



## Review Essay: A Daoist Heidegger

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### ABSTRACT

This article reviews the essay collection *Daoist Resonances in Heidegger: Exploring a Forgotten Debt* (2022) from a Heideggerian perspective to investigate the confluence of Heidegger and Daoism. The volume offers comprehensive analyses of Daoist thinking and its stimulating intersection with Heidegger's philosophy. I approach this book from a Heideggerian perspective, highlighting Heidegger's Daoist debt via a "Daoist Heidegger": a potential aspect of Heidegger who learns from his Daoist progenitors. From each author's work in this collection, I retrieve Heidegger's potential Daoist moments beginning with the breaking down of the "why" and the engrossment of the "worldhood" anchoring Heidegger's *Gelassenheit* and Zhuangzi's 无为 (*wu wei*). Secondly, I discuss the Daoist Heidegger's treatment of the authentic mode of beings and things as a corporeal embodiment and the responsive employment of the Dao that is beyond human effort. The last theme I explore is Heidegger's treatment of language, potentially learned from Zhuangzi, which is not used as a tool but as a reflection of the deepest resonance and saving power of being. By analyzing these themes from the volume, I intend these three moments to delineate a Daoist Heidegger. Overall, the volume demonstrates a detailed cross-cultural comparison that is contextually thought-provoking while leading readers to un-think Heidegger outside of the traditional Western presuppositions. Instead of exhausting the depths of Heidegger's alleged Orientalism, the volume resoundingly calls for further contributions and engagements with Heidegger's unique Daoism.

### KEYWORDS

Martin Heidegger,  
 Daoism,  
 Worldhood,  
 Ontology, Nature,  
 Language

Is Heidegger's thinking a philosophical rendezvous of the West and the East? Does his muse inaugurate an oriental journey that radicalizes occidental discourse? Or, as many have said, does Heidegger's encounter with the East only serve his own path of thinking through an idiosyncratic misappropriation of Daoism? Editor David Chai provides evidence for both positions by offering multiple authorial voices throughout Heidegger's early to late philosophical career. In *Daoist Resonances in Heidegger: Exploring a Forgotten Debt*, the authors explore Daoism's influence on Heidegger's thinking and his complicated appropriative relationship with the Lao-Zhuang texts. This essay collection helps readers acquire a detailed understanding of Heidegger's Daoist resonance specifically from a Heideggerian perspective. Given that the nature of Chai's project is comprehensive and covers a gamut of topics, I shall underscore only one guiding thread of Heidegger's Daoist thinking—beginning with the task of escaping from the enframing of nature to the nature of beings and things, before turning to language which preserves the deepest accord between things and beings. As I shall claim in the first section, with these anchoring themes introduced by Chai, Heidegger's "living without why" overcomes the enframing of nature by arriving at a new and extra-ordinary (非-常) path for thinking. In the second section, I turn to those essays which could renovate Heidegger's account of "worldhood" (*Welttheit*) as the clue to respond to the Dao in bodily self-so actions that precede the mind. In the third section, I find the joint way of Heidegger's and Daoists' poetic paths not only preserve things from which beings seek the path of a homecoming (*Heimkehr*) from the foreign, but also the saving power of Germany's new beginning.

In granting Heidegger a Daoist identity, I shall approach Heidegger not as a Heideggerian Daoist, but as a Daoist Heidegger since Heidegger, at best, provides an occasional Daoist persona that has no interest in explaining Daoism correctly. For this reason, this review intends to draw attention to what Heidegger could have done "correctly" given Chai's detailed analysis of Heidegger's Daoist parallel. My approach to this volume should not overshadow the brilliance of Chai's volume, as it offers a rigorous analysis of the affinity between Heidegger and Daoism. Through the contributors' contentions, I take one of their efforts as seeking in Heidegger's thinking a hermeneutic retrieval of Daoism. These active dialogues countenance Chai's injunction of thinking of Heidegger as if he was equipped with a Daoist mind that "no other philosophical tradition could."<sup>1</sup> This review presupposes Heidegger's Daoism as analogous to his appropriation of Hölderlin. In other words, Heidegger cares more about the hermeneutic collision with his imaginary foreign interlocutor than reading the texts "correctly." However, to err on the side of Daoist misappropriation, Heidegger's Oriental parallel is promising as it attempts to rejoin the severed connection between the East and the West. Thus, regardless of the contributors' positions, I propose a Daoist Heidegger who endeavors to encapsulate each author's contributions and introduce possible new dimensions for reading Heidegger.

## Section I

The inception of Heidegger's Daoist kinship shares a similar departure with Zhuangzi. Both seek the ontological blind spot that is omitted by one's typical busyness. Heidegger and the Daoist inaugurate new "ways of thinking" by awakening from one's everydayness to encounter the being of all beings themselves (12). Graham Parkes points out that the first step for a Daoist Heidegger is to abandon the tyranny of the ready-to-hand. In the essay "Thoughts on the Way," Parkes first leads us to the hidden resemblance between Heidegger's readiness-to-hand

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<sup>1</sup> Chai, David (ed.). *Daoist Resonances in Heidegger: Exploring a Forgotten Debt*. New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022. 5. All parenthetical citations below refer to the Chai volume.

(*Zuhandenheit*) in *Being and Time* and a Daoist's usefulness of uselessness in *Zhuangzi*. Readiness-to-hand is not only a convenient way of relating to things but a one-dimensional schema of tools (*Zeuge*) that show themselves to us as such. In such a showing, what is used as ready-to-hand requires a situation for its application. For instance, a pen and paper imply a situation of writing. For this, Heidegger calls it an *Umwelt*, environment (16). Parkes sees this environing nature (*Umweltnatur*) as a disclosure of a world that gives one an adumbration of what a thing is. However, such a prescription of things shies away from its other possible appearances. Thus, the breakdown of the ready-to-hand, as the author notes, is an escape from an equipment-dominated way of thinking that gestures to the Daoist's motto "Be natural." Parkes aptly describes how this "incapacity to use" makes uselessness useful in the ontological inquisition of things and their unveiled nature. Heidegger's purported use for uselessness resonates with Daoism, especially Carpenter Shi's example of crafting out of an unserviceable wood as analogous to the breakdown of the ready-to-hand by giving rise to new possibilities of how things and we can be related (24). This breakdown of tools reveals for both philosophers the *archai* of their thinking. For both, the guiding principle of uselessness is to see the world as such by overcoming why-oriented (*Warum-Willen*) questions and habitual ways of thinking. Whereas the author suggests that Heidegger and Zhuangzi arrive at similar conclusions through different methods. For Heidegger, releasement (*Gelassenheit*) is to set things free from the constraints of human intervention. By *Gelassenheit*, "releasing" or "freeing" things, human beings allow something to emerge in its own accord via its equipmental breaking down. Slightly different in Daoist terms, the allowance of such a free relationship entails a return to the primordial harmony with the Dao, not through the cacophony of things, but a recognition of the 德 that amounts to an act-less action (無為) (31). This harmony is crucial for our Daoist Heidegger, as it underscores the natural potential of a thing as well as their pre-established harmony (32). From Parkes' contribution, we begin to see the Daoist Heidegger's rendering of "living with the Dao" that is *via positiva*. This sets up a contrast with Heidegger's original account of *Gelassenheit* or "living without why" that is, for the most part, *via negativa* (38). The Daoist Heidegger not only finds the ready-to-hand superfluous in pursuing the concordance with the Dao, but also *Gelassenheit*. In essence, both Heidegger and Zhuangzi are saying "yes and no" at the same time to the mundane engagement of things. But no one should fall into things' equipmentality and mistakenly perceive readiness-to-hand as the *truth* of those things.

Parkes's contribution attributes to Daoist Heidegger a more serene *telos* without an end, intriguing reader to ask, in what way can the harmony of being arise via either *Gelassenheit* or the useful uselessness? To this question, Jay Goulding goes beyond concerning the escapement from equipmentality, discussing the ontological ground that leads us beyond thing's actual presence to the thing's latent possibilities. If we recapitulate Heidegger's account of thinghood, one of the prime examples to encapsulate his thinking is Heidegger's jug (9). The jug is not just a bundle of material that is manufactured to hold water. Instead, it is the empty space that offers the possibility of "water holding," though such a possibility is only visibly present to us as nothing. Such possibilities, however patent they are, may be seen not as actualized things, but as mere "traces" of their potent roots that reveal them to us as nothing (*Nichts*) (53). This portal-like threshold which sits in between the no-thing and things/beings, in Daoist terms, is the messenger of the Dao that encapsulates the "deepest ground of being" (57). Can we find the same portal in Heidegger's ontology? Following Goulding's analysis, we can think of this portal as an authentic view of things that demarcates the ontology of presence from deeming beings as mere static paths of a more dynamic nothing. If this holds true, then Heidegger's ontological fourfold and the Daoist's 四大 reconverge. For Heidegger, this portal is the fourfold (*Das Geviert*) that shifts our gaze from *Ge-*

*Stell* to the manner of the thing's passing through (*Durchgang*) the enframed thing to the event of its appropriation (*Ereignis*) (56). For Daoism, it is the four greatnesses (四大) that guide the "earthly thing" to gain its presence following the footprint of heaven, which is followed by the Dao. Goulding's comparison between Heidegger's and the Daoist's portal also implies that things are no longer dictated by a unified and visible *telos* that is homocentric. Instead, it is an echo (*Anklang*) of the thing's invisible primordiality, a reverberation that is carried over and can only be heard through meditative thinking (74). This reverberation of being is a "tuning enjoining (*stimmende Erfügen*)" that amounts to a harmony between being and things" (71). Such harmony is not an agreement made at the expense of one's loss, but a surplus of how things and beings acclimatize to the same ontological tune, a tune that comes from their shared originator (73). A Daoist Heidegger, by following this echoic tune, will find the "heavenly echoic trace of the Dao" a perfect complement with the commemorative thinking of the "earthiness" (77). Consequently, to understand this primordial echo from the ontologically distant Dao calls for an Oriental second beginning as it transgresses the purlieu of Western metaphysics (75).

How exactly, then, does a Daoist Heidegger adopt the pathway to a new beginning? I want to emphasize that the second beginning, *der andere Anfang*, in Geling Shang's contribution, is an effort to re-write Western ontology as a dynamic pondering of being (*Seinsdenken*). By such a pivot, I mean the shift from thing's static ontology to the essentially dynamic quality of that which gives rise to things' physical presence. If Heidegger's effort is to go beyond metaphysics, Shang's injunction will be jettisoning the *ὄντος* as a whole, embracing the multitude of paths toward the internality (間). Instead of consulting the stasis of being or nothing (104), Shang gestures toward a new direction for Heidegger's dynamic thinking that pays homage to Daoism as inquiring about the "interlogical" realm of nothing that sits between the heaven and earth (天地之間) (105). Only if we undergo this shift from *stasis* to *dunamis* can the things which lie in between heaven and earth be grasped extra-ordinarily (106) (非-"常"道). For readers who choose to follow this thread, the previously discussed Heidegger's jug can be well renovated by the internality (間) or the empty realm of the in-between (空) (106). Corresponding to this internality, Heidegger's *Denkweg* also includes the *Leere* that becomes the traversing trace of *you* (有) and *wu* (無) (106, 109). As Shang indicates with the dynamic internality of thinking, Heidegger and Zhuangzi both walk on the pathway that experiences thinking instead of thinking the experience. Despite the similarity, there is certainly a Daoist lesson to be learned. A Daoist Heidegger will give the dynamic relationality of things an ontological primacy (109). That is, the relationality between two things determines the way they interrelate with each other and how they come to their own shapes respectively, yet this relationality is not itself a "thing." In both Heidegger and Zhuangzi, this no-thing of relationality is the mutual annihilation of being and nothing (110-111). Returning to Shang's interpretation of the *Zhuangzi*, a Daoist Heidegger will approach the ground of being as a dynamic no-thing in creating a space to animate beings' mutual annihilation, manifesting itself as no-nothings (無無) (111). Not only does nothing annihilate (*Nicht nichtet*), but this annihilation encapsulates the nature of being and the stasis of being we ordinarily perceive, granting the thing a "nothing identity (*Nicht-Identität*)" (241). Thus, Shang's contribution cements a third characteristic of a Daoist Heidegger: Being and nothing are the same in *dunamis*. They are the same since being is ontologically anchored in a dynamic yet mutually annihilative relationality with other beings or things, and such a process is not phenomenologically available, and thus, no-thing. Ultimately, Shang devises a *tertium quid* that finds Heidegger and Daoists on the same path of a philosophical "transmutation" (119).

## Section II

In the first section, the authors engage in being's ontological discussion and provide Heidegger three Daoistic suggestions. First, we discussed the possibility of a non-violent way of escaping the *Ge-stell*. The second and the third come hand in hand—the former is a concordance with the Dao and elucidates the latter, a primacy of relationality. Now, I will focus on delineating a Daoist Heidegger's refurbishment of Heidegger's authentic mode of being and things before venturing into his discussion of language. Two major themes that epitomize a Daoist Heidegger are the authentic mode of being as death and the things' reality as thinging and revealing (*techne*).

As Jason Wirth points out, one's death is crucial in Heidegger's early analysis of *Sein-zum-Tode* (Being toward death). Yet, a Daoist critique will ensue since such a scope of analysis destines one to confront death from one's own perspective and the single reference point clouds the broader context of dying. With the assistance of the *Zhuangzi*, Wirth arrives at a fundamentally transformed scope of life that appreciates death instead of the anxiety-ridden awakening that characterizes early Heidegger's *Tod* (129). Even though Heidegger's take on death is far from sentimental, Wirth claims that being-toward-death as the fundamental mode of Dasein's existence still teems with a Western logic of life that is recalcitrant to admit an aversion to demise. To reconcile such an approach, a Daoist Heidegger can turn from the Western dread of death by consulting Zhuangzi's equanimous attitude toward death. For Zhuangzi, his peace of mind after his wife's death comes from the clear understanding of the source or essence of life as 气 (*chi*) (132-134). *Chi* is also present in the Daoist sage's mind as impervious to one's state of dying. It is beyond one's intention to authentically “find (*be-finden*)” oneself through being towards one's death. In any case, the point of transforming the scope of the recognition of death goes beyond our understanding of the early Heidegger. We can see that Zhuangzi intends an inhuman perspective of death that is unstirred by desperate attempts of prolonging longevity, which is similar to Heidegger's later idea of *Gelassenheit*: letting go of the preoccupation of thinking mortally (137). Additionally, Wirth consults Améry's work, and through the mouth of a Daoist Heidegger, one asks just as *Zhang Wu Zi* did: why do we need to *gelassen* at all? For Améry, the logic of life is the cloak for the insistence of living, that anyone who is pursuing death is deemed ill and suicidal. But this is an act against our fate 命 (*ming*), the fate of living that predates any life forms. Thus, the rejection of the possibility of pursuing death is fundamentally a rejection of living. This is an exciting complement to Heidegger's eschatology. With a Daoist twist, the tension between *Tode* and *Gebürglichkeit* is mitigated by switching the scope of moribund sight of oneself (小我) to a fate-embracing equanimity (大我). Thus, from Wirth's contribution, we get a picture of the Daoist Heidegger, who is more “resolute” in being toward living by tranquilizing the fixation on death in *Being and Time*.

After the Daoist supplement to Heidegger's account of authentic death, Eric Nelson's “Thing and World in Laozi and Heidegger” attempts to make sense of Heidegger's account of the authentic thing. Nelson points out that Heidegger's account of thinghood is hindered by the prescription of worldhood which “de-lives” the experience of things and thereby conceals the “objectiveness” of the object (142). In remedying this, as introduced in the first section, the uselessness of a thing invites other possibilities for us to experience the thing itself. Nelson's work points to the other side of the coin, arguing that thinghood is to put the worldhood as such in front of us to see the things garner their appearances and discloses the process of “thinging” (152). Such a disclosure leads us to another Daoist Heidegger's patchwork. The thing's worldhood, for Laozi, is the process in which “myriad things” (萬物) gets particularized into a given form that abides by

the rule of 自然 (*zi ran*) (144-145). *Zi ran* not only guides the thing into its form irrespective of our demands but also allows things to piece themselves together via their own accordance (萬物自成) with their preordained accordance with the Dao. If one takes this Daoist approach in examining Heidegger's *Ding*, then it is not the world that "worlds" but the thing that gives rise to the "world" of the "thinging." In terms of the *zi ran*, things carry a concealed "inappropriate atmosphere" that shows itself without an equipmental breaking down (145). This point goes beyond Heidegger's worldly "gathering" of things since all things, however advanced they are, aim at *zi ran*. Zhuangzi finds, borrowing a term from Heidegger, that an authentic understanding of thing-hood is not the end, but strives for a bodily understanding of the Dao (146). Since the sage knows his inability to interfere with the "thinging" of things, a sagacious act will be a corporeal reflection of the Dao without the mind's participation. If we ask Heidegger to speak in Zhuangzi's tone, artifacts bear the characteristics of self-becoming (自化) via the act of nothing (無為之用) (153) not because of an understanding of nature but because of the corporeal comprehension of the Dao. It is not far off to say that Heidegger's *Gelassenheit* is anachronistically responding to the Daoist's wisdom: Dao and Dao only generates (147). Precisely because one manifests the Dao in a corporeal manner that precedes the mind, the responses (感而後應) toward such an epiphany complement the bodily aspect of the Heideggerian "releasement" (148, 153). The Daoist Heidegger's lesson to be taken here is that "what things the thing is not itself the thing" but the corporeal authentic engagement with the thing not as *zu-lassen* but *zu-körperlich-lassen* (154). Through the recognition of nature via the delineation of multifarious things, we authentically respond to their unique "thinging" in a bodily manner, constituting an authentic engagement with the Dao under the Daoist Heidegger milieu.

David Chai's own contribution exemplifies Nelson's point, helping us envision a concrete case of a Daoist Heidegger. For Chai, the corporeal response to the Dao practically manifests itself in the sculpture which is further illuminated by his example of candlelight and Heidegger's own Zhuangzian remarks in *What Calls for Thinking?* Both delineate the natural contours of a thing that is previously concealed and can only be exposed to light via an authentic gathering of things (164). For a good cabinetmaker, it is to respond to the various demands of the different parts of the wood (170). Moreover, Chai's work endorses the idea that Zhuangzi's candlelight exemplifies things' self (自)-showing, a spontaneous rendezvous between the body and the thing in responding to nature's call at a given place. Chai identifies similar experiences in the anecdote of the woodworker Qing (167). When the woodworker goes out searching for the desired wood for carving, he is not looking for anything that is optimal for production. Quite the contrary, he responds to the Dao and the call from the wood (168-169). This anecdote allows us to further amend Heidegger's notion of an authentic thinghood by introducing a new dimension. The call from the raw material entails profound richness that resides in the material itself which supersedes any human intervention (174). Through craftsmanship, such richness is enacted first by the body and then via ponderings (*Nachdenken*). The sculpture is the prime example of material's self-showing carried out in a self-nurturing fashion where being and nature approximate each other under the joint guidance of the Dao. Chai's contribution, together with the other two essays in this section, brilliantly complement a Daoist Heideggerian thread that aims beyond a comprehension of nature and casts light on the possibility of acting in concordance with nature. Such a bodily response to nature not only acts out the "unconcealment of being," but also articulates nature and things without confining them to an individual scope (172).



### Section III

Thus far, I have entertained the idea of a Daoist Heidegger that perceives ontological questions via a Daoist lens while preserving Heidegger's own Occidental heritage. The last theme I shall emphasize lies between the ontology of language and the relationality of individual being. In the following section, I contend that the Daoist Heidegger speaks a language of Zhuangzian silence that is simultaneously a shelter of being and a messenger of that guide being.

In the essay "Rivers to the East," Daniel Fried presents Heidegger's poetic appropriation of Hölderlin as well as his later philosophical gesture toward the Orient. Fried concludes that Heidegger's version of Hölderlin conceals his hidden desire for the resurrection of the secret Germany (185). Indeed, Heidegger's understanding of Hölderlin's major theme of recovering the fatherland is reflected in *Being and Time* insofar as Da-sein is historically attuned to the call of the origin (185-186). However, soon afterward, Heidegger's "phenomenological nationalism" is transmogrified into an "internationalism" that unites the "ours" with the "others." The quest of traversing between the "ours" and the "others" constitutes the theme of origin for Heidegger, especially in the later period. Through the Rhine River in Hölderlin's Hymn, Heidegger pays interest in only that which is both the foundation of humanity and the deepest meaning of being (*Seyn*). As Fried claims, one's origin is to be made clear through this river journeying to a foreign place (186). This foreign experience triggers not-at-home-ness and garners a new vocabulary in describing one's home-like experience of the familiar (190). However, the unhomely experience only fulfills the purpose of reinforcing the homely experience that is potentially concurrent with the latent sentiment of National Socialism. For Fried, this journey outward to a foreign place is not a genuine understanding of a different culture or country, but a renewed understanding of the fatherland (191). Can a Daoist Heidegger save this aporia? As Fried himself quotes, Heidegger retrieves the importance of the unnecessary from Zhuangzi's dialogue with a logician (194). Fried insists that the talk of fatherland is still in Heidegger's mind, claiming that even his recourse to Zhuangzi does not absolve him of this nationalist project (195). To ensure fairness, we have to question whether this claim is adequate. Could it be the case that Heidegger concludes the *Feldweg Gespräche* with Zhuangzi's wisdom of the unnecessary intentionally? Does transcendence of necessity serve as the culmination of the third *Gespräch*, which is also applied to the first conversation that ends in a meta-linguistic mutual consent? Is this proof that Heidegger aims beyond narrative, words or even renders all necessity unnecessary? Heidegger was not clear whether his "Germany" is a philosophical antidote for the lost war, or a futural hope that is not yet utterable via the vocabulary of his own time. For such a reason, a Daoist Heidegger must take the latter possibility in underscoring the *luxus* as the saving power amidst the grand narrative centered around Germany (Heidegger, *Sojourn*, 11). By venturing into a state of uselessness, one reinterprets usefulness as a way in which one hones the experience of uselessness. I agree with Fried that Heidegger's Nazi identity is always a specter for readers, but a lesson certainly can be learned from the Daoist Heidegger, lest we falter from the truth.

This uselessness is also pivotal for the discussion of silence in the linguistic aspect of a Daoist Heidegger. Steven Burik's essay "Thinking Through Silence" systematically traces Heidegger's reticent silence and Zhuangzi's non-language. Silence is a non-signifying way of challenging the signifying structure of language (204). Silence overcomes the everyday wielding of language and recognizes the inherent inadequacy of speaking one's being directly. With the Daoist Heidegger, this inadequacy can be resolved if and only if we can have authentic things to be said apropos the nature of a thing (205). However, when it comes to words, a Daoist Heidegger has nothing to say (203). Burik identifies the Daoist Heidegger's muse of silence as Janus-faced.

In one sense silence is reserved or comported. It refuses any human crafts of words to preserve the genuine language of saying (*Sage*) (208). Also, the language of silence is resolute, and in late Heidegger's terminology, appropriating. Silence gives a new possibility of speaking without conceding to daily language. As a result, Burik finds that Heidegger's silence refuses to be subsumed under the language of metaphysics. Instead, it is a dynamic interplay between *entbergen* (unconcealing) and *verbergen* (concealment). A Daoist Heidegger has recourse to the same dynamic in Lao-Zhuang's philosophy of 道 (Dao), that 道可道, 非常道 (Dao can be said but only extra-ordinarily) (214). Language is only a way-making that paves the path toward the Dao, thus whatever is beyond language must remain silent by retrieving Burik's use of the term, *Vor-Wort*, before words being uttered (220). The Daoist Heidegger will revere the silence that prepares the readiness to speak the homely words that adopt this foreign reticence.

Heidegger certainly did not foresee in what ways the interplay of concealment and unconcealment would politically exert such a great weight. Fabian Heubel's contribution "The Politics of Uselessness" demonstrates that uselessness is not only the saving power of omnipresent linguistic enframing, but also a political *coup de grace* for the shattered Germany. Here I shall focus primarily on Heidegger's Zhuangzian "evening conversation" and, from this, propose a Daoist Heideggerian moment by bringing the linguistic parallel to a socio-political level. Heidegger solicits the theme of the necessity of the unnecessary by presenting the space where one stands as always in use because of our constant occupancy. However, when we are engulfed, the space is always "being used". If we bring Heidegger into agreement with Zhuangzi, then the same logic applies to the origin of the fatherland. Only through collective cherishing of uselessness can the German people recover from the trauma of war in the useless place of "pure waiting" (231), a place in which their fates can be pondered. This theme is also presented in Burik's contribution since this waiting shares the same root with silence in generating a movement of wandering to the foreign. Likewise, Heubel envisions Heidegger's commitment to silence as a political mission for a "spiritual upheaval" (*Geistesumwälzung*) that is no longer confined by a one-dimensional space, let alone a geological one. Hence, the Daoist Heidegger's journey to the East brings new possibilities in salvaging the broken Germany by turning to silence and wandering place as saving powers.

### **Is Heidegger really a Daoist?**

Chai's volume undoubtedly excels in investigating the parallel between Heidegger and Daoism. However, to reiterate the initial question, Was Heidegger a Daoist? Although no definitive answers were provided by the majority of contributors, readers are left to think of Heidegger as either a Daoist or a faux Daoist reader. We have to remind ourselves that any commitment to Daoism, despite his occasional Daoistic scintillations, diverges from Heidegger's philosophical commitment. Heidegger's appeared Daoist interest is more of the material to be betrayed for the sake of his thinking than a genuine retrieval of Daoism. In this sense, we at least can safely claim that Heidegger's engagement with Daoism is one of the forest-paths (*Holzwege*) in his thinking. As Heidegger has stated more than once that the reader of his writing must eventually forsake the writer, it should not be a surprise that I believe Heidegger could have been a Daoist, but he never will. Nevertheless, thanks to Chai's essay collection, one must seriously consider the Daoist retrieval of Heidegger just as the one whose unwieldiness sits under the gnarly tree ponders his progenitors along with the looming *Feldweg* (Heidegger, GA 13: 90).



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