

# Gatherings

**THE HEIDEGGER CIRCLE ANNUAL**

**VOLUME 2, 2012**

*Gatherings: The Heidegger Circle Annual* is a publication of the Heidegger Circle, a group of scholars who have been meeting annually in North America since 1966 to discuss the work of Martin Heidegger. In the Spring of 2010, at the business meeting of the Heidegger Circle, the members present at the meeting voted to produce an annual publication of research on the thought and writings of Martin Heidegger and related themes. The first issue of the annual was published in the Spring of 2011.

## *Gatherings: The Heidegger Circle Annual*

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# Trading in Being: Event, Capital, Art

*Krzysztof Ziarek*

While the elaborations of the notion of the event in Lyotard, Foucault, and Derrida are sometimes linked to the thought of Martin Heidegger, it remains uncertain to what extent all these various articulations of the intensifying preoccupation with time and history as event are indebted to Heidegger's pioneering rethinking of the event (*Das Ereignis*), tracing back to the mid 1930s. What interests me here is not a genealogy of Heidegger's influence but the possibility that Heidegger's term *das Ereignis* may still mark the most radical signification of the event, extending beyond the force of rupture by instantiating an "alternative time-space" critical of technological operations of power and capital. The event as *Ereignis* does not signify simply a rupture of chronological time, which would produce a revision of history into a complex, singular patchwork of events, repeatedly destabilizing unities of origin and continuities of meaning. The force of the event in Heidegger lies elsewhere, as it has to do primarily with the opening of a new time-space whose organizing relationality is experienced in terms of freedom from power, i.e. freedom to be power-free.

## THE EVENT

Heidegger links the possibility of another time-space with the necessary transformation of "man" away from anthropological conceptions of the rational animal and into *Da-sein*, that is, into an entity whose

being is determined primarily in terms of its serving as a placeholder for the opening up of the question of being:

...*this* more originary retrieval demands – and already gives rise to – a complete transformation of man into Da-sein, because the truth of be-ing [*Sein*], which is to be opened up, will bring nothing other than the more originary unfolding of *be-ing itself*. And this means that everything is transformed and that the walkways that still led to be-ing must be broken off, because another time-space is enopened by be-ing itself, which time-space makes a new erecting and grounding of beings necessary.<sup>1</sup>

For Heidegger, the *Ereignis* is less about the rupturing of the chronological span of experience – though obviously such a rupture and displacement occur within the event – than about the opening up of another time-space which makes necessary a different manner of thinking about beings and their respective ways of being. Without going into much more detail about the specific vocabulary Heidegger employs in *Contributions to Philosophy* to propose “a more originary retrieval” of the problematic of being and the ontological difference between being and beings, I would like to explore the terminology Heidegger uses to indicate the otherness of this “other time-space,” which opens up from within the *Ereignis*. For what is truly interesting about Heidegger’s notion of event is that it pivots on a radical critique of power in its modern forms of deployment: from machination, production, calculation, and control, to ordering and information. What Heidegger refers to in *Contributions to Philosophy* as “another time-space” is characterized later on in terms of a decisive release from power.

As it evolves through the late 1930s and early 1940s, Heidegger’s discourse about the *Ereignis* distances itself more and more decisively from the terms of power, production, and machination, all underpinning and regulating Western metaphysics. It describes the disclosure of being which frames European culture as *Machenschaft*, that is, as

machination, or manipulative power, which indicates that Western thought and practice hinge on the idea of an intrinsic manipulability of being: in its “essence,” being is manipulable, calculable, and, in principle, makeable. Heidegger plays on the correlation in German of *machen*, to make or to produce, with *Macht*, power, demonstrating that the metaphysics of production and making is essentially also the metaphysics of power. The term *Machenschaft* is thus deployed to illustrate this intrinsic link between making and power, which underpins both Western thought and the practices of Western culture. Improvement and intensification of the ability to make and to produce becomes a simultaneous intensification of the operations of power. Today, these operations of making and manipulation hinge on the understanding, computation, and control of being as information. One can thus talk about contemporary informational operations of power, from the micro scale of genetic manipulation to the global scale of economic activity in terms of the world market.

Heidegger develops his critique against the backdrop of Nietzsche’s will to power, as he begins to distance the thought of being as event (*Ereignis*) from the terms of power, control, and violence. He shows how being has come to be disclosed in ways that dissimulate it in terms of *Gewalt* (violence), *Herrschaft* (mastery, dominion, reign), *Machen* (making or production), and, finally, *Macht* (power). In short, in Western metaphysics “to be” means to exist in terms of power, that is, to be in essence makeable, calculable, and controllable, whether as, say, value, capital, or information. This is the reason why Heidegger’s discourse on the event sets out to evolve alternative terms for thinking being, terms divorced from the discourses of making and power, and directed toward articulating freedom as a releasement (*Gelassenheit*) from the workings of power. The whole discourse of this period in the 1930s and 40s comes to be based on the idea that being and event happen as power-free. Let me illustrate this with two quotations from the 1938/39 text *Besinnung* (*Mindfulness*).

Be-ing – the *powerless* [*das Machtlose*] – *beyond power and lack of power* – better, what is outside power and lack of power, and fundamentally unrelated to such.

The power-less [*das Macht-lose*] is not the same as what is without-power which while it is deprived of power and lacks power nevertheless and simply remains related to power. ...How to understand the *-less*? From out of *refusal*.<sup>2</sup>

The suffix *-less* (*-los*) in *machtlos* (literally, power-less) does not have, as Heidegger explains, the connotations of lack or absence: it is not powerlessness in the sense of the lack of power, impotence, or disempowerment. Rather the German suffix *-los* indicates a release and a freeing. Thus it may be best to render *das Machtlose* into English as the power-free, as Heidegger himself suggests, when at one point he supplements *machtlos* with *machtfrei*.

As event, being does not explain itself in terms of making (*Machen*) or power (*Macht*): it is not fashioned in terms of power into something that is made or makeable, as both “making” and “power” resonate in the German *Gemächtes*. Rather, event is to be thought in terms of setting-free: “Setting-free consists in the e-vent of *Dasein* in such a way that e-vent withdraws in the t/here [*Da*] (in the notground of the unprotected and unsupported) which is thus lit up. Setting-free and withdrawal belong to be-ing as event. Thus nothing occurs within the sphere of beings. Be-ing remains non-appearing; but *with* a being as such it can happen that it moves into the clearing of what is non-ordinary, casts away its ordinariness, and has put itself up for decision as to how it suffices for be-ing.”<sup>3</sup> The event lets what exists, be, because it unfolds “the free-play of the time-space”<sup>4</sup> of the possible.

The event indicates that being happens as “the quiet force of the possible.” “Be-ing is a possibility, what is never extant and yet through e-vent is always what grants and refuses in not-granting.”<sup>5</sup> Rethinking being as *das Mögliche* in “Letter on Humanism,” Heidegger indicates that the force of the possible works beyond metaphysically and logically

conceived notions of possibility and actuality. “When I speak of the ‘quiet force of the possible’ I do not mean the *possible* of a merely represented *possibilitas*, nor *potentia* as the *essentia* of an *actus* of *existentia*; rather, I mean Being itself, which in its favoring [*mögen*, possibilizing] presides over thinking and hence over the essence of humanity, and that means over its relation to Being. To enable something here means to preserve it in its essence, to maintain it in its element.”<sup>6</sup> The element of being is characterized by Heidegger here as *das Mögliche*: as that which both *has* the force of rendering possible and unfolds *as this possible*, which means that being is both the force which renders possible and what is thus rendered possible.

What is critical to understanding Heidegger on this point is that being, as the element which renders possible, happens as nihilation (*Nichten*, *Nichtung*), that the momentum of the force of the possible is nihilation. On many occasions, notably in *Contributions to Philosophy*, Heidegger describes the characteristic opening up of the element of being in terms of being’s refusal, its retreat or withdrawal into beings, and thus into essence, presence, objectivity, etc. He is emphatic, though, in claiming that this refusal is nothing negative, and that, in fact, it is “*the foremost and utmost gifting of be-ing, nay even its inceptual unfolding* [*Wesung*] *itself*.”<sup>7</sup> The refusal is not to be thought as a lack, an absence, or a fault in being, in being which should be there, that is, be “present,” but which instead refuses itself. Rather, the refusal is the *eigen*, the own, the “proper” way for being to be: it is how being suitably gives itself as its own refusal. The term “refusal” signals the fact that being is neither lack nor fullness, but a characteristic overflow<sup>8</sup> of the nothing/nihilating over what exists as beings. It also indicates the way in which nihilation as the element of being “overflows” both positivity and negativity, rendering positing and negation possible. The nothing as the momentum of being is “*the overflow of pure refusal. The richer the ‘nothing,’ the simpler the be-ing.*”<sup>9</sup> As Heidegger remarks, we need to take the nihilating away from the word “nothing” (understood negatively) and give it the force (*Kraft*, not *Macht*) of pointing to the abyss (*Ab-grund*) of being.<sup>10</sup> Nihilation, therefore, is the force that being

has as the abyss, or ab-ground: namely, the force that enables into the possible precisely by vacating, emptying, and opening up essence and presence through the futural play of time-space.

What allows beings to have possibilities is the releasing momentum of the play of time-space. Releasing and freeing beings from their representation in terms of presence, essence, objectivity, and so on, the force of the possible enables them to be: it lets them be precisely to the extent that being means the force of the possible, and not essence or presence, whether posited or negated: "...this setting-free nihilates in the originary sense, dis-engages [*ab-setzt*] beings as such. That is, nihilating is not negating but rather – if it should be interpreted at all in terms of the judgmental comportment – is an affirming of beings as such, as what is dis-engaged. However, nihilating is precisely dis-engagement itself, whereby be-ing as setting-free owns itself over to the clearing of the enowned t/here [*Da*]."<sup>11</sup> It is on the strength or force (*Kraft*) of this not-character (*Nicht-haftigkeit*) (nothinghood, not-hood) that being can assign or grant possibilities to beings: "refusal is the intimacy of an allotting."<sup>12</sup> Instead of negating, nihilation here has the sense of freeing, of releasing beings into their possibilities for being. "The nothing is neither something negative nor is it a 'goal'; rather it is the essential enquivering of be-ing itself and therefore is *more-being* than any beings."<sup>13</sup>

Power flows through beings in such a way that it renders them present, standing there as graspable and manipulable entities. It is nihilation as the quiet force of the possible that disengages beings from being "powered" into calculability and manipulation. This freeing momentum of nihilation, which Heidegger characterizes as a kind of tremor or vibration which constitutes the very force of "to be," is not negative: it is freedom, releasement, letting be. In other words, nihilation is the "force" indicated by the suffix *-los* in *machtlos* (power-less/power-free). "Less" here does not signify negation or absence but releasement and freeing characteristic of nihilation. Nihilation, as it were, "voids" machination (*Machenschaft*), that is, power, which, flowing from being, turns the event, and its free-play of the time-space, into the domain

of making and machination. It is in this sense that nihilation is not only not negative (or negation) but constitutes in fact an affirmation of beings as existing in the free-play of possibilities, in the power-free time-space granted by being itself.<sup>14</sup> Nihilation opens up the free-play of the time-space precisely as *power-free*. “And only in the free-play of time-space of this strife is there preserving [keeping true, *be-wahren*] and loss of event and does that which is called a being enter the open of that clearing.”<sup>15</sup>

### **CAPITAL**

At the same time that the event lets be, it also allows everything, as part of the play of possibilities, to be in force and to stand as beings. Simply put, being finds itself always already concealed in beings, and there is being only to the extent that there are beings. This other letting Heidegger describes as “*Alles-gelten-lassen*,” a letting be that allows everything to be in force as entities and thus to be valid, valid as a being, a presence, or a value. These two vectors of letting be come into tension and conflict. “[W]hat a thing is in its Being is not exhausted by its being an object, particularly when objectivity takes the form of value. Every valuing, even where it values positively, is a subjectivizing. It does not let beings: be. Rather, valuing lets beings: be valid – solely as the objects of its doing.”<sup>16</sup> When letting be takes the form of allowing something to be in force and valid, it tends at the same time to obscure the nihilating and freeing momentum of possibility. In this way, it trades the force of the possible for the force, or the standing, of validity as beings, and, subsequently, for the value of standing presence which beings acquire. No longer thought in nearness to nihilation but instead as different from it, *Gelten* makes it possible to think beings without, as it were, thinking them as being in being, that is, as being continuously freed into the force of the possible, into the futurity of the time-space. It thus makes possible not only thinking beings as valid and having a value but also as reducible to and representable in terms of value(s). In this way, ontological difference not only makes capitalization possible,

but also facilitates and installs calculation and exchange by allowing us to think beings as though they were different from being.

The point here is that *Gelten* is only a moment, a possibility, within the nihilating vector of being. It is a moment when being comes to stand as beings, and thus appears to hold true as and to be equivalent to beingness, that is, to the being of beings, to the various ways in which beings exist. But this moment when being, as it were, comes to be in force as beings, has always already been nihilated, that is, freed and released from the capture implied by obtaining standing, validity, or value. To perhaps oversimplify the point, one could say that beings *are not*, that they do not hold true as beings, but merely happen, which means here that they are freed into their possibilities, whose force nihilates any standing, validity, or value that they are allowed to have as beings. When beings are allowed to be, they in fact never come to be in force as (present) beings, but instead happen in the manner of nihilation: their standing as beings is always already nihilated, voided, and opened up into future possibilities. And to the extent that, when let be, beings are not beings but happen in the force of nihilation, they never come to be valid or capable of having a value. Only when this vector of nihilation is forgotten, when being is no longer in force as the quiet force of the possible, can beings become primarily a matter of validity and value. When *Gelten* is allowed to stand as different from nihilation, as positivity different from negation, it at once conceals nihilation and makes being capable of having a value, which means that it makes being capitalizable.

At the moment that being is admitted as presence, objectivity, or value, nihilation becomes mis-presented as negation. Because *gelten lassen* indicates how a being is allowed to be valid and as such take a stand in being as something existing, a positivity, nihilation can only appear in this context as a negation of what “stands” as valid, effective, posited, etc. In the releasement characteristic of *Gelassenheit*, being resonates in its force of possibility, and is not about standing, presence, or validity, just as it is not about absence or negation. Rather, it is in *Gelassenheit* that all of those “possibilities” are released into

the open, into the play of time-space. In fact, only within this opening, this abyss, do they become possible to begin with. Since value or presence, and in fact the very standing of something as a being, give this being a certain constancy or positivity, such positivity covers over the freeing and enabling force of nihilation, and requires instead that a being, always already “present,” be seen in terms of negation, that is, that its constancy, its standing in being, be canceled, voided, or invalidated. But this negation becomes possible only in the aftermath of the releasement of possibilities by nihilation, that is, by being’s force of the possible. In this context, letting be valid signals a misprision of the force of the possible in terms of validity, positivity, and effectivity. And that becomes particularly evident when *gelten lassen*, letting be valid, conceals the nihilating force of possibility and does not let beings be but instead holds them to their standing as present, valid, and valuable objects or resources. Letting beings be valid, being no longer enables them to be in the force of the possible freely granted to them. In such a case, letting be valid no longer remains in tension with letting be, understood as letting nihilate.

In an age defined by the world market, global communications, and planetary capitalism nothing seems more self-evident and omnipresent than power operating in terms of value, whether in trading, marketing, or profiting. Stock market fluctuations measure the economic pulse of contemporary reality, while electronic trading brings our homes into the sphere of the global market and renders participation in the operations of capital increasingly easier. The saturation of today’s life with patterns of efficiency, productivity, and profitability keeps turning our existence into a giant and omnipresent market sphere. Yet, while economic, political, and cultural analyses or contestations of global markets and planetary capital proliferate, the obviousness and pervasiveness of this “planetary market-ability” appears to impact adversely reflection on what in fact makes being and experience predisposed toward exchange and trading, in short, what makes being market-able, and in turn also marketable. What is it in being that makes trading in it possible, in spite of the uncontainable,

futural play of the time-space? And, especially, what is it, in being and of being, that comes to be traded, in making room for exchange and trading? To put it differently, what kind of “ontological” trade-offs have to take place to make the contemporary planetary-technological revealing of being as a “global market” possible?

While it might seem initially a bit of a stretch to propose that one could look at Heidegger as a thinker of the world market, in fact his rethinking of the essence of technology as planetary technicity provides probably the most sustained contemporary reflection on the ontological transformations which render the time-space of being market-able. Heidegger’s repeated meditations on the pervasively technicist character of being in modernity, from the analysis of *Machenschaft* in the mid-1930s, to the reflections on the essence of technology, technological revealing, and the *Gestell*, keep engaging with the historical-ontological positioning of being, and especially with its broadly conceived modern enframing (*Gestell*), which has made capital and capitalism possible. Though Heidegger does not discuss at length economic or social relations, and does not involve himself in cultural critique, his thinking is motivated and energized by the need to lay bare the ways in which being, revealing itself as modern planetary technicity, not only opens itself to but in fact calls forth what in another context I referred to as the “capitalization” of being. Being’s intrinsic tendency to be effective through beings, that is, to be in force only to the extent that there *are* beings at all, or that beings are insofar as they are *in being*, enframes being metaphysically and technicistically into essences, ideas, values, or, more recently, into resources and information. It is precisely this tendency of being to reveal itself through beings and to stand as beings, and in this way to gain the standing and the validity of essence or presence, that makes room for capitalization of being. This proclivity allows for capitalizing being just in this specific sense that it lets being, and its time-space, stand as something of worth, as a value, and thus as something that can become capital.

I am not alone in seeing in Heidegger’s ontological difference the “origin” of capitalization. Addressing what she calls the originary

exchange of being and essence in Heidegger, that is, the change of being into beingness (*Sein* as *Seiendheit*), Catherine Malabou in her book *Le change Heidegger* writes about “le capitalisme ontologique,” or ontological capitalism, in Heidegger’s thought: “Ontological capitalism names the economic system opened up by the originary exchange of presence as itself. A being against being via the currency of essence.”<sup>17</sup> Essence, beingness, and presence become the currency in which being gives itself both to be and to be thought. They become the ontological money, the metaphysical gold standard, which makes thought, representation, and the philosophical trading in being possible. The exchange of being for a being and the substitution of presence or essence for that being’s being clear the room for capitalization. Being’s specific way of revealing itself in modernity as standing reserve, reserve of resources and capital, marks the intrinsic technicity of being. It also makes clear that capitalization is never an arbitrary or external imposition but an inclination of being itself, which intensifies in proportion to the characteristic heightening of being’s technicity into the modern *Gestell* or enframing.

Heidegger only hints at this line of questioning in “What Are Poets For?,” the 1946 lecture on Rilke’s poetry published in *Holzwege*:

In place of that, which the once heeded world-content used to give freely of itself, the object-character of technological dominion spreads itself over the earth ever more quickly, ruthlessly, and completely. Not only does it establish [*stellt....auf*] all things as producible [*Herstellbares*] in the process of production; it also delivers [*stellt...zu*] the products of production by means of the market. In self-assertive production [*des sich durchsetzendes Herstellens*], the humanness of man and the thingness of things dissolve into the calculated market value of a market which not only spans the whole earth as a world market, but also, as the will to will, trades in the essence of Being [*im Wesen des Seins markt*] and thus subjects all beings to the trade of a calculation

[*in das Handel eines Rechnens*] that dominates most tenaciously in those areas where there is no need of numbers.<sup>18</sup>

While human beings live “essentially by risking [their] nature in the vibration of money and the currency of values [*der Vibration des Geldes und des Geltens der Werte*],”<sup>19</sup> being risks itself in the vibration of technicity as the *Gestell*, the risk which Heidegger deliberately makes resonate throughout the essay in the multiple and complex plays on *stellen*. The technological dominion (*Herrschaft*) spreads all over the earth because technicity discloses being into and as the objective or the object-like (*das Gegenständige*). Revealing being, technicity changes being into entities and thus exchanges it for objects, installing in this specific way all beings as essentially producible. “To be” thus comes to indicate being “placeable” and “positionable” (*stellbar*) as producible and makeable (*herstellbar* and *machbar*). This general putting in place of being as production and producibility also effects a dissolution of thingness and of the being of humans into calculable market values: as resources, capital, information, etc. In this specific sense, technicity as enframing reveals the modern world to be a world market. The phrase “reveals to be” signals here that technicity does not simply reveal what is already there, present and waiting to be displayed, but rather that technicity reveals the world in such a way *that it be* a “world market.” In revealing being as the (modern) world, technicity renders it into and enframes it as a world market. Technicity thus comes to play a disclosive and a decisive role, so that the world no longer happens as world, but instead is put in place as world market, in which what takes place is a trading in being, a trade where being is brought to the market, assigned value, marketed, and exchanged.

Speaking of this trade in being, Heidegger indicates that it is the will to will, the will to power, that comes to trade in being through the opening up and the installation of the world as world market [*Weltmarkt*]. To characterize this trade, Heidegger employs in the phrase describing the operations of the world market, “*im Wesen des Seins marketet*,” (“[it] trades in the essence of Being”) a rarely used, and somewhat archaic

verb *markten*. If used at all, the verb *markten* appears mostly in writing. Contemporary dictionaries explain its meaning through the verbs *handeln* and *feilschen*: to trade, in the sense of to bargain or to haggle. The Grimm dictionary, however, lists *feilschen*, together with *handeln*, to trade, only as the fourth entry in a six-entry explanation of the meaning of *markten*.<sup>20</sup> The first entry explains *markten* as going to the market as a trader and trading, selling, etc., there (“*als händler den markt beziehen, handelschaft auf dem markte betreiben: markten, kaufen, kramen, nundinari*”). The second entry refers to gaining or earning money through trading (“*durch solchen handel einnehmen, in der formel geld markten; viel, wenig markten.*”). The third meaning is that of *kaufen*, and is explained in terms of buying, selling, or acquiring. In the fourth entry, *markten* is explained as bargaining or haggling with someone. Entry number five concerns finding fault with a bought article, while the last entry has *markten* as negotiating a lower price, bartering, carping, quibbling, and nitpicking to depress the market value of an object.

In a characteristic gesture, Heidegger uses the verb *markten* as the verbal form of the noun “market,” to indicate the manner in which the world market ‘markets,’ or trades in, the essence of being. It is the market itself that ‘markets’ and ‘trades,’ and this trading is not something that simply takes place on the market, but, instead, it is precisely what makes the world into a world market. Just as elsewhere Heidegger is fond of writing that “world worlds,” verbalizing the noun *welt* into the invented *welten*, here he uses the archaic *markten* as the verb form of the noun *Markt* (market). One could therefore say, literalizing the translation of Heidegger’s phrase “*der Weltmarkt markt*,” that the “world market markets.” This sense of “marketing” obviously does not refer to the common meaning of preparing something for the market and advertising it, but to the manner in which, through technicity as enframing, the world is revealed to be a market, revealed to be in the sense of being rendered into a world market. Revealing the world to be a world market, technicity reveals beings as commodities, whether real or potential. To be in the world revealed as the world market means to be in essence a commodity. Existence becomes tantamount

to capitalization and commodification. In technicity, *markten* belongs characteristically to the “essence” of being, that is, to the way in which being unfolds and comes to be. When the passage from “What Are Poets For?” is read this way, it becomes possible to say that the verb *markten* describes the manner in which the world no longer “worlds,” that is, is no longer revealed as world, but instead, “markets,” that is, comes to be a world market.

The somewhat archaic use of *markten* even at the time of writing “What Are Poets For?” in 1946 may be read as indicative of the manner in which this trading in being tends to easily erase itself, obscuring the essence of technicity, and allowing capital to appear primarily in economic and social terms rather than as rendered possible through a historico-ontological trade-off in the very essence of being. Just as the verb *markten* is rarely used, the very movement of the world’s becoming market-able rarely registers in thinking. And when it does, it forces the question of what specifically it is in being that makes the world capable of being a market.

In the *Gestell*, instead of enabling and making possible, being reveals itself to be that which frames, posits, and sets up everything so that beings obtain a certain currency or value: as objects, resources, information, capital, commodity, etc. Such currency or worth is intrinsically calculable, and thus beings can obtain their value in gold or money, and become ready to enter the capitalist mechanism of exchange. Rather than letting be (*sein lassen*), technicity gives being the momentum of *gelten*, so that “to be” now means to be effective or in force as a being, to have the currency or worth of a being, a being whose being can be determined in terms of its value. In technicity, “to be” is no longer to be in the quiet force of the possible but rather to be value-able. As a consequence, beings exist not in the force of their futurally oriented possibilities but obtain in terms of their present and calculable value: they become value-able, capable of having a value and of being calculable in terms of values. When being admits of a value, when it becomes “valid” as a present being, this present being comes to stand as something intrinsically open to being set up and posited in a manner

not simply allowing but in fact calling for calculation. Letting be valid thus renders beings into resources, or into the standing reserve, as Heidegger calls it in “The Question Concerning Technology”: “Everywhere everything is ordered [*bestellt*] to stand by, to be immediately on hand, indeed to stand there just so that it may be on call for a further ordering. Whatever is ordered about in this way has its own standing. We call it the standing-reserve [*Bestand*].”<sup>21</sup>

A distinctive trait of this standing is the ability to be calculated in terms of value. When something has a standing that is estimable in terms of value, this value can also be translated into and ordered in mathematical or monetary terms. It can be measured by means of gold, money, or capacity as capital. The capitalization of being, to which I referred in the beginning of my essay, is that moment when letting be becomes letting be valid, and the validity gives being a standing which covers over the nihilating momentum of its force of the possible. In this sense, such a capitalization is the prelude to the acquisition by being of the standing of capital, when what exists, or even what can potentially exist, has its being determined in terms of its value and validity as capital. Capitalization can be thus understood as the “validation” of being into the standing-reserve, where being obtains the standing of calculable and measurable beings. The German term *Geltung* reflects this sense of capitalization as “validation,” that is, the sense of obtaining validity, of gaining the standing of value and worth. As being valid through *gelten lassen*, beings *are* to the extent that their being is a value, or has worth and validity. This means that beings are in being, and thus are actual or real, only as having the standing of value, as being something of worth. As a consequence, their being, now their validity=value=worth, becomes capable of being capitalized and calculated as capital. To put it differently, the being of beings comes to reside in their validity or standing *as* capital.

This moment of capitalization, when being acquires the standing which renders it intrinsically capitalizable, is also the moment when the world becomes able to be a market. Capitalization makes the world market-able, which means that what exists in the world has been

admitted into the standing of validity as capital. Having as the key component of its standing this ability to be capital, beings become calculable and exchangeable. This capacity to have one's value calculated and exchanged means that beings become market-able, that they can be brought onto the market, marketed, and traded. Thus trading and marketability associated with the operations of capitalism become possible and valid as a consequence of this characteristic tradeoff in being: a tradeoff between letting be and letting be valid, between *sein/nichten lassen* and *gelten lassen*. This tradeoff makes possible production, capital, technology, and so on.

As capitalization, however, this tradeoff is intrinsic to how being lets be, both letting be and letting be valid. The issue, therefore, is not capitalization itself, or technicity as enframing, or even the world's market-ability, but the disappearance and forgetting of letting be and of its nihilating force of the possible. Capitalization becomes a problem only when the letting be valid, necessary to the capitalization of being, ends up "invalidating" letting be, and with it, being as the quiet force of the possible. Yet, part of the problem is that, because being gives itself through its refusal, such an invalidation of letting be has always already happened. The difficulty here is discerning and letting being have its 'proper' force of nihilation, which means not allowing this force to be rendered "invalid" in relation to the validity and value which beings gain by virtue of being, that is, being present.

#### THE OTHER TIME-SPACE OF THE ARTWORK

The passage in which Heidegger discusses world market and trading in being, and which has provided the impetus for my discussion, comes from the lecture "What Are Poets For?" which reflects on the role of poetry in the technological world of global capital. Philosophically and poetically the issue, at least as it emerges from Heidegger's essay and in the context of the trajectory of his thinking from mid-1930s onward, is not the world market or global economy, but rather the world's market-ability, that is, the way in which the world no longer comes to be world in its futurally oriented time-space of nihilation but unfolds instead as

a world market. In such a world market everything happens not in the event of the nihilating time-space but in real time and in virtual space, so that instead of the play of time-space, there is the play of market and economic indicators, and the global flow of information, of ones and zeros as the indicators, or informational indexes, of the success of the calculation of time and space, of the accomplishment of the valuation and capitalization of beings. What then are poets, and poetry, and even more generally, art, for in the age of world market? Not for presenting a committed, or socially minded, critique of capital in its economic, political, and cultural operations, but, more radically, certainly from the point of view of philosophical thinking, for providing a critique of the capitalization of being and of the “marketing” of being in terms of value, capital, and money contingent upon it. The poetic in poetry and art is there for the critique of the trading (*Marktung*) of being and its “validation” (*Geltung*), which bring being onto the market, both trading in the event and trading the event in, that is, exchanging it for beingness, with its capitalizable standing of a value. This trading intrinsic to technicity, to the technical revealing of being, makes possible the rise of capital. What can be developed in this manner out of Heidegger’s thought is the necessity of a critique of the capitalization of being on the ontological level, a critique of the capitalization that, trading letting be for letting be valid, opens the door to capital and to its economic, social, and cultural expansions and expenditures.

If Plato wanted to banish all poetry that could potentially upset the philosophical, rational, and, ultimately, technicist running of the polis, today’s world market banishes poetry even more effectively, and does so without any need of political decrees. It is enough to point out the essential market-disability of anything poetic, whether in poetry, literature, art, or thinking. And the only way that poetry can be rendered marketable is to show that it can acquire a value of some sort, that, for instance, it exemplifies or teaches values: moral, cultural, political, religious, ecological, human, that is, values which could be used “productively,” for example, to evaluate and guide us in our use of technology. But, as Heidegger already remarked, values are precisely the indicators of the

effectiveness with which technicity pervades modern society and assigns a technicistically prescribed value to poetry, literature, and, more generally, art. For to make poetry a value, whether literary, cultural, or moral, is precisely to technicize it. “The inherent natural power of technicity shows itself further in the attempts that are being made...to master technicity with the help of traditional values.”<sup>22</sup>

What puts poetry, and thus art, in a critical tension with technicity is that poetry does not trade the poetic saying for what is said; that is, poetry does not exchange its saying, its ways of engaging with and letting us experience language, for the validity and value of communication, representation, or expression. Poetry, if it merits that name, does not allow language to obtain the value of representation or expression but instead lets language “nihilate.” In other words, poetry resonates, through and within what it says, the nihilating and emptying manner in which being, as the force of the possible, lets be. This is why poets dare meaning, endanger sense, even venture into non-sense, risking communicability and comprehension for the sake of being, that is, for the sake of allowing being to nihilate in its force of the possible. They endanger and challenge the cultural and political “value” of poetry, and not only when that value is traditional and regressive but also critical and progressive. And in a more fundamental manner, poets risk the market-ability of art and literature, in order to dare to disrupt the capitalization of being, and the exchange of being into capital it enables. In their poetic wager with language, poets dare to disallow capitalization—in German, one could say “*nicht gelten lassen*”—in order to challenge its disregard for the nothing and for nihilation and to inscribe the freeing nihilation back into being.

Yet this critique can happen only when artworks become divorced from being misrecognized as aesthetic experiences or cultural objects. Heidegger suggests that the question of the work of art is bound with “the task of overcoming aesthetics and that means simultaneously with overcoming a certain conception of beings as what is objectively representable. Overcoming of aesthetics again results necessarily from the historical encounter with metaphysics as such....Overcoming of

metaphysics means freeing the priority of the question of the truth of being in the face of any 'ideal,' 'causal,' and 'transcendental' and 'dialectical' explanations of being."<sup>23</sup> To be framed and represented aesthetically and culturally, the work of art has to be posited as an object, an object capable of being represented, for instance, in terms of aesthetic experience or as a culturally produced and exchanged object of art. Culture and art business result in the proliferation of art objects, but they do not necessarily foster the artwork as event. In fact, as Heidegger indicates, our age, though abundant in art objects, is characterized by a certain *Kunst-losigkeit*, not simply by a lack of art, that is, of art as event, but by a release, or a setting free from the aesthetic and cultural conceptions of artwork as art object. Aesthetic and cultural framing of art necessarily grasps the artwork in metaphysical terms, and it is these terms that Heidegger wants to leave behind in the gesture of the overcoming of aesthetics and aiming for a different knowledge of art: "In the horizon of this knowing, art has lost its relation to culture; it reveals itself here only as an event of be-ing."<sup>24</sup> It is only when experienced in its *Kunst-losigkeit*, in its freedom from art, that is, from aesthetic and cultural ideas of art, that the artwork can reveal itself as an event and thus discover "an originary necessity of what is ownmost to art, namely putting the truth of be-ing to a decision. . ."<sup>25</sup> What Heidegger is looking for is another origin of art, not an aesthetic or a cultural one, but one intimately linked to being as event and to its opening up of the nihilating free-play of another time-space.

When freed from artfulness and aestheticization, from its historical categorization as belonging to a sector of culture, the artwork reveals its ability to put being to a decision. But what kind of a decision, that is, of a scission, which illuminates a difference and brings it into the open, is at work in art when it succeeds in happening as event? It seems to me that the decision at work in art is precisely the one between two senses of time-space. On the one hand, it is the metaphysical time-space, regulated and pervaded by the operations of power, by *Machenschaft*, where all becomes accessible and available in terms of current calculability and manipulability; for us, this means information, instant and global

telematic facility, digitization, in short, experience as data-bank, available in its informational articulations and susceptible to instant machination, transformation, calculation, and thus profit. On the other hand, it is the time-space of the possible, unfolding as power-free, beyond power and powerlessness, essentially unrelated to power as such. It is the play, the de-cision between these two valencies of time-space that may be enacted in the event of art.

Artwork as an event stages the scission between the time-space of the operations of power – the tele-informational global time-space of contemporary capital – and the time-space of the power-free, where beings are allowed to dis-engage from their capture into standing presence, into idea, value, or information. It is this decision between the time-space of power as capital and the time-space of the power-free that gives the outline to the event at play in the artwork. One of the most forceful characteristics of the time-space of capital is its increasing insistence on the non-existence and impossibility of another paradigm of being, experience, or social relations. What power does not want to admit within its time-space is the possibility of another time-space, one based on the gentleness of the power-free, on the release from power into the mildness of being. For this time-space released from the operations of power would precisely disallow capitalization, free relations from the productive and effective reach of power and its proclivity to articulate all relations into power differentials within the spectrum spanning the extremes of global powerfulness and local powerlessness. Power presents being as always already decided into the terms of power, as effectuated into the degrees of powerfulness, entangled into relations of power, and thus as calculable somewhere along the extending vector of power. The only decision that power admits of is the decision which assigns the degree of power, deciding all that exists into the terms of the presence or absence of power. To the extent that as event, the artwork manages to bring being again to a decision, that is, into the scission between the capitalization into power, on the one hand, and the power-free, on the other, art becomes of pivotal and of critical importance to contemporary operations of power. When disengaged from

its misrepresentations as aesthetic and cultural objects, artworks can become paramount events of the power-free, showing being as in essence unrelated to power and powerlessness, as a matter of a power-free play of the time-space of the possible. The work at stake in art shows itself as intimately related to capital, yet precisely by way of its radical dis-capitalization of being into the relationality of the power-free. Playing the power games of capital, art in its force of event disengages from power, indicating how being is never really calculable or producible into value. Art as event is value-free, and this renders it much more precious and worthy than any imaginable value, as well as intrinsically incommunicable as information. Art as event cannot be translated or forced into aesthetic or cultural terms, always already operating in sync with and on the same terms as power and capitalization. If an artwork can succeed in refusing these terms, it is precisely by bringing them to a de-cision, which opens being all over again as the play of power and freedom from power, and marks the event as the beginning of another time-space.

## Notes

- 1 *Contributions to Philosophy*, 334; tm.  
 2 *Mindfulness*, 166.  
 3 *Contributions to Philosophy*, 339; tm.  
 4 *Contributions to Philosophy*, 335.  
 5 *Contributions to Philosophy*, 335; tm.  
 6 *Basic Writings*, 220; tm.  
 7 *Contributions to Philosophy*, 170.  
 8 *Contributions to Philosophy*, 176.  
 9 *Contributions to Philosophy*, 173.  
 10 *Contributions to Philosophy*, 173.  
 11 *Contributions to Philosophy*, 340.  
 12 *Contributions to Philosophy*, 170.  
 13 *Contributions to Philosophy*, 187-188.  
 14 The difference between negation and nihilation can perhaps be thought in the following way. Nihilation is neither positive nor negative, and refers instead to the force of *das Mögliche*, of that which has the force, or the ability, to open, always futurally, the play of possibilities. Negation comes into play, so to speak, within this already opened realm of the possible, specifically at the moment when what is possible is allowed to be valid. Negation “becomes possible” when being comes to stand as a being, and thus to have a value of presence (or absence) and the validity of being present.  
 15 *Contributions to Philosophy*, 336; tm.  
 16 *Basic Writings*, 251.  
 17 “Le capitalisme ontologique désigne le système économique ouvert par l’échange originaire de la présence come elle-même. L’étant contre l’être via la monnaie de l’essance.” Catherine Malabou, *Le change Heidegger: Du fantastique en philosophie* (Paris: Léo Scherer, 2004), 98.  
 18 *Holzwege 270 = Off the Beaten Track*, 219; tm. “An die Stelle dessen, was der einst gewährte Weltgehalt aus sich verschenkte,

schiebt sich immer schneller, rücksichtsloser und vollständiger das Gegenständige der technischen Herrschaft über die Erde. Sie stellt nicht nur alles Seiende als ein Herstellbares im Prozess der Produktion auf, sondern sie stellt die Produkte der Produktion durch den Markt zu. Das Menschliche des Menschen und das Dinghafte der Dinge löst sich innerhalb des sich durchsetzenden Herstellens in der gerechneten Marktwert eines Marktes auf, der nicht nur als Weltmarkt die Erde umspannt, sondern der als der Wille zum Willen im Wesen des Seins marktet und so alles Seiende in das Handeln eines Rechnens bringt, das dort am zähesten herrscht, wo es der Zählen nicht bedarf.”

19 *Holzwege*, 289 = *Off the Beaten Track*, 235.

20 “MARKTEN, verb. des marktes pflegen, mit der nebenform *marken*, die nach *mark* für *markt* (sp. 1644) sich gebildet hat und in der ältern schriftsprache, jetzt noch mundartlich, öfters auftritt; schweizerisch auch *märten*, vgl. unten 4.” Cited from *Deutsches Wörterbuch von Jacob und Wilhelm Grimm* on the Internet. The web address: <http://germazope.uni-trier.de/Projects/WBB/woerterbuecher/dwb> (accessed 2/13/2012).

21 *Basic Writings*, 322.

22 *Holzwege*, 267 = *Off the Beaten Track*, 217; tm.

23 *Contributions to Philosophy*, 354.

24 *Contributions to Philosophy*, 355; tm.

25 *Contributions to Philosophy*, 355.

## From *Destruktion* to the History of Being

*William McNeill*

In his late, 1962 lecture “Time and Being,” Heidegger pointed to an intrinsic connection between the task of *Destruktion*, which was central to his conception of fundamental ontology in the 1920s, and his later thought of the history of Being.<sup>1</sup> In the period surrounding *Being and Time*, *Destruktion* was conceived as a dismantling (*Abbau*) of those concealments which, in the history of ontology, had covered over the initial, Greek sense of the meaning of Being as presence. In “Time and Being,” Heidegger stated the following:

Only a dismantling [*Abbau*] of these concealments – this is what is meant by “*Destruktion*” – affords thinking a precursory insight into what then reveals itself as the destining of Being. Because people everywhere regard the destining of Being only in terms of history and represent the latter as a happening, they attempt in vain to interpret such happening in terms of what is stated in *Being and Time* about the historicity of Dasein (not of Being). By contrast, the sole possible way for thinking to anticipate the later thought of the destining of Being coming from *Being and Time* is to think through what is presented in *Being and Time* concerning the *Destruktion* of the ontological doctrine of the Being of beings.<sup>2</sup>

One must take Heidegger’s hint seriously here, when he tries to direct our view away from the historicity of Dasein and toward the disclosure of Being itself within the perspective of *Destruktion* in *Being*

*and Time*. And yet, this retrospective indication, coming from the later perspective of the history of Being, oversimplifies what is at stake in the historicity of Dasein, and in particular conceals a key element in what is at stake in understanding the transition from the historicity of Dasein to the history of Being. For what Heidegger states here in 1962 implies that one could separate the issue of the historicity of Dasein from the task of Destruktion, something that is emphatically not the case in *Being and Time*. There, the theme of Destruktion is introduced explicitly in terms of the historicity of Dasein: Insight into the essential historicity of Dasein indicates that the question of Being – as an ontic possibility of Dasein – is itself characterized by historicity, and so the unfolding of the question of Being must inquire into its own history (the history of ontology) by itself becoming historiological, so as to accomplish a “positive appropriation” of its own past and to “take full possession of its ownmost possibilities of questioning.”<sup>3</sup> It is this historiological inquiry that is characterized as Destruktion, and its ground and necessity are rooted in and understood from out of the historicity of Dasein itself.

It is this intrinsic connection between Destruktion and the historicity of Dasein that I would like to pursue in these remarks, with a view to better understanding just how the fundamental ontology of Dasein anticipates and opens onto what would later be called the history of Being. My underlying thesis – and it is, I hope to show, an uncontroversial one – can be stated straightforwardly: Heidegger’s later thinking of the history of Being in terms of the destining of Being (*Geschick des Seins*) is nothing other than a renewed thinking of what, in *Being and Time*, is intimated at a decisive point as “the quiet force of the possible” (*die stille Kraft des Möglichen*).

To begin with, let us undertake a brief survey of how Destruktion is understood by the early Heidegger in some of his lectures that predate *Being and Time*. Following this, I shall turn to *Being and Time* itself, and finally to the “Letter on ‘Humanism.’”

Heidegger developed his conception of Destruktion well before *Being and Time*.<sup>4</sup> Although the first appearance of the term “Destruktion”

is a mention of the term in the course on *Basic Problems of Phenomenology* from winter semester 1919-20,<sup>5</sup> the theme is already anticipated the previous semester, in his course on *Phenomenological and Transcendental Philosophy of Values* (SS 1919),<sup>6</sup> where Heidegger insists on the critical import of phenomenology. The idea of phenomenological critique, which would soon become understood as *Destruktion*, was, however, not to be taken in a negative sense, Heidegger insisted. Although Heidegger here presents the concept of phenomenological critique in Husserlian terms – its criterion is “... the evidentiary understanding of lived experiences, of living in and for itself in the *Eidos*” – it is concerned neither with logical proof and refutation, nor with theoretically imposed criteria, but rather with historical questions of provenance (*Herkunft*) and motivation.<sup>7</sup> By the summer semester of 1920, in his course on *Phenomenology of Intuition and Expression*, the idea of phenomenological critique had become what Heidegger explicitly called that of “phenomenological-critical *Destruktion*.”<sup>8</sup> A couple of years later, in his treatise *Phenomenological Interpretations with Respect to Aristotle* (1922), Heidegger further clarified his notion of historical critique intrinsic to phenomenology in terms of the need for a “critique of the present”: “Critique of history is always only critique of the present. [...] History gets negated not because it is ‘false,’ but because it still remains effective in the present without, however, being able to be an authentically appropriated present.”<sup>9</sup> The phenomenological hermeneutics of facticity, Heidegger insists in the same text, can occur “only on the path of *Destruktion*”; and the latter is conceived as essentially regressive, as a “*deconstructive regress*” (*abbauenden Rückgang*) that will penetrate into the “original motivational sources” underlying the traditional concepts and categories used to interpret factual life. *Destruktion* is “‘historical’ knowing in the radical sense of the term...”; it is philosophy’s “destructive [*destruktive*] confrontation with its own history.” As such, it is not a return to the past, but “the authentic path upon which the present needs to encounter itself in its own basic movements.”<sup>10</sup>

It is in the summer semester 1923 course *Ontology (Hermeneutics of Facticity)*, however, that Heidegger provides the fullest delineation of

what is entailed by Destruktion. Phenomenology as a distinctive “how” of research that seeks to make present its thematic object, Dasein itself in its facticity, must proceed beyond the initial givenness of its object, which is permeated by tradition and conceptual concealments, to “a grasping of its object [*Sacherfassung*] that is free of concealments.” This entails the disclosure of the history of those concealments itself. “The tradition of philosophical questioning,” writes Heidegger, “must be pursued back to the original sources [*Sachquellen*]. The tradition must be dismantled [*abgebaut*].”<sup>11</sup> For this going back, this regressive movement (*Rückgang*) alone can once again bring philosophy before the decisive issues. That philosophy as phenomenology must be regressive means that it must assume historical critique (*historische Kritik*) as its fundamental task, and resist the ahistorical appeal to “naïve evidence” that characterizes Husserlian phenomenology. It must take its point of departure from the present day (*das Heute*), and resist the tendency toward system. “Not every era needs to have a grand system,” Heidegger remarks. This “critical dismantling of the tradition,” more specifically, means a regress “to Greek philosophy, to Aristotle,” to show how an originary phenomenon falls into decline and concealment, a decline in which we still find ourselves today. The dismantling must retrieve and unfold anew the original position, and is thus a retrieval of “something different and yet the same.” Hermeneutic phenomenology in this sense must be preparatory: it has the task of preparing the path (of access), as a “critical-cautionary guidance of seeing in the movement back, by way of a dismantling of critically ascertained concealments.” Its ultimate task is to bring Being itself to a phenomenon, to show itself.<sup>12</sup>

While in the 1923 course itself, Heidegger’s favored term is *Abbau*, dismantling, it is clear that he is here sketching nothing less than what would eventually become Destruktion in *Being and Time*. The notes that form the appendix to this volume, which may stem from a later period, are quite explicit in naming Destruktion: “Hermeneutics is Destruktion!” declares Heidegger, and it must proceed on the basis of concrete investigations, and safeguard against the closure of a philosophical system.<sup>13</sup> The “destructive interpretation” must first

seek out ontology – and vice versa: ontology needs Destruktion. What is originary, Heidegger insists, is not something in the past, but “facticity itself,” facticity as encompassing “an equiprimordial multiplicity of movements, interpretations, and objects,” a multiplicity to be understood in its unity, that is, on the basis of facticity itself.<sup>14</sup>

This sketch of Destruktion in the 1923 course anticipates in its fundamental outlines the essential project announced several years later in *Being and Time*. In section 6 of the Introduction to his magnum opus, Heidegger again depicts the task of Destruktion in terms of a regression to the original sources from which the dominant concepts and categories of ontology were drawn, a going back that undoes the concealments of the history of ontology and that performs a critical role in relation to the present. The preparatory interpretation of Dasein in its everydayness will reveal a twofold tendency toward concealment, a twofold “falling” that afflicts Dasein’s understanding of Being: on the one hand, Dasein has the tendency to interpret its own Being in terms of the Being of those beings that it is not, namely, the present-at-hand and ready-to-hand; on the other hand, and “together with this” (*in eins damit*),<sup>15</sup> Dasein falls prey to tradition, which takes away from Dasein its own initiative, questioning, and choice. Although they are both at work in Dasein’s understanding of Being, these two concealments, Heidegger seems to imply, even though they go together, are not the same: the first is implicitly due to an ontological structure intrinsic to Dasein’s Being in general, and would not be something that could be overcome: it would be a kind of fatality, rather, inevitably inscribed within the very movedness (the falling, that is, ultimately the in-authentic historicity) of Dasein’s Being; while the second, which is due to the force of tradition, and indeed of a very specific tradition, is something that nevertheless both can and must be undone or dissolved (via a historiological Destruktion undertaken from out of Dasein’s authentic historicity). This point, I shall later suggest, is of particular significance in understanding the fate of Destruktion itself.

Since questioning concerning Being in general – the guiding task of *Being and Time* – is an ontic possibility of Dasein, and since

Dasein's Being is intrinsically constituted by temporality and historicity, such historicity is necessarily intrinsic to the very unfolding of the question concerning Being and to its very necessity. Thus, Heidegger insists, the question of Being must inquire into its own history [*Geschichte*], that is, become historiological [*historisch*] so as to secure its ownmost possibilities of questioning through a "positive appropriation" of the past.<sup>16</sup> Heidegger's question of Being itself arises from, and in response to, the history of ontology initiated by the Greeks and in particular by Aristotle. Now the tradition that comes to dominance here, Heidegger suggests,

at first and for the most part makes that which it "transmits" [namely, a specific understanding of Being] so little accessible that it instead conceals it. It delivers what has been passed on to the status of self-evidence and blocks access to the original "sources" ["*Quellen*"] from which the traditional categories and concepts were drawn, in part in a genuine manner. The tradition even brings such provenance [*Herkunft*] in general into oblivion. It gives rise to an absence of any need to understand the very necessity of such a regression [*Rückgang*].<sup>17</sup>

As a consequence, Being itself has been forgotten, has concealed itself in its questionability, concealed itself as a question – and such is the predicament from which the project of *Being and Time* notoriously begins. It is Greek ontology itself that is thus responsible for *such* concealment, Heidegger insists: "Greek ontology and its history, which, through manifold twists and turns [*Filiationen und Verbiegungen*] still today determines the conceptuality of philosophy, is proof of the fact that Dasein understands itself and Being in general in terms of the 'world' [i.e., entities present-at-hand within the world], and that the ontology that has thus arisen sinks [*verfällt*] to the status of tradition. . . ."<sup>18</sup> Greek ontology interprets the Being of beings in terms of "world" or "nature," conceived and experienced as that which lies independently present

before us, and thus understands the meaning of Being as presence, as *parousia* or *ousia*, thus in terms of a particular mode of time, the present.<sup>19</sup> Greek ontology, Heidegger here implies, is itself a consequence of Dasein's falling.

It is ancient Greek ontology and its heritage, therefore, that face the initial task of Destruktion. Heidegger writes:

If transparency regarding its own history is to be attained for the question of Being itself, then what is needed is a loosening up of the congealed tradition and a liberation from the concealments it has brought about. We understand this task as the Destruktion of the transmitted content of ancient ontology, accomplished by way of the guiding thread of the question of Being, to arrive at the original experiences from which the initial and subsequently leading determinations of Being were acquired.<sup>20</sup>

The goal here, as Heidegger stipulates, is transparency regarding the history of the question of Being itself. Yet that history is a non-history, insofar as the question of Being has not been explicitly posed as a question ever since the Greek beginning: the meaning of Being, rather, has been presupposed, implicitly understood as the presence of what lies before us; and this non-history – the history of this covering-over – which would be the result of Dasein's intrinsic tendency to understand itself in terms of the "world," or "nature" in the broadest sense: in short, in terms of *parousia* or *ousia* – this history of concealment would now, following the Destruktion, become transparent in what it really is and was.

Such are, in outline, the task and framework of Destruktion as presented in *Being and Time*, a project that will be maintained at least over the next two years, as documented in the 1927 *Basic Problems of Phenomenology* and 1928 *Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*. And yet, there is something naïve about this very project. Heidegger himself later – much later – concedes as much. In his Zähringen seminar of 1973, he makes the following remark:

In *Being and Time*, however, there was as yet no genuine recognition of the history of Being, and from this there arose the inappropriateness and, strictly speaking, the naiveté, of the “ontological Destruktion.” Since then, the unavoidable naiveté with regard to what had yet to be experienced has given way to an insight.<sup>21</sup>

The inappropriateness and naiveté of Destruktion, Heidegger indicates, lay in its failure to recognize and experience the history of Being. And yet, as Heidegger suggested in “Time and Being,” Destruktion itself prepares for and anticipates this very experience: *only* the Destruktion “affords thinking a precursory insight into what then reveals itself as the destining of Being,” that is, into the essence of the history of Being itself as destining. What, then, is the path that leads from the Destruktion to a precursory insight into the destining of Being? The path, I want to suggest, cannot simply be a delineation of the project of Destruktion itself, but must entail reflection upon the insight that gives rise to and grounds the necessity of Destruktion: the historicity of Dasein itself, and how that historicity is conceived in *Being and Time*. The key reflection here, I would propose, is found in section 76 of *Being and Time*. This section, entitled “The Existential Origin of Historiology From Out of the Historicity of Dasein,” has the explicit task of “preparing for an ensuing clarification of the task of a historiological Destruktion of the history of philosophy.”<sup>22</sup>

The central question of this section concerns what exactly constitutes authentic historiology and what is to be its theme. Since historiology is a possibility grounded in the historicity of Dasein, and presupposing such historicity, *authentic* historiological inquiry into Dasein’s own history must evidently be grounded in authentic historicity itself, that is, in the historical unfolding of Dasein’s possible authenticity. And its theme is Dasein itself, being-in-the-world itself as having been there, and as transmitted through its traces: historical remains, documents, reports, monuments, and the like. Authentic historiological inquiry must therefore thematize its object, Dasein that has been there, in terms of Dasein’s ownmost possibility of existence – that is, in terms

of Dasein itself as possibility. It must have as its object nothing other than the possible, possibility itself. Heidegger thus writes: “Because existence in each case is only as factually thrown, historiology will disclose the quiet force of the possible all the more incisively, the more straightforwardly and concretely it understands and ‘merely’ presents having-been-in-the-world in terms of its possibility.”<sup>23</sup> Authentic historiology is thus at once grounded in the authentic historicity of Dasein, temporalizing itself from out of Dasein’s ownmost possibility of Being, and it has such possibility as its object or theme: it is concerned with such possibility itself. Such historiological inquiry is undertaken not out of mere historical interest, for the purposes of disclosing what was or was not possible in the past, but as an openness toward and retrieval of possibility to come. As Heidegger puts it, such historiology discloses the history that has been there “in such a way that in this retrieval, the ‘force’ of the possible impacts factual existence, that is, approaches it in its futural character.”<sup>24</sup>

What is critical here, I think, is Heidegger’s acknowledgement of a “force” (*Kraft*) of the possible, a force pertaining to the possible itself, a force that Dasein does not project, but at most discloses, and that thus approaches it from beyond the horizon of Dasein’s own projective activity. For what becomes apparent here is that Dasein does not project itself – does not project its own Being as possibility – and that to suggest that it does (as in fact occurs in the hermeneutic phenomenology of *Being and Time*) is not only phenomenologically inaccurate and misleading, but inevitably attributes to Dasein a kind of subjectivity: not the classical subjectivity of modernity, to be sure, but still a subjectivity that attributes too much power to the activity or action of Dasein as source of its Being, of its giving birth to itself (as historical). The projection and configuring of possibility belongs, rather to Being itself as such, as a happening to which Dasein (or the Being of the human being) is exposed in advance – an antecedent happening or “event” (*Ereignis*) that “destines” Being in this or that historical manner. The “history of Being” is the history of what has thus been destined (in a non-dialectical, non-causal manner) and has

come to language in the history of philosophy as the metaphysical representation of Being. The human being's actions are always primarily responsive: responsive to what is historically destined by Being (and such destining is the very opening of freedom: cf. "The Question Concerning Technology"<sup>25</sup>). The destining of Being is the historical unfolding of the "quiet force of the possible."

The significance of this insight within *Being and Time* itself is attested to by Heidegger's own retrieval of precisely this theme and by his renewed appeal to "the quiet force of the possible" at the beginning of what is arguably his most important text from the 1940s, the "Letter on 'Humanism'" (1946). "When I speak of the 'quiet force of the possible,'" Heidegger there writes, "I do not mean the *possibile* of a merely represented *possibilitas*, nor *potentia* as the *essentia* of an *actus* of *existentia*; rather, I mean Being itself. . . ."<sup>26</sup> Possibility is now thought not on the basis of Dasein's projective activity, but in terms of the quiet force of the possible as that of Being itself, as the "element" that "enables" (*ermöglicht*) thinking – a thinking that is more originary than philosophy as determined by the Greek beginning. From the perspective of the "Letter on 'Humanism,'" we can now appreciate that it is this element, from out of which the historical Destraktion of the history of philosophy itself comes to pass, that was first uncovered and exposed as such through the analytic of Dasein in *Being and Time*. In the "Letter," the essence of the possible is conceived in terms of an enabling (*Vermögen*) that refers, not to the capability to accomplish something, as the ability belonging to Dasein or to a "Subject," but to a more originary "embracing," a "loving," a "bestowal," a "favoring" – thus in each case to the felicitous giving of a gift, an excess that first gives rise to the possible, that constitutes its very emergence:

Thinking is – this says: Being has embraced its [i.e., thinking's] essence in a destinal manner in each case. To embrace a "thing" or a "person" in their essence means to love them, to favor them. Thought in a more original way, such favoring means the bestowal of their essence as a gift. Such favoring [*Mögen*] is the proper

essence of enabling [*Vermögen*], which not only can achieve this or that, but also can let something essentially unfold in its provenance [*Her-kunft*], that is, let it be. It is “by force” [*kraft*] of such enabling by favoring that something is properly able to be. This enabling is what is properly “possible” [*das “Mögliche”*], whose essence resides in favoring. From this favoring Being enables thinking. The former makes possible [*ermöglicht*] the latter. Being is the enabling-favoring, the “may-be” [*das “Mög-liche”*]. As the element, Being is the “quiet force” of the favoring-enabling, that is, of the possible.<sup>27</sup>

Here, the “quiet force” of the possible is thought as the propriative force of Being that, in a destinal manner, lets thinking itself be, that is, lets it arrive in its very coming, its provenance. Heidegger here hyphenates the German word for “provenance,” *Her-kunft*, to indicate once again the primacy of that coming (*Kunft*), of that originative force that, in *Being and Time*, was thought in terms of the priority of the futural ekstasis in which Dasein comes toward itself. Here, in the “Letter,” however, this coming is thought in terms of the arrival of Being itself as the element of the possible. Heidegger’s discussion of the “quiet force of the possible” in terms of favoring, embrace, and bestowal here, moreover, unfolds what, in *Being and Time*, remained relatively undeveloped within this invocation of a “quiet” or “gentle” force: namely, that the word *Kraft*, which in German does not carry the overtones of violence that the English “force” may suggest, is not to be understood in terms of any metaphysical or modern conception of potentiality, power, or energy, but rather in terms of a gentle strength or resourcefulness that comprises the hidden preserve of Being.<sup>28</sup>

What, in *Being and Time*, is identified as “the quiet force of the possible” that “comes toward,” approaches and thus addresses Dasein in its futural character – that is, in the futural character of the force of the possible itself – is thus, as Heidegger himself later declares, nothing other than the approach or address of Being itself, as it announces itself to thinking in its destinal character. Yet it is important to see

that this destinal character of Being becomes manifest only in and through a projection of authentic historiology and its rootedness in the authentic historicity of Dasein. Dasein's futural character, its coming toward itself, is, more originally conceived, the destinal force of Being itself, and such force is disclosed to thinking only in and through the historiological presentation that, in *Being and Time*, is conceived as the Destruktion of the history of philosophy. On the one hand, this implies that insight into the destinal character of Being cannot, therefore, come about via reflection on the project of Destruktion alone, but entails an appreciation of how Destruktion, as a historiological project, is grounded in the historicity of Dasein. On the other hand, it implies that the later thought of the history of Being as destinal cannot itself be thought without historiological presentation of the history of philosophy, of the traces left by Dasein that has been there.<sup>29</sup>

To return, by way of conclusion, to an earlier question: What does Heidegger mean when he later refers to the "naiveté" of the ontological Destruktion? In what does such naiveté consist precisely? It is important to remember that in *Being and Time*, the Destruktion of the history of philosophy was not yet fully accomplished, but only intimated in its necessity by reference to the Greek beginning and its subsequent transformations, and projected for Part Two of the investigation. It is projected as an undoing (*Ablösung*) of those concealments that find their origin in the Greek beginning and that are perpetuated by the subsequent transformations in the tradition of the history of philosophy that proceeds from that beginning. The dismantling of such concealments, however, contrary to what *Being and Time* suggests, does not lead us back to "original 'sources'"<sup>50</sup> or "original experiences"<sup>51</sup> from which the Greek understanding of Being derives, and which would now be fully revealed, as it were, beyond all concealments.<sup>52</sup> Nor does it lead to an ultimate "proof" of Dasein's tendency to fall prey, not merely to tradition, but to the "world" of its concern and to understand its own Being and Being in general in terms of "nature" – as if such an understanding were a kind of inevitable fact or fatality, beyond all historical determination. It leads, rather, to an insight into Dasein's

ekstatic temporality as exceeding the horizon of presence that determined the Greek beginning, and thereby to an insight into the historical determination of presence itself – that is, into the history of Being itself as the destinal sending of presence. The Destruktion is not simply the dismantling of those concealments of Being that comprise the history of philosophy; rather, it can now be seen as “the dissolution, the dismantling of that which has destined itself [*sich zuschickt*] as Being since the beginning in the uninterrupted sequence of transformations that the history of philosophy presents.”<sup>53</sup> The concealments of Being that constitute the history of philosophy, in other words, are not *mere* concealments. Rather, as concealments, they are at the same time the manifold ways in which Being has destined itself positively, not beyond, but in and through its very withdrawal, its self-concealment. In showing that the horizon of our understanding of Being exceeds that horizon of presence that was determinative for the Greek beginning, Heidegger noted in his Le Thor seminar of 1969, the analytic of Dasein enables us to delimit the meaning of Being in its non-metaphysical sense. With this, he states, the Destruktion has attained its goal. But now, he continues,

it becomes visible that the various concealments of the incipient [*anfänglich*] meaning of Being maintain an essential relation to that which they conceal. The history of metaphysics thereby receives a fundamentally different significance. Its diverse fundamental positions can henceforth be understood positively as a sequence of ever new transformations of the incipient meaning, transformations that belong together in the unity of a singular destiny – hence the name “destiny of Being” to designate the epochs of Being.<sup>54</sup>

In other words, it can now be seen that the sequence of concealments that constitute the history of philosophy are not a fault or shortcoming of philosophy: they are not a result of the history of philosophy, but first enable and give rise to that very history, and for this reason alone can

*From Destruktion to the History of Being*

be read in and through that history as belonging to the history of Being itself. Nor are those concealments the result of Dasein's falling, of some kind of failure or inauthenticity on the part of Dasein. Not only that, however: The history of Being can itself be thought and is thinkable only by virtue of the trace of Being's self-concealment that manifests itself as the history of philosophy – by virtue, that is, of that oblivion of Being that first called forth the original project of Destruktion. Being's oblivion, was, from the beginning, never sheer oblivion: it always was, and always will have been, the “quiet force” of the possible.

## Notes

- 1 I leave the term *Destruktion* untranslated in the present essay, since clarification of the full scope of its meaning constitutes a central aim of the essay.
- 2 *Zur Sache des Denkens*, 9.
- 3 SZ 20-21. Pagination cited for *Sein und Zeit* follows that of the first edition (Halle a. d. S.: Niemeyer, 1927).
- 4 On *Destruktion* in the early Heidegger and its Lutheran origins see in particular Benjamin D. Crowe, *Heidegger's Religious Origins: Destruction and Authenticity*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006.
- 5 GA 58: 139.
- 6 GA 56/57: 119-203.
- 7 GA 56/57: 125-26. See, in particular, *ibid.*, 126: "Phenomenological critique is not refuting, bringing proofs to the contrary; rather, the statement to be criticized is understood in terms of *where* it takes its provenance from, in keeping with its meaning. Critique is a positive hearing-out of genuine motivations. Non-genuine motivations are no motivations at all, and can be understood as non-genuine only in terms of the genuine. What is phenomenologically genuine demonstrates itself as such, it does not need some further (theoretical) criterion."
- 8 GA 59: 29.
- 9 "Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu Aristoteles (Anzeige der hermeneutischen Situation)." *Dilthey Jahrbuch für Philosophie und Geschichte der Geisteswissenschaften* 6 (1989): 239. Cited as 'PIA'. Translated by John van Buren in *Supplements: From the Earliest Essays to Being and Time and Beyond*, edited by John van Buren. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), 114.
- 10 PIA 245/124.
- 11 GA 63: 75.
- 12 GA 63: 76.

- 13 GA 63: 105.  
14 GA 63: 108-09.  
15 SZ 21.  
16 SZ 20-21.  
17 SZ 21.  
18 SZ 21-22.  
19 SZ 25.  
20 SZ 22.  
21 *Vier Seminare*, 133 = *Four Seminars*, 78, tm.  
22 SZ 392.  
23 SZ 394.  
24 SZ 395.  
25 “For the human being indeed first becomes free insofar as he belongs in the realm of destining.... Freedom is the realm of destining that on each occasion brings a revealing onto its path.” *Die Technik und die Kehre*, 24-25.  
26 GA 9: 316-17.  
27 GA 9: 316.  
28 It is no accident that in rethinking the essence of possibility and potentiality in 1931 in dialogue with Aristotle, Heidegger chooses the word *Kraft* to translate Aristotle’s *dunamis* and to ponder anew its essence and actuality. See GA 33.  
29 This point has been convincingly argued by Robert Bernasconi from the perspective of the later Heidegger’s history of Being. See his essay “Descartes in the History of Being: Another Bad Novel?” In: *Heidegger in Question: The Art of Existing* (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1993), chapter 9.  
30 SZ 21.  
31 SZ 22.  
32 It is important to note that in the lectures immediately following the publication of *Being and Time*, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* and *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, the appeal to “primordial experiences” is conspicuously absent. The point is noted by Robert Bernasconi in his essay “Repetition and

Tradition: Heidegger's Destructuring of the Distinction Between Essence and Existence in *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*." See *Reading Heidegger From the Start: Essays in His Earliest Thought*, eds. Kisiel & van Buren (Albany: SUNY, 1994), chapter 7, note 8.

33 *Vier Seminare*, 133 = *Four Seminars*, 77-78, tm.

34 *Vier Seminare*, 77 = *Four Seminars*, 43, tm.

# The Art of Fugue: Heidegger on Rhythm

*David Nowell-Smith*

During his short lecture on Stefan George's "Das Wort," Heidegger turns to another of George's "songs," "In stillste ruh." After reading the poem aloud, he offers the following "short remark:"

The rhythm of this song is as marvellous as it is clear. It is enough to suggest it with a short remark. Rhythm, *rhuthmos*, does not mean flux and flowing, but rather structure [*Fügung*]. Rhythm is what is at rest, what structures [*fügt*] the movement [*Be-wegung*] of dance and song, and thus lets it rest within itself. Rhythm bestows rest. In the song we just heard, the structure shows itself if we pay heed to the one fugue [*Fuge*] which sings to us, in three forms, in three stanzas: secure soul and sudden sight, stem and storm, sea and shell.<sup>1</sup>

Rhythm, removed both from its literary critical usage and from the philosophical tradition that has interpreted it as "flux," would, through its close working of the cognates of *fügen*, trace the movedness of being. But the particular rhythm through which this movedness becomes discernable is the "fugue" [*Fuge*] of the poem itself. This invites the question – how does the rhythm that issues from the movement and rest of being interact with "poetic" rhythm more broadly?

This is the question that the current essay will pose; in so doing it will return to that vexed issue of Heidegger's disregard for literary criticism. The rhythm Heidegger outlines in his discussion of George is far removed from "rhythm" as literary critics would envisage it: the

patterning of the “suprasegmentals” of speech (which, for purposes of disambiguation, I will henceforth term “prosody”). Indeed, he situates the poem’s “rhythm” in its tropological development, from “secure soul” to “sea and shell;” what literary critics would call rhythm is pointedly absent. Elsewhere he is more explicit in this regard. The discussion of Georg Trakl’s “Ein Winterabend” begins with the laconic remark: “Meter and rhyme pattern can be defined accurately according to the schemes of metrics and poetics,” but such “schemes” leave us “confined by the notion of language that has prevailed for thousands of years.”<sup>2</sup> The metrical patterning of the sounds of language independently of their sense treats language as a semantic content transmitted through sensuous tokens, whereas Heidegger would refigure verbal language as a “sounding” anterior to the sound-sense split.<sup>5</sup> And in the 1953 lecture on “Language in the Poem,” again on Trakl, he says that the “site of the poem [*Gedicht*], as the source of the animating wave [*bewegende Woge*], holds within it the veiled essence of what – to metaphysical-aesthetic representation – can at best appear as rhythm.”<sup>4</sup> “Rhythm” (i.e. prosody) is a metaphysical-aesthetic derivation of the animating wave that sets language itself into motion.

Heidegger’s choice of *Fuge* to describe George’s poem is particularly intriguing: it is a well-known musical form, but also alludes to what he elsewhere thematizes as the “jointure” of beings in presence. It offers a point of contact between the poem’s formal palette and its claim to disclose the shape of the presencing of beings as a whole. The following pages will probe *Fuge* as it is deployed to understand the peculiar temporality of beings in their presencing, but also as it describes the way an artwork coheres and the “unifying element” by which verbal language and the disclosive “gathering” are bound together in the “saying” [*Sage*] of language. Poetry comes to be conceived by Heidegger as a kind of threshold between two modes of rhythmicity: the oscillations between presencing and absencing on the one hand, and prosody on the other. In the final section I will ask how these two different experiences of rhythm intersect – are “joined,” even – in Heidegger’s readings of poetry.

**FUGE: JOINTURE AND FUGUE**

In the second section of *Being and Time*, Heidegger proposes not simply that being is temporal, but that time *is* being. But to substantiate this claim requires that we reconceive of both “being” (which is no longer a transcendental substrate, “big Being,” but rather the shape of beings’ disclosing themselves “in their being”) and “time.”<sup>5</sup> Time had been portrayed by philosophers from Aristotle to Hegel as a series of discrete “nows.” For Heidegger it is that movement through which what appears “now” emerges from out of, and withdraws into, the double absence of its having-been [*Gewesenheit*] and its futurity [*Zukünftigkeit*].<sup>6</sup>

When Heidegger discusses *rhuthmos* itself, in the 1939 lecture on Aristotle’s *Physics*, the concern remains that of the temporal character of beings’ self-disclosure. Heidegger translates *rhuthmos* as “articulating, impressing, fitting, and forming”: *Gliederung, Prägung, Fügung, und Verfassung*.<sup>7</sup> Offering “articulation” as a possible translation recalls the discussion of language in *Being and Time*, where “discourse is the articulation of intelligibility”: in one gesture it binds entities together in an intelligible whole and differentiates them, both *synthesis* and *diairesis*.<sup>8</sup> In translating *rhuthmos* as *Fügung* (translated by Sheehan as “fitting”), Heidegger anticipates the account of rhythm we saw in his discussion of George’s “In stillste ruh.”

The initial concern in the discussion of *rhuthmos* in the Aristotle lecture is Antiphon’s claim that the *proton arruthmiston*, that which is untouched by the temporality of appearance, is what is “most being” (even if, for precisely this reason, what is “most being” will never enter presence). Aristotle, Heidegger argues, inverts this: *rhuthmos* does not describe entities that appear temporally, but rather indicates the temporal structure by which the entity remains within appearance as bounded by the absences of non-being. It is only in *rhuthmos* that a being can articulate itself, that is, set itself into relation with its surrounds, and take an intelligible form – and thus be said “to be.” For Antiphon, what is “most being” cannot admit of a change of state, as this would amount to saying that its being is incomplete; yet if “to be” means “to enter into presence,” then what is most-being must continually be in

movement if it is to remain in being. *Rhuthmos* is not flux, instability, but rather that which structures a being's appearance within time, that which allows it to enter into presence as an intelligible "such-and-such" that we can encounter in an "open" region.

Heidegger attempts to grasp something similar in his gloss of *dike* in "Anaximander's Saying." In place of the standard translations of *dike* as "penalty" or "damages," Heidegger turns to another cognate of *fügen*: "*dike*, thought out of being as presencing, is the ordering, jointure-giving order [*fugend-fügende Fug*]." <sup>9</sup> In order for beings to enter into presence, they must be "joined" in such a way that they are intelligible and, for Heidegger, this jointure is paradigmatically temporal, adjoining "all that presences between a twofold absence (arrival and departure)." All jointure, Heidegger stipulates, is a "jointure of the while." <sup>10</sup>

Here too Heidegger is building on *Being and Time's* exposition of the three temporal ecstases. Just as the presencing of beings cannot be situated in a discrete series of "nows," Heidegger distinguishes the "while" from mere "continuation." However, Heidegger sees Anaximander's fragment to stage a contest between these two conceptions of time. As an entity attempts to persist in presence, it "concerns itself no longer with the other things that are present" and so "stands in dis-jointure" [*in der Un-Fuge*]: it presences "without and against the jointure of the while." <sup>11</sup> In dis-jointure, presence is no longer a "while" bounded by a double absence, but rather "continuation": what will later be conceptualized by Plato as "constant presence." This "metaphysical" interpretation of presencing as constant presence is, then, already latent in Anaximander's fragment; but for Anaximander, Heidegger argues, dis-jointure becomes the mode in which the being in fact "gives jointure." In other words, the being's resistance to its temporal finitude becomes the mode through which it inhabits time as a finite being.

In the glosses of both *rhuthmos* and *dike*, then, Heidegger offers an account of how beings constitute themselves temporally through their engagement with absence; both take issue with the conception of time in which what is "most being" is characterized by "constant presence." Central to this argument is the claim that the division of

time into discrete units transforms the basic fact that we encounter the auto-disclosure of entities temporally into an insurmountable enigma; the intelligibility of the world is put “out of joint.” This argument recurs throughout Heidegger’s work, not simply in discussions of temporality but also regarding any attempt to break the meaningful fabric of experience down into “sense data.” In *Being and Time* he says: “‘Initially’ we never hear noises and complexes of sound, but the creaking wagon, the motorcycle. We hear the column on the march, the north wind, the woodpecker tapping, the crackling fire.”<sup>12</sup> In *The Principle of Reason*, thirty years later, he revisits this argument: “Of course we hear a Bach fugue with our ears, but if we leave what is heard only at this, with what strikes the tympanum as sound waves, then we can never hear a Bach fugue.”<sup>15</sup> Just as Bach’s fugue cannot be broken down into its constituent parts and remain the artwork that it is, so the fugal “jointure” of beings within the while cannot be divided into a series of discrete “nows.”

Given Heidegger’s employment of the term *Fuge* as “jointure” from the 1930s onwards, it is quite striking that he should have chosen a fugue as his example of meaningful sound irreducible to a configuration of auditory data. This is even more the case when we think that one year after *The Principle of Reason* he will describe “In stillste ruh” as a “fugue.” In the George lecture, *Fuge* as musical form and *Fuge* as jointure are quite explicitly aligned, as George’s “fugue” joins the three stanzas into a “rhythmic” unity. Without lapsing into etymological opportunism, I would like to pursue exactly what is taking place when Heidegger aligns the “jointure” of beings in presence with this intricate form of musical composition.

In a fugue, one motif (the subject) is developed polyphonically, undergoing a series of inversions and modulations, changes of register and timbre, but always guided and bounded by a strict forward motion. Each time the subject returns in a new melodic strand (a voice), undergoing inversions and modulations, it is at once linked to and differentiated from every other voice within the polyphony; moreover, each voice, as it enters into the fugue’s polyphonic fabric, advertises

its own entry into audibility and at the same time advertises it as an entry *out of absence*. It is notable in this regard that the subjects of most of Bach's fugues took extended upbeats as their starting point, as though to perform its movement from silence towards the cadence that would signal its "arrival." And, within the fugue's broader structure, the subject's movement from absence into presence, and its recurrence in differing forms, cuts against the forward propulsion of the fugue as a whole, so as to create a highly wrought temporal frame. Without this forward propulsion the counterpoint of these different voices would lose its intricacy; without the counterpoint, the forward propulsion loses its urgency.

But this would suggest that the fugue offers two opposed experiences of time: the metronomic rhythm of the time signature and tempo, and the fugal rhythm of the plays of similarity and difference involved in the polyphony itself. It is not simply the different voices that are in counterpoint in a fugue, but these two conceptions of time. Might we find something similar in Heidegger's own analyses of poetic rhythm, and between the rhythmicity of beings' entry into appearance on the one hand, and the poems' prosodic patterning on the other? Before offering a response to this question, I wish to probe the way that movement is thematized in Heidegger's accounts of the artwork and of language, which, we shall see, meet in his readings of poetry. The notion of a fugal "jointure" is central to how he conceives of the "agitated stillness" of the artwork, and of the "way-making movement" through which the "saying" of language enters into "speech."

#### THE MOVEDNESS OF THE ARTWORK

In the reading of "In stillste ruh", we learn of the "rest" of rhythm insofar as it structures the movement around it. Here Heidegger is drawing on his account of the "rest" or "repose" that in "The Origin of the Work of Art" characterises the artwork itself. The temple at Paestum attains its "unity" and "self-sufficiency" by virtue of "the closed, unitary repose of [its] resting-in-itself."<sup>14</sup> Moreover, it is because the work is "solitary," because it "stands within itself" and "cuts all

ties with human beings” that it can constitute a “step into the open,” through which it “carries us into this openness and, at the same time, out of the realm of the usual.”<sup>15</sup> The artwork’s hermetic stillness is the way that we can encounter it as a “happening of truth.” Indeed, only by exhibiting such stillness can it transform our encounter with beings (or, in Heidegger’s terminology, “set up a world”). For both the reading of “In stillste ruh” and “Origin,” this rest, far from constituting the mere absence of motion, indicates “a state of extreme agitation [*Bewegtheit*].”<sup>16</sup> In “Origin” this state of agitation is ascribed to a series of anterior movements, the “strife” of world and earth, and the counter-movements of concealing and unconcealing, absencing and presencing. If the agitated stillness of the work structures the motion around it, it is because it renders manifest the oscillations between presencing and absencing through which movement as such becomes discernible.

Yet for Heidegger, the artwork does not indicate the dynamics of the strife of world and earth so much as *instigate* it. This happens through the artwork’s treatment of the “earth” of its “work-material” (that is, its medium). As a “coming-forth concealing” movement, the “earth” functions as a limit inherent in the medium, conditioning the way this medium can appear within the world of phenomenal experience.<sup>17</sup> As the artwork searches out the limits of its medium, the shape of the earth’s “concealing” is modified, and with it the modalities of the medium’s self-disclosure (its “coming-forth”) are transformed. For as long as the artwork is at work, the shape of the earth-world relation continues to shift, continually breaching and reconfiguring its own limits, and with it the limits of beings’ self-disclosure as such. This engagement with the limits and the concealing movement inhering in the medium Heidegger terms a “continually self-surpassing gathering;”<sup>18</sup> this allusion towards the revelatory function of *logos* is central to the model of the artwork Heidegger wishes to propose. Addressing entities “as” such-and-such within the work (through its depiction, for instance), and presenting itself “as” such-and-such (namely, as the work that it is), the work at the same time exceeds the very “as”-structure of this address.

In this, Heidegger points to a constitutive excess within *logos* itself: the work's ability to "gather" entities into openness depends on its exceeding the bounds of the open itself.<sup>19</sup> The artwork, as a mode of *logos*, continually "strives" to grasp that which recedes into the work-material out of which it is fashioned, so as to "gather" beings into presence.

This is developed in the discussion of the artwork's *Gestalt*: its "figure" or singular "look."<sup>20</sup> As the work searches out the limits of its work-material, the earth, which, "bearing and rising up, strives to preserve its closedness,"<sup>21</sup> is "wrested" into the world from which it would withdraw. The strife of world and earth is internalized into the artwork's engagement with its medium as a "contest of measure and limit," where the repertoire of means and techniques an art form has at its disposal confronts a medium that will resist these techniques. As the work contests the limits of its measure, it reflects on this measure, and comes to sketch out and to render manifest this contest itself. This is as much at work in the painterly perspective of cinquecento Florentine painting, which continually probes and questions its own illusory techniques, as it is in Manet's dismantling of perspective through pointedly incongruous spatial relations of figures, or Cézanne's attempt to evoke depth through shading and texture rather than through line; it is as much at issue in the unsettling effect of placing a caesura after the eighth syllable in a heroic line in 18<sup>th</sup> century English verse, as it is in the typographical explosion of Mallarmé's *Un coup de dés*. In each instance, the opposing movements of "gathering" and "self-surpassing" are held together in a continual tension; in each instance this tension is figured as a "contest of measure and limit."

It is this contest which permits the strife to sketch itself out in a singular fashion, in what Heidegger calls the "rift-design" (*Riß*), and to embody this "rift-design" in the way the work shows itself as a singular configuration of this rift-design: its *Gestalt*. If the strife of world and earth is "fixed in place" in the *Gestalt*, it must not be stabilized or it will lose its strife-character and the work will cease to be "at work." It is in order to explain how it can fix this strife in place without subjecting to stasis that Heidegger specifies: "What is here called figure [*Gestalt*] is

the structure [*Gefüge*] as which the rift joins itself [*der Riß sich fügt*]. This joined rift [*gefügte Riß*] is the jointure [*Fuge*] of the shining of truth.”<sup>22</sup> As the way in which the strife of world and earth remains continually in strife, and thereby binds together the “appearance” or “shining” [*Scheinen*] of truth, it is a movement of a movement, the articulation of an articulation. Attending to the ways in which the artwork is constituted by these different movements will allow us to attend to the “movedness” of the open as such, as it inflects the presencing of beings and the broader oscillations of presence and absence that shape of our encounter with these beings, what Sheehan astutely terms their “kinetic intelligibility.”<sup>23</sup>

To see how this “movedness” or “agitation” [*Bewegtheit*] inflects the artwork’s *Gestalt* more concretely, an example may help. In Cézanne’s *Portrait du jardinier Vallier*, the arching of the gardener’s shoulders and the thickly applied downward brushstrokes of blacks and dark greens that make up his coat and waistcoat serve to engender an extraordinary sense of weight.<sup>24</sup> Set firmly at the centre of the composition, this weight serves as a kind of organizing principle for the painting, drawing the various other textural movements towards a focal point. In addition to being a formal feature, this weight is central to the characterization of the painting’s subject. As the focal point of the portrait is displaced from Vallier’s face to his shoulders, we intimate his humility and fatigue; as he assumes the painting’s compositional weight, he is endowed with a pathos of dignity and understated strength. But what is particularly striking is how, as the point at which the countermovements of brushstrokes cohere, Vallier himself becomes uncannily *still* – indeed, this stillness is one of the first things that strikes one when one encounters the work. It would seem to accord with what Heidegger identified as that “repose which is an inner concentration of motion, hence a highest state of agitation.”<sup>25</sup>

It is precisely this inner concentration of motion that Heidegger, in an ekphrastic poem about the Vallier portrait written in 1970, approaches as a *Gestalt*:

Das nachdenksam Gelassens, das inständig  
Stille der Gestalt des alten Gärtners  
Vallier...

The reflective released, the standing-within  
Stillness of the figure of old gardener  
Vallier...<sup>26</sup>

The “inständig / Stille der Gestalt” evokes a stillness born of, and borne by, movement, in which the movement itself is figured, becomes figure. It is worth noting here that *Gestalt* has two senses within Heidegger’s account of the artwork. It can either be the look of the artwork as a whole, its composition, or it can indicate a particular figure within the work – as in this instance, where the “figure” is that of Vallier himself. The shape of thinking is the same for both uses of *Gestalt*: it serves as a point of coherence in which the work’s “agitated” crisscrossing of movements and textures are joined together. It is as these movements cohere, that they afford a “standing-within stillness,” that rest which structures movement. It is this coherence, moreover, which constitutes the artwork’s “jointure of the shining of truth.”

#### THE WAY-MAKING MOVEMENT

In both “The Origin of the Work of Art” and “Anaximander’s Saying,” the term *Fuge* is employed as a jointure through which the limits of a being’s entry into appearance are fixed and the being can appear “as” the being it is. For both, *Fuge* is thematized as a movement, either to be thought in terms of the “strife” of earth and world or as the construction of a “while” in which beings disclose themselves in a temporally bounded presence; for both, its movedness issues from the countermovements between presencing and absencing. Both, finally, align the “joining” of *Fuge* with *logos*. The artwork’s engagement with its work-material was described as a “self-surpassing gathering,” whilst in “Anaximander’s Saying” Heidegger indicates an intimate relation between *Fuge* and the *logos* that “gathers” into a “tarrying presence.”<sup>27</sup>

Both the “jointure” of entities into presence and the gathering of *logos* are considered as modes of articulation: bringing entities into an intelligible whole through differentiating them. But if jointure and *logos* trace similar movements, then only *logos* is endowed with linguistic valence. In this next section, I wish to probe the movedness of what Heidegger identifies within language itself.

There is a danger in aligning Heidegger’s thinking of *logos* too closely with “language” as a semantic-syntactic system. In *Being and Time* he proposed the *existential* of “discourse” as a translation for *logos*, the Greeks having “no word for ‘language.’”<sup>28</sup> Later he repudiated the focus on discourse as *existential*, as it turned language into “an activity of man” rather than attending to its “linguistic essence”;<sup>29</sup> and in the 1939 Aristotle lecture (one of the key texts in his interpretation of *logos* as “gathering”) he says: “Of itself *legein* has nothing to do with saying and with language,” but rather describes “the original and fundamental relation to beings.”<sup>30</sup> In short, Heidegger’s concern is primarily with the disclosive function of *logos*, and not the specificities of written or spoken utterance.

However, we can also read a more tempered account of the relation between verbal language and *logos* running throughout his work. In *Being and Time*, talking of the movement from the discoveredness of the world into linguistic meanings (*Bedeutungen*), he says: “The meaningful whole of intelligibility is *put into words* [*Wörter*]. To meanings, words accrue [*Den Bedeutungen wachsen Worte zu*]. But word-things do not get supplied with meanings.”<sup>31</sup> What is striking here is not only that he uses a figure of accrual or growth [*wachsen... zu*] to describe meaning production, but that the growth happens within the words themselves, as a group of lexical items, *Wörter*, “grows” into the *Worte* of meaningful verbal comportment.<sup>32</sup> And moments later Heidegger will argue that discourse can “make known” and “indicate” *Dasein*’s state-of-mind through the “intonation, modulation, the tempo of talk,” that is, the prosodic coloration of words.<sup>33</sup> In both instances, verbal language is approached in terms of movement: on the one hand its “growth” into meaning, on the other the shape a phrase traces (intonation and

modulation) and its accelerations and decelerations (tempo). But this poses a problem, as it is not clear how these movements interact with the temporality specific to discourse as “presencing.” It seems, even, as if there are two incompatible notions of language at work in *Being and Time*, which furnish highly divergent experiences of time. We find something similar in his later writing when he insists that verbal language should be understood as a “sounding word,” anterior to the distinction between sound and sense. The basis of this claim is that it “is just as much a property of language to sound and ring and vibrate, to hover and to tremble, as it is for the spoken words of language to carry a meaning.”<sup>54</sup> Not only does this mean that prosodic features of verbal language cannot be entirely dismissed from the gathering of *logos*; it also means that there is a prosodic movedness of language independent of the gathering movement that brings beings into presence.

How do these two movements interact? To see this we should turn to yet another kind of movement by which Heidegger thematizes language: the Swabian archaism *Be-wägung*, the movement that sets language “on its way.” “The Way to Language” is organized around the “guideword”: “to bring language to language as language.”<sup>55</sup> At first, Heidegger presents this as a challenge for thinking: how can we say something about language when our means to do so are themselves linguistic? And how can we speak about language in its “linguistic essence” – bringing language to language *as language* – rather than as a human activity (be it expression, representation, or communication), despite the fact that talking and thinking are themselves human activities? Heidegger wishes to ask what a non-human linguistic essence might be, and to this end he sketches the relation between an originary “Saying” [*Sagan*], which functions as a pre-verbal opening of intelligibility, and human verbal comportment [*Sprechen*]. If this would appear to mimic the structure of “ontological difference,” we should note that Heidegger’s interest is in the “unifying element” through which these two apparently opposed poles are bound together into one; instead of “saying” being the substrate of “speech,” they are two moments within language, which meet when, as his famous guideword has it, “language speaks.”

This endows the phrase “to bring language to language as language” with a deeper significance: the “bringing” by which “saying” enters “speech” might offer the key to what “language” itself is. But this requires that there be a “unifying element” that joins together the ordinary articulation of “saying” with human speech. This will join together speech with both the possibilities that belong to speech, and the unspoken that bounds it. In his first attempt to grasp this unifying element, he sketches “the adjointment [*Gefüge*] of a showing in which are joined [*verfugt*] the speakers and their speaking, the spoken and its unspoken out of the to-be-spoken.”<sup>56</sup> As with ecstatic temporality, Heidegger conceives of this unspoken as a double absence. This adjointment will characterize what he subsequently names *Sage*: that element which unifies both the ordinary saying and human speech as features of language. But the “adjointment” also pre-figures his final claim about how language is set on its way. *Sage* can only unify “saying” and “speech” if these two are appropriate for, and appropriable by, one another. He thus concludes: “*Ereignis* gathers together the design of saying [*Sage*] and unfolds it into the structure [*Gefüge*] of a manifold showing.”<sup>57</sup> *Ereignis*, as a way-making movement, gathers language into a unified whole [*Sage*], so that it might gather beings into presence. Whence final revision of the guideword: “The way-making movement [*Be-wägung*] brings language (linguistic essence) as language (*Sage*) into language (the sounding word).”<sup>58</sup> The way-making movement is not simply *kinetic*, but, as Thomas Sheehan has observed, *dynamic*.<sup>59</sup>

What relation does this way-making movement bear to the prosodic movement of speech? In discussing the “site” of Trakl’s poetry in the 1953 lecture, Heidegger hints at a response. The distinction between the “site of Trakl’s poetry” [*das Gedicht*], that one poetic statement which binds all of Trakl’s poetry together as a singular oeuvre, and the individual poems [*Dichtungen*] that make up his poetic output, is akin to that between “saying” and “speech.” Neither individually nor as a totality do the *Dichtungen* articulate this statement completely in and of themselves; rather, we must trace within the poems a shared source out of which they arise, a source which continually pervades and

animates the poems, and towards which they continually signal, even if only obliquely. Here I reproduce in full the passage cited partially in the introduction.

From the site of the poem there rises the wave that in each instance moves his Saying [*Sagen*] as poetic. But that wave, far from leaving the site behind, in its rise causes all the movement of Saying [*Bewegen der Sage*] to flow back to its ever more hidden source. The site of the poem, as the source of the animating wave, holds within it the veiled essence of what – to metaphysical-aesthetic representation – can at best appear as rhythm.

To trace the originary site out of which the poems stem requires that we grasp the animation underlying each poem; not only the wave upon which the poems flow, but the source of that wave – what first endows the poems with their animation. The movement of saying into speech is thematized in the same way as in “The Way to Language.” There *Sage* transports the pre-verbal *Sagen* into the verbal *Sprechen* of the poem. Yet here it attains a specifically rhythmic valence: what “rhythm” would reveal is the very impulse into animation that lies within *Sage*.

But the precise role of prosody in Heidegger’s argument (what he here terms “rhythm”) is somewhat ambiguous. In his seminal essay on this topic, David Farrell Krell noted that the animating wave concerns “the peculiar binding power of language,” a power which lies “beyond the mere linkage of syllables, or even of words and things, a binding power beyond both ‘naming’ and ‘predicating.’”<sup>40</sup> Krell thus summarizes: “Rhythm has essentially nothing to do with the conformity of spoken or written language to inherited standards of measure and versification. It does have to do with the intrinsic motion and animation of language as such.”<sup>41</sup> But can the two be so neatly separated? That is, if “the source of the animating wave” can “best appear as rhythm” to “metaphysical-aesthetic representation,” then in order to grasp this animation of language from within the epoch of metaphysics, we should attend to the poem’s rhythm. Throughout his work Trakl

employs meter and rhyme, extracting the sounds of words and syllables from their sense in order to create sonorous patterns. He too is confined within that “notion of language that has prevailed for thousands of years.” Nevertheless, Heidegger suggests, these same rhythms will allow his poems to bear witness to the animation of language that pervades them and yet withdraws from their grasp.

This would mean that the poem’s “linkage” of accentual feet would render manifest an anterior binding power of language. The poem’s prosodic rhythms, in other words, become a point at which “metaphysical-aesthetic representation” exceeds its own representation. But it also means that at work in the poem will be two competing, and incompatible, experiences of movement: as it were rhythm and prosody. This recalls our observation about the two competing temporalities at work in the fugue itself: the series of “nows” of its time signature, and the entry of each instance of each voice into the “while” of polyphonic texture. Might these two diverging experiences of movement inflect not only Heidegger’s exposition of poetic rhythm, but also the way that he reads poetic rhythms? This will be the topic of the final section.

#### **RHYTHM AND PROSODY**

Heidegger, notoriously, rarely discusses “form” in his readings of poetry; and yet there are some powerful exceptions to this rule. I will focus on two of them, twenty years apart. The first, from the *Introduction to Metaphysics*, is of the first choral ode from Sophocles’ *Antigone*; the second is the reading of George’s “In stillste ruh,” whose “rhythm” of tropes is portrayed as a “fugue.” Sophocles portrays man as the “most uncanny” [*das Unheimlichste*], insofar as he is being torn from the earth that would otherwise be “home.” Heidegger observes:

The ode . . . sings of breaking forth upon the groundless waves, of giving up firm land. This breakaway does not take place upon the cheerful smoothness of gleaming water but amid the winter storm. The saying of this breakaway is situated in the law of motion of the

word- and verse-structure [*das Bewegungsgesetz der Wort- und Verfügung*], just as the *chorei* in verse 336 is placed at the point where the meter [*Versmaß*] shifts.<sup>42</sup>

A few minutes earlier, Heidegger had read the ode aloud in the Greek, so that his audience would have heard the metrical shift for themselves.<sup>43</sup> It is immediately striking that this shift is considered not simply to emphasize or qualify the meaning, nor to heighten our attentiveness to what is said, nor “echo” its sense; rather, it changes quite fundamentally the meaning of the word *chorei*. In the opening translation, *chorei* is given as *kreuzt* (rendered by Polt and Fried as “cruises”<sup>44</sup>), but after attending to its metrical position, Heidegger can continue:

[Man] gives up the place, he heads out – and ventures to enter the superior power of the sea’s placeless flood. The word stands like a pillar in the construction of these verses.<sup>45</sup>

“Like a pillar,” the word stands at rest and supports the weight of all that surrounds it. The resemblance to the temple in “The Origin of the Work of Art” (which he was working on at the same time), whose self-subsistence lies in its standing there in a repose that structures the relations around it, is striking. In both, we encounter an “inner concentration” which, far from indicating an absence of movedness, constitutes its nodal point. The shift that takes place on the word *chorei* might at first advertise itself as a metrical feature, but it subsequently reaches beyond its local metrical function to render manifest the “law of motion” governing the meter as a whole. This moment is what Heidegger in “Origin” termed the artwork’s *Gestalt*: a moment of coherence where the work’s countermovements are joined together in agitated stillness. The ode’s prosody, it would seem, can use this moment of dissonance or transformation to grasp its own movedness.

In the reading of Sophocles’ ode, Heidegger appeals to a metrical feature but does not ask what it is about the meter that allows it to transform the meaning of the strophe as a whole. When he comes to discuss “In stillste ruh,” the question of rhythm as a jointure becomes the center of his analysis, but in so doing the account of rhythm comes

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to be troubled by the poem he reads. "In stillste ruh" itself probes the relation between rest and movement, as its eponymous rest is broken by "a sight which / With undreamed terror / Troubles the secure soul."

In stillste ruh  
Besonnenen tags  
Bricht jäh ein blick  
Der unerahnten schrecks  
Die sichre seele stört

So wie auf höhn  
Der feste stamm  
Stolz reglos ragt  
Und dann noch spät ein sturm  
Ihn bis zum boden beugt:

So wie das meer  
Mit gellem laut  
Mit wildem prall  
Noch einmal in die lang  
Verlassne muschel stößt.

In stillest rest  
Of a musing day  
Suddenly breaks a sight which  
With undreamed terror  
Troubles the secure soul

As when on the heights  
The solid stem  
Towers motionless in pride  
And then late a storm  
Bends it to the ground:

As when the sea  
 With shrill scream  
 With wild crash  
 Once again into the long  
 Abandoned shell thrusts<sup>46</sup>

George's and Heidegger's thematization of movement and rest seem at first blush diametrically opposed. For George, the destruction of stillness would evoke the vulnerability of man faced with nature; for Heidegger, the poem successfully embodies a resting-within-itself. We might be tempted to say, as Paul de Man did of Heidegger's Hölderlin's readings, that George "*says exactly the opposite of what Heidegger makes him say.*"<sup>47</sup> Yet Heidegger's central observation about the poem's compositional structure identifies a current within the poem that would counter this first interpretation. The colon at the end of the second stanza draws the second "As when" back to the first stanza. As a result, the poet, bent "to the ground as the storm bends the tree" in the second stanza, becomes "open" for the third stanza, where "the sea thrusts its unfathomable voice into the poet's ears which are called 'the long abandoned shell.'"<sup>48</sup> The third stanza, Heidegger argues, has engendered an openness to the world (somewhat akin to *Dasein's* "resolve" in *Being and Time*) in which the poem's "rest" is ultimately restored. Within the argument of Heidegger's reading, this shift is crucial: the openness the poem engenders will permit the "renunciation" that George, in "Das Wort," searches after.

But what of the "rhythmic" aspect of this poem? In the introduction I noted that situating the poem's rhythm in its tropological movement can be read as a denigration of the literary-critical category of prosody; but prosody cannot be so easily suppressed. Heidegger enumerates the poem's figures thus: *Sichre Seele, jäher Blick, Stamm und Sturm, Meer und Muschel*; the pattern of two stressed syllables separated by one unstress mimics, and even condenses, the halting syncopations through which the poem both sets up a forward motion and presses back in on itself.<sup>49</sup> Indeed, in order to retain this pattern, Heidegger undoes the contraction of *jäher* into *jäh*, and turns it from an adverb describing

the “break” into adjective describing “sight.” Heidegger’s adherence to the poem’s prosodic movement would distort its grammatical movement; contracting *jäher* into *jäh* might reproduce the regularity of the poem’s prosody but, rendering an adverb an adjective, it imposes upon the poem a grammatical stasis. In addition to reading “rest” back into the poem through this openness to the world, his enumeration of the poem’s figural movement brings its prosody and grammar to “rest.”

The power of this particular reading lies not simply in its being a compelling *exegesis* of the poem, but in its performing a compelling *encounter with* the poem. And moreover, this encounter with the poem is *prosodic*. The “renunciation” the poem engenders through its openness, Heidegger concludes, is “no refusal of a claim but the transformation of the saying into the almost concealed roaring songlike echo of an unsayable Saga [*die Wandlung des Sagens in den fast verborgen rauschenden liedhaften Widerklang einer unsägliche Sage*].”<sup>50</sup> The poem has become nothing less than an allegory for the movement from the pre-verbal *Sagen* into the poem’s speech; in its rhythmic jointure, it renders audible the *Sage* that joins the two together. Just as in the programmatic discussion of Trakl’s “poetic site,” this movement into speech is experienced as rhythm – but here it has been internalized into Heidegger’s own rhythms. Earlier we noted how Heidegger’s writing echoed the ebb and flow of George’s stress-unstress syncopations; here, by contrast, we encounter a near-paratactic accumulation of adjectives, culminating in an almost “dactylic” progression of the cadence – *rauschenden liedhaften Widerklang einer unsäglichen Sage* – whose prosodic overflow seems like a release of the tension the poem had built up.<sup>51</sup> At this crucial juncture, Heidegger’s writing is remarkably *unlike* George’s poem. The poem’s *kinesis*, then, its “joining rest,” plays itself out through the counterpoint of George’s clipped dimeters and Heidegger’s dactylic overflow.

Heidegger’s reading of George’s “fugal” rhythms involves him in a fugal interaction between the movement he wishes to trace from *Sagen* to *Sprechen* and the prosodic movement that marks his encounter with the poem. In “Origin” Heidegger argues that, for the work to remain at work requires that the artwork be taken up by its “preservers,” who

“stand within the openness of beings that happens in the work.”<sup>52</sup> It is precisely such a preservation that is taking place in Heidegger’s prosodic encounter with “In stillste ruh,” and if this affords a momentary glimpse of “the almost concealed roaring songlike echo of an unsayable Saga,” then it is precisely as the prosodic encounter exceeds itself and opens up a rhythmic jointure binding the two. But this also means that, despite Heidegger’s somewhat patrician disdain for literary criticism, the categories through which literary critics conceive of rhythm become central to our grasping the originary movedness that George’s poem would engender. Prosody is dynamized, not only in that it ceases to be the mere patterning of accents and syllables, but also in that more precise sense in which Heidegger translates *dynamis*: it sets thinking on its way.

## Notes

- 1 *Unterwegs zur Sprache*, 230-1 = *On the Way to Language*, 149; tm.
- 2 *Unterwegs zur Sprache*, 18-19 = *Poetry Language Thought*, 193.
- 3 See his discussions of Aristotle's *De Interpretatione* in "The Nature of Language" and "The Way to Language," *Unterwegs zur Sprache*, 205 = *On the Way to Language*, 98; *Unterwegs zur Sprache*, 244-5 = *On the Way to Language*, 115.
- 4 *Unterwegs zur Sprache*, 38 = *On the Way to Language*, 160; tm.
- 5 In this, I am broadly following the "paradigm shift in Heidegger research" proposed by Thomas Sheehan; see Thomas Sheehan, "On Movement and the Destruction of Ontology," in *Man and World*, 64:4 (Oct 1981): 534-542, and most recently, "Astonishing! Things Make Sense!" in *Gatherings: The Heidegger Circle Annual*, I (2011): 1-25.
- 6 *Sein und Zeit*, 420-427 = *Being and Time* (trans. Macquarrie and Robinson), 473-480.
- 7 GA 9: 337 = *Pathmarks*, 204.
- 8 *Sein und Zeit*, 159 = *Being and Time*, 201.
- 9 *Holzwege*, 329 = *Off the Beaten Track*, 269.
- 10 *Holzwege*, 339 = *Off the Beaten Track*, 277.
- 11 *Holzwege*, 328-329 = *Off the Beaten Track*, 268-269.
- 12 *Sein und Zeit*, 163 = *Being and Time*, 207.
- 13 *Der Satz vom Grund*, 87 = *The Principle of Reason*, 47.
- 14 *Holzwege*, 37 = *Off the Beaten Track*, 26.
- 15 *Holzwege*, 54 = *Off the Beaten Track*, 40.
- 16 *Holzwege*, 37-8 = *Off the Beaten Track*, 26-7.
- 17 *Holzwege*, 35 = *Off the Beaten Track*, 24.
- 18 *Holzwege*, 37-8 = *Off the Beaten Track*, 26-7.
- 19 I take this to be the central point of Richard Polt's "Meaning, Excess, and Event", in *Gatherings: The Heidegger Circle Annual*, I (2011): 26-53.

- 20 In the Aristotle lecture three years later, Heidegger will offer  
*Gestalt* as a translation for *eidōs*; see GA 9: 344-346 = *Pathmarks*,  
 210-211.
- 21 *Holzwege*, 51 = *Off the Beaten Track*, 38.
- 22 *Holzwege*, 51 = *Off the Beaten Track*, 38.
- 23 Sheehan, “On Movement and the Destruction of Ontology,” 538.
- 24 Cézanne painted Vallier on several occasions late in his life.  
 Julian Young takes the painting in question to be one of the 1906  
 versions, which is characterized by its light colours including  
 patches of white to endow it with an unfinished quality (it was  
 indeed one of the final paintings he completed before his death  
 that year) and make it resemble the watercolour sketches he also  
 made; see Julian Young, *Heidegger’s Philosophy of Art* (Cam-  
 bridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 153ff. However, the  
 earlier paintings of Vallier, one of which dates from 1902 and  
 another of which was being worked on over a long period up until  
 his death, aim to capture the dark weariness of Vallier as my brief  
 description does above. My reasons for opting to read Heidegger’s  
 poem in terms of this poem are double: firstly, because its pathos  
 seems far more in keeping with Heidegger’s tastes, as they are ex-  
 pressed in his discussion of Van Gogh’s “peasant shoes”; secondly,  
 because these are the paintings where an “in-standing stillness”  
 really seems to be at issue.
- 25 *Holzwege*, 38 = *Off the Beaten Track*, 27.
- 26 GA 13: 223. I would normally translate “inständig” by “inward”;  
 the clunkiness of the proposed translation comes from the desire  
 to retain the literal sense of standing-within, which is crucial to  
 the stillness of the hermetic artwork from “Origin” onwards.
- 27 *Holzwege*, 340 = *Off the Beaten Track*, 278. Indeed, just before he  
 embarks on his reading of *dike*, Heidegger says that the “funda-  
 mental words” of *dike*, *tisis*, and *adikia*, must be understood in  
 terms of *logos*, *aletheia*, and *phusis*, “words which are thought  
 from out of the experience of presencing” (*Holzwege*, 325 = *Off*  
*the Beaten Track*, 265).

- 28 *Sein und Zeit*, 165 = *Being and Time*, 209.  
29 *Unterwegs zur Sprache*, 14 = *Poetry Language Thought*, 190.  
30 GA 9: 350 = *Pathmarks*, 213-4.  
31 *Sein und Zeit*, 161 = *Being and Time*, 204; tm.  
32 Both Jan Aler and Charles Guignon offer powerful discussions of this moment in Heidegger's account of language; see Jan Aler, "Heidegger's conception of language in *Being and Time*" in Maccann (ed.), *Martin Heidegger: Critical Assessments*, vol.4 (London: Routledge, 1992), 28, and Charles Guignon, *Heidegger and the Problem of Knowledge* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1983), 116ff.  
33 *Sein und Zeit*, 162 = *Being and Time*, 205.  
34 *Unterwegs zur Sprache*, 205 = *On the Way to Language*, 98.  
35 *Unterwegs zur Sprache*, 242 = *On the Way to Language*, 112 (I have changed Hertz's translation so as to follow Heidegger's formulation more closely).  
36 *Unterwegs zur Sprache*, 252 = *On the Way to Language*, 121.  
37 *Unterwegs zur Sprache*, 259 = *On the Way to Language*, 128.  
38 *Unterwegs zur Sprache*, 261 = *On the Way to Language*, 130.  
39 Thomas Sheehan, "On the Way to *Ereignis*: Heidegger's Interpretation of *Physis*," in Hugh J. Silverman, John Sallis, and Thomas M. Seebohm (eds.), *Continental Philosophy in America* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1983), 131-164.  
40 David Farrell Krell, "The Source of the Wave: Rhythm in the Languages of Poetry and Thinking," in *Lunar Voices: Of Tragedy, Poetry, Fiction, and Thought* (University of Chicago Press, 1995), 65.  
41 Krell, "The Source of the Wave," 60.  
42 *Einführung in die Metaphysik*, 118 = *Introduction to Metaphysics*, 164; tm.  
43 *Einführung in die Metaphysik*, 112 = *Introduction to Metaphysics*, 156.  
44 *Einführung in die Metaphysik*, 112 = *Introduction to Metaphysics*, 156.

- 45 *Einführung in die Metaphysik*, 118 = *Introduction to Metaphysics*,  
164.
- 46 *Unterwegs zur Sprache*, 229-30 = *On the Way to Language*, 148;  
tm.
- 47 Paul de Man, "Heidegger's Exegeses of Hölderlin," in *Blindness  
and Insight: Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism*, ed-  
ited by Wlad Godzich, second edition, (London: Methuen, 1983),  
254-5. De Man continues: "it is already a major achievement to  
have, in a dialogue of this sort, the two interlocutors manage to  
speak of the same thing."
- 48 *Unterwegs zur Sprache*, 231 = *On the Way to Language*, 149.
- 49 Somewhat fortuitously, the English translation of 'sudden sight'  
for *jäher Blick* provides an extra alliterative pair.
- 50 *Unterwegs zur Sprache*, 231 = *On the Way to Language*, 150.
- 51 Krell, discussing a passage from 'Why Poets?' (*Unheil also Unheil  
spurt uns das Heile. Heiles er winkt rufend das Heilige. Heiliges  
bindet das Göttliche. Göttliches nähert den Gott*), speaks of Hei-  
degger's "strongly rhythmical line, which can be scanned as dac-  
tylic tetrameter and trimeter" ("The Source of the Wave," 72).
- 52 *Holzwege*, 55 = *Off the Beaten Track*, 41.

# The Perils of Overcoming “Worldliness” in Kierkegaard and Heidegger

*Adam Buben*

In discussing Søren Kierkegaard’s “retroactive power” (*tilbagevirkende Kraft*) of death,<sup>1</sup> George Connell claims that it “is very like Heidegger’s notion of authenticity and resoluteness in the face of death.”<sup>2</sup> What Connell has in mind about Kierkegaard’s account is the way in which an individual’s death, rather than simply annihilating this individual’s life, meaningfully impacts this life while it is still being lived. Heidegger, like Kierkegaard before him, provides an anti-Epicurean account in which “you are and death also is.”<sup>3</sup>

the fact that even everyday Dasein already is *towards* its end – that is to say, is constantly coming to grips with its death . . . shows that this end . . . is not something to which Dasein ultimately comes only in its demise. In Dasein, as being towards its death, its own uttermost “not-yet” has already been included.<sup>4</sup>

Without getting into the still murky issue of Heidegger’s actual debts to Kierkegaard’s writings, it is safe to say that these two have much in common when it comes to the employment of death in their work. Despite this kinship, there have been numerous efforts both from the Kierkegaardian camp and from Heidegger himself to distinguish sharply the one from the other. While Heidegger makes several somewhat condescending comments about Kierkegaard’s endeavors, some observers (both avowed Kierkegaardians, and those just interested in criticizing Heidegger) explain why the Dane would not, or even should

not, be interested in pursuing a Heideggerian project. After a brief description of their largely shared philosophy of death, I would like to consider what I take to be the most significant complaint from each side and suggest a more nuanced understanding of their relationship.

### THE EXISTENTIAL PHILOSOPHY OF DEATH

The story of the similarity between Kierkegaard's death project and the role of death in *Being and Time* is a complicated one with roots going back over two millennia.<sup>5</sup> But one need not explore all of the details to see that Heidegger shares both particular concepts with Kierkegaard, and also a purpose in overcoming the Epicurean view and encouraging an existence closely intertwined with death.<sup>6</sup> In Kierkegaardian terms, the goal here is dying to the world as exemplified by Christ, described in the epistles (e.g. Rom. 6:6-8; 2 Cor. 4:10-12, 5:14-19), and passed down, more or (occasionally) less authentically, by a series of Christian thinkers.<sup>7</sup> It is crucial to realize that Heidegger is involved in developing a secularized version of this Christian sense of dying to the world. Iain Thomson describes death in *Being and Time* as a "movement in which we turn away from the world, recover ourselves, and then turn back to the world, a world we now see anew, with eyes that have been opened."<sup>8</sup> Following in Paul's footsteps, dying to one's "worldly" ways makes possible a "rebirth" that brings with it a new way of viewing existence.

Hubert L. Dreyfus is surely onto something when, in discussing the Kierkegaardian notion of dying to immediacy, he states, "for Heidegger being-unto-death, then, is dying to *all* immediacy."<sup>9</sup> Just as Kierkegaard is critical of all ways of relating to oneself that are dictated by human understanding of the world, since they forego or prevent a genuinely faithful relationship with Christ, Heidegger is interested in severing the connections to one's existence that have been unquestioningly received from "the they" in everydayness, because these connections prevent grasping who one "authentically" is.<sup>10</sup> One must die to the distracting ways of existing that one just happens to have "fallen" into and must do so in order to focus upon what is most properly one's own.<sup>11</sup> Both Kierkegaard and Heidegger describe the distractions handed down by

the everyday world as “accidental” or “incidental” (Danish: *tilfældige*, German: *zufällige*) in the sense that there is nothing that one can receive from this everydayness that is absolutely essential to one’s existence.<sup>12</sup>

Whereas the world tends to focus on *what* can be accomplished or actualized in a given period of chronological time (which of course can never be guaranteed, rendering all actualization merely accidental), Kierkegaard and Heidegger emphasize that for the kairological moment (Danish: *Øjeblikket*, German: *Augenblick*; both literally mean “the blink of an eye”)<sup>13</sup> *how* one relates to the possible (regardless of the chronological time available) is what really matters.<sup>14</sup> Both in his own name and under pseudonym, Kierkegaard describes the new sense of time that Christianity introduces as the intersection of eternity with worldly temporality in a “present” moment that reconciles the fallen condition one comes from with the salvation one runs toward. For example, the pseudonym Haufniensis states that “the fullness of time is the moment as the eternal, and yet this eternal is also the future and the past.”<sup>15</sup> To put it another way: in a movement that transcends any common sense of temporality one comes to participate in the past, yet timeless, act of cleansing sacrifice (the crucifixion) and thereby receives another chance for the future.<sup>16</sup> With ever-present anxiety and vigilance one renews or repeats one’s commitment to the divine in repentance of sins and longing for mercy. The moment of life comes to take on an eternal significance by constantly shaking loose from lostness in a highly contingent temporal worldliness.

Despite Heidegger’s apparently dismissive claim that Kierkegaard could not see the “more primordial temporality”<sup>17</sup> that underlies the theological view of the moment in terms of the eternal, the de-theologized account that Heidegger provides shows many signs of benefiting from Kierkegaard’s work on this topic. Heidegger is also interested in something like a lived synthesis of Dasein’s past and future – Dasein is a projecting ahead of itself based on limitations it has fallen (or been thrown) into. In owning up to the possibilities that are available to it given the situation, and responsibly choosing from among them which to pursue (the resolute repeating of inherited or past possibilities into

the future), Dasein pulls itself out of its standard (in the sense of a default-setting) fallenness and takes possession of itself.<sup>18</sup> Among the many such descriptions Heidegger provides, consider the following:

to the anticipation which goes with resoluteness, there belongs a Present in accordance with which a resolution discloses the Situation. In resoluteness, the Present is not only brought back from distraction with the objects of one's closest concern, but it gets held in the future and in having been. That *Present* which is held in authentic temporality and which thus is *authentic* itself, we call the '*moment of vision*.'<sup>19</sup>

when its heritage is thus handed down to itself, its 'birth' is *caught up into its existence* in coming back from the possibility of death (the possibility which is not to be outstripped), if only so that this existence may accept the thrownness of its own 'there' in a way which is more free from Illusion.<sup>20</sup>

Like Kierkegaard, Heidegger is looking for a way out (albeit not necessarily one that is easily maintained) of an unreflective and deficient state that prioritizes contingent worldly accomplishment and the quantifiable temporality that such accomplishment requires. According to their view, anything that is qualified purely by this everyday chronological sense of time is necessarily a distraction aimed at aiding one in trying to flee one's essential responsibility to be oneself (whether before God or not).<sup>21</sup>

It is their shared concern about the chronologically accidental and interest in avoiding it that leads both Kierkegaard and Heidegger to describe this process (of avoiding it) in terms of death. Physical death, while not ultimately what they are focused upon, provides an important "formal indication" of essential features of human existence and a deeper sense of dying.<sup>22</sup> For both Kierkegaard and Heidegger there is no other occasion that better demonstrates the contingency of all

attachments to and ways of understanding one's place in the world; the image of death is employed because it is the best way to awaken someone from the complacent slumber of a thoughtless existence (e.g. as a merely cultural Christian, or a "they"-self) that is not essentially and necessarily theirs.<sup>23</sup> That one will die signifies that existence has to be given up one way or another, and realizing this already has a way of weakening the bonds of meaning that are passed down to us merely by existing in the world.<sup>24</sup> But what is more, the uncertainty with regard to the when of physical demise suggests a general indefiniteness in existence, particularly in connection with worldly endeavors and understanding.<sup>25</sup> Given this structural indefiniteness one need not feel constrained to interpret existence strictly as a function of the specific projects, relationships, and goals that the everyday world recommends. Without such constraints, both Kierkegaard and Heidegger believe that it is possible to appropriate meaning for oneself in the light of one's contingent, and admittedly culturally-textured, situation.

#### **HEIDEGGER'S "ATHEISM" AND THE THEOLOGY OF KIERKEGAARD**

Although they have much in common on death-related issues, Heidegger clearly does not share the theological concerns at the heart of Kierkegaard's account of dying to the world. At least during the few years leading up through the writing of *Being and Time*, Heidegger holds that there is a "fundamental atheism indigenous to philosophy."<sup>26</sup> This atheism is necessary in order to distinguish philosophy from the ontic science of theology: philosophy is absorbed in ontology, which is an inquiry into Being in general, while theology merely posits some basic regional idea about the nature (or being) of God – or, according to Heidegger, the nature of the Christian connection to God<sup>27</sup> – and inquires into matters pertaining to what it posits.<sup>28</sup> In order for philosophy to retain its status as the more primordial, general, and pure form of inquiry, it cannot allow itself to be contaminated by theological concerns. Because Heidegger is engaged with fundamental ontology in *Being and Time*, he must maintain a 'methodological atheism' throughout his consideration of death and related issues.<sup>29</sup>

For Heidegger, Kierkegaard is a theologian because he simply posits humans as derived from the Christian God, and then proceeds to consider the particulars of relating to this God.<sup>50</sup> He is a great theologian because, unlike so many others, he joins Martin Luther in emphasizing faith alone as the difficult, but proper way of appropriating and existing in this relationship, to the exclusion of a diluted theology that relies on reason to explain away and soften any difficulty.<sup>51</sup> It would be hard to deny the accuracy of Heidegger's assessment of Kierkegaard's theological propensities given that Kierkegaard himself states, "I have never broken with Christianity. . . from the time it was possible to speak of the application of my powers, I had firmly resolved to employ everything to defend it, or in any case to present it in its true form."<sup>52</sup> But if he is indeed a theologian of some sort, it seems that Kierkegaard's theological treatments of human guilt, anxiety, conscience, and even death cannot provide the primordial ontological understanding of these matters that Heidegger seeks in *Being and Time*. Thus, according to Heidegger, Kierkegaard's works are mostly just interesting ontical analyses that might provide helpful starting points for a more penetrating investigation into what underlies the derivative phenomena of religious experience.<sup>53</sup> While Heidegger seems to rely on these starting points quite heavily, particularly on the topic of death, he does apparently remove specific ideas in several of Kierkegaard's works from their theological trappings, and push them further until these ideas become more broadly relevant (i.e. to the non-religious).

For example, consider "At a Graveside," where Kierkegaard demonstrates the importance of thinking about death without explicitly attempting to secure this importance by appealing to very much in the way of theology. Despite its relative silence on the matter, it is not as though God never comes up. Assuming for the moment that Heidegger is in fact indebted to this discourse for its impact on his own views on death,<sup>54</sup> he would still likely complain that it is not sufficiently free of the theological. It is not just a discussion of God, however, that Heidegger jettisons; ultimately, it seems that even Kierkegaard's least religious discussion of death can only be properly motivated by appealing

to the "infinite significance" of the divine.<sup>55</sup> Unless one shares Kierkegaard's Christian interests, it will remain unclear why his approach to life through death is preferable to other possible attitudes. In contrast, because Heidegger treats death without such theological commitments, it seems that he needs only appeal to what it is to be Dasein in order to make his account of death compelling.

#### **THE EMPTINESS OF ANTICIPATORY RESOLUTENESS**

While Heidegger clearly sees the limitations of Kierkegaard's attempt at a religious-existential philosophy of death, it remains to be seen what Kierkegaard might think of Heidegger's more secular version. Some commentators have wondered whether there is not something about offering an account as general as Heidegger's that Kierkegaard would find particularly problematic.<sup>56</sup> Kierkegaard has a well-known aversion to any abstract system-building and, although it is debatable whether this is what Heidegger is up to, it could simply be the case that despite Heidegger's condescension there is something about Kierkegaard's formulation of the existential philosophy of death that points to a shortcoming in Heidegger's.

There is no denying, for example, that Heidegger strips away so much content from his consideration of what it is to exist that he cannot even allow himself to speak about humans. The primary point of raising the objection that he is excessively formal and abstract, though, is to suggest that when one detaches from (or dies to) so many of the "everyday" specifics of the world in which we have to live, as Heidegger seems to in his discussion of authenticity and anticipatory resoluteness, it becomes difficult to reconnect to any specifics at all.<sup>57</sup> Furthermore, his attempt to describe such reconnection is, according to some, so vague that it remains hard to see by what means one can ever come to determine *what* to do when all that has been laid out is about *how* one should do it. Commentators such as Daniel Berthold-Bond and Patricia J. Huntington claim that Kierkegaard would be unsatisfied by the empty formality that Heidegger provides. On their view, Kierkegaard argues that one needs some sense of *what* one ought to do if there is to

be any genuine meaning to one's existence. Bare authenticity does not provide such meaning and neither does Heideggerian openness.

In making a connection between Heidegger's emphasis on formality and his questionable politics, both Berthold-Bond and Huntington debate the value of anticipatory resoluteness. For example, Berthold-Bond states, "it seems that we are thrown back onto a criterion for action and authentic existence which is so formal, abstract, and indefinite that the prospects for non-arbitrary action in the concrete situations we face in the world are quite problematic."<sup>38</sup> Huntington, relying on Berthold-Bond, claims that "Heidegger's abstract account of authentic resolve, because empty, provides no material criteria for political action."<sup>39</sup> Because Kierkegaard does not go so far out of his way to sever his notion of authentic existence from the aesthetic realm, according to Berthold-Bond, and the ethical, according to Huntington, he has easier access to the sort of normative criteria that might rule out something like membership in the Nazi party. What Berthold-Bond and Huntington apparently want in an account of human existence are "signposts" that motivate or lead one to behave in certain ways rather than others.<sup>40</sup>

On Berthold-Bond's view, Heidegger's notion of the distracting curiosity characteristic of inauthenticity is very much like Kierkegaard's understanding of the aesthetic realm of existence in which one makes no commitment to anything in particular and simply drifts from one amusing diversion to another.<sup>41</sup> While both of them treat this frivolous way of existence with a great deal of suspicion and scorn, Berthold-Bond points out that according to several of Kierkegaard's early pseudonyms, the aesthetic is not to be disregarded in moving to a higher sphere of existence, but transformed and its possibilities understood in a new light. It is from these possibilities, which have been taken over from the aesthetic sphere, that one is able to choose concrete courses of action in an authentic ethical or religious manner. Because Heidegger never offers a similar redemption of curiosity, but rather perseveres in disparaging it, he seems to lose touch with its vast stores of specific possibilities that could be re-appropriated in the formal authentic manner he describes. Thus, Berthold-Bond states, "Kierkegaard's theory of the

sublimation of the aesthetic through authentic repetition presents a way to resolve the abstract and formal character of Heidegger's phenomenology of authentic being."<sup>42</sup>

There seem to be two problems with Berthold-Bond's account, however. First, when considering Kierkegaard's later more explicitly Christian writings, as I do when demonstrating the similarity between Kierkegaard and Heidegger on dying to the world, it is not at all clear that the sympathetic understanding of the aesthetic that Berthold-Bond relies on is maintained. If there is in fact good reason not to rely too heavily on what certain early pseudonyms have to say when comparing Kierkegaard and Heidegger, then Berthold-Bond's account of what separates the two might be called into question. Second, I believe that Berthold-Bond is less than charitable in his assessment of Heidegger's abstractness due to "dislocation" from concrete possibilities. While Heidegger is surely critical of the attitude of curiosity (which he associates with the "idle talk" of the "they"),<sup>45</sup> he does not disparage the particular possibilities that are made available in curiosity by one's thrown situation (even if discussing them is not his priority). If anything, Heidegger might be more open to the possibilities of curiosity, if authentically appropriated, than Kierkegaard would be from a more strictly Christian perspective. Berthold-Bond certainly acknowledges that Heidegger means "to allow for a recovery of the world in a transformed way" based on a "criterion for choice [that] can only be made by concrete reference to the past."<sup>44</sup> Yet for some reason that continues to elude me, he seems to believe that this description of what Heidegger is up to is more abstract and ungrounded than what Kierkegaard supposedly takes from the "aesthetic 'theatre of infinite possibility.'"<sup>45</sup>

Without rejecting Berthold-Bond's account, Huntington tries a slightly different approach. Her argument relies on a purported difference between Kierkegaard's and Heidegger's respective treatments of the social realm and its normativity. Kierkegaard's authentic individual rejects the thoughtless mass known as "the crowd" as a kind of inauthentic community, but does not distance him- or herself from one's essential sociality in itself, or rule out "the possibility of a true community of 'individuals.'"<sup>46</sup>

Such a community would “embody a set of norms without absolutizing” them and “without lapsing into a herd-like communitarianism.”<sup>47</sup> Heidegger, on the other hand, fails to distinguish “between inauthentic participation in ‘everydayness’ and social life per se,” which makes it possible to see the authentic individual in near complete opposition to “the public world of norms.”<sup>48</sup> In other words, Heidegger apparently associates social normativity with the everydayness that is to be overcome (so far as possible), and thereby loses touch with such normativity. In the absence of norms that could direct his actions, he seems to advocate an empty and arbitrary “decisionism” that leaves him open to, among other things, “involvement in National Socialism.”<sup>49</sup>

Given that their approaches to offering a Kierkegaardian critique of Heidegger are quite similar, it should come as no surprise that I have roughly the same two problems with Huntington’s account that I had with Berthold-Bond’s. The first is of course the fact that she pays little attention to the specifically Christian ideas in Kierkegaard’s later writings, where one can find important parallels with Heidegger’s version of dying to the world. Without this attention, Huntington’s portrayal of Kierkegaard and sociality fails to take note of his more “community-hostile” views and thereby remains *at least* in tension with his later thought.<sup>50</sup> Considering that this portrayal is central to her explanation of what Kierkegaard has and Heidegger lacks, such tension renders her entire comparison of the two questionable. But even if this were not the case, I would still suggest that she is less than fair in her description of Heidegger’s “antinormative” and anti-social tendencies.<sup>51</sup> There is no reason to see Heidegger’s emphasis on the formal aspects of individual self-mastery as a rejection of one’s communal and ethical relationships.<sup>52</sup> In fact, he is quite similar to Kierkegaard in arguing that the individualizing capacity of dying to the world is the prerequisite for the authentic “re-taking” of communal relationships and the normativity that comes with community.<sup>53</sup> Although such relationships are derived from, and in some sense secondary to, Heidegger’s “existential ‘solipsism,’” this establishment of order does not distinguish him in any profound way from Kierkegaard.<sup>54</sup>

While I disagree with much of what Berthold-Bond and Huntington have to say, their primary point is not one that I would necessarily dispute. It does indeed seem that Kierkegaard would reject the empty formality and abstractness of Heidegger's notion of anticipatory resoluteness, but on religious – and specifically Christian – grounds rather than on aesthetic or ethical grounds. Although Kierkegaard dramatically emphasizes the more formal *how* aspects of Christian existence, which indeed makes him look very similar to Heidegger, it would not be *Christian* existence without some notion of *what* Christianity is and *what* it demands.<sup>55</sup> It is precisely such a *what* that provides the sort of content and specific direction to existence that Heidegger's account lacks. Whereas for Kierkegaard dying to the world has a concrete purpose in leading to Christian rebirth, for Heidegger dying to the world leads to an open-ended self-possession that seems like it could manifest itself in a diverse range of concretions that might include apparently contradictory possibilities such as Nazism and pacifism. In fact, it is conceivable that on Heidegger's view one might even find it necessary to switch from one to the other given serious enough oscillations in the situation one encounters. This self-determination of a somewhat tentative content might be the best that one can do in trying to attribute specific meaning to one's existence according to Heidegger, but Kierkegaard would likely see a certain bankruptcy in trying to find meaning in such an arbitrary and potentially transient way. It is only through participation in something eternal – the relationship with the divine – that one can find a more solid sense of meaning and avoid this almost nihilistic bankruptcy.

#### **A MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING**

With this Kierkegaardian criticism of the sort of dying to the world found in Heidegger, the best shot from each camp has been fired. While Kierkegaard is too ontically narrow for Heidegger, Heidegger is too abstract and arbitrary for Kierkegaard. But is there perhaps another way to understand what seems to be a fundamental disagreement? I believe that the key to such an understanding lies in the peculiar way

that Kierkegaard explains the development of the necessary relationship with the divine.

In a short preface to the pseudonymous *Practice in Christianity*, Kierkegaard, in his role as editor, states that “the requirement should be heard . . . so that I might learn not only to resort to *grace* but to resort to it in relation to the use of *grace*.”<sup>56</sup> He believes that this requirement, which ought to be associated, at least in part, with the stripping away of one’s worldly meaning in dying to the world, is so difficult that no human can meet it on his or her own.<sup>57</sup> It is therefore necessary for something beyond human to step in and offer assistance if one is to die to the ways of the world and fill up one’s cleansed and empty existence with divine meaning. As John D. Caputo puts it, one must quit “the illusion that a man can make himself whole by his own powers, then a healing power from without can intervene.”<sup>58</sup> Humans do not come to God, having earned his mercy; God comes to humans out of compassion for such impotent beings, and offers them the eternal religious meaning – which Kierkegaard sees in participating in Christ’s death – purely by grace. The sacrifice of God’s son is an act of divine mercy, but even our own ability on some level to imitate Christ’s dying to the world is the result of the divine gift of faith – a receptivity that would not be possible without the “Spirit working within us.”

The problem with reliance on divine assistance for the sake of attributing meaning to one’s existence is that one is left with no possibility of meaning if one finds faith to be a nonviable or unappetizing way of life. This view of faith seems to be especially compelling in modernity when the various articles of Christian dogma begin to look more and more foolish under the light of scientific and technological advances. Kierkegaard understands the trends of modernity and argues that increasing doubt with respect to the objective “facts” of Christianity should have little impact on a genuinely striving Christian who cultivates a subjective relationship with Christ.<sup>59</sup> Heidegger, on the other hand, chooses a different approach to the search for meaning in the modern situation.<sup>60</sup> Rather than refocusing one’s religious endeavors in dying to the world, he suggests a version of ‘dying to’ that sets

aside the problematic religious issue. Heidegger describes the process of redeeming oneself by stripping away all of the ordinary meaning that comes from simply having fallen into the world, and rebuilding a new meaning by critically taking over what is available in one's thrown state. Thus, as McCarthy points out, Heidegger comes to play the role of a sort of "Pelagius to Kierkegaard's Augustine."<sup>61</sup>

In a world in which Christian absolutes no longer seem tenable, however, the meaning that Heidegger gives to himself is not meaning "in the positive Kierkegaardian sense that . . . gives Dasein a self-definition in terms of something specific."<sup>62</sup> It may be that without these kinds of absolutes, there is necessarily going to be the sort of indeterminacy, albeit within a determined range of specifics, which Heidegger's account suggests. Although disappointing to thinkers such as Berthold-Bond and Huntington, there may be no definitive signposts hammered in, but only a series of well-worn paths that one can somewhat arbitrarily choose between. While this choice is necessarily conditioned by the world and its norms, it is the choice itself that gives certain norms priority over others and allows them to provide a specific meaning to existence that remains open to revision.<sup>63</sup> And this might just be the best that a modern irreligious world can do once the power of grace to render some particular choice enduringly significant is off the table.

This understanding of the existential philosophy of death in which the goal is to gain a certain mastery over the meaning of one's existence (as opposed to being mastered by the meaning of the world one happens to be thrown into), either through option A (with God's help – redeemed sinfulness) or option B (without such help – anticipatory resoluteness), suggests a sense of "agreeing to disagree." Both Kierkegaard and Heidegger seem aware of the difficulties that individuals are up against in their search for significance in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Interestingly, the disagreement between their respective responses to these difficulties as I have laid them out finds a close parallel in Thomas Miles' work on Kierkegaard and Nietzsche.<sup>64</sup> Over the last few pages of his paper, Miles describes a Kierkegaard that seems to hold out hope for a more substantial and incontrovertible meaning than Nietzsche seems

to think is possible.<sup>65</sup> Nietzsche argues against a descent into nihilism but, like Heidegger, refuses to resort to religious faith in divine assistance in order to avoid such a descent. While Kierkegaard would not be happy with the result of Nietzsche's efforts, Miles seems to conclude that they must each concede that the other's point of view cannot be easily ruled out.<sup>66</sup> Although Christian faith may be an extreme and, in a certain sense, unjustifiable option, its renunciation of such justification means that it need not defend itself from Nietzsche's criticisms. And although Nietzschean self-mastery (like its Heideggerian counterpart) has its limitations, one can certainly appreciate its value if it is the alternative to a risky and desperate leap of faith. I would suggest that a similar concession must ultimately be made in the case of dying to the world according to Kierkegaard and Heidegger.

In fact, certain developments in the views of both Kierkegaard and Heidegger suggest that they do come around to making such a concession. It is no secret that Kierkegaard realizes how miserable, uncertain, and dangerous a true Christian existence can be. After all, he spends much of his later authorship trying to make these perils clear.<sup>67</sup> Although he has the hopeful recourse of grace and divine mercy to rely upon, he does not want to repeat what he sees as Luther's mistake.<sup>68</sup> Hence, he cautions his readers against making too much of this consolation – there is work to be done and it will not be pleasant so long as one exists in the world. It is because grace does not excuse an individual from striving in existence that Kierkegaard even expresses concerns about the preface to *Practice* that I quoted from above. Without a willingness to die to worldly ways, which includes admitting one's failure to do so, "one does not have the right to draw on grace."<sup>69</sup>

Heidegger, on the other hand, seems to lose his Pelagian spirit throughout his later work.<sup>70</sup> Caputo states that "Heidegger later on conceded ... that the transition from inauthenticity to authenticity is not something effected *by* man but rather something effected *in* man by a saving grace."<sup>71</sup> Although there is no reason to think that Heidegger has a specifically Christian sense of grace in mind, he does make several,

telling comments, which support Caputo's general assessment. For example, in an interview released after his death, Heidegger famously asserts:

Philosophy will not be able to bring about a direct change of the present state of the world. This is true not only of philosophy but of all merely human meditations and endeavors. Only a god can still save us. I think the only possibility of salvation left to us is to prepare readiness, through thinking and poetry, for the appearance of the god or for the absence of the god during the decline; so that we do not, simply put, die meaningless deaths, but that when we decline, we decline in the face of the absent god.<sup>72</sup>

This is of course an issue that deserves more attention than it can receive here, but the point of mentioning it briefly is to suggest that while Kierkegaard seems to understand the drawbacks of relying on grace to give life meaning, especially when considered from a non-Christian perspective,<sup>73</sup> Heidegger might eventually come to appreciate the drawbacks of trying to find meaning through one's own endeavors. Thus, these two pioneers of the existential philosophy of death could ultimately end up with a greater sense of mutual understanding and respect for each other's approach than initially seems possible.<sup>74</sup>

## ABBREVIATIONS OF KIERKEGAARD'S WORKS

- CA *The Concept of Anxiety*. Translated by Reidar Thomte in collaboration with Albert B. Anderson. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980.
- CD *Christian Discourses and The Crisis and a Crisis in the Life of an Actress*. Translated by Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997.
- FSE *For Self-Examination and Judge for Yourself!* Translated by Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990.
- JP *Søren Kierkegaard's Journals and Papers*, 7 volumes. Translated by Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, assisted by Gregor Malantschuk. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1967–1978.
- NA *'The Moment' and Late Writings* (Newspaper Articles). Translated by Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998.
- PF *Philosophical Fragments; Johannes Climacus*. Translated by Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985.
- PV *The Point of View*. Translated by Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998.
- PC *Practice in Christianity*. Translated by Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991.
- SUD *Sickness unto Death*. Translated by Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980.
- SKS *Søren Kierkegaards Skrifter*, 28 volumes (plus corresponding commentary volumes). Edited by Niels Jørgen Cappelørn et al. Copenhagen: Gads Forlag, 1997–2013.
- TDIO *Three Discourses on Imagined Occasions*. Translated by Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993.
- WL *Works of Love*. Translated by Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995.

## Notes

- 1 TDIO, 97 / SKS 5: 465. It has become common practice to include reference to the new, nearly-finished Danish fourth edition of Kierkegaard's works (SKS) because the complete English edition only provides a concordance with older Danish editions. This inclusion will of course not be possible for volumes that are still in the process of publication.
- 2 George Connell, "Four Funerals: The Experience of Time by the Side of the Grave," in *International Kierkegaard Commentary*, vol. 10, ed. Robert L. Perkins (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2006), 436.
- 3 TDIO, 75 / SKS 5: 446.
- 4 SZ 259. The Macquarrie and Robinson translation has been followed throughout.
- 5 Amongst Heidegger's works, I focus primarily on his early magnum opus for several reasons; the two most significant reasons are, first, that death receives its most prominent and developed treatment in this text, and, second, that Kierkegaard's influence wanes dramatically not long after its publication.
- 6 Epicurus famously combats the fear of death with his claim that "the most frightening of bad things, is nothing to us; since when we exist, death is not yet present, and when death is present, then we do not exist" (*The Epicurus Reader*; trans. Brad Inwood and L. P. Gerson [Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1994], 29).
- 7 On his understanding of dying to the world, see, for example, CD, 17, 72, 172, 184, 208, 242-43 / SKS 10: 29, 81, 183, 194-95, 216-17, 248-49; and FSE, 76-85 / SKS 13: 98-105. On his view of the mistakes of even his most promising Christian predecessors and his role as corrective, see, for example, JP 1: 71-72; 2: 354, 368; 3: 82, 101, 467 / SKS 23: 323; 24: 491; 25: 400-01, 432-33; 26: 44.
- 8 Iain Thomson, "Heidegger's Perfectionist Philosophy of Education in *Being and Time*," *Continental Philosophy Review*, 37, no. 4 (2004): 456. Cf. John van Buren, *The Young Heidegger: Rumor of*

- the Hidden King* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 158-67, 174-76, 186-89; and Michael Theunissen, "The Upbuilding in the Thought of Death: Traditional Elements, Innovative Ideas, and Unexhausted Possibilities in Kierkegaard's 'At a Graveside,'" trans. George Pattison, in *International Kierkegaard Commentary*, vol. 10, ed. Robert L. Perkins (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2006), 338-39, 343-46.
- 9 Hubert L. Dreyfus, *Being-in-the World* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1991), 312.
- 10 SZ 262-67.
- 11 Cf. Vincent McCarthy, "Martin Heidegger: Kierkegaard's Influence Hidden and In Full View," in *Kierkegaard Research: Sources, Reception and Resources*, vol. 9, ed. Jon Stewart (Surrey, England: Ashgate, 2011), 108-11; and van Buren, 177-82. Everyday falling into an inauthentic grasp of one's place in the world (like falling into sin on Kierkegaard's view) is a common and unavoidable aspect of Dasein (SZ §51).
- 12 See, for example, TDIO, 75, 96 / SKS 5: 446, 464. Heidegger speaks of becoming "free from the entertaining 'incidentals' [*Zufälligkeiten*] with which busy curiosity keeps providing itself" (SZ 310). Cf. SZ 384, 388, where Heidegger continues to rely on the same Kierkegaardian language of the accidental and "trivial" "what"-concerns about "output."
- 13 Cf. Dreyfus 1991, 321-22; Theodore Kisiel, *The Genesis of Heidegger's "Being and Time"* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 437-38; and van Buren, 190-202.
- 14 Cf. Dan Magurshak, "The Concept of Anxiety: The Keystone of the Kierkegaard-Heidegger Relationship," in *International Kierkegaard Commentary*, vol. 8, ed. Robert L. Perkins (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1985), 180.
- 15 CA, 90 / SKS 4: 393.
- 16 Van Buren, 192-93.
- 17 SZ 338n.

- 18 According to van Buren, it is through reading Kierkegaard (along with other Christian thinkers, such as Paul and Augustine) that Heidegger develops the notion of conscience as “the call and ‘renewal’ of anxious care” from one’s “‘authentic self’” to one’s inauthentic or fallen self – a call of essential guilt, which must be “chosen and taken up into one’s futural possibility” (van Buren, 185). Cf. also van Buren, 192-95.
- 19 SZ 338.
- 20 SZ 391. Cf. also SZ 384-85.
- 21 See van Buren, 191, 194-95. Cf. Haufniensis’ claim that “the moment sin is posited, temporality is sinfulness.... He sins who lives only in the moment as abstracted from the eternal” (CA, 92-93 / SKS 4: 395-96).
- 22 Briefly, formal indication with respect to death is the process of taking the specific things one can properly say about physical death as suggestive of the form or nature of existence in general.
- 23 This is the sense of wakefulness engendered by the thought of death in *Works of Love* (e.g. WL, 353 / SKS 9: 347) and “At a Graveside” (TDIO, 76, 81-83 / SKS 5: 447, 451-54). In his early lectures, notably from winter semester 1920-21, Heidegger traces this sort of wakefulness from the New Testament notion (later handed down by Augustine, Luther, and Pascal to Kierkegaard) that one must always be prepared – even in the metaphorical darkness of worldly night, when it would just be easier to “fall asleep” and get lost in distraction – to offer an account of oneself because there is no telling when Christ will return (cf. Matt. 25: 13, 26: 40-45). Thus, wakefulness is closely bound not only with the uncertainty of death, but also with the kairological moment of ever-present vigilance. See van Buren, 175, 178, 188-91, 193, 195, 202.
- 24 TDIO, 75, 95 / SKS 5: 446, 463; SZ 250-51, 262-64.
- 25 TDIO, 95-96, 99 / SKS 5: 463-64, 467; SZ 258, 265-66.
- 26 Kisiel, 80.
- 27 Soon after *Being and Time* in 1927 Heidegger states that, “etymologically regarded, theo-logy means: the science of God,” but

- actually, “*what is given for theology (its positum) is Christianness ... theology is the science of faith*” (*Pathmarks*, 43, 45, 48). And on faith: “Luther said, ‘Faith is permitting ourselves to be seized by the things we do not see’ ... faith is an appropriation of revelation that co-constitutes the Christian occurrence ... *Faith is the believing-understanding mode of existing in the history revealed, i.e., occurring, with the Crucified*” (*Pathmarks*, 44-45).
- 28 SZ 8-11, 34-35.
- 29 SZ 247-48.
- 30 See, for example, SUD, 13-17 / SKS 11: 129-33; see also Magurshak, 193. On Heidegger’s view of Kierkegaard’s theological tendencies see SZ 190n; *Off the Beaten Track*, 186; and *The Piety of Thinking*, 195-96.
- 31 Cf. SZ 10. For examples of this sentiment in Kierkegaard, see JP, 1:71-72 / SKS 25: 432-33; FSE, 68 / SKS 13: 90.
- 32 PV, 80.
- 33 See, for example, SZ 338n.
- 34 Among other alleged debts, Theunissen actually suggests that the intentionally limited reliance upon theological matters in “At a Graveside” might have set a precedent for Heidegger’s methodological exclusion of such matters from his own death chapter (Theunissen, 347).
- 35 TDIO, 78 / SKS 5: 448. Cf. Connell, 436.
- 36 E.g. Charles Guignon, “Heidegger and Kierkegaard on Death: The Existentiell and the Existential,” in *Kierkegaard and Death*, ed. Patrick Stokes and Adam Buben (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011), 200-01.
- 37 Although acknowledging that Heidegger’s “existential ‘solipsism’” (SZ 188) certainly does not pose the same sorts of problems that plague early-modern philosophy, Daniel Berthold-Bond notes the parallel here with the Cartesian project of getting a world back after doubting it; see Daniel Berthold-Bond, “A Kierkegaardian Critique of Heidegger’s Concept of Authenticity,” *Man and World*, 24 (1991): 126-27. While the issue for Heidegger is

- self-understanding and taking on responsibility for the meaning of one's own existence, Descartes' concern was of a more metaphysical-epistemological nature.
- 38 Berthold-Bond, 128.
- 39 Patricia J. Huntington, "Heidegger's Reading of Kierkegaard Revisited: From Ontological Abstraction to Ethical Concretion," in *Kierkegaard in Post/Modernity*, ed. Martin J. Matušík and Merold Westphal (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 56.
- 40 Bertold-Bond, 128-29; Huntington, 47, 59.
- 41 Bertold-Bond, 133-37.
- 42 Ibid., 138.
- 43 SZ 173.
- 44 Bertold-Bond, 130-31.
- 45 Ibid., 137.
- 46 Huntington, 49.
- 47 Ibid., 51.
- 48 Ibid., 50.
- 49 Ibid., 56.
- 50 see e.g. JP 3: 301-02.
- 51 Huntington, 53, 59.
- 52 Cf. Julian Young, "Death and Authenticity," in *Death and Philosophy*, ed. Jeff Malpas and Robert C. Solomon (New York: Routledge, 1998), 192.
- 53 Cf. Merold Westphal's claim that "the need to flee from an inauthentic being-with-others does not deny the possibility of an authentic form of relatedness nor imply that existential loneliness is the highest human achievement. It may be that existential loneliness is but the half-way house required on the path from everyday loneliness to genuine togetherness" (*God, Guilt, and Death* [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987], 98). Charles Guignon provides an excellent account of how Heidegger maintains the bonds of normativity, even if it is not the neat and unyielding sort of normative compulsion that Huntington and Berthold-Bond

- seem interested in; see Charles Guignon, “Heidegger’s Concept of Freedom, 1927-1930,” in *Interpreting Heidegger*, ed. Daniel O. Dahlstrom (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 97-99.
- 54 Huntington states, “to recover an ethical capacity by no means necessitates the rejection of the very norms that the crowd I resist embraces” (Huntington, 51). Although she takes herself to represent Kierkegaard’s stance in saying this, such a statement seems just as representative of Heidegger’s position. The latter’s point is not necessarily to dismiss any particular norms, but to avoid taking them on uncritically as the “they” does.
- 55 McCarthy notes the “structural joke” (McCarthy, 108) in two of Kierkegaard’s pseudonymous works where the objective issue (the *what*) is given a comically disproportionate amount of attention as compared to the subjective issue (the *how*). For example, the objective issue of Christianity in *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to “Philosophical Fragments”* is dealt with in roughly 50 pages while the subjective issue takes up the remaining 550 or so pages. Still, while it might not take much, there must be at least some minimal grasp of *what* subjective Christian existence is based on (cf. PF, 104 / SKS 4: 300). What leads Kierkegaard to downplay the importance of the objective issue is that he sees a world that focuses almost entirely on this Christian *what* (whether in support or criticism) and forgets the importance of subjective appropriation.
- 56 PC, 7 / SKS 12: 15. There are two important points that must be noted with respect to this preface. The first concerns the meaning of the latter part of this quoted passage. Because grace is “a kind of indulgence from the actual imitation of Christ and the actual strenuousness of being Christian” (NA, 69 / SKS 14: 213), one must also rely on Christ’s merciful redemptive act in order to gain forgiveness for even the fact of having to rely on grace and be indulged in this way in the first place. The second point concerns the nature of my use of this preface. It must be noted

- that Kierkegaard has a specific target audience for *Practice* – the established church and its leader on the Danish isle of Zealand, the Bishop Jacob Peter Mynster (NA, 69-70 / SKS 14: 213). While he is therefore calling for a very specific confession of inadequacy in attaching his preface to Anti-Climacus' discussion of the rigorous requirement, I believe that Kierkegaard also intends his appeal to be applicable to anyone who associates with Christianity. It is this broader sense of the need for grace that I focus on here.
- 57 See e.g. FSE, 76-77, 81/SKS 13: 97-99, 102.
- 58 John D. Caputo, "Kierkegaard, Heidegger, and the Foundering of Metaphysics," in *International Kierkegaard Commentary*, vol. 6, ed. Robert L. Perkins (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1993), 217.
- 59 Cf. Thomas Miles, "David Hume: Kierkegaard and Hume on Reason, Faith, and the Ethics of Philosophy," in *Kierkegaard Research: Sources, Reception and Resources*, vol. 5, tome 1, ed. Jon Stewart (Surrey, England: Ashgate, 2009), 23-27.
- 60 I certainly do not mean to suggest that Heidegger sees his *Being and Time* project in precisely these terms, but I do find this description to be both accurate and helpful for understanding his relationship with Kierkegaard.
- 61 McCarthy, 113.
- 62 Dreyfus, 313.
- 63 Guignon, "Heidegger's Concept of Freedom," 97-99.
- 64 It is perhaps not so surprising to find such a parallel as Jean Wahl points out that "it has even been suggested that Heidegger frequents the world of Nietzsche with the feelings of Kierkegaard and the world of Kierkegaard with the feelings of Nietzsche" (*Philosophies of Existence*, trans. F. M. Lory [London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969], 103). Just before making this comment, Wahl seems to hint at an interesting question about Heidegger's *Being and Time* project: why would he want to rely so heavily on the language and structure of Christianity when he is explicitly not engaged in a religious endeavor? The answer to this question

seems to be that even though his intended audience may not consist in large part of striving Christians, this is the structure of existence that would surely resonate with his predominantly Western, culturally Christian readers.

- 65 Thomas Miles, “Friedrich Nietzsche: Rival Visions of the Best Way of Life,” in *Kierkegaard Research: Sources, Reception and Resources*, vol. 9, ed. Jon Stewart (Surrey, England: Ashgate, 2011), 283-86.
- 66 Ibid., 286-87.
- 67 See e.g. FSE, 61-62/SKS 13: 84.
- 68 See e.g. JP 3: 82/SKS 23: 323.
- 69 NA, 70 / SKS 14: 213. Kierkegaard’s discussion of removing the preface and its allowance for grace is one instance that is particularly focused on the situation of Mynster. Nonetheless, I once again see a broader application for such statements given the resonance between Kierkegaard’s critique of Danish Christianity and his concern about Luther’s overemphasis on grace.
- 70 Furthermore, in contrast to the *Being and Time* era, Heidegger’s later writings can be partially characterized by an appreciation for the possibilities of some sense of divinity.
- 71 Caputo, 222.
- 72 Martin Heidegger, “The Spiegel Interview,” in *Martin Heidegger and National Socialism: Questions and Answers*, ed. Gunther Neske and Emil Kettering, 41-78, (New York: Paragon House, 1990), 56-57.
- 73 See, for example, where Anti-Climacus speaks about relying on grace and states that “from any other perspective Christianity must and will appear as madness or horror” (PC, 68 / SKS 12: 80). Of course, Kierkegaard makes even stronger claims along these lines in *For Self-Examination* and other places.
- 74 Thanks to Megan Altman and Charles Guignon for helpful conversations about the issues considered in this paper.

## BOOK REVIEW

### The Event of Space

*François Raffoul*

Andrew J. Mitchell. *Heidegger Among the Sculptors: Body, Space, and the Art of Dwelling*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010. 123 pp.

Andrew Mitchell's *Heidegger Among the Sculptors* (hereafter 'HS') is a short but dense, original and profound study, displaying solid scholarship while developing a remarkable account of Heidegger's evolving thinking about space, spatiality, and place, and the way in which, as he considered works of sculptors in the sixties, Heidegger came to rethink the relation between body and space. Heidegger indeed notes that "sculptural structures are bodies" (*Körper*),<sup>1</sup> and Mitchell's central conceit in this book is that "Heidegger's texts present us with a thought of the mutual belonging together of space and body, a thought that allows the art of sculpture to touch us so."<sup>2</sup> Sculpture, Mitchell suggests, "teaches us what it means to be in the world," and Heidegger's texts lead to a "rethinking of body, space, and the relation between these," as well as offering us "a starker conception of corporeality... entailing a new conception of space as well."<sup>3</sup> Further, according to Mitchell, one finds in Heidegger's later writings a rethinking of both "materiality,"<sup>4</sup> in a sense that still remains to be clarified, as well as the motif of the limit, which is, as Mitchell reminds us on several occasions, and as Heidegger famously put it, that at which something begins and not ends. Mitchell

*Gatherings: The Heidegger Circle Annual*, 2 (2012): 89-106.

writes that “things begin at their limits for it is here that they enter into relationships with the rest of the world,” thereby opening to an understanding of the limit as the opening of relationality; indeed, to exist, Mitchell maintains, is “to be exposed at one’s limits,” indicating that bodies exhibit an essential “ecstaticity,” and to such an extent that to be in the world now means “to be ever entering a material space of radiance.”<sup>5</sup> The body is reconceived as a bodily spatiality, that is, as ek-static relationality.<sup>6</sup> There are wonderful developments and insights in this book, from the analysis of degenerate art – thinking together Barlach’s “degenerate forms” with Heidegger’s abandonment of being and what one may call the unsubstantiality or “insufficiency” of being<sup>7</sup> – to the characterization of Heiliger’s heads as “a pointing out to the unknown,”<sup>8</sup> the treatment of the motif of sculpture as figuration of the invisible (“The knowing of the artist is a sighting of the invisible”<sup>9</sup>), the *poiesis* of sculpture bringing-forth [*her-vor-bringen*] that invisible, to Athena gazing at the limit as the place of gathering into one’s own, and to the insights into the materiality and relationality of space.

More broadly, one could say that against a certain *doxa* concerning an alleged neglect by Heidegger of spatiality, and most importantly, of corporeality (as well as concerning an alleged prioritizing of temporality over space in Heidegger’s work), Andrew Mitchell’s book reveals the depth and extent of Heidegger’s thinking of space, place and embodiment in existence. As Mitchell put it, “with Heidegger’s later turn to sculpture, gone is even the suspicion that our existence could take place or be adequately thought apart from spatiality or even be considered along anything like the parameters of *Being and Time*.”<sup>10</sup> By revealing several little-known texts by Heidegger on sculptors from the sixties, Mitchell also begins to fill a major lacuna in the scholarship on Heidegger and his thinking of space and embodiment, but also his understanding of art. For, as Mitchell notes, although there is a substantial amount of work on Heidegger and art, and even on Heidegger and space, there is precious little on the motif of sculpture in Heidegger’s reflections on art, despite the fact that “Art and Space” has been available in English since 1973, and Heidegger’s “Remarks on

Art-Sculpture-Space” since 1996 in German.<sup>11</sup> Mitchell’s contribution is therefore also important in this respect.

### SPACE, PLACE, EVENT

Why appeal to sculpture to engage the question of space, or rather, as Heidegger puts it, the question of what is singularly proper (*das Eigentümliche*) to space? Heidegger tells us in the 1969 text “Art and Space,” at the occasion of an exhibit of the Spanish Basque sculptor Eduardo Chillida, that it is indeed a matter of questioning about what is proper to space, that is, “the question of what space as space is.”<sup>12</sup> This requires, in turn, to think space, as it were, from space itself! “What is proper to space,” Heidegger writes, “must show itself from space itself.”<sup>13</sup> Indeed, far from attempting to derive space from another phenomenon, allegedly more primordial, here Heidegger insists that space should be approached as belonging to those originary phenomena (*Urphänomene*), that is, the sort of phenomenon behind which there is “nothing” to which it could be traced back.<sup>14</sup> Further, space is said to be a phenomenon through “the discovery of which humans are overcome by a kind of awe, to the point of anxiety [*Angst*],” in the sense that not only is there nothing behind it, but also because, “in front of it, there is no evasion to something else” possible.<sup>15</sup>

Sculpture would allow us to engage these questions, and give us access to the proper of space, as indeed Heidegger engages the proper of space *from sculpture*. Heidegger’s encounters with sculptors provoked him to return to the question of space, a theme which was, if not neglected, at least somewhat derivative with respect to world and temporality in *Being and Time*. Sculpture enacts a *confrontation* with space: as Heidegger explains in “Remarks on Art-Sculpture-Space” (the text of which was an address given by Martin Heidegger at the opening of the Bernhard Heiliger sculpture exposition on October 3, 1964 at the Erker-Galerie in St. Gallen, Switzerland): “Now one is quick to point out that today plastic art, and here above all sculpture, proceeds once again to find its proper place... This lies in the fact that it has an exceptional

relation to space, that it can be understood in a certain regard as a confrontation with space.”<sup>16</sup>

A first clarification may be useful at the outset. In “Art and Space” Heidegger writes: “The sculptural body embodies [*verkörpert*] something.”<sup>17</sup> Does it embody a physical body? No. A head, for instance, “is not a physical body [*Körper*] equipped with eyes and ears, but rather a bodily phenomenon [*Leibphänomen*], shaped by the seeing and hearing of a being-in-the-world.”<sup>18</sup> Thus, when a sculptor models a head, he or she is not merely making a copy of the visible surface, for “in truth the artist shapes the properly invisible, namely the way in which this head looks into the world, how it abides in the open of space, approached by the humans and things therein.”<sup>19</sup> The sculpture does not shape the physical body but the “bodying” (*Leiben*) of being-in-the-world, which is, we should note, *invisible. Sculpture brings into view the invisible.* This is why Heidegger adds: “The artist brings the essentially invisible into figure and, when he or she corresponds to the essence of art, each time allows something to come into view that until then was never seen.”<sup>20</sup>

The sculptural body thus does not embody a physical body but the “bodying” of being-in-the-world. “Does the sculptural body embody space?”<sup>21</sup> In fact, it does not, as Heidegger explains that sculpture embodies not space, but *places*: “Art as sculpture: no occupying of space. Sculpture would not be a confrontation with space.” Instead, sculpture “would be the embodiment of places [*Orten*].”<sup>22</sup> In contrast with Kant for instance, for whom various places and locations are possible on the basis of the one *a priori* space as infinite given magnitude, here Heidegger reasserts what he had already stated in “Building Dwelling Thinking,” namely that “*spaces receive their being from locations [Orten] and not from ‘space.’*”<sup>23</sup> Heidegger clarifies that “place is not located in a pre-given space, after the manner of physical-technological space. The latter unfolds itself only through the reigning of places of a region.”<sup>24</sup> “Space” is here identified with scientific homogeneous space, that abstract space which Heidegger characterizes as that “homogeneous separation that is not distinct in any of its possible places.”<sup>25</sup> Mitchell shows very well how, in contrast to this homogeneous space

– which is referred throughout the book as “frictionless,” a “frictionless empty field [for the most efficient cycle of consumption]”<sup>26</sup> – there is, for instance in Heiliger’s sculptures, a friction, a “broken open” or exposed quality that renders space *heterogeneous*, so that these sculptures “indicate a more refined conception of *exteriority*, where the forms show signs of distress and weathering.” Indeed, these figures are “suffering this outside already. The purity of the surface is compromised, matter is striated and punctured, eroded.”<sup>27</sup> Not a frictionless space, as “sculpture thickens space, gathers it together and knots it in ways that are felt throughout its surroundings.”<sup>28</sup>

Returning to the reversal from space to place, Heidegger continues by insisting that it is important “to learn to recognize that things themselves are places and do not merely belong in a place.”<sup>29</sup> And already in “Building Dwelling Thinking,” Heidegger had shown that “only something *that is itself a location* can make space for a site. *The location is not already there before the bridge is.*”<sup>30</sup> What kind of place is here spoken of? Certainly a thing-place as Mitchell rightly stresses (a place that would be a thing, and a thing that would be a place), but also perhaps a place in the sense of what *takes place*, so that a place would now name where something is happening, is taking place, where there is a taking place. Heidegger indeed refers to spacing as a happening, states that in spacing, “a happening [*ein Geschehen*] at once speaks and conceals itself,” indicates that the “granting of places happens [*geschieht*]” and that “the character of this happening [*Geschehens*] is such a granting.”<sup>31</sup> And with this motif of this *happening of space*, with this attempt to think space (*Raum*) from the event of “spacing” (*Räumen*) – in fact, in “Building Dwelling Thinking” Heidegger tells us that “a space is something that has been spaced, or made room for [*Ein Raum ist etwas Eingeräumtes*]”<sup>32</sup> – aren’t we invited as it were to approach space from *Ereignis*? Heidegger actually suggested this explicitly in a passage from *On Time and Being*, adding a marginal note referring to the essay “Art and Space.” Space, he writes, should be thought on the basis of *Ereignis*: “Since time as well as being can only be thought from *Ereignis* as the gifts of *Ereignis*, the relation of space to *Ereignis* must

also be considered in an analogous way,” which also implies inquiring into “the origin of space” and “the singular proper being of place.”<sup>55</sup> *Ereignis* is also named in the “Remarks on Art-Sculpture-Space,”<sup>54</sup> at a crucial moment when Heidegger enfolds what is “most proper” to space. So a first question would be: should one not elaborate further on the motif of space as event, on place as taking-place, and on the role of *Ereignis* in that thought? And, since in Mitchell’s reading space is bodily, how would one think the bodying of the body (*Leib*) from *Ereignis*?

#### EMPTINESS AND MATERIALITY

Mitchell insists that space must be understood in terms of the *materiality of bodies*: “Space must become a medium of exchange, not simply defined by an absence of body. Space must be understood ‘materially,’ or rather, as no longer antipodally opposed to bodies.”<sup>55</sup> A provocative and fascinating claim, but which needs to be immediately confronted with what Heidegger says about space in relation to bodies in the 1969 essay on “Art and Space”: namely, that it is the metaphysical tradition that has always thought of space in terms of bodies (although, to be sure, he means “body” there as *Körper*, and not *Leib*), a tradition from which Heidegger wants to part. (One may raise a question in passing here, since this distinction appears here. Mitchell writes throughout the book of “bodies,” and how space is never to be thought without bodies. But how does one mean “bodies” here, given that distinction between *Körper* and *Leib*? Is the distinction maintained, or on the contrary blurred in this reference to “bodies”? Indeed, Heidegger states that the lived body only exists as mine, as my body, as “each time mine.”<sup>56</sup> Thus, in what sense does Mitchell refer to “bodies” in the third person of the plural?) With respect to this relation between body and space, Heidegger writes: “Despite all the differences in the manner of thinking between Greek and modern thought, space is understood in the *same* way, as from *bodies*. Space is three-dimensional extension, *extensio*. In it, the bodies and their movements have their trajectory, their station, their permeable stretches and expanses, which they run their course in, as it were.”<sup>57</sup> In contrast with that tradition, Heidegger then inquires about the proper

of space itself: “But now what is space itself – in its ownness [*in seinem Eigenen*]:?” And then he adds this clearly not insignificant clarification: “What is space as space – *thought without consideration to bodies?*”<sup>38</sup> This seems to go against the grain of what Mitchell proposes to show, and this is probably why he felt compelled to write that “despite appearances Heidegger might give us to the contrary,” space is never “apart from bodies.”<sup>39</sup> Now this may be the case, but in the meantime the reader first sees Heidegger emptying space of bodies! And how could it be otherwise if space is approached in terms of a spacing that makes room, a spacing which means a clearing out, a freeing, a setting free into a free area (*freigeben ein Freies*), the freeing of the open itself (*Offenes*):<sup>40</sup> Should this spacing not be taken in a certain sense as a “nothing” (one recalls here how Kant, in his “Remark to the Amphiboly of the Concepts of Reflection” in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, included space in his table of the Nothing as “an empty intuition without an object”<sup>41</sup>). Heidegger clarifies further the sense of his approach: he seeks to raise the question of space, not from something other (bodies), but *from itself*: what is space as space – thought without consideration to physical bodies? The answer to this question is simple, he tells us, but for that very reason, he continues, also the most difficult. Why? Because “the common conception only holds something to be clarified [*geklärt*] when it is explained [*erklärt*] on the basis of *something else, in the present case, space in relation to physical bodies*. Opposed to this, for a thinking that is appropriate to the matter at hand, an issue is only experienced in its ownness [*in ihrem Eigenen*] when we renounce explanation and let go of referring something back to something else. Instead, it is important to bring the matter into view *purely from itself, just as it shows itself*.”<sup>42</sup> Heidegger is attempting to access what is most proper to space, and that first means: *independently of bodies*. To think space from space, that is, as we will see, as the event of spacing, and perhaps even, as I suggested above, from *Ereignis*.

How does one reconcile these passages with the claims regarding Mitchell’s material and bodily dimension of space? Specifically, how does one reconcile the characterization of space as a “materiality”

with Heidegger's developments in "Art and Space" on the emptiness of space?<sup>45</sup> (Mitchell recalls that Heidegger also speaks of the "emptiness of being" in *The End of Philosophy*<sup>44</sup>). This is a difficulty, with which Mitchell clearly struggles on page 76, and already page 69. For, confronted with Heidegger's developments on the emptiness of space (and Chillida's, where, as we are about to read, Mitchell actually makes Chillida say the opposite of what he says), Mitchell writes that "emptiness is never empty" and that "there is no void." Let us read here that passage from Chillida that Mitchell cites, taken from an interview given in 1967. Chillida states: "Sculpture and music exist in the same harmonious and ever developing space. The volume of musical sound fills the silence with tension; similarly *there could be no volume in sculpture without the emptiness of space. In the void the form can continue to vibrate beyond its limits.*"<sup>45</sup> Clearly, Chillida is emphasizing the presence of the empty, indeed of the void, as an element of music and sculpture. For Heidegger insists that bodies are held apart (that is precisely the "void" of spacing) and thus gathered and brought in relation from this spacing, this "emptiness." What Heidegger – and Chillida – say is that emptiness is not nothing ("*Die Leere ist nicht nichts*"), not a deficiency, not a lack, that is, not insignificant, but not that there is no emptiness. On the contrary. I cite Heidegger:

And what would become of the emptiness of space? Often enough, it simply appears to be a deficiency. Emptiness then counts as the filling-out that cavities and gaps lack. Presumably, however, emptiness is precisely related to the proper singularity [*Eigentümlichen*] of place, and thus is not a lack but rather a bringing-forth.<sup>46</sup>

Clearly Heidegger posits the emptiness of space (it is said to belong to what is proper to space), but attempts to rethink it in a positive way as the possibility for places: place happens from the empty: "To empty the collected fruit into a basket means: to prepare this place for it."<sup>47</sup> These passages are stating the opposite of what Mitchell claims they do, as they stress that there must be emptiness for place to take place,

as music needs silence to resonate. Certainly, Mitchell is attempting to think a materiality of space, but what conception of materiality is here presupposed? What conception of the materiality of the body? To go in this direction does not necessarily require the rejection of the motif of the empty, except by presupposing a traditional sense of materiality as that which fills the empty. Now, since space and spacing are, as Mitchell himself writes on page 72, the “spacing apart of things,” or what Nancy calls “the parting of things,” are we not called to think a spaced-open, “differential” materiality? A spaced-open materiality that would accommodate the thought of the limit as exposure and relationality that Mitchell tries to develop in his book? Space as the gap allowing for a thing to come forth as shared out, as a singularity in Nancy’s sense? On page 44, Mitchell seems to go in that direction, writing that “space is a separation that allows for contact” but then he seems to take it back or at least qualify it by adding immediately that space is not a gap. A short discussion here of the difference between separation and gap would have been helpful.

#### **THE LEGACY OF BEING AND TIME**

Mitchell states that, while Heidegger’s engagements with sculpture in the sixties are “deeply enmeshed in his earlier thinking,” they “emerge from a rethinking of body and space that departs from the earlier conceptions of *Being and Time*” and instead grow out of “the trajectory of inquiry opened in ‘The Origin of the Work of Art,’ developing these latter ideas in a more explicitly corporeal vein than ever before in his work.”<sup>48</sup> Let me briefly investigate this claim, and in particular with respect to the contrasts drawn by Mitchell between *Being and Time* and Heidegger’s later work on sculpture and space. Mitchell claims that in *Being and Time* – but also in *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic* – Dasein is “pre-spatial,” not fully unfolded in its spatiality, although he does note the inscription of space in the very term “Da-sein.”<sup>49</sup> As Heidegger clarified in the Zollikon seminars, “In *Being and Time*, *being-open* (*Da-sein*) means *being-open* (*Da-sein*). The ‘Da’ [of *Da-sein*] is determined here as ‘the open.’ *This openness has the character of space.*

*Spatiality belongs to the clearing* [Lichtung]. It belongs to the open in which we sojourn as existing [human] beings....<sup>50</sup> Yet Mitchell maintains that Dasein's spatiality is, as it were, derivative, that is, derived from being-in-the-world: Dasein has a being-in-space "only on the basis of Being-in-the-world in general."<sup>51</sup> The conclusion from this is that somehow for Heidegger being-in-the-world could be without space, clearly an inference that is Mitchell's responsibility alone.

Mitchell's basic assumption requires that this derivation of space from world is absent in Heidegger's later writings. However, one must note on the contrary the same insistence in later Heidegger on the indissociability between world and space, reasserted in a passage from the 1964 "Remarks on Art-Sculpture-Space," where Heidegger shows how space is intertwined, indissociable, from world: "The human is not bounded by the surface of his supposed body. When I stand here, then I only stand here as a human insofar as I am simultaneously there by the window and, for example, outside on the street and in town, *briefly put: I am in a world.*"<sup>52</sup> And when Heidegger thematizes the bodying of the body as *Leib*, he refers it to the existential structure of Dasein as being-in-the-world: "The *bodying* [Leiben] of the body is determined by the way of my being. The bodying of the body, therefore, is a way of Da-sein's being."<sup>53</sup> And ultimately: "*Bodying* as such belongs to being-in-the-world."<sup>54</sup>

Mitchell develops that same critique in a reading of "neutral Dasein" in *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, claiming that neutral Dasein is "prior" to its factual dispersion in space. Again, one could discuss this interpretation by showing that there is no *essential* difference between neutral Dasein and factual Dasein, but in any case Mitchell asserts that this approach is completely abandoned in Heidegger's later work on sculpture. As Mitchell puts it: "In the later work on sculpture, this methodological conceit is abandoned in order to think the body from out of itself, space from out of itself, and not through a factual/existential divide, however nuanced it may be."<sup>55</sup> I will not pursue this question further, since clearly Mitchell is attempting to draw a contrast between Heidegger's later writings and his early work, sadly at the price

of foisting a reductive reading of *Being and Time* upon the reader. A note of regret, then: in general, it should be possible to do justice to the originality of Heidegger's late writings without doing injustice to his early writings.

Mitchell complains that space is too tied to the world of concern, to the *things* one encounters in our concerned dealings: the existential spatiality of Dasein "is born of its circumspective and concerned ties to the world" and "such a space is ultimately too narrow to accommodate the excessive character of embodiment found in Heidegger's later work."<sup>56</sup> Yet Mitchell then writes that in *Being and Time* space "is eerily devoid of objects,"<sup>57</sup> an apparent contradiction that might have required some clarification. One in fact might argue that being-in-the-world, and precisely in the for-the-sake-of-which Mitchell refers to, means precisely that Dasein in its own being-a-self cannot exist apart from the things with which it is involved concernedly. Mitchell gives the example of the chair not touching the wall, to conclude that for Heidegger "the things themselves do not enter space,"<sup>58</sup> alluding to a certain anthropocentrism in Heidegger's analyses of space (I will return to this motif). However, one might consider that rather than a neglect of objects, it instead indicates that touch is possible when there is an ecstatic openness, *a space or spacing*, when a world opens up and things give themselves in it, and thus when there is a "making-room" or a "spacing."

With respect to the question of the world, and an alleged anthropocentrism in Heidegger's analyses, Mitchell claims that in *Being and Time* Dasein is as it were the center of space: "First, let us note that Dasein is, in a certain sense, at the 'center' of this space, or at the very least it organizes this space around its own ends. Insofar as space arises through the equipment attending the projects of our concern and all of our equipment points around to Dasein itself as its ultimate purpose, space arises with Dasein as its focus." In other words, space would become "a function of Dasein" so that *Being and Time* only proposes in for Mitchell a "domesticated space," and that "gone is the sense of being lost in space or the feeling of its overwhelming

excess.”<sup>59</sup> A question at the outset: what does “overwhelming excess” mean here, given the role of the limit in spacing, as that from which something is gathered into its ownness? And in light of what Heidegger says about space and limit in “Building Dwelling Thinking,” namely that space “is something that has been spaced or made room for, something that is cleared and free, *namely within a boundary*, Greek *peras*,” is Heidegger then referring to the essential role of the limit and concluding that space essentially includes the *horismos*, the horizon, the boundary, that “space is in essence that for which room has been made, *that which is let into its bounds*”?<sup>60</sup> There seem to be three motifs at play here: the overwhelming excess, which seems to imply a transgression of limits, a taking place that exceeds places; the determination of the limit as that which gathers into one’s own; and third, the limit as place of exposure and opening of relationality (there clearly is throughout Mitchell’s book a constant unreferenced reference to Jean-Luc Nancy’s work on limit, exposure, and relationality). What is the relation between these three senses? What is the relation between these senses as they play in Mitchell’s interpretation in the book on space and body? What, in fact, is the relation between Nancy’s thought of the limit, exposure and relationality, and Heidegger’s work on space? Some unfolding of these questions would have been helpful, especially if one notes that the crucial question of expropriation and appropriation plays in this issue: the expropriating exposure, and/or the appropriating limit. Finally, does this overwhelming excess, this ecstatic expropriation, not point towards a certain excess with respect to place and to being in a place, to a certain being “out of place,” “without a place”? Heidegger stated, and we cited it above, that space brings up anxiety, and one in fact finds a fascinating passage in §40 of *Being and Time*, where Heidegger speaks of the presence in anxiety of a certain *nowhere*. “The fact that what is threatening is *nowhere* characterizes what anxiety is about.”<sup>61</sup> What oppresses us in anxiety is a “nowhere,” a lack of place. If sculpture could figure the invisible, could it also figure such a “nowhere,” such “being out of place”? What

“place” can one give to this “out-of-place” that Levinas opposed to Heidegger and his motif of dwelling, in this reading?

#### THE HUMAN BEING IN THE EVENT OF SPACE

Mitchell’s entire book is structured by a somewhat artificial opposition between an early, anthropocentric Heidegger, and a later work that would escape that horizon. But this contrast is far too facile to be convincing. Let me suggest that the early elaborations on space no more commit Heidegger to an anthropocentrism than do the later works abandon a reference to the distinctive place of the human being in the event of space. With respect to the first point, I would note that the understanding of *Being and Time* as an anthropo-centrism was famously Sartre’s and the existentialists’ misunderstanding of Heidegger, a misunderstanding that Heidegger endeavored to correct in the “Letter on Humanism.” In fact, it was as early as 1929 that Heidegger attempted to answer that charge, in a footnote from “On the Essence of Ground.” His clarification is most revealing, for it involves a certain reference to space and the ec-static. “As regards the reproach... of an ‘anthropocentric standpoint’ in *Being and Time*,” Heidegger asks, what “dangers are entailed by an anthropocentric [Dasein coming to the fore, the center] standpoint that precisely puts its *entire* effort *solely* into showing that the *essence* of Dasein that there stands ‘at the center’ is ecstatic, i.e., ‘*excentric*?’”<sup>62</sup> In other words, Dasein is not at the center, because it is itself the ecstatic being, *outside*-itself, determined as transcendence, all categories, one will admit, that have something to do with space, especially since for Heidegger, “*Spacing* = space only from standing in the clearing [*der Inständigkeit in der Lichtung*], ecstatic.”<sup>63</sup> It thus becomes problematic to speak of center here, of *anthropocentrism*, especially since Dasein is not another name for the anthropological being, Dasein being but the *Da-* of *Sein*.

Now, with respect to a thinking that goes beyond anthropocentrism in the later works (an anthropocentrism that may not even have existed!), I will simply point out that Heidegger retains the distinctive role of the human in the event of space and of the body as bodying.

In fact, Heidegger makes clear that any consideration of the bodily “must always start with the basic constitution of *human* existing, that is, from being-*human* as Da-sein.”<sup>64</sup> Mitchell draws a contrast between space through the human in the early work and a thinking of space from things and bodies in later writings. But let us look at the text more closely. We last saw Heidegger emptying bodies from space in order to think space from space itself. What does he say next? That space... spaces! What is ownmost [*Eigenste*] to space is that it spaces. “What, then, is space as space? Answer: Space spaces [*der Raum räumt*]. Spacing means *clearing out, making free*, the setting free into a free area [*freigegeben ein Freies*], an open [*Offenes*]. In so far as space spaces, freely gives a free area, then it first affords with this free area the possibility of regions, of nearness and farness, of directions and bounds, the possibilities of distances and magnitudes.”<sup>65</sup> And then? That humans are involved in, needed, indeed *required by* that spacing, Heidegger adding the following: first, having stated that “it is worth seeing how the *human* is in space,” he answers that human beings are not in space like physical bodies, but in such a way that they arrange space [*den Raum einräumt*], so that they do not have physical bodies and are not physical bodies [*Körper*]. Rather, the human lives his body [*lebt seinen Leib*]. He then writes: “Back to space: space is space insofar as it spaces (clears out), freely gives the free area for regions and places and paths. But space also spaces only as space *insofar as* the human arranges space, concedes this free giving, and lets himself in it, establishing himself and the things in it, and in this way protects space as space.”<sup>66</sup> Therefore, Heidegger continues, “in order to space *as space*, space needs the human being,” Heidegger evoking at that point the “mysterious” relation here disclosed that touches not only on the relation between the human being and space and time, but also the relation of being to the human being, and at that point he names: *Ereignis*. *Ereignis* is thus the site of what Heidegger called at the beginning of the essay the “circle” between artist and art, the site where original space occurs, in the co-proprietion of humans with

*Ereignis*. One glimpses this co-appropriation in the fact that space only spaces insofar as human beings make room for space.

Would one consider this last characterization as being still “anthropocentric”? Probably not, I imagine, as in fact Mitchell shows convincingly on pages 83 and 86, or at the very least not in its traditional sense, and yet Heidegger continues to posit the distinctive privileged role of the human being in the givenness of original space (Heidegger speaking of that “arranging of space distinctive to the human”<sup>67</sup>) and in the exposure/relation to all things. Isn’t the relationality spoken of in the book in fact thought by Heidegger from the bodying of the human being? The following passage seems to suggest as much: “The human lives in that he bodies [*leiben*] and thus is he admitted into the open of space, and through this self-admittance [*Sich-einlassen*] from the outset he already resides in a relation to his fellow humans and things.”<sup>68</sup> In the Zollikon seminar, Heidegger goes even further in this vein, and in a session from July 6, 1964, explains that space is not open for things (things do not enter space), that there is no space without the human being, that only humans have access to space, that the human being and space belong to each other, indeed that “the animal does not experience space *as space*.”<sup>69</sup> In “Remarks on Art-Sculpture-Space” he makes the claim that the human being as such is spatializing, “spatial like *no* other entity.”<sup>70</sup> How are we to understand these statements, how are we to reconcile them with Mitchell’s claim that “Heidegger’s later thought removes the ecstatic privilege from Dasein and sees it as integral to all appearing whatsoever”?<sup>71</sup> Questions that are indicative of how much Mitchell’s fine book gives us to think, as if to confirm what Heidegger said in closing his 1964 lecture of sculpture, namely that “more philosophical than science and more rigorous, i.e., nearer to the essence of things – is art.”<sup>72</sup>

## Notes

- 1 “Die Kunst und der Raum” (1969) in *Aus der Erfahrung des Denkens, 1910-76*, GA 13: 203-211. Translated by Charles H. Seibert as “Art and Space,” *Man and World* 6 (1973): 3-8, and reprinted with the same title in *The Heidegger Reader*, edited by Günter Figal (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2007), 305. English pagination is cited as AS, followed by page numbers of *The Heidegger Reader*. I wish to thank my colleague Jon Cogburn for his telling comments on this essay.
- 2 *Heidegger Among the Sculptors* (hereafter ‘hs’), 14.
- 3 HS, 1.
- 4 HS, 2.
- 5 HS, 1, 52.
- 6 HS, 81.
- 7 HS, 22.
- 8 HS, 47.
- 9 HS, 60.
- 10 HS, 8.
- 11 See *Bemerkungen zu Kunst – Plastik – Raum* (hereafter cited as ‘KPR’). I have generally followed Andrew Mitchell’s translation of this text, with some occasional modifications, as well as consulted another version from Jedidiah Mohring, from Southern Connecticut State University and Marquette University.
- 12 GA 13: 205/AS, 306.
- 13 GA 13: 205/AS, 306.
- 14 GA 13: 205/AS, 306.
- 15 GA 13: 205/AS, 306; tm.
- 16 KPR, 6.
- 17 GA 13: 205/AS, 306.
- 18 KPR, 14.
- 19 KPR, 14.
- 20 KPR, 14.
- 21 GA 13: 205/AS, 306.

- 22 GA 13: 208/AS, 308.  
23 GA 7: 156/PLT, 152.  
24 GA 13: 208/AS, 308.  
25 GA 13: 205/AS, 306.  
26 HS, 39.  
27 HS, 44.  
28 HS, 93.  
29 GA 13: 208/AS, 308.  
30 GA 7: 156/PLT, 151, my emphasis.  
31 GA 13: 207/AS, 307-308.  
32 GA 7: 156/PLT 152.  
33 “Zeit und Sein,” in *Zur Sache des Denkens* (1927-1968), GA 14: 28-29 = *On Time and Being* 23; tm.  
34 KPR, 15.  
35 HS, 1-2.  
36 ZS 113/86.  
37 KPR, 11.  
38 KPR, 12, my emphasis.  
39 HS, 90.  
40 KPR, 13.  
41 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, translated and edited by Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), A 292/B 348, p. 383.  
42 KPR, 12-13, my emphasis; tm.  
43 GA 13: 209/AS, 309.  
44 HS, 24.  
45 Cited in HS, 69, my emphasis.  
46 GA 13: 209/AS, 309; tm.  
47 GA 13: 209/AS, 309.  
48 HS, 14.  
49 HS, 3.  
50 ZS 283/225, my emphasis.  
51 HS, 5.  
52 KPR, 13-14, my emphasis.

- 53 ZS 113/86; tm.  
54 ZS 244/196.  
55 HS, 4.  
56 HS, 6.  
57 HS, 7-8.  
58 HS, 8.  
59 HS, 4.  
60 GA 7: 156/PLT 152, my emphasis.  
61 SZ 186.  
62 "On the Essence of Ground," *Pathmarks*, 371, note 66.  
63 KPR, 19.  
64 ZS 292/231, my emphasis.  
65 KPR, 13.  
66 KPR, 13-15.  
67 KPR, 14.  
68 KPR, 13.  
69 ZS 19/16.  
70 KPR, 19.  
71 HS, 77.  
72 KPR, 16.

## TEXTS OF HEIDEGGER CITED AND ABBREVIATIONS USED

The letters ‘tm’ in footnotes stand for ‘translation modified by the author of the footnote.’ Where possible, English translations are indicated following the reference to the original German and a slash ‘/’ or equal sign ‘=’.

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- GA        *Gesamtausgabe*. Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1975–.  
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- GA 7        *Vorträge und Aufsätze* (Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann, 2000)
- GA 9        *Wegmarken* (Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann, 2004)
- GA 13       *Aus der Erfahrung des Denkens* (Hermann Heidegger, 2002)
- GA 14       *Zur Sache des Denkens* (Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann, 2006)
- GA 33       *Aristoteles, Metaphysik IX, 1-3. Vom Wesen und Wirklichkeit der Kraft* (Heinrich Hüni, 1990)
- GA 56/57   *Zur Bestimmung der Philosophie* (Bernd Heimbüchel, 1999)
- GA 58       *Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie* (Hans-Helmuth Gander, 2010)
- GA 59       *Phänomenologie der Anschauung und des Ausdrucks* (Claudius Strube, 1993)
- GA 63       *Ontologie – Hermeneutik der Faktizität* (Käte Bröcker-Oltmanns, 1988)

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