

Oluşuna-Bırakmak: Heidegger'in Gelassenheit'ı ile Çin Düşüncesindeki Wu Wei Arasında Bir Karşılaştırma

Going With The Flow: A Comparison Between Heidegger's Gelassenheit And Chinese Wu Wei

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Öz

Bu çalışma Heidegger ve Asya düşüncesi arasındaki ilişki ile ilgilidir. Asıl olarak, Heidegger'in Asya düşünme yollarına yönelik ilgisini incelemeyi amaçlar ve bunu Batı ve Asya dünyasından birer kavramı, Gelassenheit ve Wu Wei, ele alarak yapar. Bu çalışmada ayrıca yeni bir felsefi yöntem ve alan olan füzyon felsefesinin; söz konusu Batı ve Asya felsefeleri arasındaki benzerlikleri ve farklılıkları araştırmak olduğunda karşılaştırmalı felsefeye oranla hangi açılardan daha gelişmiş ve faydalı olduğu da problematize edilmiştir. İlk olarak, Heidegger'in özellikle Kehre terimi ile ilişkilendirilen geç dönem düşüncesinde Doğu Asya'ya ait olan düşünme yollarına yönelik ilgisine

Abstract

This study concerns with the relationship between Heidegger and Asian thought. Mainly, it aims to investigate through Heidegger's interest in East Asian ways of thinking, two notions, one from West and one from East, namely Gelassenheit and Wu Wei. In this investigation, a philosophical method and field -named fusion philosophy- is also problematized regarding how beneficial and advanced it is, compared to the comparative philosophy when it comes to the studies about differences and similarities between Western and Asian philosophies. At first, Heidegger's understanding of Dasein is examined in order to gain insight on his interest towards ways of thinking which belong to East

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dair bir temel oluřturması aısından Dasein anlayıőı incelenmiřtir. Her ne kadar bu terimi ge donem duőunesinde pek kullanmasa da, onun ge donem duőunesindeki Doėu Asya duőunme tarz ve yapılarına ilgisi, erken doneminde Varlık ve Dasein arasındaki iliőkiye dair yeni duőunme yolları aması uėrasının bir devamı olarak okunabilir. İkinci olarak, Heidegger'in varlıėın anlamının incelenmesine yonelik ilgisinden yola ıkarak, Batı ktr dnyasındaki Gelassenheit kavramı kendi tarihsel geliőimi iinde -ozellikle Meister Eckhart'ın bu terime atfettiėi anlam zerinde durularak incelenmiřtir, nc kısımda hem Konfyő hem Daocu ve hem de Budist aėrıőımlara sahip olan ve ozellikle in kltr dnyasında nl ve yaygın olan Wu Wei anlayıőı kendi tarihsel baėlamı ve geliőimi iinde incelenmiřtir. Bu inceleme ile, Wu Wei duőunesini doėa ve varoluő ile birleřtiren anlayıő aık kılınmıřtır. Bu aık kılınma ile iliőkili olarak, Wu Wei anlayıőını insan, oluő, varoluő, varlık gibi kavramlarla iselleřtiren yaklaőım hermeneutik bir analiz ile problematize edilmiřtir. Sonu olarak da Gelassenheit ve Wu Wei arasındaki benzerlikler ve

Asia, especially in his later era, namely Kehre. Even though he rarely mentions his idea of Dasein in his later works where he shows a clear interest into the Asian ways of thinking, still this interest in later works can be seen as endeavor to open up new ways to think about the Being and Dasein. Secondly, by setting off from Heidegger's interest with examining the meaning of being, the western notion of Gelassenheit is examined throughout its historical progress, especially with its usage in Meister Eckhart. In third part, the famous notion of Wu Wei which has both Confucian, Daoist and Buddhist connotations and scope, is examined through its own historical context and progress. With this examination, relationship of the mentality which embraces the Wu Wei with the nature and existence is clarified. Related to this clarification, the approach of the understanding which interiorizes the Wu Wei to the notions like human, becoming and Being is problematized through a hermeneutical analysis. In last part, the resemblances and differences between Western Gelassenheit and Asian Wu Wei

farklılıklar bir karşılaştırma içinde ele alınıp bunun Batı ve Asya felsefeleri arasındaki etkileşim içindeki yeri ortaya koyulmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Asya Felsefesi, Eylemeden Eylemek, Füzyon Felsefesi, Karşılaştırmalı Felsefe, Oluşuna-Bırakmak.

are taken into consideration with a comparison between them.

Keywords: Action without Action, Asian Philosophy, Comparative Philosophy, Fusion Philosophy, Letting-be.

1. Introduction

There's a somewhat famous quote of Nietzsche that almost all the researchers who study in the field of comparative philosophy know very well: "I imagine future thinkers in whom European American indefatigability is combined with the hundred fold inherited contemplativeness of the Asians: such a combination will bring the riddle of the world to a solution." (Nietzsche, 1999, p. 55). It seems like this quote alone provided a new fad in the field of comparative philosophy for investigating the differences, similarities, resonances, impacts and influence points between not just Nietzsche and Asian thought¹ but also Eastern and Western ways of thinking in general. This combination which Nietzsche talked about was probably not only a combination of philosophical discourse and investigation, but a combination on a bigger scale. It points toward a merge on deep cultural, traditional structures of Eastern and Western worlds.

While the world-mentality of the modernity causes this merge under the act of mono-typing and standardization on a rather negative manner [and post-modernity resisting against these acts by emphasizing the importance of cultural polyphony and intellectual multiplicity], what Nietzsche meant might also has an aspect of ontological and phenomenological understanding towards reality and universe. It was about intertwining of two or more different ways of experiencing and perceiving of world, nature and everything within. From philosophical perspective, this kind of intertwining, merging and combination can open up new thinking ways. Ways that were never possible before. Ways that parties of this merging would never have just by themselves. All in all, wasn't comparative philosophy or fusion philosophy created by the motivation of the hunger for this kind of new ways? Of course, one might argue that comparative philosophy still has its own problems (there's no time or space to account all of them in this study), but when it's come to East-West comparison, Graham Parkes summarizes the situation (maybe not in the context that it is interested in now, but still useful) with pros and cons like this:

Finally there is the case of two philosophies from different cultural contexts in which the possibility of influence can be ruled out completely.

In lifting the philosophies out of their historical context we do, of course, lose something. But as long as our interpretations of the texts keep the appropriate linguistic and historical contexts in view, and refrain from projecting anachronistic or culturally incongruous meanings on to them, the losses can be outweighed by the gains. (Parkes, 1990, p. 3)

Yes, it can be said that the whole intention of the comparative approach is to gain more understanding or insight about the things that are being compared. The whole aim of comparative approach in philosophy is to gain what is impossible to be gained without a comparison. When it comes to the term of “fusion philosophy” (one might think that it is just a cooler and flashy name for comparative philosophy and one might be half right about this)², it can be basically said that fusion philosophy is, firstly, just trying to avoid the barriers and obstacles that comparative philosophy has encountered and stumbled upon. It should be mentioned from the beginning that of course not all the researchers who are interested in fusion philosophy draw the line between comparative philosophy and fusion philosophy this blurred. Moreover, for these researchers, fusion philosophy is definitely not a flashy, cool and new name for the comparative philosophy. Before anything else, they are two different, even though closely related to each other, mentality of approaches and methodology.

Although the two have met, ‘fusion philosophy’ has yet to be properly introduced to comparative philosophy. There are those on both sides of the divide, and some are on either side of the divide, that will deny that fusion philosophy and comparative philosophy are engaged in the same sort of enterprise or are in competition. They have not thought the matter through. While it is largely true that they are not doing the same sorts of things (e. g. analyzing the same issues), it is not the case that their different approaches, conceptions, and understandings of some of the same subject matter and source material, means that they are not competing with one another [...] one of the more radical fusionists, Mark Siderits claims that comparative philosophy has been superseded by what he terms fusion philosophy (Levine, 2016, p. 209).³ Of course, it's impossible to know for sure if the fusion philosophy overcame the problematics of the comparative philosophy or not⁴ because there is still lack the application results

of these two research fields in philosophy. There's just not enough content to construct a sufficient context yet to be able to consider the outcomes and contributions of both comparative and fusion philosophy. But, in here, it is aimed to enlarge the historical background and archive of these fields. For this enlargement to happen, it is aimed to add Heidegger from the West into these fields, even though his understanding of philosophy does surely not belong to them, not even to one of them (Heidegger was neither a comparative researcher, nor a fusionist one).⁵ Because, before all else, he simply doesn't centralize the idea of comparative or fusion into his philosophical inquiry.

But, his interest into Asian philosophical culture, attitude of investigation and thinking make him relatable to these two aforementioned fields. So, in here, it is aimed to see if the circumstance of Heidegger's idea of Dasein (as it is related to the understanding of human), his philosophical interpretation of nature [mainly, his return to the mind-set of pre-socratic understanding of physis (φύσις)], his emphasize on the chronologically basic meaning of techne [τέχνη], and other elements which can be read with regard to his interest towards Ruism, Daoism and other Asian ways of thinking can be considered under a familiarity with comparative or fusion philosophy or not, while comparing his thoughts (mainly on the later era thought of *Gelassenheit*) with an eastern notion. It is the notion of *Wu Wei* that will construct that eastern part of the comparison. By investigating these elements, one maybe reach a solution to the questioning of "why was Heidegger interested in Asian ways of thinking after all?" within the context of his change of philosophy from his early to late era, usually designated with the word *Kehre*. This investigation also deals with the question of "what kind of source of possible solutions did he find in Asian ways of thinking for what kind of problems that he encountered in his Western thought?" which he clearly shows that he found some, especially in his later era.

2. Heidegger's Dasein: Ultimately, A "Western" Human in the End

At multiple occasions, Heidegger mentions the need of a somewhat East-West dialogue in philosophy. In addition, sometimes more than a dialogue

but a somewhat combination which the results of such combination would be uttered as related to the terms like “world civilization”⁶ and such. However, before dealing with the relation of Heidegger with Asian philosophical traditions,⁷ there's still something to tell about Dasein first, especially its relationship with human as a subject. The idea of Dasein is deeply and essentially connected with the idea of human, even though it is not synonymous with it:

Being there (Dasein). In Being and Time, being there is the formal indication of the entity that is ontologically distinguished from all other entities by the fact that, in its very existence, the challenge and meaning of existing is an issue for it. Being there is a way of being of human beings, which harbours the possibility of raising the question of being (Schalow & Denker, 2010, p. 71).

While on one side, the idea of Dasein holds a deep criticism toward the general understanding of human within western world [especially modified and characterized by the thoughts of Kant and Husserl with the concepts like subject and ego], on other side, Dasein is a way of being of human which enables the human to ask the question of Being properly. For Heidegger, the idea of the philosophical subject, “I”, was problematic to the point that it wasn't able to conceptualize or represent the essence or fundamental features of the idea of human. Kant's idea of subject was so rooted in a categorical abstraction that it wasn't able to create a connection with the phenomenological experience world of the human. Kant's idea of subject was more of a gear or a piece in a philosophical theory of epistemology and mind than it corresponds to a real humanness of human beings. It was more of a terminological agent where under, all the process of gaining knowledge, operations of mind and understanding occur. It is the transcendental glue or the roof that makes the experience possible. It is not in the sense of experiencing, real subject but in a way of a critical key which enables the possibility of the experience. Kant's subject doesn't have a personal past, nor it has a social one, at least when compared to the understanding of subject especially in Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty. It doesn't properly or essentially have a biological structure which effects the way it is thinking, it doesn't have the progress of evolution on its historical background which changes the nature of its subject-ness

throughout time. It is a theory of subject which is in its essence, a theory of apperception, which tests its own limits. Dasein was a criticism of this theory.

And Husserl's idea of subject, or ego, was also problematic for Heidegger. The criticisms that were directed to Kant's subject are also, more or less, valid for Husserl's subject. Even though their manner of explanations and way of approaches are different, their understanding of transcendental (or pure) ego was similar to each other as being non-empirical and ego-logical.⁸

But with Husserl, another problematic aspect of the discussions about subject emerges. Just as much as Kant's theory of subject was in its essence a theory of apperception that tries to go beyond of itself, Husserl's theory of subject was, in its essence, a theory of consciousness. A theory of consciousness which is ego-logical and reflexive. It handles the transcendental ego almost as a substance [even though his understanding of consciousness is a non-substantial one] and builds its concept of subject on this ground. Husserl also understands the idea of subject as a theoretic necessity [not a categorical one as Kant thought, but a thematic one], as a necessary part for his theory to stay intact. This half-foundationalist approach to the problematic of subject also blurs the difference between ego being a mode or an attribute of being and being a state or qualification of thinking cogito, Ego, the I.⁹

But, for Heidegger, the problem of Husserl's point of view or approach runs deeper than it is thought. The main problem of Husserl's subject is that it doesn't have an existence. Husserl's idea of *Lebenswelt* was indeed not thought or aimed to create a sense of vitalness, life-hood or live-ness for the ego firstly, but it is mainly used to support the arguments about inter-subjectivity. It is true that Husserl's subject was more phenomenological than Kant's lifeless subject, but it still ignores or overlook the existential aspect of human essence. Even though Heidegger was not an existentialist in Sartrean manner, he was aware of this lack of Husserl's understanding of subject and made sure that he wasn't going to repeat the same mistakes that his teacher had done. Dasein was not an existentialist theory of subject [actually, Dasein was not a theory of subject at all], but it was a criticism of subject which has a deep emphasize on the meaning of existential features of human life and living.

But still, Dasein was something more. For Heidegger, as said before, Dasein was a way of being of human which enables the human to ask the question of Being properly. So, Dasein was somewhat a relation or a link between human and Being. It is a link that is built over the concept of thinking. Dasein was the attempt to think Being properly. Heidegger did really try that in *Sein und Zeit*. He tried to ask the question about the meaning of Being in a new manner. But, as he admitted elsewhere, this attempt ended as a failure, simply because he thought that he couldn't free himself from the basin of terminological and traditional thinking manner of the Western world. The attempt of Dasein failed because the traditional Western philosophy was far more rooted in Heidegger's way of investigation and thinking. Dasein failed because Heidegger thought that he couldn't free himself from the wrongdoings of the traditional Western philosophy, which is also almost a synonym for Western metaphysics. Heidegger thought that the attempt of Dasein wasn't successful because his way of thinking was tainted with the traditional western thinking patterns and structures. Dasein was a failure because it was an attempt to think about the Being on the rotten and barren soils of Western intellectual reservoir. The problem was mainly not an anthropological or sociological or psychological one. The problem was an ontological one. That's why Heidegger insisted the term of "fundamental ontology" in his early era. Dasein was a criticism of theories of subject which prevail in Western intellectual tradition. But it was also [and mostly] a criticism of understanding of Being.

The adequate execution and completion of this other thinking that abandons subjectivity is surely made more difficult by the fact that [...] the third division [...] was held back. [...] The division in question was held back because thinking failed in the adequate saying of this turning [Kehre] and did not succeed with the help of the language of metaphysics (Heidegger, 1998, p. 249-250).

Sein und Zeit was not a failure but still it included something that is not capable of taking the next step. In addition, Western metaphysics had the guilt for that. It made Heidegger think and philosophize within the faulty western language, tradition and intellectual culture. The very tradition that Heidegger was emerging from was the thing that holds him back, was putting obstacles

on his way. Dasein was not a still-born child of this Western metaphysics, but it was sure that he wasn't going to survive and thrive under those circumstances. This is the summary relation between Heidegger and traditional Western philosophy. His accusatory mind-set [some of them had rightful points, some of them did not] was a calling for something else. This and the necessity of the next step aforementioned was the foreshadow of *Kehre* coming. *Kehre* or *The Turn* (or *Turning*) is the name of the change that Heidegger went through in 1930s. He turned his interest areas and his manner of thinking towards pre-Socratics like Anaximander, Parmenides, Heraclitus, some Mystics from middle Ages like Meister Eckhart and some poets like Friedrich Hölderlin and Rainer Maria Rilke, and to the Eastern world.¹⁰

He needed a change, a change from the unfruitful soils of western metaphysics to think the meaning of Being in a more sufficient way and finally he found the change he needed. This next step was about fulfilling and establishing a more profound way of thinking than the traditional Western thinking. His search for this other way of thinking or other beginning is the first place where his interest towards Asia started to grow

Heidegger's other commencement is not a point of time in the past in our own or some other culture, but a task that lies ahead of us. [...] Heidegger now denounces his stance of *Sein und Zeit*, and actively seeks contact with other cultures to enlarge the thinking world. He looks to other cultures for ways of thinking that can assist him in his efforts of preparing the other way of thinking [...] (Burik, 2009, p. 37-38).

So, it can be said that the thinking which had created Dasein was somewhat a failure because it was too "western", but an essential and profound ways of thinking can't be limited within a culture or a continent. Furthermore, for Heidegger, essential and profound ways of thinking can't afford to dwell in the language of metaphysics.¹¹ Heidegger wanted to stay away from the philosophy that was dominant within the western culture and get close to the essence of thinking. His last lectures in university as a lecturer was an investigation on "thinking", and accordingly, these lectures which were published later "Was Heist Denken?"¹² was the proof of this research for another *Anfang*

that Heidegger was missing. On one side, it is strange that in this lecture series Heidegger doesn't mention anything related to his interest towards Asian cultures and thinking paths.¹³ On other side, when the political and academic situation is considered (after the WWII), it was probably for the better to not mention about something from the Asia at all. Nevertheless, he was surely fed up with what was mainstream and dominant within the western traditional philosophy. His hunger for "something else", for some alternative thinking paths was obvious in the way he deals with the fragments of Parmenides and Heraclitus and the way he approaches to the intellectual context of the Ancient Greek world. Heidegger needed something other, in order to save his thinking from traditional frames and limits. His distinction between *Rechnendes Denken* [calculative thinking] and *Besinnliches Denken* [meditative thinking] is also a sign and indication for his motivation and search for something new.¹⁴ In his search for *Anfang*, other commencement, he looked at the pre-Socratics, he looked at the medieval era mystics, he looked at the great poets (hence the importance of the poetical dwelling)¹⁵ and he looked at the most authentic and outcast thinkers within philosophy -like Nietzsche- and so on. He looked at these, only to find the same thing. He looked for one thing in all those places, names and times. He looked for the possibility of interpreting and thinking differently. Thinking differently from the way of western philosophy thinks traditionally. Mainstream of western philosophy was a one commencement and Heidegger looked for another one. He wanted to overcome the *Seinsvergessenheit* which haunts modern life and its people, by any means necessary. His interest into Asian ways of thinking springs from this rummaging around. Even this idea of *Besinnliches Denken* includes a sense of Eastern contemplation,¹⁶ since it is not about the intellectual and mental representation of what is characteristic and typical in things. It is not mainly about gaining of an understanding of things, but it is about gaining the awareness of the horizon of the region where those things exist to be. It helps thinker to gain [or regain, since it is a forgetting] what is forgotten in *Seinsvergessenheit*. It helps thinker to remember Being. His term of plenary thinking also designates the same outcome (Zhang, 2005, p. 283).

Now it can be focused on the issue that what kind of contribution the

East-West dialogue can make to the idea of Dasein and concept of human related to that idea. He wanted to use Dasein because he wanted to erase the line between Being and human. He wanted the concept of human to be closer to the Being so he created the idea of Dasein. He sees his Dasein in the middle of Being. Dasein is “inter-est-ed” in being and Being. Dasein stands within the Being. And, Being is within the Dasein. Dasein is somewhere in between human and Being. In a sense, Dasein is both a little Being and a little human. It is the horizon of the meaning of Being. With its sense of Time, Dasein is the construction of the meaning of Being. And this is the exact point where Asia can come to help understand the idea of Dasein

In my understanding of Daoism humans are very much a part of the whole process of *Dao*, and this means that the different, opposing, or conflicting sides of this processual world are all equally important. [...] Thus, we are neither pure Being nor pure Non-being, neither this nor that, neither purely natural nor purely conventional [...] Put another way, human beings are always a bit of both of these yin yang opposites. [...] humans would do well to acknowledge that *Dao* is always and only like the in between that itself is not anything, or [...] that *Dao* is nothing other than the interplay of things and processes (Burik, 2010, p. 500-501).

Of course, the relation of *Dao* with human is something completely and entirely different from the relation of Being with Dasein. But still, one can use the first relation to understand the second relation mentioned better. For further explanation about this situation, this seems useful:

As for Zhuang Zi, the perfect man, the ideal human being, took various names [...] Yet in *zhen ren* (authentic person), we find Zhuang Zi’s positive descriptions of a paradigmatic individual. In the chapter ‘*Da Zong Shi*’, Zhuang Zi described the authentic person by reference to the relation between *Dao* and man in saying that there existed a hermeneutic circle between them, somewhat as Heidegger did for Dasein and Sein in his famous *Sein and Zeit* (Being and Time) (Shen, 2009, p. 254).

As it is clear to see, Asian ways of thinking and languages¹⁷ might bring more insight to the Western terms, concepts, ideas and even philosophical

movements. What Heidegger was trying to say when he was talking about the need of an East West dialogue (about a new way of thinking)¹⁸ can be read basically related to this situation, the situation about the relationship between the human and the nature, human and Being.

This brings the reader to the first subject matter in the title of this article. The *Gelassenheit*. In the following section, what Heidegger understands the notion of *Gelassenheit* will be examined and through its historical process, the questions like “how can it be any use regarding overcoming of Seinsvergessenheit?” and “what kind of place and importance does this notion have within the comprehending or experiencing the meaning or sense of the Being better?” will be asked properly in order to comprehend its function in Heidegger’s later thought.¹⁹

3. The Gelassenheit: Releasement or Letting-be

Heidegger talks about the Gelassenheit in two occasions, which are basically the same talk with little differences. First occasion is the text that published in 1959 under the title of named *Zur Erörterung der Gelassenheit. Aus einem Feldweggespräch über das Denken* in the work *Gelassenheit*.²⁰ And the second occasion is the full version of the dialogue (the first version was almost the last third of the this final version of the dialogue) which appeared in the *Feldweg-Gespräche* (1944/45).²¹ In these two work, (the second one will be taken into consideration), Heidegger uses the word *Gelassenheit*, which later become one of the most important key terms that explains and carries the characteristic of Heidegger’s later thought. It has been translated into English as *releasement*, *letting-be*, *letting-go*, *being-let* etc. In general, the releasement is the most accepted one. To understand the function and the usage of this word in Heidegger (and also for the comparison with the Wu Wei), one must look into the word’s historical progress and the religious context of it first.

The word *Gelassenheit*, as it is derived from the verb *lassen* (to let), signifies a kind of a deed of letting and the condition of being let. In its religious connotation, (one can ignore the political and economical context of *laissez-faire* in here for a moment) it is a releasement from the will of the ego and anything seen related to the person’s idea of self. It is a practical and existential state of selflessness. It is being free from the will and the self. What

is being released is the soul, it is being released from the will and anything comes attached to it. With the *Gelassenheit*, the soul no more holds the possibility of being an element of resistance and interfere within the flow of the becoming and Being. Since it is being released into the will of the God, or of the enactment of the whatever the metaphysical, the real truth is. It is giving up the wheel and the control regarding of what is happening and occurring. It is unhanding the steer to what is divine. It is a selfless surrender to the becoming's conditions and accepting it. It is a sincere acceptance of God and its truth within the heart. The soul is set free from the will of the self to the will of the God. This is how the Meister Eckhart and other thirteenth century theologians and mystics understood the word. The *Gelassenheit*, in Christian tradition, was about joining God's grace and obeying the relationship between God and human according to the truth of that grace, namely God's creation, to be more precise, Being and becoming. As a practical praying and ecclesiastical strategy, it is a manoeuvre related to retreating to seclude and living as an eremite, by letting the world and its matters go and taking shelter in the God's will. This is a willing retire from most of the aspects of the life and dedicating oneself to a divinity. This is a religious devotion that paralyzes, cancels or suppresses the will into a non-desiring state of being. It is the existential decision to desert life and reside, dwell for the God.

For Heidegger, the meaning of this word, on one side still related to its connotations within the Christian tradition, differs. At first, its sense of obedience within religious practice aside, it can be said that he doesn't want to think about the *Gelassenheit* within the horizon or the ground of the will.

This traditional understanding of *Gelassenheit*, it is said, is "thought of still within the domain of the will." Heidegger does not want to simply reverse positions within this domain, namely from active assertion (willful projection) to passive deference (will-less reception). Rather, insofar as releasement as "non-willing" (*Nicht-Wollen*) would "not belong to the domain of the will" as such, he is attempting to twist free of this very dichotomy, and indeed to think "outside the [very] distinction between activity and passivity" (Heidegger, 2010, p. xi).

So, for Heidegger, the problem is different. It is not just about going from

willing to unwilling, but it is also about destructing the duality and dichotomy that these two constructs with opposing each other, on the soil of the will. It is a phenomenological and philosophical difficulty that a deliberate abandonment or relinquish of the will can still be regarded as the act of will. So, the supposedly willingful deserting of the will can still be a derivation of the will. This desert or the renunciation of the will is not a real and authentic annihilation of the will. For the real non-willing to happen, at first, the whole discussion on the Gelassenheit should be not taken into consideration on the horizon of the will, or the willing-unwilling dichotomy. Of course, this is not an easy task to do, since paradoxical, even for the partners of the dialogue. The possibility of this authentic non-willingness is one of the two main themes of the relevant dialogue (the other being die *Gegnet*, the *open-region* which is also connected to the discussion on the non-willingness, since it is possibly where the aforementioned dichotomy will vanish for good and the alternative way of thinking the unwilling would rise from). But neither of them is related to something that includes a direct replacement or transition. It is the trace of an ontological withdrawing of the will and self.²² With releasement, Heidegger is not aiming to change the horizon of the will with horizon of something, anything. The releasement is not about finding a new ground or horizon, but it problematizes the mentality of thinking the Being under a horizon. It problematizes the notion of horizon itself, the horizon of the will, or the horizon of “transcendental”, “what is represented-what is representing” etc., it problematizes all these horizons and the state of thinking being stuck under it. In Gelassenheit, there is an ability of sensing the meaning of Being more properly, because of the relation between being and *lassen*:

While he concludes elsewhere that “the deepest meaning of being is *letting* [Lassen],” he proposes here that the most proper comportment of human being within the open-region of being is releasement (Gelassenheit). In *Gelassenheit*, human being properly corresponds to the *Seinlassen* of being itself (Heidegger, 2010, p. xiii).

So, the Gelassenheit seems like it holds the possibility of gaining that aforementioned awareness. It holds the possibility of thinking (acknowledging and recognizing) the things not just as objects to a subject, but things as such, bein-

gs as such. The *Gelassenheit* saves the thinking from being a willing that shapes its relationship with beings and Being through and transcendental objectification. The *Gelassenheit* opens the limits of the horizons for the thinking by giving the awareness and recognition of these horizons. In the openness of the horizon, the human will think and sense the beings as what they are, as such. So, the *Gelassenheit* might be the threshold that opens up to the alternative the *Dasein* or Heidegger was searching for. In *Gelassenheit*, the thinking nears the Being. This was what Heidegger's philosophy was characteristically turning into.²³ So, the *Gelassenheit* is not about just one text or one dialogue, but it also shows the sense of the change Heidegger's philosophy was undergoing.

One other thing that should be mentioned about the notion of *Gelassenheit* that (rather unimportant), even though it was a phenomenological or philosophical word for Heidegger, because of the timing of his interest towards it can be thought that there might be some subconscious reasons -political and warfare related- for him inclining towards the notion.

Just as the political and military crises surrounding him come to a head, Heidegger retreats from the theme of emergency and abandons the revolutionary tone of his writings of the mid-1930s. For example, whereas the Contributions speak of a "will to Ereignis" and challenge humanity to "empower be-ing to its essential happening in a unique moment of history". *Besinnung* (1938–9) claims that be-ing lies beyond both power and powerlessness. [...] By the end of the war, Heidegger has embraced "letting-be" (*Gelassenheit*) and "pure waiting" as the only appropriate attitudes. (Polt, 2005, p. 384-385).

While this political sub-reasoning is not really important for the philosophical perspective (maybe it can hold an essence for psychological evaluation of Heidegger himself), it still should be mentioned for the sake of the comparison with Wu Wei. But without going further with the notion of *Gelassenheit* (its philosophical examination with being releasement towards things and openness to mystery),²⁴ the history of this notion in Heidegger's philosophy (not the history within the history of philosophy, but the conceptual change that is attached to this notion within Heidegger's works) should be examined first. Because even though it is true that there is a *Kehre* in He-

idegger's thought, there is still some elements that stay the same throughout from beginning to end for Heidegger. These elements, while on one side create the unity and continuity of Heidegger's own thought, on the other side show how Heidegger's philosophical thoughts have developed through years.

This notion of *Gelassenheit* can be trace back to the notion of *hingabe*, which was an important element for early years of Heidegger. This *hingabe*, while it is closer to the Eckhartian understanding of the *Gelassenheit* more than the later Heideggerian understanding of *Gelassenheit*, carries a sense of devotion and submission.²⁵ Especially while interpreting Schleiermacher, Heidegger uses this word to evoke a thoughtful surrender and dedication for the phenomenology of experience of the world, the universe. It implies a receptiveness of human mind in the unity of perception and intuition. It designates our givenness to the world and its flow during the immediacy of the experience. The experiencing mind, when it starts experiencing, is already absorbed within what it is experiencing. But, this givenness (givenness to the things and the flow of the being) is not a priori to the apprehension and comprehension in Kantian sense (although it sure seems similar on a certain perspective) but it is a manner of phenomenological openness.

Heidegger became acquainted with the term from reading Lask. [...] *Hingabe* as pre-reflective absorption in the categories thus becomes a non-ocular replacement for *Hinsehen*, directly looking-at, inspecting, intuiting. *Hingabe* thus expresses a less "theoretical" and more "practical" manner of receptivity to our immediate experience, our "openness." [...] Another term adapted from religious experience at this time, Eckhart's *Gelassenheit* (letting-be), will eventually win out in the expression of "receptivity" and "openness" to be-ing and existence (Kisiel & Sheehan, 2007, p. 433).

Both *Gelassenheit* and *hingabe* is related to the mentality of later Heidegger thought which downsizes the role and importance of the western metaphysical subject in the process of thinking and experiencing the Being and beings. So, it can be said that what Heidegger did to the western subject with the idea of *Dasein*, he did it once again with *Gelassenheit* from a different perspective

in his Kehre, or later thought. It is not a passivity of the subject (the ego or I, or the agent) which is understood under the duality of activity-passivity, but it is an acceptance of the notion of receptivity that is more suitable to account for the phenomenon of experience. It is problematizing the overestimation of the reason-based mind and its misunderstood power of representation. Thus, the *Gelassenheit* and the *hingabe* emphasize both “what is given to human thinking” and “what the human thinking is giving to”. Therefore, the talk about the givenness and openness [and also the clearing (*Lichtung*)]²⁶ does not happen on the horizon of activity-passivity duality. It happens on the notion of *lassen* and *geben* and their intimate connection (or nearness) with the Being itself. With “es gibt” meaning both “it gives” and “there is/there are” kept in mind, Heidegger does not think the receptiveness or the openness as a passivity, but he thinks them as embracing that intimate connection thoughtfully. It is the manner of setting things straight with phenomenology. It is the attitude of putting things (human, being, experience, mind etc.) in their own rightful place in order to experience and sense Being more properly. “Perhaps we overestimate the role to be played by such an examination of the world, and what we ourselves contribute to it, by holding it to be the work of our representing, and by remaining insensitive to that which touches us inconspicuously” (Heidegger, 2010, p. 105). Now that this effect of the *Gelassenheit* on the operating subject is mentioned, the examination of the *Gelassenheit* can continue.

The thing that should be taken into consideration with the examination of the *Gelassenheit* is that while it saves human contemplation from willful calculation and reflection, it so does this with the meditative thinking related technological handling of the world and reality.²⁷ But this remark of the technological is in the sense of the *techne* which is not about modern specialization or experting in a technical profession or practical field but about the intuitive way of seeing and knowing things beforehand, like it is understood in the ancient Greek, just like a sculpture seeing the statue, the image of the possible result of the sculpturing within the not-yet-shaped marble bulk without really focusing on neither functionality nor productivity, with a comportment to the nature and not against it or to dominate it, (although the modern sense of the word is more or less still rooted in the ancient usage). Thanks to this sense of *techne*, the

Gelassenheit opens up to the mystery of the reality and being. The relationship of “yes-no” between the Gelassenheit and the technology rises from this duality. The duality of the essence of technology being nothing technological in the most common sense of the word but being something else. The Gelassenheit is the chance of overcoming this duality. It creates the feeling of wonder and awe which leads to the proper contemplation on the issue, namely the being. The Gelassenheit releases the human thinking into the mystery of the beingness of being. It is the mystery of what “is”. It is the mystery of Ereignis, the eventful event of the Being. It is the mystery of becoming and happening. This is where Heidegger’s thought is setting itself free from what then later be called “metaphysics of presence”. In Gelassenheit, there comes the possibility of thinking the being without apprehending it as a presence at first. The Gelassenheit holds the possibility of overcoming the metaphysics of the western thinking. It can be the solution to the failure that Dasein is. In Gelassenheit, with the meditative thinking that is fit to this Gelassenheit, this failure can be surpassed. So, with the Gelassenheit, there comes the possibility of seeing the things as *they are*, maybe for the first time. With this emphasize, this notion now becomes a major key for understanding the phenomenology of late Heidegger thought.

According to Heidegger, presence is dependent on a prior opening. “That” which is absent is responsible, in a mysterious way, for the opening that makes presence possible. [...] The new thinking will think “Difference” rather than only presence. In other words, it will think both presence and absence. It will think about that absent source which grants the possibility of presence while simultaneously holding itself back in “concealment.” “Being,” “the mysterious,” simultaneously reveals and conceals itself. Absence can never be calculated and dominated in the technological fashion of enframing (Smith, 1991, p. 383).

This is what the Gelassenheit would give to the human thinking, the ability to think about the absence or the nothingness and its relationship with the Being. On a conceptual level, the understanding of Heidegger towards absence [Abwesen] and the nothing [das Nicht] is probably where the similarities between his later philosophy and East-Asian thought began, and already well-examined.

In my critical examination of the presumed similarities between Heidegger and Mahayana Buddhism, I shall focus particular attention on the claim advanced both by Heidegger and by Buddhism: that humans can learn to “let beings be” only by gaining insight into the nothingness that pervades all things (Zimmerman, 1993, p. 240).

This “letting beings be” can be easily read with the notion of *Gelassenheit*, but of course its connection with the notion of *Wu Wei* is still a matter of investigation. Of course, it is also a matter of questioning whether this similarity on the understanding of nothingness between Heidegger and East-Asian thought is because of Heidegger’s interest towards Asian thought or his interest towards Christian-pagan mysticism [which Meister Eckhart and Angelus Silesius can be thought as one of the associates.] that downsizes the power of will and of explaining through reason-based cause-effect and logical grounding.²⁸ All things aside, it can be concluded, regarding this approach to the notion of absence and nothing, similarity of Heidegger’s philosophy with East-Asian thought reaches beyond his later thought, his early era. His early remarks (including the ones within the famous *Sein und Zeit*) on anxiety, authenticity, groundlessness of things, mortality and temporality of human existence as a clearing and openness where things and beings appear as such within can be easily put in a comparative reading with the emphasized initial enlightenment and insight towards things true nature within the Japanese, Buddhist notion of *Satori* (悟り)²⁹ and *Kenshō* (見性) (Zimmerman, 1993, p. 245).

But then again, the relation of these aforementioned similarities is still problematical with regarding to the notion of *Wu Wei*, since this notion belongs more to the Confucian and Daoist traditions, rather than the Buddhist ones. Or, it seems so at first sight. And the similarities mentioned above more related to the Buddhism, mainly Mahayana and Zen Buddhism.³⁰ But of course, it should be acknowledged that, under different connotations and related emphasizes, the *wu wei* can also be read within the Buddhist traditions as well.

As Heidegger’s later thought focuses on the meaning and understanding of Being under a new terminology, through the word *Ereignis*, this also designates and emphasizes more of an acceptance of the receptivity, dependen-

cy of human understanding before Being and its being appropriated [ereignet] to the Being, compared to the both traditional western philosophy and Heidegger's early era (Zimmerman, 1993, p. 248). So, it can be said that, this new sense of Being is gathered and gained only through learning how to let things be, through the Gelassenheit characteristic of attitude and approach.

Early Heidegger maintained that the moment of authenticity required resoluteness, a decision to allow human temporality to transform itself into a more radical openness for the self-manifesting of things. Later Heidegger, however, played down the voluntaristic dimension discernible in the resoluteness and conceived of authenticity in terms of *Gelassenheit*, releasement from will. Interestingly, similarities between these two ways of conceiving authenticity -as resoluteness and as releasement- are detectable in the Rinzai and the Soto Zen traditions, respectively. [...] The differences between [...] should not obscure their shared belief that "authenticity" or "salvation" involves becoming the nothingness that we already are [...] (Zimmerman, 1993, p. 256).

Even though their (Heidegger's and Buddhism's) motivations, approaches, goals and endgames are different, their handling and criticism of the substance-based conceptualization, dualisms (mainly subject-object and human-nature), casuality-based explanation of phenomenality and reality, anthropocentric understanding of Being, nihilistic and non-nihilistic experience of the phenomenality and the philosophical interpretation of absence indeed carries similarities.³¹ The question is whether these similarities are because of Heidegger's genuine interest towards Asian thought or just his endeavor of generating alternatives for the western thought regarding its understanding of Being. This is a question that every researcher has to search on their own. In here, it is just advised to researchers to not forget about the bigger picture, where German and Ancient Greek always had a keen influence on Heidegger's philosophy and thought and he probably belonged to the metaphysical tradition and ground of western thought more than he wishes to admit. There can be indeed some similarities between his ideas and some Asian notions. But there was probably not one point in his philosophy that he decisively embraced the Asian thought. He never was an

Asian thinker by the characteristic of his philosophy and thought. It is true that sometimes he managed to be not a westerner, but this doesn't mean he accomplished being an easterner (of course there is another question that whether he ever tried to be one or not). The "spirit" of his philosophy was indeed sometimes something alien to the western philosophy and emphatical to the east-Asian thought. But this spirit was never Asian. He was always a thinker that is stuck on the barrier of being a westerner showing sincere interest towards Asian thoughts. He never managed to pass beyond that barrier, willingly or non-willingly. During the interpreting the examination, comparison between *Gelassenheit* and *Wu Wei* here, every researcher should keep this condition and barrier in mind.

Now it seems clear that, the *Gelassenheit* sits well on every brink of the similarities between Heidegger and Asian thoughts. Of course, the differences still remain,³² but they are not of any importance right now. Since the usage and meaning of *Gelassenheit* for Heidegger is revealed clear enough, now it is time to move on to the second part of the comparison.

4. The Wu Wei: Without Action or Without Force

At first, it should be said that even though the *Wu Wei* is a notion that is well accepted within Ruism (Confucianism), Daoism and Buddhism, this is not because it is fully suitable for all these three teachings but rather because these three teachings tend to accept each other to create a harmonious understanding towards reality, life and world. All in all, it is generally impossible to fully and decisively differentiate between these three teachings, considering the famous conception of *San Jiao* (三教) which signifies the true oneness and harmony between the three, namely Buddhism, Daoism and Ruism.

Within this harmony, the *Wu Wei*, at first look, designates an effortless-ness, a state of inaction, a condition of in exertion. It, on the literal meaning, basically means "doing nothing" or "not doing anything". It is a letting things go by their own flow and not trying to change their path, way or flux with using a force.³³ These things might be something metaphysical, political, economic, phenomenological, natural, existential, agminal etc. No matter what they are, it is choosing for the humans to not force their hands. It is choosing the non-will.

It is choosing not to choose. It is not even a choosing. It is a doing something so accord to the nature's flow by doing nothing or almost nothing. It is a doing in a way that it fits perfectly within the flow of the nature's phenomena and reality. It is not doing absolutely nothing, but it is a doing in a way that it would be like there is no trace of will other than the nature's flow itself. It is the result of coherence between human and nature, where the pure activity emerges.

To think and act in a state of no-mind is to be at once free and natural; it is to exist in a state of natural freedom. In Zen, as in Daoism, such naturally free action is referred to as "non-action" or as "the action of non-action" which indicates not a lack of action but rather pure activity, in other words, activity that is empty of willfulness and artificiality [...] As we have seen, Zen often employs terms that begin with wu / mu [...] Along with "emptiness" and "nothingness," such terms may strike our ears as negative. Indeed they should, insofar as they do imply a radical negation of all the subtle and gross forms of our egocentric impulses, [...] However, these terms ultimately also indicate, as the other side of this radical negation, the affirmation of a liberated and liberating way of life (Davis, 2013, p. 203-204).

So, the Wu Wei means wei Wu Wei. Action without any action. Doing something without particularly doing anything. It is executing fully within the becoming of nature without committing any peculiar deed. It is a phenomenological accommodation with the nature without any discernible perform. It is the perfect accordance to the reality's flow with being a part of it. It is a conforming to the realization of the true essence of Being (the absence, the nothingness, the Dao, etc.). It is acting in a way so perfectly fit in the scenery of the occurring of the natural happening of becoming that it becomes impossible to differentiate between what is natural occurring and what is the will of the human. For the Asian thought, this is the true meaning of the non-willing and it is deeply connected with the Wu Wei. The Wu Wei carries the non-willing or the willingness. For a detailed context, there should be an investigation of this notion's historical progress. The change in the usages of this notion with different emphasize and connotations from different historical eras will provide a better elucidation of this notion's place within the Asian thought.

4.1. Ruist Wu Wei

Since there is a trace of this notion within the Analects,³⁴ at first sight, it can be said that the Wu Wei is a part of the Ruist teaching. In 15:5 “The Master said, Of those who ruled through inaction, surely Shun was one. What did he do? Dedicating himself to courtesy, he faced directly south, that was all.” (Watson, 2007: 106). Or with another translation “The Master said “The only one who achieved good government through nonaction was perhaps Shun! For what did he do? He conducted himself respectfully facing due south, that is all.”” (Huang, 1997, p. 152). The inaction or the nonaction here refers to the same thing. They refer to the Wu Wei. At first sight, this passage seems like it is related to something political, something about governing. And it is not wrong. This passage is indeed telling something that Confucius himself or the Ruism in general thought about the characteristic of the act of ruling of the ruler. It is not directly an “ought” judgement. It doesn’t necessarily say “the ruler or the governor should rule with nonaction.” It just says that the ruler Shun ruled with nonaction. It seems like both an informative and reminding sentence. The sentence itself doesn’t say anything about a normative presupposition. All it says is what the Shun had done. He ruled with Wu Wei and he dedicated himself to courtesy or conducted himself respectfully, and he faced south. He did nothing else. There is no judgement related whether what he did was good or bad. Ruling with Wu Wei can be something bad or it can be something good. The passage does not give the reader any clue to help the reader decide which one.

But, it is known that Shun was one of the three sages that Analects and the Chinese thought hold high and prioritized, other being Yao and Yü the Great. They were the mythological and historicized rulers of the ancient dynasties. They were rulers of the human world, but they still had divine dispositions and sacred powers. They were somewhere between a human ruler and a divine ruler. They were the Tiānzǐ (天子), sons of the heaven as the rightful ruler or the Shàngdì (上帝) the supreme ruler, supreme emperor and ruler deity who has a divine connection with the Tiān (天) heaven, heavenly god or with the Shàng. It seems impossible to conceptualize the naturalistic characterization of the ancient rulers within the dichotomy of divine-secular, sac-

red-profane, or natural-supernatural. The ancient divine sages, rulers were both. Shun was a divine ruler, a divine sage. And he governs with Wu Wei. Because there is no need for him to do something in excess.

Elsewhere, he [Shun] is said to have ruled by wu-wei (non-activity), through the mere fact of sitting in a majestic attitude 'with his face turned to the South'. We have here the conception, [...] of the divine king whose magic power regulates everything in the land. It is one which is common to all early Chinese thought, particularly in the various branches of Quietism that developed in the fourth century B.C. The sheng, however, only 'rules by nonactivity' in the sense that his divine essence (ling) assures the fecundity of his people and the fertility of the soil. We find Shun assisted in his task by 'five servants', who are clearly conceived of as performing the active functions of government (Waley, 2005, p. 18).

So, when Confucius talks about Shun being a ruler which governs through nonaction, he doesn't talk about any ruler. Within a context of divinity, he talks about a divine ruler that the other rulers should take him as a model. He talks about a divine way of ruling that the teaching of Ruism generally accepts and embraces. A rightful and divine way of governing that every ruler should look up to.

He faces towards to south (because the throne of the emperors generally directs to the south). And he dedicates himself to courtesy or conducted himself respectfully (which means he cultivates and disciplines himself through training, schooling and education. He doesn't do anything else. He acts with Wu Wei. Within a political context, this would mean that he doesn't need to do anything else because he has good helpers around himself. On this political, executive and administerial context, it means that if a ruler can choose ministers and chancellors who are rightful and good at doing their jobs, there would be no extra job or problem that the ruler should have to face or deal with).³⁵ So, the Wu Wei seems deeply connected to the notion of having virtue which is already an essential notion within the whole Analects and Ruism. If the humans have their virtues and if they act accordingly to them, then there would be no need to break the Wu Wei. This brings the social and ethical aspect of the Ruism and Confucian thought that everybody knows well. And the relationship

between the conception of having virtues and Wu Wei can also be seen clearly in the *Analects*, 2:1 “The Master said, Conduct government in accordance with virtue, and it will be like the North Star standing in its place, with all the other stars paying court to it” (Watson, 2007, p. 20) or with another translation “The Master said, He who rules by moral force (*tê*) is like the pole-star, which remains in its place while all the lesser stars do homage to it” (Waley, 2005, p. 88). The passage is about the ruler who has the *tê*. If the ruler is in accordance with the *tê*, then there is no need for anything in addition for the governing. The administrative executing coherent what the virtue is appropriated or required is the rightful one that doesn’t any supplementary action which is conceptualized under another notion or manner of deed. Therefore, the Wu Wei is the sign of what is ideal. In an ideal ruling, there would be nothing but Wu Wei. This ideality is related to being harmonious with the natural order of the things and society. So, the presence of the Wu Wei is the manifestation of the natural. If there’s Wu Wei, then everything is natural and in order, therefore, if there is no order or naturality in things and phenomena, then the first issue to be searched for is what interrupts the Wu Wei. If there’s no Wu Wei, then there must be definitely some problem to be fixed. If there is Wu Wei, then this means that the final perfection of the ideal governing has been accomplished. The gears of the social and natural phenomena work so perfectly that there is no need for an extra interference. It is almost like performing or operating in a way that lets things happen in their own way. It is a kind of natural doing without doing anything severe that will cause to change their proper discourse.

But there seems an incompatibility of this idea of “nonaction” with the general characteristics of Confucian thought. This incompatibility at first might be tracked within the possible historical changes of the Ruism has undergone.

Book 15 contains several doctrines that suggest a worldview quite different from that of book 4: in book 15 we find an endorsement of the “Daoist” doctrine of “inaction” (15:5), efforts to bring systematicity to Confucian doctrine (15:24), which may reflect Mohist challenges, and what may be an attack on Mencius (15:31). This all suggest the intellectual environment of the fourth B.C.E. (van Norden, 2002, p. 223).

The doctrine of inaction, namely the Wu Wei, is seemingly a Daoist one,

it doesn't perfectly fit with the mentality or the mind-set of that is carried within the core of Ruism. The Wu Wei is still a Ruist notion. It doesn't conflict or disagree with Ruism, but still it doesn't completely fit within either. This is mainly because, and this was one of the main criticisms of Daoist towards Ruism, the Ruist thought emphasize the importance of education and cultivation of the people and direction the administration of the government towards more healthy and rich welfare. In the core of Confucian thought, this positive idea of controlling for the better has its own place. The Confucian thought does not just "let things happen in their own way" but it makes sure that while things happen in their own way, the results and outcomes are beneficial and not harmful for the people. That's why it was an important agenda of the Confucian thought, even in the era of Confucius himself, that the arbiter officers in the key positions of governing the dynasty should have a Ruist education and mentality. This agenda was both about placing the educated and literate people in the offices within the government in order to have a strong and fair ruling that will lead to the prosperity and protect it, and making sure that other ideological and religious movements which are against or not compatible with Ruism would not gain a powerful position withing governing to the point that the mentality of Ruism would be outcasted from the processes of administrative regime. This attitude of controlling, shaping and enhancing the influence of Ruism within every aspect of the people's lives can be regarded as something opposite to the notion of Wu Wei. Because, while Wu Wei, at first sight, emphasizes the effortlessness and going with the flow, the Ruism accepts the importance of being a point of influence to the rest with going the extra miles, with effort. Because one can't get to the life full with virtue without cultivation and education. And education and cultivation does not come by themselves, without effort. People must get their education, when required, with forcing themselves. Even this notion of force in here has a humanistic, non-violent and pacifist sense, it still indicates the importance of culture and civilization which, to be accomplished, needs the human effort. Of course, there is a semantic difference between this sense of effort and the sense of effort in the "Wu Wei", which can also be the basis of the difference between Ruist Wu Wei and Daoist Wu Wei.

But still, it should be kept in mind that Ruist understanding of Wu Wei does not have the sense of estranging from the public life and retreating from human affairs, living in seclusion as an ascetic or hermit. On the contrary, Ruist understanding of Wu Wei is being enacted actively within every aspect of governmental, religious, political and social life. It is more of an understanding of acting harmoniously within the cultural and social life with according it to the harmonious becoming of nature itself as much as possible. It is an understanding of not forcing the power of the ruling over the people as a dictatorship or tyranny but creating a natural rapport within every aspect of civilization where there is minimum amount of conflict, disagreement and inconvenience. The Ruist idea of Wu Wei is both the ideal proof and source of humanistic and social consonance and coherence which tells that everything is in the way that they are meant to be.³⁶

4.2. Daoist Wu Wei

Within the Daoist understanding, the notion of Wu Wei gains a wider context and scope, a sense that is richer on the metaphysical and natural aspect, and even more importance. Both in *Tao Te Ching*³⁷ and *Zhuangzi*³⁸ the Wu Wei is present as one of the key elements which creates and shapes the core characteristics and essence of Daoism. In order to comprehend the sense that is used within the Daoism, one must examine the relevant passages and chapters in both works.

In *Tao Te Ching*, the idea of Wu Wei welcomes the reader at least in 6 chapters. Chapters 2, 3, 37, 38, 48 and 75 have a direct account of Wu Wei one way or another.³⁹ And so many other ones hints this understanding implicitly.

2: [...] the sage manages affairs without doing anything, and conveys his instructions without the use of speech.⁴⁰

3: He constantly (tries to) keep them without knowledge and without desire, and where there are those who have knowledge, to keep them from presuming to act (on it). When there is this abstinence from action, good order is universal.⁴¹

37: The Dao in its regular course does nothing (for the sake of doing

it), and so there is nothing which it does not do.⁴²

38: (Those who) possessed in the highest degree those attributes did nothing (with a purpose), and had no need to do anything. (Those who) possessed them in a lower degree were (always) doing, and had need to be so doing.⁴³

48: He who devotes himself to the Dao (seeks) from day to day to diminish (his doing). He diminishes it and again diminishes it, till he arrives at doing nothing (on purpose). Having arrived at this point of non-action, there is nothing which he does not do.⁴⁴

75: The people are difficult to govern because of the (excessive) agency of their superiors (in governing them). It is through this that they are difficult to govern.⁴⁵

The problem of different meanings from different translations put aside (it is a subject matter for a more comprehensive and different investigation),⁴⁶ it is crystal clear that Wu Wei as inaction, non-action, withdrawing from excessive effort etc. has a fundamental and essential place within Daoism. It is not just the “how” of according oneself with the Way, the Dao for the sage, the master, the ruler or any individual.⁴⁷ With the emphasize more on the “wu”, it is the characteristic of the Dao itself.

What makes wu a suitable term for describing the *tao* makes these terms suitable as well. To say of the *tao* that it acts is to limit its effectiveness, because merely by doing some things, it must, by implication, leave other things undone. To say that it does not act at least leaves it untrammelled: no special relation exists between the *tao* and certain affairs to the exclusion of others (Lau, 1989, p. xxvii).

It is impossible here to examine what the Dao is (compared with the Heideggerian notion of Weg),⁴⁸ but it is for sure that it acts with Wu Wei. So, in Ruist understanding, the Wu Wei is the necessary manner of the human who wants what is civilized to be in accord with nature, but in Daoist understanding, the Wu Wei is the characteristic of the Dao itself, not just the humans acts with it but the Dao itself happens by it [And also, if one wants to be accord with the Dao, then one also has to act with Wu Wei]. So, it can be

said that, even though the Confucian sense of the Wu Wei (which emphasizes on the cultural, civil, political and social aspect) is still preserved within the Daoist sense of Wu Wei (which emphasizes on the natural, metaphysical, ontological and phenomenological aspect), the Daoist Wu Wei is quite different. It is the manner of Dao happens and occur. It is the way of Dao, it is the Dao. It is the way how Dao is what it is. In chapter 25, it says: “Man takes his law from the Earth; the Earth takes its law from Heaven; Heaven takes its law from the Dao. The law of the Dao is its being what it is.” With comparative reading the chapters above, it can be said that, just like man receives his law from the world in the attitude of Wu Wei, and the Earth from Heaven in the attitude of Wu Wei, Heaven from Dao in the attitude of Wu Wei, the Dao itself takes its law from itself in the attitude of Wu Wei. The Wu Wei is how the Dao tracks itself. The Wu Wei is the character of the actualization of the Dao and its destined transformations. Same logical and formal argumentation can be applied to the chapter 51.

The chapters also surface some similarities and more differences between the Ruist and Daoist sense of the notion. They both emphasize the importance of keeping away from intentional (purposive) acts (because it can lead to an unbalanced, unfair, biased and partial decision process which would be both not good for the governing and harmonious with the spontaneity of nature). It seems like, for the Daoist, the Wu Wei has an instrumentative sense of a mean which mediates through the finalization of the process (process of happening or process of harmonization between). But for the Ruist one, the Wu Wei has a more of an idealized final state or circumstance sense. The Wu Wei is the outcome when one has the life with virtue. The Wu Wei has the sense of ideal that is reached after the cultivation and establishment of harmony. It can be said that, in Daoist sense, the Wu Wei brings and constitutes the harmony with and of the Dao, in Ruist sense, the virtue brings the harmony which comes with the Wu Wei.

Of course, one of the important features that differentiates Daoist sense of Wu Wei is that it has more of a philosophical aspect in itself as well. This philosophical aspect reveals with the relations between Wu Wei and nothingness or emptiness.

The reason one values not doing anything (Wu Wei) and not thinking about anything is that this constitutes emptiness. But one who lacks the right technique is obsessed with the notion of emptiness and thus his mind is dominated by this obsession. Now the essence of emptiness lies in the mind not being dominated by anything, and for it to be dominated by the obsession with emptiness is for it not to be empty. [...] In being obsessed with the notion of emptiness while pursuing emptiness is, in a sense, having an ulterior motive. The point made is that it is only by ridding oneself of this ulterior motive that one is able to attain emptiness (Lau, 1989, p. 180).

It seems that while the Ruist sense of Wu Wei has a more of a practical usage, the Daoist sense of Wu Wei has a more of an abstract and theoretical usage. This abstract and theoretical usage with its connection to the understanding of nothingness or emptiness makes it more philosophical than the Confucian sense of the notion.⁴⁹ But also, this point, while nearing Heideggerian philosophy to Daoism and Buddhism under the horizon of nothingness,⁵⁰ clears one difference between the notion of Wu Wei and Heideggerian understanding of Gelassenheit. While for Daoism, the scope of Wu Wei and nothingness pervade every act and faculty of human being, it also put an emphasize on the “not thinking”. Because the presence of thinking itself is a diversion from the emptiness or nothingness, namely the true essence-less essence of the nature and Being. So, one can't think about the nothingness that lies in the core of the Dao or nature or Being. One can only sense it in an existential mode of passive mindfulness. This downsizing of act of thinking in the Wu Wei is not compatible with the Heideggerian sense of Gelassenheit. Because even the meditative thinking in Heidegger is not a practice of meditation which tries to empty the mind from thinking. Heidegger, even in Gelassenheit, puts an essential significance on the notion of thinking and its relationship with reaching the meaning or sense of Being or Ereignis. So, the negation of thinking, as it is present within the Daoist sense, is not something that can fit or be suitable for the Heideggerian notion of Gelassenheit. But, in order to dig deeper on this difference, one must continue to track the historical progress and change of the Wu Wei in Asian thought.

Alongside its manifestation in *Tao Te Ching*, the notion of Wu Wei is also one of the key elements in the Zhuangzi. Within Zhuangzi, this notion gains -as expected from Zhuangzi's mystical humorous, critical, narrative and rhetoric style- more of a spiritual sense. While the general theme of "freeing oneself from the world and its suffering" also binds the Daoism with the inner characteristic of Buddhism as well (although the understanding of Wu Wei is not as ascetic as it is in Buddhism), this "freeing" is deeply related with the Wu Wei.

He [the man who has freed himself] does not in any literal sense withdraw and hide from the world -to do so would show that he still passed judgment upon the world. He remains within society but refrains from action out of the motives [...] He maintains a state that Chuang Tzu refers to as wu-wei, or inaction, meaning by this term not a forced quietude, but a course of action that is not founded upon any purposeful motives of gain or striving. In such a state, all human actions become as spontaneous and mindless as those of the natural world. Man becomes one with Nature, or Heaven, [...] with Tao (Watson, 1964, p. 6).

So, for Zhuangzi, just like it was for Tao Te Ching, the Wu Wei is an essential aspect for the relation between the Nature, human and all other phenomena which is basically the Dao in its occurring. While Zhuangzi explains this mindless mode of existence, it uses the analogy of craftsman. Just like the skillful craftsman has no process of cognitive pondering or calculating in thought during the action of the craft, but the process of creating happens almost like spontaneously, intuitively and instinctively, because the skill is so imbedded within the craftsman, it becomes something immanent, it happens by itself through the craftsman within a unity between the craftsman and the skill (similar to Heidegger's Dasein relation to things with the manner of *zuhandenheit*).⁵¹ The craftsman makes but this making happens more autonomously than it is being the outcome of an act of calculated, theorized and reflected-upon thought process. The action with Wu Wei is the same way. There is no purpose and deliberate inclination or intention in it. It is the manner of saving oneself from the misconceptions and misunderstanding of life that causes sadness, misery and suffering but just like the mention of emptiness above, it doesn't come after a mental focus and willingness attached to it. It just

happens and happens naturally in accord with the order of the nature. Another analogy that Zhuangzi used is the journey or wandering freely without destination or directive instructions that serves a purpose. This wandering, which is signified by the word *yu*, is a wandering through all things and phenomena, relishing the charms of what is experience, without being attached to any of the things encountered along the way (Watson, 1964, p. 6-7). This sense of purposelessness and non-deliberation is perfectly elucidated in one of the miscellaneous chapters, namely *Gengsang Chu* 庚桑楚, Chapter 23.

Forgetting the Human makes you a man of the Heavenly. Only when a man merges into Heavenly Harmony can he be respected without being delighted or insulted without being angry. Anger comes forth from him without himself being angry, so his anger is an expression of his nonanger. Actions come forth from him without himself being in action, so his actions are an expression of his nonaction. To seek stillness by pacifying your vital energy or to seek spiritual power by following your mind -these are still just forms of deliberate activity. If you want to do both right, though, follow along with what is unavoidable in you. For it is something like the unavoidable that constitutes the Course of the sage (Ziporyn, 2009, p. 102-103).

With Zhuangzi, the sense of transcending the duality of action-inaction is almost philosophically grounded with the understanding of non-action (similar in a way that Heidegger's *Gelassenheit* goes beyond the duality of activity-passivity). It seems that the Daoist Wu Wei has a profusely philosophized sense which Confucian usage of the term does not have. Therefore it can be said that, the Wu Wei is more diverse in Daoism than it is in Ruism (In Buddhism, this notion is best understood within the emphasize in its "uncompounded", "uncreated" sense which defines it as being not arisen from causes or condition. That's why the Sanskrit *asamskrta* or the Tibetan '*dus ma byas* -the translation of Wu Wei in Buddhist texts- highlights the meaning of "unconditioned" or "uncaused", even though it holds an importance as it is closely connected to the nirvana tathatā as transcending the ever-changing aspect of existence). And it is worth to mention that the notion of Wu Wei is one of the few points that Daoism can be accepted within the legalist strategies (Lai, 2017, p. 164).

With these final remarks on the Wu Wei in Asian thought, now the essential sense of the notion is surfaced enough for a comparison between Gelassenheit. With keeping in mind the general and obvious differences between Western and Asian thinking (and also the other similarities between Heidegger's philosophy and Asian thought, related to the Gelassenheit-Wu Wei relation,⁵² a proper and fruitful comparison can be accomplished now.

5. Gelassenheit and Wu Wei

This comparison, while the possible similarities and differences are already obvious, should start with the examination of the word itself. Both the Gelassenheit and the Wu Wei is a kind of letting things happen in a true way, which goes beyond the dichotomy of activity-passivity, or the traditional action-inaction.

The *Zusatz* is concerned mainly with resolving the apparent opposition between the 'establishing of truth' (in the work of art) and a 'letting the advent of truth occur', and emphasizes that 'this Lassen is not any kind of passivity but'—just like Wu Wei in Daoism—'the highest kind of doing' (Parkes, 2005, p. 103).

Even though both of these notions have the sense of "letting go of things in their own characteristics and ways and according oneself to them in order to not attain but join them", they carry this sense under different etymological, grammatical and semantic structures.⁵³ While Gelassenheit emphasizes the "lassen", the "letting" or the "releasing", the Wu Wei has the element of "wu" in itself, which has a wide range of context, mainly designating the non-being and nothingness.⁵⁴ In here the difference between non-being and nothingness can be read under like the non-being as the cessation or finalization of ontic being and existence; and nothingness as the symbolization of the absence of the presence (Chai, 2019, p. xiii). This wu alone makes the Wu Wei as one of the most important and essential feature and components of Asian thought, especially Daoism. The Wu Wei has a critical and key place in Daoism than the Gelassenheit has ever had in Christianity or Heidegger. The Gelassenheit in Heidegger was kind of a philosophical solution to overcome to problem of reaching and comprehending the meaning of Being. While this sense of "gaining awareness" is preserved

within the Wu Wei, still the Wu Wei is something more metaphysical and immanent to nature itself. It is the way of happening of the Dao. In Heidegger, the Gelassenheit has no sense that covers this enough to be similar. Gelassenheit is a way of the thinking subject (agentless and subject-less thinking, to be more precise) getting rid of the willfulness (which is also a larger similarity between western and Asian thought)⁵⁵ and reaching a more Being-based understanding of reality, phenomenology and Being. From this perspective, it seems like the Wu Wei and Gelassenheit is not something compatible or similar but something that complete each other from different aspects.

One of the main differences is that Gelassenheit has a simultaneous yes-no relation with the technology and its excessive power in shaping the course of human history.⁵⁶ The Gelassenheit problematizes the understanding of *physis*, and human's relationship with this *physis* through machination⁵⁷ and poetic dwelling.⁵⁸ Even though the Wu Wei does not have something similar to this yes-no relation, it can be said that the non-anthropocentric understanding of nature-human relation is a common ground⁵⁹ for both Wu Wei and Gelassenheit. Heidegger's main issue with the understanding of *physis* or technology is that it is part of a bigger problem, namely understanding Being as a mere presence. The Wu Wei does not have this kind of problematic (the relation between presence and non-presence or absence was different from the western conceptualization all along). But, even though it doesn't express it with western terminology, the Asian idea of "seeing the true essence of phenomena" or "reaching the real all-unifying reality behind the nature" can be read within a parallel of western notion of reaching the authentic phenomenality of phenomena which was always expressed under a rather strange way of dualities, namely ideal-real, phenomenal-noumenal etc.

One of the resemblances between Wu Wei and Gelassenheit is that, they both have a sense of "waiting in readiness" in this notion of inaction or non-action.⁶⁰ Not a passive waiting or readiness but a waiting in readiness that transcends the traditional dualities of activity-passivity, subject-object etc. This waiting in readiness (the Heidegger's analogy of waiting that corresponds to the meditative thinking should be kept in mind here) shows that maybe there is more to Heidegger's interest than just on the theoretical or conceptual level. Because, even though Heidegger probably never lived his

life as a Daoist or never really thought about turning his philosophical thoughts into something that sincerely resembles to the Daoist understanding of life and reality (Pattison, 2001, p. 204). This common element of waiting in readiness clearly shows that there is an affinity of Heidegger towards Daoism.

This affinity can also be traced on the two aspects that are common for both Wu Wei and Gelassenheit. The first aspect is that both notions have an non-theological and non-religious characteristics, even though they have past relations to what can be seen as theological or religious. Both Heidegger's Gelassenheit and chinese Wu Wei, no matter how much they are intertwined with what can be regarded as theological or religious, they are both god-less understandings (especially in Daoism). Second aspect is that, still connected to the first one, while they are both god-less (or not god-centered), they still have a deep connotation with eschatological and supernatural (not in the sense that the natural is divided from what is supernatural, but supernatural being both immanent and transcendent to natural) significance.

Another similarity is that both of these notions does not really have the sense of absolute detachment from what is happening phenomenologically (as a sense of abgescheidenheit or reclusement) but still have the sense of moving away one step back from the beings and phenomena in order to gain a better sense of awareness of these beings or phenomena or Being (Ereignis or Dao) under and within them through their flow of becoming. So, they both mean that they both a giving up the regular sense of concernment to achieve a more authentic and real sense of concernment towards beings and everything around. The Gelassenheit as the missing link between Dasein and Being; the Wu Wei as the necessary link between the human and the true essence of reality. While the Gelassenheit appropriates with Being, the Wu Wei enables a true connection and harmony with it.

One of the difference is that while for Heidegger, the Gelassenheit does not have an ethical sense but it is mainly an ontological or phenomenological concept, within the Asian thought the Wu Wei has political, governmental, ethical, social sense (especially within Ruism) that shapes its usage.⁶¹ Although Gelassenheit's relation with technology can give it a technic or social characteristic, this characteristic would be secondary for Heidegger, when com-

pared to its ontological (and anti-metaphysical) significance. But for Wu Wei, its different aspects almost have an equal significance, namely its non-metaphysical and ontological sense⁶² on one side and social, cultural, cultivational sense on other side, even though for the Daoism, its quasi-ontological sense has a more emphasize. But it is understandable because Heidegger was a philosopher, more a phenomenologist not a cultural theorist or social engineer, while the Daoism, Ruism or Buddhism (as a teaching, world-view and mentality) would of course cover more ground with a wider scope than just philosophy.

Both Gelassenheit and Wu Wei can be seen as a state of mind and a mental frame that is cherished and highlighted and put into use as related to the experience of phenomena and things. This is a state of mind that prioritizes and operates preceded of the distinction between theory and practice. Both Gelassenheit and Wu Wei belongs to a horizon that this distinction does not exist within. The lack of the presence of this distinction also makes these two perspectives near each other philosophically. Even though, for Heidegger this nearing has a more ontological significance as Gelassenheit being *befindlichkeit*, but for Wu Wei, the psychological significance is more put forward here.

As an idea of non-interference, both Wu Wei and Gelassenheit has an aspect that criticizes the power of rational and logical representation as a way of interacting with things and phenomena.⁶³ Because the cognitive and rationality-based understanding is not sufficient enough to acquire ontological awareness of the whole truth of the nature, universe and Being.⁶⁴ The act of representing the phenomena or a thing (as a presence) is, even at the beginning and by default, an interference which misleads the comprehension away from the needed awareness. This interference comes with the humanistic dominance over the nature (the technological attitude of the western world for Heidegger) that both Gelassenheit and Wu Wei are opposed to.

As one of the differences, it should be mentioned that the sense of “openness” for Being in Gelassenheit can't be found within the Wu Wei. There is indeed a similarity between the dasein-being relation and human-Dao relation. But while this similarity has a sense of openness for the Gelassenheit, it has a sense of harmony and accord in Wu Wei. The idea that dasein is the open-

ness that the meaning of Being manifests or reveal itself from concealment is particular to the Heidegger's understanding of ontology and phenomenology. The Gelassenheit is the actualization of this openness. In Wu Wei, there is no openness in this sense, but there is a harmony which unifies human and what is heavenly, namely, the nature.

Both Gelassenheit and Wu Wei lets things appear in their own appropriation. They both let phenomena appear as such. Through the Gelassenheit and Wu Wei, things and phenomena happen and "are" as themselves. Although, this "to be" has different connotations. While in Heidegger it is the revelation of Being in beings's themselves, because of the placement of nothingness and emptiness in Asian thought, this "to be" does not have the sense of suchness that is consisted of the Being or Being-based ontology. It should be reminded that, Heidegger's idea of fundamental ontology, or hermeneutic phenomenology was arisen as a reaction or a criticism towards a more than 1900 years old tradition of philosophical thought. Both Heidegger and his philosophy belonged to a paradigm shift or a change that the western humanity and culture has undergone with the end of 19th century and the beginning of the 20th. Just like other elements of his philosophy and thought, the Gelassenheit also carries this attitude of criticism, towards both the traditional western philosophy, and also early philosophical thoughts of Heidegger himself. In Gelassenheit, there is a criticism towards Plato, Aristotle, Hume, Kant, Hegel etc. Even though Heidegger himself does not put this criticism into the word itself, but his philosophy being a bridge figure between the preceding and following philosophical thoughts, his place seeks this criticism in Gelassenheit reaches its destinations. When one reads Heidegger's texts and if one is familiar with the thematic structures and his general characteristic of approach, then there would be no problem in understanding what he criticizes, even when it seems possible to comprehend what he is saying. For example, it is almost impossible to fully comprehend what Ereignis is in Heidegger's mind, but it is perfectly easy to guess what Ereignis is opposed to. Because, once the process of criticism that gives birth to the idea of Ereignis is understood, then it is relatively easy to make an informed guess of what it "must have meant". So, when Heidegger takes the notion of Gelassenheit within his own

philosophy and transforms it according to his thought, it is easy to see why that notion is chosen, into which it must have been transformed, and which points it is able to criticize within the history of philosophy. In Gelassenheit, there lies a criticism that resonances within almost one third of traditional western philosophy. In Wu Wei, there is no such radical and wide range criticism towards a historical tradition. It is still indeed a criticism towards a mentality and a worldview, because it designates an awareness towards nature, human and reality. Both Gelassenheit and Wu Wei claims a truth about Being, becoming, and happening of universe and all within it. And they are both still modes that belong to humans and their experience of things, so they are both phenomenological concepts. They both more belong to the horizon where the distinction between *theoria* and *praxis* doesn't have a meaning, so, it can be said that they are both existential attitudes. Of course, in this existentiality, one of the general differences between western and Asian cultures shows itself. In this attitude, even though it is not obvious or apparent, the Gelassenheit has a more individualistic characteristics, while the Wu Wei (especially in its social and administrative accomplishment) has a more collective tone, although both are still non-ego-logical. This is mainly related to the condition that there is no reason to think Heidegger's idea of Dasein in a collectivity. The path that gives the sense or awareness of Being is a path to be walked alone best. In nowhere substantial in his works, Heidegger gives a reason to imagine Dasein or the opening related to Being in a collective sense. Even though this sense of "aloneness" is well preserved within the Wu Wei, there is still a implication of the collectiveness in Wu Wei. Because the harmony on the bigger scale between the ruler and the people depends on the minor harmonies within the people, namely between father, mother, son and daughter within a family, between the employer and employees, between the director and officers, between all of the members of the society, otherwise the Wu Wei would be functionless on its sociality. While Heidegger's Dasein is always with other people, there is an un-shareability of the experience of / within Gelassenheit. One can not share the experience of the awareness of Ereignis with someone else. But for Wu Wei, without this kind of shareability, an aspect (the social aspect) of the Wu Wei would be impossible.

6. Conclusion

After all these examinations and the investigation here, it can be said that there is indeed a resemblance between Heideggerian notion of *Gelassenheit* and the Asian notion of *Wu Wei*. This resemblance, while on one side opens a comparison or meeting point between the West and the Asia, it also clearly reveals Heidegger's interest towards Asian thought. While it is not sure whether Heidegger thought of Asian *Wu Wei* when he places the *Gelassenheit* into his philosophy (even if he didn't think of this Asian notion or wasn't aware of it, since in summer of 1946,⁶⁵ he tried to translate the *Tao Te Ching* with Paul Shih-yi Hsiao, he must have realized that his *Gelassenheit* sounds similar to the *Wu Wei*) or not, it doesn't matter. Because it is for sure that no matter how he was interested in the Asian thought, Heidegger was a western philosopher, thinker and his philosophy was too bounded to the western horizon of the philosophy, even in the utmost points where he tried to get away from the tradition he was born into.

While there are differences and similarities (most of them are accounted above, but probably there are still ones which are missing here) between two notions, throughout the examination, it has been realized that maybe the more important thing regarding these notions are not establishing the differences and similarities between them. The examination started with the traditional mind-set of comparing two things, one from the Asia and other from the West. With this comparison, it was aimed to detect resemblances between them. But, during the examination, an unignorable insight started to follow the researcher. An insight about the direction of the examination. The two notions that are compared here, lie within an incomparability. It's not that they are not comparable. They are comparable indeed. But there's a bigger or more essential structure that makes them not suitable for a comparison. This incomparability does not raise from their indifference towards each other, nor it rises from their being irrelevance for each other. They are not comparable to each other, because it seems like they complete each other to a bigger whole, which makes their feature of comparable to each other insignificant. While both are about the same thing, they lack of each other. They fit to each other and create a bigger notion. The *Gelassenheit* and the *Wu Wei*

are not same, nor are they similar, even though they of course have similarities. They don't correspond or mirror each other enough to dominate this sense of bigger whole. They are compatible in a way similar to pieces of puzzle compatible with each other regarding an act of constructing a whole. The Wu Wei gives to the Gelassenheit what Gelassenheit lacks. The Gelassenheit gives to the Wu Wei what Wu Wei lacks. This mutual "giving" can be conceptualized, if wanted, through the idea of philosophy and non-philosophy. The Wu Wei gives the Gelassenheit what is non-philosophical and the Gelassenheit gives the Wu Wei what is philosophical, in a way that they can be completed afterwards, both within in themselves, and also with fulfilling their serve of being components in a bigger element, within the whole. This examination, although had started as a comparison, turned into a demystification (again, like completing or doing a puzzle) or an unconcealment which would be impossible if the Gelassenheit and the Wu Wei were to examined by themselves, without including the other. This insight would be the endgame that the comparative or fusion philosophy would probably mean to aim. Along the way of this investigation, the sense of examining the Wu Wei and the Gelassenheit left its place to the sense of examining something else. This investigation turns into a phenomenological experience of while looking at the same thing, seeing different aspects of it under different angles of light. In one beam, the Gelassenheit appears, and in another beam, the Wu Wei appears. It is the same attitude (whether it belongs to human, Dasein or the Dao doesn't hold any importance anymore). They (the Wue Wei and the Gelassenheit) are the different facets of the same manner (manner of letting things be and happen in their own place and way in the receptive readiness of non-action).

Therefore, it can be concluded that, there is indeed a possibility of new horizons (as an example of it can be seen above) in both phenomenology and in the phenomenality of the matters related that phenomenology within these kinds of comparative or fusion sense investigations. The notion of Gelassenheit in Heidegger's philosophy and the notion of Wu Wei in Asian thought are both important in their own context, namely historical and cultural background. But there is a bigger importance in here that justifies the remarks of Nietzsche quoted in the beginning of this investigation. There are indeed

riddles in this world that remain unsolved. But these riddles remain unsolved to the western and Asian thought when these thoughts are alone with these riddles. But, just like the quote says, a combination would pave the path that leads to a solution, or at least to a new horizon that these riddles would play in a new and different way. Without the combination of western and Asian *branches* of thought (even the word of branch now sounds more full and meaningful), it would be harder to accomplish this, because the context (what makes the “western” in western thought and what makes “Asian” the Asian thought) anchors the related thinking into the horizon, the ground of that context. Without the help of another horizon, it would be almost impossible for a thinking to free away itself from the horizon that it born under. Nietzsche and Heidegger were aware of this situation. That’s why they had a sensitivity regarding towards what is different, what is other to the western. They dreamt of a new horizon for the thinking itself and they tried to accomplish this within the thoughts of their abilities enable and let. This endeavor, this enterprise, is not a matter of succession or failure, but it is a project and sketching where the possibility of this new horizon or new phenomenology is just waiting there in the future to be encountered with along the way.

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1 For examples, see, Parkes (1991) and van der Braak (2011).

2 Siderits (2016), p. 1-9.

3 Also, see for response: Nylan & Verhoeven (2016).

4 It seems like the theoretical ground and justification in favour of fusion philosophy is already at present, see, Coquereau (2016).

5 But his contributions to comparative philosophy or intercultural studies are influential and important, see, Ma & van Brakel (2006).

6 See, Clarke (2001), p. 8-9.

7 See, May (2005), p. 3, 22, 25, 32.

8 See, Carr (1977), p. 685-688.

9 See, Edie (1993), p. 109-114.

10 See, Cherata (2006).

11 The problematization of the language can be found in multiple places in Heidegger's philosophy. The most famous one regarding the Asian thought and language is: Heidegger (1982), p. 1-56.

12 See, Heidegger, M. (2002).

13 For his relationship with Japanese philosophy, see, Tsujimura (2008).

14 See, Heidegger (1966), p. 23-24; Heidegger (1959): p. 12-17.

15 See, Heidegger (2001), p. 209-227.

- 16 See, Erickson (1991), p. 30-35.
- 17 For an examination, see, Wei (2005).
- 18 For further information, see, Ma (2008), p. 10-26.
- 19 For a comprehensive study, see, Young (2002), p. 37-61, 97-104.
- 20 Heidegger (1959). English translation of this text was published as “Conversation on a Country Path about Thinking” within Heidegger (1966), p. 58-90.
- 21 Heidegger (2005). English translation of this version was published within the translation of the GA 77 as Heidegger (2010), p. 1-104.
- 22 See, Stenstad (2006), p. 51-63.
- 23 See, Sheehan (2001), p. 190-196.
- 24 See, Heidegger (1966), p. 55-56.
- 25 For an examination of this notion within Heidegger's philosophy, see, Crowe (2006), p. 131-148.
- 26 See, Eckartsberg & Valle (1981).
- 27 For a summary with this regard, see, Pezze (2006), p. 108-117.
- 28 See, Snodgrass (2009), p. 93-96.
- 29 One should not confuse with the Chinese character *wu* 悟 that corresponds with *satori* as the Chinese translation of it with meaning of gaining spiritual awareness, enlightenment and consciousness towards true essence of things with the *wu* 無 in *Wu Wei* 無爲 (*wú wéi*), which means “no”, “not”, “non-”, “without”, “not have” etc.
- 30 For a short examination of the Zen in Heidegger's philosophy, see, Storey (2012).
- 31 See, Woźniak (2008), p. 27-35.
- 32 For a summary of the differences, see, Zimmerman (1993), p. 258-260.
- 33 See, Budriünaitė (2013), p. 37-39
- 34 For the translation, see (1) Huang (Trans.) (1997); (2) Brooks & Brooks (Trans.) (2001); (3) Watson (Trans.) (2007).
- 35 See note 2, Watson (Trans.) (2007), p. 106.
- 36 For the understanding of Ruism within Japan and its related to Daoism, see, Paramore (2016), especially p. 16-92.
- 37 Lau (Trans.) (1989).
- 38 Watson (Trans.) (1964)
- 39 For the sake of comprehending, it is useful to read two different translations of the Tao Te Ching together. The translations within the main text (chosen for the minimize subjective interpretation and its characteristic of more integral translation) belong to the <https://cetxt.org/Dao-de-jing>. The original text has been comparatively checked for errors. The translations in the footnotes (chosen for its characteristics of interpretive and direct translation) belong to Mitchell (Trans.) (2006).
- 40 “The Master acts without doing anything and teaches without saying anything. Things arise and she lets them come; things disappear and she lets them go.”
- 41 “Practice not-doing, and everything will fall into place.”
- 42 “The Tao never does anything, yet through it all things are done.”
- 43 “The Master does nothing, yet he leaves nothing undone.”
- 44 “Less and less do you need to force things, until finally you arrive at non-action. When nothing is done, nothing is left undone. True mastery can be gained by letting things go their own way. It can't be gained by interfering.”
- 45 “When the government is too intrusive, people lose their spirit. Act for the people's benefit. Trust them; leave them alone.”

- 46 For a summary of the problematic related, see, Lacertosa (2017).
- 47 Even though it is a term generally open to all individuals, there is indeed a special emphasize on the sages, masters, ruler and enlightened ones, see, Chan (2010), p. 15-17.
- 48 See, May (2005), p. 37-48.
- 49 For a short examination on nothingness in Asian thought, see, Rigsby (2014), p. 469-489.
- 50 See, Yao (2010).
- 51 This *Zuhandenheit*, when it is examined with the *Erscheinung*, provides a deeper understanding of *Gelassenheit*, see, Sena (2011), p. 91-92.
- 52 See, Parkes (2013), p. 95-116.
- 53 The problem of translatability of the terms between European and Asian languages still persists with this regard, see, Steffesen (2018).
- 54 See, Liu, J. (2017). "Be-ing (you 有) and non-be-ing (wu 無) in the Dao De Jing". *Asian Philosophy*. 27(2): 85-99
- 55 See, Davis (2011), p. 86-92.
- 56 For an east-west comparative study regarding this issue, see, Babich (2015).
- 57 There is a similar story of Zhuang Tzu about a man choosing not the use machines (because using machines would spoil what is pure and simple in the heart and it would lead to the restlessness of the spirit and the cessation of Dao buoying up the human) for planting the fields, and would be ashamed if to use it, for the story, see, Harries (2009), p. 195.
- 58 See, Storey (2015), p. 137-138.
- 59 This commonness is also related to the understanding of Heidegger and Daoism on the notion of human nature, for a short summary, see, Wang (2017).
- 60 See, Yu (2018), p. 49-55.
- 61 Of course, here, the Heideggerian understanding of ethics with its relation to Being and the Asian intearction with it should be reminded, see, Mayeda (2006), p. 18-22.
- 62 The term "metaphysics" does not signify the same thing for the west and the east. So, when one talks about "metaphysics" in Daoism or Asian thought, there rises a problem of misconceptualizing it within the western frame. For this problematic of metaphysics, see, Stambaugh (1991), p. 107-121.
- 63 The same criticism can also be found in Zhuang Tzu, see, Goicoechea (2003), p. 82-85.
- 64 For a comparison with Heidegger and Daoism with this regard and some more, see, Zhang (1993), p. 309-316.
- 65 See, Ma (2006).