which holds different possibilities for human existence. What is fundamental is that the world stands over and above any beings disclosed within the world, but that all beings can only be understood within this world, while each of the beings that exist within it makes manifest the world because it reflects the underlying order of being disclosed. However, the art work, more than anything in a particular world, shows the order of the world. In Thomson's words, the Heideggerian works of art thereby function as 'ontological paradigms'.[28] For example, the Greek temple in 'The Origin of the Work of Art' might be said to make manifest the whole moral order of Greek society at the time when it was created, since, in gathering together mortals and

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[28]   I. D. Thomson *Heidegger, Art, and Post Modernity*. Cambridge University Press Cambridge 2011   p 44 .

divinities, it makes manifest the relationship between them, while at the same time it reflects the underlying understanding of that relationship.

However, Heidegger also extends this privileged significance in relation to the world to the apparently more everyday shoes of the peasant woman. This is because the shoes reflect the world of the peasant woman, particularly in terms of her work, and makes manifest her relationship to the earth: 'the shoes are what they are when the peasant woman wears them in the field'.[29] Such items as the temple and the shoes can only be thoroughly understood as part of the world where they are seen to belong. Each being within a world might be said not merely to belong to a particular world, but to reflect that world in its inter-relatedness to other beings within the world.

World, Language and Intelligibility

In Heidegger's thought, language occupies a particularly privileged position in relation to the world. There is a sense that human language is not merely part of a world, but also might be said to bring to light the way that the world is ordered. Why and how is this case?

 At a basic level, language only makes sense as part of a broader set of social practices, whilst those social practices are also only possible with the existence of language. Communication might be said to be only possible within a shared world. Therefore, from a Heideggerian point of view, creating a universal and artificial language along the lines of Esperanto would neither be practically possible, nor desirable. This is because, if a language such as Esperanto were to gain wide acceptance in practice, it would need to be embedded within a community of speakers, and thus be tied to the practices of a particular world; thus, it would lose its claim to universality. Even were one single language ever to gain complete acceptance everywhere in the world, it would act to the exclusion of other historic forms of meaning; it would mean, basically, to create one absolute world. From a Heideggerian perspective, such a universalised language, particularly if it was

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[29]   M. Heidegger "Origin of the Work of Art in *Off the Beaten Track*. Translated by Julian Young and Kenneth Haynes. Cambridge University Press Cambridge 2002 p.12 .

artificially created without a heritage within a particular world's history, would be semantically impoverished and function in a similar way to Orwell's Newspeak in the novel 1984, reducing the richness of meaning.

Each language is therefore only possible within the ordered and structured revealing of 'world' as it requires a common form of disclosure to make sense. Taking a basic example, the English word "chair" could have no equivalent in the language of a people in whose world everyone sat on the floor. If such a people were to come into contact with a chair through trade, the chair they encountered may take on a completely different significance, for example as an altar in a religious ceremony; therefore, whatever word they used for it (it may even be identical to the English word 'chair') would in fact carry a different meaning. Taking this principle a stage further, the statements, 'an old man sits on a chair' and 'the king sits on his throne', may appear to be ways of picking out the same point of reference, which can both be correct. However, a statement such as 'the king sits on his throne' would have no equivalent and lack any sense in a world that had never known a king. Were a traveller from such a world to see the king, he or she would have no way of translating the statement 'the king sits on his throne' directly into their own language. On the other hand, in an absolute monarchy, a statement such as 'an old man sits on a chair', while being perfectly intelligible, might be thought of as more than a straightforward statement of fact; it might appear instead as a statement of offence, subversion, or even outright revolution. Words such as chair and throne, man and king, all get their meaning through social practices associated with the worlds in which they are used. Hence, while these words may appear to pick out objective points of reference, they are in reality given their meaning through their prior usage within a social context, or practice and it would not be possible to use such words without an embedding within this world.

Heidegger therefore fundamentally rejects the seventeenth-century empiricist view of language as presented by John Locke, where words are points of reference attached to objects known through sense experience. Any language, as Heidegger sees it, must be dependent on, and

also presupposes, a particular historical disclosure of being. Therefore, all words must carry the weight of their prior historical use as, without such nuances, words lose their meaning (this leads to the problem of translation in Heidegger, which will be looked at in more detail later on).

Language, however, has a further significance in relation to the world, in that, while it always requires the world for meaning, at the same time, the world as Heidegger understands it, is possible only with the structured ordering of language. Without such a relationship with language, world would not exist. There can be no world without language and there can be no language without world.

Without language, the world would not be intelligible to human Dasein, and as such, the way in which the world is structured is crucial in Heidegger's thought. The world is what grants intelligibility, and whatever is brought into the world is made intelligible by the world. Heidegger therefore associates world with light (*Lichtung - clearing: light - Licht*), in that it is in light that beings stand out as part of the world. Hence, Heidegger takes up the metaphor for 'world' as a clearing in a forest to denote the world as that region which is open to the light. The nature of Heidegger's understanding of clearing will be looked at further at the end of the section.

Dasein Centeredness?

In Heidegger's understanding, the world is always made accessible to Dasein, and it is furthermore given significance through Dasein's practice. In so far as Heidegger's thought is focused around world, he must remain focused on the phenomenology of Dasein as it relates to beings in the world. *Sein* as disclosure therefore requires a Dasein to disclose to. Hence, while for example a Dasein could theoretically be an alien species with awareness and the capacity to ask the question of a Being, still the illustrations that Heidegger takes for 'world', both in *Being and Time* and 'The Origin of the Work of Art', are always based on human experience, though Heidegger himself would reject the use of such terminology as tied to a notion of the human subject. This is

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because at a basic level, anything Dasein refers to must be a definition of part of its experience, in non-Heideggerian terms. This applies even if a human thinks about the rocks on the surface of Saturn's moon, Titan, a place which he or she has not been to and which is uninhabitable to human life. In trying to conceive of its surface, the human being has brought thoughts or images of Titan within the framework of experience as part of their own imagination. The problem that such an approach presents, however, is that it leaves open the question of what, if anything, stands outside the phenomenological horizon. Hence while Heidegger would reject the extreme position of Berkeley's subjective idealism he still states that 'if no Dasein exists, no world is there either'[30,] indicating that the existence of the world and Dasein are mutually dependent. Therefore, what there is, when there is no Dasein, is not considered worthy of question in *Being and Time*. The early Heidegger is in effect agnostic about the existence of any entity beyond that which is disclosed to Dasein. Such an approach leaves no room for mystery, because there is no sense of anything that may be inaccessible to intelligibility. Hence, in the Heidegger's early writings, through its central focus on Dasein, there appears to be a residual degree of anthropocentrism.

There is, however, a fundamental shift in Heidegger's thought from the *"Origin of the Work of Art"* (*OWA)* onwards, in the sense that Heidegger starts to acknowledge the existence of something beyond that which is disclosed within the phenomenological horizon. This means he abandons the centrality of Being as *Sein* in his thought. While world still remains prominent in the later writings, after *OWA*, it is crucially only a part of the ontological account. This is because, for the later Heidegger, there is more to ontology than that which is disclosed to Dasein. This notion of something more than that which is disclosed leads onto the later Heidegger's deeper sense of Being as that which grants disclosure. As an illustration of this sense of Being, Heidegger's metaphor for the world of Dasein as a clearing may be taken. In using the term 'clearing', denoting the region in a wood that is cut away and opened up, there is an awareness that there is also a forest beyond. Thus, Heidegger is pointing to something that is beyond disclosure. It is this sense of that which

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[30]M. Heidegger *Being and Time*. Translated by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson .Blackwell, Oxford 1962 p417

underlies, but is beyond complete disclosure, that is vital to Heidegger's later conception of Being i.e. *Seyn*. It is this more mysterious notion of Being that will be introduced in the following section and which will be pivotal to the rest of the thesis.

Chapter 2 Being – *Seyn*

In order to understand 'Being' in this sense, it is necessary first to look in detail at Heidegger's 'Origin of the Work of Art' (OWA). This work is generally held to mark a transition in Heidegger's philosophy between these two different understandings of Being, from *Sein* to *Seyn*, with its distinction between earth and world.

The Earth as the Limit of Disclosure

The earth, as a limit on the disclosure of world in Heidegger, is first introduced in OWA. Within the presence of the world, therefore, there is a sense of something that is beyond world. In OWA, Heidegger always treats this sense of the 'earth' as manifest in the world, but never completely graspable within it. The earth takes the role of the ground upon which the world is founded[31] and therefore on which the work of art, rests. This means the work of art should not be considered apart from the earth. Thus, the example of the Greek temple that Heidegger refers to, must be understood as part of the landscape that surrounds it. It may appear that Heidegger's main concern in the essay is still the 'world', rather than the earth, as he treats disclosure as a main function of the work of art. Heidegger, however, attributes a key role to the relationship of art work to the earth, since, 'in setting up a world, the work sets forth the earth.'[32] The nature of Heidegger's understanding of setting forth will be discussed in greater depth in a later section. At this point, it is sufficient to say that Heidegger holds that the work of art sets forth the non-transparent nature of earth into the openness of the world. Thus, the 'earth' is manifest in the world, but never completely graspable within it. Heidegger uses the example of the stone; in this illustration, the inner part of the stone always resists opening up:

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[31]   See the previous section *Individual and Community in World* for further details on this

[32]   M. Heidegger 'Origin of the Work of Art' in *Off the Beaten Track*. Translated by Julian Young and Kenneth Hayes. Cambridge University Press Cambridge 2002 p.24 .

if we attempt a penetration by smashing the rock, it still does not

display in its fragments anything inward that has been opened up.

The stone has instantly withdrawn again into the same dull press and

bulk of its fragments.[33]

The sense of the stone's "dull heaviness" appears always mysterious: although its effect is manifest in its force pressing outwards, there is an element of the stone which always remains beyond one's grasp. It cannot be completely disclosed to Dasein in the same way that beings within the world, as ready-to-hand or present-at-hand, are. The sculptor or the architect, however, can make manifest the bulk and weight of the stone within the work of art in the same way that a painter uses the pigment, 'in such a way that colour is not used up but rather only now comes to shine forth'.[34] According to Heidegger, analysing the colour of the stone as a wavelength, or measuring the mass of the stone in grams, will always fail to see what is essential to the stone.

Colour shines and wants only to shine. If we try to make it comprehensible

by analyzing it into numbers of oscillations[35] …... if we attempt such a penetration

by smashing the rock, it still does not display in its fragments anything inward

that has been opened up'. [36]

Thus, attempting to disclose what might be inside of the earth makes it no longer earth. This may, therefore, to a certain extent break with Heidegger's earlier phenomenological method, since it involves an area of investigation that cannot, by definition be brought within the horizon of phenomenological disclosure. Moving away from being centred on the human world, the earth

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[33] .M. Heidegger 'Origin of the Work of Art' in *Off the Beaten Track*. Translated by Julian Young and Kenneth Hayes. Cambridge University Press Cambridge 2002 p 25
[34] *Ibid*
[35] *Ibid*
[36] *Ibid* pp. 24-25

might be seen as being set beyond the boundary of what is ordinarily considered intelligible.

How, therefore, might the earth be understood? The earth at first appears as an inherent limit on the disclosure of the world, and along such lines Heidegger calls it the 'the limit of all limits'.[37] This is because it is opaque and impenetrable as opposed to the transparency of the world. In Heideggerian terms, earth can never be completely given over to disclosure; therefore, there cannot be any such thing as a complete phenomenology of earth. The earth, so long as it remains, always avoids the grasp of Dasein. It cannot therefore be described within *Being and Time*'s categories of 'present to hand' or 'ready to hand' because earth is never disclosed to Dasein, thus being basically set apart from the linguistic ordered structuring of the World. It is from this opaqueness that the earth derives its mystery, which could be called its power or enchantment.

However, while it stands beyond the horizon of disclosure, the earth provides a foundation on which the world rests: 'upon the earth and in it, historical man grounds his dwelling in the world'.[38] Thus the presence of the earth, while it cannot be completely disclosed to world, still adds an element to world. This is because the self seclusion of earth is not uniformly staying under cover, but unfolds itself in an inexhaustible variety of modes and shapes. Heidegger takes the principle of *physis* as the earth springing up into the world, describing it as 'the coming-forth-concealing'.[39] Heidegger refers to the setting forth of the earth into the world "as it sets itself back into the earth", this means that, although the earth may impact on the world, it still always returns back to itself. The presence of earth in the world should therefore be thought of as something that can be felt, but not completely grasped.

It might be said that Heidegger introduces the earth in order to avoid falling into an idealist position of asserting that beings only come into existence with Dasein, thus neglecting the possibility of there being anything outside of human experience. The introduction of the earth as a

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[37] F. Schalow *The Incarnality of Being*. State University Press of New York, New York 2006   p. 63 .
[38] M. Heidegger 'Origin of the Work of Art' in *Off the Beaten Track*. Translated by Julian Young and Kenneth Hayes. Cambridge University Press Cambridge 2002 p.26 .
[39] *Ibid* p. 24

non-Dasein-centred element thus represents a fundamental change in Heidegger's understanding of Being, away from a residual anthropocentrism in this early work, and introducing a sense of otherness into his philosophy. Hence, in the 'OWA', Heidegger uses the natural images of stone and soil as opposed to man-made images of temple and shoes to represent the earth.

This notion of the earth as standing beyond disclosure and intelligibility to Dasein leads on to the understanding of a more mystical sense of Being which will be referred to by the archaic German term *Seyn*, rather than the ordinary modern German *Sein*. This use of the word *Seyn* for Being in Heidegger's later writings denotes an ontology set beyond the world as a presence of disclosure, which makes it much harder to understand satisfactorily. *Seyn*, unlike *Sein, is never* completely disclosed to Dasein. It is by its very nature ineffable. The following discussion will focus on the nature of *Seyn* as Being in Heidegger's later philosophy, and how it differs from *Sein* in his early philosophy.

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<u>Introduction to Being (*Seyn*)</u>

Being in the later Heidegger's thought underlies both earth and world. Thus in Heideggerian terms it should be thought of as the grounding for the horizon of disclosure. However, Being for the later Heidegger is more than simply a framework in which beings stand out. Such a sense of Being, unlike *Sein*, cannot simply be equated with world; more specifically, it is something that underlies and grants the world, but which can never be completely disclosed within the world. In the "Dialogue on a Country Path", Being in this sense is referred to cryptically as "that which regions".[40] Returning to the image of the World Tree or *Yggdrasil*, world and *Sein* in Heidegger's early philosophy would refer to the outer surface of the tree which is present in the different regions of existence, whereas Being in its later sense would refer to the core of the trunk on which all the different points rest.

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[40]   M. Heidegger   "Conversation on a Country Path" in *Discourse on Thinking*. Translated by John M. Anderson. Harper Row, London 1966   p. 67

Heidegger equates his later sense of Being with 'the origin'. He rejects the idea of beings having their ultimate origin in other beings in the same way that he rejects the position that beings only derive their 'being' from the human subject. This means he rejects in his later writings any view that beings derive their existence through an interaction with Dasein. Thus, in order to attempt to grasp the ground that lets beings be what they are, he must search for something wholly other. To find such a ground, Heidegger is therefore required to go beyond the normal representational thinking within the horizon of disclosure, meaning he seeks to go beyond the thought of beings that can be grasped by Dasein. To do this, however, is a profoundly difficult task

Naming Being as *Seyn* in the Later Heidegger's Thought

By its very nature, such a sense of Being is difficult to define. It is always removed from the human grasp and is therefore effectively beyond language. This problem is brought to light by the difficulty that Heidegger himself has in attaching a name to this. In the dialogue, Heidegger directly states that attempting to represent Being "would reify it".[41] This resistance to any kind of reification of "Being" is in some sense vital to the way in which Heidegger understands "Being", but it is also problematic because it defies any attempt at description. Along such lines, Heidegger at times refers to 'Being' in this nuance with a crossing-out sign over it. This might be said to indicate the concealment and refusal of Being to disclose itself. Hence, as Julian Young states, 'the radically disruptive device (of crossing out) is needed to remind us that "Being" does not function like a common or garden noun, that Being is not a being'.[42] It is to make this clarification that Heidegger more often refers to this sense of Being by taking the archaic German word *Seyn*, rather than *Sein*. Julian Young further remarks that the use of the antique "y" suggests 'something solemn and forgotten'.[43] A more revealing comment as to the way that an understanding of 'Being' is thought

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[41] M. Heidegger "Conversation on a Country Path" in *Discourse on Thinking*. Translated by John M. Anderson. Harper Row London 1966 p. 67
[42] J. Young *Heidegger's Later Philosophy*. Cambridge University Press Cambridge 2002 p. 16
[43] *Ibid*

out in Heidegger's later philosophy is when he refers to this sense of "Being" as that which discloses.

However, attaching any name to "Being" will always be problematic. This is because such a sense of "Being" as *Seyn* must always remain beyond language. Hence, on one important level, Being as *Seyn* in the later Heidegger can never be truly named because it can never be completely disclosed. This is something that will be looked at further in the section on "Heidegger, Daoism and Ineffability". At the same time, Heidegger is always aware that any name he uses for Being in his later philosophy must still carry the weight of its prior usage within the language and tradition of thought. As stated in "The Dialogue on Language Between a Japanese and an Inquirer", the word "Being" belongs to the 'patrimony' (tradition) of metaphysics by which is meant that "Being" is already weighted down by its previous usage in western philosophy. This is a problem that Heidegger cannot easily evade and therefore he employs a variety of names to hint at such a sense of Being as *Seyn*. It is not possible at this point in the thesis to look further into the nature of such terms. However, for the rest of this work, Being in the sense that Heidegger uses it in *Being and Time* will be referred to as *Sein*, or disclosure, while Being in the sense of underlying the world of disclosure in Heidegger's later work will be referred to as *Seyn*.

The Problem of Seyn

Julian Young links *Seyn* in Heidegger with the traditional notion of the sublime, since *Seyn*'s 'awesomeness that lies in its concealment' is similar to eighteenth and nineteenth-century notions of the 'magnitude so vast as baffles conceptual comprehension'.[44] This means that an important element of *Seyn* evoking a certain attitude is its concealment. When experienced fully, it creates a breakdown in the normal conceptual framework, meaning that it cannot be fitted into normal forms of understanding. Young uses the example of a sublime person to show that such a feeling is lost if one 'has plucked out the heart of another's mystery, that one has a complete conceptual mastery of

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[44] .J. Young *Heidegger's Philosophy of Art* Cambridge University Press Cambridge 2001 p. 43

what makes her 'tick'- that she has become, as Heidegger would say, completely calculable- then she cannot command awe'.[45] It is the same with *Seyn*, in that such a sense of Being involves the breaking apart of normal categories of thought, which leads to an uplifting in its sense of awe. If *Sein* as world is the clearing, *Seyn* is the depths and mystery of the forest that makes the clearing itself possible. A person standing in the clearing will be aware of the depths of the forest, but will not be able to see far into the woods; and it is this impenetrability combined with the openness of the clearing that makes the sense of the woods complete.

The awareness of this ungraspable element adds something to the disclosure, although it can never be pinned down and described completely. This is an essential aspect of such awareness. It is an awareness that brings thought to the edge of 'horizon', in that it takes it to the limits of possible understanding and brings a sense of something that lies beyond it. The question is, however, how this can be possible without falling back into the trap which Heidegger is trying to escape from, that is, of reifying *Seyn* and betraying the nature of what it is. In a similar way to the stone in the 'Origin of the Work of Art' that loses its sense of mystery once it is smashed up to be examined, *Seyn* for Heidegger is lost if *Seyn* is completely disclosed. Heidegger is therefore left in the position of both trying to make people aware of *Seyn* while allowing it to be concealed, and trying to illuminate *Seyn* while allowing it to keep its mystery.

A discussion of *Seyn* therefore presents one of the single greatest problems that is encountered in Heidegger's later philosophy. This is because Heidegger wishes both to avoid laying out a fixed conceptualisation of *Seyn*, while at the same time trying to avoid conceding that *Seyn* is merely consigned to oblivion. This is a problem that Heidegger himself was aware of and is often seen as a central weakness by critics of his later thought, particularly those who take a positivistic standpoint. Along such lines, Herman Philipse accuses Heidegger of '"an empty play with words" since nothing is offered by way of meaningful descriptions'. [46]

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[45] .J. Young *Heidegger's Philosophy of Art*. Cambridge university Press Cambridge 2001 p. 43 .

[46] H. Philipse *Heidegger's Philosophy of Being*. Princeton University Press,Princeton New Jersey 1998   p. 302 .

Central to Heidegger's later thought, therefore, is this cultivation of a sense of *Seyn*, while at the same time resisting the construction of a fixed conception of *Seyn* that would take away its essential mystery. It is on this basis that particular significance is given to poetry in Heidegger's thought, as well as to the distinction between calculative, meditative and poetic thinking. The exact nature of these different kinds of thinking will be looked at in more detail in a subsequent section. It should be noted here, however, that the general challenge that the later Heidegger faces is precisely to cultivate awareness in human thinking of both its own limitation as well as *Seyn* remaining ungraspable. Along such lines, in "The Dialogue on Language between a Japanese and an Inquirer", he depicts human existence as standing on the 'boundary of the boundless'.[47] David Cooper refers to this as 'comportment' (attunement towards this awareness), that 'is not simply some form of behaviour, but involves a way of seeing, revealing and experiencing things'.[48]

How Heidegger carries out this project of the cultivation of a 'comportment', as well as contend with the problems that such cultivation may face, is one of the crucial concerns of Heidegger's later thought thought. It will be central in various ways to much of this thesis. The next section will seek to lay out what Heidegger understands as the gradual impoverishment of Western life.

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[47]   M. Heidegger " Dialogue on Language Between a Japanese and an Inquirer", in: *On the Way into Language*. Translated by Peter D. Hertz. Harper and Row .San Francisco 1971   p. 41.

[48]   D.E. Cooper *Measure of Things: Humanism, Humility and Mystery*. Oxford University Press Oxford 2002 p. 294 .

Chapter 3 Heidegger and Nihilism

It is in relation to this later sense of "Being" that Heidegger observes a certain impoverishment in Western modernity. In effect, the modern disclosure of Being lacks something in the sense that it cannot allow those who live within its context to truly experience the mystery of Being. Heidegger borrows the term "nihilism", already in use by previous philosophers, particularly Nietzsche, to describe this condition. Here, Heidegger might be seen as making a transition from a description of Being and human life to an evaluation of a particular mode of living. Heidegger thereby also switches the central direction of his later philosophy away from focusing on questions of the authenticity of individual Dasein that provides the nucleus of Heidegger's early philosophy, to looking at a form of life within a civilisation as a whole. Julian Young takes up Nietzsche's metaphor of the philosopher as the "physician of culture" to describe Heidegger's role in this,[49] by which he means that Heidegger's later philosophy seeks to question the nature of modernity in the West and to evaluate its particular disclosure of 'being' relative to other disclosures.

Central to Heidegger's evaluation of the modern condition is the loss of the gods, by which he does not mean a complete triumph of atheism. Rather, "the loss of the gods is the situation of indecision regarding God and the gods".[50] This can be interpreted as an indifference to the sacred within the modern world, whereby the sacred ceases to be anything special. This can roughly be described as a state of disenchantment, a loss of "divine radiance" within the world. There is loss of the previously mentioned feeling of the "sublime" in "Being". The modern world, therefore, lacks a sense or a place for the sacred. Julian Young states that, unlike the ancient Greek, Polynesian,

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[49]   J. Young *Heidegger's Later Philosophy*. Cambridge University Press Cambridge 2002   p. 31.
[50]   M. Heidegger 'Age of the World Picture', in*: The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*. Harper Torch Books Harper Row New York 1977   p. 117

Aboriginal or Mbuto cultures, "our culture no longer responds to nature as a sacred place".[51] Without this relation to the sacred as that feeling of awe and wonder, modernity for Heidegger becomes fixed in its own ordinariness. It is under such conditions no longer possible to truly experience the unfathomable depth of "Being".

Underlying this modern condition of the "loss of the gods" is for Heidegger the dominance of modern technology. By technology, Heidegger does not merely understand a network of machines, but rather a particular way in which the modern world is produced, in the sense of the ground's being laid out for the modern mode of disclosure: "modern technology is an ordered revealing".[52] Therefore, all that exists within the modern world has to be understood within the context of this disclosure. The modern world for Heidegger, like the ancient Greek world and any other world, still has its own particular form of disclosure, and it is this that governs the way in which beings are interpreted within the context of modern technology. What is most central to the disclosure of the world within modern technology is that it reveals beings fundamentally as resources standing in reserve, which, in turn reveals nature, above all, "as the chief storehouse of the energy standing in reserve".[53] This central aspect of modern technology means that within the modern world, a forest, for example, will be revealed primarily as a supply of wood. A cultivated plantation forest is in practice grown entirely for this purpose. It is therefore essentially the character of the way that beings are disclosed within the framework of modern technology, that they are there as resources. Julian Young refers to this, stating that, 'as a hammer is not violated, not abused, by hammering that takes it to its limits, so a river is not violated by its unconditional use as a hydro-electric power source',[54] in that from the standpoint of modern technology, it is the function of such things to be used up as resources. Violation here can be understood as a thing that is prevented from standing out as the thing that it is, and for modern technology, a thing is precisely a

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[51] M. Heidegger 'Age of the World Picture', in: *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*. Harper Torch Books, Harper Row New York 1977 p. 117

[52] M. Heidegger 'Question Concerning Technology', in: *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*. Harper Torch Books, Harper Row New York 1977   p. 19

[53] *Ibid* p. 21

[54] J. Young *Heidegger's Later Philosophy*. Cambridge University Press Cambridge 2002 p. 53 .

resource to be used up. There is thus an implicit violence in modern technology, from the standpoint of Heidegger, that is essential rather than accidental towards the beings that are disclosed in this form of disclosure, in that it leads to their subjection to exploitation as part of the character of their being: 'it makes violation inevitable because, fundamentally, it takes away the concept of violation'.[55] In the same way that Marx held that the alienation and exploitation of labour was built into the capitalist system, not in the sense of evil actions of particular capitalists but within the flow of domination of capital itself; so, too, Heidegger holds the violation of beings to be built into the system of modern technology. The resources have merely fulfilled their purpose as being used up in the flow of technology.

It is this mode of revealing in modern technology that Heidegger refers to as *Gestell*. *Gestell* is translated by William Lovitt as 'enframing'. It is derived from the ordinary German word for 'frame, rack, shelf, or stand'.[56] The term stands for the ordering of beings to make them available for use (standing in reserve), by which is meant that technology sees beings as always there to be used. Julian Young, however, rejects this translation of disclosure from *Gestell* that renders it as a verb, which would suggest that *Gestell* is an action with an agent. Instead Young takes a position that views technology as an impersonal system. It would appear natural to view technology as something inherently anthropocentric, by which is meant that it is centred on nature undergoing a transformation for human use, as a resource for human consumption. This would be the classical modernist, or humanist, view of technology that holds that modern technology exists for the functions and purposes of human kind. Reflecting this view of technology, Heidegger states that, 'in this way the impression comes to prevail that everything man encounters exists only insofar as it is his construct. This illusion gives rise in turn to one final delusion: It seems as though man everywhere and always encounters only himself'.[57] Therefore, within modern technology, there

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[55] *Ibid*
[56] *Ibid* p.44.
[57] M. Heidegger 'The Question Concerning Technology', in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*. Harper Torch Books, Harper Row New York 1977 p. 27

persists the illusion of the central human subject who commands everything, which represents the process of human progress in the sense of the ideal of eighteenth-century Enlightenment. This notion of the gradual empowerment of humanity over and against the forces of nature is one on which, to a certain extent, Hegel's philosophy would appear to rest. Heidegger rejects such an interpretation as an illusion, instead seeing technology as a destiny and framework that grounds human action. For Heidegger, modern technology, based on *Gestell,* is a system that involves and controls everything within the modern world by virtue of its existence within that world. The illusion of human mastery over technology is maintained, since 'as organised mass and as individual member of such organisation, man is thus simultaneously always the powerful and the indifferent, the leader and melted down'.[58] Ultimately, therefore, despite appearances, humans only perform another function within this flow. In the final analysis, the aim of modern technology, in so far as it is an aim, is to make all beings function correctly within this flow.

Julian Young comments that "Human being has lost its apartness, has itself become part of the resources to be exploited",[59] just as the mountains show up as a supply of minerals, and forests show up as a supply of wood or cellulose. He even goes further, seeing this principle of the reduction of beings to resources as extending into every aspect of modern life, including humans, stating that "the current talk about human resources gives evidence of this".[60] Hence, humans become a supply of labour or consumption in the same way that a hammer in a blacksmith's workshop primarily shows up as an implement to be used. *Gestell* is a background against which the modern world stands out and which governs the way that all that is within the modern world appears "disclosed" in Heidegger's terminology. It is therefore comparable with the Greek world, which for Heidegger is symbolised by the temple, in that they are both ways that a particular world is revealed in a particular way. For Heidegger, however, there is a fundamental difference between

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[58] M. Heidegger *Mindfulness* Translated by Parvis Emad and Thomas Kalary Continuum London 2006   p. 22 .
[59] J. Young *Heidegger's Later Philosophy*. Cambridge University Press Cambridge 2002 p. 46 .
[60] M. Heidegger 'The Question Concerning Technology' *Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*. Harper Row New York 1977   p..18.

the *Gestell* of modernity and the temple of ancient Greece, since, while the Greek temple allows the 'beings' in the world which, in Heideggerian terms, the work allows to stand out in themselves as they are, *Gestell* only allows beings to stand out in terms of their utility as resources within the overall functioning of technology. A part of the way that this affects the way that beings are disclosed is making them appear as standing in reserve and thus making them disposable: "the ontological determination of standing reserve (of the being as material supply) is not permanence (the steady persistence), but rather orderability, the constant possibility of being summoned and ordered. In orderability, the particular being is posited from the ground up and exclusively as disposable.[61] Technology, therefore, leads not merely to a forgetfulness of 'Being', but implicitly to a destructiveness towards beings, by making them disposable within a larger network of technology. Heidegger takes the destruction caused by the atomic bomb as a symbol of the ultimate completion of this process. However, 'the bomb's explosion is only the grossest of all gross confirmations of the long-since-accomplished annihilation of the thing: the confirmation of that thing as a thing remains nil.' [62]

What is wrong with this particular kind of disclosure for Heidegger? At one level, it may appear just as a particular kind of disclosure of "being", among other possible historical disclosures, that happens to have gained dominance in the modern world, "in consumption the current countenance of 'being'".[63] The essential pathology for Heidegger in this disclosure of beings is, as Young notes, that "It deprives us of the ability to stand in a gentle careful, as opposed to violent, relation to things, if one cannot see the forest as anything more than a supply of cellulose, the river as anything more than a power source".[64] The technological disclosure of beings deprives them of any other "being", meaning that beings within technology cannot be disclosed in any other way.

[61] M. Heidegger *Four Seminars*, Translated by Andrew Mitchell and Francois Raffoul. Indiana University Press Bloomington Indianapolis 2003 p. 63 .

[62]   M. Heidegger 'The Thing' in *Poetry Language and Thought.* Translated by Albert Hofstadter. Harper Row New York 1971 p. 170 .

[63]   M. Heidegger *Four Seminars* Translated Andrew Mitchell and Francois Raffoul Indiana Press Bloomington Indianapolis 2003 p 62.

[64]   J. Young *Heidegger's Later Philosophy* Cambridge University Press Cambridge 2002 p. 53.

'Above all, *Gestell* conceals that revealing, which in the sense of *poeisis* lets presences come forth into appearance'.[65] The dominance of technology therefore stops the poetic mystery of 'Being' coming into the world. In making beings into resources, Heidegger considers that modern man loses a certain awareness and respect for beings. It becomes harder to experience certain relations and awareness towards beings, such as thankfulness or awe; rather, they become merely tools in a similar way to beings that are ready-to-hand in *Being and Time.* The fundamental damage of *Gestell* in modern technology is that it does not allow the possibility of another disclosure of Being: it reduces all disclosures of Being to their values based upon their use as resources. This reduction of beings to resources is extended in the modern world to include things such as art. Therefore, the technological world of *Gestell* in practice, in Heideggerian terms, will shut off anything beyond its own horizon. This can particularly be seen in Heidegger's writing about art in the modern world. For Heidegger, in the epoch of the completion of modernity, 'art becomes a manner in which machination completes itself in a thorough construction of beings unto the unconditioned, secure disposability of the organised'.[66] Even art, therefore, has its function within the over-arching system of technology. Heidegger thus rejects the romantic ideal of art as a sphere separated from everyday life in the modern world. The dominance of modern technology in effect renders such a sphere no longer possible. Hence, 'kitsch is not the inferior art but the very best skill that is devoted to what is empty and is not fundamental, which in order still to secure itself a significance seeks support in the public advertising of its symbolic character'.[67] Art assumes a function of its own within modern technology, it has become part of the 'art industry',[68] in that 'word, sound and image are means for structuring, stirring, rousing and assembling the masses, in short they are means of organising'.[69] Art, therefore, has its 'cash value' within modern society in terms of its ability to order and manipulate people as part of the system of technology. Heidegger builds on Nietzsche's conception

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[65] M. Heidegger 'The Question Concerning Technology' in *The Question concerning Technology and Other Essays* Harper Row New York 1977   p. 27.
[66] M. Heidegger *Mindfulness*. Translated by Parvis Emad and Thomas Kalary Continuum. London 2006 p..23.
[67] *Ibid* p 24.
[68] *Ibid* p.28.
[69] *Ibid* p 24.

'of art as a stimulant to life',[70] which he interprets as art's ability in the modern world based on power. The significance of art within the modern world, therefore, is primarily based around its possibility of fulfilling this function.

While Heidegger sees *Gestell* as coming to dominance in Western modernity, for him, it also represents the ultimate conclusion of the prior history of Western 'metaphysics'. (It should be noted here that what follows should be read as brief outline of Heidegger's commentary on the history of Western metaphysics, focusing on Plato as the start and Nietzsche as the end of metaphysics, rather than as a complete account or exhaustive critical analysis). He states that the 'completion of modernity is simultaneously completion of the metaphysical history of the Occident - the history which explicitly or implicitly is sustained by metaphysics'.[71] Metaphysics for Heidegger represents a particular type of understanding of beings that he sees as having come to dominance in Western thinking. Heidegger's interpretation of the term "metaphysics" is in this respect by no means a standard interpretation of the term. For Heidegger, metaphysics is always an analysis of the transcendent Being of beings, in terms of their universals that all beings have. This means the interpretation of 'Being' in terms of categories.

Heidegger considers this condition of Western modernity to be already based on a tendency in Western thought that goes back much further, as far as Plato, who, for Heidegger, represents the foundational metaphysics from which all other Western metaphysics develops and so subsequently sets the course for the process later developed through Western history. Heidegger states directly that 'all metaphysics is Platonism.'[72] He notes 'the rule of modern technology, which is thoroughly foreign to the ancient world, yet nevertheless has in the latter [the ancient world] its essential origin'.[73] The history and development of Western thinking is in Heidegger's interpretation a working out of the principles laid down at its origins. For Heidegger, 'whatever happens with

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[70] M. Heidegger *Mindfulness* Translated by Parvis Emad and Thomas Kalary Continuum., London 2006, p. 2.
[71] *Ibid* p. 19.
[72] M. Heidegger *Nietzsche Volumes One and Two* Translated by David Farrell Krell. Harper Collins San Fransisco, 1991 p. 203.
[73]   M. Heidegger 'Science and Reflection', in: *A Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*. Translated by Lovitt. Harper and Row: New York,1977 p. 158 .

historical human beings always derives from a decision about the essence of truth that was taken long ago',[74] by which he means that human actions are always performed within the context of an underlying assumption about the nature of truth. This means that Heidegger interprets the history of Western thought and civilisation as remaining based on Plato's thought. For Heidegger, the point that is fundamentally damaging in Plato's thinking is the interpretation of the truth of beings according to ideas, meaning that for Plato, what is truly real in beings is the idea as the absolute form. Heidegger states 'that which is first of all decisive' in Plato's thinking and Western thinking stemming from it, 'is not which ideas and which values are posited, but rather the fact that the real is interpreted according to ideas at all and that the world is interpreted according to values at all'.[75]

The centrality of the idea within Plato marks the crucial and defining break in Heidegger's reading of the history of Western philosophy. This means that Plato's thought moves towards abstraction: it moves away from a basic sense of the Being of beings. This Heidegger sees as a crucial shift away from prior thinking that is ultimately played out in the rest of Western thought. This central aim of Plato's philosophy, of laying beings bare through abstraction within 'ideas', means that Heidegger sees Plato's theory of truth as moving away from the earlier model of truth based on concealment and unconcealment. This can be read as losing the balance between light and dark in Plato. Plato instead favours the idea as 'the shining (self showing)'[76]: ideas by definition have to be made intelligible to the intellect, even the idea of the good that is for Plato the ultimate goal. For Plato, beings are given reality by the participation in the world of ideas, while in a similar way, in medieval thinking, all beings in the world are given their reality through God resulting in a continual shift away from the beings themselves. For Heidegger, this interpretation of the true nature of reality in terms of ideas, in the end leads on to the interpretation of the modern world in terms of values. Heidegger states that, 'taking the essence of truth as the correctness of

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[74]   M. Heidegger 'Plato's Doctrine of Truth', in *Pathmarks*. Edited and translated by William McNeil. Cambridge University Press Cambridge 1998 p. 182 .

[75]   *Ibid*

[76]   *Ibid* p. 179.

representation, one thinks of all beings according to "ideas" and evaluates all reality according to "values"'.[77] In this respect, therefore, Heidegger sees Plato's thought as leading directly on to Nietzsche.

Heidegger regards Nietzsche's philosophy as representing the metaphysic of "will to power", where everything that exists is disclosed in terms of its force, by which is meant its ability to affirm itself and thereby hold power over other beings. It should be noted that such a reading of Nietzsche is highly controversial, with many scholars advocating less destructive and more potentially spiritual reading of Nietzsche's thought, along the lines of Joan Stambaugh's 'Nietzsche the poetic mystic'[78] comparable with Laozi or Zhuangzi. It is not however the aim of this thesis to evaluate Heidegger's reading of Nietzsche against such alternative readings, but rather to present Heidegger's reading of Nietschean thought as a model for how he understood western nihilism. This should not be read as implicit endorsement of such a reading of Nietzsche, but rather that such a reading whether or not it is correct, is in itself important to understanding Heidegger's thought on the world.

Hence, in the Heideggerian understanding of the modern world, 'according to the conventional estimation, what in the highest sense "is", is a being as *actual*. What supremely counts is "actuality", in the sense of extantness of the effective; effectiveness and nothing else'.[79] This means that, within the metaphysics of modern technology, what it means for a being to be is for it to be 'effective'. 'The completion of modernity is "actuality" the completion of the metaphysical history of "the Occident"',[80] meaning that all preceding metaphysical interpretations of beings ultimately lead to this interpretation. For Heidegger, Nietzsche's philosophy represents the most transparent moment in Western thought; it reveals the underlying foundations of Western thought by

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[77] M. Heidegger 'Plato's Doctrine of Truth', in: *Pathmarks*. Edited and translated by William McNeil. Cambridge University Press Cambridge 1998 p. 182. .

[78]'Joan Stambaugh 'The Other Nietzsche' in *Nietzsche and Asian Thought.* edited by Graham Parkes . *The University of Chicago press 1991* Page 20

[79] M. Heidegger *Mindfulness* Translated by Parvis Emad and Thomas Kalary Continuum.London,2006 p. 165.
[80]   *Ibid* p. 30.

taking it to its ultimate extreme. This may appear an odd reading of Nietzsche, given the apparent radicalism of Nietzsche's thought with its apparent notion of the inversion of Plato. Heidegger states that the 'ultimate blow in the killing of God is perpetrated by metaphysics, which as the metaphysics of the will to power, accomplishes thinking in the sense of value thinking'.[81] As Heidegger states, 'the ultimate blow against God and against the supersensory world consists in the fact that God, the first of beings is degraded as to the highest value'.[82] What is first damaging towards the sacred is not the 'death of god' in Nietzsche's philosophy, but the prior equation of god as the highest value. What is wrong with this thinking in terms of values? For Heidegger, it is because this interpretation of Being in terms of values seeks to represent Being in terms of what is objective quantification. Hence, 'this blow comes precisely not from those who are standing about, who do not believe in God, but from the believers and their theologians who discourse on the being that is of all beings most in being, without ever letting it occur to them to think on Being itself'.[83]

It might therefore be said that, already within the interpretation and implicit reduction of Being into value, there is a loss of Being. How is this? It might be held that the valuation of Being is fundamentally a pinning down of Being. It reduces the Being of beings into a matter of evaluation, or quantification, and so the question of Being is no longer open. It closes off the fundamental disclosure of Being, which might be interpreted as its sense of existence.[84] What is fundamentally damaging to the Being of Beings, by interpreting being in terms of value, is that it implicitly means that b/Being must be made into some thing that can grasped and quantified. Hence, 'Being is interpreted as pure presence.'[85] There is in effect no space for an unquantifiable Being within beings. It is the absolute uncovering of Beings. Heidegger treats this valuation as a form of objectifying and control over beings by quantifying them, and Nietzsche's philosophy is essentially the ultimate expression of this, because it represents all beings in the most basic terms of

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[81]   *Ibid* p 109.
[82]   *Ibid* p.105.
[83]   M. Heidegger *Mindfulness*. .Translated by Parvis Emad and Thomas Kalary Continuum. London 2006 p.105.
[84]   M. Heidegger 'Dialogue on Language Between a Japanese and an Enquirer′ in *Way into Language*. Translated Peter D Hertz Harper Rowe San Francisco 1971 p .10.
[85]   M. Heidegger *Nietzsche* Volume 3 Translated by David Farrell Krell. Harper Collins San Francisco, 1991 p. 60.

the 'will to power'. Central to the whole system of valuation that Heidegger sees as represented in Nietzsche's metaphysics, and as having gained dominance in the modern world, is the will to power. Nietzsche's philosophy replaces the prior system of values based on transcendental values, in favour of a system of valuation based on the will to power, and is thus the ultimate stripping away of the prior foundation of Western metaphysics; but for Heidegger, it also represents the clearest and most transparent form of Western metaphysics. This transition in Western philosophy from Plato to Nietzsche represents for Heidegger the transition from 'Being' interpreted as an idea that is fixed, to 'Being' interpreted as a value that is continually becoming. However, ultimately, both Nietzsche and Plato might be seen as part of the same tradition.

Nietzsche's 'will to power' is, within Heidegger's reading of the history of Western metaphysics, the final culmination of Western metaphysical thinking in which all that is is understood as a representation of will to power. In prior epochs, 'the Being of beings', what it means for beings to be, has been interpreted in various ways. For example, in the Middle Ages, the 'Being of Beings' would be interpreted as a being created by God. For Nietzsche, in the same sense, the 'Being of beings' exists as part of the 'will to power', which Heidegger understands as the very heart of Nietzsche's philosophy. Heidegger claims that 'the essence of power is will to power',[86] by which he understands that, in Nietzsche, will and power are inseparable because, 'power is power only if it and as long as it is enhancement of power, taking command over the increase in power'.[87] The effect of will to power is the continual assertion and enhancement of itself; 'therefore, enhancement of power is at the same time in itself the preservation of power'.[88] To resist the will to power is, therefore, essentially to become part of the will to power; and so that state effectively closes off all other possibilities of a disclosure of Being. Furthermore, the will to power, by its very nature, represents continual overpowering and enhancement of itself, with Heidegger asserting that

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[86] M. Heidegger *Nietzsche.*Volume 3 Translated by David Farrell Krell. Harper Collins San Fransisco 1991 p.195.
[87] *Ibid*
[88] *Ibid* p.197.

'any kind of power can maintain itself only in overpowering.'[89]

This is how Heidegger understands the notion of becoming within Nietzsche's philosophy. He interprets Nietzsche's doctrine of becoming as representing the continual overpowering of the will to power by itself. Hence, 'in reckoning with values and in estimating according to the relations of value, will to power reckons with itself'.[90] The will to power itself can be compared to the Form of the Good in Plato, as that which enables the act of valuation itself to take place. As such, within Nietzsche's system, the will to power, in order to be the will to power, has to be effectively locked into a continual "arms race" with itself. The will to power is thereby seen as practically inescapable for modern humanity, because even fighting against the will to power would simply lead to another expression of the will to power, another affirmation through force, in a similar way to Hegel's interpretation of the absolute spirit as encompassing even that which is, on the surface, in opposition. The will to power is therefore both treated as absolute and as dynamic. In order to be the will to power, it has to grow in power. The system of modern technology, as based around the metaphysics of the will to power, can therefore not be a static system. Nietzsche's aim was to posit new values through the will to power, by which Nietzsche claimed to have overcome nihilism. Within this framework, all that is becomes simply another manifestation of the will to power, and, therefore, another extension of nihilism. Heidegger sees nihilism operating at an effectively deeper and more profound level than Nietzsche. In his understanding, nihilism is not simply the "devaluation of the highest value", but rather holds that "nihilism proper first proclaims that there is nothing to 'Being' itself, which has now become a value".[91] It is effectively the interpretation of the Being of beings in terms of values. Attached to this valuation of Beings, there is an implicit loss of the sense of the Being of beings. It is effectively an objectification and quantification of the "Being" of beings.

Nietzsche's interpretation of the Being of Beings as will to power might thereby be seen as

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[89]   M. Heidegger *Mindfulness*. .Translated Parvis Emad and Thomas Kalary Continuum London 2006   p. 20.
[90]   M. Heidegger *Nietzsche*.Volume 3Translated by David Farrell Krell. Harper Collins San Fransisco1991 p. 200.
[91]   M. Heidegger *Nietzsche*.Volume 3 Translated by David Farrell Krell. Harper ,Collins San Francisco 1991   p. 200.

the conclusion of this tradition of thought, representing the ultimate disenchantment and as such the ultimate revealing of the objectification for what it is. This naturally appears as a deviation away from both a traditional understanding of the history of Western philosophy and of Nietzsche's place within it. It would appear natural to read Nietzsche's philosophy as representing the ultimate overturning of Platonism by emphasizing 'becoming' as opposed to the eternal ideas of Plato. However, as has been stated, Heidegger interprets the history of Western philosophy as a generally linear process of development from Plato through to Nietzsche. Throughout its history, Western metaphysics continuously seeks to represent the 'being of beings' in terms of a being or underlying form. Hence, as John C. Maraldo states, for Heidegger,

> metaphysics is ontological in concerning itself with being as being, but in a
> two-fold manner: it represents "the totality of being as such with an eye to its
> most universal traits", but at the same time also "in the sense of the highest
> and therefore divine being".[92]

In Heidegger's view, it is irrelevant whether the highest being is Plato's Form of the Good, the Christian God, or Nietzsche's will to power; all metaphysical systems share this same basic hierarchical trait of ontologically subordinating beings to a being. This metaphysically superior being is thus given the status of really real, while other beings gain their reality in relation to it. Nietzsche's philosophy represents the ultimate development of Western philosophy, where philosophy itself destroys itself as a separate entity to become another manifestation of the will to power. It is for Heidegger the philosophy of the modern epoch, but

> 'this does not mean that the struggle for unlimited exploitation of the earth

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[92] J. C. Maraldo 'Rethinking God', in: *Religious Experience and the End of Metaphysics*. Edited by Jeffrey Bloechi .Indiana University Press: Bloomington Indianapolis 2003 p. 33.

as the sphere of raw materials and for the utilization of "human material," in

the service of the unconditional empowering of the will to power in its essence.

On the contrary, it is to be conjectured that philosophy as the doctrine and

image of culture will disappear; for insofar as it has been genuine it has already

brought the reality of the real to utterance and in that way has brought that

which is as such into the history of Being'.[93]

The dominance of modern technology is the expression of Nietzsche's metaphysics of will

to power. It is in this way that the 'will to power from the start dictates the arrangement of all

things.'[94] Modern technology is thus the ordering of things as resources in accordance with the

continual enhancement of the will to power, and that is why Heidegger's later philosophy takes

among its central concerns, the work of Nietzsche.

The essential nature of modern nihilism for Heidegger, rather than simply a matter of the

loss of previously established transcendental values as understood by thinkers such as Nietzsche or

Turgenev, is deeply rooted in the complete prior evaluation as set out in Western metaphysics.

Hence, 'the securing of supreme and absolute self-development of all the capacities of mankind for

absolute dominion over the entire earth is the secret goad that prods modern man again and again to

new resurgences, a goad that forces him into commitments that secure for him the surety of his

actions and the certainty of his aims.'[95] This for Heidegger is the underlying dynamic of Western

metaphysics, and Nietzsche represents the ultimate expression of this. Heidegger's aim in his

thinking is to reopen the sense of Being, but he is faced with the weight of prior Western

metaphysical thinking pressing down on him. For Heidegger, the fundamental failing of prior

Western philosophers since Plato is to question and get beyond the underlying tradition of Western

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[93]   M. Heidegger 'The Word of Nietzsche, in: *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays* Harper Torch
      Books Harper Row New York 1977 p .101.
[94]   M. Heidegger *Nietzsche* Volume 3 Translated by David Farrell Krell. Harper Collins San Francisco 1991   p. 232.
[95]   M. Heidegger *Nietzsche* Volume 4 Translated by David Farrell Krell. Harper Collins San Francisco 1991 p. 99.

thinking. The aim of Heidegger is thus to reopen the basic questions of philosophy, such as the 'question of Being', and thereby hold out the possibility of a new beginning.

Looking at traditions of thought outside of the Western tradition from Plato through to Nietzsche, can provide a possible way to make sense of Heidegger's conception of 'the New Beginning', or 'turning'. The rest of the thesis will focus on Heidegger's relation to the East Asian world.

Chapter 4 The Basis of Heidegger's Dialogue with the East Asian World

Heidegger's interest in philosophical traditions outside of Western philosophy is driven by his project of going beyond the nihilism that he sees as inherent within that tradition, culminating in the Nieztschean will to power. For Heidegger, each philosophical tradition and world in which it is grounded is the product of a previous historical development. This means that, for Heidegger, modern Western philosophy still remains tied to its foundations in ancient Greek thought, to the extent that it would not be possible to adequately understand events such as the eighteenth-century Enlightenment in Western thought without having understood the thought of Plato and Aristotle. In Heidegger's understanding, even something similar to the radical doubt of Descartes or the Copernican revolution, both of which were traditionally claimed as marking a radical break with what went before, still remain grounded within the thought of ancient Greece. As Heidegger states, 'origin always comes to meet us from the future'.[96] Thus, for Heidegger, the modern world in general follows directly from the post-Platonic Greek world. Hence, the ultimate destination of Western philosophy is set out from Socrates and Plato. Tradition for Heidegger functions in a similar way to a railway line, setting a developmental line of thought from its beginning. The answers that people will give to questions, such as 'what it means for a thing to be' in any world, are therefore always understood within the context of the way that people have previously interpreted 'Being' in history. Emphasising this, Heidegger states that "Each man is in each instance in dialogue with his forebears".[97]

Therefore, at different stages in Western history, there have been different interpretations of 'Being'. However, they each lead on to the succeeding stage, and this is the development of the world throughout history. Consequently, as has been shown, the modern Western world is based upon the development of Western metaphysics since Plato. It is this understanding of 'Being' and

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[96] M. Heidegger 'Dialogue on Language Between a Japanese and an Inquirer' in *On the way into Language* Harper Row San Francisco 1971 p. 10.
[97] *Ibid* p.19.

thought based upon that understanding, which, for Heidegger, is the primary foundation of any world rather than its politics or economic relations, although such aspects are always founded in relation to the basic understanding of 'Being'. Therefore, the history of a world in Heidegger's definition is chiefly a progression of different understandings of 'Being'. It is, however, possible for other worlds in Heidegger's sense to stand outside the Western world and to represent other possible understandings of 'Being'. A world for Heidegger is marked out by history, and is often linked to a particular place, although it is, in effect, possible, in Heidegger's thought, for completely different worlds to exist alongside each other. These other worlds, following Heidegger's interpretation, can fit into his project of reopening the question of 'Being' and stepping outside of the modern Western world. Turning to a different tradition of thought may thus make sense of the crucial idea in Heidegger's philosophy of a 'new beginning', by showing what it means to think in a non-*Gestell* way.

The central concern here is with Heidegger's dialogue with the East Asian world, as Heidegger appears to display a particular philosophical interest in this region. Reinhard May states that 'neither Heidegger's interest, nor his contacts' with East Asia, 'have been contested'[98], while Heidegger himself states that 'such an engagement (with East Asian thinking) could help with the task of saving the essential nature of human being from the threat of an extreme technological reduction and manipulation of human *Dasein*'.[99] Why, in particular, does Heidegger choose this specific historical tradition rather than any other?

Heidegger makes the fundamental assumption that there is a radically separate East Asian world, or at least that there is separate East Asian tradition grounded in a different understanding of Being. The question then arises what it is that is distinctive about the East Asian style of thinking according to Heidegger, and what it is in this distinctive discrepancy between East Asian and Western philosophy that attracts Heidegger to East Asian philosophy. It has already been noted that,

[98]   R. May *Heidegger's Hidden Sources*. Routledge,London New York 1996   p. 1.
[99]   M. Heidegger   Japanese forward to *Zur Frage nach der Bestimmung der Sache des Denkens*, 'Koza-Zen' Tokyo.1968

for Heidegger, it is this ontological understanding that is primary to the foundation of any world, as each world is founded on a particular understanding of Being. It is possible to say in the sense of ontology, for example, that the Christian and Islamic worlds remain relatively close together. Both are essentially based on the principle of beings coming into existence through an act of divine creation, so that, ultimately, all beings owe their existence to God as Supreme Being. Furthermore, the Islamic tradition of philosophy draws on the same Greek (particularly Aristotelian) way of thinking and, to a certain extent, on Judaic heritage. In terms of the metaphor of the 'House of Being', the Western and Islamic worlds might be said to occupy different rooms of the same house.

Heidegger's interest in East Asian philosophy appears as a search for a different house of Being. By its very nature, the East Asian world might be able to offer a different understanding of Being for Heidegger. The implicit hope for Heidegger is that this different East Asian understanding of Being might not produce the same errors and dangers that Heidegger finds in Western philosophy, particularly regarding onto-theology and nihilism, which Heidegger sees as finding its ultimate expression in the modern technological Western world.

A Different "House of Being"?

Heidegger is faced with a deep ambiguity. He finds that there is a resonance in East Asian thought with his own philosophy, while at the same time viewing this East Asian tradition as radically separated from the Western tradition of which he is aware that his thinking is a product, although Heidegger's thought is taking a critical step back from this Western tradition. Heidegger's interest in East Asian philosophy always maintains this degree of ambiguity of both looking towards the East, but always holding its distance from the tradition of philosophy that preceded him and from which his own thought still cannot completely separate itself. The dialogue with East Asian philosophy thus appears attractive to Heidegger, but also difficult and problematic.

Heidegger would appear not to wish for a direct appropriation of East Asian thought by the West, or a direct form of syncretism between Eastern thought and Western philosophy. In this respect, Heidegger's philosophy differs from other philosophies, such as Schopenhauer's. In his writing, Schopenhauer takes elements of Eastern philosophies, including Vedānta and Buddhism, but integrates them within a Western metaphysical system that is based heavily on Plato and Kant. Schopenhauer's system uses the notion from Advaita Vedānta of the ultimate unreality of everyday experience, particularly the illusion of individuation, together with the Buddhist connection of desire with suffering. These are combined with the Kantian distinction between appearance and the thing in itself, while also incorporating Plato's conception of true reality. Heidegger does not wish for such a simple reframing of East Asian philosophy within a Western metaphysical context, since for Heidegger, such a synthesis would lose the particular distinction of East Asian philosophy. Heidegger does not, for example, seek to include Chinese Daoism within a system of Husserlian phenomenology. Rather than seeking to fit East Asian philosophy into a Hegelian style overarching metaphysical system aimed at combining both the Western and East Asian philosophical traditions within one single understanding, Heidegger sees the East Asian world as radically separate from the West. Heidegger's interest in the East Asian World, that clearly and indisputably shown in the 'Dialogue Between A Japanese and an Inquirer', stems precisely from this view of the East Asian World as a radically separate tradition.

This overt resistance to a direct syncretism at times has led some to call into doubt the extent of Heidegger's connection to East Asian philosophy. However, rather than simply limiting the possibilities for a dialogue with the East Asian world, Heidegger's rejection of syncretism means that he is anxious to allow the East Asian world to speak for itself and in its own terms. It is for this reason that Heidegger chooses the method of dialogue and hermeneutic interpretation as his primary approach.

This is a central concern of Heidegger's 'Dialogue between the Japanese and an Inquirer' [100]

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[100] M. Heidegger 'Dialogue on Language between a Japanese and an Inquirer' in *On the way into Language*

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the work by Heidegger that can be said to constitute his most direct analysis of East Asian thought. The dialogue itself, as Heidegger writes it, may not directly correspond to any conversation. However, it loosely relates to an encounter in 1955 between Heidegger and Tezuka Tomio, a Japanese Germanist academic of the Imperial University in Tokyo, an encounter which Tezuka reproduced in an article, 'An Hour with Heidegger', that to a certain extent, but not exactly, parallels the conversation in the 'Dialogue'. While the Japanese interlocutor in the dialogue may not be said to correspond exactly with Tezuka, the former might be said to represent Heidegger's various encounters with East Asian thought and East Asian thinkers, in particular Count Kuki Shuzo, a Japanese art critic, who, according to Graham Parkes,[101] had met Heidegger in 1927. As Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht states, 'if there is a counterpart in the text the Inquirer/Heidegger finds intellectually worthy and challenging, it is not the Japanese/Tezuka, but Count Kuki Shuzo whose figure (perhaps we should rather say: whose shadow) dominates - by direct and detailed reference - the opening sequence of the conversation'.[102]

What matters, however, is that Heidegger's 'Dialogue on Language between a Japanese and an Inquirer' was not so much an accurate account of any one particular encounter as it happened, but rather that it offered the East Asian world the opportunity to speak for itself through various different encounters, and this is a central aspect of the 'dialogue' itself. He turns to this method as a way of avoiding the danger of simply imposing a Western conceptual system upon East Asian thought, essentially by allowing the East Asian tradition to express itself through the dialogue. However, Lin Ma and Jaap Brakel doubt the possibility of true dialogue for Heidegger between the East Asian and Western worlds, in that they hold that 'a true dialogue could possibly happen only between Being and Dasein or man, or between Being and Heidegger'.[103] From this, Lin Ma goes on to argue that such a position automatically excludes the East Asian world, apart from when 'the East

Translated by Peter D. Hertz Harper Row San Francisco ,1971 p .19.

[101] G. Parkes 'Rising Sun Over the Black Forest ' *Heidegger's Hidden Sources* Routledge London New York 1996

[102] H. U. Gumbrecht 'Heidegger and his Japanese Interlocutors: About a Limit of Western Metaphysics' in *Diacritics*, Volume 30, No 4 Winter 2000 (Johns Hopkins University Press) pp 83-101

[103] Lin Ma and Jaap Van Brake Heidegger's Comportment toward the East West Dialogue in *Philosophy East and West* Volume 56, No. 4 University of Hawaii Press October 2006 p. 540

engages itself in the project of retrieving Being from within the One House of Being, as elaborated by Heidegger's thinking'.[104] Such a position basically holds that the only role for the East Asian world, or any other non-Western world in Heidegger's thought, is as an adjunct to the Western-centred project of reclaiming the notion of Being from pre-Socratic philosophy. This, however, overlooks, in Iain D. Thomson's words, the '*ontological pluralism*'[105] of Heidegger's thought, in that, for Heidegger, Being discloses multiple different understandings and possibilities. It is thus legitimate for one understanding of Being to be in dialogue with another, and this is essentially what Heidegger's dialogue with the East Asian world involves.

Heidegger, however, still sees an inherent danger in the dialogue itself. There remains a concern that, at some level in the dialogue, the East Asian world should be allowed to remain distant. Heidegger refers to the danger of 'distancelessness'; that, 'distant sites of the most ancient cultures are shown on film as if they stood this very moment amidst today's street traffic'.[106] In Heidegger's view, such an appropriation of East Asian and other cultures by the Western world is both destructive and superficial. As Otto Pöggeler notes, Heidegger 'considered the dialogue between Europe and the Far East to be as necessary as it was difficult; he did not want to overlook the element of foreignness that remained in every encounter'.[107] There is a sense, however, that the 'Dialogue on Language between a Japanese and an Inquirer' is already biased in so far as it takes place in German rather than Japanese. Heidegger states that 'the languages of the dialogue shifted everything into European'.[108] The Japanese in the dialogue further comments that, 'Count Kuki had uncommonly good command of German and of French and English'.[109] Count Kuki had lived in Germany and France, and had visited Heidegger in the 1920s. Graham Parkes further comments

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[104]   *Ibid*

[105]   I. D Thomson *Heidegger, Art, and Postmodernity* Cambridge University Press Cambridge 2011 p. 37

[106]   M. Heidegger 'The Thing' in *Poetry Language and Thought* Translated by Albert Hofstadter Harper Row New York 1971 Page 165

[107]   O. Pöggeler 'West East Dialogu*e'* in *Heidegger and Asian Thought* Edited by *Graham Parkes* .University of Hawaii Press Delhi 1992 p.59

[108]   M. Heidegger 'Dialogue on Language Between a Japanese and an Inquirer*'* in .*On the way into* Language Translated by Peter D. Hertz Harper Row San Francisco 1971 Page 4

[109]   M. Heidegger ''Dialogue on Language Between a Japanese and an Inquirer*'*in *On the way into* Language Translated by Peter D. Hertz Harper Row San Francisco 1971 Page 4

that, 'among the Japanese thinkers who visited Heidegger in the 1920s it was Kuki who made the most forceful impression.'[110] However, perhaps precisely because of Kuki's languages abilities, the dialogue itself, by being based around German terminology, has been "Europeanised".

Heidegger is very aware of the metaphysical baggage carried by any language and that, in so far as he continues to work within a specific language, he cannot completely escape the prior accumulation of metaphysical meaning in any particular word, or philosophical usage. Any reference to East Asian philosophy in a Western language is therefore automatically coloured by the tradition of Western metaphysics. Particular words in philosophy will therefore inevitably be affected in the way that they understood by the prior usage of such words in that specific language. This creates the difficult problem of translation between languages. For example, as will be discussed later on, the *Dao* from Chinese might literally be translated as 'way'. However, such a translation, although it could be claimed to be literally correct and may convey some of the meaning of the Chinese word, would be in danger of losing at least some of the sense of the original Chinese word, particularly as to how it is used in the *Dao De Jing*.

An underlying question Heidegger investigates in his work 'The Dialogue on Language, between a Japanese and an Inquirer' is whether dialogue itself is possible and whether it is possible to gain entry into the East Asian world. The dialogue investigates various possible ways in which the 'Inquirer' who appears to represent Heidegger, can cross the divide into the East Asian world. Heidegger is faced with the possibility that it may never be possible to be truly part of the East Asian world. Clearly, it cannot be possible, for example, to read the *Dao De Jing* as it would have been read in ancient China. In this sense, it is obviously impossible for someone from the modern Western world to ever literally 'be' in the world of ancient China or Edo-period Japan. Without being able in this way to enter such worlds, can it ever be possible to thoroughly understand the framework of thought of such worlds? From a Heideggerian point of view, this would not appear to

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[110] G. Parkes 'Rising Sun Over the Black Forest: in *Heidegger's Hidden Sources* Routledge London New York 1996 Page 93

be possible since, 'great thinking always understands itself best of all';[111] therefore, any attempt to understand it from the outside will always be inadequate. Heidegger would thus radically dismiss any Hegelian claim of having a historically privileged access into other worlds.

However, such a position would be in danger of leading Heidegger into absolute resignation, in that it would appear to entail that it is never possible to gain a true understanding of anything that is outside the modern technological world. Heidegger's concern about gaining entry into the East Asian world might in some sense be said to run parallel with his already established concern about gaining entry into the pre-Socratic Greek world. However, the East Asian world might be said to be still further away from the modern world than the pre-Socratic Greek World. This is the case because as Heidegger, along with many other western theorists, holds that Greek philosophy, although radically altered from the original pre-Socratic basis, went on to have a deep influence over the later history of Western civilisation. By contrast, Heidegger considered that East Asian philosophy has always been radically removed from Western philosophy.

As referred to previously, while his thought is an acknowledged part of the Western tradition of philosophy, Heidegger stands in an ambiguous relationship to the tradition that preceded him, since through his work, he continually aimed at the project of undermining the dominance of Western metaphysics. Heidegger's dialogue with East Asian philosophy can be read as part of this project and must be seen within this context. Heidegger acknowledges that, 'Nobody can in just one single leap take distance from the predominant circle of ideas'.[112] Were Heidegger to completely deny the possibility of ever being able to go beyond Western philosophy, however, it would appear to undermine what can be said to be the central project of his thought; and he would seem to be left with no choice other than pessimistic resignation. Heidegger, however, does not appear ready to completely settle with this apparently bleak prospect. He, therefore, continues a dialogue with East Asian philosophy, but at the same time is always aware of the inherent difficulties in the dialogue.

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[111] M. Heidegger ''Dialogue on Language Between a Japanese and an Inquirer' in *On the way into Language* Translated Peter D. Hertz Harper Row San Francisco 1971 Page 39
[112] *Ibid* p. 36

'The Dialogue on Language between a Japanese and an Inquirer' explores several different possible ways by which Heidegger as the Inquirer may enter into the East Asian world. Firstly, and most centrally in the dialogue, Heidegger looks to *iki* as a way into the East Asian world. He is concerned with how *iki* might be expressed and understood within Western languages without imposing onto it Western metaphysics or concepts and thereby losing its original sense. The central question of the dialogue appears to revolve around whether it is possible for the Inquirer to truly understand the Japanese word *iki*.

Looking further into Heidegger's engagement with *iki* and its relationship with East Asian philosophy, it is possible to say that *iki* represents a particular Japanese sensibility associated heavily with the Edo period in Japan (1603-1868). Its exact nature is difficult to define. Kuki Shuzo, a Japanese philosopher, appears to have been the first to introduce Heidegger to the notion of *iki*. Heidegger mentions him directly in the dialogue and states that, 'from my dialogue with Kuki, I never had more than a distant inkling of what that word ('*iki*') says'.[113] Kuki later on, after meeting Heidegger, went on to publish his own work on *iki* in 1930, where he stated that 'words' carrying a meaning similar to that of '*iki*' can be found in European languages, but none has the same semantic value of '*iki*''.[114] A correct literal translation of *iki* into any western language is, in Kuki Shuzo's interpretation (that seems to be accepted by Heidegger), impossible. It should be noted here that 'An Hour with Heidegger' by Tezuka Tezuka,[115] the conversation that Heidegger's 'Dialogue on Language between a Japanese and an Inquirer' was originally based on, makes no direct reference to *iki*. Heidegger, however, sees it as important to include this within the dialogue, perhaps because it easily presents an example of the aims and dangers within the dialogue. When Heidegger is writing about *iki*, he is probably thinking back to his earlier conversations with Kuki Shuzo. Heidegger presents the aim of the dialogue to reveal the underlying meaning of *iki*, but the

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[113] M. Heidegger 'Dialogue on Language Between a Japanese and an Inquirer' in *On the way into* Language Translated Peter D. Hertz Harper Row San Francisco1971 p. 2

[114] H. Nara. *The Structure of Detachment: The Aesthetic Vision of Kuki Shuzo: With a Translation of Iki no kozo* Translated by Hiroshi Nara. University of Hawaii Press 2004 pp16-17

[115] T. Tezuka 'An Hour with Heidegger' in *Heidegger's Hidden Sources* Routledge London New York 1996

danger persists that, in interpreting *iki* within a Western language, it will lose the original Japanese meaning and ultimately make *iki* fall into the clutches of aesthetic ideation'.[116]

Why does Heidegger object to reading *iki* as aesthetic? It may appear natural to assume that *iki* is, by definition, a Japanese word, making Heidegger's rejection of an aesthetic interpretation of *iki* seem incongruous and controversial. He goes on to make the more apparently extreme and revealing claim that,

> the name aesthetics and what it names grow out of European thinking, out of
>
> philosophy. Consequently, aesthetics must ultimately remain alien to East
>
> Asian thinking,[117]

Along such lines, Heidegger, therefore, would hold that any attempt to use 'aesthetics' to understand the 'East Asian' world is, by definition, inappropriate because such a category necessarily imposes a European metaphysical concept and, as a result, must fail to fully understand the East Asian world. This may appear a surprising claim, especially since Japanese thought in particular appears to make a lot of use of aesthetics. However, for Heidegger, aesthetics represents a particular development in Western philosophy after Plato, where art becomes associated with matters of personal taste and is seen as removed from the deeper philosophical basis of the world. This is because, in Thomson's words, 'art works become *objects* for human subjects to experience in an especially intense, vital, or meaningful way'[118] thus satisfying their aesthetic desires. Heidegger views such a distinction of subject and object, as well as the Platonic based metaphysical division between sensuous and super-sensual, as not being appropriate to East Asian art. This shows the hermeneutic sensitivity that Heidegger has towards certain vocabulary that carries a prior tradition

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[116] M.. Heidegger 'Dialogue on Language Between a Japanese and an Inquirer*'* in *On the way into Language* Translated by Peter D. Hertz Harper Row San Francisco 1971 Page 43

[117] *Ibid* Page 17

[118] I. D Thomson *Heidegger, Art, and Postmodernity* Cambridge University Press Cambridge 2011 p. 48

of use in the Western tradition when interpreting the East Asian world. Heidegger holds that language may block, as well as enable, dialogue by creating such misunderstandings. For Heidegger, it is not possible to use words such as 'aesthetics' without retaining the tradition of its prior use in the Western tradition of thought. Using the word 'aesthetic' to describe art therefore implies a certain Western metaphysical understanding of the nature of art. He regards the usage of such words as inappropriate for an understanding of East Asian thought. This, therefore, leaves the residual problem in Heidegger as to whether it can ever be possible to understand East Asian thought in Western languages without altering the underlying meaning and imposing Western metaphysics, since it seems that any vocabulary used within that language, combined with the prior philosophical tradition, must carry with it some Western metaphysical concepts.

There is the further danger that an aesthetic interpretation of *iki* might lead to a phenomenon similar to that of *Japonism* in nineteenth-century France, and to a certain extent Western Europe more generally, where Western artists appropriated superficial aspects of Japanese style into their own work. This was done particularly with *ukiyo-e* in paintings, but also parts of Japanese music in works such as Puccini's Madam Butterfly. Such aesthetic appropriation has the danger of presenting the East Asian world as an exotic curiosity for the Western world. Heidegger is therefore concerned to avoid *iki* becoming understood in the West as simply another kind of aesthetic taste. Thus, as Young states, for Heidegger, the reason 'aesthetic art fails to be great art - becomes in fact a triviality - is that even in the lives of those who 'take it up' it represents, in a double way, an option rather than a 'need'.[119] In Heideggerian terms, aesthetics takes away art's true significance in world gathering and disclosure:

Aesthetics, or shall we say experience within the sphere in which it sets the

standard, from the very start turns the art work into an object for our feelings

and ideas. Only when the artwork has become an object, only then is it fit

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[119]   J. Young *Heidegger's Philosophy of Art* Cambridge University Press Cambridge 2001 p. 12

for exhibitions and museums[120].

The danger of applying Western thought to Japanese principles of *iki* is that its true significance within the Japanese world of the Edo period might be lost, and that *iki* is simply made into an object of Western appreciation in a similar way as the statue of the Greek goddess on display in a modern museum that Heidegger refers to in the 'Origin of the Work of Art'.[121] Hence, when the Japanese in the dialogue proposes a translation of *iki* as 'the gracious'[122], Heidegger is critical, stating that, 'as soon as you say this, we are at once in the midst of aesthetics - think of Schiller's treatise'.[123] Words such as "gracious" already have a prior history and meaning in Western aesthetics. This is similar to Kuki Shuzo's own rejection of the conventional translation of *iki* as 'chic'.[124] Accordingly a mistranslation of terms such as *iki* is for Heidegger more than a matter of simple misunderstanding or misinterpretation; rather, it threatens the loss of the whole nature of *iki* by submerging it under European aesthetics.

Eventually, in the dialogue, the translation and interpretation that Heidegger appears to accept is of *iki* as

the pure delight of beckoning stillness. The breath of stillness that makes this

beckoning delight come into its own, is the reign under which that delight is

made come[125].

This interpretation of *iki* focuses on the coquettish aspect of *iki* that draws people in.

[120] M. Heidegger A Dialogue on Language Between a Japanese and an Inquirer*" On the way into Language* Harper Row San Francisco 1971 p. 43

[121] M. Heidegger t 'Origin of the Work of Art' in *Off the Beaten Track* Translated by Julian Young and Kenneth Haynes Cambridge University Press Cambridge p.13

[122] M. Heidegger 'A Dialogue on Language Between a Japanese and an Inquirer*' in* On the way into Language* Harper Row San Francisco 1971 p. 43

[123] *Ibid* p 44

[124] H. Nara. *The Structure of Detachment: The Aesthetic Vision of Kuki Shuzo: With a Translation of Iki no kozo* Translated by Hiroshi Nara. University of Hawaii Press 2004   p. 16

[125] M. Heidegger 'A Dialogue on Language Between a Japanese and an Inquirer' in *On the way into Language* Harper Row San Francisco 1971 p. 45

Heidegger states 'delight literally, then, as what ensnares, carries away - into stillness'.[126] This resonates strongly with Kuki Shuzo's association of *iki* with coquetry, which he understands as 'a dualistic attitude; that it puts a person of the opposite sex in opposition to the monistic self; that it posits a possible relationship between that person and the self'.[127]   Parkes states that 'the paradigm for this moment is to be found in the relationship between the geisha and her patron in the gay quarter of the Yoshirwara in eighteenth-century Tokyo'.[128]

This is a relationship and environment that may appear deeply alien to Heidegger's concerns, begging the question as to why Heidegger should particularly focus on *iki*, with its association with the relative hedonism of the *Ukiyo,* the 'floating world' of the Edo period in Japan. It is notable that Kuki Shuzo, himself a cosmopolitan and a somewhat hedonistic Japanese aristocrat, appears very different from the more rustic Heidegger. It is true that Heidegger does not go into as detailed a discussion of *iki* as Kuki Shuzo does in his work. For example, he does not mention the dichotomy between *iki* and *yabo*, its opposite within Japanese culture, nor does he refer to the different expressions of *iki* that Kuki examines, such as colours associated with its style. However, while it may be that some of these aspects of *iki* are superfluous to Heidegger's main concerns within the dialogue, there is one particular part of *iki* that he does not discuss directly, and which may be crucial. This is *akirame* (resignation). Kuki, in his study of *iki*, links the coquetry of *iki* with this resignation, which he associates strongly with Buddhism: 'iki arises from the world of suffering'.[129] This relationship of *iki* to Buddhism is outlined by Botz-Bornstein who states that, 'to quit everyday life not in order to enter Nivana but in order to live everyday life in another way is one of the principles of Zen Buddhism and in this we recognise Kuki's main suggestions concerning *iki'*.[130] Hence, *iki*, starts from the awareness of the passing nature of existence, which ultimately

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[126] *Ibid* p. 44
[127] H. Nara. *The Structure of Detachment: The Aesthetic Vision of Kuki Shuzo: With a Translation of Iki no kozo* Translated by Hiroshi Nara. University of Hawaii Press 2004 p. 19
[128] G. Parkes   'Rising Sun Over the Black Forest' in *Heidegger's Hidden Sources* Routledge London New York 1996 p. 94
[129] H. Nara *The Structure of Detachment: The Aesthetic Vision of Kuki Shuzo: With a Translation of Iki no kozo* Translated by Hiroshi Nara. University of Hawaii Press 2004 p. 23
[130] T Botz-Bornstein '"Iki", Style, Trace: Shuzo Kuki and the Spirit of Hermeneutics' in *Philosophy East and West*

means that desire and enticement of coquetry cannot be truly fulfilled; but this does not mean that coquetry itself should be abandoned. In this respect, the coquetry of *iki* differs radically from the Western conception of romantic love, in that it has no aim or completion. Kuki Shuzo writes:

> Seriousness and attachment to love go counter to the being of *iki*, because in such
>
> a case, love has been actualised and is no longer a possibility. *Iki* must transcend
>
> the bonds of love to maintain a free and flirtatious spirit.[131]

While this element of *iki* is not directly mentioned in Heidegger's dialogue, it is alluded to in his reference to the role of 'enticement': the enticement of *iki* is always tied to this idea of the impossibility of a complete union. As Parkes states, for Heidegger, 'the only feature of this moment that might have appealed to him is Kuki's emphasis on coquetry (of *iki*) as embodying the possibility of sexual union and his insistence that the phenomenon is destroyed if this possibility is allowed to become an actuality'.[132] 'The main concern of coquetry - and the essence of pleasure - is maintaining a dualistic relationship, that is to say, protecting the possibility as a possibility'.[133] The ambiguity between intimacy and distance is clearly central to Kuki's reading of the coquetry and resignation inherent to the notion of *iki*, and it may be that this is also central to Heidegger's use of *iki* in the dialogue, in that it is precisely this tension between distance and nearness that in effect drives the dialogue with the East Asian world in Heidegger's paper. This is comparable to the significance that Heidegger attributes to distance in his essay 'The Thing', where he states that 'nearness preserves farness. Preserving farness, nearness presences nearness in nearing that farness.'[134]

Volume 47 No 4 Oct 1997   University of Hawaii Press p. 565

[131] H. Nara. *The Structure of Detachment: The Aesthetic Vision of Kuki Shuzo*: *With a Translation of Iki no kozo*: Translated by Hiroshi Nara. University of Hawaii Press 2004 p. 23

[132] G. Parkes 'Rising Sun Over the Black Forest' in *Heidegger's Hidden Sources* Routledge London New York 1996 p. 95

[133]   H. Nara. *The Structure of Detachment: The Aesthetic Vision of Kuki Shuzo: With a Translation of Iki no kozo* Translated Hiroshi Nara. University of Hawaii Press 2004 p. 19

[134]   M. Heidegger 'The Thing' in *Poetry, Language Thought* translated by Albert Hofstadter Harper Row New York

The role of distance and nearness in Heidegger's 'Dialogue on Language Between a Japanese and an Inquirer', is shown further by the part of the dialogue that discusses the film *Rashomon*, which in some respects demonstrates the role of distance and enticement in Heidegger's dialogue. The inquirer in the dialogue states at first, referring to *Rashomon,* that, 'I believed I was experiencing the enchantment of the Japanese world, the enchantment that carries us away into the mysterious'.[135] This appears to directly parallel Heidegger's statement about *iki* as that which 'carries away', and he appears to present *Rashomon* as another way into the East Asian world. However, the Japanese in the dialogue is portrayed as a sceptic in relation to this possibility and even cites the film *Rashomon* as an example of sweeping 'Europeanisation'. This resonates strongly with Tezuka Tezuka's own statement about *Rashomon* in 'An Hour with Heidegger':

> I felt that the kind of indefiniteness conveyed by this film concerning our
>
> knowledge of reality may have intrigued Heidegger as an East Asian
>
> phenomenon. It is another question, of course, whether one can regard this
>
> work as pure exemplification of this East Asian characteristic.[136]

Young states that Kurosawa 'never pretended otherwise than that his works were cultural hybrids'.[137] It is certainly fair to say that in Heidegger's time, Kurosawa's films, in Japan, were regarded as more Western in style, with the Japanese in Heidegger's dialogue stating for example, 'we Japanese consider the film too realistic, for example in the duelling scenes'.[138] The Japanese in the dialogue, however, appears to extend his criticism of the film further, stating that, 'regardless of

San Francisco London 1971 p. 179 (Heidegger was referring here to a particular way that the wine jug brings together the four-fold of 'gods', mortals', 'earth' and 'sky', while at the same time allowing them to maintain their particular distance)

[135] M. Heidegger   'Dialogue on Language Between a Japanese and an Inquirer' in *On the way into Language* Harper Row San Francisco 1971Page 18

[136] T. Tezuka 'An Hour with Heidegger' in *Heidegger's Hidden Sources* Translated by Graham Parkes Routledge London New York 1996 p. 62

[137] J. Young *Heidegger's Philosophy of Art* Cambridge University Press Cambridge 2001 p. 149

[138] M. Heidegger   'Dialogue on Language Between a Japanese and an Inquirer' in *On the way into Language* Harper Row San Francisco 1971 p. 16

what aesthetic quality of a Japanese film may turn out to be, the mere fact that our world is set forth in the frame of the film forces the world into the sphere of what you call objectness'.[139] The criticism contained here seems to extend to the medium of the film itself. Along such lines, Heidegger states that 'the East Asian world and the technical-aesthetic product of the film industry are incompatible'.[140] Such an apparent change of position for Heidegger within the dialogue may appear oddly self-contradictory. However, it may indicate that Heidegger at first saw *Rashomon* as an authentic example of the East Asian world, although he later rejected it as being a film too inherently Europeanised. This rejection may have resulted from the fact that the film denies the possibility for distance and concealment in the East Asian world. It makes the presentation too near and too immediate, and as such, effectively blocks off a real entry into the East Asian world. Young notes that, for Heidegger, the photography of Kurosawa's film 'block's thematisation of anything other than beings, prevents objects becoming, as one might put it, windows into the Other. It is purely representational, metaphysical'.[141] This might be understood as an indication that *Rashomon* is only capable of representing images of the East Asian world, but never enters into the underlying world. The question is whether, for Heidegger, this is a characteristic of all film as an artistic medium. Young again, asserts, 'a reasonable acquaintance with the films of, say, Bergman, Visconti or Wenders reveals as clearly absurd the claim that the film can provide nothing but densely naturalistic representation of the mundane world, that as such, the film cannot be poetic'.[142]

In contrast to the realism still inherent in Kurosawa's film presentation of the East Asian world, the Japanese in Heidegger's dialogue suggests an alternative form of art in the No-play. This he holds to be a truly Japanese form of art, stating that 'the background world of Japan, or better the world itself, is what you experience in the No play'.[143] What is it about No-drama in particular that

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[139] *Ibid* p. 17
[140] *Ibid* p. 16
[141] J. Young *Heidegger's Philosophy of Art* Cambridge University Press Cambridge 2001 p. 149
[142] J. Young *Heidegger's Philosophy of Art* Cambridge University Press Cambridge 2001 p. 165 [Could a film such as *An Actor's Revenge* (*Yukinojo henge*) by Kon Ichikawa, which takes its style more heavily from the Japanese traditions of Kabuki theatre, provide Heidegger with a more appropriate way into the East Asian world? This question would require going beyond the current study]
[143] M. Heidegger 'Dialogue on Language Between a Japanese and an Inquirer' in *On the way into Language* Harper

Heidegger finds to be fundamentally different from the representation in a film? The Japanese in the dialogue draws attention, firstly, to the minimalism of the stage in the No-drama, in contrast to the realism of the representation in the film. Hence, in the No-play, 'if a mountain landscape is to appear, the actor slowly raises his open hand and holds it quietly above his open hand and holds it quietly above his eyes at eyebrow level'.[144] As such, the Japanese No-play does not have the realism in representation that film does. However, what is special about the method of bringing a landscape on stage through a gesture? The Japanese in Heidegger's dialogue, secondly, emphasises how the gestures in the No-play relate to the emptiness on stage. 'In beholding that it is itself invisible, and that, so gathered, bears itself to encounter emptiness in such a way that in and through it mountains appear'.[145] Young maintains, 'the play allows 'the nothing, 'the empty' to presence because emptiness is literally present: the stage is empty'.[146] Emptiness/ nothingness appears to be central to Heidegger's understanding of the East Asian world. The Japanese in the dialogue states that, 'to us, emptiness is the loftiest name for what you mean to say with the word "Being"'.[147] The emptiness on the stage in the No-play would therefore appear to reveal directly how Heidegger understands the basis of the East Asian world, and as such, the No-play might be said to perform a similar function of world gathering as the temple in 'Origin of the Work of Art'. Heidegger finds here a deep relationship with his own project of reopening the question of 'Being' and moving away from reified thinking of 'Being', to the extent that Heidegger's own thought may be seen as closer to East Asian thought than to Western thought. For Heidegger, the No-play can be said to be an authentic East Asian art work, reflecting the grounding of the East Asian world. As the Japanese in the dialogue states, referring to Heidegger's lecture "What is metaphysics?", 'we marvel to this day at how the Europeans could lapse into interpreting as nihilistic the nothingness of which you speak of

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Row San Francisco 1971 p. 17
[144] *Ibid* p. 18
[145] *Ibid* p. 19
[146] J. Young *Heidegger's Philosophy of Art* Cambridge University Press Cambridge 2001 p. 150
[147] M. Heidegger ' Dialogue on Language Between a Japanese and an Inquirer' in *On the way into Language* Harper Row San Francisco 1971 p. 19

during the lecture'.[148] This particular East Asian understanding of nothingness points deeply into the nature of East Asian thought, and particularly the nature of '*Śūnyatā*' as emptiness in Mahāyāna Buddhism, as well as the role of nothingness within Daoist thought; this will be looked at in more depth, later on. It should be noted here, however, that in the Heideggerian sense, 'nothingness' is central to the East Asian understanding of Being, and as such central to the East Asian world. Therefore, the No-play, centred on this 'emptiness' or nothingness in Heideggerian terms, can be seen as an art work foundational to the East Asian world in a way that is comparable with the temple or the tragedies of Aeschylus in the Greek world.

However, in spite of this relationship between Heidegger's thought and emptiness, there is still a sense in which the No-play remains too distant for Heidegger. The Japanese in the dialogue states that,

you would need to attend such plays. But even that remains hard as long as you

are unable to live within Japanese existence.[149]

Such works of art can therefore only be completely understood and authentically experienced from within the East Asian world and Heidegger cannot make such a radical transition. The dialogue, besides the discussion of emptiness and gestures, does not enter further into the themes of No-drama, in that the dialogue is only presented to the 'inquirer' by the 'Japanese', 'from afar'.[150] It remains like the temple in 'The Origin of the Work of Art', in so far as it represents a world gathering that cannot truly be accessed from the modern Western world.

In contrast to the complexity and distance of the No-play, Heidegger mentions earlier in the dialogue that 'Count Kuki occasionally brought his wife along who then wore festive Japanese

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[148] M. Heidegger 'Dialogue on Language Between a Japanese and an Inquirer'' in *On the way into Language* Harper Row San Francisco 1971 p. 19
[149] *Ibid* p. 18
[150] M. Heidegger 'A Dialogue on Language Between a Japanese and an Inquirer' in *On the way into Language* Harper Row San Francisco 1971 p. 18

garments. They made the whole East Asian world more luminously present'.[151] This may appear a casual remark. However, it appears to link strongly with the idea of world gathering in 'The Thing', where Heidegger draws attention to the significance of 'a wine jug' as a thing within a particular world. Heidegger does not enter into further discussion of the festive Japanese garments, unlike the wine jug in 'The Thing'. However, in some respects, the two are similar in that they are relatively simple in appearance on the surface and can be easily overlooked. They both have the quality of nearness and demonstrate the importance of such relatively ordinary things in world-gathering for Heidegger. In contrast to No-drama, the festive garments of Kuki's wife may not appear to offer such deep insights into the East Asian world. It would appear hard to learn anything about the East Asian understanding of Being from a woman's clothes. However, in Heidegger's thought the presence of seemingly everyday items such as the jug of wine in his essay 'The Thing' often provide an ontological insight into the nature of a world. Hence the festive garments of a Japanese woman could provide a similar role in the 'Dialogue' and thus provide kind of disclosure of the East Asian world that allows it to be near, 'luminously present', but does not seek to remove the distance[152]. In this respect, it might be said to be an example of the 'nearness that preserves farness'.[153] What can be seen as a central part of Heidegger's philosophy is that, in many ways, apparently simple things, such as festive garments or a wine jug, can be seen as windows providing a deeper insight into the disclosure of Being.

The Problem of Europeanisation

There is, however, a sense of danger apparent in Heidegger's dialogue with the East Asian world which is, as Heidegger refers to it in the dialogue, 'a process which I would call the complete

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[151] *Ibid* p. 4

[152] It should be noted here that Gumbrecht states there is 'no record of any Mrs. or Madame Kuki'- *(Heidegger and His Japanese Interlocutor* 'Diacritics' Page 89 Volume 30. No 4 Winter 2000 The Hohns Hopkins University Press) and it is indeed possible that the woman who was with Kuki may have in fact been a prostitute . This, however, need not detract from the point of Heidegger's experience.

[153] M. Heidegger 'The Thing' in *Poetry, Language and Thought* Translated by Albert Hofstadter Harper Row New York San Francisco 1971 p. 179

Europeanization of the Earth and of man'.[154] This would indeed represent a serious problem, in so far as it might be argued that the East Asian world with which Heidegger is seeking to pursue a dialogue might no longer exist. As such, any hope from Heidegger's point of view that the East Asian world might present new possibilities for the Western world, away from modern nihilism, might no longer be fulfilled. If this were true at the time when Heidegger wrote the 'Dialogue on Language between a Japanese and an Inquirer' in 1959, it would appear to be even more true now, given the further post-war development of 'East Asian countries' along ways that Heidegger would consider to be 'Western lines'. It would thus be harder for a follower of Heidegger to find an authentic expression of the East Asian world, since the 'Europeanisation of man and of the earth attacks at the source of everything of an essential nature. It seems that these sources dry up".[155] The issue of Europeanisation, which Heidegger understands as the dominance of modern Western technocratic reasoning blocking other forms of thought, is an important background to Heidegger's dialogue.[156] Heidegger was aware that even the uptake of his own philosophy in Japan may contribute to this process of Europeanisation. The Japanese interlocutor in the dialogue states that, 'Professor Tanabe often came back to a question you once put to him: why it was that we Japanese do not call back to mind our own venerable beginnings of our own thinking, instead of chasing more ever more greedily after the latest news from European philosophy'.[157] The Japanese interlocutor in the dialogue refers to the fact that many people consider the process of Europeanization 'the triumphal march of reason. At the end of the eighteenth century, in the French Revolution, was not reason proclaimed a goddess?[158] Heidegger clearly regards such a Hegelian reading of history as the 'triumphal march of reason' as a threat. The interlocutor indicates a feeling

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[154]   M. Heidegger 'A Dialogue on Language Between a Japanese and an Inquirer' in *On the way into Language* Harper Row San Francisco 1971 p. 15
[155]   *Ibid* p. 16
[156]   The notion of Europeanization itself heavily resonates with the work of the Japanese scholar Okakura Kakuzo, who according to Tomonobo Imamichi was an early influence on Heidegger (Tomonubu Imamichi, *In Search of Wisdom. One Philosopher's Journey, Tokyo,* International House of Japan, 2004)
[157]   M. Heidegger 'A Dialogue on Language Between a Japanese and an Inquirer' *On the way into Language* Harper Row San Francisco 1971 p. 37
[158]   *Ibid* p. 16

of being overwhelmed by it within the East Asian world: 'the incontestable dominance of your European reason is thought to be confirmed by the success of that rationality which technical advances set before us at every turn'[159]. He refers to the depth of this weakness: 'since the encounter with European thinking, there has come to light a certain incapacity in our language'.[160]

However, challenging this dominance of European thought based on a Hegelian ideal of 'the march of reason' is central to Heidegger's later thought. In Heidegger's interpretation, such an understanding of progress is linked heavily with modern technology and nihilism. However, he was clearly aware that he could not realistically reverse this process of Europeanisation, just as he could not abolish modern technology. Heidegger, therefore, was deeply conscious of the fact that he could not in reality return to the East Asian world as it was, just as it is not possible to truly enter into the pre-Socratic Greek world as it was. There is a danger that the East Asian world might become a museum piece in the way that the pre-Socratic Greek world has already become. However, the dialogue itself presents the possibility that, as the Japanese interlocutor suggests in the dialogue, 'from the point of view of our East Asian world, the technical world which sweeps us along must confine itself to surface matters'.[161] Whether it will be the case that the East Asian world will only take up the modern Western technological world on the surface while maintaining its own disclosure, is a question that Heidegger leaves open within the dialogue. Heidegger cannot know the ultimate effect of technology.

It may appear an over-optimistic assessment to claim that East Asian traditions have been preserved intact in the modern world. Clearly, Heidegger cannot hope simply to reverse with ease the process of Europeanisation. While it may be possible from a strongly Heideggerian point of view to hold a degree of sympathy for acts such as the Boxer Rebellion in nineteenth-century China or the Japanese isolationism of the Edo period before the Meiji restoration as resistance to rising technocratic power of Europe, these strategies in reality are no longer viable.

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[159] *Ibid*
[160] *Ibid* p. 2
[161] *Ibid* p. 3

However, as Heidegger's Japanese contemporary, Nishitani Keiji, states, from an East Asian perspective 'European nihilism teaches us to return to our forgotten selves and to reflect on the tradition of oriental culture'.[162] Along such lines Heidegger's thought, precisely by highlighting the crisis of the modern Western world, provides an opportunity for a renewal of East Asian thought. In consideration of this, Blocker and Starling take a somewhat idiosyncratic metaphor, borrowed from H.G Wells' *War of The Worlds* comparing, Westernisation to the Martian invasion of that novel, where 'the earthlings [East Asians] are invaded by a seemingly unstoppable foe, but the Martians [the westerners] are finally stricken where they stand by a microbe within [nihilism]'.[163] In this way, Heidegger's thought, with its critique of Western philosophy, offers a unique historical chance for a far-reaching dialogue between East Asian and Western thinking. This kind of dialogue would take place at a deeper level than, for example, the interest that the seventeenth-century Jesuits and Leibniz showed in Chinese thought, since, while they may have shown an admiration for certain Confucian virtues (*ren*) or concern for translating the *Yijing*, they would never have seriously called into question the important aspects of the ontological and metaphysical foundations of their own Western understanding (such as the belief in God). The danger of Europeanisation, combined with the crisis of Western nihilism, can thus also provide the hope ('saving power' in Heidegger's and Hölderlin's terms) for a global dialogue between traditions of thought that has the potential both to challenge the hegemony of Western metaphysics and to provide new possibilities for resisting the technocratic way of relating to beings.

Hence, there is a still a deep risk that Western technocratic reason may triumph globally and block out all other ways of thinking, which indeed may appear the more likely outcome of Europeanisation. However, there is still a sense that the East Asian tradition of thought can provide alternatives to the system of the modern Western world, even if a distinct 'East Asian world' no longer exists as it once did. As such, Heidegger's dialogue with the East Asian world is, as the

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[162] N. Keiji *The Self Over-Coming of Nihilism* Translated by Graham Parks and Setsuko Aihara   State University of New York New York 1990 p.179

[163] H G. Blocker and C. I Starling *Japanese Philosophy* State University of New York Press New York 2001 p.163

Japanese interlocutor in the dialogue states, directed 'toward a transformation of thinking - a transformation which, however, cannot be established as readily as a ship can alter its course'.[164]

Hence, rather than abolishing the process of Europeanisation or modern Western nihilism, what Heidegger offers is a continual transformation of thought through an ongoing dialogue with the East Asian world, a dialogue in which, in the words of Lin Ma and Jaap Van Brakel, the East Asian world, functions as 'an aid for Heidegger's path of thinking', while at the same time being 'kept at an enormous distance'.[165] At the same time Heidegger's dialogue is not offering direct hermeneutic access to the East Asian world in the sense of Gadamer's claim that hermeneutic 'understanding is always the fusion of … horizons supposedly existing by themselves'.[166] For Heidegger, such a fusion would deny the crucial element of distance that is exemplified, as previously discussed, by *iki*. Heidegger's dialogue with the East Asian world is thus always based on this balance of distance and nearness. Hence, he both seeks to show the possibilities presented by the East Asian world, while at the same time allowing the East Asian tradition to remain radically separate and distinct from the Western world.

The written account in the 'Dialogue On Language between a Japanese and Inquirer' itself breaks off, somewhat ambiguously, with the statement: 'it seems as if, though even we, even now, instead of speaking about language, had tried to take some steps along a course which entrusts itself to the nature of saying'.[167] This suggests that the dialogue is incomplete, thus presenting the possibility of a continued dialogue. At the end of the dialogue, Heidegger, through the 'Inquirer', refers to the dialogue that 'has been' as 'the gathering of what endures'.[168] This phrase is difficult to interpret. However, it might be read as suggesting an ongoing dialogue with the East Asian world,

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[164] M. Heidegger 'A Dialogue on Language Between a Japanese and an Inquirer' *On the way into Language* Translated by Peter D. Hertz Harper Row San Francisco 1971 p. 42
[165] Lin Ma and J. Van Brakel 'Heidegger's Comportment toward the East West Dialogue' *Philosophy East and West'* Volume 56, No. 4 October 2006 pp 519-566
[166] H-G. Gadamer *Truth and Method* Translation Revised and edited by Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G Marshall Second revised edition : Sheed & Ward Ltd and the Continuum Publishing Group London New York 2004 p. 305
[167] M. Heidegger 'A Dialogue on Language Between a Japanese and an Inquirer' in *On the way into Language* Translated by Peter D. Hertz Harper Row San Francisco 1971   p. 54
[168] *Ibid* p. 54

since elsewhere, Heidegger refers to 'the inevitable dialogue with the East Asian world'.[169] Heidegger's 'Dialogue on Language between a Japanese and an Inquirer' can thus be read as a foundation for a further dialogue between the western and the East Asian world along the lines of the principles previously set out. Along such lines, the rest of this thesis will seek further to explore these possibilities of dialogue between Heidegger's thought and the East Asian world, particularly focusing on how aspects of East Asia can provide alternatives to the nihilism that Heidegger sees in the modern Western world.

Introduction to Heidegger and Daoism

Though not mentioned directly in Heidegger's 'A Dialogue on Language Between a Japanese and an Inquirer' Heidegger's interest in Daoism can be seen as a part of his overall dialogue with the East Asian world. It can be read as another part of his search for a different house of 'Being'. However, it is made less explicit than Heidegger's relationship with Japanese thought in the dialogue between the Japanese and Inquirer. There is no work in which Heidegger talks extensively and explicitly about Daoist philosophy. Ancient Chinese Daoism appears a more distant world to Heidegger than the Japanese world of the Edo period.

However, Daoism, together with Confucianism, is one of the most ancient schools of Chinese philosophy, and it had a deep influence over the development of later schools, such as Zen/Chan Buddhism. Considering its ancient roots it could be equated with the 'origin' of the 'East Asian tradition' in the way that Heidegger understands it when he refers to the 'venerable beginnings'.[170] As such, in Heidegger's terms, the ancient Chinese thought of thinkers such as Laozi and Zhuangzi, might be read as providing the foundation for what Heidegger considers to be the East Asian world, in a similar way to the pre-Socratics or Plato in the West. Hence, in the dialogue,

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[169] M. Heidegger 'Science and Reflection' in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays* Translated:by William Lovitt Harper Row New York 1977 p.158

[170] M. Heidegger ' 'A Dialogue on Language Between a Japanese and an Inquirer' .in *On the way into Language* Translated Peter D. Hertz Harper Row San Francisco 1971 p. 37

when Heidegger discusses the emptiness in No-drama, he is in effect, and by his own standards, referring back to the understanding of emptiness set out in *Dao de Jing,* although it is mediated through the development of Zen Buddhism amongst other things. In Heidegger's own terms, therefore, it is necessary to go back to the Daoist thinkers of ancient China to understand the East Asian world.

It is definite that Heidegger clearly makes isolated references to the *Dao* and the *Dao De Jing*. For example, in 'The Thing', Heidegger's refers to the 'jug's void' as being vital to the jug. This clearly parallels the *Dao De Jing*, Chapter 11, which states that in its nothingness consists the pot's effectiveness;'[171] and as such Heidegger appears to be alluding directly to Laozi, although he does not directly acknowledges it. It is widely accepted that Heidegger often makes crucial influences appear less explicit in his writings. This can be observed in the role of Kierkegaard, whose work Heidegger does not often directly mention, but in *Being and Time* Kierkegaard's influence is clearly present in topics such as 'the call'. Thus, it is possible to see that Heidegger often kept certain aspects of his work and influences concealed.

According to Otto Pöggeler, Heidegger's interest in Daoism goes back at least to the 1930s.[172] However, of central concern here is the relationship with Daoism of Heidegger's post-war philosophy. It was during this period that Heidegger's apparently most direct personal encounter with Chinese Daoist thought occurred: his meeting with Paul Xiao Shiyi (*Hsiao Shih- I*). Xiao Shiyi records that he and Heidegger had attempted to make a translation of the *Dao de Jing* into German in the summer of 1946. However, they only translated eight of the chapters after working over the summer in 1946, of which none is still in existence. Yi Hsiao, however, states that 'they exerted a significant influence on Heidegger'.[173] Xiao Shiyi had first made his acquaintance with Heidegger in 1942. The former had previously translated the *Dao de Jing* into Italian. According to Shi Yi

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[171] Laozi *Tao Te Ching The Richard Wilhelm Edition* Translated and Edited by Richard Wilhelm Akarna London 1989 Page 31

[172]   O. Pöggeler 'West East Dialogue' in *Heidegger and East Asian Thought* University of Hawaii Press1990 pp 47-76

[173]   P. Shi Yi Hsiao 'Heidegger and the TaoTe Ching: in *Heidegger and East Asian Thought* University of Hawaii Press 1990 p. 99

Hsiao, Heidegger wished to translate the *Dao De Jing,* but admitted that, 'as a European', he found 'Lao Tzu in many ways incomprehensible'.[174] This shows the previously mentioned residual problems of distance and translation that Heidegger sees as inherent in any authentic dialogue between the East Asian world and the West.

At the very heart of a Western understanding of Daoism must be the interpretation of *Dao* within a Western language and the question whether this can, in the final analysis, be possible. Heidegger acknowledges this when he directly discusses the translation of *Dao* in 'On the Nature of Language', written after his encounter with Xiao Shiyi. In this work, Heidegger suggests an apparently literal translation of *Dao* as 'way', stating that, 'The key word in Laotse's [*Laozi*] poetic thinking is [*Dao*], which "properly speaking" means way. But we are prone to think of "way" superficially, as a stretch connecting two places. Our word "way" has all too rashly been considered unfit to name what [*Dao*] says'.[175] The *Dao* in ordinary Chinese means 'way' or 'road'. However, the use of *Dao* in Laozi's writing appears radically separated from ordinary Chinese; hence, translating *Dao* as 'way', while it may be literally correct, appears to fail to represent an important aspect of Laozi's original meaning. As such, it appeared an imprecise translation. He subsequently proceeded to reject what might be said to be the more revealing translations of the *Dao* as 'reason, mind, raison, meaning, logos'.[176] While such translations may reveal more about the nature of the *Dao* than simply "way", each of those translations is deeply weighted by its prior use in the tradition of Western philosophy, and in some sense still misses the full meaning of *Dao* in Chinese thought. It may therefore not be possible to truly translate the Chinese word *Dao*. Hence, elsewhere in Heidegger's *Identity and Difference*[177], Heidegger lists the 'Chinese [*Dao*]' with the Greek '*logos*' as words that cannot be decisively translated. This is consistent with Heidegger's wish to leave part

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[174] P. Shi Yi Hsiao 'Heidegger and the Tao Te Ching' in *Heidegger and East Asian Thought* University of Hawaii Press 1990 p. 99

[175] M. Heidegger ' The Nature of Language' in *The Way into Language* Translated by Peter D'Hertz Harper San Francisco 1971 p. 92

[176]   M. Heidegger 'The Nature of Language' in *'The Way into Language'* Translated by Peter D'Hertz Harper San Francisco 1971 p. 92

[177]   M. Heidegger *Identity and Difference*   Translated by Joan Stambaugh Harper Row University of Chicago Chicago and London 1969 p. 88

of his relationship to Daoism concealed. His understanding of the *Dao* will be looked at in greater detail subsequently. However, it is significant to note here that Heidegger in his later works makes a number of notable references to 'way', not only in his title '*On the Way into Language'*, but also in his 'Conversation on a Country Path'.[178] Hence, it seems that the notion of 'way' means more to Heidegger than might commonly be understood, and for him can possibly be read as seeking to signify something akin to the *Dao*.

Hence, Heidegger is clearly aware of the Daoist tradition of thought and shows some degree of interest in the '*Dao*' in his later writings. It would appear, too, that if Heidegger is to understand the 'East Asian world' from his own position, he would of necessity have to look into Daoism. Given these points, what is the relationship between Daoism and Heidegger's thought?

Introduction to Daoism

The following sections of the thesis will examine Heidegger's thought primarily through the lens of Daoism. This will be done in order to make sense of Heidegger's later thought, and to furthermore show how East Asian thought and Daoism in particular can provide an alternative to the problem of technocratic Western nihilism.

The focus of the first three sections will be centred on the ontology of Daoism. The first two of these sections focus on the ontology of the *Dao* itself, in particular the nature of the *Dao* and its relation with Being as *Seyn* in Heidegger's thought. Starting with the immanence and transcendence of the *Dao*, this will be looked at in relation to the notion of the sacred in Heidegger. This section will seek to answer the central question: to what extent can Daoism provide a model for the sense of the sacred that the later Heidegger looked for as an alternative to traditional Western Platonism? The next section will look at ineffability in Daoism and Heidegger, focusing in particular on the role of language and poetic thought in. the two philosophies.

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[178] M.. Heidegger Conversation on a Country Path' in *Discourse on Thinking* Translated by John M. Anderson Harper Row London Singapore 1966 p. 89

Following on from this, but moving away from the *Dao* itself, the next section will interpret Heidegger's account of concealment and unconcealment through the *yin-yang* dichotomy. I aim to show that Heidegger essentially sees the modern Western world as lacking a space for the *yin*, or the receptive. As such, question of technology within Heidegger's thought, and to what extent Heidegger's thought might be seen as Luddite, will also be considered.

The remaining sections of the thesis will move away from looking at Daoism chiefly as an ontology, to looking at Daoism as a way of living. In this section, I aim to show how Daoism can present Heidegger with a model, or *ethos*, of how to live within the modern technocratic world. This will be done, firstly, through comparing Heidegger's notion of G*elassenheit* with Daoist notions of *wu wei* and ziran. The central questions that will be asked in that section are: to what extent is Heidegger's thought fatalist and what is a Heideggerian way to live in the modern world? Can Daoist *wu wei* provide a model of such a Heideggerian way to live within the modern Western world?

The last section will look at the notion of non-doctrinal religion as underlying both Heidegger and Daoism. It will look at how Heidegger moves away from the traditional Western notion of religiosity, particularly that which is based around a fixed set of beliefs and scriptural authority; however, Heidegger still sought to preserve a sense of the sacred. I will explore whether or not Daoism can provide this alternative sense of non-doctrinal religion.

Chapter 5 Heidegger, East Asia and the Sacred

Part 1: Daoism and Transcendence

Daoism and Plato's Forms

Traditionally, Daoism has often been seen as mystical in the sense that the *Dao,* as thinkers such as Laozi and Zhuangzi understood it, naturally appears as something outside of ordinary understanding. This mysticism associated with the *Chang Dao* (eternal *Dao*) should not be thought of as equivalent to any kind of Platonic or Neo-Platonic mysticism which has tended to become associated with mystical thought in the West.

Central to mysticism in the Platonic sense is the notion of transcendence by which is meant the rejection of the ordinary everyday world, associated with appearance and transitiveness to what is held to be really real, the world of the forms. These abstract ideas were held to be ontologically separated from the world as it appears, and as such, distinct from the transitory nature of the senses representing for the Platonists the true reality. Hence, for example, Plato would understand the Form of beauty as abstract, perfect beauty, divorced from any particular instance of beauty visible to the senses. Plato is therefore concerned to separate the eternal world of Forms, which, for Plato, is the ontologically real world, from the imperfection and decay that constitutes the world of appearances. For this reason Plato, through the voice of the young Socrates in the Parmenides rejects that there are forms of ' hair and mud and dirt, or anything else totally undignified and worthless'?[179]   This rejection of 'mud' and 'dirt' from the perfect world of forms would appear to be because 'mud and 'dirt' seem inseparable from the decay of the appearance. Therefore, Forms for Plato must be separated from the dirt of appearance.

Such a Platonic position is in clear contrast to when Zhuangzi is asked by Master Dong Go to give a specific example of where the *Dao* is, to which he responds that it is 'in this ant'. In

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[179]   Plato 'Parmenides' in *The Complete Works of Plato* Edited by John M. Cooper Translated by Mary Louise Gill and Paul Ryan Hackett Publishing Co. Indianapolis Cambridge 1997 p. 364

response to this, Master Dong Guo then asks, 'is that the lowest point'? Zhuangzi continues to name several examples, culminating in 'It's [the *Dao* is] in shit and piss too'.[180] Zhuangzi's understanding of the *Dao,* therefore, is radically removed from Plato's understanding of the transcendence of forms, in so far as Zhuangzi seeks to see the *Dao* precisely within that which Plato would have associated with the flux and decay of the world of the senses. Hence while Zhuangzi states 'you should not look for the *Dao* in anything specific'.[181] The Dao should not be viewed in anyway as a separate higher world, ontologically divorced from the particulars. The *Dao* relates to the particular entities in the world in that it 'makes them full or empty, but is not defined by fullness or emptiness. It creates withering and decay, but it is not defined by withering or decay'[182]. In this way Dao is within each moment of the transitivity of the world. The aim of the Daoist sage therefore is not to in any sense transcend to a world beyond the senses, but rather to see the various changes and transformations of the world as *Dao* hence 'the limitless arises out of the limited and the boundless arises out of the restricted'.[183]

The *Dao* and the World

Rejecting, therefore, the notion of the *Dao* as a separate higher reality that is radically distinct from the myriad of things in the world, what is the relationship between the *Dao* and each particular thing in the world that enables the sage to see the *Dao* in each of the myriad of things? How should the following passage in the *Dao De Jing* be read?

Dao generates the One. The One generates the Two. The Two generates the

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[180] *Ibid* p. 193

[181] Zhuangzi *The Book of Chuang Tzu* Translated by Martin Palmer with Elizabeth Breuilly Arkana London 1996 Page 193

[182] *Ibid*

[183] Zhuangzi *The Book of Chuang Tzu* Translated by Martin Palmer with Elizabeth Breuilly Arkana London 1996 p. 194

Three. The Three generates all things.[184]

This may appear to suggest that *Dao*, as understood in the *Dao De Jing,* is similar to the *causui sui* or first cause, as a generative agent causing all things. This suggests that in some sense, the *Dao* is causally related to, but separate and ontologically distinct from, 'all things' which it causes, appearing more like Aquinas' understanding of God. The fundamental question, therefore, is whether such a view of the *Dao* as causally related to, but remaining ontologically distinct from, the world, is correct.

While it is true that, at times, *Dao* does take on the role of the origin of all things, and as such may appear possibly similar to the first cause, as Cheng Hao clearly states, 'the *Dao* has no opposite'.[185] This means that for the Daoist, there is nothing that is separate from the *Dao*. A view of the *Dao* as *causui sui* would thus appear to miss the point: the *Dao* as one, all-embracing, whole cannot be seen as a separate reality from the myriad of things, because for the Daoist, there is nothing that is not *Dao*. Hence, a causal relationship between the *Dao* and the world as two distinct entities is not possible in Daoism. While it is true that the *Dao* acts as the origin of all things, it should not be thought of as 'a definite point, it can be seen as a constant beginning and that at the same time marks a continuous point of return'.[186] David Cooper states, 'the Daoist' would reject the dualism of 'source and world',[187] noting further that, 'not even notionally can the *dao* be imagined in the absence of the things it gives'.[188] Hence, unlike the Christian God of Aquinas who is seen as an ontologically distinct agent, conceivable without having caused the world, the *Dao* can only be understood through the myriad of things.

Another possible way of understanding the *Dao* in relation to the world is as one over many,

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184 LaoZi *Dao de Jing The Richard Wilhelm Edition* Edited and Translated by Richard. Wilhelm Penguin Arkana London 1989 p. 46
185 Chang Chung-Yuan *Creativity and Taoism: A Study of Chinese Philosophy, Art and Poetry* The Julian Press. Inc. New York 1963   Page 31
186 K. Froese *Nietzsche, Heidegger and Daoist Thought: Crossing Paths In Between* Series in Chinese Philosophy and Culture State University of New York New York 2006 p 49
187 D.E. Cooper *Converging with Nature: A Daoist Perspective* Green Books*,* Dartington UK *2012*
188 *Ibid*

a unity of all things, distinct from the multiplicity of everyday experience. Such an interpretation appears similar to the Indian tradition of Vedānta philosophy, where the aim of 'spiritual practice' is to achieve union with the true reality. Such a reading of the *Dao* as analogous to the Indian notion of Brahman, an undifferentiated unity, distinct from all particular things, has been popular in the West with writers such as Aldous Huxley. Wang Bi's question, 'those whose roots are more than one, can they be close to Dao?'[189], appears to be consistent with this, suggesting that dwelling upon a multiplicity of things leads away from the oneness of the *Dao*. Such a reading of Daoism seems to suggest that the more someone dwells upon the myriad of things, the further an individual moves away from the *Dao*. This would appear congruous with Richard Wilhelm's interpretation of the *Dao De Jing*, in that 'LaoZi is far from merely offering a theory for understanding the world. He wants to point a way out of the confusion of the phenomenal world, and into the eternal'.[190] This suggests that, while the *Dao* is present in everything, the *Dao* is in truth the reality of things as a unity, and that their separation is an illusion.

However, this presents a limited view of the Daoist tradition, emphasising the oneness of the *Dao* rather than the particularity of things. Such a reading of the *Dao* would suggest that it is a whole that is more real than its parts. This view of the *Dao* may appear to be supported by the following passage in the *Dao De Jing*, where the *Dao* is understood as

the one without opposite which is invisible, inaudible, unfathomable. It

is the same One past and present; it embraces form and formless alike, being as

well as none being. The One is therefore a unification of duality and multiplicity.

it is the One without opposite',[191]

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189   P. J. Lin   A Translation of Laotzu and Wang Bi's commentary Michigan Papers in Chinese Studies University of Michigan p.81
190   Chang Chung-Yuan *Creativity and Taoism: A Study of Chinese Philosophy, Art and Poetry* The Julian Press. Inc New York 1963 p. 31
191   LaoZi *Dao de Jing The Richard Wilhelm Edition* Edited and Translated by Richard. Wilhelm Penguin Arkana 1989 p 77

This clearly suggests that *Dao* is a unified whole underlying all particular things. From such a position, it may appear natural from this to assume that the *Dao* is the whole rather than the particulars. It implies that Daoists favour the whole over the parts as the true *Dao*, in a way that is perhaps similar to the Vedantin that seeks union with Brahman.

This interpretation of the *Dao*, as one whole over many, is, however, a misrepresentation, as can be seen in a passage in Richard Wilhelm's translation of the *Dao de Jing* that reads,

> Heaven attained the One and became pure. Earth attained the One and became
>
> firm. The Gods attained the One and became powerful. The valley attained one
>
> and fulfilled itself.[192]

This suggests that, rather than representing a loss of particularity, it is through the *Dao* that each particular thing (gods, earth, etc.) gains its particularity.

Concerning the everyday world of particulars, Jonathan Star has translated a somewhat ambiguous passage in the first verse of the *Dao De Jing*, stating that '*Dao* and this world [the old Chinese word *jiao* in such a context meaning outer forms - manifestation] seem different, but the truth is they are one in the same'.[193] Richard Wilhelm translates the same passage as

> 'therefore does the direction towards non existence lead to the sight of the
>
> miraculous essence, the direction towards existence to the sight of spatial limitations.
>
> Both are one in origin and differ only in name'.[194]

This can be interpreted as follows: While from the position of *Dao De Jing*, the *jiao* may appear distinct from the *Dao* at first, with *jiao* as mere manifestation and the *Dao* as underlying it,

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[192]   *Ibid* p. 44

[193]   Lao Zi *Dao De Jing The Definitive Edition* Translated by Jonathan Star Tarcher Penguin New York 2001 p. 14

[194]   LaoZi   *Dao de Jing* Edited and Translated by Richard. Wilhelm Penguin Arkana London 1989 p. 27

ultimately, the two should be understood as the same thing. Hence, while the *Dao* may appear initially different from particular things in the world, ultimately, the *Dao* and the world are conceived of as the same. This means that while the *Dao* is understood as 'really real',[195] the reality of the *Dao* does not imply that particular things are less real. Rather each particular entity in the world gets its particularity through the *Dao* and thus it is not necessary to reject the particular to get to the *Dao*. Hence, it is incorrect to view the *jiao* (everyday) world as simply an unreal or dreamlike shadow of the *Dao*. The goal of Daoist practice is rather to 'discover unity with the *Dao* within that very particularity, within the flux and flow of existence itself'.[196] This means that the aim of Daoism is to see everyday things as the *Dao*; and thus, 'our daily life gains its significance by being rooted in a deeper harmony, or underlying reality'.[197]

It is in this sense that Daoist philosophy might be thought to be both transcendent and immanent, in that the *Dao* is both 'limitless' and in all things. This is what can be called 'organic mysticism', according to Joseph Needham,[198] as distinct from Plato's transcendental mysticism'. This 'organic mysticism' is concerned with cultivating a deeper disclosure of the everyday world, rather than transcending to a higher realm beyond it.

The aim of Daoist thought and practice can thus be understood as learning to see the world in this way. This can be seen in the Guo Xiang commentary on Zhuangzi:

> The mind of the sage penetrates to the utmost the perfect union of yin and
>
> yang and understands most clearly the wonderful principle of the myriad of things.
>
> Therefore he can identify himself with changes and harmonize with transformations,
>
> and finds everything all right wherever he may go. He embraces all things.[199].

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[195] K. L. Lai *An Introduction to Chinese Philosophy* Cambridge University Press 2008 p. 71
[196] J. J. Clarke *The Dao of the West: Western Transformations of Daoist Thought* Routledge London 2000 p. 162
[197] Chang Chung-Yuan *Creativity and Taoism: A Study of Chinese Philosophy, Art and Poetry* Julian Press. Inc New York 1963 p. 96
[198] Referred to in Katrin Froese *Nietzsche, Heidegger and Daoist Thought: Crossing Paths In Between* Series in Chinese Philosophy and Culture State University of New York New York 2006
[199] Kuo Hsiang in *A Source Book,in Chinese Philosophy* Compiled Translated and Edited by Wing-Tsit University of Princeton Princeton New Jersey 1969 p. 328

What marks the mind of the sage as apart from the mind of the ordinary person is therefore, the sage's identification of the *Dao* within each particular thing within the world; and he is thus able to 'embrace all things'.

Dao as Primordial Harmony

Central to the notion of understanding *Dao* as manifest within the everyday world is primordial harmony. It is this primordial harmony that rests upon the interconnectedness of the *Dao*. This interconnectedness in Daoism is based on the underlying unity of the *Dao*, while it is in each particular thing of the myriad of things. Hence, the Daoist views each particular thing as a manifestation of the one single *Dao*.

In this unity everything breaks through the shell of itself and interfuses every

other thing. Each identifies with every other. The one is many and the many

is one.[200]

This does not mean that the significance of the particular thing in the world is in any sense denied or even observed as less real. It is rather understood as a present manifestation of *Dao,* which remains a whole that is underlying all such particulars. The Daoist sage does not see the world as a collection of particulars, but as an interconnected whole, with the *Dao* both underlying it as a pre-established harmony and being manifest within each of the particulars in the world.

Such a way of seeing can also be perceived in the tradition of Chinese landscape painting. As Aldous Huxley stated, it is 'only in the Far East that landscape painters consciously regarded their art as religious'.[201] This is because landscape is understood not merely as the result of the

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[200] Chang Chung-Yuan *Creativity and Taoism: A Study of Chinese Philosophy, Art and Poetry* Julian Press. Inc New York 1963 p. 36

[201] A. Huxley *Doors of Perception* Flamingo Modern Classics London 1994 p. 31

Dao, or as causally related to the *Dao*, but is essentially the *Dao* itself. This clearly differs from Plato's views on the ontological status of art in *The Republic*, where art is a copy of a world that is itself only a copy of the higher world of Forms. Neither is the Daoist artist attempting to represent the landscape as a realist portrait of an actual landscape, seeking to show part of the landscape (rocks, trees etc.) exactly as it would appear to a passer by in everyday life. The aim of the Daoist artist is rather to present the landscape as the *Dao*. That is to show the *Dao* as present with each of the particulars of the landscape, precisely through the artistic sense of underlying harmony with the whole.

The *Dao*, however, is not simply reducible to the landscape itself in a purely naturalistic way. This can be discerned in the element of ambiguity in Daoist writings. The *Dao* often appears enigmatic, as observed in the statement, '*Dao* is both named and nameless'.[202] This could be understood as the *Dao* being both nameless and beyond each particular thing, and as named in each particular thing (the ineffability and namelessness of the *Dao* will be looked at more deeply later on).

It is in this sense that the *Dao* is both immanent and transcendent, and it is in this way that the *Dao* and the *de* (德) are related. The *de* has variously been translated as 'virtue' or 'life' by Richard Willhelm. Virtue appears closer to the Confucian usage of *de*, in the Daoist sense. However, *de* can be read as the manifestation of the *Dao* in each particular thing.

Katrin Froese states that,

De does not refer to a kind of consistent singularity suggested by the term
 Substance, for it is part of the dynamic flux of the *Dao*. Instead of insisting
 on one translation at the expense of others, I argue that all of them should be
 borne in mind. If one translates it as life, then we might lose sight of the emphasis
 that *de* intends to give to the particularity of things. If one translates it simply as

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[202] Lao Tzu *Dao De Jing: the Definitive Edition* Translated by Jonathan Star Tarcha Penguin New York 2001 p. 14

particularity, then one may ignore the word's reference to the overlapping

processes of growth, which constitute the unity implied by the term "life".

De refers to a kind of specificity that emerges out of process and therefore

it cannot be understood without the corresponding notion of the *Dao*.[203]

As such, the *Dao*, cannot be truly thought of without the *de*, and the *de* cannot be truly

understood without the *Dao*. This further helps to make sense of certain ambiguities. At various

points, Daoist philosophers refer to each particular thing as having 'a *Dao*'. Hence, in Zhuangzi,

there is the question, 'is there a *Dao* for the thief?' the response being, 'what profession is there

without its *dao*?'[204] In this context, the *Dao* can be understood as the way, or method, of each thing,

what makes the thing itself. This is because the thing is a manifestation of the *Dao* as an underlying

ontological reality. It is in this way that the *Dao* is both manifest and immanent within each

particular thing, yet also remains transcendent and irreducible to anything particular within the

world.

Hence, the *Dao* is both immanent and transcendent, in that it is both 'one' 'transcendent

reality' and is present in each one of the myriad of things, including the apparently lowest things. In

this way, Daoism rejects the notion of appeal to a higher reality that is distinct from, and even

conceivable without, the everyday world, while at the same time it rejects a simple reductionist

approach to things in the world, which would view them simply as particulars with no greater

significance.

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[203] Katrin Froese *Nietzsche, Heidegger and Daoist Thought: Crossing Paths In Between* State University of New York New York 2006 p. 54
[204] Zuangzi *The Book of Chuang Tzu* Translated Martin Palmer with Elizabeth Breuilly Arkana London 1996 Page 77

Part 2 Heidegger, Daoism, Shintoism and the Sacred

The preceding discussion raised the possibility that Daoism may provide an alternative to what Heidegger held to be the dominant tradition of Western metaphysics, by offering a different understanding of the sacred that would break away from both Platonism and Nietzschean nihilism. Heidegger is thus seeking to regain a notion of 'immanent transcendence', which he considers has been lost within the Western tradition.

Can Daoism provide such an alternative understanding of the sacred based on 'immanent transcendence'? Crucially, as stated in the previous section, the *Dao*, in the writings of Daoist thinkers such as Laozi and Zhuangzi, is understood as not only present within 'the myriad of things' in the world, but also as transcendent. Daoism thus appears to provide a way of seeing the sacred as distinct from a traditional Western understanding of the higher realm of existence. It has already been suggested that such a reading of Daoism may provide a resolution for the perceived crisis of Western nihilism.

> For Halls and Ames, the West's disenchantment with transcendence need not lead
> to nihilism and anguish, as it is often experienced, but rather as a liberating episode
> in Western thought which opens the possibility of bridging certain long-ignored or
> long-despised strands of Chinese philosophy into a new inter-cultural dialogue.[205]

Can Daoism play a similar role for Heidegger? This section will focus on this question; firstly, by looking at a comparison between sections of Heidegger's later work, particularly his essay 'The Thing', and the Daoist notion of the sacred. Subsequently, the question will be posed whether in fact Shintoism may provide a better model than philosophical Daoism for the sense of the sacred which the later Heidegger is searching. Through looking at these issues, the section will seek to

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[205]   J. J. Clarke *The Tao of the West: Western Transformations of Taoist Thought* Routledge London 2003 Page 160

show what it means for Heidegger to regain a disclosure of the ineffable within the world. As such, in Heidegger's later thought, Daoism will need to provide an alternative understanding of ontology that is neither Platonic nor Nietzschean.

Being and beings: Dao and the Myriad of Things

There is a proposal put forward by Katrin Froese in *Nietzsche, Heidegger and Daoist Thought*[206], that the *Dao* can be understood as equivalent to 'Being' in Heidegger's philosophy. This is a focal point that will be referred to again subsequently, posing the central question as to whether or not Froese is right in making such a claim. To answer this question it is necessary to look further into the relationship between 'Being and beings' in Heidegger's later philosophy.

In his later philosophy, Heidegger clearly does not reject the significance of particular beings. This is shown in essays such as 'The Thing' and 'Building Dwelling Thinking', which do not focus simply on creating an abstract ontology of 'Being' as either *Seyn* or *Sein*, but rather look at beings in their particularity. At the same time, Being is not neglected. The central point of the two essays is not that Heidegger has abandoned Being in favour of particular things, but rather Being, or the fourfold, is manifest in such particular everyday entities as the wine jug or the bridge. Hence, to gain an understanding of Being one must look at beings.

Heidegger's thesis is that, in the modern world, 'Being' has essentially been separated completely from 'beings' and has been abandoned in modern Western thought. By looking at beings in this way Heidegger is seeking to redress this balance. The relationship between the *Dao* and world, or the *Dao* and the myriad of things in the *Dao De Jing* therefore appears to provide a good model for Heidegger in that the aim of Daoist thought might be considered as seeing *Dao* amidst the world. A phrase in Jonathon Star's translation of the *Dao De Jing* reads, '*Dao* and the world, but in truth they are one and the same. The only difference is what we call them.'[207] Dao amidst the

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[206] K. Froese *Nietzsche, Heidegger and Daoist Thought: Crossing Paths in-between   Between* State University of New York New York 2006

[207] Lao Zi *The Dao De Jing The Definitive Edition* Translated by Jonathon Star Tarcher Penguin New York 2001 p. 14

world might subsequently be seen as parallel to Heidegger's efforts to think of 'Being' amidst 'beings'. Western philosophy's continual misuse of the ontological difference between beings and 'being' is a point of reference that will be referred to in a later section.

Immanence and Transcendence in Heidegger's 'The Thing'

In order to investigate such a possible reading, this section focuses on the later Heidegger's short but significant essay 'The Thing', which explores further the notion of the sacred as associated with 'gathering', thus extending it beyond that in the 'Origin of the Work of Art'. It focuses on a wine jug. The wine jug clearly lacks the prominence that the ancient Greek temple would have to the Greek world, and such an object would not normally be considered as a 'great work of art'. In Heidegger's essay 'The Thing', however, it is the apparently ordinary wine jug that becomes the central focal point for the sacred.

As such, 'The Thing' can be interpreted as an attempt to think through the notion of immanent transcendence. Heidegger's essay aims to get away from the impoverished relationship to 'the thing', which is the loss of the sense of the sacred within the everyday. Hence, Heidegger draws attention to the 'nearness' of the 'wine jug' , in order to show that it is something that can easily be encountered within daily life and that it might therefore easily be overlooked. Crucially, in the modern Western world, Heidegger calls this the 'annihilation of the thing',[208] by which he means that the modern world denies the sacred within the everyday. This is because 'the thing' is reduced to simply another commodity in the flow of resources, and is therefore interpreted only in terms of its use and value in the world. For example, in the modern world, the wine jug might be seen as just another consumer product. It has the role of holding wine as another resource standing in reserve that is waiting to be consumed by people, who in turn become 'human resources', themselves standing in reserve in the process of production and consumption.

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[208]   M. Heidegger 'The Thing' in *Poetry, Language, Thought* Translated by Albert Hofstadter Harper and Row New York San Francisco 1971 Page 170

What does it mean for Heidegger to recover this sense of the sacred within the world and to view 'the thing' in a non-technocratic way? While Heidegger does not want to view 'the thing' as merely something for use, at the same time he does not wish to view 'the thing' in the sense of a being that is 'present-at-hand'.[209] He is not concerned with cataloguing a series of objective properties of 'the thing', such as its colour, shape, etc., as distinct from its role within the world. Rather, he gives 'the thing' a deeper significance as a 'gathering', by which Heidegger means 'thinging, the thing stays the united four, earth and sky, divinities and mortals, in the simple onefold of their self-unified fourfold'.[210] Thus, through its relationship to the fourfold, 'the thing' gains greater significance than its mere ordinary use value.

However, Heidegger's treatment of the wine jug in 'The Thing' differs radically from Plato's treatment of beauty in *The Symposium*, in that, for Plato, a beautiful object in the world is given its significance through its relationship to the perfect form of beauty. Once the ideal philosopher king has gained knowledge of the true form of beauty, the particular will be discarded. For Plato, dwelling upon a particular, immanent instance of something such as beauty or a wine jug leads away from the transcendental world of forms that, according to Plato, should be the true goal of contemplation. Heidegger would reject any view of the wine jug in 'The Thing' that would view it simply as a vehicle to be used as a way into a higher reality. The significance of the wine jug is not because it corresponds to a higher reality beyond itself. In contrast to Plato, Heidegger, is concerned with the immediacy of the particular wine jug. This approach to the wine jug also differs from the view of the church as a building in Christianity, as it is understood in the Western tradition of onto-theology. The church is here seen as in the world, but points to the 'Christian God' who, as understood within the tradition of 'onto-theology', is beyond the world, acting as first cause of the world, although always remaining outside of the world. By contrast the 'thing' for Heidegger acts as a point bringing together the different elements of the 'world', 'gods', 'mortals', 'earth' and 'sky'.

[209] M. Heidegger *Being and Time* Translated by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson Blackwell Oxford1962
[210] M. Heidegger 'The Thing' in *Poetry, Language, Thought* translated Albert Hofstadter Harper and Row New York San Francisco1971 p. 178

While it may be the case that each of the four-fold in Heidegger is transcendent in the sense of not being completely graspable, it can also be held that none of the four-fold is transcendent in the sense that the God of Thomas Aquinas is transcendent, as being wholly beyond the world. Heidegger's approach in 'The Thing', when viewed from certain Christian and particularly protestant perspectives, may thus appear potentially close to idolatry, in that the disclosure of the sacred in 'The Thing' is directly attached to a particular being within the world.

In this way, the wine jug as the 'thing' can be thought of as an example of Heidegger's treatment of immanent transcendence, since it is a disclosure of the sacred within the everyday, in that the sense of the sacred in 'The Thing' is derived from a way of seeing a particular being in the world. Without such a relation to things, such a disclosure of the sacred would not be possible. Elsewhere in his writings, Heidegger gives other 'things' a similar status, in particular the 'bridge' in 'Building Dwelling Thinking'.[211]

Organic Mysticism in Heidegger and Daoism

This presents the possibility of a comparison between this treatment of the 'sacred' Heidegger's work and the Daoist tradition, in that for both, this sense of the sacred is based on a way of seeing beings in the world. As has already been stated, Heidegger's essay 'The Thing' can be interpreted as implicitly referring to the *Dao De Jing*, Chapter 11. However, can the relationship between 'The Thing' and Daoism be read at a deeper level? Might the relationship which Heidegger wishes to cultivate towards 'the thing' be understood in a similar way to the relationship that the Daoist is seeking towards the world, in experiencing the *Dao* in the myriad of things? Both Daoism and Heidegger are presenting a kind of 'organic mysticism' in so far as they are not seeking the discovery of a separate higher reality, but are rather concerned with gaining a particular relationship to the world. Heidegger in 'The Thing' is attempting to gain what can be called an 'enchantment' of

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[211]   M. Heidegger 'Building, Dwelling Thinking' in *Poetry, Language and Thought* Translated Albert Hofstadter
Harper and Row New York San Francisco 1971

the everyday world, 'the thing' being a kind of 'poetic revealing' which Heidegger refers to in 'The Question Concerning Technology'.[212]

This phraseology is a point where some resonance between Being and *Dao* can be felt. It may be that 'Being' as *Seyn* in 'The Thing' could be understood in a similar way to *Dao* in Chinese landscape painting. It is true that in 'The Thing', Heidegger does not refer directly to 'Being', giving the appearance that he has abandoned the ontology as a central concern. However, it could be interpreted that 'Being' as *Seyn* in 'The Thing' is made manifest through the four-fold, gods, mortals, earth and sky, in that *Seyn* gives each of the four-fold its distinction, while at the same time bringing them together. The sense of *Seyn* can thus be seen as disclosed in each of the four-fold. Thus, it could be said to give the gods their divinity, mortals their mortality etc., while at the same time it allows the four-fold to come together and be manifest in the interplay between each of them. This parallels how the *Dao* in the Chinese landscape painting is present within each part of the landscape as well as manifest within the underlying harmony of the landscape.

Interconnectedness, in this way, plays a profound role in both Heidegger and Daoism. In 'The Thing', Heidegger states that it is not possible to think of one of the four-fold without implicitly thinking of the other three. Being, therefore, can be said to be disclosed in each one of the four-fold that by its very nature relates to the other, but is not reducible to any of the four-fold. The way that this is expressed by Heidegger offers a comparison with Zhuangzi's passage:

Does Heaven move? Does the Earth stand still? Do the sun and moon argue

about where to go? Who is Lord over all of this? Who binds and controls all?

Who doing nothing makes all this be?[213]

This passage in Zhuangzi may be read as interpreting the *Dao* as the unspoken harmony

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[212]   M. Heidegger The Question Concerning Technology in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays* Translated by William Lovitt Harper and Row Torch Books New York 1977

[213]   Zhuangzi *The Book of Chuang Tzu* Translated by Martin Palmer and Elizabeth Breuilly Arkana London 1996 Page 117

existing between things. In the case of both Heidegger and Zhuangzi, 'Being' as *Seyn* or the *Dao* stands both disclosed and manifest in the myriad of things, but is not reducible to them. Rather, it is in some sense manifest within the interplay between them. Katrin Froese states that

> the *Dao* makes interconnections possible. The *Dao* is manifest in the
> interconnectedness between the myriad of things, while remaining un-graspable
> and can be understood as an ungraspable unity and harmony between the myriad
> of things'; ...., 'whenever we feel a sense of oneness with the universe, this is
> an experience of the *Dao*. And yet we human beings are but one of the ten thousand
> things; we can never fully comprehend the unity of the *Dao*.[214]

'The Thing' and Daoism

There is, however, a crucial difference between the interpretation of the sacred as presented by Heidegger in 'The Thing' and Zhuangzi's understanding of the *Dao* within ordinary entities, such as the ant. This difference can be observed in the nature of 'the thing'. What is fundamental in Heidegger's assessment of 'the thing' is that, by its very nature, it is treated as something special and distinct, while the *Dao* in the Daoist tradition is understood in some sense as present in everything, including, for example, an ant.[215] Zhuangzi's *Dao* is therefore all-encompassing and therefore the aim of Zhuangzi's thought is to cultivate this ordinary everyday world as *Dao*. Such a poetic and mystical sense of the world is expressed by Zhuangzi's Master Chi.

> 'The vast breath of the universe, this is called Wind.
>
> Sometimes it is unmoving; when it moves it makes the ten thousand
>
> openings resound dramatically. Have you not heard it, like a terrifying gale?

[214] K. Froese *Nietzsche, Heidegger and Daoist Thought: Crossing Paths in-between* State University of New York New York New York 2006 p 53
[215] Zhuangzi *The Book of Chuang Tzu* Translated by Martin Palmer and Elizabeth Breuilly Arkana London 1996 p. 191

Mountains and forests are stormed by it, great trees, a hundred spans round

with dips and hollows, are like noses, like mouths, like ears, like sockets,

like cups, like mortars, like pools, like gullies, sounding like a crashing wave,

a whistling arrow, a screech; sucking, shouting, barking, wailing, moaning,

the winds ahead howling yeeh, those behind crying yooh, light breezes

making gentle sounds, while the typhoon creates a great din. When the

typhoon has passed, all goes quiet again. Have you not witnessed this

disturbance settle down?[216]

Such a description of a mystical sense of natural imagery does refer to any transcendent power, or entity that is set outside of nature, but rather on an awareness of the mysterious within the ordinary. This sense of the mystical within the ordinary for Zhuangzi may occasionally be manifest in particular entities such as for example in the shrine tree [217] which Zhuangzi does not refer using the Chinese word *shen* 神 loosely meaning god or deity. This alludes to a shamanistic notion of sacred associated with the divine tree, to which Zhuangzi is respectful towards, however he does not look look in more great detail at the notion of *shen*.

Heidegger, however, would not want 'the thing' to be thought of as simply equivalent to *anything*. If the wine jug that he refers to in 'The Thing' were to be replaced or substituted, even for an apparently identical jug, the sense of thing-hood would be lost. Heidegger would, therefore, hesitate to extend 'thing-hood' as far as Zhuangzi wishes to extend the *Dao,* as all encompassing. The 'thing' in Heidegger occupies a more prominent position than the rest of what is disclosed. It is 'everyday', but stands out as a unique point.

Hence, while there may be nothing particularly notable in the structure of the wine jug in its

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[216]   Zhuangzi *The Book of Chuang Tzu*: Translated by Martin Palmer and Elizabeth Breuilly Arkana Publishing London 1996   p 51
[217] *Zhuangzi:The Book of Chuang Tzu:* Translated by Martin Palmer and Elizabeth Breuilly Arkana Publishing London 1996 pp33-34

appearance that marks it out, Heidegger gives the wine jug as a 'thing' a unique position in relation to the four-fold. Heidegger is not merely concerned with the role that the wine jug occupies within the world, but with the particularity of the wine jug itself. The danger Heidegger sees in the modern world is that 'the thing' becomes lost within the 'uniform distancesslessness' of the modern world,[218] where there is no particular sphere that is distinct as the sacred. 'The Thing', in order to resist this process, cannot be allowed to slip into the background along with everything else, but must stand out. In this regard, it would not be possible for Heidegger to read everything as a 'thing'. Zhuangzi's position, in contrast to Heidegger's, appears to suggest a world in which everything is seen as in some sense a 'thing', the *Dao* being manifest in everything. Hence, while there is a strong parallel between Heidegger and Daoism in the sense of organic mysticism (they both focus on the sense of the sacred within everyday life), the prominence that Heidegger gives to 'the thing' does not appear to be paralleled within Daoism.

Shintoism and the Sacred in Heidegger

Shintoism, particularly Shrine Shintoism, however, provides an alternative model for interpreting Heidegger's account of the sacred in 'The Thing'. This may appear to be an unorthodox interpretation, at first. It is true that Heidegger never appears to explicitly refer to Shintoism in any of his writings, and he may not have had direct awareness of Shintoism. However, Benjamin D. Crowe has noted, with reference to Heidegger and the Greeks, 'With regard to historical realities, such as Greek culture, Heidegger's approach is to view them as repeatable possibilities of existence, as paradigms that, when appropriated as possibilities for the future, cast a critical light on the present situation'.[219] Shinto could therefore also be understood as a possible paradigm, providing a potential alternative to Western modernity. Shinto presents a pre-reflective understanding of the sacred. Central to Shintoism is not a rationalised theological account of the divine. More

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[218]   M. Heidegger 'The Thing' in *Poetry, Language, Thought* Translated by Albert Hofstadter Harper and Row New York San Francisco 1971 Page 168

[219]   B. D. Crowe   *Heidegger's Phenomenology of Religion, Realism and Cultural Criticism* Indiana University Press Bloomington Indianapolis 2007 p. 120

specifically, it is based on a primal notion of the sacred.

Central to this notion of the sacred in Shintoism are the *kami*. The word *kami,* often translated into English as 'gods', is a difficult concept to render outside Japanese. Perhaps the notion of '*kami*' might be held to be closer to the Indian notion of *deva*, although there are still differences. The understanding of *kami* in Shintoism is radically separated from the Western notion of 'onto-theology'. 'In Shinto there is no absolute deity that is the creator and ruler of all.'[220] Even *Amaterasu Omikami*, 'the Sun Goddess, the *kami* who brightens the world with the virtue of the sun and is commonly regarded as the supreme *kami* of Shinto, consults the opinion of the other *kami*, calls upon them for help and at times makes concessions to them'.[221] The *kami* are not looked to as a source of absolute authority, nor as the origin of all things.

The *kami* in Shintoism also do not often appear as personal beings in a conventional sense. While it is true that there are paintings and statues of *kami* in the Japanese Shinto tradition, this representation was done largely under the influence of Japanese Buddhism; generally, the *kami* are not represented. Lafcadio Hearn describes the presence of the *kami* as 'a vibration',[222] rather than anything concrete. Although in certain Shinto myths, such as those shown in the writings of the *Kojike* and *Nihongi*, the *kami* are represented in a more anthropomorphic form, this is only done for certain major *kami*, such as *Amaterasu*, the sun goddess and her brother *Susanoo*, the storm god. Other *kami* are portrayed as more elemental beings. As John K. Nelson states, 'the practitioners of Shinto hold that anything we can see or sense that is full of power, mysterious, marvellous, uncontrolled, strange, or simply beyond our abilities of comprehension is what constitutes a *kami*'.[223] This means that what is essential to the *kami* in Shintoism is beyond human understanding and has the ability to inspire awe, as expressed by Robert S. Gall, who relates that the Japanese Shintoist philosopher Motoori Norinaga 'characterises the *kami* exclusively in terms of their ability

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[220]   S. Ono in collaboration with W. P. Woodard *Shinto:the kami Way* Tuttle Publishing Boston 2004 Page 8
[221]   *Ibid*
[222]   Lafcadio Hearn *Gleanings In Buddha Fields* Kegan Paul London 1897 Page 5
[223]   J. K Nelson   *A Year In the Life of a Shinto Shrine* University of Washington Press Seattle 1997 p.27

to inspire awe and wonder'.[224] This sense of awe that cannot be brought into human understanding is, for Shintoism, what marks out the *kami* from the ordinary. As Daniel M. P. Shaw states, this sense of awe is in some ways 'comparable to western aesthetic idea of the sublime'.[225] Such an interpretation of the Shinto *kami* along western aesthetic lines may be in danger of failing to convey the full sense of the experience of *kami*. It does, however, provide a hint of the sense of the *kami*. Shintoism in effect extends what in the West is called the notion of the sublime, a stage further to see it as an experience of the divine. This experience can often be unsettling and can be thought of in Heideggerian terms as *Umheimlich* (un-homely/ un-canny or out of the ordinary).

This understanding of *kami* within Shintoism offers the basis for a comparison with Heidegger's understanding of the 'gods' or 'divinities' referred to in 'The Thing'. Clearly, the absence of the gods is a central concern of Heidegger's later writings, as can particularly be seen in 'Why Poets'. The notion of 'gods' in Heidegger is less looked at and discussed. Some commentators on the later Heidegger give less significance to the role of the 'gods'. Young, for instance, plays down the role of the 'gods' in the later Heidegger, offering the equation of the 'gods with the 'divine laws', or 'heritage'.[226] Such a reading would present the gods in Heidegger as a poetic metaphor. However, in 'The Age of the World Picture', Heidegger rejects anthropocentric understandings of the 'gods' based on 'historiographical' or 'psychological' interpretation of 'myth', as symptomatic of the flight of the 'gods' in the modern world. Benjamin D. Crowe states that 'the reduction of religion to "culture", to an adornment affixed to an intrinsically unsatisfying way of life, is [a] central aspect of what Heidegger calls the flight of the gods'.[227] This reading of 'gods' fails to see the otherness and mystery that Heidegger attributes to the 'gods'. Indeed, it is this mystery attached to the 'gods' that for Heidegger might be said to give them their significance as 'holy', standing out

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[224] R. S Gall 'kami and Daimon: Cross-Cultural Reflection on What Is Divine*'* in *Philosophy East and West,* Voumel 49 No.1 January 1999 : University of Hawaii p. 64

[225] D. M. P. Shaw 'Shinto and a Twenty First Century Japanese Ecological Attitude'.in *Nature Space and The Sacred*:: Edited by S. Bergmann, P.M. Scott. M. Jansdotter Samuelsson and H. Bedford-Strohm . Published Ashgate 2009 p. 312

[226] J. Young *Heidegger's Later Philosophy* Cambridge University Press Cambridge 2002 Page 95 to 98

[227] B. D Crowe *Heidegger's Phenomenology of Religion: Realism and Cultural Criticism*, : Indiana University Press Bloomington Indianapolis 2008. p. 120

of the ordinary.

Kami, as understood by Shintoism, may thus be used to interpret Heidegger's notion of the gods, in that they provide a model of the disclosure of the awesome and mysterious within the world. Gail Stenstad notes, 'the usefulness of the Japanese notion of *kami* in understanding the divinities of the four-fold is that it helps us keep clear that the divinities are divinities only as they occur in the gathering movement of thinging'.[228] Along these lines, the gods as *kami* in the later Heidegger can be understood as the presence of awe-inspiring mystery manifest within the world that stands out of the ordinary. Hence, the 'gods' in the later Heidegger are beckoning messengers of the 'godhead', while the 'godhead' may be equated with 'Being' as *'Seyn'* mentioned previously. This means that the gods should be understood as the manifestation of mystery in the world, underlying all existence. Thus, in order to be gods, they must be beyond the understanding of mortals.

The Shinto Shrine and Heidegger

In Shrine Shintoism, the disclosure of the sacred is associated with particular places, generally called *jinja* in Japanese and usually translated into English as 'shrine', although there are more specific Japanese names for the types of place associated with different *kami*. This sacred shrine is held to be the dwelling-place of *kami,* such as, for example, a particular tree: 'these trees are believed to be the special abode of some *kami'*,[229] while Mount Fuji is held as the dwelling place of *Konohanasakuya-hime*, the goddess of blossom and symbol of a delicate earthly life. The shrine is both built around a natural thing and also marked off in some sense from the ordinary world, usually by the *torii* gates (the entrance gates to the shrine) or in the case of the sacred tree, by the *shimenawa* or sacred rope. A wide variety of different places can be regarded as 'sacred' in Shintoism, including, trees, mountains, or waterfalls, and there can also be a home shrine, or *kamidana* - *kami* shelf. The sacred in the shrine *is* always thus in some sense attached to a particular

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[228] G. Stenstad *Transformations: Thinking After Heidegger* Page 209-210. Footnote referring to page 89: University of Wisconsin Press Wisconsin 2006

[229]   S. Ono in collaboration with W. P. Woodard *Shinto:the kami Way* Tuttle Publishing Boston 2004 Page 98

place but, at the same time, the kind of place that can be sacred is quite varied. Hence, the Shinto shrine is not merely an accident of place, but is always deeply attached to a particular natural setting. The central point of a Shinto shrine might be thought of as in some sense everyday and natural, but also unique and special. Considering this, it therefore seems very similar to the wine jug in Heidegger. Kasulis emphasises this point, stating that, by visiting such places in Shintoism, 'the person's holographic to all reality becomes manifest',[230] meaning that in visiting the shrine, the relationship between the individual, the *kami* and the underlying sense of the sacred are displayed and experienced. This clearly resonates with the interplay between the four-fold in Heidegger.

Along such lines, the shrine can be thought of as equivalent to 'gathering' in Heidegger. Shrines in Shintoism are understood as the dwelling places of the *kami*, as well as meeting places for people, which are attached to a particular natural setting. It is not possible to truly understand the shrine without this natural element.

Shrines themselves cannot be considered without some relation to the natural

beauty which traditionally has surrounded them. Shrine worship is closely

associated with a keen sense of the beautiful - a mystic sense of nature.[231].

While in modern Shinto shrines, it may not always be possible to preserve the natural setting, the link with nature is still fundamental to the Shinto experience of the sacred. In this way, the role of nature within a Shinto shrine might be said to be similar to 'earth' and 'sky' for Heidegger. The shrine in Shintoism can be understood, in effect, as the point at which the four-fold meet.

In conclusion it is possible to say that, in different ways, Shintoism and Daoism, taken together, can provide a means by which Heidegger can gain an understanding of the sacred outside of the Western tradition. They both show an understanding of immanence and transcendence that is

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[230] T. P Kasulis *Shinto The Way Home*: Page 23 University of Hawai'i Press Honolulu 2004 p. 23
[231] S. Ono in collaboration with W. P. Woodard *Shinto: the kami Way* Tuttle Publishing Boston 2004   Page 97

outside of the Western 'onto-theology'. Daoism, through the sense of the *Dao* as present within the myriad of things that is in a way similar to Heidegger's disclosure of Being as *Seyn* in the world; and Shintoism, through the sacred dwelling of the *kami* in the shrine that is similar to the Heideggerian notion of gathering and 'the thing'. Both in different ways provide this sense of the sacred in the everyday. Thus, it is possible to see how, for Heidegger, such an understandings of the sacred outside the Western tradition can provide the possibility of a way out of the impoverishment that he sees in the modern Western world.

Chapter 6 Language and Ineffability in Daoism and Heidegger's Thought

Part 1: The Ineffability of the Dao

Besides its immanence and transcendence, another crucial attribute of the *Dao* is its ineffability. This is based on the first words in the opening chapter of the *Dao de Jing: Dao ke dao, fei chang dao'*, which is translated as 'the *Dao* that can be expressed is not the true *Dao*'[232] (Wilhelm) or, 'the way that can be walked, is not the true way'[233] (Star).

The implication of this often quoted passage is that language is unable to express the *Dao* as 'eternal *Dao*'. Hence, anything that can be referred to in language is not the true, eternal *Dao*. It is along such lines that Zhuangzi claims that, 'to be questioned about the *Dao* and to give answer means that you don't know about the *Dao*'.[234]

Why is it the case that any attempt to express the *Dao* within language automatically fails? The answer is that all language is based on distinctions. For example, a word such as 'tree' picks out an object that is a tree from other entities in the world that are not trees, while a concept such as 'goodness' denotes something as good as opposed to things that are not good. Words only have meaning through distinction and, hence, are only suitable for delineating items with form in the world. For this reason, they are incapable of enunciating the eternal *Dao* which has no form. Therefore, no words can express the *Dao*. Along such lines, Wang Bi states that 'the *Dao* that can be spoken and the name that can be named which refer to the denoting of things and making of shapes, are not eternal. Therefore, [the eternal] cannot be spoken of and named'.[235] The eternal *Dao* is therefore treated as formless, with the result that any words create the danger of reifying the *Dao*,

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[232] Laozi *The Tao Te Ching* Translated by Richard Wilhelm Penguin Arkana London 1989 p. 27

[233] Laozi *The Tao Te Ching The Definitive Edition* Translated by Jonathan Star Tarcher Penguin New York 2001 p. 14

[234] *The Book of Chuang Tzu* Translated by Martin Palmer and Elizabeth Breuilly Arkana London 1996 p. 195

[235] P. J. A. Lin *A Translation of Lao Tzu's Tao Te Ching and Wang Pi's Commentary* Translated by Paul Lin Centre for Chinese Studies University of Michigan 1977 p. 3

thereby presenting the *Dao* as if it were a being. Zhuangzi emphasises, 'our words are just hot air',[236] when they attempt to understand the *Dao.* As Hans-Georg Moeller states*,* 'all the disputes in the realm of language reflect the basic pattern of diversity in the world of things and events'.[237] Hence, for Laozi and Zhuangzi, describing the eternal *Dao* in words appears problematic, in that this both fails to represent the *Dao* as it is and risks misrepresenting the *Dao* by referring to it as though it were another being in the world.

This, however, presents a classic problem of Daoist thought. If the *Dao* is beyond words, how is it possible to enter into any discussion of it? Consider Laozi's statement that 'one who speaks does not know. One who knows does not speak.'[238] P'o Chu-i in the ninth century famously asked of such a passage in Laozi,

those who know do not speak do; those who speak do not know. This

is what we were told by Laozi. Should we believe that he himself was the

one who knew? How could it be that he wrote no less than five thousand words?[239]

It would certainly appear from the *Dao De Jing*, Chapter 56, that silence for Laozi is considered more worthwhile than speech. This Daoist position appears similar to Wittgenstein's, 'whereof one cannot speak, one must remain silent'.[240] However, Laozi, in the *Dao De Jing*, rather than simply accepting the *Dao* as beyond words, clearly goes into further discussion of the *Dao*. It would therefore seem that Daoists, rather than viewing the impossibility of speaking of the *Dao* as the final conclusion preventing the possibility of further discourses on the ineffable, take it as their starting point, and from there seek to gain a deeper understanding of the *Dao*.

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[236] Zhuangzi *The Book of Chuang Tzu* Translated Martin Palmer and Elizabeth Breuilly Arkana London 1996 p 12
[237] H-G. Moeller *Daoism Explained: From the Dream of the Butterfly to the Fishnet Allegory* Open Court USA 2005 p 125.
[238] Laozi *The Tao Te Ching The Definitive Edition* Translated by Jonathan Star Tarcher Penguin New York 2001 Verse 56 p. 69
[239] P'o Chu-i Cited in Chang Chung-Yuan *Creativity and Taoism: A Study of Chinese Philosophy. Art and Poetry* Julian Press New York 1963 Page 30
[240] L. Wittgenstein *Tractatus Logico Philosophicus* Standard Publications London 2007

This can be observed in passages in the *Dao De Jing* that explicitly refer to knowing the *Dao*, as illustrated by the translation, 'one who knows the *Dao*, never turns from life's calling' (Star).[241] There is a certain ambiguity in the Chinese *yu,* translated by Jonathan Star as 'knows'; it could appear closer to 'possess' or 'have', rather than 'know'. The passage, however, still clearly implies that it is possible to gain a deep understanding of the *Dao*, despite the *Dao* being beyond words. It would appear inevitable that in order to convey or even gain this understanding of the *Dao,* it is necessary to use words. In the act of writing, both Laozi and Zhuangzi sought to undertake exactly such a project, of conveying the *Dao* through language.

Daoism as a Way into the Ineffable

Unlike the position adopted within certain Schools of Thought in Western philosophy, particularly the analytic tradition as exemplified by Logical Positivism, simply because the *Dao* cannot be grasped within language does not mean for the Daoists that it should be neglected or excluded from discourse. Rather, as Katrin Froese states, 'according to Daoist thinkers, that which cannot be spoken is precisely what is most worth speaking about'.[242]

How is it that the Daoists can get around the problem of constructing a discourse on the *Dao* while recognising the limitations of language? As Philipe J. Ivanhoe states, 'Zhuangzi's mistrust of language, as a vehicle for the *Dao*, has led some contemporary scholars to claim that he never really talks about the *Dao*'.[243] However it is important to note that Zhuangzi's views on the limitedness of ordinary perspectives does not mean that Zhuangzi seeks to exclude the possibility of understanding the *Dao*. Rather, Zhuangzi's thought and Daoism in general can be said to have the aim of bringing people to the edge of the ineffable in describing the limitlessness of the *Dao*. Daoism can be understood as a philosophy that seeks to stand on the edge of the un-graspable.

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[241] Laozi *The Tao Te Ching The Definitive Edition* Translated by Jonathan Star Tarcher Penguin New York 2001 Verse 31 p. 44
[242] K. Froese *Nietzsche, Heidegger and Daoist Thought: Crossing Paths In Between* Series in Chinese Philosophy and Culture State University of New York New York 2006 p. 61
[243] P. J. Ivanhoe *'*Zhuangzi on Skepticism and the Ineffable Dao'*: Journal of the American Academy of Religion:* Volume 61 Winter 1994 p. 640

In order to achieve such a position of understanding, Daoists such as Zhuangzi often use metaphorical language. This can be illustrated in Zhuangzi's story of the encounter between the Lord of the Yellow River and Jo, the God of the Ocean. In the account, the Lord of the Yellow River is highly impressed at first when, during the season of autumn floods,

> the waters were churning so wide, looking across from one bank to the other,
>
> it was impossible to distinguish an ox from a horse. At this the Lord of the Yellow
>
> River was decidedly pleased, thinking the most beautiful thing in the whole world
>
> belonged to him.[244]

The Lord of the Yellow River, however, goes on to encounter Jo, the God of the Ocean, and through this encounter, the 'endless vastness', the Yellow River, can know its own 'inferiority'. It now becomes possible for the Ocean God to 'discuss great principles' with the Lord of the Yellow River.

> Viewed from the perspective of the *Dao*, said Jo of the North Ocean, things are
>
> neither elevated nor lowly. Viewed from the particular perspective of things,
>
> each one considers itself as elevated and the rest as lowly.[245]

The central aim of such an account is to bring about understanding of the *Dao* through metaphor. This is achieved by showing the inadequacy of ordinary perspectives, as represented by the River God in this story. Such ordinary perspectives remain tied to the distinctions of language. This is done in order to make people aware of the *Dao* as something beyond the grasp of ordinary language. This experience of the ineffable is shown in Zhuangzi's statement,

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[244] *The Book of Chuang Tzu* Translated by Martin Palmer and Elizabeth Breuilly Arkana London 1996 p 137
[245] *Ibid*

forget about life, forget about worrying about right and wrong. Plunge into the

unknown and the endless and find your place there.[246]

Such a passage describes a mystical experience that is outside of the ordinary, that resists conventional classifications such as 'right and wrong'. It should, however, not be thought of as a particular esoteric revelation, in that philosophical Daoism does not claim to have an epistemologically privileged access to the nature of the *Dao*. This leads to an important distinction between mystical revelation, that is in theory intelligible and conveyable through language, if only to a select few, and the kind of mysticism that thinkers such as Laozi, Zhuangzi, in addition to (as will be shown later), Heidegger, hold on to. What such mystical experience in Daoism constitutes, is an event the sage aware of, but the contents of which are beyond the grasp of intelligibility, hence the nature of it cannot be directly conveyed through language. Hence the Daoist sage, in seeking to convey a description of such an event, rather teaching a particular kind of knowledge, instead aims primarily to remain open to a sense of mystery.

The following section will look at how both the Daoists and Heidegger seek to convey a sense of the ineffable through language in order to preserve and cultivate openness to this sense of mystery.

Part 2: Daoism, Heidegger and Ineffability

Throughout his philosophical project, Heidegger always sought to distinguish Being, both as *Sein* and *Seyn*, from beings. Therefore, attempting to present Being for Heidegger in terms of attributes or properties as though it were a being will not merely fail to understand Being, but will inevitably lead people away from Being. This is even more true in the case of *Seyn,* which Heidegger goes as far as to represent as Being with a crossing-out sign over it, to indicate that

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[246]   *The Book of Chuang Tzu* Translated by Martin Palmer and Elizabeth Breuilly Arkana London 1996 p 137

Being as *Seyn* remains outside of representation. Hence, for Heidegger, any attempt to express 'the Being of beings' in the descriptive terms of language is in danger of reifying Being and misrepresenting the term by presenting it as though it were 'a being'. This means Heidegger would, for example, radically reject a personalised understanding of the Being of beings that could be equated with certain interpretations of the Christian God. Heidegger does not attribute to Being such predicates as 'benevolent'. Furthermore, *Seyn* should not be understood impersonally, along Spinoza's lines, as a 'substance'. Such a monist account of *Seyn* still reifies Being by presenting it in this way. Heidegger, therefore, must resist the tendency that he observes in Western languages to represent things spoken of in this way as substances in the world with attributes.

The *Dao* and *Seyn*

This presents the possibility of a comparison between Heidegger's notion of Being and the *Dao*, in that both Being as *Seyn* and the *Dao* appear as an ineffable ground of beings that resists description within ordinary language.

Such a comparison between different mystical experiences, however, is more problematic than it may at first seem, and has been challenged by Steven Katz, who holds that,

> the ineffability of mystical experience does not provide any point of comparison
>
> between mystical traditions. Rather they function to cloak experience from
>
> investigation and to hold mysterious whatever ontological commitments one has.
>
> As a consequence, the use of the terms 'paradox' and 'ineffable' do not provide
>
> *data* for comparability, rather they eliminate the logical possibility of the
>
> comparability of experience altogether. To assume, as James, Huxley, Stace,
>
> and many others do, that, because [two] mystics claim that their experiences
>
> are paradoxical [say], they are describing like experiences, is a non sequitur.[247]

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[247]   S. Katz (edited) *Mysticism and Philosophical Analysis* Oxford University Press Sheldon USA 1978 pp 54-55 (a

According to Katz, therefore, all mystical experiences and traditions that claim to go beyond ordinary language and outside normal discourse are by definition beyond any conception. It is therefore impossible to compare different mystical traditions, since there can never be a justification to make sense of such a comparison. Katz sees mystical experiences as beyond any description, regardless of which tradition they are in, ineffability being here understood as something that excludes the possibility of analysis by its very own nature. Hence, there is nothing to compare or analyse in different mystical experiences. All that it possible to say about mystical experiences is that they are ineffable. Therefore, according to Katz, the *Dao* and *Seyn* are both excluded from discourse, thereby making any comparison between *Seyn* and the *Dao* impossible. Precisely in the sense that both the *Dao* in Chinese Philosophy and Heidegger's understanding of Being are ineffable, any comparison between them is not practicable because there is nothing that can be compared. Thus, following Katz's position, the dialogue between Heidegger and Daoist thought is, in effect, already concluded before it has even begun.

This orientation rests on two fundamental assumptions: (1) That all mystical traditions are ineffable in the same way in relation to language; and (2), that ineffability can only be understood as a negative category, placing a particular experience beyond description. However, such a position is flawed in that it fails to acknowledge the distinctions between different kinds of ineffability.

In response to this problem, this section will first distinguish different kinds of ineffability. Secondly, it will consider Heidegger's understanding of the ineffable, particularly the relationship between language and Being, as *Seyn*. Following from this, the section will focus on Heidegger's conception of attunement to Being. Finally, any underlying similarity in this respect between Heidegger and Daoism will be analysed.

Kinds of Mysticism

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useful collection of articles, especially Katz's own on *Language, Epistemology and Mysticism*)

In relation to language, three kinds of 'ineffability' can be distinguished. Katz's position would appear to rest on an understanding of mystical disclosure as being ineffable in the sense of being completely beyond all language. Such an understanding of mysticism is basically equivalent to the early Wittgenstein's position, 'whereof one cannot speak, one must remain silent.'[248]

Opposed to such an understanding of ineffability, there is the kind of ineffability that can be exemplified by the 'form of the good' in Plato. Plato treats the form of the good as being beyond ordinary understanding, as represented by the cave or even the people who first step outside the cave. However, Plato implies that, ultimately, the philosopher king outside the cave will be able to look directly into the sun. This can be read as suggesting that 'the form of the good' is ineffable in the sense of being beyond an ordinary understanding, but it is not, in principle, un-graspable. Such an understanding of the ineffable might therefore be equated with 'esoteric knowledge'. Mysticism based on 'esoteric knowledge' still views the ineffable as being beyond 'ordinary understanding'. However, through specialist knowledge, such schools of mysticism hold out the possibility of an enhanced human understanding, if only to an elect figure such as the enlightened Gnostic adept of Plato's philosopher king. Such knowledge can still be conveyed through language, even if it is radically different from how language might be used in an ordinary setting. Through this enhanced human understanding (often called *gnosis*) of the esoteric mystical tradition, it is possible to gain insight into the true nature of reality that would otherwise be hidden. For such doctrines, it is only due to an underlying failure of understanding on the part of the cave dwellers in Plato, or those under the power of the *demiurge* in Gnosticism, that they do not see the truth of the doctrine. Such positions hold that correctly functioning understanding ought to be able to comprehend the true nature of reality, and that this understanding can be conveyed through specialist esoteric knowledge, or *gnosis*.

In principle, therefore, Katz's description of the ineffable mystical experience cannot be

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[248] L.. Wittgenstein *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* Standard Publications London 2007

applied to such an understanding of 'mystical knowledge'. Such positions at some level provide a doctrine, even though it may be beyond ordinary comprehension. Hence, for example, a comparison between Plato and Gnosticism is perfectly legitimate.

However, the kind of mystical or ineffable position in relation to language that Heidegger appears to be concerned with might be understood as standing between the position of complete silence and esoteric knowledge. As has already been discussed, for Daoist thinkers such as Laozi and Zhuangzi, Daoism is on the edge of the boundless, which is expressed through language, but is beyond language. The concept of standing on the edge of the boundless, discussed by Heidegger in the 'Dialogue on Language Between a Japanese and Inquirer', appears somewhat indeterminate and will be clarified later on; but at this point, it should be noted that the edge of the boundless means standing on the edge of something that is beyond one's grasp. In this way, it will be argued here that Heidegger's relationship to ineffability is in some sense similar to the Daoist position.

This, however, raises a difficult question about the significance of language and ineffability in Heidegger. Along what lines is it possible to make a comparison between the role of ineffability in Daoism and in Heidegger? How is one to avoid a complete consigning of Being to silence and to avoid holding on to an esoteric doctrine. Accepting the position that either 'Being' or the Dao are completely beyond discourse, or that they can be described in terms of esoteric doctrine or be completely excluded from all discourse, are for both Heideggerian and Daoist thought considered to be dangerous in so far as it would lead to the forgetfulness of *Seyn* or the *Dao*. Conversely, creating an esoteric doctrine might lead to the possibility of becoming too rigid, thereby reifying and misrepresenting 'Being' by applying finite human understanding to the 'boundless'.

Language and Heidegger

What therefore is the role of language for Heidegger, given such a position on ineffability?

Language for the later Heidegger is clearly a central concern and has, at times, been held to preclude the possibility of a comparison between Heidegger and East Asian traditions of thought, such as Daoism or Zen Buddhism. Joan Stambaugh states that, in relation to Heidegger and Buddhism, 'a Buddhist would never say 'language is the house of being"'.[249] Stambaugh thereby contrasts Heidegger's apparent celebration of language with the inadequacy attributed to language in Zen Buddhism. This would thereby appear to distance Heidegger's position from Daoism in that Daoism has a similar view on the limitations of language, as shown the statement that 'the *Dao* that can be spoken of, is not the true *Dao*'. Such a reading appears to indicate that Heidegger and the Daoists are heading in opposite directions. Heidegger is seeking to listen more closely to language, stating that the central purpose of his lectures on *The Nature of Language* is that 'they are intended to bring us face to face with a possibility of undergoing an experience with language'.[250] By contrast, Daoist thinkers, such as Laozi and Zhuangzi, in a similar way to Zen, appear to hold that language is inadequate for expressing the true reality of the *Dao*.

What, however, does 'undergoing an experience of language' really mean for Heidegger? In order to answer this question, it is necessary to look more closely at the nature of language and thinking in Heidegger's philosophy.

Poetic and Calculative Language

Central to Heidegger's concern with language is his emphasis on the role of poetry. Heidegger is particularly and crucially concerned with distinguishing between 'poetic thinking' and 'calculative thinking'.

Vital to understanding this dichotomy in language between poetic and calculative thinking is the distinction that Heidegger sees between hints (*Wink*) and gestures (*Gebärde*), and the signs and *chiffres* that he sees as associated with metaphysics. This distinction which Heidegger sets out in the

[249]   J. Stambaugh 'Commentary on Takeshi Umehara's "Heidegger and Buddhism*" – Philosophy East and West* 20 (3) 1970 p. 286
[250]   M. Heidegger 'On the Way to Language' in *The Nature of Language:* Translated by Peter D. Hertz Harper and Row New York 1971 p. 57

'Dialogue on Language Between a Japanese and an Inquirer' is quite subtle. Heidegger states that hints and gestures

> are enigmatic. They beckon to us. They beckon *away*. They beckon us *toward*
>
> that from which they unexpectedly bear themselves toward us.[251]

What distinguishes hints and gestures appears therefore to be their indirectness. 'Signs and *chiffres*' can be read as seeking to directly express something in language, whereas 'hints and gestures' seek to point towards something. This means that hints and gestures aim to evoke thoughts of something without being able to say exactly what it is. Calculative thinking essentially rests on signs and *chiffres*. Hence, it relies on fixed definitions and quantifications and depends on fixed references, whereas for poetic thinking, Heidegger states that 'the poet almost as soon as he has spoken the line about the mystery of the reserving proximity, has to descend to the phrase "foolish is my speech": But, nevertheless he is speaking'.[252] Expressing Being wholly within language, in Heidegger's view, only offers a reification of Being, by presenting Being as though it were 'a being'. Words for Heidegger in poetic thought function as 'hints and gestures' to point towards something they cannot wholly express within language, but which Heidegger does not wish to completely leave silent.

This relation to silence can be noted in Heidegger's 'Dialogue on Language Between a Japanese and Inquirer' and can be observed in an exchange such as the following:

> *Inquirer:* who could simply be silent of silence?
>
> *Japanese*: that would be authentic saying,
>
> *Inquirer*: ….and would remain the constant prologue to the authentic dialogue

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[251] M. Heidegger ' Dialogue on Language between a Japanese and an Inquirer' in*: On the Way into Language* Translated by Peter D Hertz Harper and Row New York 1971

[252] M. Heidegger *Existence and Being* Translated by Henry Regnery: University of Chicago1Chicago 949 p. 280

of language.[253]

Both silence and language are therefore important for Heidegger. In favouring 'hints and gestures', Heidegger's thought is rather seeking to point towards Being, offering attunement to the mystery of *Seyn*. Poetic language for Heidegger thus can be understood as providing a sense of mystery that cannot be completely expressed within language.

Hence, Heidegger, in seeking to understand Being through poetic language and thought, cannot move to say that 'Being' is X, as calculative thinking would require. He therefore cannot offer 'esoteric knowledge' in the sense of a specific revelation or g*nosis* about *Seyn*. It may thus be the case that, while for Heidegger there will be certain thinkers who will preserve an insight into Being, this insight can never be directly conveyed or communicated. A central failing of 'Western metaphysics' for Heidegger is the attempt to represent the nature of Being in this way. Western metaphysics denies a space for the mysterious by seeking always to portray it in graspable notions. Western metaphysics denies space for anything that cannot be represented in this way. This ultimately leads, in Heidegger's view, to a state where, as Xianglong Zhang states, 'modern technology pursues brightness without recognising the necessity of darkness that hides the secret'.[254]

The project of poetic thought in Heidegger is thus tied to this preservation and opening up to the sense of mystery. Hence, as Otto Pöggeler noted, comparing the star on Heidegger's gravestone with Plato's sun, 'the star rises alone for us out of darkness and its mysterious depths'.[255] Thus, rather than seeking the complete illumination that Plato's thought aimed at, Heidegger's thought can be understood as a guide to a sense of mystery that can never be completely illuminated, but of which Heidegger aims to make people aware. A star may serve as an indicator for people through the darkness of night, while still leaving the darkness itself unlit, so that for Heidegger, the sense of

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[253] M. Heidegger ' Dialogue on Language between a Japanese and an Inquirer' in*: On the Way into Language* Translated by Peter D Hertz Harper and Row New York 1971 p. 53

[254] Xianglong Zhang 'The Coming Time "Between"Being and Daoist Emptiness: An Analysis of Heidegger's Inquiring into the Uniqueness of the Poet via Laozi'i in Philosophy East and West Volume 59, Number 1, January 2009

[255] O. Pöggeler 'West-East Dialogue' in *Heidegger and Asian Thought* Edited by Graham Parkes University of Hawaii Press 1990 p. 62

mystery always remains.

It is precisely the relationship between language and silence, as opposed to logocentrism (in the sense of crudely privileging language), that is crucial to the poetic in Heidegger. Attempting to say too much with language is, therefore, deeply dangerous for poetic language and thought. Poetic language, in order to be poetic, must allow a sense of mystery for the later Heidegger. This can help to clarify Heidegger's claim that, 'perhaps the mystery of mysteries of thoughtful Saying conceals itself in the word "way", [*Dao*] only we will let these names return to what they leave unspoken'.[256]

Thus, poetic thought and language, through preserving this sense of mystery within language, points to the *Dao* or *Seyn* that is its unspoken base. As Tetsuaki Kotoh notes, 'the echo of stillness is the silent *logos* of the ancient origin beyond the particular features of everyday-level language'.[257]

The Nature of Poetic Thought and Ineffability in Heidegger

The notion of poetic thinking has often been considered one of the most problematic parts of Heidegger's thought. This is because, within the tradition of analytic philosophy, it appears natural to associate language with matters of naming and reference. To talk about 'what names leave unspoken', therefore, seems by its very nature unintelligible. Herman Philipse views Heidegger's apparent resistance to offering propositions concerning *Seyn* as virtually making *Seyn* empty as a category:

let it be sufficient here to observe that, if Heidegger did not assert anything, there

is nothing to discuss either. Because to believe that p means: believing that p

is true, we cannot even believe what Heidegger says if he does not assert anything.[258]

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[256] M. Heidegger 'The Nature of Language' *On the Way into Language* : Translated by Peter D. Hertz Harper and Row New York 1971 p. 92

[257] T. Kotoh 'Language and Silence' *Heidegger and Asian Thought* Edited by Graham Parkes University of Hawaii Press 1990 p.210

[258] H. Philipse *Heidegger's Philosophy of Being* Princeton University Press Princeton New Jersey1998 p. 302

Such a position, however, rests on the view that language must either be tied to fixed propositions that can be clearly defined, or be meaningless. Conversely, David Cooper notes, Heidegger's words 'expound no doctrine, but are directives'.[259] Considering this, it is inappropriate to criticise Heidegger for failing to offer propositions about *Seyn* when this is not his aim. However, the question remains as to how Heidegger can use language in this way, as a directive or guide, rather than as collection of propositions. This is the objective of this section, which seeks to show that this is done, firstly, through offering a descriptive sense of Being as *Seyn*, and to show that, through this descriptive sense, Heidegger strives to cultivate a particular attitude and awareness.

One can take as a starting point Bo Mo's distinction between three naming activities. Firstly through description*',* by which he means offering a general outline concerning attributes of an entity, which picks it out from other objects that may surround it. Secondly, it may be through 'direct reference' such as a name. The third is through offering both a direct reference and description.[260]

Bo Mo's distinctions here are concerned with the way that names can relate to the world. The first is the kind of name that seeks to convey a sense through a general description; hence one might refer to a particular house along such lines as an old stone building with a yellow door and a broken window. Using such a form of description it is the attributes which identify the entity from its surroundings. The second form of designation means directly referring to something in the world. Thus, one word picks out one particular thing in the world to the exclusion of everything else, as signifier and signified. The third is a combination of the other two, selecting something in the world while conveying a general sense of it. Heidegger's thought may be said to be based around Bo Mo's first statement in so far as he is seeking to convey a descriptive sense of Being, rather than attempting to delineate Being directly as a reference point. Heidegger's way of talking

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[259] D.E. Cooper *The Measure of Things   Humanism, Humility and Mystery* Oxford University Press Oxford 2002 p. 293.

[260]   Bo Mo *Eternal Dao: Comparative Approaches to Chinese Philosophy* Ashgate Publishing Ltd London 2003 p.254.

about Being can thus be understood as comparable to the Daoist way of talking about the *Dao,* which, in Cooper's words, seeks to 'evoke an attitude', rather than set out a series of propositions.

David Cooper, again, notes that for Heidegger, 'in thinking/saying, we call or name, but not in the ordinary - and, for Heidegger, derivative - sense of coordinating a linguistic object with another'.[261] Heidegger is not seeking to present a metaphysical definition of Being as X. Hence, in the 'Dialogue on Language Between a Japanese and Inquirer', the Japanese asks, 'why did you not surrender the word "Being" immediately and resolutely to the exclusive use of the language of metaphysics? Why did you not at once give its own name to what you were searching for, by way of the nature of Time, as the "sense of Being"?'[262] To this the Inquirer responds, 'how is one to give a name to what he is still searching for?'[263] This indicates how Being, for Heidegger, rather than standing as an overarching concept that might be thought comparable to the Christian God, should instead be thought of as a loose place holder. 'Sense of Being' may in fact be a more effective way of understanding what Heidegger means by Being. Hence, in some of his essays, such as 'The Thing', Heidegger makes little direct reference to 'Being'. This does not, however, mean that Heidegger has abandoned *Seyn* as ontology, in so far as he still seeks to convey a sense of Being in such works.

Hence, in the words of Emilo Brito, for Heidegger, 'the Most-High of Being allows itself to be named only in the hymn of the Sacred'.[264] As it is only through such a poetic description associated with the hymn of the sacred that the sense of Being as *Seyn* in Heidegger can be conveyed. Being as *Seyn* is not named in the ordinary sense of picking out one particular point of reference in the world, but is rather named more loosely, in the sense of evoking a presence.

Such a use of language in Heidegger can be perceived as similar to the use of language in

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[261]   D.E. Cooper *The Measure of Things: Humanism, Humility and Mystery*: Oxford University Press 2002 pp. 293-294

[262]   M. Heidegger 'Dialogue Between a Japanese and an Inquirer' in *On the Way into Language* Translated by Peter D. Hertz Harper and Row New York 1971 p. 20

[263]   *Ibid*

[264] E. Brito' Light and Shadow from Heideggarian Interpretation of the Sacred' in *Religious Experience and the End of Metaphysics* Edited by Jeffrey Bloechl Indiana University Press Bloomington Indianapolis 2003 p. 51

Laozi and Zhuangzi, in that the Daoists use language to make people aware of the *Dao*. Cooper holds that such statements, rather than seeking to provide a description of something, aim 'to "inspire" or "evoke" a way of seeing or thinking about something,'[265] comparing the use of language to a cry of pain, which 'does not self describe, but is better construed as a piece of pain behaviour'.[266] Therefore, they should not be understood as propositional statements.

An example of such non-propositional use of language is metaphor. In order to get round what can be said directly and what cannot be said at all Daoist writers often use language based on metaphor, such as the famous passage in the Dao De Jing

> The best way to live is is to be be like water. For water benefits all things
>
> and goes against none of them. It provides for all people and even clenses
>
> those places a man is loath to go. In this way it is just like *Dao.[267]*

Clearly the point of such a passage is not literally to suggest the proposition that the *Dao* is in anyway ontologically equivalent to water , but rather that through the image of water the text is able to convey a sense of what it means to see and embody the *Dao.* This bears comparison to Heidegger's use of the image of the clearing in the forest to convey the sense of Being. Metaphor thus counts more broadly within the category of poetic language.

Poetic language may lack a certain precision, but it opens up a richness and flexibility in language. Katrin Froese draws attention to the differences between the Chinese language and some Western languages, particularly Latin, in that,

> Chinese words are more fluid, and very much context dependant. The fixation

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[265] D.E. Cooper *The Measure of Things Humanism, Humility and Mystery* Oxford University Press Oxford 2002 p. 290.
[266] *Ibid*
[267] Laozi *The Tao Te Ching The Definitive Edition* Translated by Jonathan Star Tarcher Penguin NewYork2001 Verse 8 page 21

on grammar, which Nietzsche rails against, is notoriously absent in the Chinese

language. The Chinese language is metaphorical and malleable.[268]

This stands against the position held by Stella Sanford that the apparent 'absence in Chinese of the verb 'to be' and of the abstract noun being'[269] automatically distances Chinese thought from Heidegger.[270] It might be said that in Heideggerian terms, the Chinese language does not present the dangers of reification of Being that Western Indo-European languages do. This offers greater flexibility, for example, in how the *Dao* appears as both a verb and a noun. This flexibility means that, in Katrin Froese's words, Chinese thinkers do not have to 'make essences out of symbols.'[271] Thus, Heidegger's use of language in poetic thought appears closer to the use of Chinese by Daoist thinkers such as Zhuangzi and Laozi, rather than the use of language in what might be considered traditional Western philosophy. Heidegger, as opposed to being centred on a rigid structure of language based on fixed definitions that seeks to pin down concepts, focuses on a more descriptive and flexible understanding of words. As Otto Pöggeler states, 'the title of the Chinese novel *Chin p'ing mei* means, depending on the context, "blossoms in a golden vase" or "beautiful women in a rich house." The decisive thing for thinking is for it to be able to break through from superficial means to the depths in order to bring us back on to a way or to the underway'.[272]

Heidegger's thought should not, therefore, be understood, as an 'empty play on words'.[273] Heidegger's use of poetic language and thought aims at painting an impression of Being as *Seyn*. Through creating this impression, he seeks to cultivate an attitude attuned towards Being and a way of relating to the world, rather than presenting a set of propositions. In this way, as Cooper notes,

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[268] K. Farose *Nietzsche, Heidegger and Daoist Thought: Crossing Paths In-Between* Series in Chinese Philosophy and Culture State University of New York New York 2006 p 60

[269] S. Sanford 'Going Back: Heidegger, East Asia and 'The West'' in*: Radical Philosophy 120*: July/August 2003: p.15

[270] While it remains, of course, the central claim here that *Dao* can be read as equivalent to Being as Seyn in the sense that Heidegger uses it

[271] K. Froese *Nietzsche ,Heidegger and Daoist Thought: Crossing Paths In Between* Series in Chinese Philosophy and Culture   State University of New York New York 2006 p. 60

[272] O. Pöggeler 'West-East Dialogue' in *Heidegger and Asian Thought* Edited by Graham Parkes University of Hawaii Press 1990 p 72-73

[273] H. Philipse *Heidegger's Philosophy of Being* Princeton University Press Princeton New Jersey1998 p 293

Heidegger 'offered a whole battery of terms to characterise the roles played by his talk about the mystery.'[274] Given, therefore, that this is done in order to cultivate a particular mood or attitude, it is necessary to look in more detail at this mood of attunement.

Attunement and Ineffability in Heidegger and Daoism

Central to Heidegger's later philosophy is the notion of attunement to Being. At a basic level, attunement can be understood as what Heidegger calls in his 'Memorial Address', 'openness towards mystery'.[275] In the address, Heidegger holds that openness towards mystery, alongside *Gelassenheit* (which will be looked at in more detail later), can provide the possibility of resisting the complete technocratic disclosure of the modern world. Heidegger goes as far as to state that such attitudes can provide a 'path that will lead to a new ground and foundation'[276] What, therefore, does it mean to stand in 'openness to mystery'?

David Cooper states that attunement towards Being is understood by Heidegger as the 'cultivation of a certain comportment to the world and to the mysterious'.[277] As such, 'openness towards mystery' or attunement can be understood as a particular way of relating to the world. It should be viewed as diametrically opposed to a technocratic and reductionist way of seeing the world. Julian Young notes, such a reductionist approach of seeing things as resources deprives 'us of the ability to see the whatness, objectness, the itselfness of beings'.[278] Openness towards the mystery of things can be understood as precisely the opposite of such a way of viewing things, in so far as it entails to always remain open to that which cannot be completely calculated in beings. To illustrate this by way of an example: to remain open to the mystery of the forest would therefore

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[274] D.E. Cooper *The Measure of Things: Humanism, Humility and Mystery* Oxford University Press Oxford 2002 p 293

[275] M. Heidegger *Memorial Address: Discourse on Thinking* Translated by John M Anderson and E Hans Freund Harper and Row New York 1966 p. 55

[276] *Ibid*

[277] D.E. Cooper *The Measure of Things : Humanism, Humility and Mystery* Oxford University Press Oxford 2002 p 294.

[278] J. Young *Heidegger's Later Philosophy* Cambridge University Press Cambridge 2002 p 53

mean remaining open to a sense of the presence of the forest that is not reducible to that which is calculable (e.g. its economic value as a source of cellulose). In this way, it is both at the basis of poetic thought in Heidegger and in the content of that which poetic thought seeks to convey. It is this state of mind or mood that makes it possible to sense the disclosure of Being as *Seyn*. Cooper expresses this by saying that 'to experience the mystery and to comport oneself in a certain way towards it are two sides of the same coin'.[279]

Thus, openness towards mystery provides a sense of Being as *Seyn,* without needing to claim any particular esoteric knowledge about Being. Tetsuaki Kotoh points out that 'it is not *logos* but silence as "basic mood/voice" (*Grundstimme*) that encounters the wonder of the presencing of Being, being attuned (*gestimmt*) by the silent voice (*lautlose Stimme*) of Being'. [280] Such mood, therefore, rejects any claim to absolute knowledge, but remains open to something that is beyond one's grasp.

There is, therefore, a deep resonance between the sense of ineffability and the use of language in Heidegger and Daoism. Thus, it is possible for the Daoist notion of *Dao* to provide a model for Heidegger's understanding of Being as *Seyn*.

Both Heidegger and the Daoists seek to make people aware, through language, of something that is beyond language and distinction. In this way, they are 'mystics' not in the sense that they set down a particular esoteric doctrine, but in that they are seeking to gain a kind of awareness that is outside of ordinary understanding and language. This awareness in both Heidegger and Daoism is tied to an observing and relating to the world that rejects a reductionist or technocratic way of interpreting things based upon calculative thinking. It thus provides a different way of discerning the world which, as noted by Cooper in relation to Zen Buddhism, sees that the 'experience of mystery is a way of experiencing, of being with, the ordinary and familiar'.[281] Daoism and

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[279] D.E. Cooper *The Measure of Things: Humanism, Humility and Mystery* Oxford University Press Oxford 2002 p 295.

[280] T. Kotah 'Language and Silence' in *Heidegger and Asian Thought* Edited by Graham Parkes University of Hawaii Press 1990 p*t* 210

[281] D.E. Cooper *The Measure of Things: Humanism, Humility and Mystery*: Oxford University Press Oxford 2002 p 346

Heidegger thus both provide a way of perceiving the ordinary everyday world that allows a sense of mystery. It is this sense of awareness that both Heidegger and Daoist thinkers aim to achieve; a sense of the underlying whole that is within awareness, but beyond grasp.

Chapter 7 Heidegger and the *Yin* and *Yang*

Part 1: Earth and World: *Yin* and *Yang*

Outline of *Yin* and *Yang* in Chinese Thought

The origins of the concepts of *yin* and *yang* are ancient and difficult to trace. The dichotomy underlies a significant part of Chinese thought, not merely Daoism. Early in Chinese history, it was associated with a distinct *'yin-yang'* school near the commencement of the warring-states period. Wing-Tsit Chan states that 'no aspect of Chinese civilisation - whether metaphysics, medicine, government, or art - has escaped'[282] the influence of the *yin* and *yang*. It has become a central part of Daoist thought, as well as influencing elements of Confucianism, although the notions of yin and yang do not appear to have been directly referred to in the writings of Kongzi and Mengzi. The *yin/ yang* dichotomy, however, has influenced Neo-Confucianism as well as Chinese martial arts and *feng shui*. The notion of such a dichotomy in Chinese thought can be traced as far back as the *Yijing* (also known as the *I Ching* or *The Book of Changes*), compiled under the Zhou dynasty (1045BCE-256BCE), the period of Chinese history that leads on to the period of warring states, and the rise of a hundred schools of thought. Under the Zhou dynasty, the *Yijing* was used as a manual for divination, showing the cosmic process, while elements of it have been traditionally attributed to the mythical ancient Chinese sage and sovereign Fu Xi (2800BCE).[283] *Yin* and *yang* can be seen as central to the system of the *Yijing*, where yin is represented by a broken line and yang by a solid line. These are put together in various different possible combinations of six lines, where, for example, six broken lines is the *kun* and all *yin*, whereas six solid lines is *qian* and is all *yang*. The *Yijing*, called by Kakuzo Okakura 'the vedas of the Chinese race',[284] is an important work for both religious and philosophical Daoism, as well as elements of Confucianism.

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[282]   Wing-Tsit Chan *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy* Compiled and translated by Wing-Tsit Chan Princeton University Press 1969 p. 244
[283]   K. L.Lai *An Introduction to Chinese Philosophy*   Cambridge University Press Cambridge 2008 p. 199
[284]   K. Okakura *Ideals of the East* E. P. Dutton & Co. New York 1904 p. 28

The main concern here, however, is with the Daoist understanding of the *yin-yang* dichotomy. The significance of the *yin-yang* in Daoist philosophy is outlined by Laozi:

> Dao gives life to the one. The one gives life to the two. The two gives life to the
>
> three. The three give life to ten thousand things. All beings support yin and
>
> embrace yang and the interplay of these two forces fills the universe.
>
> Yet only at the still point, between the breathing in and breathing out, can one
>
> capture these two in perfect harmony.[285]

This passage is difficult to interpret. However, *yin* and *yang* can be read as equivalent to 'the two' and as the twin manifestations of the *Dao*, through the *qi* energy - 'the one' - that underlies the myriad of things. The classic symbol of *yin* and *yang* is called the *Taijitu* ☯. This shows the *yin* as the dark part of the circle, while *yang* is the light part of the circle. Ray Billington, referring to the *Taijitu*, notes that, 'draw a diameter anywhere across the circle and each section will include some Yang and some Yin',[286] which indicates that there is no such thing as pure *yin* or pure *yang*. In reference to the two sections of the circle, Richard Wilhelm comments:

> the primal powers never come to a standstill; the cycle of becoming continues
>
> uninterruptedly. The reason is the two primal powers there arises again and again
>
> a state of tension, a potential that keeps the powers in motion and causes them to
>
> unite, whereby they are constantly regenerated.[287]

Rather than a dialectic in the Hegelian sense, where a binary opposition is ultimately resolved at a further stage of development, the *yin* and *yang* dichotomy can be regarded as a

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[285] Laozi *Dao De Jing The Definitive Edition* Translated by Jonathan Star Tarcher Penguin New York 2001 p. 53
[286] Ray Billington *East of Existentialism: The Tao of the West* Routledge London 1990 p. 197
[287] *I Ching or the Book of Changes* Translated Richard Wilhelm Penguin London 1967 p. 297

continual interplay of opposing forces that is in effect (certainly in the *Yijing*) cyclical, with continual change and interaction between *yin* and *yang*. As Zhuangzi states, 'yin and yang reflect each other, oppose each other and control each other'.[288]

The Distinction between *Yin* and *Yang*

Accepting the *Yijing*'s interpretation of *yin* as the receptive and *yang* as the active, Richard Wilhelm states that, in relation to the *Yijing*, 'the light and dark are the two primal powers …, as firm and yielding, or as day and night'.[289] The same writer further points out that the words *yin* and *yang* came from ways of talking about the distinction between the dark and sunny sides of a mountain.[290] This use of the terms can still be seen in certain Chinese place names, such as Luoyang, which means built on the sunny side of the river Luo.

In Daoism, *yin* and *yang* can be read as the twin ways in which *Dao* is, in Heideggerian terms, disclosed. *Yin* is understood as the dark, receptive force, associated with night, whereas yang is understood as the light active force, associated with the day time. As Ray Billington explains,

the Yang represents strength, as in male: activity, movement, creative power and

rational thought; the Yin corresponds to the more reflective qualities of the female[291]:

receptivity, stillness, complexity, intuitive wisdom rather than rational thought.[292]

The *yang* is associated with the sun and is often symbolised by the dragon or the Duke of the West, whereas the *yin* is associated with the moon, often symbolised by the Chinese phoenix (*fenghuang*) and the Queen Mother of the West. *yin* and *yang* are also associated with returning and

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[288] Zhuangzi *The Book of Chuang Tzu* Translated Martin Palmer and Elizabeth Breuilly Arkana London 1996 p. 233
[289] *I Ching or the Book of Changes* Translated Richard Wilhelm Penguin London 1967 p. 298
[290] R. Billington *East of Existentialism: The Tao of the West* Routledge London 1990 p. 198
[291] It should be noted that although yin and yang are commonly referred to as female and male: they should really be more loosely thought of as feminine and masculine, hence within Daoist thought it is entirely legitimate for a female to have *yang* qualities and a male to have *yin* qualities.
[292] R. Billington *East of Existentialism: The Tao of the West* Routledge London 1990 p. 198

going out. Richard Wilhelm, when referring to this aspect of *yin* and *yang*, states that

> the light spirits (*shen*) are outgoing; they are active spirits, which can also enter
>
> upon new incarnations. The dark spirits (*guei*) return home; they are withdrawing
>
> forces and have the task of assimilating what life has yielded.[293]

In such a reading, the *shen* spirits are perceived as *yang* and therefore active, going out into life; whereas the *guei* spirits are *yin* and are therefore thought of as receptive and returning home. There is a danger in this association, in that, because *guei* are the traditionally malevolent and unhappy spirits in China, the *yin* is therefore conceived in a morally negative way. However, although Wing-Tsit Chan associated *yin* with apparently negative qualities, such as being destructive,[294] *yin* and *yang* should not be thought of being in moral opposition, in the sense of the *yin* being evil and the *yang* being good. The *yang* may also be associated with bad qualities, such as anger or violence, while the *yin* may also be associated with positive qualities, such as gentleness.

Hence, while it is true that in some Confucian readings of *yin-yang*, a negative view is taken of yin, particularly with some Han Confucian thinkers such as Dong Zhongshu who, for example, took a negative view of the cult of the 'Queen Mother of the West' on the grounds of her association with the *yin*,[295] this is not the understanding of *yin* and *yang* in Daoism. Indeed, to a certain extent, Laozi and Zhuangzi have a deep respect for virtues that would normally be associated with the *yin*.

Earth and World in Heidegger

This primal strife between *yin* and *yang* resonates with Heidegger's *polemos* in the 'Origin

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[293] *I Ching or the Book of Changes* Translated by Richard Wilhelm Penguin London 1967 p. 295

[294] Wing-Tsit Chan *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy* Compiled and translated by Wing-Tsit Chan Princeton University Press 1969 p. 244

[295] S. E.Cahill *Transcendence Divine Passion: The Queen Mother of the West in Medieval China* Stanford University Press Stanford California1993 p. 21

of the Work of Art', where there is an interplay between 'Earth and World'. As Heidegger states, 'the world is self opening openness of the broad paths of simple and essential decisions in the destiny of a historical people. The Earth is the unforced coming forth of the continually self-closing, and in that way self sheltering'.[296] The dichotomy in Heidegger between 'earth' and 'world' has already been briefly discussed in earlier sections. This chapter aims to look more closely at the nature of it. Heidegger's central images of earth are those that epitomise 'darkness and sheltering'.[297] The earth might therefore be said in some sense to be beyond human knowledge, not being opened to presence. The world for Heidegger is essentially understood as anything and everything that the individual encounters, or may encounter. All is part of the world: the world is presence. As such, the 'world', as Heidegger understands it, is transparent, ordered and structured. While the 'earth' and 'world are in some sense opposed to each other in a primal strife, the two are deeply interrelated. There is a continual interplay between the 'earth' and 'world'. Thus, 'world is grounded on earth, and earth rises up through world'.[298] A complete separation of 'earth' and 'world' is impossible. It is the nature of this interplay between 'earth' and 'world' that defines the nature of them both. Although the earth is associated with the natural and the organic, and in some sense as beyond human knowledge, it should not be thought of as completely other, as opposed to the 'human'. Nor, although Heidegger states that 'earth shatters every attempt to penetrate it',[299] should earth be thought of as equivalent to the Kantian un-knowable, in the sense that it is completely excluded from disclosure. As has been mentioned previously, a crucial aspect of the work of art for Heidegger is the setting forth of the earth into the world. It might therefore be said that the work of art brings the earth into human life, when otherwise, because of its nature as concealment, the earth would remain hidden. By 'setting

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[296] M. Heidegger :'The Origin of the Work of Art' in Off *the Beaten Track* Page 26 Translated by Julian Young and Kenneth Haynes Cambridge University Press Cambridge 2002 p. 26

[297]   In Heidegger's works following on from the 'Origin of the Work of Art', he still continued to use earth as a category, although what exactly he designated by this category changes. Hence, for example, in essays such as 'The Thing', Earth becomes an element of the four fold (gods, mortals, earth and sky). It is not possible here to go into a full discussion of how the notion of earth develops in Heidegger's thought. However, it might be said that Heidegger associates the earth with the organic and with concealment.

[298]   M. Heidegger 'The Origin of the Work of Art' in *Off the Beaten Track:*   Translated by Julian Young and Kenneth Haynes Cambridge University Press Cambridge 2002 p.24

[299] *Ibid* p. 25

forth', Heidegger means to bring the earth into the world, while still allowing it to remain as the earth: 'the work sets itself back, and thereby allows to come forth, is what we called the "earth"'.[300] For example, a stone sculpture brings out structures that would normally be hidden within the rock into the light of day. However, at the same time, in order for the sculpture to exist, the rock must retain solidity and opaqueness. In this way, the sculpture sets forth the earth through the stone. Without this setting forth of the earth, the work of art would be significantly diminished, since

> the setting up of a world and the setting forth of earth are two essential
>
> features of the work-being of the work. They belong together.[301]

How does the work of art bring about this relationship to earth? Heidegger states that earth in the work of art is made manifest, by which he means that it is brought to un-concealment in a particular way that still allows it to remain non-transparent. Crucially, Heidegger states that 'on and in the earth, historical man found his dwelling'.[302] This particular relationship between 'World' and 'Earth' is central to Heidegger's thought, as this is what distinguishes Heidegger's position from a Hegelian reading of history, as a succession of 'worlds', each world being defined in terms of its own self-understanding. Hence, for example, Hegel would see the significance of the Greek temple as something that represents the Greek world's understanding of itself, putting emphasis on aspects of it, such as a Greek sculpture depicting the human form, with stone only acting as a useful medium. Thus, to Hegel, nature or the Earth is only something that Spirit becomes alienated within, away from itself and thus acts as an obstacle to the spirit's own self realisation. The central aim of history for Hegel is spirit's own contemplation of itself, without having to go through the mediation of nature. For Heidegger, the 'World', regardless of its historical, is always founded upon a particular relationship with the Earth.

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[300] M. Heidegger 'The Origin of the Work of Art' in *Off the Beaten Track*   Translated by Julian Young and Kenneth Haynes Cambridge University Press Cambridge 2002 p. 24
[301] *Ibid* p.26
[302] *Ibid* p.24

Concealment and Un-concealment in Heidegger

This dichotomy in *'Origin of the Work of Art'* reflects a deeper dichotomy that Heidegger associates with the Greek *aletheia*, meaning un-concealment. The Earth is associated with concealment and the world with un-concealment. Taking Heidegger's metaphor of the clearing in the forest, the 'World' is essentially the clearing, whereas the Earth is essentially the depths of the forest. As has been stated earlier, basic to Heidegger's later philosophy is the understanding of truth, *aletheia,* which entails that there is both concealment and un-concealment. Critically, unlike what might be called a traditional Western understanding of knowledge, Heidegger does not view un-concealment as being in itself wholly desirable.

The dichotomy underlies much of Heidegger's later work. The distinction between 'Earth' and 'World' can still be said to be present within Heidegger's four-fold in the brightness of the sky and the darkness of the earth. It can be observed directly in Heidegger's *Sojourns*, where Heidegger discusses Apollo and Artemis: 'Apollo, the one with great and luminous gaze, the glowing one, who commands through splendour. Artemis, the archer, the one who finds home in the shelter of the wilderness---the two of them are siblings. The way of their presence is together the powerful nearness and sudden disappearance in farness'.[303] In this passage, Heidegger associates Apollo with un-concealment, equivalent to world, while Artemis appears related to concealment and earth in the same text. The two are interlinked as siblings, but set in opposition to each other. Hence, the dichotomy between concealment and un-concealment, equated with light and dark, can be seen as running throughout Heidegger's later work in different forms.

Earth and World as *Yin* and *Yang*

'Earth' and 'World', as concealment and un-concealment, resonate with the *yin* and *yang.*

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[303] M. Heidegger *Sojourns: The Journey to Greece* Translated by John Panteleimon Manoussakis Series in Contemporary Continental Philosophy State University of New York Press New York 2005 p.31

Hence, the earth is understood as *yin* (being dark and receptive), while the world is equated with *yang* (being light and active). As such, they are both inter-related and co-dependent, while at the same time being in a state of primal strife. There is a further possible Daoist reading of Heidegger's *physis* as equivalent to the *qi* in that they are both the energy springing through the primal strife.

A comparison between *yin* and *yang* is hinted at by Graham Parkes, who writes in reference to a passage in the 'Origin of the Work of Art': 'the *yang* power of "World" is unable unequivocally to open up the secret of the *yin* power of "earth"'.[304] It does appear that there is a deep similarity between World and Earth as the twin ways in which 'Being' is disclosed in Heidegger. This is particularly the case in so far as the *Yijing* equates *kun*, the pure *yin* hexagram, with receptive Earth, while *qian*, pure *yang*, is equated with creative heaven. This strongly resonates with Heidegger's Earth and World. Parkes suggests a possible alternative reading through a hypothetical student F, stating that, 'I keep being reminded of Nietzsche's distinction between Apollonian and the Dionysian'.[305]

While it is not possible to enter into a full discussion of the Dionysian and Apollonian here, it is noteworthy that in the previously mentioned passage from *Sojourns,* Heidegger takes Apollo as the representative of un-concealment, but takes Artemis, rather than Dionysus, as symbolising concealment. Such representation shows that there is a degree of distance between Heidegger's position and Nietzsche's Apollonian/Dionysian dichotomy. While Heidegger refers to Dionysus indirectly as 'the wine god' in relation to poets in 'Why Poets?' he never links Dionysus specifically to the earth. It might still be that there is a deep relationship between 'earth and world' and the 'Apollonian and the Dionysian'. However, the way that Nietzsche thought of the Dionysian in Schopenhauerian terms, as a surge of undifferentiated primal energy comparable to Schopenhauer's 'will', appears different from Heidegger's interpretation of the 'Earth' as receptive rather than active. The *yin* and *yang* may therefore provide a better comparison, while the association of Artemis with

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[304] G. Parkes 'Thoughts on the Way*'* in *Heidegger and East Asian Philosophy* Edited by Graham Parkes University of Hawaii Press 1990 p. 136
[305] *Ibid*

the feminine and with Selene, the goddess of the moon, would appear to link Artemis directly to symbols associated with the *yin*. In this respect, therefore, while Katrin Froese states that 'Heidegger, himself makes no explicit connection between Being and the feminine',[306] the Earth can conceivably be equated with the feminine, at least in the sense of *yin*. Furthermore, by taking the light and dark sides of the mountain as the origin of the *yin* and *yang,* it is possible to see the relationship between light and shadow underlying Heidegger's *aletheia*. From this, a further proposal could be derived, that the notion of dwelling in the later Heidegger could be equated with the cultivation of a balance between *yin* and *yang*. Zhuangzi states, for example, 'here is a man of China, balanced between yin and yang, dwelling between Heaven and Earth'.[307] Indeed, as will be discussed in more detail later in this section, Heidegger's reading of the history of Western thought can be understood as the story of the relationship between concealment and un-concealment, between *yin* and *yang*; and, fundamentally, what can be read as the loss of the *yin* in the modern Western world.

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[306] K. Froese *Nieztsche, Heidegger and Daoist Thought: Crossing Paths In-Between* Series in Chinese Philosophy and Culture State University of New York Press New York 2006 p. 186

[307] Zhuangzi *The Book of Chuang Tzu* Translated by Martin Palmer and Elizabeth Breuilly Arkana Publishing London 1996 p. 192

Part 2 Heidegger: *Yin* and *Yang* and the History of Western Metaphysics

The Nature of Heidegger's History of Western Metaphysics

Taking this interpretation of interplay between the *yin* and *yang* as concealment and un-concealment that underlies Heidegger's work, it is further possible to apply it to a reading as a way to understand Heidegger's history of Western metaphysics. Reference has been made to Heidegger's understanding of history previously. It is important to note here that, although Heidegger presents it as a history of 'metaphysics', it should not be thought of simply as an academic history of philosophy. For Heidegger, 'metaphysics grounds an age'.[308] By this, Heidegger means that 'metaphysics' has a fundamental role in defining a particular point in history. Hence, while Tom Rockmore criticises Heidegger for failing to 'understand the way in which technology is embedded in modern social and historical contexts',[309] it can be said that the contemporary social and historical context is founded precisely upon modern technocratic reasoning that, for Heidegger, is founded upon the disclosure of modern technology. As Iain D. Thomson states, 'by giving shape to our historical understanding of "what is," metaphysics determines the most basic understanding of what anything is, including ourselves.'[310] It is possible to read this history in Heidegger as an interplay between *yin* and *yang* or, in Heidegger's own terms, concealment and un-concealment.

While he is not merely interested in recording the history and development of Western metaphysics, his reading of history is tied to an evaluative judgement upon

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[308] M. Heidegger 'The Age of World Picture' in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*: Translated William Lovitt Harper Torch Books Harper Row New York 1977 p. 115

[309] T. Rockmore:' Heidegger on Technology and Democracy' in *Technology and the Politics of Knowledge* Edited by Andrew Feenberg and Alister Hannay   Indiana Press Bloomington Indianapolis 1995 p. 141

[310]   I. D Thomson *Heidegger On Ontotheology: Technology and the Politics of Education*: Cambridge University Press Cambridge 2005 p. 55

the nature of Western metaphysics and the Western world in general. As has been noted before, Julian Young borrows Nietzsche's phrase 'doctor of culture'[311] to describe the project of the later Heidegger. However, this notion of a 'doctor of culture' should not be thought of as making a judgement on the vitality of a culture in the Nietzschean sense, that is a culture's ability to affirm itself. Heidegger's deep concern regarding modern Western nihilism has already been mentioned. Notwithstanding this, Heidegger's critique of the modern Western world is different from Spengler's critique in the *Decline of the West* in the sense that Heidegger does not view the Western world as 'decadent' and in immediate danger of collapse. Although Heidegger does concern himself with the prospect that the Western world may implode and destroy itself as illustrated by 'the atomic bomb' in 'The Thing', this is only a possibility and certainly not viewed as inevitable. Heidegger dismisses this, stating that 'All attempts to reckon existing reality morphologically in terms of decline and loss in terms of fate, catastrophe, and destruction are merely technological behaviour'.[312] Heidegger, in effect, views Western civilisation as being strong in the Nietzschean sense, in so far as it is still expanding outwards. Hence, 'the Europeanisation of the earth and man'.[313] Indeed, it may be the case that the domination of the 'Western world' in the Heideggerian sense would not be dislodged, even if modern China were to replace the United States of America as the dominant world power, as its underlying 'metaphysics' could still remain fundamentally unchanged. Heidegger's ultimate fear might indeed be said to be that the dominance of the 'Western world' would continue un-contested. What is it in Western metaphysics that disturbs Heidegger? The challenge he presents to Western

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[311] J. Young *Heidegger's Later Philosophy* Cambridge University Press Cambridge 2002 p.31

[312] M. Heidegger 'The Turning' in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays* Translated by William Lovitt Harper and Row New York 1977 p. 48.

[313]   M. Heidegger 'A Dialogue on Language between a Japanese and an Inquirer' in *On the Way into Language* ': Translated by Peter D. Hertz Harper and Row New York 1971 p. 15

metaphysics, that is often called his '*destruktion'*, can be seen as founded upon an interplay between *yin* and *yang*, as concealment and un-concealment and, as will be explored in this section, the denial of this interplay through the loss of the *yin* in Western thought. The modern Western world for Heidegger lacks, in the words of Julian Young, the sense that 'Awesomeness lies in concealment'.[314]

Heidegger's History of Western Metaphysics as the Loss of *Yin*

This loss of *yin* can be said to begin with Plato. While it is not necessary to enter into a full account of Heidegger's reading of Plato's theory of truth, it is important to note that Plato shifts the understanding of truth towards the Forms that he understands as ideas (*eidos*). From the position of Plato's *Republic*, the world of the senses is regarded as an imperfect shadow of the true world of the Forms. From this, Heidegger proceeds to state 'that the beingness of whatever is, is defined for Plato as *eidos* (aspect, view) is the presupposition, destined far in advance and long ruling indirectly in concealment, for the world's having to become a picture'.[315] Such an interpretation may appear a peculiar reading of Plato, in so far as Plato's philosophy is normally read as a passage away from an image towards truth. However, Heidegger views Plato's theory of truth as representing a crucial shift away from the pre-Socratic understanding of truth as *aletheia*, concealment and un-concealment. As such, Plato can be read as retreating from the significance of concealment. For Plato, darkness is implicitly seen as negative, associated with the shadows on the cave that have to be transcended. As Heidegger understands it, Western metaphysics continues this underlying Platonic project. In Plato's interpretation, the ultimate goal of philosophy is to attain knowledge of the Form of the Good, which Plato identifies with the sun,

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[314]   J. Young *Heidegger's Philosophy of Art* Cambridge University Press Cambridge 2001 p. 43
[315]   M. Heidegger 'The Age of the World Picture' *Question Concerning Technology and Other* Essay Translated by William Lovitt Harper and Row New York 1977.p. 131:

which may be associated in Heideggerian terms with total un-concealment. While there is a sense in Plato that the Form of the Good may remain un-graspable, from a Heideggerian perspective, it may be read as setting out the path for the later development of Western philosophy.

Hegel can also be interpreted as further extending this dominance of the yang in Western thought, in so far as for Hegel, the goal of philosophy is to gain total disclosure of the world, when the 'Absolute Spirit' is able to contemplate itself. As the Hegelian Kojève states, the goal of philosophy is to become the 'wise man', who is said to have 'absolute knowledge, as *perfectly* self-conscious'.[316]. Kojève contrasts the Hegelian notion of the "wise man" which might be said to represent extreme *yang,* with 'the Hindu thinkers, who say that man approaches satisfaction-perfection in a dreamless sleep, that satisfaction-perfection is realized in the absolute night of the "fourth state" *turiya*'.[317] Entering into a full and complete discussion of this aspect of Hindu thought cannot be undertaken. However it might be said that in Daoist terms, such a state would be understood as that of extreme *yin.* The association of sleep with *yin* will be returned to later. Kojève, however, does not enter into a serious discussion of the possibility of '*turia*' or *turiya* as a philosophical ideal, seeing the Platonic-Hegelian ideal of wisdom as underlying all philosophy.

Taking such a position, it seems there is little room for *yin* in Kojève's Hegelian ideal of complete self-consciousness in the sense of Heidegger's concealment. For Hegel, such an element would appear only negative as a limit to the Spirit's self realisation. This can be observed in Hegel's understanding of the religion of the Syrians and Semitic Western Asians. Hegel speaks in a deeply negative way

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[316] A. Kojève *Introduction To Reading Hegel: Lectures on the Phenomenology of Spirit*:. Assembled by Raymond Queneau: Edited Allan Bloom Translated. James H Nicols, JR. Cornell University Press 1980 p.76

[317] *Ibid* pp 83-84

about the 'worship of the Universal Power of Nature' represented by 'Astarte, Cybele, Diana of Ephesus', associating such worship with 'sensuous intoxication, excess and revelry'.[318] This shows a marked contrast to Heidegger's reverential tone towards Artemis. Hegel's assessment is that, rather than 'sheltering and concealment', the worship of nature is associated with 'destruction of its consciousness on the part of the Spirit in striving to identify itself with Nature, and the annihilation of the Spiritual in general".[319] Hegel clearly sees such a position as deeply regressive; and his analysis of the significance of nature in the Greek world differs radically from Heidegger's reading of ancient Greece, as fundamentally founded upon the primal strife between earth and world. Hegel states that, regarding 'the Diana of Ephesus (that is nature as the universal mother), the Cybele and Astarte of Syria - such comprehensive conceptions remained Asiatic, and were not transmitted to Greece'.[320] For Hegel, it is the progressive achievement of the Greek world that 'begins with Nature, but transforms it into a mere objective form of its (Spirit's) own existence.[321] This reading shows a clear difference from Heidegger's understanding of Greek art as setting forth the earth. In Hegel, the ultimate goal of history and the ideal of progress is the complete realisation of the spirit, that might read as the *yang* or unconcealment in Heidegger, and the complete domination over nature, which might be read as *yin*, or concealment in Heideggerian terms.

In Heidegger's writings, the ultimate culmination of the history of Western metaphysics lies with Nietzsche. Therefore, in this interpretation of Heidegger, Nietzsche would be read as the ultimate disclosure of yang. Such a reading of Nietzsche, however, appears problematic, particularly given the significance of the

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[318] G.W.F. Hegel *Philosophy of History*: Translated J.Sibree Dover: New York 1956 p. 192
[319] *Ibid* pp 192 to 193
[320]   *Ibid* p 234
[321] *Ibid*

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Dionysian in the early Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy*. It has already been hinted at that Dionysian in the Nietzschean sense may not correspond exactly to the *yin* as it is understood in Daoism. For example, while Nietzsche associates the yin with darkness, he does not associate it with receptivity. A full discussion of Nietzsche's philosophy cannot be entered into, but taking Heidegger's reading of Nietzsche's philosophy as a basis, the mature Nietzsche can be understood as the culmination of the dominance of the *yang* in Western philosophy. As has been previously discussed, Heidegger sees Nietzsche as the spokesperson for the dominant metaphysics of Western modernity; and as such, for Heidegger, Nietzsche is the clearest expression of what was previously thought out in Western metaphysics, but which was never previously made clear. Heidegger describes Nietzsche's philosophy as 'the consciousness that unconditionally and in every respect has become conscious of itself as that knowing which consists in deliberately willing the will to power'.[322] Heidegger understands Nietzsche's philosophy as a metaphysical interpretation of everything that is, in terms of its ability to exert power and continually enhance its power. As such, Nietzsche, for Heidegger, 'realises conditions for absolute dominion over earth'.[323] Nietzsche's doctrine of the eternal return of the same is interpreted as this continual affirmation of the will to power. There is no space in such metaphysics for anything to be disclosed as yin, in so far as there is no position for anything to be mysterious and receptive.

Heidegger's Understanding of Technology as the Loss of *Yin*

The ultimate culmination of the history of Western metaphysics, and for Heidegger, the application of Nietzsche's metaphysics, is the dominance of modern

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[322]   M. Heidegger 'The Word of Nietzsche' *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays* Harper Torch Books Harper Row New York 1977 p. 103
[323]   M. Heidegger *Nietzsche Volume 4:* Translated by David Farrell Krell, Harper Collins San Francisco 1991 p. 231

technology.

> The securing of supreme and absolute self-development of all the
>
> capacities of mankind for absolute dominion over the entire earth is
>
> the secret goad that prods modern man again and again to new
>
> resurgences, a goad that forces him into commitments that secure
>
> for him the surety of his actions and the certainty of his aims.[324]

As previously noted, in Heidegger's view, modern technology is understood as the reduction of the 'earth' to 'resources standing in reserve'. Heidegger's assessment is that modern technology is based upon a continual flow of resources with no ultimate centre of subject, transforming everything 'into an energy source for the coming to of the fully realized technological future, with everything in a waiting mode, on stand by ready to be parasited by the demands of technicity'.[325] As such, this might be read as the ultimate loss of the *yin,* in that the earth can no longer be disclosed as *yin* sheltering and concealing - if the earth is demanded by *Gestell* to be 'orderable as standing-reserve'.[326] In effect, this means that it is no longer possible for the stone to have 'instantly withdrawn into the same dull weight and mass of its fragments',[327] if the stone is understood simply as a 'mineral deposit' yielding 'ore, ore to yield uranium, for example; uranium is set upon to yield atomic energy, which can be released either for destruction or for peaceful use.'[328] This understanding of

[324] M. Heidegger *Nietzsche Volume 4:* Translated by, David Farrell Krell, Harper Collins San Francisco 1991 p. 99

[325] Arthur Kroker *The Will to Technology and the Culture of Nihilism* University of Toronto Press Toronto 2004 p.50

[326] M. Heidegger The Question Concerning Technology in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays* Translated:by William Lovitt Harper and Row New York 1982 p. 23

[327] M. Heidegger 'Origin of the Work of Art' in *Off The Beaten Track:* Translated by Julian Young Cambridge University Press Cambridge 2002. p. 25

[328] M. Heidegger 'The Question Concerning Technology' *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays.:* Translated by William Lovitt Harper and Row New York 1977 p. 15

modern technology, in effect, sees modern technology as representing the complete dominance of the *yang* to the extent that there is no longer a possibility of dynamic interplay between *yin* and *yang*. In the sense that it is expressed in the 'Origin of the Work of Art', the primal strife between earth and world is no longer possible within a world dominated by modern technology.

This complete domination of modern *yang* in the form of modern technology means that it is no longer possible, as Julian Young states, to see 'awe and reverence'. It can be linked fundamentally with a sense of the disenchanted, in that 'if one feels one has plucked out the heart of another's mystery, that one has complete conceptual mastery of what makes her "tick"-that she has become as Heidegger would say, completely "calculable"- then she cannot command awe or even respect'.[329]. It is notable here too, that Heidegger associates the feeling of the sacred precisely with concealment and mystery, which can be linked with *yin*. This appears to run directly counter to the Platonic sense, and thus to elements in the Western tradition of religion and philosophy that are based on Plato, that associates the divine with light and disclosure, in effect, with *yang*.

Heidegger's Response to Technology and the *Yin*

Responding to a world dominated by technology is a central concern within the later Heidegger's philosophical project, which could be read as an effort to reclaim a space for *yin*. Thus, Heidegger's thought could be understood as attempting to renew an attunement to a sense of the *yin*. This concern underlies Heidegger's dialogue with the East Asian world, linking with Heidegger's own comment on ancient Greece that '[t]he Asiatic element once brought to the Greeks a dark fire, a flame that their poetry

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[329] J. Young *Heidegger's Philosophy of Art* Cambridge University Press Cambridge Cambridge 2001 p. 43

and thought reorder with light and measure'. This seems to link directly with Heidegger's speculation that 'the East could be for us another sun-rising'.[330]

It appears that Heidegger sought to renew the primal interplay between the earth and world, or dynamic interplay between *yin* and *yang*. Hence, at times, Heidegger can be said to emphasise essentially *yin* virtues. This is illustrated in the example Hwa Yol Jung raises that, for Heidegger, 'thinking as pious, is receptive and reverential. It is a receptive response to the "call" or "voice" of Being';[331] and he is also correct to link this with the *yin* principle, suggesting again Heidegger's thought as a re-emphasis on the importance of *yin* receptivity, against the extreme *yang*, Nietzschean, position concerning the continual optimisation of the will to power. This appears similar to some points in the *Dao De Jing*, which seeks to emphasise essential *yin* virtues: 'the highest benevolence is like water'[332] or 'the best way to live is to be like water'[333] and 'the movement of the *Dao* is to return the way of the *Dao* is to yield'.[334] This might be understood as Laozi's attempt to re-emphasise the role of *yin* against the possible excess of *yang* in Confucianism. However, it might be described as the most direct contrast to Nietzsche's extreme *yang*, and his emphasis on hardness in *Thus Spake Zarathustra*. This can particularly be seen in the radical difference between Nietzsche's parable of the diamond and charcoal in *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, where Nietzsche speaks in terms of an unqualified support for hardness, 'for creators are hard' and 'oh my brothers become hard'.[335] This can be taken to represent a continual enhancement of *yang* as hardness in Nietzsche that Heidegger would

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[330]   M. Heidegger *Sojourns: Journey to Greece* Translated by John Panteleimon Manoussakis State University of New York Press New York 2005 pp 26-27

[331]   Hwa Yol Jung 'Heidegger's Way with Sinitic Thinking' in *Heidegger and Asian Thought* Edited by Graham Parkes University of Hawaii Press 1990 p. 230

[332]   Laozi *The Tao Te Ching The Definitive Edition* Translated by Jonathan Star Tarcher Penguin New York 2001 p. 29

[333]   *Ibid*   p.21

[334]   *Ibid* p.53

[335]   F. Nietzsche *Thus Spake Zarathustra::* Translated by J. Hollingdale Penguin Classics London 1969. p. 231

associate with will to power, in sharp contrast to Laozi's saying that 'the soft overcomes the hard and the yielding triumphs over the rigid'[336], which can be interpreted as viewing the receptivity of the *yin* more positively.

Is Heidegger Pro-*Yin* and Anti *Yang*?

Yet Heidegger's position should not be thought of as simply 'pro-yin' and 'anti-yang', even though certain readings of Heidegger might be said to over-emphasise the yin aspects of his thought. Such readings might seem to present Heidegger's thought as crudely technophobic, even Luddite, or perhaps, as Richard Rorty refers to him, Heidegger as an 'ascetic priest' in Nietzsche's sense,[337] in the sense that a *yin*-centred reading of Heidegger's philosophy would in effect see Heidegger as set up against any kind of human action upon nature. Such a reading of Heidegger is offered by Graham Harman: 'for Heidegger, technology is a gloomy drama in which invention merely strips the mystery from the world'.[338] Richard Rorty can be said to exemplify such a reading of Heidegger as a pro-*yin* and anti-*yang* thinker when he comments that 'Heidegger's utopia is pastoral, a sparsely populated valley in the mountains'.[339] It is significant that Rorty further associates Heidegger with Hinduism, stating that Heidegger is seeking to make 'contact with what he calls his "true self" or "Being" or "Brahma" or "Nothingness"'.[340] Whether or not this is an accurate reading of Hindu philosophy is a point that cannot be fully discussed here, although it should be noted that by Brahma, Rorty means Brahman, the un-changing

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[336] Laozi *The Tao Te Ching The Definitive Edition* Translated by Jonathan Star Tarcher Penguin New York 2001 p 78

[337] R. Rorty 'Heidegger, Kundera and Dickens in *Essays On Heidegger and Others* Cambridge University Press 1991 p. 70   .

[338] G. Harman *'The McLuhans and Metaphysics':*in*: New waves in Philosophy of Technology:*: Edited by Jan Kyrre Berg Olsen, Even Selinger and Soren Riis   Palgrave Macmillan Hampshire 2008 p. 112

[339] R. Rorty 'Heidegger, Kundera and Dickens'in *Essays On Heidegger and Others* Cambridge University Press Cambridge 1991 p 75

[340] *Ibid* p 71

ground of existence in Hindu philosophy. It is, however, clear that there is an underlying Schopenhauerian element in such a reading of Heidegger, in so far at it appears to suggest that Heidegger wishes to have a simple renunciation of the World in the sense of not merely rejecting modern technology, but possibly all action that brings order and structure to the Earth. This would be the extreme *yin*-reading of Heidegger's philosophy.

However, such a reading of Heidegger is deeply one-sided. An interpretation along these lines would set him against all 'World', in the sense that Heidegger understands it. Heidegger is not against what might loosely be called all human activity that brings order and structure to the 'Earth'. The Greek temple can be thought of as an example of this, while in Heidegger's 'Building Dwelling Thinking', Heidegger attributes a particularly deep significance to the role of 'building', as in his statement, 'the bridge swings over the stream "with ease and power" it does not just connect banks that are already there'.[341] Such an attitude towards human construction appears different from a position such as Pentti Linkola's description of humans as 'a cancer of earth'.[342] What is it that distinguishes such an example of building that Heidegger views as positive, from the dominance of modern technology? Crucially, buildings, such as the bridge or the Greek temple, allow the dynamic interplay between the Earth and World. The bridge in 'Building Dwelling Thinking' is associated with 'power', while the temple in the 'Origin of the Work of Art' is clearly an imposing structure. Thus, they are both definite examples of the power of *yang* in Heidegger's writings. What, however, distinguishes the temple and the bridge from the overwhelming *yang* power of the river dam in the 'Question Concerning

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[341] M. Heidegger' Building, Dwelling and Thinking' *Poetry Language and Thought* :Translated by Albert Hofstadter Harper and Row NewYork1971. p. 152.

[342] A. S. Rufus *Party of One: The Loners' Manifesto* Da Capo Press Cambridge Massachusetts 2003 p. 17

Technology' is that both the bridge and the temple allow their surroundings to be yin. It is this dynamic interplay between *yin* and *yang* that makes Heidegger's notion of gathering possible. Heidegger's thought, rather than the crude technophobic renunciation which Rorty attributes to him, might be thought of as drawing closer to Ray Billington's interpretation of the ideal of Daoist philosophy, as '*Yang* and *Yin* in harmony allow for both action and reflection, avoiding the extremes of the former, found in the materialism of the west, and the "otherworldliness" of Buddhism and Vedānta with their ideals of Nirvana and Brahman'.[343] While a full discussion of the extent to which Buddhism and Vedānta might truly be said to represent 'otherworldliness' in the sense of yin cannot be undertaken in this thesis, it has been hinted at that Vedānta might represent such an extreme. Perhaps a philosophy like Mahāyāna Buddhism is harder to categorise in this way, but that is outside the central question here. The crucial point is that Heidegger, like the Daoists, is essentially seeking for balance or dynamic interplay between *yin* and *yang*. It is thus possible to understand Heidegger's distinction of the ancient Greek *techne* from modern technology along these lines. Froese states that 'Greek craftsmen paid more attention to how the sculpture fit into their environment'[344] so that the environment could show itself. Such activity might be said to encompass perfectly the interplay between the *yang* structure and order of the sculpture, with the *yin* depth and receptiveness of the landscape.

Heidegger: *Yin* and *Yang* and the Modern Westernised World

What does it mean to re-open the interplay between *yin* and *yang* in Heideggerian terms? Heidegger rejects the possibility of simply abolishing

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[343] R. Billington *East of Existentialism: Tao of the West* Routledge London 1990 p 199

[344] K. Froese *Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Daoist Thought Crossing Paths In-Between:* State University of New York New York 2006 p. 193

technology, since 'No single man, no group of men, no commission of prominent scientists, and technicians, no conference of leaders of commerce and industry can break or direct the progress of history in the atomic age'.[345] Is it possible to make sense of Heidegger's apparently enigmatic phrase, 'will we see the lightening-flash of Being in the essence of technology?'[346] This may appear to suggest that Heidegger has become merely resigned to the dominance of technology. Thomson presents Heidegger's position as a '*gestalt* switch', meaning a transformation in understanding so that: 'we see the promise instead of the danger when, rather than see being as nothing, we learn to recognise the "nihilating" of being - that is the "presencing" of being makes itself felt in its difference from enframing'.[347] Such a position may still suggest that Heidegger merely wishes to have a passive acknowledgement of nihilism as the current disclosure of Being, while holding out the possibility of a future redemption. An alternative reading of Heidegger could be that he is emphatically not trying to actively abolish modern technology, nor does he believe that it is possible to bring about a new beginning immediately in the sense of a sudden radical transformation that might be equated with a re-opening of the inter-play between *yin* and *yang*. However, his philosophy might be read as an effort to cultivate a sense of the *yin* out of the dominance of the *yang* within modern technology.

One interpretation of the sort of relationship with technology that Heidegger is seeking to reach is proposed by Hubert Dreyfus who takes 'Woodstock' as an example, which, using non-Heideggerian terminology, he calls a 'new cultural paradigm'. Fundamental to Dreyfus' reading of Woodstock is that 'technology was not smashed or

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[345] M. Heidegger   *Discourse on Thinking*, Translated by John M. Anderson and Hans Freund Harper Rowe London 1996 p. 52

[346]   M. Heidegger 'The Turning' in *Question Concerning Technology and other Essays* Translated by William Lovitt Harper Row New York 1977. p. 49

[347]   Jan Kyrre Berg Olsen, Even Selinger and Soren Riis (Edtited) Understanding of Technology: Ontotheologically, or the Danger and Promise of Heidegger, an American Perspective in*: New Waves in the Philosophy of Technology.* Palgrave MacMillan 2008 p. 159

denigrated but all the power of the electronic media was put to the service of music',[348] which he interprets as focusing on the concerns of 'Greek virtues such as openness, enjoyment of nature, dancing and Dionysian ecstasy along with a neglected Christian concern with peace tolerance, and love of one's neighbour without desire and exclusivity'.[349] While it is not possible to enter into a full Heideggerian discussion of Woodstock, Dreyfus interpretation does provide a possible model of how, within the context of the modern Western world and without adopting a Luddite position, it is possible to have a renewed sense of interplay between *yin* and *yang*. A similar claim might be made of Dreyfus' reading of modern Japan: ' In contemporary Japan a traditional, non-technological understanding of being still exists alongside the most advanced high-tech production and consumption'.[350] Such a society appears in clear contrast to 'the pastoral, a sparsely populated valley in the mountains',[351] referred to by Rorty. While it may not be that Dreyfus wishes to present Japan as a 'Heideggerian Utopia', it can be seen as an example of a society with what would by most standards be called a high level of technology, which may also have a sense of the *yin*. It is of course an open question as to what extent modern Japan may or may not be considered a technocratic society. However, Dreyfus' account does provide a model for how a society may respond in Heideggerian terms to technology.

It is possible along these lines to present a potential Heideggerian future world which is not, in crudely Luddite terms, simply a return to pre-industrial ways. Such a society might still maintain a high level of technical advancement. However, crucially, the society would also maintain an attunement to *yin* in terms of a sense of mystery and depth, as well as an appreciation for stillness as well as action. Such a society

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[348] H. Dreyfus 'Heidegger On Technology' in *The Politics of Knowledge:* Edited by Andrew Feenberg and Alastair Hannay .Indiana Press Bloomington Indianapolis 1995 p.106
[349] *Ibid* p.106
[350] *Ibid* p.101
[351] R. Rorty 'Heidegger, Kundera and Dickens' *Essays On Heidegger and Others* Cambridge University Press Cambridge 1991 p. 75

may preserve an understanding of science, but would reject the hubris of scientism. A Heideggerian society might preserve a high standard of living while abandoning the need for continual economic or arms races, both of which, in Heideggerian terms, might be seen to represent the Nietzschean, continual enhancement of the will to power. In such a world, where the interplay between *yin* and *yang* is present, it might be said that technology would whither away, to a certain extent resembling Engels' prediction that the 'state would whither away',[352] in the sense that technology would not suddenly be abolished by fiat, but rather that the technology or technological artefacts, while remaining in existence, would gradually no longer be allowed to stand as '*Gestell*', meaning a total disclosure of all that is, but would return to *techne*. Such a way of relating to beings would allow for a sense of *yin* as the receptive and ungraspable, rather than simply presenting everything that is as a resource. Achieving such a transformation, however, is not possible through human action. The question therefore remains as to what the place of human action is, in the thought of the later Heidegger.

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[352]   F. Engels 'Anti-Dühring ':*Herr Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science*, Progress Publishers Moscow 1947; p. 111

Chapter 9 Heidegger: *wu wei* and *Gelassenheit*

The later Heidegger has often been read as being fatalistic, denying the possibility of human action making a radical difference to the world. This section, however, will seek to show that such an interpretation is one-sided. In order do this, Heidegger's understanding of action will be considered, particularly his notion of *Gelassenheit*, through the Daoist principle of *wu wei*.

Part 1: Introduction to wu wei

wu wei as a principle forms the political and moral guideline for Laozi's notion of what can be called the 'sage king'. More generally, it might be said to provide an ethical principle for all Daoist thinkers as a means of relating to themselves and the world. A literal translation of *wu wei* (無爲 or in simplified Chinese 无为) would be 'non doing' or 'without action'. It is based on the position put forward by Laozi that 'the sage acts without action and teaches without talking',[353] and it is often also associated with *wei wu wei* - action without action. Roughly, *wu wei* can be defined as between action and non-action. Such a definition, however, appears explicitly contradictory, ambiguous and problematic. Qingjie Wang lists three possible classical interpretations of *wu wei*: Firstly, 'literally doing nothing'[354]; secondly, 'unintentional spontaneity';[355] and, thirdly, the 'action which does not force but yields'.[356] This section will work on the basis of accepting the latter two interpretations of *wu wei*, while rejecting the first interpretation as a one-sided misrepresentation, for reasons that will

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[353]   Laozi *The Dao De hing The Definitive Edition* Translated by Jonathan Star Tarcher Penguin New York 2001 p. 15
[354]   Qingjie Wang '"It-self-so-ing" and "Other-ing*"': Comparative Approaches to Chinese Philosophy*: Edited by Bo Mo Ashgate London 2003 p. 232
[355]   *Ibid* p. 232:
[356]   *Ibid* p. 233

be discussed in the following paragraphs. I seek to explain the principle of *wu wei,* first, by looking at possible misunderstandings of *wu wei,* then by looking at *wu wei* in its historical context as a political position; finally, I will discuss *wu wei* as a philosophical way of life.

The apparent denial of human action in *wu wei* has often led Daoism to appear as if it were celebrating a kind of passive resignation. This is suggested by the fact that Daoist thinkers, such as Laozi and Zhuangzi, as well as the less well known sage Liezi (列子), often seem to concur in the apparent moral arbitrariness of fate and the inadequacy of human endeavour. Hence, Liezi states that 'long life and short, failure and success, high rank and low wealth and poverty, come about of themselves'.[357] This view appears fatalistic and amoral as it can be said to reject a notion of justice based around moral choice, such as in Kantian ethics.

wu wei appears anti-humanist in the sense that it denies the power of a rational agent or subject over outcomes in favour of what appears to be impersonal and arbitrary. It should be noted that fate in Chinese thought is understood as *tian ming,* which literally means decree from heaven, associated with 'mandate from heaven' in the case of the emperor. However, as A.C. Graham states, 'heaven is only vaguely personal even for Confucians and quite impersonal for Daoists'.[358] Hence, fate, *tian ming*, for Daoist thinkers such as Liezi and to a certain extent Zhuangzi, becomes a metaphor for events that happen outside of anyone's control.

In certain Western interpretations, this apparent denial of the effectiveness of human action and effort has been, as J.J. Clarke notes, 'dismissed in the west for promoting a typical oriental attitude of apathetic indifference to the demands of the

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[357] Liezi *The Book of Lieh-Tzu A Classic of Tao* Translated by AC Graham   Columbia University Press New York 1990 p 122
[358] *Ibid* p. 118

world'.[359] Daoism appears to advocate resignation in the face of apparently amoral and impersonal fate.

A similar view of Daoism may be found in some Confucian and Neo-Confucian writings such as Cheng Hao's criticism of the *Dao De Jing* that, 'both good and evil in the world are both Principles of Nature'.[360] Cheng Hao thereby attacks the Daoists for rejecting the Confucian moral order, as well as potentially all moral endeavour and associates the Daoist ideal of naturalness with moral indifference. Such a view would suggest that the Daoist must simply accept both good and evil as natural, while holding a generally negative view of all human actions as all human action would interfere with the natural flow of events. Hence, it is implied that the Daoist life is based around complete resignation.

A view of Daoism as morally indifferent is also indicated by passages of the *Dao De Jing*, for example as found in Chapter 19 which states,

'abandon holiness. Discard Cleverness and the people will

benefit a hundredfold. Abandon the rules of "kindness".

Discard "righteousness"'. [361]

This could be interpreted as portraying a strongly negative Daoist view of all efforts based on moral virtue.

However, a passive, amoral view of *wu wei* as promoting a Stoic acceptance of fate is a one-sided misrepresentation. An example to the contrary could be observed when in Japan, under the influence of Chinese thought, according to Blocker and

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[359] J.J Clarke *The Tao of the West: Western Transformations of Taoist Thought* :Routledge London 2003 p. 84

[360] 'Ch'eng Hao *Selected Sayings': Source Book In Chinese Philosophy* Translated and Edited Wing-Tsit Chan. Princeton University Press Princeton New Jersey 1969 p. 528

[361] Laozi *Tao Te Ching The Definitive Edition* Translated by Jonathan Star Tarcher Penguin New York 2001   p. 32

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Starling, Daoism was held by the government leaders to encourage 'anarchy, rebellion and lack of loyalty to the state',[362] rather than being associated as passive resignation. This apparent perception of Daoist philosophy as deeply subversive on the part of a ruling elite indicates that a reading of Daoism and *wu wei* as only advocating passive resignation fails to see something important. Taking the position of Qingjie Wang, this section will hold that a literal interpretation of *wu wei* as 'doing nothing', although widespread among its critics, 'was not accepted by the mainstream of philosophical Daoism in history'.[363] However, if such a literal reading of *wu wei* as doing nothing is incorrect, how, then, should *wu wei* be interpreted?

wu wei and the Politics of the Warring States Period in China

In order to thoroughly understand the nature of *wu wei*, it is necessary to look at it in the context of the Warring States period in Chinese history, as well as in contrast to the alternative doctrines of Confucianism and Legalism (*fa jia*).

The Warring States period in Chinese history was a period of political fragmentation following the loss of the central government from the Zhou Dynasty. This was also the period of the Hundred Schools of Thought in Chinese philosophy. While not denying the concerns of Daoism with nature, it is important to recognise some degree of political concern within the writings of the major Daoist thinkers. *Wu wei* should be associated with the *de*, the practical virtue of Daoism as the embodiment of the *Dao* in the world, and not merely a resignation from politics. There has been a tendency to downplay the political and ethical aspects of Daoism. This is largely because of a general conception of Daoism as promoting a political

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[362] H. G. Blocker and C. I Starling *Japanese Philosophy*: State University of New York New York 2001 p. 19:

[363] Qingjie Wang '"*It-self-so-ing" and "Other-ing"': Comparative Approaches to Chinese Philosophy* Edited by Bo Mu Ashgate London 2003 p. 233

withdrawal, as well as certain later developments in Chinese philosophy that led to the development of Neo-Confucian thought, associated with thinkers such as Zhu Xi, that began under the Song dynasty and became the dominant system of thought in China under the Ming and Qing Dynasties. Broadly speaking, one could say that Neo-Confucian thinkers adopted elements of Daoist and Buddhist ontologies and cosmologies, while holding a political position based on Confucian social ethics. This focus on Confucianism as social ethics and Daoism as ontology has led to periods of a practical exclusion of Daoism from political discourse.

Although it is not possible here to enter into a full discussion of the two systems of thought, the following discussion outlines the social philosophies of Confucianism and Legalism in order to contrast them with Daoism, particularly in relation to *wu wei*. The Confucian ideal of social harmony is based on a notion of rules (*li*), where a king or emperor cultivates moral virtue *(ren)*, often translated as benevolence or humaneness, and guides his subjects in doing likewise under his leadership. For the Confucians, 'good government begins in the moral self cultivation of able leaders'.[364] It is, then, the moral duty of the able and benevolent leader to both uphold the standards of their own morality and that of their subjects, while it is the moral duty of their subjects to submit to a benevolent ruler. The moral ideal of Confucianism might be said to look to a benevolent hierarchy as a model that is upheld through a code of conduct rather than through direct force or coercion. Hence, for the Confucians, the political discord could be resolved through moral leadership. The ideal Confucian leader, therefore, while he may be required to punish certain wrong doers and socially undesirable elements in order to uphold the ordered hierarchy of society, he would be able to inspire his subjects' obedience through their

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[364] K. L. Lai *An Introduction to Chinese Philosophy* Cambridge University Press Cambridge 2008
   p. 35

own sense of obligation. At the same time he would provide a moral example to them.

Opposed to this is the view, for a thinker such as Han Fei Zi, that, rather than simply the benevolence of an educated leader, what is needed to keep order in society is a system of laws (*fa*). *Fa* in Legalism can be understood as an abstract system of institutional rules, which is associated with the state and thereby distinct from the Confucian rites/rules (*li*) associated with personal moral behaviour. While within Confucianism, there were debates about the moral character of human nature, Confucius clearly held that human beings, given the correct moral guidance of the *li*, could behave benevolently in accordance with *ren*. Han Fei Zi, in contrast to both mainstream Confucians and Daoists, took a more negative view of human nature which is closer to a Hobbesian idea of a war of all against all, thereby rejecting the capacity for acts of individuals to be benevolent in the Confucian sense of *ren* even with the correct moral training, while at the same time eschewing the desirability for the running of society through benevolence from the ruler. The ruler under Legalism must rather uphold, and become the embodiment of, an impersonal system of *fa*, while ordinary people under Legalism are held to be 'instruments of state power; they had two primary functions; food production on the one hand and defence and military expansion on the other'.[365] It is thus required the subjects of the Legalist state should feel deep sense of terror towards sense authority, controlling their own negative or destructive instincts, as well a feeling of insignificance for themselves as individuals. As such, Legalism is a radically anti-individualist, to the point of being a totalitarian philosophy.

While it is true to say that all of these schools of Chinese thought have at times interacted with and influenced each other, (for example Han Fei Zi sought to

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[365]   K. L. Lai *An Introduction to Chinese Philosophy* Cambridge University Press Cambridge 2008
p. 195

appropriate certain aspects of Daoism) the following section will show how Daoism is distinguished from the other two schools. Particularly in the teaching of *wu wei,* Daoism can be seen as opposed to both Legalism and Confucianism. Considering Confucianism first, Zhuangzi directly challenges the Confucian ideal of benevolence, stating that,

> When the Dao was lost, virtue appeared; when virtue was lost,
>
> benevolence appeared; when benevolence was lost, righteousness
>
> appeared; when righteousness was lost, ritual appeared. Rituals
>
> are just frills on the hem of the Dao, and are signs of impending
>
> disorder.[366]

The Confucian notions of benevolence are seen as both overly restrictive and hypocritical in Daoism; while Froese notes that, for the Daoists in relation to *ren* and *li,* 'The problem inhered not in the ideals themselves, but in the fact that they had become too ritualised and therefore undermined sincerity'.[367] This is true to a certain extent that Daoist criticism of Confucian morality is not so much directed the morality itself, but rather against the excessive moralising tone of the Confucians. However, particularly for a Daoist thinker such as Zhuangzi, objection to *ren* and *li* runs at a deeper level, precisely in so far as the Confucian *ren* and *li* in themselves uphold a hierarchical ritualised society. Being *ren* in the Confucian sense means adhering to one's role within the hierarchy. *wu wei* can thus be seen as an attempt to return back to the *Dao* from ritual, righteousness, benevolence and virtue. A.C. Graham states that

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[366] Zhuangzi *The Book of Chuang Tzu* : Translated by Martin Palmer and Elizabeth Breuilly Arkana Publishing London 1996   p. 188

[367] Katrin Froese *Nietzsche, Heidegger and Daoist Thought: Crossing Paths in Between:* Series in Chinese Philosophy and Culture State University of New York New York p. 105

Daoism is 'designed to encourage spontaneity in the same way that the Confucian and Mohist theories are designed to encourage moral endeavour'.[368]

However, *wu wei* in Daoism is more than simply a method of cultivating spontaneity. For Laozi, *wu wei* is associated with an ideal of a 'sage king'. This model of leadership contrasts with the benevolent Confucian leader. In the writings of Laozi, the Daoist sage does not seek to impose a moral order upon the society through benevolence and ritual. The model of Daoist leadership in practice is rather, as expressed in Laozi's words, that

> he guides men back to their own treasure and helps all things come
>
> to know the truth they have forgotten. He does all of this without a stir.[369]

This means that instead of directing people to act in a particular way through imposing a series of moral rules, the Daoist leader should rather encourage people to be true to themselves. However, Laozi still maintains a notion of an ideal society, as expressed in the following passage:

> Let every state be simple, like a small village with few people.
>
> There may be tools to speed things up ten or a hundred times,
>
> yet no one will care to use them. There may be boats and carriages
>
> yet they will remain without riders. There may be armour
>
> and weaponry, yet they will sit collecting dust.[370]

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[368] Liezi:*The Book of Lieh-Tzu A Classic of Tao* Translated by AC Graham . Columbia University Press New York p. 118
 Mohism represents another of the schools of Chinese philosophy in the Warring States Period, which emphasised the importance of austerity and the significance of human endeavour rather than fate (*Tian Ming*). It is not however possible to enter into a full discussion of Mohism here.

[369] Laozi *Dao De Jing The Definitive Edition* Translated by Jonathan Star Tarcher Penguin London 2001 p. 88

[370] Laozi *Dao De Jing The Definitive Edition* Translated by Jonathan Star Tarcher Penguin London

Such an ideal, poses a problem in Daoism since societies such as the militaristic, expansionist Kingdom of Qin, or the ritualistic strongly Confucian Lu Kingdom in Warring States period China, at the time when the early Daoists were writing, do not appear to closely resemble such a utopia. The question is, therefore, how, for Daoists, such an ideal can be realised and indeed were such a society to be set up, how would it be able to resist being conquered by its more aggressive and expansionist neighbours. The danger is that such a Daoist ethos either slips into a default position of conservatism, holding out an impossible ideal of a radically different society, or may appear simply to parallel Confucianism in seeking to impose a set of specific virtues on society. The crucial question is therefore, what would distinguish the Daoist leader from the Confucian in practice?

A crucial part of *wu wei* as a applied in philosophy is responding to the needs of a particular time. Ray Billington states that it means 'acting only at the right time and with the minimum amount of effort'.[371] In this respect, Daoism might be said not to be fatalist in the sense of merely accepting fate, but rather in seeking to respond to fate (*tian ming*), as events present themselves in the current situation, in an appropriate manner. This is essentially how, in a practical sense, Laozi's sage king should act. Hence, Laozi condemns the fact that 'now the rulers are filled with clever ideas and the lives of people are filled with hardship'.[372] With the phrase 'clever ideas' in this passage, the writer appears to be referring to the Confucian virtues and rites being imposed upon ordinary citizens. The sage king for Laozi differs from the benevolent Confucian monarch in the sense that the sage king should be a guide for

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2001 p .80
[371] R. Billington *Religion Without God* Routlege London 2001 p. 83
[372] Laozi *Dao De Jing The Definitive Edition* Translated by Jonathan Star Tarcher Penguin New York 2001 p. 65

the people, but not seek to impose virtue upon the people. This means that the sage king should respond to the particular needs of the people, while at the same time seeking to influence them without imposing an unattainable standard of morality upon them.

A further point is that the sage king in Laozi should not seek to uphold an abstract system of laws as would a Legalist monarch. A Daoist criticism of the excesses and flawed nature of such a Legalist system can be observed in the following passage:

Why are the people starving? - Because their grain is being eaten up by taxes.

That's why they're starving. Why are people rebellious? - Because those

above them meddle in their lives. That's why they're rebellious. [373]

Laozi also challenges the authority of the state to institutionally terrorise its subjects, as would be done through the harsh sanctions of the Legalist state, declaring that,

if people do not fear death why threaten them with it? But suppose

they did fear death and this was the fate handed to lawbreakers.

Who would dare to do the killing? There is always a Lord of Death.

He who takes the place of the Lord of Death is like one who cuts

with the blade of a master carpenter. Whoever cuts with the blade

of a master carpenter is sure to cut his own hands.[374]

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[373] Laozi *Dao De Jing The Definitive Edition* Translated by Jonathan Star Tarcher Penguin New York 2001 p. 88

[374] Laozi *Dao De Jing The Definitive Edition* Translated by Jonathan Star Tarcher Penguin New York 2001 p.87

This can be taken as a rejection of the kind of state terror associated with Legalism, which requires that the state institutes harsh punishments in order to keep its subjects in compliance.

Wu wei in Daoism can thus be interpreted as a rejection of the destructive aspects of the continual mobilisation during the Warring States period of Chinese history. This is apparent in the passage of the *Dao De Jing*;

those who rule in accordance to the Dao do not use force against the world. For that which is forced is likely to return - where armies settle nature offers nothing but briar and thorns. After a great battle has been fought the land is cursed, the crops fail, the Earth lies stripped of its motherhood.[375]

Liu Xiaogan emphasises that, 'for the Daoists, it is not worthy to conquer a country by wars and killing'.[376] This, however, should not be thought of simply as an opting out of politics during the Warring States period, but rather as a response to it. As such, it is possible to understand *wu wei* as a rejection of direct confrontation. It is along these lines that Froese interprets a passage in the *Dao De Jing* Chapter 3: 'thus the sage rules by stilling minds and opening hearts, by filling bellies and strengthening bones',[377] sometimes also translated as 'he weakens their will and strengthens their bones'.[378] The expression, 'weaken their will', has been thought to imply a kind of authoritarianism close to ancient Chinese Legalism. However, such a

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[375] Laozi *Dao De Jing The Definitive Edition* Translated by Jonathan Star Tarcher Penguin New York 2001 p.80

[376] Liu Xiaogan 'Non-Action and the Environment Today: Daoism and Ecology*':* in *Ways Within A Cosmic Landscape* Edited by N.J Giradot James Miller and Liu Xiaogan . Harvard University Press Cambridge Massachusetts 2001 p.333

[377] Laozi *Dao De Jing The Definitive Edition* Translated by Jonathan Star Tarcher Penguin New York 2001 p 16

[378] Laozi *Dao De Jing The Definitive Edition* Translated by Jonathan Star Tarcher Penguin New York 2001 p 28

reading is inconsistent with other passages already referred to from the *Dao De Jing*.

Froese interprets the passage thus: 'if the Daoist ruler seeks to reduce willing, it is because he hopes to encourage people to find harmonious means of relating to each other so that the particular virtues of each other can thrive'.[379] In the context of the Warring States period, such a reading of *wu wei* can be understood as applying to the relationships between states, too. From the perspective of the *Dao De Jing*, an approach to unifying China, such as that taken by Qin Shi Huang, based upon Legalist philosophy through conquest and subjugation, would seem to be too destructive and unable to bring long-term stability. This is exemplified in practice by the fact that, although Qin Shi Huang united China within his life time, his dynasty, faced with a popular revolt, barely outlived his death, being supplanted by the Han dynasty.

W*u Wei* and *Ziran*

The ultimate ethical aim for the Daoists in acting in accordance with *wu wei* can be understood as Qingjie Wang states: 'how "I" can behave in such a way the other's "it-self-so-ing" will have maximum room for growth and realisation'.[380] This means acting in such a way that both cultivates one's own spontaneity as well as that of others. Such a reading of *wu wei* in effect links with *ziran*. The Daoist notion of the free spontaneous individual, *ziran*, which has been translated literally as 'so of its own', is associated with 'naturalness', 'freedom', 'spontaneity', both in people and in beings in general. *Ziran* might be understood roughly as everything being able to be as it is. Along these lines, *wu wei* can be understood as allowing beings to be *ziran*. At times therefore *wu wei* as the cultivation of *ziran* might require the active limitation of

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[379] K. Farose   *Nietzsche, Heidegger and Daoist Thought: Crossing Paths In-Between :*Series in Chinese Philosophy and Culture State University of New York New York 2006 p. 104

[380] Qingjie Wang "'It-self-so-ing" and "Other-ing*"': Comparative Approaches to Chinese Philosophy*: Edited by Bo Mu Ashgate Publishing London 2003 p. 233

certain entities that damage the *ziran* of others. Hence, in order to cultivate the *ziran* of a tree or a plant, it may at times be necessary to actively intervene to protect its growth from the appetites of animals that would wish to feed upon it. Still, however, while preserving *ziran* may require active intervention, it is by definition not possible to force any being to be *ziran.*

This link between *wu wei* and the free spontaneous individual can be seen in Zhuangzi. For Zhuangzi, *wu wei* becomes a more radical position than in Laozi. Zhuangzi appears less concerned with Laozi's ideal of a 'sage king' who is still in some sense guiding a state; rather, he tends to look at *wu wei* from a more individual level. Thus, rather than as a model for government, he looks to *wu wei* as a way of life that affects both the way people relate to the world and to themselves.

This practical application of *wu wei* on an individual level is illustrated by in the story of cook Ding's butchering skills in Zhuangzi. It should be noted that a butcher in China at that time was considered as a profession of a very low social status. Zhuangzi, however, takes the skill of cook Ding cutting the meat as an example of a particular kind of intuitive awareness that 'acts without acting', in the sense that, 'between the joints there are spaces, and the blade of a knife has no real thickness. If you put what has no thickness into spaces such as these, there is plenty of room, certainly for the knife to work through'.[381]

Why does Zhuangzi focus on such an intuitive kind of awareness? It can be understood in Karyn Lai's terms as seeking to depict 'a knack, a know how of living one's life to the fullest'.[382] Zhuangzi appears to associate *wu wei* and ziran with a kind of liberation. Lai further states that, 'in Zhuangzi, the reason for undoing layers of

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[381] Zhuangzi *The Book of Chuang Tzu* Translated by Martin Palmer with Elizabeth Breuilly Arkana Publishing London 1996 p. 23
[382] K. L. Lai *An Introduction to Chinese Philosophy* Cambridge University Press Cambridge 2008 . pp156-157

conventional and cultural conditioning is that they are a hindrance to a more spontaneous and seemingly intuitive expression of self'.[383] It is along the lines of this awareness and spontaneous expression that Benjamin Schwartz states that the 'problem' for Zhuangzi's 'men of gnosis is how to avoid government'.[384] The use of the word 'gnosis' for the kind of intuitive awareness that Zhuangzi is seeking is problematic, although, as will be seen, there is a sense in which it may be called mystical. It is, however, correct to say that it is through this awareness and use of *wu wei* and cultivation of *ziran* that Zhuangzi is seeking to escape from subordination to convention.

Thus, the practice of *wu wei* relates to the Daoist cultivation of *ziran* and naturalness. *ziran* is, in principle, the aim of *wu wei,* which should not be thought of merely as fatalism, but rather as a positive cultivation of such a state. For Zhuangzi, when an individual or entity is *ziran,* it means that it is allowed to follow its own course. At times this may mean limiting the course of another harmful entity. To act in accordance with *wu wei* means that the individual acts in a way that cultivates her own *ziran* and the *ziran* of whatever she comes into contact with. Hence, Zhuangzi's butcher cuts the meat in such a way that he does not violate the structures already existing within the meat; thus the *ziran* of the meat is preserved. The aim of *wu wei* as a way of acting in practice should therefore be understood as a state of just being and allowing other beings to be.

Part 2: Gelassenheit and Daoism

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[383] K. L. Lai *An Introduction to Chinese Philosophy* Cambridge University Press Cambridge 2008 pp 156-157
[384] B. Schwartz *The World of Thought in Ancient China* Harvard University Press Cambridge Massachusetts 1989 p. 232

Heidegger and Fatalism

Heidegger's thought, like Daoist thought, has often been held by critics to be fatalist. Fatalism means in this context the rejection of the capacity of human action to radically alter the state of the world. Richard Wolin, for example, holds this true of Heidegger's thought, stating that he places us 'in impotent bondage'[385] before Being.

It is true that Heidegger rejects the widely accepted understanding of the human subject as an independent agent with the ability to radically change the state of the world at will through conscious choice. Such a view for Heidegger is both illusory and dangerous. He would reject Sartre's position that the self as agent or author always has the capacity to transcend his or her own facticity. This means as the subject, the individual can radically alter the conditions of life through his or her own affirmation of choice. Heidegger states: 'meanwhile man, precisely as the one so threatened, exalts himself to the posture of lord of the earth'.[386] This means that technology as a system provides the basis for the illusion that people are the masters of destiny, and this is the basis of humanism. As such, it appears natural in the modern world to associate 'technological progress' with human mastery over the world.

However, for Heidegger humans are in reality victims of technology. This is because, under the dominance of modern technology through enframing (*Gestell*), humans, too, are reduced to the status of 'human resources'. As has been stated in previous discussions, by technology is meant the disclosure of all that is in terms of its value as a resource, and the continual challenging and optimisation of resources that Heidegger associates with the German verb *Gestell*. *Gestell* affects at a basic level the way that human beings both see and relate to themselves as well as to beings in the

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[385]R. Wolin *The Politics of Being: The Political Thought of Martin Heidegger:*: Columbia University Press New York 1992 p. 15

[386]M. Heidegger *The Question Concerning Technology: The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays* Translated by William Lovitt Harper and Row New York 1977 p. 27

world. Technology, for Heidegger, represents the horizon of disclosure in the modern world and, as such, not only determines the way that beings are revealed, but also affects the range of possibilities for human action both towards themselves and other beings. This means that Heidegger doubts the possibility that human actions may have the capacity to reach beyond technology. As Heidegger states: 'this destining, the coming to presence of technology gives man entry into that which of himself, he can neither invent nor in any way make'.[387] For Heidegger, it is possible to alter superficial aspects of the modern world through human endeavour, but no amount of human action will alter the underlying nature of the disclosure of the world in modernity. In effect, any attempt to abolish the technological disclosure of beings in the modern world by an act of human intervention will ultimately only cause a cursory change and thus, in practice, still affirm technology. For Heidegger, within the framework of modern technology, there is the illusion of continual change and novelty, while the underlying system of flow remains unaltered. The inherent violation in modern technology Heidegger considers to be something structural that is not dependant on the action of human beings. For example, in the later Heidegger, one might have chosen to support Russia or America in the cold war. However, either way, it will not fundamentally alter the disclosure of Being.

This appears problematic for the fundamental project of Heidegger's philosophy, in so far as the later Heidegger's thought can be regarded as offering a response to the dominance of modern technology and nihilism. Heidegger rejects the possibility of mastering history or technology, and thereby seems to discount the possibility of an immediate and simple escape from technology. Julian Young makes the point that there is a sense in which, for Heidegger, 'to believe oneself the master of

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[387] M. Heidegger *The Question Concerning Technology The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays* Translated by William Lovitt Harper and Row New York 1977 p 31

Being would reveal, precisely, one's 'forgetfulness' of Being'.[388] Does this mean that,

for Heidegger, modern technology and nihilism must be accepted as a destiny decreed

by Being? At times, it does appear that Heidegger's philosophy is quietist in simply

waiting for a possible future turning in world history. There are points in his writing

where he talks ambiguously about a future change, such as the 'return of the gods'. In

Why Poets?, such an event always appears messianic, appearing to be set at an

indefinite moment in the future, a distant possibility, and Heidegger clearly seeing it

as beyond the capacity of mortal humans to bring it about. Benjamin D. Crowe notes

that Heidegger 'makes it clear that he has no intention of carrying out Nietzsche's call

for a "new table of values"'.[389] The attempt to systematically impose a new system of

values upon the world would thus slip back into the inherently violent, technocratic

and Nietzschean position that the later Heidegger was trying to escape from. Does this

mean that Heidegger must in effect accept technology and *Gestell* as fate and decree

from Being?

This would appear to leave Heidegger's thought in a weak position, trapped in

the nihilistic world of *Gestell* disclosed by modern technology, which appears beyond

human alteration. As Heidegger states, 'always the destining of revealing holds

complete sway over man'.[390] Heidegger would thereby appear obliged to accept

technology and *Gestell* as the current mode of revealing, regardless of his own

concerns about disenchantment; thus appearing to undermine the possibility of his

own later work ever having any effect. It is along these lines that Herman Philipse

claims that 'Heidegger's seemingly "deep" critique of technology is nothing but

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[388] J. Young *Heidegger's Philosophy of Art* Cambridge University Press Cambridge 113
[389] B. D Crowe *Heidegger's Phenomenology of Religion*   Indiana University Press Bloomington Indianapolis 2007 p.102
[390]   M. Heidegger '*Question* Concerning Technology' in: *Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays* Translated by William Lovitt Harper and Row New York 1977 p 25

pseudo-religious quietism disguised as radical critique'.[391] This, however, is a one-sided reading of the dominance of modern technology for Heidegger; and, furthermore, as the following sections will show, Heidegger's philosophy should not simply be understood as fatalist in the sense of holding all human action as completely futile. Such a reading of Heidegger ignores the central aim of a large part of Heidegger's later writings, which is basically concerned with how to live in the modern world rather than merely accepting the modern world as it is.

Introduction to *Gelassenheit* in Heidegger

As a response to the modern world, Heidegger turns to *Gelassenheit.* He associates *Gelassenheit* with renunciation of will: 'a patient noble-mindedness would be a pure resting in itself of that willing, which, renouncing willing, has released itself to what is not will'.[392] In this passage, Heidegger appears to put forward *Gelassenheit* as a rejection of a Nietzschean-style affirmation of the will. As such, *Gelassenheit* may still at first appear simply as a kind of passive resignation. Heidegger, however, rejects such an interpretation, stating through the figure of the scientist in 'Conversation on the Country Path', that *Gelassenheit* 'is in no way a matter of weakly allowing things to slide and drift along'.[393]

The word *Gelassenheit* itself is an old German word, sometimes translated as "releasement" or "letting go", and is connected with Meister Eckhart's thought, where it is understood as renouncing one's own will in order to act with the will of the godhead. Heidegger was of course aware of the relationship of *Gelassenheit* to Meister Eckhart's thought. However, he still distanced himself from it, stating that,

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[391] H. Philipse *Heidegger's Philosophy of Being A Critical Interpretation* Princeton University Press Princeton New Jersey 1998 p. 309

[392] M. Heidegger 'Conversation on a Country Path' in *Discourse on Thinking*: : Translated by John M Anderson and E Hans Freund Harper and Row London 1966 p. 85

[393] *Ibid* p. 61

'what we have called releasement evidently does not mean casting off sinful selfishness and letting self-will go in favour of the divine will'.[394]

What Heidegger means by *Gelassenheit* does not appear immediately clear in his later writings. Firstly, he makes the bold claim that *Gelassenheit* has the possibility, together with 'openness to mystery', to 'grant us the possibility of dwelling in the world in a totally different way. They promise us a new ground and foundation upon which we can stand and endure in the world of technology without being imperilled by it'.[395] What does Heidegger mean by this claim? It would appear that, by its very nature, *Gelassenheit* is still not able to transform the world, in that it rejects any kind of imposition of a new order upon the world. Heidegger would appear to remain in the position of having to wait for a turning in world history. However, while *Gelassenheit* cannot be equated with an event such as the 'return of the gods', Heidegger states that, in *Gelassenheit* there is 'a higher acting concealed' that is above 'the actions within the world and in the machinations of all mankind' while at the same time being 'without acting'.[396] This apparent ambiguity means that while *Gelassenheit* does not involve direct action to change the world, it can for Heidegger, provide a deeper and more radical alteration. The rejection of 'will' that Heidegger associates with *Gelassenheit*, can in this way be understood as a radical rejection of the will to power in the Nietzschean sense, which Heidegger sees as at the foundation of the modern world. Along these lines, Heidegger's assessment of *Gelassenheit* can be understood, rather than simply waiting and continuing unchanged within the disclosure of modern technology, as representing the cultivation of a particular kind of attitude and relation to the world.

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[394] *Ibid* p. 85

[395] M. Heidegger ' Memorial Address' in *Discourse on Thinking* Translated by John M Anderson and E Hans Freund Harper and Row London 1966 p. 55

[396] *Ibid* p. 61

Michael. E. Zimmerman outlines such a way of acting in three points,

[Firstly] it means not unduly interfering with things. Second, it means

taking care of things, in the sense of making it possible for them to fulfil

their potential. Third, letting be involves not just the ontic work of

 tending to things, but also the ontological   work of keeping

open the clearing through which they can appear'.[397]

The nature of what it means to not unduly interfere and to take care of things will be looked at subsequently. At this point, though, it is important to note that such a reading of *Gelassenheit* rejects what is, for Heidegger, the structural violence of modern technology. As such, *Gelassenheit*, for Heidegger, represents a more radical alteration than any course of action normally undertaken in the world, in that it represents a change not merely in a way of acting, but in a way of seeing and relating to the world. Hence, 'staying open' which Zimmerman associates with *Gelassenheit*, can in this way be understood as a part of Heidegger's overall system of thought, in the sense of staying open to an awareness of the sacred, the ineffable and of the interplay between concealment and un-concealment.

Heidegger, *Gelassenheit,* **Turning and** *wu wei*

Taking this summary as an initial reading of *Gelassenheit,* there is a clear resonance with the Daoist principle of *wu wei.* Heidegger's use of the old German word has been thought to be similar to *wu wei* in Daoism, particularly in a passage where he describes *Gelassenheit* as 'beyond the distinction between activity and

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[397] M. E. Zimmerman   *Contesting Earth's Future: Radical Ecology and Postmodernity*: University of California Press London 1997 p. 132

passivity',[398] while Froese directly translates Heidegger's *Gelassenheit* as 'letting be',[399] which appears directly equivalent to

wu wei in Daoism.

This section will look at the Daoist model of *wu wei* in order to see whether the Daoist understanding of 'actionless action' can provide a way to understand Heidegger's position in relation to the dominance of technology; and subsequently to show that Heidegger's stance is not fatalist. Rather, it will be argued that through *Gelessenheit*, like *wu wei* in Daoism, Heidegger is seeking to cultivate a radical transformation, which at the same time does not involve a comprehensive imposition of a new order upon the world.

Taking the possibility that *wu wei* in Daoism provides a possible way to understand Heidegger's *Gelassenheit,* it is also possible from this to make sense of Heidegger's response to the dominance of modern technology, thus showing the way that Heidegger seeks to resist the reduction of everything to resources within the flow of technology.

Joan Stambaugh defines *Gelassenheit* as 'to stop doing all the things we constantly do',[400] meaning that 'we' stop acting in such a way that affirms *Gestell*; *'we'* stop acting unquestioningly within the flow of resources. Thus, *Gelassenheit* appears as a transformation of perception at a profound level, rather than a passive acceptance of the world as it is. In this respect, *Gelassenheit* can be understood as stepping outside of the technocratic framework of *Gestell*, where everything is viewed in terms of its resource value. Thus, *Gelassenheit* still does not entail acting in such a way as to

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[398] M Heidegger 'Conversation on a Country Path' in *Discourse on Thinking:* Translated by John M Anderson and E Hans Freund Harper and Row London 1966 p.61

[399] K. Froese *Nietzsche Heidegger and Daoist Thought: Crossing Paths In-Between* Series in Chinese Philosophy and Culture State University of New York New York 2006 p. 115

[400] J. Stambaugh 'Heidegger, Taoism and Metaphysics' in: *Heidegger and Asian Though:* Edited by Graham Parkes University of Hawaii Press 1990 p. 86

directly bring about an immediate radical transformation in the modern world. What, however, does a non-technocratic, non-*Gestell* relationship to the world entail?

Gelassenheit is basically what Young calls the 'personal turning', as the 'turning of thought and life of the individual'.[401] Following this analysis, *Gelassenheit* for Heidegger can be understood as being similar to the ideal of the Daoist sage, particularly for Zhuangzi, in so far as Heidegger's *Gelassenheit* presents the possibility for an individual to rise out of the disclosure of Being as *Gestell,* meaning that the individual no longer sees itself, and relates to beings, as resources standing in reserve. This resembles the ideal of the Daoist sage when confronted with a world that is, from the Daoist perspective, corrupted.

Heidegger's position appears closer to Zhuangzi's than Laozi's in so far as Heidegger remains focused on the ideal of certain individuals being able to rise above the dominant framework of the surrounding world, as has been discussed here, rather than an ideal of a 'sage king' guiding the whole of society. Hence, the 'releasement' of the Heideggerian thinker who practises *Gelassenheit* resembles Zhuangzi's 'liberation from the need to pursue the goals set up by one's cultural tradition'.[402] In Zhuangzi's position, it is the liberation from the conformist and hierarchical Confucian or Legalist dominated court life and mass mobilisation of the Warring States era, while in Heidegger's case, it is liberation from the consumerist and reductionist nature of technology based on *Gestell*. In both cases, they do not seek to enforce a radical transformation of the world around them through conquest, but rather promote a deep personal transformation. Although Schwartz describes Zhuangzi's philosophy as 'mystic gnosis',[403] in neither of the cases does it involve a direct revelation or specific

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[401]J. Young *Heidegger's Later Philosophy*: Cambridge University Press Cambridge 2002 p.89

[402] K. Lai *An Introduction to Chinese Philosophy:* Cambridge University Press Cambridge 2008
p. 160

[403]B. Schwartz *The World of Thought in Ancient China:*: Harvard University Press Cambridge Massachusetts 1989 pp 215-237

kind of knowledge. Rather, in both instances, it involves cultivating a particular way of seeing and relating to the world. In this way, it does not involve one single radical 'turn' once and for all, but rather the continual cultivation of this non-enframing way of relating to beings.

      Gelassenheit (interpreted as *wu wei*) does not require a radical epochal turning in the world, but rather presents a way for individuals to live within the modern world without being entirely taken into the flow of resources; both in the sense of not viewing beings entirely in terms of resource value and also not relating to oneself as a human resource. In this way, it is possible to make sense of Heidegger's statement, 'we can use technical devices and yet keep ourselves so free of them, that we may let go of them any time'.[404] The cultivation of *Gelassenheit* understood as *wu wei*, while accepting the continued dominance of technology and enframing of the current epoch, at the same time allows a state of existence that is in itself non-technocratic. Thus, it becomes possible to live with the modern world without being completely taken into the metaphysics and disenchantment of the modern world.

Heidegger: *Ziran*, Dwelling and Freedom

      Just as for Heidegger viewing beings in a technocratic way through *Gestell*, as resources standing in reserve, is, by definition, violating the earth and world regardless of how one then acts, seeing everything that is, in terms of *Gelassenheit* in itself lets things be. For Heidegger, once someone has assumed *Gelassenheit*, beings in the world will in effect be allowed to be disclosed in a different, non-technocratic way, and, as such, one will act differently towards them. What is the essential state of existence that Heidegger is trying to cultivate through *Gelassenheit*? This state can be

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[404] M. Heidegger ' Memorial Address' in *Discourses on Thinking*   Translated by John M Anderson and E Hans Freund Harper and Row London 1966 p 55

understood in terms of *ziran* as Zhuangzi understands it: as a state of naturalness, as 'it self so-ing' as Qingjie Wang interprets it. *ziran* can be understood precisely as that which is lost for Heidegger in the 'challenging forth'[405] and optimisation of resources standing in reserve. Hence, in the same way that Qingjie Wang sees *ziran* and w*u wei* as linked in Daoism, it is possible to see in Heidegger an underlying relationship of *Gelassenheit* to a state that is equivalent to *ziran* in Daoism.

The following in Heidegger's 'Building Dwelling Thinking' exemplifies this:

> To dwell, to be set at peace, means to set at peace, to remain at
> peace within the free, the preserve, the free sphere, that safeguards each
> thing in its nature. The fundamental character of dwelling is this sparing
> and preserving.[406]

This clearly resonates with *ziran* in the Daoist tradition, in so far as 'dwelling' in this passage is understood as existing in a state where beings are allowed to be 'set at peace'. This can be seen further in Heidegger's understanding of 'free', which he states, 'really means to spare'.[407] This shows a radical break from a view of freedom as being able to assert one's will, to one of leaving beings as they are. Technology through *Gestell* denies the freedom of beings in precisely this sense. Freedom for Heidegger can be associated with a state of 'just being', with naturalness, or *ziran* in Daoist terms.

Heidegger's aim to cultivate an anti-instrumentalist view of things may thus appear similar to Zhuangzi's story of the oak tree and the carpenter, where the tree

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[405] M. Heidegger 'Question Concerning Technology' in *Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays* Translated by William Lovitt Harper and Row New York 1977 p. 23
[406] M. Heidegger 'Building, Dwelling Thinking' in *Poetry, Language and Thought:* Translated by Albert Hofstadter Harper and Row New York 1971 p. 149
[407] *Ibid*

states, 'I have perfected the art of uselessness and this has been very useful to me', while 'trees such as hawthorn, pear trees, orange trees, citrus trees, gourds and other such fruit', 'because they are useful, they suffer, and they are unable to live out the years heaven decrees for them'.[408] In Heideggerian terms, the 'useless tree' can be understood as the tree that does not get used up in the flow of technology. For Heidegger, the simple view of the tree as a supply of wood standing in reserve waiting to be used up in the flow of resources has already been destroyed, because the tree is no longer allowed to disclose itself simply as a tree. Even before it is cut down, it already is seen and judged merely in terms of its commodity value. It is unable to remain as it is. Under such circumstances, uselessness stands out against the view of everything in terms of use value. It is notable that Zhuangzi goes on to say that, 'this is the sort of uselessness that sages live by'.[409] This understanding of the sage as useless appears similar to the Heideggerian notion of the thinker who steps outside of the flow of resources. In this respect, both Heidegger and Zhuangzi are trying to cultivate an appreciation of uselessness in the sense that they both oppose the continual optimisation of use value and the valuation of beings only according to their use value in the flow of resources in technology.

Preserving *ziran* in this way, as letting beings be, may therefore appear to prevent the Heideggerian dweller from extracting any kind of practical utility from beings encountered in the world. Such a view would suggest that any kind of use would entail violation. However, this may be a one-sided view. Graham Parkes states that 'Heidegger would applaud a woodworker who himself seeks and finds the perfect tree for the chair he has in mind, and then proceeds to fashion it with thoughtful hands

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[408] *Zhuangzi:The Book of Chuang Tzu:* Translated by Martin Palmer and Elizabeth Breuilly Arkana Publishing London 1996 pp33-34
[409] *Ibid* p 34

to respond to the uniqueness of the wood'.[410] Along these lines, in *What is Called Thinking*? Heidegger states that 'proper use does not debase what is being used'.[411] To a certain extent, elements of this have been looked at in the previous section on Heidegger and the *yin* and *yang*, although in the current discussion, it is possible to see further the link with Zhuangzi's butcher, also referred to previously, who cuts in accordance with the joints of the meat. In both cases, they hold a skill and awareness of that which they are acting upon, that reveals the form latent within it. The butcher with his knife has to respond to the structure of the meat. This directly parallels Heidegger's statement, 'when we hand a thing, for example, our hand must fit itself to the thing'.[412] What distinguishes such forms of action, craft or skill from *Gestell* is that such actions allow, or even in some sense might be able to cultivate, *ziran,* the essential nature of things. Froese makes the point that, for Heidegger, 'one must provide an opening for other beings through one's actions'.[413] At times, acting in this way requires more than simply and passively leaving things as they are; but, crucially, it never involves imposing one's own will on beings.

Thus, the Daoist sense of 'actionless action', understood as 'acting in such a way that lets beings be', can be understood in Heideggerian terms as to 'act without enframing (*Gestell*)'. In both cases, in the Daoist and Heideggerian sense, this may involve not just a passive leaving of beings as they are, but a positive cultivation of beings. However, it never involves mass subjugation in the sense of a radical reduction of beings to resources that Heidegger associates with *Gestell*.

Heidegger's thought should not be taken as a direct attempt to bring about a

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[410] G. Parkes 'Thoughts On the Way'*: Heidegger and Asian Thought* University of Hawaii Press1990 p. 130

[411] M. Heidegger *What is Called Thinking:* Translated by J. Glenn Gray Harper Row New York p. 187

[412] *Ibid*

[413] K. Froese *Nietzsche, Heidegger and Daoist Thought: Crossing Paths In-between* Series in Chinese Philosophy and Culture State University of New York New York 2006 p 149

new world disclosure, nor as simply a matter of fatalistically waiting, but rather as seeking to cultivate a way of relating to beings that can be understood in the sense of the practice of Daoism. While Heidegger's thought remains passive on a world historical scale, it should not be thought of as passive or indifferent on a personal scale.

Heidegger's philosophy thus offers what can loosely be called an 'ethical position' based on *Gelassenheit* and dwelling, which can be understood through *wu wei* and *ziran.* It is an 'ethical position' that can be understood as acting in such a way that 'lets things be', which, while rejecting direct wilful imposition upon the world, at times does involve a positive cultivation. It should be considered as 'ethical', not in the Kantian sense of seeking to lay down a categorical imperative that can be expressed as a set of commandments or fixed code of behaviour, nor even in the sense of a Confucian virtue of benevolence based on the rites or Christian ideal of charity. What Heidegger is seeking in *Gelassenheit* is closer to the ancient Greek notion of *ethos* that offers a way of seeing and relating to the world that precedes acting or not acting in a particular way. Heidegger sees taking this attitude as superior and praiseworthy, ultimately offering a richer and less inherently destructive form of life in comparison with simply continuing to relate to beings in a technocratic way based on *Gestell*. Implementing this fundamental change, however, should influence the way that someone acts. At times, it does require a positive cultivation; as Heidegger states, 'real sparing is something positive'.[414] Its main aim, however, is to resist the overarching nature of *Gestell* as the reduction of all beings to resources standing in reserve.

The problem with such a position is that, while it is not completely fatalist, it still remains deeply focused on a personal transformation, rather than seeking to

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[414] M. Heidegger 'Building, Dwelling Thinking' in *Poetry Language and Thought:* Translated Albert Hofstadter: Harper Row New York 1971 p.149

transform the world or society. An individual could practice *Gelassenheit* in the sense outlined above, and the rest of the flow of resources would be unaffected. As such, Heidegger's position virtually precludes the possibility of mass action in the Marxist sense to transform society. However, in dwelling and *Gelassenheit*, understood through *wu wei* and ziran, Heidegger does provide a radically non-technocratic way of relating to and seeing the world. In this respect Heidegger's philosophy offers a fundamental and profound transformation. Heidegger would willingly acknowledge that it is not an easy state for an individual to achieve within the modern world. However, a significant part of Heidegger's later writing can be read as aiming to achieve this state.

Chapter 9 Heidegger, The East Asian World and Non-Doctrinal Religion.

This section will examine Heidegger's philosophy of religion in the light of Heidegger's dialogue with the East Asian world. The central focus of the section is to show what a possible final understanding and conclusion of Heidegger's dialogue with the East Asian world could be. To achieve this, the argument will be advanced that East Asian thought provides a means to understand Heidegger's efforts to rethink the philosophy of religion, proposing that his thought should be understood as religious, but in a way that breaks with the Western tradition of religion as a fixed set of beliefs. As an illustration of this, I will look at Shrine-Shinto and Zhuangzi's Daoism as examples of non-doctrinal religions. These, it will be argued, provide ways to understand aspects of Heidegger's later religious thought.

Heidegger's Early Phenomenology of Religion

The question of religion is central to much of Heidegger's thought from an early stage in his work. In *The Phenomenology of Religious Life,* a lecture course given in 1920-21, Heidegger takes as a central project a phenomenological enquiry into the life of the early Christian community at the time of Paul's epistles. As such, the project is connected with an attempt to reclaim the primitive Christian religion in terms of a lived experience separated from the various doctrines, particularly those associated with Platonism and Neo-Platonism that were later included within Christianity. Hence, Heidegger in *The Phenomenology of Religious Life* was not concerned with presenting early Christian belief as a metaphysical system, but rather as a form of life based on an eschatological anticipation of the second coming of Christ. Therefore, in the *Phenomenology of Religious Life* Heidegger is not, for

example, concerned with presenting how Paul's epistles could be used to support later church doctrines, such as the Trinity. Thus, as Crowe states, 'since his enterprise is phenomenological rather than theological, Heidegger is not compelled to assent to the truth of such claims.'[415] This means that Heidegger does not need to look at whether Paul's claims are valid as doctrines. Along such lines he therefore states that,

> It is noticeable how little Paul alleges theoretically or dogmatically;
> even in the letter to the Romans. The situation is not the sort of
> theoretical proof. The dogma as detached content of doctrine in an
> objective, epistemological emphasis could never have been
> guiding for Christian religiosity. On the contrary, the genesis
> of dogma can only be understood from out of the enactment
> of Christian life experience.[416]

However, while for Heidegger, the early church may not have had the complex doctrines and metaphysical assertions of later Christianity, it was still a form of life and religious practice that could only be made sense of within certain fixed beliefs. Therefore, for example, although the early church would have lacked metaphysical speculations about the nature of the Trinity, it would still have maintained certain defining points, such as the belief in the Second Coming of Christ, that were thought to be both fundamental and unquestionable. One could not be a Pauline Christian in the sense that Heidegger seeks to present it and not believe in the Second Coming or the authority of certain scriptures. The belief in the Second Coming of Christ is what

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[415]   B. D. Crow *Heidegger's Phenomenology of Religion- Realism and Cultural Criticism* Indiana University Press Bloomington Indianapolis 2007 p. 86

[416] M. Heidegger *The Phenomenology of Religious Life* Translated by Matthias Fritsch and Jennifer Anna Gosetti-Ferencei Indiana University Press Bloomington Indianapolis 2005 p.79

gave early Christianity its sense as a way of life. Hence, the life-world of the early Christian community would still remain founded on a shared holding of fixed beliefs.

It would, therefore, seem that Heidegger's *Phenomenology of Religious Life* is to a certain extent Kierkegaardian in its view of faith as lived experience. This reflects the fact it was written during the period of Heidegger's involvement with Lutheranism in the early 1920s. Such an approach clearly remains strongly indebted to the Christian understanding of what it means to be religious in so far as faith as lived experience is still tied to a commitment to a particular set of beliefs, although at the same time it is seeking to get away from any systematic church dogma or metaphysics. It will be argued here that, while maintaining certain aspects of his early phenomenology of religion, such as the concern to separate religious practice from merely practical human concerns and the rejection of modernist attempts to reduce religious practice to sociology or psychology, in his later work he does make a crucial break away from this position on religion. This break is not merely superficial in that he moves away from explicit references to Christianity in his later writings; but, as the following section will seek to show, Heidegger's later thought aims to challenge the very notion of what it means to be religious, a notion that has been dominant within Christianity, while at the same time associating the holy or sacred with a sense of otherness and mystery. What, therefore, does such a re-thinking of the nature of religion entail?

Introduction to Heidegger's Later Religious Thought

Certain readings of the later Heidegger tend to over-emphasise the continuity between his early and later writings. Crowe takes such a view on Heidegger's

religious position, stating that 'the differences between early and later Heidegger on religion are not sufficient to warrant the claim that his later work is a radical departure'.[417]. Such a position implicitly holds that the later Heidegger still remained heavily influenced by Christianity, or at least a certain notion of Christianity as represented in the *Phenomenology of Religious Life*.

However, at this stage, it is important to note that a crucial change occurred in Heidegger's thought when, in *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, he stated concerning biblical scriptural authority that, 'anyone who holds such faith can in a way participate in asking our question, but cannot really question without ceasing to be a believer'.[418] By this, Heidegger is referring to the question expressed as, 'why are there beings rather than nothing?"[419] This means that Heidegger radically rejected any religion based on faith that required the holding of certain fixed beliefs, seeing this as antithetical to real philosophical questioning, particularly the question of Being.

In this way, his later work represents a radicalisation of Heidegger's earlier position in that Heidegger's early *Phenomenology of Religion* sought to reclaim a notion of Christian faith as separate from later church doctrines. However, in doing so, Heidegger maintains a notion of faith in certain fixed beliefs as defining religious life. Thus, in his early writings, Heidegger still remained attached to a Christian notion of faith. However, in his later writings, he rejected the notion of faith itself. Hence, it is hard to see that the later Heidegger in any meaningful sense might be called a Christian. It would appear that Heidegger rejects Christianity along such lines, not because he disputes any particular belief of Christianity, but rather because he rejects a notion of religion based upon a fixed set of beliefs. The later Heidegger is

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[417]   B. D. Crowe *Heidegger's Phenomenology of Religion: Realism and Cultural Criticism* Indiana University Press Bloomington Indianapolis 2007 p 99

[418]   M. Heidegger *Introduction to Metaphysics* Translated by Ralph Mannheim Yale University Press London 1974 p. 7

[419]   *Ibid* p. 6

thereby implicitly challenging the definition of religiousness that is based on a Christian notion of belief. It would appear, therefore, that Heidegger's later thought must not only reject Christianity, but any potentially parallel religion with a similar model of fixed belief or scriptural authority.

Does such a claim mean that Heidegger has completely rejected any notion of religion? It appears natural in Western thought to assume that someone questioning Christianity is in some sense implicitly opposed to any kind of religiousness. However, from the perspective of Heidegger's later writings, it does not appear to be the case that he completely rejected the importance of religion or the sacred after the early writings. Indeed in many of Heidegger's later writings, such as the 'Age of the World Picture', or 'Why Poets?', his chief concern and criticism of the modern world is 'loss of the gods', which, for Heidegger, is deeply tied to the dominance of modern technology as *Gestell,* reducing the earth to a resource. According to the later Heidegger, there is an absence of the divine within the modern world. However, he did not regard the loss of what, in a general sense, may be defined as the 'religious' in a positive light. In describing the modern world, Heidegger sought, as William Barrett states, to provide 'a description of the world in from which God is absent'[420] This, however, does not amount to a Nietzschean-style affirmation of the death of God, as it is precisely the dominance of the technocratic modern Western world, that is based on the loss of the divine, that Heidegger sought to challenge. Hence, the later Heidegger should not be thought of as an atheistic or even non-religious thinker.

Crowe is therefore right in pointing out that 'Heidegger makes it clear that a reinvigoration and transformation of the religious heritage of Europe lies at the very heart'[421] of his programme, seeking to struggle against the disenchantment of

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[420]   W. Barrett *Irrational Man: A Study in Existential Philosophy*   Anchor Books Doubleday New York 1962 p. 209
[421] G. D. Crowe (2007) *Heidegger's Phenomenology of Religion*   Indiana University Press

modernity. However, at the same time, Heidegger's later thought challenges a model of doctrinal religion as exemplified by medieval Catholicism, where 'the real locus of truth has been transferred to faith - the infallibility of the written word and to the doctrine of the Church'.[422] The religious project of Heidegger's later thought must be understood as a rejection of both, of modern secularism and of traditional dogmatism.

Interpretations of Heidegger's Later Thought on Religion

Given its double-sided aspect, how should Heidegger's later thought on religion be interpreted? It has been understood variously as a lapse into incoherent mysticism, an effort to reinstate ancient Greek religion, or as a continuation of Christian theology. In this section, it will be argued that such approaches to Heidegger are fundamentally flawed, in so far as they all fail to understand Heidegger's radical re-thinking of the possibilities of religious practice. This section puts forward the position that in this radical re-thinking of the nature of the sacred and the religious in general, Heidegger's later thought fundamentally challenges the understanding and definition of what it means to be religious, a view that has been dominant, within western Christianity and possibly to a certain extent within some other religions, at least since the early church creeds and councils such as Nicaea. His understanding rests on the idea, which it appears intuitive to hold, that any religion is by definition identified as a particular set of beliefs that may or may not have practices and rituals associated with them. Thus, adherence to religion, given such an understanding, is defined as acceptance of a particular set of beliefs or doctrines that may then provide the basis for a certain set of rituals and social practices. It is, however, the argument of this section that such an understanding of religion is not universally applicable and

Bloomington Indianapolis 2007 p 100

[422]M. Heidegger 'The Age of the World Picture' in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*: Translated by William Lovitt Harper and Row New York 1977 p. 122

runs the risk of excluding religions, such as shrine-based Shintoism or certain aspects of Daoism, from religious discourse. Furthermore, this notion of 'non-doctrinal religion', the exact nature of which will be discussed subsequently, can provide a way to understand the work of the later Heidegger, particularly regarding the notions of dwelling and the sacred expressed in works such as 'The Thing'.

Seeking to challenge Heidegger's later philosophy of religion, Philipse makes the claim that 'religious believers, whether polytheist, monotheist, post monotheist, tend to claim that they have specific religious experiences that must be explained by supposing that their religious doctrine is true'.[423] From this fundamentally doctrine-centred position, Philipse continues to assert that Heidegger is offering a religious doctrine that is in effect 'post monotheistic' in attempting to substitute 'Being' for the traditional Christian notion of God. He therefore regards it as a failure in the project of the later Heidegger that he could not offer a fixed and justified doctrine or set of beliefs and, as a result, he sees Heidegger's position as entailing a kind of spiritual arbitrariness, thus falling foul of a basic assumption he makes about religion along the lines that:

> as there are many religions, one must *either* admit that each of them
>
> has to be explained by supposing that the religious doctrine which
>
> it embraces is true. Consequently, one has to posit innumerable
>
> gods and supernatural beings, including Heideggerian Being.
>
> Religious people will find this result unacceptable, because
>
> they claim that only their own religious doctrine is completely
>
> true, so that religions are mutually incompatible.[424]

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[423] H. Philipse *Heidegger's Philosophy of Being* Princeton University Press Princeton New Jersey 1998 p.301

[424] H. Philipse *Heidegger's Philosophy of Being* Princeton University Press Princeton New Jersey

Philipse appears to present Heidegger as playing a religious-philosophical trick in order to keep his position safe from criticism by failing to present any doctrines to analyse or review openly, while at the same time trying to set up what is in effect still a religious doctrine in the Christian sense. Such a reading presents Heidegger's philosophy as seeking to offer a religion that is parallel to Christianity, but which, however, fails to assert itself in terms of a justified doctrine and thus falls into incoherent mysticism.

However, Philipse misunderstands the religious project of the later Heidegger. It is incorrect to say that his later thought has such deep 'structural resemblances to traditional Christian monotheism'.[425] While there may still be certain resonances with religion, Heidegger's later thought does make a crucial break with the understanding of what it means to be religious that has been dominant in Christianity. Philipse's interpretation thereby misses the central thrust of Heidegger's later religious thought, which should not be understood as a failed 'creed of Being', nor as another attempt to set up a doctrinal religion along the lines of, for example, Catholicism or Lutherism. It is rather, as it will be argued here, an attempt to rethink the nature of religion.

Another misrepresentation of Heidegger's later thought is that put forward by John Caputo, which states that Heidegger's later philosophy of religion is simply an effort to reinstate Greek religion, combined with an effort to remove the Judeao-Christian elements, which Caputo refers to as 'its radical exclusion of everything Jewish and Christian'[426] in order to restore, 'the myth of the Great Beginning among

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1998 p 301
[425] *Ibid* p 302
[426] J. D Caputo *Demythologising Heidegger* Indiana Press Bloomington Indianapolis 1993 p. 184

the Greeks, to which the Germans are the sole, appointed, destined heirs'.[427] This view of Heidegger's work is further extended by Philipse who holds that Heidegger is generally involved in an implicitly anti-Semitic project of trying to remove the Jewish religious influence on the West.

However, while it is true to say that Heidegger does break with Judaism, in so far as he rejects scriptural authority and strictly exclusive monotheism, the central thesis of Heidegger's thought is not so much to escape from Judaism or Jewish influence, but rather to challenge the dominance of Christian doctrine together with modern secularism. Heidegger clearly uses at times the pre-Socratic or Homeric Greek world as an archetype and potential alternative model of life to set against the modern Western world. This is most clearly expressed in his 'Origin of the Work of Art' and his writings on Hölderlin, although in other works of the later Heidegger, such as 'Building Dwelling Thinking' and 'The Thing', the Greek references are far less explicit. Heidegger himself states ambiguously that he aims

> to pursue more originally what the Greeks have thought, to
>
> see it in the source of its reality. To see it so is in its own way
>
> Greek, and yet in respect of what it sees is no longer, is
>
> never again, Greek.[428]

The exact meaning of this passage is unclear. However, it can be interpreted roughly as stating that, while Heidegger at times seeks to reclaim ideas, particularly of pre-Socratic and Homeric Greek thought, seeing such ways of thinking as preferable to medieval Catholicism or modern secularism, he does not simply seek

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[427] *Ibid* p 177

[428]   M. Heidegger 'Dialogue on Language: Between a Japanese and an Inquirer :in *On the Way into Language:* Translated by Peter D Hertz Harper and Row New York 1971 p. 39

to repeat Greek thought as it was in ancient Greece. Rather than simply seeking to recover ancient Greek thought, Heidegger's project might be understood as an effort to recover a more deeply primordial notion of the sacred that is non-doctrinal. Ancient Greek religion might be understood as an expression of this non-doctrinal sense of the sacred, but it is not the only expression of such a sense that is possible.

Robert S. Gall notes,

with its emphasis on god and gods presencing within the

familiar abode of man, as unfamiliar, the Heideggerian

scheme suggests that the matter of the god and gods is less

that of dogma and doctrine and more that of our being on the

way, going out into the world and giving thought to

what has been given, and thereby perhaps catching sight

of the divine.[429]

Gall's statement on Heidegger's later religious thought is correct and shows that it should be understood as a way of relating to the world that cultivates a sense of the sacred. As such, it cannot be expressed in any fixed doctrinal understanding of religion, and can, therefore, be taken as an example of 'non doctrinal religion'. The following sections will look at Heidegger's own dialogue with the East Asian world and the dialogue between Heideggerian philosophy in general and East Asian traditions of religious thought, in order to clarify the notion of non-doctrinal religion, thereby providing an alternative understanding of the sacred.

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[429]   R. S. Gall *Beyond Theism and Atheism: Heidegger's Significance for Religious Thinking* :
Springer London 1987 p. 87

The Nature of Non-Doctrinal Religion

What does it mean to be religious in a non-doctrinal sense? Given that religion and doctrine have appeared inextricably intertwined to such an extent, for a large part of European and American history, it seems difficult to conceive of a religion without this theoretical basis. Thus, being a Catholic naturally means to believe in church doctrine and creeds, although tied in with the commitment to these doctrines may be certain practices such as the seven sacraments. Such practices are always seen and made sense of within the context of certain beliefs, say the Trinity, to the extent that it would appear impossible for someone to be a Catholic and not believe in the Trinity. The Athanasian Creed, for example, aims to define the 'Catholic Faith' and states explicitly that, 'This is the catholic faith. One cannot be saved without believing this firmly and faithfully'.[430] Throughout the course of the history of the development of Christian doctrine, there have been a number of major schisms, such as the Arian movement, often over what may appear comparatively minor points of belief, thus reflecting the deep significance given to doctrine in defining Christianity. Such a notion of religious belief as central and definitive to the nature of religion still appears central to certain protestant churches, particularly regarding notions such as the Lutheran justification through faith alone. To a certain extent, Protestantism in general and Lutheranism in particular, tend to turn religion into a matter of personal belief, together with biblical authority.

Thus, it would seem natural to assume that adherence to a religion is by definition a matter of accepting a fixed set of beliefs. Indeed it makes no sense for someone to be both a Lutheran and a Catholic, or a Catholic and an Arian, as they appear to be mutually exclusive. It would appear natural to assume that one either

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[430] *Athanasian Creed*: Text prepared by the International Consultation on English Texts (ICET) and the English Language Liturgical Consultation (ELLC): *Creeds, Councils and Controversies* (1989) J. Stevenson edited. *SPCK Church History*

accepts the Augsburg confession of faith in Lutheranism, or one does not. Non-adherence to any religious creeds would appear, by definition, to entail either atheism or agnosticism. A debate between religious sects would therefore seem to be a debate between different doctrines; and a large part of the philosophy of religion appears to be concerned chiefly with the nature and validity of different doctrines as an effort to induce true religious faith. Adherence to a particular religion would thus seem to be defined naturally as an exclusive commitment to a particular set of beliefs.

However, such a definition of religion is not able to include all religions that have existed. It might still be argued that the English word 'religion' itself carries too many connotations of 'doctrine,' and, therefore, should not be applied to systems lacking in fixed doctrinal beliefs. It appears an almost insurmountable task to have a strict definition of religion that might include everything that has, at various times and in various places, been classed as religious. Accordingly, it goes beyond the scope of this thesis to lay down an all-encompassing definition of religion. It appears that, to a certain extent, the rejection of the word 'religion', when applied to non-doctrinal religions, is part of a way of excluding them from religious discourse, thus implying they are in some sense less theologically developed in their understanding of religious belief. Along such lines, a number of Western thinkers, such as Hegel and Voltaire, have held, in Hegel's words, that 'inward religion... is alien' to the 'character of the Chinese people.' [431] Against such views, this thesis will continue to use the term 'religion' to describe non-doctrinal religions. It will seek to show that such doctrinal religions, rather than being less developed, represent an alternative understanding of what it means to be religious.

A wide variety of different religions are 'non-doctrinal', in that being

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[431] G.W.F. Hegel T*he Philosophy of History* Translated by J. Sibree Dover Publications New York 1956 p. 138

committed to them cannot be defined as adhering exclusively to a fixed set of beliefs. Such a list of religions might include Classical Greek religion, as well as certain other polytheistic traditions, mainstream Hinduism and possibly elements of Judaism. The central focus here, however, will be on East Asian religious thought as non-doctrinal.

What does it mean to be religious in a non-doctrinal sense? To answer this question, it is necessary to ask what it is that would distinguish an adherent to a particular non-doctrinal religion from a non-adherent. This appears far less clear cut than for doctrinal religions, particularly since, as will be discussed further at a later stage, in certain non-doctrinal religions, adherence need not necessarily be exclusive. While there may be a wide variety of aspects that are definitive of different non-doctrinal religions, this section will look at two aspects that are fundamental for defining a large range of non-doctrinal religions. These two aspects are a way of living and relating to the world, often marked out by certain rituals; and, secondly, a sense of the sacred which can be understood, in Robert Gall's words, as the way that 'what is divine is shown and emerges through our words, thoughts and deeds.' [432]

The first of these involves a way of life and ritual. This aspect appears naturally dominant, particularly in certain non-doctrinal religions. Gavin Flood states that, concerning Hinduism:

what a Hindu does is more important than what a Hindu

believes. Hinduism is not creedal. Adherence to the *Dharma* is

therefore not an acceptance of certain beliefs, but the

practice and performance of certain duties.[433]

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[432] R. S Gall: 'Different Religions, Diverse Gods' in*: International Journal For Philosophy of Religion* Volume 49 No 1 February.2001 p. 39
[433] G. Flood *An Introduction to Hinduism* : Cambridge University Press Cambridge 1996 p.12

Frits Staal expands that a Hindu 'may be a theist, pantheist, atheist, a communist and believe whatever he likes, but what makes him into a Hindu are the ritual practices he performs and the rules to which he adheres.'[434] Hence, what matters in defining Hinduism, rather than any fixed unified beliefs, is how one lives one's life. This emphasis on practice, rather than doctrine, appears common to a number of different religions besides Hinduism, including certain non-doctrinal, practice-based religions. These practices, in particular in non-doctrinal religions, can be highly prescriptive, such as the conservative Confucian understanding of the rites, or an Ultra-Orthodox Jewish (*Haredi*) reading of the Torah, while others, such as modern Shrine-Shintoism, appear more flexible.

Viewing non-doctrinal religion as simply a collection of rituals and practices, however, remains only superficial. The rituals and practices within specific non-doctrinal religions are given sense and significance as part of a way of perceiving the world. This way of observing the world is not made into a systematic set of beliefs about the world as in doctrinal religion. It is rather a more basic way of relating to the world, similar to mood in the Heideggerian sense, as a way that the world is disclosed. This sense of the sacred as a way of relating to the world thereby provides the basis for the various practices associated with non-doctrinal religions. Hence, at a basic level, it is what would separate the way a religious adherent would see a particular sacred mountain, such as Fuji or Tai Shan, as manifestations of the sacred (a place to encounter the divine), as opposed to the merely aesthetic resorts that a tourist might see. Thus, as Robert Gall states, the 'reality of the divine is demonstrated through a variety of interrelated, integrated and mutually supportive practices.'[435] Such rituals

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[434] F. Staal   *Rules Without Meaning, Ritual, Mantras and the Human Sciences :*Peter Lang Publishing New York 1989 p 389

[435] R. S Gall: 'Different Religions, Diverse Gods'*: International Journal For Philosophy of Religion* Volume 49 No 1 February.2001 p. 39

and practices in non-doctrinal religion thereby act to preserve and cultivate the sense of the sacred or divine in daily living. Hence, for example, tying blue ribbons to a tree in Mongolian shamanism, red ribbons in Chinese folk religion or the *shimenawa* in Japanese Shintoism all make sense because of a particular association with the sacred and also serve to both mark out and preserve the sense of the divine in such places. Such actions define a particular relationship to the world. In this way, practice and the experience of the sacred can be fundamentally and mutually interconnected with practice in non-doctrinal religion.

Non-Doctrinal East Asian Religion

This section will examine shrine-based Shintoism and Daoism (focusing on Zhuangzi) as non-doctrinal religions. Firstly, Shrine-Shintoism will be looked at as a model for a communal and ritual based non-doctrinal religion. Following this, Zhuangzi's writing will provide an ontological view of non-doctrinal religion.

Shrine-based Shintoism provides an important model of a non-doctrinal religion in that it combines an experience of the sacred with a set of practices and rituals that do not entail, at least in traditional forms of Shintoism, a fixed set of doctrinal beliefs. It is notable that Shintoism in Japan has co-existed with Japanese Buddhism and has often been directly combined with Buddhism. This often entailed direct syncretism between Buddhism and Shintoism in medieval Japan. Even at times when Shintoism and Buddhism have existed separately, it has been common for both religious traditions to be practised by the same people. It is reported that 'whenever there is a census or survey asking Japanese to check off a box describing religious affiliation, over ninety percent still select Shinto. Yet some seventy to eighty percent also check off Buddhist.'[436] This apparent overlap between Shintoists and Buddhists in

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[436]   T. P. Kasulis *Shinto: The Way Home:* University of Hawaii Press 2004 p. 28

Japan has led people with a Western understanding of religion to assume that Japanese culture is not serious in its commitment to religion, or else that Shintoism should not be truly classed as a religion. The model of non-doctrinal religion, however, provides a way to interpret the nature of Shintoism and presents a way to understand how it can be taken as a committed religion. Sokyo Ono states that 'the strength of Shrine-Shinto is in its emphasis on sensory experience derived from mystic rites and natural phenomena rather than theological discourses'.[437] The absence of sacred texts and doctrine can be seen as setting traditional shrine Shintoism apart from later developments, such as 'Sect Shintoism' or 'State Shinto' as well as various Japanese new religions, such as Tenrikyo, that derive partly from Shintoism. It is important to note that these are generally later developments in Japanese religious practice, partly in response to Japan's contact with Christianity and, for this reason, they are more doctrinally centered with fixed beliefs. The main focus here, however, will remain on Shrine-Shintoism.

Aside from certain readings of Shintoism, particularly those of Neo-Confucian-influenced Edo scholars, such as Yamazaki Ansai (1618-1692) who sought to interpret Shinto myths and legends in the light of philosophical principles such as the yin and yang, shrine-based Shintoism does not appear to offer what in Western terms might called a systematic ontology. It may rather be thought of, in the Greek sense of the word *ethos*, as a way of seeing, acting and relating to things in the world. Motoori Norinaga held that this way of seeing and relating to things in the world in Shintoism was founded on *Mono no Aware*. This notion of *Mono No Aware,* can be understood as a sensitivity towards the beauty of transitory things in the world, which Motoori Norinaga contrasted with the more heavily rule-based Confucian morality

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[437] S. Ono in collaboration with W. P. Woodard *Shinto The kami Way* Tuttle Publishing Boston 2004 p. 93

that failed to take note of such a sense of things.[438] Shigeru Matsumoto notes:

> Thus we can see that *mono no aware* experiences involves some intuitive
> and aesthetic understanding of the heart of an object, which implies a
> certain sympathy for or even empathy toward the object. In short,
> *mono no aware* as Norinaga conceives it may be understood as a man's
> emotional and aesthetic experience of being aware.[439]

Such a poetic sense of existence is lost with cold indifference or a preoccupation with abstraction. Crucial to Shintoism, therefore, is cultivating a sense of responsiveness to this immediate presence of things in the world. It is related to a certain feeling of awe that in Shintoism is tied to the *tama*, roughly translated as the spiritual power of things. As Kasulis states, relative to such experiences of awe, 'Shinto spirituality is about learning to feel at home with - feeling we belong with them and them with us - even if we do not fully understand why'.[440] This underlying notion of the sacred is tied to and expressed through certain rituals, such as *Misogi* (ritual washing)*,* offerings to shrines (such as rice, sometimes given first, because 'it is considered in Shinto to be the initial gift of the *kami'*, then, 'salt, water and sake'[441]) and the Shinto wedding ceremony. The rituals of Shintoism serve as expressions of the underlying sense of the sacred and ethos of existence, at times being tied to certain particular virtues, such as *misogi* - purity of heart. These further contribute to the notion of a community founded on a sense of the sacred. These, as will be shown later, relate powerfully to Heidegger's notion of religion as 'being in the world'.

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[438] S. Matsumoto *Motoori Noringnaga 1730-1801* Havard University Press: Cambridge, Massachusetts 1970 p 44
[439] *Ibid* p.45
[440] T. P. Kasulis *Shinto: The Way Home:* University of Hawaii Press 2004 p.28
[441] K Nelson *A Year in the Life of a Shinto Shrine* University of Washington Press Seattle 1997 p. 49

Zhuangzi's thought provides to a certain extent a parallel, but also, in specific crucial respects, a contrasting notion of non-doctrinal religion to the heavily ritual and community-focused religion of Shrine-Shintoism. While Shintoism is not as prescriptive in its demands of an individual for the community as Confucianism, the overall focus of Shintoism is still on the life of the community, and important aspects of Shrine-Shintoism, including rituals such as the *Kagura* or sacred dance, only make sense as part of the community. Zhuangzi's writing is more directly focused on the individual life of the sage who is radically distinct from any community.

An additional factor is that, alongside a shift in focus towards the individual, Zhuangzi offers a more developed ontology. It is this ontology as a model of non-doctrinal religion that will be considered here. On first reading, Zhuangzi's ontological and epistemological thought may appear from a Western viewpoint an odd combination of perspectivism and mysticism in that Zhuangzi seeks to both affirm and show the limited nature of a wide variety of perspectives, while at the same time seeking to express a notion of the Dao. These two positions do not naturally appear linked together, with mysticism seeming to imply a higher insight into the nature of reality, while perspectivism would see the truth as being conditioned by different perspectives. In the latter, there are different understandings of the truth for different perspectives and it is impossible to say which perspective is right and which is wrong. Rather than the ontological insight that appears naturally to be associated with mysticism, perspectivism seems to lead more easily to a position of relativism with the view that there is no absolute truth or scepticism, that the truth is unknowable.

Zhuangzi's mysticism has already been looked at in the previous section on Daoism and ineffability. However, the main focus here will be on how the notion of non-doctrinal religion can reconcile the mystical and religious elements of

Zhuangzi's thought with Zhuangzi's own perspectivism with regard to any absolute claim on truth. To do this, it is first necessary to look more closely at the nature of Zhuangzi's perspectivism that is shown by passages such as the following:

> I Zhuangzi, dreamt that I was a butterfly, flitting around enjoying
>
> myself. I had no idea I was Zhuangzi. Then suddenly I woke up
>
> and was Zhuangzi again. But I could not tell, had I been
>
> Zhuangzi dreaming I was a butterfly or a butterfly dreaming I was
>
> now Zhuangzi?[442]

It would appear that Zhuangzi offers equal validity for the perspectives of the butterfly in the dream and of himself as Zhuangzi. Zhuangzi's thought, therefore, seems to differ radically from, for example, Cartesian doubt, which took the ambiguity in different perspectives between dreaming and awake as a challenge to be overcome in order to establish a secure basis for knowledge. Instead, as Hans Georg Moeller states, Zhuangzi 'does not take anything away from the reality of either Zhuang Zhou or the butterfly for he affirms and founds their complete reality'.[443] There is no privileged perspective and therefore, Zhuangzi is willing to accept a wide variety of different perspectives, thereby appearing to implicitly limit any single perspective's claim on truth. Hence, in passages such as 'under heaven there is nothing greater than a tip of a hair, but Mount Tai is smaller; there is no one older than a dead child, yet Peng Tsu died young,'[444] *(Mount Tai* being the highest mountain in China and Peng Tsu being famous for his longevity). Zhuangzi is apparently arguing

[442]   Zhuangzi *The Book of Chuang Tzu* Translated by Martin Palmer and Elizabeth Breuilly .Arkana Publishing London 1996 p. 22
[443]   H. G. Moeller *Daoism Explained: From the Butterfly Dream to the Fishnet Allegory* Open Court Chicago USA 2005 p. 54
[444]   Zhuangzi *The Book of Chuang Tzu* Translated by Martin Palmer and Elizabeth Breuilly Akarna Publishing London 1996 p.15

that such seemingly absurd judgments are possible because of the differences in perspectives. Thus, claims such as 'there is nothing greater than a tip of a hair' can be true by taking a particular perspective. For Zhuangzi, any attempt to hold on to one single, absolute and privileged, perspective is inherently flawed. Karyn Lai, commenting on an extreme reading of Zhuangzi, states that it seems that 'the perspectives of a cicada, the dove, the giant bird, as those of the well-frog and sea-turtle, are equally valid'.[445] This would be problematic for any attempt to set up a religion based upon fixed doctrines.

Given this strong perspectivism, certain commentators have suggested that Zhuangzi's thought has abandoned any notion of one single *Dao* underlying all things, the *Shen Dao*. Along such lines, Chad Hansen states that 'Zhuangzi's argument undermines *Shen Dao'*s absolute monism'.[446] Such a reading of Zhuangzi seemingly holds that perspectivism precludes the possibility of the apparent overarching understanding of the nature of reality that *Shen Dao* appears to entail.

However, David Cooper interprets the *Dao*,

> as the condition for all experience - and hence for worlds as experienced.
> A perspective is itself a way in which the world is experienced or becomes
> present for us and other creatures. So we might call *dao '*the way that gives
> all ways' or 'the origin of presence'. Recalling the Daoist predilection
> for aquatic imagery, we might name it the source or well-spring - even
> the opening up of channels - that enables experience to flow.[447]

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[445]   K. Lai *Introduction to Chinese Philosophy* Cambridge University Press Cambridge 2008 p. 155
[446]   C. Hansen Tao of Tao in Chuang-Tzu*' Experimental Essays on Chuang Tzu*: Edited by Victor H Mair University of Hawaii Press 1983 p. 47
[447]   D.E. Cooper *Converging with Nature: A Daoist Perspective:* Green Books*,* Dartington UK *2012*

Accepting such an interpretation of the *Dao,* Zhuangzi's thought should be read as offering a mystical/religious experience that does not entail the privileging of one perspective. As the *Dao* is understood as a condition which grants all experiences, it can be understood through all different experiences in different ways. Zhuangzi's thought, therefore, can be understood as seeking to cultivate an awareness of the *Dao* within each of these perspective, even though the *Dao* can never be completely revealed within any single perspective. Hence, the *Dao* might be revealed in different ways through different experiences, but it can never be presented as a systematic doctrine. This can be observed in passages from Zhuangzi such as the following:

Master Chi said, 'Yen this a good point to make, but do you

really understand? I have lost myself, do you understand? You hear

the pipes of the people, but not the pipes of earth. Even if you

hear the pipes of earth, you don't hear the pipes of Heaven!'

'Please explain this' said Master Yu.

Master Chi replied. 'The vast breath of the universe, this is called Wind.

Sometimes it is unmoving; when it moves it makes the ten thousand

openings resound dramatically. Have you not heard it, like a terrifying gale?

Mountains and forests are stormed by it, great trees, a hundred spans round

with dips and hollows, are like noses, like mouths, like ears, like sockets,

like cups, like mortars, like pools, like gullies, sounding like a crashing wave,

a whistling arrow, a screech; sucking, shouting, barking, wailing, moaning,

the winds ahead howling yeeh, those behind crying yooh, light breezes

making gentle sounds, while the typhoon creates a great din. When the

typhoon has passed, all goes quiet again. Have you not witnessed this
disturbance settle down?[448]

In this passage, Zhuangzi is seeking to convey, through an intense description of natural phenomena and without recourse to any fixed doctrine, a mystical sense of the *Dao* as underlying all experiences. As Hans-Georg Moeller notes, 'in the midst of changes, the sage is no longer a distinct phase, but the core of the process of *Dao*'.[449] However, this does not mean that the Daoist sage has a unique and distinctly insightful perspective that is separated from ordinary perspectives, but, rather, that the sage can see the *Dao* through the differing perspectives and transformations of ordinary life. It is a sense that, for Zhuangzi, can easily be lost within the ordinary routine of life and certain practical concerns.

This *Dao* as *shen Dao* - eternal *Dao* - can be disclosed through a wide variety of '*daos*' -teachings or ways -, but no single '*dao*' as teaching can claim unique access or complete expression of the *shen-Dao*. Thus, Zhuangzi's thought offers a sense of the sacred (equivalent to the *shen-Dao*) that, through his perspectivism, resists any attempt to lay out a systematic doctrine. Furthermore, Zhuangzi's *shen-Dao* cannot be conveyed through a sudden revelation. A.C Graham maintains that, 'unlike, many mystical schools (including Zen Buddhism, which continued its cult of spontaneity), Daoism does not seek an absolute, unique and final illumination different in kind from other experiences'.[450] The aim of Zhuangzi's thought, as with philosophical Daoism more widely, is to continually cultivate a sense of the *Dao* as a process underlying all things, without setting forth a fixed doctrine.

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[448] Zhuangzi *The Book of Chuang Tzu*: Translated by Martin Palmer and Elizabeth Breuilly Arkana Publishing London 1996   p 51

[449] H-G Moeller *Daoism Explained: From the Butterfly Dream to the Fishnet Allegory* Open Court Chicago USA 2005 p. 55

[450] Liezi *The Book of Lieh Tzu:A Classic of Tao* Translated by AC Graham Introduction by A C Graham Columbia University Press New York 1990 p 8

The Later Heidegger: Daoism and Non-Doctrinal Religion

As has been discussed in preceding sections, a central project of the later Heidegger's thought is the regaining and rethinking of a sense of the sacred within the modern world. It will be argued here that this rethinking of the sacred can be understood in terms of non-doctrinal religion as exemplified by Zhuangzi's Daoism and Shrine-Shintoism.

Firstly, Heidegger's later thought clearly focuses on Being (*Seyn*). The ontological aspects of *Seyn* have been looked at in preceding sections. What is crucial here is the religious aspect of *Seyn,* associated with the sense of 'wonder towards Being'. As Young states, this is associated with the 'wonder that there is something rather than nothing, gratitude because, whatever its darkness (Hölderlin's distant rumbles of thunder), the world is still, for those of us with eyes to see, an extraordinarily beautiful place: not just granted to us there, but rather gifted'.[451] What, however, does it mean to live in such a state of wonder towards Being?

It may at first seem that the later Heidegger is trying to set up a doctrine of Being that would represent one single creed of Being (*Seyn*). However, in the letter he wrote seeking to explain his essay, ′The Thing′, Heidegger takes 'the divine world of the Greeks', 'prophetic Judaism' and 'the preaching of Jesus'[452] as examples of this 'presencing'[453] of Being. Such examples appear incongruous for the reason that the iconoclastic monotheism of Jewish prophets, such as Jeremiah or Ezekiel, appears, by definition, to exclude the polytheistic sense of the divine expressed in a work such as Hesiod's *Theogeny*. As such, Jewish monotheism and pagan Greek polytheism appear mutually contradictory. This means that any attempt to combine such mutually

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[451]   J. Young *Heidegger's Later Philosophy* Cambridge University Press Cambridge 2002 p 60

[452]   M. Heidegger 'The Thing: Epilogue: A Letter to a Young Student'*: Poetry, Language, Thought* Translated by Albert Hofstadter Harper and Row New York 1971 p. 184

[453]   M. Heidegger 'The Thing: Epilogue: A Letter to a Young Student' *Poetry, Language, Thought* Translated by Albert Hofstadter Harper and Row New York 1971 p. 184

exclusive positions would appear to entail a radical dilution of one or both. Heidegger clearly would not wish 'an adornment'[454] (something which is merely trivial or superficial); while, furthermore, he does not appear to indicate or desire the possibility of a Hegelian synthesis of Judeo-Christianity with Greek paganism. How, therefore, is it possible to understand Heidegger's use of contradictory illustrations within his letter?

The 'divine world of the Greeks', 'prophetic Judaism' and 'the preaching of Jesus', should not be understood as an exclusive set of examples, but rather as three easily accessible historical archetypes that provide radically differing understandings, all of which provide for Heidegger a legitimate disclosure of the sacred. The list of possible legitimate archetypes or understandings of the sacred could indeed be extended beyond this, certainly for Heidegger, it could include the poetry of Hölderlin and the East Asian world. It might be projected still further. Hubert Dreyfus gives the examples of the 'music of the sixties', 'the Beatles', Bob Dylan' as well as the 'Woodstock music festival',[455] as what might in Heideggerian terms be called presencing of the sacred. Whether or not it is correct to hold that such phenomena do indeed represent a break from the dominant technocratic understanding of the modern world, as Hubert Dreyfus claims that they do, is not relevant here. What is of significance is the principle that, from a Heideggerian position, it is possible to see the presencing of Being (*Seyn*) in a wide variety of different traditions, understandings and practices, including many that Heidegger himself would not have anticipated.

What Heidegger is seeking, through these different understandings, is to reclaim and develop awareness of the underlying disclosure of the prescencing of

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[454] B. D. Crowe *Heidegger's Phenomenology of Religion: Realism and Cultural Criticism* Indiana University Press Bloomington Indianapolis 2007 p. 120

[455] H. L. Dreyfus':Heidegger on Technology' .in *The Politics of Knowledge* Edited by Andrew Feenberg and Alastair Hannay Indiana University Press Bloomington Indianapolis 1995 p. 106

Being within them. As such, Heidegger's thought allows for a wide variety of different traditions to show a legitimate expression of the sacred. For this reason, he has to reject any one single doctrine as having an absolute claim over the disclosure of Being as *Seyn*. Hence, Heidegger refers directly to having 'renounced the claim to a binding doctrine'.[456] It can be inferred that, for example, Heidegger refers to the 'preaching of Jesus' rather than to Christianity, precisely because the word Christianity carries with it too many connotations of church doctrine, dogma and fixed belief.

Rather than seeking to advocate any particular set of beliefs concerning the divine, Heidegger's later thought is concerned with cultivating a sense of openness towards Being as *Seyn*. For Heidegger, various different traditions and practices can represent an expression of an underlying sense of *Seyn*. What matters to him is primarily to remain open to the presencing of Being underlying such different experiences of the sacred. It is this openness towards the sense of Being that makes Heidegger's thought distinct from a reductionist technocratic approach or a dogmatic position that requires a fixed adherence to one set of beliefs.

This openness towards Being in Heidegger can be understood through Zhuangzi's non-doctrinal Daoism, as has been stated previously. For Zhuangzi, there can be no single overarching claim of truth upon the *Dao*. Rather, the *Dao* is manifest through a variety of different perspectives and transformations, each of which remains valid. Each perspective is in effect a manifestation of the *Dao* that grants the possibility of that perspective. Zhuangzi's sage, therefore, can provide a model for Heidegger's non-doctrinal openness towards the presencing of Being. It is this openness, rather than any fixed doctrine or belief, that enables the sense of wonder towards Being.

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[456]   M. Heidegger 'The Thing: Epilogue: A Letter to a Young Student' in *Poetry, Language, Thought* Translated by Albert Hofstadter Harper and Row New York 1971 p 185

Heidegger - Practice and Shrine-Shintoism

Some of Heidegger's later works focus more directly on everyday practices. 'Building Dwelling Thinking' and 'The Thing', both exemplify this focus. In these two essays, Heidegger seeks to look at what appears to be a relatively routine set of practices, such as drinking from a wine jug in 'The Thing', or building a bridge in 'Building Dwelling Thinking'. Such practices might appear to a certain extent distinct from the ontological concerns that underlie Heidegger's work, in that they are directed as relating to beings rather than to 'Being'.

How should such a change in concern be viewed in the context of Heidegger's overall philosophical project? In order to answer this question it is necessary to look in more detail at the role of practice and ritual in the later Heidegger. These two elements, practice and ritual, in the later Heidegger should both be understood as part of a relationship towards beings that Heidegger seeks to cultivate, and which he refers to as dwelling, *Baun*.

> The way in which you are and I am, the manner in which we humans
> *are* on the earth, is *Baun,* dwelling. To be a human being means
> to be on the earth as a mortal. It means to dwell. The old word
> *bauen,* which says that man *is* in so far as he *dwells*, this word *bauen*
> however *also* means at the same time to cherish and protect,
> to preserve and care for.[457]

Dwelling as *Baun* for Heidegger is, therefore, more than a trivial notion of living in a particular place. It is rather an understanding of how to live in the world,

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[457] M. Heidegger ' Building: Dwelling and Thinking' in *Poetry, Language, Thought* Translated by Albert Hofstadter Harper and Row New York 1971 p. 147

The role of the sacred associated with the four-fold, 'earth, sky, gods and mortals' in dwelling, has already been looked at in previous sections. The main focus here is on dwelling in the later Heidegger as religious practice. As Crowe states, 'what is particularly significant about this notion of mortal dwelling in the fourfold is that Heidegger incorporates a specifically *religious* dimension of meaning into what appears to be a generic account of the structures of human existence as such.[458] What, therefore, does it mean to dwell as a religious practice?

It is clear in 'The Thing' that crucial to dwelling is an awareness of apparently ordinary items, such as the wine jug, It is the neglect of such everyday things that Heidegger sees as a deep failure of Western modernity, in which 'man has so far given no more thought to the thing as a thing'.[459] His concern is not, however, to present a purely intellectual and abstract understanding of things. This can be seen in Heidegger's comments on Kant's 'thing in itself', in which, he states, 'to Kant the character of the 'in itself' signifies that the object is an object in itself without reference to a human act representing it'.[460] Heidegger does not take such an abstract intellectual understanding of the thing as something that is objective and distinct from any practical concern. The focus of the essay is instead poetic. Such a poetic understanding is contrasted by Heidegger with a technocratic view of things*,* as resources or commodities. This raises the question as to how Heidegger seeks to cultivate such a poetic understanding of the thing.

It may at first appear that holding such a poetic sense of the jug of wine means adhering to a particular set of beliefs about the jug and the world in general. However, this misunderstands the nature and focus of dwelling for Heidegger. For

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[458] B. D.Crowe *Heidegger's Phenomenology of Religion* Indiana University Press Bloomington Indianapolis 2007   p. 132

[459] M. Heidegger 'The Thing' in *Poetry, Language, Thought* Translated by Albert Hofstadter Harper and Row New York 1971 p 177

[460] *Ibid*

example, if someone were intellectually to believe in a pantheon of gods, a community of mortals and the sacredness of earth and sky, but continued to live as a consumer within technocratic society, this person would not truly dwell in the Heideggerian sense.

What a particular individual may or not believe is not central to the notion of dwelling in Heidegger. Hence in 'The Thing', Heidegger does not lay out the ontological states of the four-fold as a series of beliefs. Rather, what dwelling entails for Heidegger is conveyed and preserved through certain practices, such as the libation from a wine jug, with reference to which he states, 'in the gift of the outpouring that is a libation, the divinities stay in their own way, they who receive back the gift of giving as the gift of donation'.[461] Crowe notes that, for Heidegger, these 'practices only make sense because of the divine'.[462] However, it is precisely through such practices, rather than any particular revelation, that the sense of the divine and dwelling in the four-fold for the later Heidegger is conveyed. These practices preserve the sense of the gods, mortals, earth and sky as both distinct and interconnected categories. They allow in Heidegger's words, 'earth sky, divinities and mortals - being at one with one another.[463] What it means for a mortal to dwell is to take part in these practices that mark out the relationship between the four-fold. The same difference and interconnection between the four-fold can be observed in the practice of bridge-building in 'Building Dwelling Thinking,' and could be extended further. Such practices cultivate the sense of the four-fold for Heidegger, and thus enable dwelling to take place. In Robert S Gall's words, 'for Heidegger, individuals, communities and the world, show themselves to be only in the harmonizing of various

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[461] M. Heidegger ' The Thing' in *Poetry, Language, Thought* . Translated by Albert Hofstadter Harper and Row New York 1971 p. 173

[462]   B. D. Crowe *Heidegger's Phenomenology of Religion* Indiana University Press Bloomington Indianapolis 2007   p 133

[463] M. Heidegger ˙The Thing' in *Poetry, Language, Thought* . Translated by Albert Hofstadter Harper and Row New York 1971 p 179

forces and activities of things.[464] It is precisely through everyday rituals and practices, such as drinking from the wine jug, that this harmonizing takes place; and, thereby, each part of the four-fold is allowed to come into their essence. It is through such practices and ways of living, rather than through any doctrine, that Heidegger sees dwelling taking place in the sense of preserving the four-fold.

Thus, dwelling consists of a way of life that is defined as practices and rituals that are based on a sense of the sacred discussed in previous sections, aimed at cultivating a sense of poetic openness towards things. However, it resists any attempt to express it as a systematic doctrine. As such, it constitutes non-doctrinal religion. Such an ethos does not bring about a new sense of the sacred, but re-attunes to a sense of the sacred that has been for the most part lost within the modern Western world These practices represent a background and foundation to daily life as, in Heidegger's terms, 'Being in the world'. For Heidegger, there is no particular need to be prescriptive in the nature of such rituals, as a wide variety of different practices are possible. What matters primarily is their role in cultivating the sense of the inter-relationship of the four-fold. This emphasis on the importance of ritual in the later Heidegger sharply contrasts with Zhuangzi's suspicion of ritual, as shown by statements such as, 'rituals are just frills on the hem of the Tao, and are signs of impeding disorder'. [465] Zhuangzi clearly views ritual as at best superficial and at worst harmful.

Shintoism, however, appears to present a better model for understanding dwelling as a non-doctrinal religion, as it represents a non-doctrinal religion expressed through ritual, tied to a sense of the sacred and to what Motoori Norinaga

[464] R. S Gall 'Different Religions, Diverse Gods' in *International Journal For Philosophy of Religion* Volume 49 No 1 Feb.2001 p. 38
[465] *Zhuangzi The Book of Chuang Tzu,* Translated Martin Palmer and Elizabeth Breuilly Arkana Publishing London 1996 p. 188

referred to as *mono-no-aware*, which resonates strongly with Heidegger's own poetic sense of things.   It is this type of awareness and sensitivity towards certain everyday things, rather than any particular doctrine, that is crucial to both shrine Shintoism and the later Heidegger.

As has already been noted, Heidegger rejected scriptural authority. Shintoism although it possesses various written collections of ancient stories, such as the *Kojiki* (Record of Ancient Matters) or the *Kogoshui* (Gleanings from Ancient Stories), should not be understood as a text based religion. As Sokyo Ono states, 'none of these writings should be thought of as Holy Writ in the sense the term is used in Christianity or Islam'.[466] He adds that 'Shinto does not possess sacred scriptures as found in other religions.'[467] Being Shinto is rather about attitude and practice. As Robert S. Gall states, the gods, (*kami*) of Shintoism are 'not beings, objects of speculation or theology but indications of the awesome forces and powers active in the world that reveal the significance of things'.[468]

Shintoism therefore does not, in Heidegger's sense, prevent the possibility of asking the question of Being. Shrine-Shintoism instead offers a poetic awareness of things and respect for the sacred. In Shintoism, the poetic awareness of things is preserved and expressed through ritual and practice. These include practices involved in making offerings at the shrine, ritual purification through *misogi* and the observance of different festivals. These rituals provide both a framework for everyday life and the experience of the sacred. Through this framework of ritual, the sense of the sacred is allowed to occur, a sense that is otherwise overlooked within daily life. It

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[466]   S. Ono in collaboration with W. P Woodard   *Shinto: The kami Way,* Tuttle Publishing Boston 2004 p. 11

[467]   S. Ono in collaboration with W. P Woodard   *Shinto: The kami Way,* Tuttle Publishing Boston2004 pp 9-10

[468]   R. S. Gall ' kami and Daimon: A Cross Cultural Reflection on What is Divine' in *Philosophy East and West* Volume 49: January 1999:p 65 of 63-74

is precisely the preservation of this sense of things and the sacred that constitutes the religious project of Heidegger's essays 'The Thing' and 'Building Dwelling Thinking'.

Shrine-Shintoism can therefore provide a model for understanding what it would mean to dwell in the Heideggerian sense. Shintoism presents an *ethos,* a way of seeing the world that is expressed and preserved through practice; in the same way that the sense of things and the four-fold is preserved through everyday practices and rituals in Heidegger. Shintoism can thus make clear what dwelling in practice for Heidegger could be as a lived non-doctrinal religion, that is, a way of living based on a sense of the sacred through practice, rather than belief.

Conclusion

Heidegger's later thought can be understood as a search for a sense of the sacred in the modern world. This sense of the sacred can be understood as non-doctrinal-religion which represents a notion of religious understanding that is separated from the metaphysics of the Western tradition, and is, thus, no longer tied to a fixed set of beliefs, but rather provides a basis for a renewed sense of questioning and wonder. As a result, rather than offering a sudden revelation, such a religious position should be understood as continual openness towards the sense of the sacred. This means cultivating an attitude of basic wonder towards Being, while rejecting any one single fixed metaphysical account of the nature of existence. Elements of this sense of wonder towards Being can be found in both Shintoism and Daoism.

Europeanisation, Technology and Nihilism

Clearly, Heidegger cannot hope to abolish modern technocratic nihilism simply by cultivating such a sense of religion. On the surface, it may appear that an adoption of a religious sensibility might make no practical difference to the modern world, while the Heideggerian would have to acknowledge that non-doctrinal religious traditions already seem deeply endangered by the modern world. While it was not possible to discuss the full effect of Europeanisation or Westernisation on the Far East, and while there may be areas or aspects of the Japanese or Chinese world which have not been completely lost, it is easy to see, at least superficially, in major East Asian cities such as Tokyo, Hong Kong or Beijing, there is a strong degree of technocratic Westernisation. The ordinary citizen of such places is more likely to go

out for fast food than visit a temple or shrine, while the traditional culture has been turned into a tourist attraction. Hence, it would be naïve to assert that the East Asian world exists now as a tradition that is radically separated from the West. From a Heideggerian perspective, therefore, it is inaccurate to say that China or Japan stands outside of the dominance of modern technocratic reason. A return to pre-Boxer-rebellion China or pre-Meiji-restoration Japan is as impossible as a return to pre-Socratic or Homeric Greece. Thus, it may seem as though Heidegger's philosophy is simply another example of antiquarian romanticism, looking longingly to a distant and unreachable past world. Does this mean that any project to resist the dominance of the modern technocratic way, of relating to an existence based on Shintoism or philosophical Daoism, has already failed?

Clearly, Heidegger does not foresee the prospect of an easy reversal of the prior development of world history. A mass conversion of the Western world to either philosophical Daoism or Shintoism is very unlikely. Although Heidegger does present the possibility of a radical change in world history, it remains only a remote possibility. There is, therefore, no historical guarantee of victory in the sense that classical Marxism would offer the cause of proletarian revolution. Heidegger would acknowledge that there is still a strong likelihood that the modern Westernised world may remain trapped in nihilism forever. How, therefore, can the cultivation of a non-doctrinal religious sensibility act as a response to modern nihilism, if indeed it must remain a fringe activity excluded from the mainstream?

In his later writings, Heidegger often hints at certain individuals who would be able to remain to a certain extent outside of the dominance of technocratic disclosure. Indeed, to a certain extent, the main project of Heidegger's later thought should be understood as advocating the cultivation of a sensibility towards the sacred that lies

outside of the prevailing technological consumerist ethos that dominates the modern Westernised world.

However, the notion of the Shepherd of Being or Guardian as a figure in Heidegger's writings appears somewhat enigmatic. This state is described cryptically in passages such as, 'the stillest witness to the stillest stillness, in which an imperceptible tug turns the truth back, out of the confusion of all calculated correctness'.[469] Such descriptions describe a way of living that is outside of the dominance of technocratic reason. However, they leave unclear what it entails. How can one individual step outside of the dominance of technocratic reason? Is it possible to make sense of this type of way of life through the principle of non-doctrinal religion?

In Heidegger's writings, the Shepherd of Being is always portrayed as having a relatively solitary existence, without the intense drama and violent struggle associated with figures such as the Nietschean *Übermensch*, or the collective action of the Marxist revolutionary. Potentially, therefore, the Heideggerian Shepherd of Being would be a figure who would not have a direct impact and may not even be noticed by the modern world. The challenge for the Heideggerian Shepherd or Guardian, therefore, is to resist being completely drawn into consumerist technocratic society, while at the same time remaining open to *Seyn*. This thesis has sought to show that this methodology of religious life through continual openness towards the sacred can provide a model for standing outside of the modern technocratic way of life. But what is the role of non-doctrinal religion in such an existence, and further from this, how can this way of life respond to modern nihilism?

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[469] M. Heidegger *Contributions to Philosophy (From Enowing)* Translated by Parvis Emad and Kenneth Maly Indiana Press Bloomington Indianapolis 1999 p.277 or, alternatively, 'Shepherds live invisibly outside of the desert of the desolated earth' M. Heidegger *The End of Philosophy:* Translated by Joan Stambaugh.: The University of Chicago Press: Chicago 1973 p. 109.

Zhuangzi's Sage/ Heidegger's Shepherd of Being in the Modern Westernised World

Zhuangzi's sage can be understood as a model for Heidegger's 'Shepherd of Being' in that both apply non-doctrinal religion in different settings, Heidegger responding to modern technocratic nihilism, Zhuangzi confronting the Confucian bureaucracy. However, despite their different contexts, both of these approaches share an underlying similarity. In both cases, the *Dao* and Being as *Seyn* are seen as obscured, for Zhuangzi by the hierarchical power structure and conformity of the Confucian system, and for the Later Heidegger by the dominance of technocratic and calculative reason. Both can be considered examples of non-doctrinal religion in that, rather than seeking to lay down a fixed set of beliefs, they seek to cultivate an attitude towards the *Dao* or *Seyn* that can be manifest in a number of possible ways.

Hence, just as Zhuangzi could see the Confucian bureaucracy as itself a manifestation of the *Dao,* so, too, does the Heideggerian perspective see modern technology ambiguously as both a destiny of Being and as an impoverishment in the disclosure of *Seyn*. Such positions appear problematic for both the Daoists and Heidegger, in that, while both Confucian bureaucracy and modern technology are seen as obscuring the *Dao* or Being, these two ontologies are taken as all encompassing, even encompassing that which appears to be opposed to them. Thus, both Confucianism and modern nihilism are thought to remain in relation to the *Dao* or Being, and in this way, they appear as manifestations of the *Dao* or Being. They are, however, both deeply impoverished. The Confucian bureaucracy or modern technology, while they may become dominant, are both taken as only one possible way that the world can be, without the claim of absolute justification. Zhuangzi

implicitly undermines the traditional Chinese notion of the mandate of the Confucian ruler from heaven (*tian*), stating that 'minor criminals are locked up, while great criminals are made into Lords and rulers'.[470] In this way, the authority of the ruler for Zhuangzi is no longer seen as being justified and based on a mandate from heaven that may be corrupted or lost, but is taken as being corrupt in its foundation, with the ruler being compared to a criminal. The mindset of the Confucian hierarchy is scene as implicit to the individual spontaneity necessary for the cultivation of *ziran*. Zhuangzi indeed extends this critique from the Confucian hierarchy to include technical devices, such as in the story of the gardener who states 'where you have machines, then you get certain kinds of problems; where you get certain kinds of problems, then your heart becomes warped by these problems.'[471] While Zhuangzi does not go on to develop a systematic ontological attack on the nature of technology in the way that Heidegger did in his later writings, the position voiced by the gardener does clearly show a concern with avoiding the technocratic mindset. The Daoist sage must therefore not merely step out of the conformist way of thinking induced by the Confucian court, but also avoid getting trapped in the technocratic mindset, induced by over dependence of technological devices.

Heidegger's thought might be said to undermine a mandate of Western technocratic progress, such as the Hegelian ideal of the 'march of reason' through history that ultimately culminates in modern Western rationality. Such an idolisation of Western rationality is referred to by Heidegger in 'A Dialogue on Language Between a Japanese and an Inquirer' as the proclamation of reason 'as goddess'.[472] The

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[470] Zhuangzi *The Book of Chuang Tzu* Translated Martin Palmer with Elizabeth Breuilly Arkana Publishing London 1996 p. 268

[471] Zhuangzi *The Book of Chuang Tzu* Translated Martin Palmer with Elizabeth Breuilly Arkana Publishing London 1996 p. 99

[472] M. Heidegger 'A Dialogue on Language Between a Japanese and an Inquirer': *On the Way into Language* Translated by Peter D Hertz Harper &Row New York 1971 p. 16

aim of Heidegger's thought, particularly his reading of the history of Western philosophy, is in part to undermine such hubris. In this way, Heidegger's thought undermines the absolute legitimacy based on either divine right or human progress.

Both the Confucian ruler and the modern Western world have their absolute legitimacy taken away from them by the thought of Zhuangzi and Heidegger. They are both possible ways in which the *Dao* or *Seyn* can be disclosed. Crucially, however, they are not the only possible ways in which being or *Dao* can be disclosed. Hence, Zhuangzi's sage or Heidegger's Shepherd both remain open to other possible manifestations. Thus, Zhuangzi's sage may attend the court of the Confucian emperor, but still remain open towards the more chaotic way of the mountains in the wilderness, while the Heideggerian Shepherd of Being may still use technological gadgets, although remaining attuned to the deep mystery of the forest. Thus, the disciple of Zhuangzi would care less about attaining a high rank within the civil service of the Confucian state; and the truly Heideggerian Guardian should be less concerned with the acquisition of the latest electronic consumer device. In both cases, such attainments lose their significance as worthwhile projects. Such figures are, however, not required to completely detach themselves from official life at court or from the use of technology. What matters is that they remain open to various senses of the sacred that stay outside of the technocratic reason or Confucian rules. This sense of openness can be extended further to other manifestations of the *Dao* or *Seyn,* such as to the Shinto Shrine or Greek temple. It is this openness or attunement, combined with the undermining of the absolute foundations or legitimacy, that keeps Zhuangzi's sage or Heidegger's Shepherd from being completely incorporated within the Confucian hierarchy or the flow of resources.

Thus neither Zhuangzi's sage nor Heidegger's Guardian should be thought of

as a strict ascetic or Luddite in the sense that neither of them advocates a complete renunciation of involvement with the Confucian or technological world. Such an approach, therefore, differs from the practice of complete extreme non-attachment to the world as practised by the Jain ascetic or the Schopenhauerian renunciation of the will. Zhuangzi refers disparagingly to the emphasis put on simplicity by the Mohists,[473] who, while criticising the Confucian hierarchy and social order, advocated a life of extreme renunciation, going as far as to hold that there should be 'no singing in life, nor … mourning at death''.[474] This form of denial Zhuangzi held to be inhuman, stating that 'making people sad and depressed by practices that are hard to follow cannot be seen as the [*Dao*] of the sage'.[475] In this way, Zhuangzi rejects all forms of extreme ascetic renunciation, while Heidegger states that 'the flight into tradition, out of a combination of humility and presumption, can bring about nothing in itself other than self-deception and blindness to the historical moment'.[476] As a true Heideggerian, therefore, one is not required to live away from modern society in the forest, just as the true Daoist is not required to live in the mountains.

Instead of adopting such extremes of asceticism or even self-mortification, the Daoist sage or Heideggerian Shepherd is able to set himself free from the Confucian bureaucracy and from technocratic thought. They see the worlds of Confucianism or technology as only one possible manifestation of the *Dao* or *Seyn*, and they develop an openness towards a sense of the sacred that lies outside of such traditions. They are able to enter and live within such places without being completely absorbed by them. Nor should they be understood as Nietzschean *Űbermenschen*, laying down a new set

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[473] The Mohists were a school of thought in Warring States Period China, rejecting Confucian rites and hierarchy- taking this view to the extreme conclusion of rejecting all ceremony and aesthetics.

[474] Zhuangzi *The Book of Chuang Tzu* Translated Martin Palmer with Elizabeth Breuilly Arkana Publishing London 1996 p. 298-299

[475] *Ibid*

[476] M. Heidegger 'The Age of the World Picture'*: The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays* Harper & Row: New York 1977 p. 136

of values, while shattering the old law tables. This is because, along the lines of non-doctrinal religion, neither Zhuangzi's nor Heidegger's thought should be understood as an alternative set of rules of behaviour or creed to replace the Confucian or technocratic valuation of life. Hence, Zhuangzi does not seek to set out a rigid alternative set of a Daoist programme of rules of conduct to replace the Confucian rites (*li*), while Heidegger's thought should not be understood as a systematic doctrine of Being to replace Western metaphysics. In both cases, such efforts would be counter-productive in that they would be in danger of merely creating another way in which *Seyn* or *Dao* could be obscured. Therefore, there can be no Marxist-style revolutionary programme or manifesto, since neither Zhuangzi nor Heidegger offers a systematic schedule of how to abolish the Confucian bureaucracy or technology and *Gestell*; nor do they offer a new systematic world view to replace Confucianism or technology.

However, this apparent lack of a structured revolutionary programme or methodical new paradigm should not be read as a conservative acceptance of the tradition or status quo, in that, without directly seeking to implement any kind of new order upon the world around them, the Daoist sage and Heideggerian Shepherd are able to free themselves. The non-doctrinal-religious sage of Zhuangzi or the Heideggerian Shepherd can look back at the prior development of tradition, whether this is the development of Confucian customs or the history of Western metaphysics, while these critiques deprive the prior tradition of its authority and legitimacy. Thus, through this process of critique and subversion, the sage or the Heideggerian Shepherd are thereby able to set themselves free from the weight of previous traditions. In this way, Zhuangzi and Heidegger may both, to a certain extent, be seen as iconoclasts in the sense of undermining traditional authority. However, there is no

violently iconoclastic command to 'shatter the good and the law tables of the good'.[477] This means there is no recommendation that the whole preceding world and tradition ought to be swept away. There is no need for any such direct iconoclasm on the part of Zhuangzi's sage or Heidegger's Shepherd, because they are able to view previous traditions from a distance that undermines their authority, but at the same acknowledges and even respects aspects of the sacred within them. Therefore, it is possible for the Heideggerian Shepherd or Zhuangzi's sage to look back at a wide variety of aspects of preceding traditions, seeing them as manifestations of the *Dao* or *Seyn*. To illustrate this principle, consider buildings such as medieval gothic cathedrals. These buildings might be seen by the Shepherd or the sage in terms of the presence of the sacredness and ineffability that they embody. The Shepherd or the sage, however, would have to reject the absolute truth claim or spiritual authority of medieval Catholic theology which the buildings are tied to.

Adopting this Heideggerian non-doctrinal religious approach towards technology, therefore, means not being completely absorbed into the flow of resources as a passive, producing and consuming human resource, while at the same time not cutting oneself off completely from the modern world. This approach can potentially also be applied more broadly at a more collective level, in providing a basis for nations with non-Western traditions to relate to 'the Europeanisation of the Earth and Man' that Heidegger referred to in the 'Dialogue Between a Japanese and an Inquirer'. The non-doctrinal religious approach provides a model to which countries such as China or Japan can potentially relate, including Western influence without becoming completely Westernised, while at the same time not returning to a pre-Meiji restoration, or Boxer-rebellion-style isolationism. This is because, when viewed from

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[477]   F. Nietzsche *Thus Spake Zarathustra* :Translated by R. J. Hollingdale, Penguin, Classics London 1969 p. 230

the position of non-doctrinal religion, Europeanisation or Westernisation no longer appear as the only and absolute models for the development of East Asian traditional thought, which may otherwise simply be dismissed as backward. It is therefore possible to adopt aspects of modern Western life while preserving the religious sensibilities associated with the Daoist sage or Shinto shrine, thus taking a step back from un-critical Westernisation and the idolisation of technocratic progress.

In this way, both at an individual and collective level, through the cultivation of a non-doctrinal-religious sensibility based upon a Heideggerian dialogue with either philosophical Daoism or Shintoism, a response can be compiled for living in the modern world that follows on from Heidegger's thought. The resulting response should be thought of as neither a passive nihilistic acceptance of modern life nor as an extreme ascetic or Luddite rejection of it.

A consideration raised by this work is the potential criticism it may invite from the standpoint of a Marxist, namely that the Heideggerian approach adopted here has failed to take into account social and economic relations. Indeed, it might seem that this Heideggerian non-doctrinal religious approach, focused on the ideal of the spiritual cultivation of the lone, isolated 'Shepherd of Being', could lead to a somewhat elitist focus on the cultivation of a few individuals who are able to become attuned to *Seyn* or the *Dao*. Such an approach may thus easily appeal to a minority of relatively privileged intellectuals, while excluding the majority of humanity who are not in a position to contemplate the *Dao* or *Seyn*, and in Heideggerian terms might be dismissed as *das Man*, being effectively left to be human resources standing in reserve. Hence, in focusing on the contemplative spiritual cultivation of a few isolated individuals, the Heideggerian Shepherd or Zhuangzi's sage might both appear disengaged from political life in the modern world. The cultivation of such a way of

life, focusing on inner attunement, could therefore be seen as evasive and, in the terms of Sartre's *What is Literature?,* lacking in political responsibility and commitment.

This Marxist and Sartrean criticism, therefore, is something that needs to be considered and addressed in later research on this topic. Is non-doctrinal religion in danger of becoming simply a matter of personal indulgence? In order to deal with this, it would be necessary to look more closely into the application of Heidegger's thought as non-doctrinal-religion in the modern world. It is therefore important to consider further how a Heideggerian/Daoist non-doctrinal religious approach might be related to sociological and political thought of thinkers such as Marx and Weber. To do this, it would be necessary to look at the already existing body of work, particularly that of Marcuse, which has sought to deal with the relationship between Heidegger's thought and Marxism. This should be undertaken in order to show how the Heideggerian Shepherd or Daoist sage can be conceived of as socially responsible.

An alternative but parallel line of criticism from a Kierkegaardian point of view might be that the continual openness to the sacred in different ways, on which the ideal of the Sage's or the Guardian's non-doctrinal-religion is based, appears un-focused. In this way, in Kierkegaardian terms, it might be taken as a continuation of the aesthetic stage of life where everything is understood 'equally accidentally',[478] in that in such an understanding, everything is taken in relation to the *Dao* or to *Seyn*. The sage or the guardian, therefore, is 'more likely to arrive at a multiplicity than an either/or'. [479] Hence, in remaining open to a multiplicity of different ways in which the sacred can be disclosed, the Heideggerian Shepherd or Daoist sage appears to avoid the Kierkegaardian notion of faith which demands an answer regarding that

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[478] S. Kierkegaard *Either/Or A Fragment of Life:* Edited by Victor Eremita: Translated and abridged by Alastair Hannay .Penguin London1992 p. 552
[479] *Ibid* p.485

which is 'absolutely either yes or no'.[480] They therefore appear to lack the single direction which Kierkegaard held be to be necessary for 'infinite passion';[481] and they also appear incapable of, in Kierkegaard's terms, 'purity of heart',[482] which he defines as willing 'one thing'.[483] Hence, they appear to lack a structure to their life, and rather seem to drift through the world.

Is the Heideggerian/Daoist model for non-doctrinal religion in danger of appearing weak and unfocused? In order to look at and deal with this potential source of criticism, it would be necessary to further compare and contrast the Daoist Sage/ Heideggerian Shepherd with Kierkegaard's Knight of Faith as models of religiosity in order to further clarify the nature of non-doctrinal-religion and to defend the model of religion based on openness towards the sacred against the directly focused model of Kierkegaard's leap of faith.

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[480] S. Kierkegaard *Concluding Unscientific Postscript To Philosophical Fragments* Volume 1 Edited and Translated by Howard Hong and Edna Hong Princeton University Press Princeton New Jersey 1992 p. 326

[481] *Ibid*

[482] S. Kierkegaard: 'Upbuilding Discourses in Various Spirits' in *The Essential Kierkegaard* : Edited and Translated by Howard Hong and Edna Hong: Princeton University Press Princeton New Jersey 2000 p. 271

[483] *Ibid*

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