

Proceedings of the Forty-Fourth Annual Meeting of the Heidegger Circle

Stony Brook University
Manhattan
May 7-9, 2010

Conveners:

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44th Annual Meeting of the Heidegger Circle – Stony Brook University, Manhattan – May 7-9, 2010

110 East 27th Street, 3rd floor

Friday, May 7

8 – 9 Breakfast

9 – 12

Technology, Science, and Heidegger

Chair: Dana Belu (CSU - Dominguez Hills)

Andrew Feenberg (Simon Fraser University)
 “Function and Meaning: The Double Aspects of Technology”
 Soren Riis (University of Roskilde)
 “The Ultimate Technology: The End of Technology and the Task of Biology”
 Don Ihde (Stony Brook University)
 “Heidegger’s Technologies: Pen versus Typewriter”
 Babette E. Babich (Fordham University)
 “Heidegger’s Philosophy of Science: Towards a Phenomenology of Questioning as Critique of Calculation”

12 – 1:30 Lunch

1:30 – 2:45

Chair: Brendan Mahoney (Binghamton University)

Vishwa Adluri (Hunter College)
 “Heidegger’s Encounter with Aristotle: A Theological Deconstruction of Metaphysics”
 Commentator: Joydeep Bagchee (University of Essen – Duisburg)

2:45 – 3:00 Coffee break

3 – 4:15

Chair: Adam Knowles (New School for Social Research)

Steven Crowell (Rice University)
 “Agency, Morality, and the Essential Consciencelessness of Action”
 Commentator: Lawrence Hatab (Old Dominion University)

4:15 – 4:30 Coffee break

4:30 – 5:45

Chair: Robert Stolorow (Institute of Contemporary Psychoanalysis)

Christopher Yates (Boston College)
 “The Necessity of Distress & the Abandonment of Being in Heidegger’s *Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis)*”
 Commentator: Maureen Melnyk (DePaul University)

5:45 – 6:15 Business Meeting

6:45 – 9:00 Reception Skyline Room
 250 W 90th (@ Broadway)

Eugene Gendlin (University of Chicago)
 “Being-in, Philosophy and Practice: Heidegger Re-understood Today”

110 East 28th Street, 2nd Floor

Saturday, May 8

8 – 9 Breakfast

9 – 11:15

Heidegger and the Political

Chair: Julie Kuhlken (Misericordia University)

Introduction and commentary: Gregory Fried (Suffolk University)
 Christopher Ruth (Villanova University)
 “Marx and Heidegger: The Question of the Human”
 Robert Bernasconi (Penn State University)
 “Poets as Prophets and as Painters: Heidegger’s Turn to Language and the Hölderlinian Turn in Context”

11:15 – 11:30 Coffee break

11:30 – 12:45

Chair: Francois Raffoul (Louisiana State University)

Jussi Backman (University of Helsinki)
 “The Singularity of Being and the Fourfold in Later Heidegger”
 Commentator: Andrew Mitchell (Emory University)

12:45 – 2 Lunch

2 – 3:15

Chair: Richard Hearn (Independent Scholar)

Scott Campbell (Nazareth College of Rochester)
 “Dilthey, Destruction, and the Early Heidegger’s Philosophy of Life”
 Commentator: Robert Scharff (University of New Hampshire)

3:15 – 3:30 Coffee break

3:30 – 4:45

Chair: William Koch (University of South Florida)

Daniela Vallega-Neu (CSU Stanislaus)
 “Heidegger’s Poietic Meditations in *Das Ereignis* (GA 71)”
 Commentator: Pol Vandeveld (Marquette University)

4:45 – 5:00 Coffee break

5 – 6:15

Chair: Carriona Hanley (Loyola University Maryland)

Bret Davis (Loyola University Maryland)
 “Horizon and Open-Region: Epistemology in Heidegger’s *Country Path Conversations* (GA 77)”
 Commentator: Cathy Leblanc (Université Catholique de Lille)

6:30 – 8:30 Banquet: La Petite Auberge
 116 Lexington Ave (@28th Street)

110 East 28th Street, 2nd Floor

Sunday, May 9

8 – 9 Breakfast

9 – 11:30

Heidegger’s 1941/42 course: Hölderlin’s Hymn “Remembrance”
 Chair: Michael Steinmann (Stevens Institute of Technology)

Julia Ireland (Whitman College)
 “‘Learning in Dialogue’: The Letter to Böhlendorff and Hölderlin’s Conception of History”
 William McNeill (DePaul University)
 “Buried Treasure: Greeting and The Temporality of Remembrance in Heidegger’s Lectures on ‘Andenken’”
 David Farrell Krell (Albert-Ludwigs-Universität, Freiburg)
 “The Swaying Skiff of Sea: A Note on Heidegger’s—and Hölderlin’s—Andenken”

11:30 – 11:45 Coffee break

11:45 – 1

Chair: Karen Gover (Bennington College)

Sophie-Jan Arrien (Université Laval)
 “Natorp and Heidegger: From Reconstruction to Destruction”
 Commentator: Wayne Froman (George Mason University)

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Function and Meaning: The Double Aspects of Technology

Andrew Feenberg
Simon Fraser University

Abstract: This paper traces the theoretical background to the split between function and meaning in the modernity theories of Marx, Lukács, Weber and Marcuse. It then discusses attempts to overcome the split in the recent philosophies of technology of Simpson and Borgmann. These attempts fail but help to focus the issue. A discussion of contemporary struggles over information technology offers a more hopeful perspective on a possible resolution of the split and suggests a new look at Heidegger's phenomenology of action. The conclusion of the paper shows that Heidegger offers resources for addressing the relation of function and meaning which he himself did not develop.

I

Every new automobile and computer is equipped with an operating manual. These manuals explain the functions of the device they describe and how to use it. They are apparently exhaustive, that is, once you have understood the device on their terms, it seems you understand it fully. But of course there is more to say, lots more. Automobiles and computers belong to a social world in which they play a complicated part. They are linked to so many other features of that world it is impossible to explain them all, to grasp the totality of their involvements, some symbolic, others causal. A few examples illustrate this complexity. Automobiles shape urban designs, they signify the status of their owners, they are polluters, and so on. Computers similarly transform intellectual property regimes, alter the relations between individual self-expression and the mass media, overcome various types of social isolation, and so on. One could continue these lists ad infinitum. We need a term for signifying this wider range of involvements. I will call it the "meaning" or "significance" of technology.

Philosophers have shown an interest in the relation between the socially determined functions of devices and the natural causality that enables them to "work." They have discovered that this is a more complicated relation than it at first appears. My subject is complementary to that one and still more complicated. I want to understand the connection between the strictly functional dimension of a device such as one finds in an operating manual and its social meaning. This is the question to which this paper is addressed, however, the path

I will take in answering it is quite different from the analytic approaches familiar from the established study of function. There is a good reason for this difference: the relation between function and meaning is not primarily a conceptual problem but strikes at the heart of modernity as a unique social formation. It raises the question of how the dominant paradigm of knowledge in modern societies relates to the dimension of meaning in the sense I have given the term. I will therefore begin with some considerations on this aspect of the problem.

II

Modern societies understand themselves and the world in terms of a stripped down functional logic, freed from sentimental and teleological accretions. This has enabled them to create effective technical means of controlling the natural world and markets which support unprecedented economic growth. The human personality itself is a collection of functions that are maintained when they break down by more or less efficient medical, psychological, and social interventions.

The attempt to generalize functionality as a culture, to found a civilization on it, is so bizarre that it commands our attention once it is noticed. This is the dystopian paradigm of modernity in the 20th century. The critique of this astounding project in thinkers as diverse as Weber, Lukács and Heidegger, Marcuse, Habermas and Foucault, should also command our attention. It points the way to a new current of social theory, a critical theory of science and technology grasped not as a specialized activity but as central to social life.

I would summarize the central insight of this current as the belief that functional understandings replace more complex meanings in the dominant culture. But before elaborating on this proposition, I must deal with an objection. Recent philosophical writing on function points out that it has a hermeneutic dimension. To recognize a function is already an interpretive act. A hammer is useful only insofar as it is recognized as such. This seems to confute the claim that modern societies are hostile to meaning. But this is to confuse two different definitions of the word “meaning.” Anticipating my conclusion, I will argue that a bare minimum of meaning necessary to use a tool is always an abstraction from a broader range of connotations and connections possessed by any object in its social context. The abstraction is of course a useful one, but it is not the whole story. A society which attempts to restrict the understanding of meaning to the bare minimum is different from one that admits the relevance of its whole range.

The influential Weberian analysis of this distinction is based on what is called the "differentiation of cultural spheres." Applied to science, technology and management, this is the social ontological equivalent of the epistemological notion of pure rationality. It asserts the effective institutional separation of functional aspects of objects from their broader significance in their social context. Means and ends are no longer united conceptually and practically but have been broken apart. The premodern notion of "essence," with its teleological conception of meaning that embraced a wide range of connections, gives way to a narrow rationality organized around a modern notion of causality.

The methodological basis of this Weberian view originated ultimately in Marx who discovered that the market has a unique rational form imposed by sundering capitalist economic exchange from tradition, religion, and politics. The larger context of use value, which situates objects within the way of life to which they belong, is replaced as an effective basis of economic action by the narrow concept of exchange value. Marx also showed that apparently "differentiated" and autonomous market rationality is tied to the rise of a specific class and creates a class biased society. Neutral rationality and class bias are conjoined in the market.

Although Weber was Marx's most influential if by no means orthodox follower, he focused on the notion of autonomization and ignored the critique. Only later, in the 1920s did Lukács recover Marx's critical theory of rationality. Following Weber, Lukács generalized the Marxian critique of market rationality to cover the whole surface of modern capitalist society, technology, administration, the media, and so on. This is the famous theory of reification which revolutionized Marxism, if not capitalism, and bore fruit in the Frankfurt School, influencing also directly or indirectly Heidegger and many other critics of modernity. Lukács offered the first version of an argument according to which behind modernity's apparently autonomous, value neutral rational systems lie power relations of a new type. The differentiation of rationality from other cultural spheres is simultaneously the subjection of society as a whole to capitalism.

Lukács notes the similarity between scientific knowledge and the laws of the market Marx criticized. The market is a "second nature" with laws as pitiless and mathematically precise as those of the cosmos. Like the worker confronted by the machine, the agent in a market society can only manipulate these laws to advantage, not change them. Lukács takes over Weber's analysis of bureaucratic and legal systems which reveals a related formalistic paradigm at work. He argues that capitalism reorganizes society around the kinds of abstractions characteristic of modern science and technology.

His position depends on his critique of the paradigmatic role of mathematical physics in the structure of modern knowledge and social practice. Since the 17th Century, physical law has been the model for all true knowledge and effective rational action has been identified with the kind of technical manipulation that can be based on such law. As Lukács writes,

What is important is to recognize clearly that all human relations (viewed as the objects of social activity) assume increasingly the objective forms of the abstract elements of the conceptual systems of natural science and of the abstract substrata of the laws of nature. And also, the subject of this 'action' likewise assumes increasingly the attitude of the pure observer of these--artificially abstract--processes, the attitude of the experimenter.¹

These laws are formal universals, abstracted from all specific time-space coordinates and from the developmental process of their objects. They isolate the functional aspect of social objects through which they can be controlled technically. Their cognitive universality promises equally universal technical control of all aspects of nature and society. But insofar as they are purely formal, they are incapable of comprehending social practice and the ever new historical contents it produces. Resistances testify to the living human content that cannot be fully accommodated to the reified forms. Lukács found in class struggle the exemplary instance of this dialectic of reification and the life process.

Lukács analyzed this dialectic in terms of Hegel's critique of Kant's notion of formal-analytic rationality, also based on the model of physics. He transposed the Hegelian critique into the social realm, and identified correspondences between it and the Marxian critique of capitalist market rationality. The Marxian critique was thus raised to the highest level of abstraction and became the basis for an alternative cognitive paradigm.

This is the background to Marcuse's critique of one-dimensional society. The fact that Marcuse did not cite Lukács in his later work is, I believe, due to the uptake of these ideas by the Frankfurt School. By the post-World War II phase of his career, Marcuse could take for granted the basic Lukácsian approach to the understanding of the relationship between capitalism and science and technology. However, there is a second partially hidden source of Marcuse's thought in this period: Heidegger's late critique of technology.

Heidegger argues that the modern world is a sum of resources, raw materials and system components. Nothing any longer has its own inner principle of movement, its own essential

¹The passivity of the experimenter to which Lukács refers is only apparent: The experimenter actively constructs the observed object but, at least in Lukács's view, is not aware of having done so and interprets the experiment as the voice of nature. While Lukács does not criticize the epistemological consequences of this illusion in natural science, in the social arena it is defining for reification. Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, trans. R. Livingstone (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1971), 131.

core of being, but rather everything is exposed to transformation to serve a role in the technical system. Objects are ripped from their contexts and reduced to their useful properties. These decontextualizations and reductions are inherently one-sided and violent. In this respect modern technology differs from craft work in which a pre-existing essential form embracing a wide range of values and meanings is realized by the craftsperson in materials conceived as predestined for the work. Instead, modern societies impose plans on passive materials. Marcuse's approach is shaped by this Heideggerian theory of the enframing, and the contrast between ancient *technē* and modern technology on which it is based.

Interestingly, the two critiques, that of Lukács and that of Heidegger, converge around several basic themes that reappear in Marcuse. These are:

1. The emergence of scientific-technical rationality as a dominant cultural framework;
2. The neutrality of this formalistic paradigm of rationality, i.e. its differentiation from meanings and values circulating in the lifeworld;
3. The predominance of technology over every other relation to reality;
4. The consequent loss of an authoritative cognitive grasp of significant aspects of the world;
5. The potential for catastrophe implicit in this limitation of the dominant culture to technical manipulation.

Naturally, the way in which Lukács and Heidegger develop these themes is quite different, but in Marcuse's appropriation a kind of synthesis is achieved. The central notion of this synthesis is the paradox of value neutrality which appears to isolate science and technology from the social while in reality it integrates them to it in a new way. This is the basis of Marcuse's critique of what he calls "technological rationality," a form of rationality that grasps its objects on purely functional terms without presupposing any goal except its own application and extension.

In chapter six of *One-Dimensional Man*, Marcuse writes, "This interpretation would tie the scientific project (method and theory), *prior* to all application and utilization, to a specific societal project, and would see the tie precisely in the inner form of scientific rationality....It is precisely its neutral character which relates objectivity to a specific historical Subject--namely, the consciousness that prevails in the society....".² Marcuse's approach, as exemplified in these passages, is based on the notion that the differentiation of modern scientific-technical rationality is linked to domination. Neutrality is just the reverse side of the insistence on

² Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964), 156-59.

quantifying and controlling all objects indifferent to their own inherent potentialities. Other forms of action associated with artistic production, craft, the care of human beings and the cultivation of nature, which are based on a relation to the potentialities of their objects, do not offer the prospect of full control and so are dismissed as prescientific or irrational.

Why is neutrality specifically linked to the project of domination of capitalism? Technological production breaks with the past and all the restraints it placed on the pursuit of productivity and profit. Traditional forms of knowledge are too closely integrated to the very lifeworld which capitalism must destroy in the course of its advance. They condense cognitive and valiative dimensions in ways that block technological rationalization, for example, by limiting the exploitation of labor or the natural environment, or preventing the optimization of resources and land.

Scientific-technological knowledge is adapted to the pursuit of power by its selective focus on quantitative aspects of its objects through which they can be broken down and transformed. Organic and essentialist paradigms of knowledge that presuppose some sort of teleology have no place here and give way to a mechanistic approach based on the measurable attributes of things. The neutrality of modern knowledge is thus both real and unreal, breaking the chains of tradition only to enter the prison house of power.

Marcuse's application of the reification/enframing thesis he derived from Lukács and Heidegger leads to the demand for a restoration of meaning through a transformation of the paradigm of knowledge and the technology that depends on it. Marcuse calls for radical technological transformation:

Only if the vast capabilities of science and technology, of the scientific and artistic imagination direct the construction of a sensuous environment, only if the work world loses its alienating features and becomes a world of human relationships, only if productivity becomes creativity, are the roots of domination dried up in the individuals. No return to precapitalist, pre-industrial artisanship, but on the contrary, perfection of the new mutilated and distorted science and technology in the formation of the object world in accordance with "the laws of beauty." And "beauty" here defines an ontological condition—not of an *oeuvre d'art* isolated from real existence...but that harmony between man and his world which would shape the form of society.³

Technologically instituted meanings are required both for human life to make sense once again and as cognitively valid guides to improving technological processes that threaten human

³ Herbert Marcuse, *Towards a Critical Theory of Society*, ed. Douglas Kellner (New York: Routledge, 2001), 138-39.

wellbeing and survival. But Marcuse insists that this restoration must not take the form of a return to premodern modes of thought. A “qualitative physics” is excluded at the outset. Instead, he promises a kind of synthesis of art and science, an aestheticization of technology that would bring values into the design process as quantifiable parameters.

This development would depend on the emergence of an “aesthetic *Lebenswelt*,” a new structure of experience encompassing aesthetic criteria. Aestheticized perception would embrace functional aspects of objects in the larger framework of their relation to life as a value. Instead of a purely empirical understanding of objects based on modern scientific-technical rationality, or a teleological notion of essence, articulating the place of objects in a traditional form of social life, an imaginative grasp of objects would locate them in a freely chosen way of life oriented toward peace and fulfilment.

While provocative the rather vague positive outcome of Marcuse’s persuasive critique is bound to be disappointing. He never worked out the alternative satisfactorily although he developed a convincing diagnosis of the problem. The impression of pessimism and indeed dystopian despair left by his contribution is due in large part to the disproportionate effectiveness of the critique relative to the rather weak positive perspective on the future.

III

The philosophy of technology has encountered the very same question that preoccupied Marcuse, namely, how can meaning be restored in the context of a civilization based on a paradigm of rationality for which only causes and functions are real.

Albert Borgmann and Lorenzo Simpson, two philosophers influenced by the later Heidegger, have addressed this question in their writings.⁴ In his later work Heidegger called for a “free relation” to technology. This alternative to a technological civilization would not require Marcuse’s transformed technology but rather a change in attitude toward technology as we know it. Presumably, if we could use technology without interpreting all of reality in technological terms, we could enjoy the best of both worlds, a world of functional efficiencies and a world rich in meaning.

Simpson and Borgmann appear to be working with Heidegger’s program. They hope to restore and validate the concept of meaning through a loosely phenomenological strategy. They address two problems associated with this project: first, the lack of rational grounds for

⁴ Albert Borgmann, *Technology and the Character of Contemporary Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984); Lorenzo Simpson, *Technology, Time, and the Conversations of Modernity* (New York: Routledge, 1995).

culturally general meanings, and second, the problem of consensus in a postconventional society. Both Simpson and Borgmann reject the relativistic refusal of local meaning in terms of some absolute standard of rationality they deem inappropriately applied to culture. They also reject the notion that cultural differences in modern societies can be adequately represented as differing concepts of the good. This supposed “good” is a matter of opinion rather than the articulation of a way of life and as such it is subject to infinite and arbitrary variation. They agree with Lukács, Heidegger and Marcuse that there *is* a very definite consensus around a way of life in technologically advanced societies. This consensus is not located at the level of opinion but at the practical level, where technology shapes a common framework of experience and action. Simpson and Borgmann argue that a desirable way of life will sustain human relations and community independent of the technological fixation of modern societies.

Simpson’s and Borgmann’s critiques are based on the distinction between function and meaning. They argue against the overestimation of the former at the expense of the latter. Today, individuals commonly talk as though the objects by which they are surrounded were essentially functional. Indeed, they even extend a functional understanding to themselves and their human relations. This is the sociological crux of the one-dimensionality thesis. Such an understanding cannot be said to be false, but it is certainly partial.

A purely functional understanding is encouraged by the existence and prestige of technical disciplines in modern societies. The transportation function of the automobile is of special concern to automotive engineers. They are obviously justified in narrowing their focus in their work. But there is a sense in which an ordinary non-professional interpreter who understands the automobile exclusively in terms of its function adopts the engineers point of view in an inappropriate context. There is a risk that the legitimate limits of the engineer’s standpoint, which open up a realm of technical knowledge, may become misleading obstacles to broader understanding for the theorist, the user and the citizen. Yet something like this confusion is implicit in much discussion of technology, and indeed in everyday attitudes as well.

The intellectual heritage of this type of argument should be clear by now. The differentiation of society has enabled function to be distinguished from the concrete relationship of artifacts to social life. One-dimensionality results from the attempt to totalize a functional view of the world, denying the residue of meaning excluded by the differentiation of function. The effectiveness of this totalization is not a theoretical but an empirical question. In Marcuse’s view as in the views of Simpson and Borgmann, it is sufficiently effective to suppress awareness of the most important “dimension” of social life, the meanings or

potentialities that enable humane understanding and self-understanding, and, Marcuse would emphasize, social progress.

Lorenzo Simpson addresses this problem as the reduction of “meaning” to “value.” Values as he defines them are simple ends or goals. They can be abstracted from the complex web of meanings in which they emerge in actual life and represented independent of that context. Such abstractions have their uses, but when they are substituted for the larger framework of meaning, the results are dispiriting.

Meanings are built out of myriad connections between experiences and spheres of life. They are not definite, bounded things we have at our disposal, but structures or frameworks which we inhabit and which contribute to making us what and who we are. Meanings are enacted in our perceptions and practices. They are not chosen but rather they “claim us.” Purpose is only one aspect of the phenomenon of meaning, but it can be isolated and privileged as the significance of the whole. The technologies that mediate the achievement of purpose then appear peculiarly central. The pursuit of ends with means, preferably technically efficient means, replaces an understanding of meaning. The focus on the means leads to a forgetfulness of the complexity of the structure of meaning and eventually to the lopping off of whole dimensions of the original experience as they appear irrelevant to maximum efficiency.

Simpson points out a second consequence of the reduction of meaning to value. Structures of meaning belong to a way of life. They can be justified only within that framework, by reference to each other and to the general virtues of the way of life in question. Values, on the other hand, seem arbitrary unless justified by arguments with rational appeal under any and all conditions. But such arguments invariably fail and so the values-perspective leads directly to a relativism that devalues the idea of the good life generally.

Simpson argues that the values perspective presupposes an absolutely detached observer. But the “death of God” is also the death of an absolute knower, uninvolved in any social world and tradition. Simpson writes,

What happens in such a transformation of meaning into value? As meaning becomes thematized as value, the manifold connections which operate in part ‘behind our backs’ and which, through informing and shaping our experience, predispose us to experience in a characteristic way, are transformed into premises. The validity of these value-premises, apart from the referential anchoring in the meaning which gave rise to the value, stands or falls with the rational evaluation of those premises. Our inability to provide *purely rational* foundations for such premises, in abstraction from the meaning that gives them point, results in our inability to

experience as binding in a nonarbitrary way. That is, such values *qua* values, that is, in isolation from meaningful practices, cannot claim us.⁵

If the position of the participant is privileged rather than that of the outside observer, relativism is avoided by reference to the internal significance of the meanings that circulate in a way of life. Those meanings do not have a compulsory evidence; they can be thematized and criticized. But the exercise of critical intelligence is a moment within the way of life, not escape beyond any and all involvement. Criticism does not automatically devalue meaning in general, but enables a more refined and appropriate relation to meaning in the particular situation of the participating individual. In sum, experience is not transcended in knowledge but forms its horizon. Simpson calls this a “*sittliche* account of rationality,” referring to the Hegelian notion of value as immanent in the way of life of the community rather than speculatively constructed in abstraction from any involvement.⁶

Unfortunately, Simpson does not see that the very reasons he adduces for insisting that values not be disengaged from their background in meanings apply to technologies as well. Technologies, considered apart from their context, are just as abstract as goals artificially isolated from the framework within which they are pursued. As a result, Simpson’s account is vitiated by an unconvincing opposition between technology and meaning. Simpson distinguishes on several occasions between a technological mentality and actual technologies, but he fails to locate his critique clearly on one or the other side of the line between them (Simpson, 1995: 8).⁷ Thus he recognizes that a different cultural environment would generate different technologies and yet he also wants to insist that the properties of technology he criticizes constitute a “residue” characteristic of technology in general⁸. Unfortunately the residue seems so loaded with undesirable features it is incompatible with benign alternatives. Meaning then shrinks to the margins of his conception of modern life, repelled by the very technical means on which it depends today for its context and realization.

Borgmann’s argument is similar. He contrasts a consumer oriented way of life with an alternative organized around what he calls “focal things” in something like the Heideggerian sense. For Heidegger the concept of the thing refers not merely to an existing entity but to the gathering power of the objects around which the rituals of everyday life are organized. Things

⁵ Simpson, *Technology, Time, and the Conversations of Modernity*, 47.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 131.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 174-75, 182.

“thing” according to Heidegger in the sense that they lay out the framework of a local world within which relationships and identities are formed. In that world individuals are active participants rather than passive consumers, although Borgmann insists that their action is not arbitrary but is shaped by the possibilities opened by the things around which it is organized.

Borgmann believes that we have become so obsessed with the acquisition of commodities that we have lost touch with things in this Heideggerian sense. Technology teaches the sharp difference between means and ends where formerly each implicated the other. The complex involvements of individuals with others and with nature of an earlier time, when activities were less effectively mediated by technology, give way to hollow technical control. “Devices...dissolve the coherent and engaging character of the pretechnological world of things. In a device, the relatedness of the world is replaced by a machinery, but the machinery is concealed, and the commodities, which are made available by a device, are enjoyed without the encumbrance of or the engagement with a context”.⁹

Consumer society is made possible by a technology sufficiently advanced to provide abundance. But the role of technology is not innocent. It is not merely a means to extrinsic ends. The ready availability of technological means to specific types of satisfactions tends to bias socially sanctioned desires toward just those satisfactions. Facility and convenience exercise a hidden tyranny which Borgmann calls the “device paradigm.” A whole way of life is thus implied in technology and the consensus it organizes practically is difficult to criticize much less to challenge and overcome. “Technology,” he claims, is “the new orthodoxy, the dominant character of reality”.¹⁰

Meaning arises from engagement with focal things, things that exercise the gathering power to constitute worlds. Such things may be celebrations or occasions as well as objects. They require effort and engagement, a practice “that can center and illuminate our lives”.¹¹ They develop the relationships and skills of those who engage with them. They provide a focus from out of which to experience a context rather than supplying a commodity with efficiency and ease. Borgmann readily admits that focal things are not subject to proof or justification in any scientific sense. A “deictic” discourse can however point to the features of the world that engage our focus. In deictic discourse we can testify to the importance of the focal things in our lives and bring them to the attention of others with the hope of engaging them too in their

⁹ Borgmann, *Technology and the Character of Contemporary Life*, 47.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 189.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 4.

gathering power. This notion resembles the Kantian “reflective judgment” which is also a testimony and an appeal based on an implicit concept of human nature rather than an absolute ground.

Like Simpson, Borgmann wants to withdraw from technology into activities on the margins, but he too formulates his program in ambiguous terms. Borgmann rejects regression and claims that a renewed emphasis on focal things will enable us to rectify our relationship to technology. Thus technology as such is not the problem but rather the device paradigm which frames life as the application of efficient means to the pursuit of goals abstracted from a context of meaning.¹² Yet at the end of his book, Borgmann calls for a “two sector economy” in which technology as device will coexist with craft production. This seems to imply that technology is after all the problem and that bounding it is the solution. Once again the argument wavers between condemning the technological mentality and condemning technology itself.¹³

IV

Marcuse argued that fundamental change in technology must be an aspect of fundamental social change. On his terms a return to focal things would imply not only a new attitude toward technology but also new technology. Although his reflections on this prospect were too vague to carry conviction, there is evidence that something like this process of change has already begun in small ways. This is especially clear in the case of the Internet. Not only has the Internet served as a scene on which new forms of sociability have been created, but users have played an unprecedented role in shaping and reshaping the technology. This example is important for revealing new forms of dialectical interaction between technology and the underlying population. We do not return to Lukács’s vision of class resistance to reification with this example, but nor are we locked into a Heideggerian enframing. Marcuse’s hopeful speculation appears relevant in a general way to this case.

Sociability was not in the original plans of the Internet’s military sponsors. It was intended to solve technical problems in time sharing on mainframe computers and to transmit official information between the government and contractors on university campuses. In addition it may have also played a role in plans for a redundant communication system able to survive nuclear warfare. But early in its history a graduate student placed a small email program on the system and soon human communication became one of its most important features. His

¹² *Ibid.*, 200.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 220.

intervention responded to an interpretation of the system different from that of the military. He looked beyond its use for efficiently distributing computer time to its communicative potential.

The shift in perception implied in such interventions was explained to me by a vice president of the Digital Equipment Corporation in the early days of personal computing. At that time human communication on computer networks was slowly emerging alongside standard usages, much to the surprise of computer professionals. The vice president said, "We were networking computers and we suddenly realized that we were not just connecting the machines but also the users of the machines."

I encountered several similar moments of realization in the early history of computer networks, enough to describe a pattern. For example, the French Minitel system connected millions of users in the early 1980s, long before the Internet was opened to the public. It was originally intended to be an information system delivering official data and news to dumb terminals, called "Minitels." The purpose of the system was clearly articulated by the government: to promote the entry of France into the "information age." But the system was very quickly hacked by users who converted it into a means of human communication. They added instant messaging to the system which exploded its original purpose and introduced an entirely new one: the pursuit of dates and sex. Of course information was still available, but the meaning of the Minitel was irrevocably transformed by the revelation of its social potential.

This basic reinterpretation of the nature of computer networks made possible a long history of user generated innovation that continues to this day on the Internet. The essential idea behind many of these innovations, so obvious but so difficult to realize, is the purely mediating role of the technology in social applications. Operations that depended on holding inventories of goods failed for the most part, but those that simply connected people to each other and to pre-existing information have been wildly successful.

This mediating role is not, however, transparent. For a connection to be made a context must be supplied. That context positions the users to take specific types of initiatives, for example, to seek personal communication or group communication, dates or information, and so on. Constructing these contexts successfully is not a simple matter and no engineering manual contains the knowledge required. This is because contexts are in effect virtual "lifeworlds," frameworks of meaning within which affordances emerge.

These lifeworlds are of course drastically simplified compared to the real thing. But they are not reducible to pure means. They are not tools but environments within which the user moves and works. Consider, for example, email programs such as Eudora and Outlook. The

division of the interface into three “panes,” one for titles, another for content, and a third for “mailboxes” constructs a specific temporality. The user is called on to assign connections and priorities. By classifying messages according to various criteria and placing them in mailboxes, she constructs a usable past. By reviewing the title pane and responding to the important communications, she enters her future. The simplicity of the interface belies the complexity of the practices it invites and facilitates.

Still more interesting are the lifeworlds that emerge around group communication on computer networks. Contrary to journalistic hype, these practices do not date from the creation of Web 2.0. The earliest forms of group communication were asynchronous bulletin boards and computer conferencing programs that enabled users to send messages to a shared file instead of to personal addressees. Long before the Internet was open to the public, people were conducting business meetings, social gatherings, and discussing hobbies, illnesses and politics on various computer networks. Of course these discussions lacked many Web 2.0 features, but the all important connection to a group was available.

Within this framework users employed language to construct identities and virtual worlds oriented toward their interests and concerns. They established a communication model at the outset by stating the kind of meeting in which they were engaged. They bounded the group more or less effectively with software or communication practices. They constructed a past and future through techniques of archiving and mutual response. As a result of these activities, computer networks became environments within which communities form and creative activity goes on.¹⁴

These examples of human communication on computer networks show that the emphasis of critique should be less on features of technology as such or the ills of consumerism and more on the problem of agency and the norms under which agency is exercised. Recognition of the value of human communication is not merely a matter of opinion but activates individuals in new ways that belie the pattern of “technology” as it has been understood by the critics.

We have seen such a recovery of agency in the environmental movement as well as with the Internet. Environmental protests have led to significant changes in technology and shattered the myth of technological determinism and its associated technocratic ideology. We know now that we are responsible for our own technology and its consequences. An older understanding of technology as a hidden cornucopia managed by experts is giving way to a new sense of

¹⁴ Andrew Feenberg and Darin Barney, eds., *Community in the Digital Age* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2004).

technology as a terrain on which human initiative is exercised in the interests of survival and progress.

These new expressions of agency in the technical sphere respond to experience with technologies. The innovators in the case of computer networks and the environmental protestors react to an unsatisfactory situation in which they find themselves. They reinterpret that situation in terms of insights available only outside the mainstream of technological development among users and victims. In Heideggerian terms one could say that they encounter their “world” in the light of potentialities unsuspected by those who first constructed its elements. Innovation is thus not just the discovery of new uses but also of new worlds in which the uses emerge. Marcuse’s notion of a normatively informed perception is relevant to the case. Although aesthetics may not be the right term under which to classify the norms involved, clearly innovation emerges from discontent with the given and the projection of new life affirming possibilities of the sort Marcuse advocated.

V

This brief sketch of the role of agency in information technology and the environment calls into question the starting point of the analysis presented here. Apparently the culture of our society is not dystopian after all, nor is our rationality purely formal; substantive considerations intrude with significant consequences. How are we to understand this complication in the picture with which we began? Two possibilities present themselves.

We can simply dismiss the Marxian-Weberian premise of social differentiation and formalization, and with it the related notion of an emancipatory dereification of rationality and the society dependent on it. This approach conforms to the skepticism with regard to traditional social critique expressed by postmodernists and some scholars in science and technology studies. They regard nostalgia for meaning as a dispensable illusion. But their attempts to reconstruct such essential aspects of social life as ethics and political resistance are unconvincing. These anti-critics usually end up with abstract appeals for tolerance of the other under a variety of fancy labels. One can hardly oppose this benign conclusion but it has little relevance to the politics of technology.

Alternatively, we could add to the notions of differentiation and formalization a complementary dedifferentiating and substantive dimension overlooked by most of the earlier social critics. In this case, the stripping down of complex social forms and meanings to functional residues would co-exist with other social processes tending in the opposite direction,

toward a reconstruction of complex meaning systems. This is the position of Habermas, for example. He is sensitive to the dystopian threat of modernity but neither resigns himself to the triumph of a purely instrumental social logic nor projects an apocalyptic transcendence of dystopia. Habermas sees a conflict of opposing tendencies in modern societies, a tendency toward total systematization countered more or less effectively by another tendency promising a recovery of meaning. In Lukács a similar conflict is developed as an immanent dialectic between reified institutions and the lives they fail completely to contain. Although I do not think these positions are entirely successful, this general approach opens up the question of modernity in a new and fruitful way. I believe that something along these lines is in fact a correct description of the social process today.

A hermeneutics of technology is needed to articulate the dimension of meaning of technology and to explain how it relates to functionality. Many approaches to developing this hermeneutic are possible. For example, one could turn to the social histories of various technologies for insight into how they engaged with many aspects of the life of their time. A theoretical approach to the relation of function and meaning might be elaborated through analysis of such examples. My very brief sketch of email clients shows the relation of function to meaning from this angle. What appear to be narrowly functional aspects of an interface in reality open up considerations on time that point to an unsuspected complexity. The apparently banal division of panes organizes more than incoming texts; it organizes the users' life, or a more or less significant part of it. In this concluding section of my paper I will sketch an approach that might guide research into such phenomena.

I am struck by the similarity between my own project and Heidegger's two apparently opposite interpretations of technical action in his early and late periods. The early account is explicitly phenomenological. It abstracts from causality to explain functionality in its relation to worldhood. The latter account is also interpretive although Heidegger no longer makes reference to phenomenology. This account, however, also abstracts from the usual causal interpretation of functionality in order to explain it ontologically. I believe that there is a hidden complementarity uniting these two accounts, but Heidegger presents them independently without reference to each other. Making the hidden connection between them explicit provides a basis for a theory of the double aspects of technology which Heidegger himself missed.

The first part of *Being and Time* lays out a remarkable phenomenology of action. Heidegger traces the links from an original attitude of care through the ordered relations of the various instrumentalities, materials and signs implicated in action. This analysis of "readiness-to-hand"

shows that functionality is a complex aspect of networks of persons and objects, a “totality of involvements,” and not a property of things taken by themselves. The analysis concludes with the notion that the whole matrix of action constitutes “significance,” *Bedeutsamkeit*. The argument thus holds that function and meaning are inseparable aspects of what Heidegger calls “world,” an ordered system of internal relations between *Dasein* and the objects of action. This notion of world lies behind the reflections of Simpson and Borgmann discussed above.

Heidegger’s account is unclear. He does not explain precisely how meaning emerges in action. Is it a condition of action or a result? The “totality of involvements” is a system of relations between entities caught up in a technical network. Each particular functional relation is defined by an operative meaning of some sort that enables coping. Heidegger carefully defines the form of that narrowly functional meaning which is discovered in circumspection (*Umsicht*). The introduction of the concept of significance at the end of this analysis seems intended to tie the variety of these interconnected practices and meanings together in a wider space of action, a “world.”

But is it in fact the case that the specific meanings involved in functional activities are connected in a coherent whole? The point of the social theories with which we began is the differentiation of function and meaning in modern societies. This interpretation of Heidegger’s early theory resembles pragmatism in attempting to redefine as one what modernity has divided in practice. In this context a mere definition cannot justify the conceptual leap from function to meaning.

We need to ask why Heidegger felt it necessary to present his analysis of function as essentially related to meaning. Awareness of Heidegger’s complicated relation to modernity helps to understand this conundrum. The radical social differentiation occurring around him ran increasingly counter to his understanding of life. As railroads, electrical systems and radio broadcasting constructed a functionally organized mass society, Heidegger reverted to the meaning-granting dimension of action to defend a human world. This world was impoverished to be sure, but it was at least a world, and not a mere causal concatenation in which human beings were caught up.

Lucian Goldmann explored one possible explanation for this approach. According to Goldmann, Heidegger’s account of readiness-to-hand is an ontological version of the theory of reification in Lukács. Without adopting Goldmann’s hypothesis of actual influence, it is still noteworthy that many categories of Heidegger’s theory of worldhood have obvious affinities with contemporary cultural critique. Heidegger’s argument, like that of Lukács, recognizes and

also places a limit on the dystopian tendency of modernity beyond which the very notion of the human would cease to make sense. The inauthenticity of the mass appears to degrade human beings to the level of things, but contained in germ within inauthentic existence is a connection to meaning. This provides the basis for the possibility of authentic action, transcending any given stereotypical response to experience. Thus in his social context, Heidegger's analysis of action has an implicit critical aspect.

What is the evidence that such problems lay behind Heidegger's early theory? The lecture course entitled *Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* contrasts human action with other types of engagement with reality. Heidegger explains that the participation of *Dasein* in a world presupposes what he calls the "as" relation, that is, the ability to relate freely to meanings. Without such a relation to meanings, there is no world in his sense but only reflexive responses to particular stimuli. Heidegger needs the concepts of meaning and world to explain care and the projective capacity of the human being. It is this capacity which brings time to being. Animals and machines do not have it and Heidegger therefore distinguishes *Dasein* from these other types of being.

But did Heidegger relate the limitations of animals and machines to the status of *Dasein* in the emerging mass society? He did not descend to the level of social criticism to make such a point, but he came close in his later work. There "technology" is action planned on the basis of representations. Such action does not follow the logic of readiness-to-hand explained in *Being and Time*. Instead it is oriented by a concept of causality and an associated concept of predictability. A truncated functionalization obliterates meaning and its associated world in a mechanically organized and planned order. Human beings become resources and system components in such an order. When *Dasein* as the site of revealing is obscured by the enframing, meaning is impoverished or blocked altogether. If we reconsider the later Heidegger's analysis of technology in the light of his early work it is clear that what he calls the "danger" threatens *Dasein* with reduction to something very much like an animal or a machine. And this reduction threatens world as well as *Dasein*. How could it not given the unity of being-in-the-world which is defining for *Dasein*?

The contrast between these two modes of action—individual action and enframing—evokes the double aspects of technology, and with it, of the society it structures. Enframing describes an order that privileges power, that is, causal relations, functions, over meanings. In fact meanings become instruments of power in this society, little more than advertising slogans. The recovery of meaning in the full sense of the term through authentic action in relation to artifacts

is evoked obscurely in the later works, for example in the essays on the thing and on building and dwelling. But Heidegger seems to be in full flight from modern technology in these interesting essays. If we go back to *Being and Time* for a more analytic concept of authenticity, we are steered away from technical practice toward a heroic conception of historical resistance. This conception has so little concrete content that it justified Nazism for Heidegger and communism for his student Marcuse.

Let us try a different tack. In *Being and Time*, the notion of authentic action involves “precisely the disclosive projection of what is factually possible at the time”.¹⁵ Heidegger interprets this proposition in terms of the concepts of death and a vague notion of historical destiny. But we can apply it to *Dasein* in its technical dealings with entities. Then authenticity suggests technical creativity rather than revolution. Indeed, the free improvisations and resistances of individuals within the enframed system obey the logic of action described in *Being and Time*. These actions generate a meaningful world in the face of the “consummate meaninglessness” imposed by enframing. The dialectic of enframing and action describes the modern experience in all its threat and ambiguity.

I have attempted to work out the implications of this approach in terms of a theory of technology as both functional and meaningful. As functional technology responds to a causal logic and is explained in technical disciplines that are relatively differentiated and autonomous. As meaningful, technology belongs to a way of life and embraces not only a minimal significance directly related to its function but also a wide range of connotations that associate it with other aspects of the human world in which it is involved. The evolution of modern technology takes place in part through the interaction between these dimensions. Modern societies tend to separate them institutionally, for example, distinguishing engineering from everyday understanding, management from working life, and control from communication. But in practice there is constant interchange between the differentiated dimensions. In fact they interact and conflict not only institutionally but within the individuals as they respond in routine or innovative ways to the technological environment in which they live.

Consider once again the examples of communication on computer networks. The hacking of the Minitel network responded to users' perception of unexplored potentialities of the technology. These potentialities were suggested by the connection of the Minitel to the telephone network. The hackers must have been puzzled by the obstacles to communication on

¹⁵ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), 345.

a familiar network dedicated precisely to that purpose. In introducing a new communicative functionality, they repositioned the computer in the structure of everyday life. Its meaning was transformed through the addition of this function. Notions of efficiency are not helpful in understanding this phenomenon. Nor is it useful to start out from the purely technical possibilities, quasi-infinite in principle. Rather, to imagine this innovation and to understand it, one must work in from meaning in all its complexity to its displacement in narrow functional terms. The key to this hermeneutic approach is thus a notion of substitution or abstraction that responds to specific technical potentials.

Examples such as this suggest a different notion of democracy from the usual one. We are not dealing here with rights and elections but with the negotiation of the technical framework of everyday life. From this standpoint the notion of liberation must be reformulated to signify a reversal in the relations of dominance between the two dimensions and the modes of action that belong to them. So long as the encounter with the technical in everyday experience is subordinated overwhelmingly to enframing, a one-dimensional universe prevails. But a social world in which the meaning-generating activities of the individuals freely interact with technical disciplines and artifacts would have a radically different character. Such a world would realize Marcuse's hope that the imagination might inform technology with values but it would not do so by creating a new form of scientific-technical rationality. Rather, it would invest disciplines and artifacts with the results of the experiential encounter with technology, that is, with new meanings emerging from human action.

The Ultimate Technology: The End of Technology and the Task of Biology

Soren Riis
Roskilde University

Introduction

Many people are astounded when they realise the remarkable potential of biotechnology. This technology might indeed mark the end of a number of horrible diseases, lead to an incredible enhancement of human power, give us the tools to design future life and to experiment with nature in previous unknown ways. For this reason, biotechnology could come to demarcate the beginning of a new era – an era of new chances and new dangers.¹ But what is biotechnology from a philosophical point of view and how did it arise? Based on a new reading of one of Martin Heidegger's most influential and relevant philosophical inquiries today, 'The Question Concerning Technology', this paper endeavours to unfold a philosophically significant interpretation of biotechnology.

Heidegger died prior to the exceptional cloning of the sheep Dolly and before stem cell research ever took place and he never explicitly discussed biotechnology. However, by reinterpreting his notion of 'modern technology', this paper will show how it becomes possible to philosophically assess biotechnology and to recognise ways in which Heidegger anticipates this phenomenon. At one and the same time the following interpretation elucidates the fundamental coming-into-being of biotechnology and presents biotechnology as the ultimate technology as well as what Heidegger calls the 'saving power'. *The thesis of this paper is that biotechnology is not just one more technology; rather it is the perfection of what has already been understood as technology by Aristotle.*

To Heidegger modern technology indeed represents a profound danger. He is thus often considered a conservative, who points out the immense differences between modern and ancient technologies. In what follows, I will question this account of Heidegger's understanding of technology. By reconfiguring the thoughts and arguments presented in 'The Question Concerning Technology' and addressing Heidegger's view on cybernetics, I will

¹ See for instance Mark A. Bedau et al, who discuss the potential revolution connected to the advancement of living technologies, which also include biotechnology: 'The authors of this review expect that living technology will be the most transformative evolution of technology that current generations will experience' ('Living Technology: Exploiting Life's Principles in Technology', in *Artificial Life* 16: 89-97, 2010, pp. 89-97, p 93).

argue that the ambivalence at play in understanding biotechnology is fundamental and of great consequence to present-day technology- and Heidegger-research. Investigating this ambivalence will grant access to a conception of the origin of biotechnology as well as facilitate a critical interpretation of Heidegger's thinking concerning modern technology and his understanding of nature and cybernetics. In order to follow the line of thinking presented in this paper, it is important to first take a closer look at one of Heidegger's key phenomenological reflections from 'The Question Concerning Technology':

All coming to presence, not only modern technology, keeps itself everywhere concealed to the last. Nevertheless, it remains, with respect to its holding sway, that which precedes all: the earliest. The Greek thinkers already knew of this when they said: That which is earlier with regard to its rise into dominance becomes manifest to us men only later. That which is primarily early shows itself only ultimately to men. Therefore, in the realm of thinking, a painstaking effort to think through still more primally what was primally thought is not the absurd wish to revive what is past, but rather the sober readiness to be astounded before the coming of the dawn.²

The 'painstaking effort', which Heidegger calls upon, is to be taken seriously. In this paper I will endeavour to 'think still more primally' the origin of modern technology and from here strive to assess its ultimate consequences. As Heidegger points out, such an investigation may imply a reversal of commonly believed understandings of technology, for the most primally thought 'origin' of modern technology might not show itself until the end. Over the next paragraphs I will first present the background for understanding Heidegger's argument and for my subsequent analysis of the coming-into-being of biotechnology. I will start by shortly presenting what is commonly known about Heidegger's critique of modern technology and afterwards I will criticise this view and endeavour to interpret and discuss the traces of another beginning of modern technology.

1 Modern Technology

The fundamental lesson from Heidegger's study of technology is that technology is not to be principally understood as a specific artefact, but essentially as a way of bringing-forth beings. Technology is as it is when it is operating and when it is used to produce various new

² Heidegger, M. (1977) "The Question Concerning Technology", in: David Farrell Krell (Eds) *Basic Writings*, pp 311-341 (New York: Harper & Row), p. 327. See also: "A mindfulness of what transpires today is always too short-sighted. What is essential is mindfulness of the beginning as it anticipates its end and still includes 'today' as the extension of the end – and this in such a manner that what is today becomes being-historically manifest only from the beginning" Heidegger, M. (1999) *Contributions to Philosophy: From Enowning* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press), p. 31.

artefacts. By analysing technology within the framework of bringing-forth beings, Heidegger links technology to the ancient Greek understanding of the concept of truth, *alêtheia*. In doing so he makes the assessment of technology a crucial enterprise to philosophy. According to Heidegger, the ancient Greeks understood *alêtheia* as the phenomenon of revealing beings, which also includes the phenomenon of bringing-forth beings. In his investigation of technology, Heidegger writes: ‘But where have we strayed to? We are questioning concerning technology, and we have arrived now at *alêtheia*, at revealing. What has the essence of technology to do with revealing? The answer: everything. For every bringing-forth is grounded in revealing’³. Heidegger emphasises that the ancient Greek understanding of truth is a reminder to us that an object first needs to be revealed, stand out and be intelligible before it can be analysed in detail, for example in the sciences, and be the object of a comparison with other objects. Before it is possible to decide whether or not a description of an object is correct or incorrect, it first needs to be revealed or brought-forth as an object with a specific identity. These two phases illustrate the precedence of the ancient Greek understanding of truth over a conception of truth in terms of correspondence. Heidegger maintains that *alêtheia* describes the very opening of being to our experience.⁴

Against this backdrop Heidegger distinguishes modern from ancient technology. He argues that the way in which modern technology reveals beings is fundamentally different from that of ancient technology. The essence of modern technology, or *das Gestell*⁵ as Heidegger calls it, is a *challenging* bringing-forth. In Heidegger’s line of thinking this is to say that modern technology brings-forth in order to sap energy from what is brought-forth or to use it as a resource in an endless chain of production. ‘The revealing that rules in modern technology is a challenging, which puts to nature the unreasonable demand that it supply energy which can be extracted and stored as such’⁶. And ‘such challenging happens in that the energy concealed in

³ Heidegger, M. (1977) “The Question Concerning Technology”, in: David Farrell Krell (Eds) *Basic Writings*, pp 311-341 (New York: Harper & Row), p. 318.

⁴ See also Riis, S. (2008) “The Symmetry Between Bruno Latour and Martin Heidegger: The Technique of Turning a Police Officer into a Speed Bump”, *Social Studies of Science*, 38, pp 285-301

⁵ Because the English translation of *das Gestell*, the enframing, does not refer to a specific “stand” pertaining to the German word *stellen*, I shall continue to use the concept “Gestell” to characterize what Heidegger means by the essence of modern technology. Another translation of *das Gestell*, which would call attention to this feature, would be “set-up”.

⁶ Heidegger, M. (1977) “The Question Concerning Technology”, in: David Farrell Krell (Eds) *Basic Writings*, pp 311-341 (New York: Harper & Row), 327.

nature is unlocked, what is unlocked is transformed, what is transformed is stored up, what is stored up is in turn distributed, and what is distributed is switched about ever anew'⁷.

Opposed to modern technology, Heidegger claims that the bringing-forth belonging to ancient technology is characterised by 'setting free' instead of 'challenging'.⁸ Ancient technology is in Heidegger's view simply responsible for 'starting something on its way into arrival'⁹. In other words, ancient technology brings the *proper* potential or the natural *telos* of something into appearance, whereas modern technology challenges its object to stand out as a mere resource in an endless chain of production and thus changes its *telos*.

In 'The Question Concerning Technology' Heidegger implies that an ancient silver vessel should somehow 'set-free' the essential being of silver, or rather, the essential feature of *silver ore*, but I argue that this is a radical ontological 'challenge' and a fundamental 'demand' on nature.¹⁰ In the inferred framework of understanding, silver ore becomes itself, is 'set free' and follows its natural *telos* when it is turned into a utensil. Along these lines of thinking, the role of bringing-forth pertaining to ancient technology and its implicit appropriation of nature is certainly 'challenging' by Heidegger's own standards and it must be seen as belonging to the rule of *das Gestell*.¹¹ Viewed from the reverse perspective: If a silver vessel is thought to disclose the proper characteristic of silver ore, how is it that silver or silver ore in ancient Greece was used to create all kinds of *different* artefacts from jewellery to utensils? The answer must be that the bringing-forth manifest in ancient technology in fact reveals silver ore as a very flexible resource – what readily could be called 'standing reserve' – namely as being ready to be used to create all kinds of different utensils. In other words, revealed through ancient technology, silver ore stands out as a resource – and a silver mine as a deposit of resources. In this sense the rule of *das Gestell* is implicitly manifest in Heidegger's own interpretation of ancient technology; namely as responsible for revealing silver as a flexible resource. Heidegger is not examining the technically complicated way of the coming-into-being of 'purified' silver, and this neglect makes his critique of modernity stand out. However, the presence of the rule of *das Gestell* in antiquity does not mean that there are no differences between ancient and

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 322.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 316.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 316.

¹⁰ See *ibid.*, p. 315.

¹¹ Furthermore Heidegger has a logical problem when he talks about "setting free" and "challenging" something, which has not yet been revealed, i.e. when he speaks of a kind of intentionality before it is possible. Thereby he either undermines the primacy of the concept of *alêtheia* or the property of the essence of technology.

modern technology. Instead it shows that these differences are not adequately addressed by Heidegger's two concepts of technology and that there is a principal and profound connection between the technologies of the two epochs.¹² There is indeed a clear continuity between ancient silver mining and modern coal mining, which manifests a basic continuity in the revealing of nature.¹³

I maintain that this continuity should make us more sceptical toward Heidegger and his critique of modern technology. My suggestion is that the archaeology of the beginning of modern technology should instead focus on another passage of 'The Question Concerning Technology' and from the thought presented here try to reinterpret his analysis of modern technology. This way it is possible to link the origin of modern technology with its ultimate consequence.

2 Biotechnology and Cybernetics

In Heidegger's view, a new technology is in one sense the very youngest technology, but understood genuinely historically, the youngest technology is the technology that needs the longest preparation, and therefore this technology can also be assessed as the oldest. Heidegger sees history as a continuing unfolding-process defined by an ancient revealing of being, and from this reversed perspective, biotechnology, which normally is regarded as the youngest technology, belongs to the beginning of ancient technology.

The last is that which not only needs the longest fore-runnership but also itself *is*: not the ceasing, but the deepest beginning, which reaches out furthest and catches up with itself with the greatest of difficulty.

¹² It is also important to keep in mind, that it is possible to differentiate between the challenging of nature belonging to ancient slave driven silver mining and the crafting of a silver vessel just at it today is possible to differentiate between coal mining and the art of Picasso. However, this does not mean that it is not the same way of challenging nature taking place in ancient silver mining and in modern coal mining. It would be misleading to compare ancient silver mining with a modern painting in order to make a systematic separation of the two epochs and subsequently stigmatise the antique Greek technology. In one sense the reverse seems to be Heidegger's strategy. As he strives to illustrate the demand on nature through modern technology, at one point he contrasts it with an artwork, but actually one of more modern times, namely with an artwork of Hölderlin: 'In order that we may even remotely consider the monstrousness that reigns here, let us ponder for a moment the contrast that is spoken by the two titles: "The Rhine", as dammed up into the *power* works, and "The Rhine", as uttered by the *artwork*, in Hölderlin's hymn by that name' (Heidegger, M. (1977) "The Question Concerning Technology", in: David Farrell Krell (Ed) *Basic Writings*, pp 311-341 (New York: Harper & Row), p 321). In analogy it would also be possible to judge the Greek polis as monstrous compared to a modern state because of the revealing of human beings as slaves belonging to the former.

¹³ Based on Heidegger's concepts associated with modern technology it also does not seem possible to point out, why the revealing of human beings as slaves in antiquity should be less challenging than the modern concept of 'the supply of patients to a clinic', see: Heidegger, M. (1977) "The Question Concerning Technology", in: David Farrell Krell (Eds) *Basic Writings*, pp 311-341 (New York: Harper & Row), p 323

Therefore, the ‘last’ withdraws from all calculation and therefore must be able to bear the burden of *the loudest and most frequent misinterpretations*. Otherwise, how could it continue to be ‘the surpassing’ [das Überholende]?¹⁴

From the latter perspective, history and chronology stand in an inverse relation, and based on this conception of history, biotechnology has the earliest origin and the longest ‘fore-runnership’ and it furthermore suffers the most misunderstandings. Bearing in mind that Heidegger first and foremost views a historical development from its beginning instead of from its final result, there is a passage in ‘The Question Concerning Technology’ which stands out and calls for interpretation. In this passage Heidegger discusses the general antique concept of bringing-forth, *poiêsis*. In doing so, Heidegger wants to illustrate the rather broad meaning of bringing-forth, but at the same time he also implicitly calls attention to an important aspect of the development of biotechnology, which is crucial for the argument presented in this paper.

It is of utmost importance that we think bringing-forth in its full scope and at the same time in the sense in which the Greeks thought it. Not only handicraft manufacture, not only artistic and poetical bringing into appearance and concrete imagery, is a bringing-forth, *poiêsis*. *Physis*, also, the arising of something from out of itself, is a bringing-forth, *poiêsis*. *Physis is indeed poiêsis in the highest sense*. For what presences by *physis* has the irruption belonging to bringing-forth, e.g., the bursting of a blossom into bloom, in itself (*en heautôi*). In contrast, what is brought forth by the artisan or the artist, e.g., the silver chalice, has the irruption belonging to bringing-forth, not in itself, but in another (*en allôi*), in the craftsman or artist.¹⁵

Heidegger argues that nature manifests bringing-forth *in the highest sense* in the minds of the ancient Greeks, because the process of bringing-forth in nature happens *by itself*. In other words, in Greek antiquity the bringing-forth of nature is understood as the ideal kind of bringing-forth since it does not need the intervention of an outside force, i.e. nature does not need a craftsperson in order to produce its outcome. Thus the basic logic of this understanding of technology and nature is that the technological development is not supposed to halt before it catches up with its ideal. I argue that the reciprocal revealing of nature and technology, according to which technology is understood as a qualitatively privative way of bringing-forth, initiates a development, the ultimate goal of which is to actualise biotechnology. Biotechnology is thus rooted in the initial conception of technology in Greek antiquity. What was ‘primally thought’ about nature paved the way for the development of biotechnology.

¹⁴ Heidegger, M. (1999) *Contributions to Philosophy: From Enowning* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press), p. 285; emphasis added.

¹⁵ Heidegger, M. (1977) “The Question Concerning Technology”, in: David Farrell Krell (Eds) *Basic Writings*, pp 311-341 (New York: Harper & Row), p. 317; emphasis added.

Heidegger did not carry out an explicit investigation of biotechnology. Nevertheless, at one point he addresses what can be readily called a critical step in the advancement of biotechnology. Here he seems to reinforce the claim that biotechnology manifests the ultimate power of *das Gestell*; this might also be the reason why he considers this technological innovation as more dangerous than the production of the hydrogen bomb. No matter how dangerous, the hydrogen bomb is not an instance of the *self-reproductive* rule of *das Gestell*.

The international meeting of Nobel Prize winners took place again in the summer of this year of 1955 in Lindau. There the American chemist, Stanley [Wendell], had this to say: ‘The hour is near when life will be placed in the hands of the chemist who will be able to synthesize, split and change living substance at will’. We take notice of such a statement. We even marvel at the daring of scientific research, without thinking about it. We do not stop to consider that an attack with technological means is being prepared upon life and nature of man compared with which the explosion of the hydrogen bombs means little. For precisely if the hydrogen bombs do *not* explode and human life on earth is preserved, an uncanny change in the world moves upon us.¹⁶

My claim is that what Heidegger describes as the ‘uncanny change in the world’ is the convergence of technology and biology, which is manifest in biotechnology. According to the line of thought presented in this paper, biotechnology is precisely the ‘coming of the dawn’, i.e. the ultimate fruits of the early planted seeds pertaining to Greek metaphysics, for which we ought to be ‘astounded’ in Heidegger’s terminology.¹⁷ The vision of Stanley Wedell highlighted by Heidegger indeed addresses a crucial aspect of biotechnology, which is possible to understand better today. In more current biotechnology research programmes, Wendell’s vision takes on increasingly more shape.

Many of the things that were discussed as science fiction five years ago have already happened. This is not just a change of techniques, it is a new way of seeing. It is now possible to think of making organisms to a specification to carry out particular industrial tasks. The limitations of species can be transcended by splitting organisms, combining functions, dovetailing abilities and linking together chains of properties. *The living world can now be*

¹⁶ Heidegger, M. (1956) *Discourse on Thinking* (New York: Harper & Row), p. 20. It is interesting to see, that Norbert Wiener saw this quite oppositely. He was horrified by the explosion of the atomic bomb, but did not see a problem in analysing the human body and social behaviour in general within a cybernetic framework. See Galison, P. (1994), ‘The Ontology of the Enemy: Norbert Wiener and the Cybernetic Vision’, *Critical Inquiry*, 21, pp. 228-266, p. 254.

¹⁷ See also the initial Heidegger quote of this paper: Heidegger, M. (1977), ‘The Question Concerning Technology’, in: David Farrell Krell (Eds) *Basic Writings*, pp 311-341 (New York: Harper & Row), p. 327.

*viewed as a vast Lego kit inviting combination, hybridisation and continual rebuilding. Life is manipulability.*¹⁸

And

During our lifetimes we expect to see technology that is robust, autonomous, self-repairing, self-reproducing, evolving, adapting, and learning—a powerful combination of life’s core properties that no current technology yet embodies....During our lifetimes we can expect purely artificial technology to acquire life’s core properties and thus vastly outperform all current technology. This transition will be a truly singular event in human history.¹⁹ 95f

According to the defining principals of technology, which has been governing since Aristotle and also been determining for Heidegger’s understanding of technology, technology ceases to be technology, when it is able to reproduce itself without the aid of a craftsperson. At that point it attains the core property of life and more accurately belongs to the sphere of biology.

However, just as it is important to notice that Aristotle sees nature as the ideal kind of production which technology should imitate, it is also crucial to understand the unique positive role Aristotle ascribes to technology separating it from nature.

Now action is for the sake of an end; therefore the nature of things also is so. Thus if a house, e.g. had been a thing made by nature, it would have been made in the same way as it is now by art; and if things made by nature were made not only by nature but also by art, they would come to be in the same way as by nature. The one, then, is for the sake of the other; *and generally art in some cases completes what nature cannot bring to a finish, and in others imitates nature.*²⁰

Aristotle maintains that technology not only imitates nature; it can also create what nature cannot bring-forth on its own. From the dual vantage point pertaining to Aristotle’s conception of technology and nature, biotechnology is the ideal synthesis of natural and technical

¹⁸ Yoxen, Edward (1983), *The Gene Business: Who should control Biotechnology*, (London: Pan Books), p. 15; Emphasis added.

¹⁹ Mark A. Bedau et al (2010): “Living Technology: Exploiting Life’s Principles in Technology”, in *Artificial Life* 16: 89-97, 2010, pp. 89-97, p 90, 95.

²⁰ Aristotle (1984), ‘Politics’, in: *The Complete works of Aristotle*, pp. 1986-2129 (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press), II 199a; emphasis added. See also: ‘Now mistakes occur even in the operations of art: the literate man makes a mistake in writing and the doctor pours out the wrong dose. *Hence clearly mistakes are possible in the operations of nature also.* If then in art there are cases in which what is rightly produced serves a purpose, and if where mistakes occur there was a purpose in what was attempted, only it was not attained, *so must it be also in natural products, and monstrosities will be failures in the purposive effort.*’ *Ibid.* II 199a-199b; emphasis added. The Aristotelian understanding of nature as being able to make ‘mistakes’ is a statement ‘we should take notice of’ as well. Implicit to this understanding of nature there is a profound accusation of and attack on nature, as it not only allows but in fact also encourages humans to intervene in nature – in order to ‘correct’ it. This paradigmatic and fundamental challenge on nature is also a driving force behind the development of biotechnology.

production as it is self-reproductive as well as capable of bringing-forth what nature cannot produce by it self, i.e. grapes without seeds, organisms without ‘disorders’, and one day biotechnology will probably also make the growth of various utensils possible.²¹ Actualising the immense potential of biotechnology only seems to be a matter of time as it manifests the goal of a profound historical development which can be called the paradigm of biotechnology. In this way biotechnology is also the technology of the future; it brings about the ultimate way of producing within the framework of bringing-forth that has been ruling since the beginning of Western metaphysics. In other words, the *end of technology* is to be understood as the fulfilment of the ancient ideal of production and thus as the realisation of the ultimate technology. This historical development has to be seen in combination with the fundamental reassessment of technology taking place when technology is enabled to reproduce itself and copy the defining characteristic of nature. In this context I shall finally argue that the ‘end of technology’ is connected to ‘the task of biology’ – as reflected in the title of my paper. In biotechnology, nature is modified in such a way that it by itself fulfils a designed task and becomes capable of producing what it originally cannot do on its own. Through biotechnology, nature becomes the object of a ‘demand’ in a much more radical sense than Heidegger’s examples in ‘The Questions Concerning Technology’ suggest. In biotechnology the ‘demand on nature’, which Heidegger is so concerned about, becomes internalised and inseparable from the living system at stake.

The technological dimension of biotechnology is not responsible for the process of bringing-forth taking place; the craftsman is only initially present and *steers* the biological process and thus modifies its outcome or growth. The self-reproduction, the bringing-forth of biotechnology, is an emerging property of what is reproduced: the new material complex has dispensed of the craftsman and shows itself by itself. To exemplify, this means that it is not due to technology that a genetically modified corn is growing in a corn field. But through biotechnology this natural process has been modified so that the corn is able to grow without catching certain diseases for example.²² By changing the initial reproductive system, in this

²¹ See also Mark A. Bedau et al (2010): “Living Technology: Exploiting Life’s Principles in Technology”, in *Artificial Life* 16: 89-97, 2010, pp. 89-97, p. 92.

²² In praxis the modification of the plant is often done in a somewhat reverse and more brutal way, but this does not influence the basic principal of biotechnological. Sometimes the plant at stake is made immune to a certain poisoning, for example *Rundup*, which kills all the ‘bad weed’ and let the plant flourish. But as A. Nordmann points out, the principal of biotechnology is designed growth as described above: ‘To obtain a more precise conception of naturalized technology, genetically modified food may serve as a paradigm. Here, the technical intervention that makes for a genetically modified plant and thus enters into food remains essentially inconspicuous to human sense. The genetic modification can produce visible and invisible phenotypic traits’

case the cells of the corn, biotechnology modifies the plan according to which nature operates and brings-forth. Instead of having people and machines in the cornfields spraying pesticides etc., biotechnology is in principal capable of enabling the corn seed itself to prevent it from catching specific diseases. In this way biotechnology dispenses of the external agent and naturalises technology. The steering mechanisms of nature itself (its governing system) has been altered in such a way that these mechanisms work in order to fulfil targets set by humans.

Against this backdrop it is also possible to view embryonic stem cells as ultimate resources, as they can be turned into any other cell through biotechnology and afterwards, in theory, by themselves grow into virtually any kind of tissue or ‘spare part’ for other living organisms.²³ Embryonic stem cells are the ‘basic atom’ of living substance - they are the flexible resource *par excellence*. It is not a coincidence that embryonic stem cells have become a fundamental area of research in biotechnology as one day they will help facilitate biotechnology to manifest its full potential.

Interpreting biotechnology along these lines intersects with Heidegger’s philosophy of technology in another significant way. This intersection is further evidence for interpreting biotechnology as *the ultimate technology*. As mentioned above, Heidegger sees the development initiated by ancient Greek metaphysics as culminating in what he describes as *cybernetics*. In two different texts he writes: ‘Philosophy is ending in the present age. It has found its place in the scientific attitude of socially active humanity. But the fundamental characteristic of this scientific attitude is its *cybernetic*, that is, technological character’²⁴. Everything including human beings is ultimately viewed as something controllable in cybernetics according to Heidegger’s understanding. This makes cybernetics a candidate for the most profound rule of *das Gestell*: ‘Meanwhile, cybernetics can be certain about its matter, i.e. to account everything that is as a controllable process, because the idea prevails, to determine

Nordmann, A (2008) “Technology Naturalized: A Challenge to Design for the Human Scale”, in P.E. Vermaas et al. (Eds) *Philosophy and Design: From Engineering to Architecture*, pp. 173-184, Springer, p. 176.

²³ Heidegger already bemoaned the implicit understanding of humans expressed in the praxis of modern hospitals. This assessment can also be seen as a sign of his radical critique towards such a phenomenon as biotechnology. ‘Only to the extent that man for his part is already challenged to exploit the energies of nature can this revealing that orders happen. If man is challenged, ordered, to do this, then does not man himself belong even more originally than nature within the standing-reserve? The current talk about human resources [Menschenmaterial], about the supply of patients [Krankenmaterial] for a clinic, gives evidence for this’ Heidegger, M. (1977) “The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking”, in: David Farrell Krell (Eds) *Basic Writings*, pp 431-449 (New York: Harper & Row), p. 323.

²⁴ Heidegger, M. (1977) “The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking”, in: David Farrell Krell (Eds) *Basic Writings*, pp 431-449 (New York: Harper & Row), p. 432ff; emphasis added.

the human freedom as something humanly planned and controllable.²⁵ By using the concept of cybernetics, Heidegger wants to call attention to the ancient Greek root of cybernetics and through this reference better understand the final phase of the ancient paradigm of technology. According to etymology, cybernetics derives from the Greek word for steering and the *kybernetes* is originally the steersman of a sailing boat.²⁶ The steersman of a boat has a particular function. He is not doing the hard work of moving the boat like a rower for example; instead he uses a special technique by which he as intelligently as possible acts through the technical systems of the sailing boat to take advantage of the forces of nature such as wind and current. By physically doing almost nothing, the steersman makes sure that the technical system he is operating is profiting the most from nature. Or viewed from the perspective of nature, the steersman steers the boat in such a way that it indeed follows the forces of nature; but in order to reach the goal of the steersman. Against this backdrop, cybernetics can be understood today as the technical enterprise that strives to design technologies that take over the function of the steersman in the example above. In this sense cybernetics is a meta-technology.

Moreover, in the example with the steersman of a sailing boat it is difficult to conclude whether technology rules nature or vice versa, and this is exactly the point. From this perspective, Heidegger's use of the concept of cybernetics can also be interpreted as his answer to the intelligent joining together of technology and nature, and in this sense the meaning of cybernetics is analogue to the meaning of biotechnology presented in this paper: it is the joining of forces of nature and technology. To Heidegger, cybernetics describes the last phase of technology in which a branch of technology, in a manner of speaking, recedes as far as possible only to steer and coordinate technological systems (including nature understood as an automatic production system – which is in line with Aristotle's understinading of nature). In the epoch of cybernetics, technology in a way turns back on itself and the ultimate technology must be the one directing the others. Thus cybernetics may also be interpreted as a pragmatic self-

²⁵ My translation of Heidegger, M. (2000) *Reden und andere Zeugnisse eines Lebensweges (1910-1976)*, (Frankfurt: Klostermann), p. 623: ‚Indes kann sie ihrer Sache, alles, was ist, als gesteuerten Vorgang zu errechnen, schon sicher sein, weil sich der Gedanke regt, die Freiheit des Menschen als seine geplante, das heißt steuerbare zu bestimmen‘. And this assessment of cybernetics indeed reflect Norbet Wiener's research. See: ‘We [Wiener and Rosenblueth]’ believe that men and other animals are like machines from the scientific standpoint because we believe that the only fruitful methods for the study of human and animal behaviour are the methods applicable to the behaviour of mechanical objects as well. Thus, our main reason for selecting the terms in question was to emphasize that, as objects of scientific enquiry, humans do not differ from machines.’ Rosenblueth, A. and N. Wiener (1950), “Purposeful and Non-purposeful Behavior”, *Philosophy of Science*, 17, p. 328.

²⁶ See “cybernetics” in *The New Oxford Dictionary of English* (1998), (Oxford: Clarendon Press), p. 456.

reflexive technology or as a meta-technology. Cybernetics hooks on to the power or streams of information²⁷ in other technological systems and strives to steer them in order to produce and reproduce an initially envisioned result more efficiently and with less use of energy or without human intervention. The cybernetic system is purely pragmatic and does not strive to create intermediary representations such as formal knowledge in order to achieve the envisioned result. This would only be considered a *sub-optimal detour*. In other words, the task of cybernetics is to produce the biggest outcome with the smallest possible amount of (human) work.

An interesting example of cybernetics from Britain in the early 1960's illustrates this point. In this period the cybernetician, Stafford Beer, attempted to frame and calibrate the biological processes of the 'eco-system' in a natural pond in such a way that they could effectively operate the technology of a factory without human intervention.²⁸ The goal of the experiment can be described as the creation of an effective hybrid of biology and technology, which in principal could regulate itself and produce artefacts at the same time. To get a clearer idea of how this joining together of technology and biology was supposed to work, I want to refer to the work of one of the leading researchers of cybernetics, Andrew Pickering. To understand Beer's experiment, he writes as follows:

In a steady state, an ecosystem like a pond, for example, exists in a state of dynamic equilibrium with its environment, homeostatically responding to fluctuations that threaten its viability. And if the environment changes, the ecosystem will reconfigure itself to achieve a dynamic equilibrium with that... Beer's idea was that if one could only couple such an adaptive system to a factory, say, making the factory part of the pond's environment, and vice versa, the health of each could be made to hinge on that of the other, in a process that Beer called *reciprocal vetoing*. Disturbances from the factory might trip the ecosystem into a new configuration, which would in turn perturb the operation of the factory, and if the factory in its new state was still unstable, new disturbances would travel back to the ecosystem – and so until the pond and the factory achieved a collective state of dynamic equilibrium with each other and their outside environments. This is the way in which a pond with some small organisms and a leech could serve as an adaptive brain for the automatic factory. An amazing idea, though I can see no reason in principle why it should not work.²⁹

²⁷ The concept of information is often associated with cybernetics, however it is information understood as that which steers the power or direction of any given system, i.e. that which has to be manipulated in order to accommodate or take over the system at stake – no matter if it is technical or natural.

²⁸ See Pickering, A. (2009) "Beyond design: cybernetics, biological computers", *Synthese*, 168, pp. 469-491.

²⁹ See Pickering, A. (2009), "Beyond design: cybernetics, biological computers and hylozoism", *Synthese*, 168: pp. 469-491, p. 479. In this version of cybernetics it seems quite harmless and not as much challenging as obeying nature. Yet, Heidegger would point out that it is the implicit revealing of nature as 'system' that goes along with it

From the point of view presented in my paper there is a clear continuity between this understanding of cybernetics and the earlier foundational work of Norbert Wiener. Heidegger knew Wiener's work as it was here that the term cybernetics was coined for the first time in 1947.³⁰ Wiener's discussion of feed-back systems, such as the governing mechanism of classical steam engines, makes it easier to understand why cybernetics can be understood as a smart meta-technology and a forerunner of the cybernetic factory above. Wiener writes:

In the original form designed by Watt, it [the governing mechanism of a classical steam engine] consists of two balls attached to pendulum rods and swinging on opposite sides of a rotating shaft. They are kept down by their own weight or by a spring, and they are swung upwards by a centrifugal action dependent on the angular velocity of the shaft. They thus assume a compromise position likewise dependent on the angular velocity. This position is transmitted by other rods to a collar about the shaft, which actuates a member which serves to open the intake valves of the cylinder when the engine slows down and the balls fall, and to close them when the engine speeds up and the balls rise.³¹

This feedback mechanism of the steam engine only works so effectively because it is a part of the steam engine itself. The continuous movement of the steam engine resembles the self-movement of nature, and I claim that the feed-back loops between Watt's new technology and the power of the steam engine in principal are analogous to the relation of nature and technology in the case of biotechnological systems and the cybernetic factory. The apparent sense of 'control' and 'regulation' in cybernetic systems is not stronger than in other technical systems. On the contrary, *in these systems the governing mechanism is smarter and more unnoticeable as it becomes an integrated part of the system itself.*³² When the cybernetic system is working, it is ideally autonomous and not controlled by an outside force. In other words, in cybernetics and biotechnology, regulation becomes an immanent part of the designed technology.

(eco-system etc), we need to pay attention to. If the factory every year had to raise its profit by 10% for example, then the cybernetic system eventually would have to challenge, control and change the pond in such a way, that it quite straightforwardly would fit into Heidegger's critique of cybernetics.

³⁰ Galison, P. (1994), "The Ontology of the Enemy: Norbert Wiener and the Cybernetic Vision", *Critical Inquiry*, 21, pp. 228-266, p 232

³¹ Wiener, N (1948), *Cybernetics or Control and Communication in the Animal and the Machine*, (New York: The Technology Press), p. 115. See also Peter Galison.: 'The self-correction is exactly what Wiener's machines did. Indeed, in every piece of his writing on cybernetics, from the first technical exposition of the AA predictor before Pearl Harbor up through his essays of the 1960s on science and society, Wiener puts feedback in the foreground, returning again and again to the torpedo, the guided missile, and his anti-aircraft director' Galison, P. (1994), "The Ontology of the Enemy: Norbert Wiener and the Cybernetic Vision", *Critical Inquiry*, 21, pp. 228-266, p. 258.

³² For this reason it also makes sense that Pickering differentiates between classic technology and cybernetics. However, from the point of view of the paradigm of technology Heidegger draws, this feature of cybernetics makes the two belong a continuous development within the *same* paradigm.

It is in this sense that I have argued that Heidegger sees cybernetics as belonging to the end of technology understood as the ultimate expression of the technological development since antiquity. Thus I claim that cybernetics and biotechnology are analogue technologies. Heidegger's understanding of cybernetics describes the kind of logic that also co-defines biotechnology. However, biotechnology more clearly materialises the synthesis of nature and technology. Cybernetics still implies the notion of a steersman, which is more or less a part of the system itself. Biotechnology more readily focuses on the ultimate synthesis between technology and biology and therefore I maintain that it can be assessed more precisely as the *end of technology*.

Yet, when technology becomes a part of nature and the rule of *das Gestell* seems to become fully automated, a subversive phenomenon occurs. In the final section below, I will unfold what I mean by this phenomenon – a phenomenon Heidegger never addresses. Biotechnology threatens to turn around Heidegger's critique of technology in yet another way, and here we may also find the reason why Heidegger avoids to explicitly address it.³³

3 The Re-disclosure of Nature

In nature the process of bringing-forth and thus also the phenomenon of *alêtheia* is continually and directly evident. In Heidegger's interpretation, nature has to be understood first and foremost in connection to its self-movement.³⁴ The self-movement of nature, its agency, manifests itself as something concealed is being unconcealed, for instance the flower pertaining to the sprout. As pointed out in the first part of the paper, this process of disclosing is the exact definition of truth according to Heidegger.

The very purpose of biotechnology is to give way to the agency of nature, allow its unfolding to happen by itself and thus to achieve the highest kind of bringing-forth. This means that biotechnology does not as such change the production-process taking place in nature; it only changes the outcome of this process, i.e. that which is being brought-forth. It is this technical accommodation of the elementary force of nature that defines biotechnology. What is brought-forth by biotechnology is due to technology as well as nature – in biotechnology the

³³ Part of my inspiration for this reassessment of technology I have found in Andrew Pickering's understanding of British cybernetics. See Pickering, A (2002) "Cybernetics and the Mangle: Ashby, Beer and Pask", *Social Studies of Science*, 32, pp. 413-437.

³⁴ Heidegger, M. (1998), "On the Essence and Concept of F'uysi" in Aristotle's *Physics* B, I", in *Pathmarks*, pp. 183-230 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p. 191.

two elements cannot be fully separated as the natural self-disclosure only becomes apparent in technical outline.

Arguably biotechnology leads away the attention from what is ownmost to nature in the Heideggerian sense, namely the self-unfolding, by directing attention to its manipulability. Yet, Heidegger stresses that to attain an understanding of what is ownmost to nature through the things in nature is already very difficult since that which is in front of one's own eyes is mostly overseen – just as we most often do not understand the beginning before the end.³⁵

What appears antecedently – as does *fuvsī* [physis] in the *fusei ontā* [physei ontā], as history does in all historical occurrences, as art does in all artworks, as 'life' does in all living things – what already stands in view is seen with the greatest difficulty, is grasped very seldomly, is almost always falsified into a mere addendum, and for these reasons simply overlooked.³⁶

In other words, I argue that biotechnology does not seem to make the task of seeing and grasping the essence of nature more difficult than it already is, and in connection to this, biotechnology does not change that which Heidegger maintains is the core property of nature, namely the self-unfolding

Even though biotechnology is defined by steering the disclosing- or unfolding-process of nature, it does not occasion this process; on the contrary, it is dependent on it. The possibility condition for biotechnology to work is that nature changes, moves and unfolds itself.³⁷ And it is exactly this phenomenon, this basic fact, for which we are to be astounded, in Heidegger's view.³⁸ Biotechnology might lead astray from this fact and make it look like technology is in control of nature, but the amalgamation of technology and nature belonging to biotechnology in fact re-discloses what Heidegger describes as the essence of nature.

In a certain way this understanding of biotechnology parallels Heidegger's own interpretation of the instrumental account of technology. In his critique, Heidegger argues that

³⁵ Heidegger, M. (1977), "The Question Concerning Technology", in: David Farrell Krell (Eds) *Basic Writings*, pp 311-341 (New York: Harper & Row), p. 327.

³⁶ Heidegger, M. (1998), "On the Essence and Concept of *F'uvsi*" in Aristotle's *Physics B, I*", in *Pathmarks*, pp. 183-230 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p. 201.

³⁷ See also: 'The priority of nature does not consist just in the fact that nature provides the materials that technology appropriates, although it must come first as material resource. To see nature in this way as resource is already to see from within technology, as Heidegger makes clear in "The Question Concerning Technology." Rather, to see nature through eyes opened by Heidegger's account of ancient science is to retrieve the claim that nature is that which moves on its own accord. It is at best borrowed, not overcome by technology.' Glazebrook, Trish (2000) *Heidegger's Philosophy of Science*, New York: Fordham University Press, p. 206.

³⁸ See Heidegger, M. (1977), "The Question Concerning Technology", in: David Farrell Krell (Eds) *Basic Writings*, pp 311-341 (New York: Harper & Row), p. 327

the understanding of technology according to which it seems like human beings are in control of technology is misplaced, he instead maintains that humans basically are controlled by the technological world-disclosure and that we thus have to turn the instrumental account of technology on its head.³⁹ Along these lines I agree that technology is not fundamentally in control of nature in biotechnology; with Heidegger's help we might learn to see it the other way around. On a different level it is technology that is dependent on the elementary self-unfolding of nature in biotechnology. It is the astonishing and autonomous self-unfolding of nature that grants the possibility of biotechnology. Biotechnology is an opening up towards a supreme incomprehensible force and nature can only be accommodated by respecting the rules of nature itself. Due to the ambivalence of the integration of nature in technology, biotechnology and cybernetics can either be interpreted as a more gentle and sustainable technology or as a more restrictive and challenging one.⁴⁰ However, from the point of view of my interpretation, they both belong to the same paradigm of technology.

Based on Heidegger's own line of thinking, it would therefore be superficial and without real understanding of technology to claim that the phenomenon of truth is ruled out by biotechnology - the contrary is the case. Truth understood as *alêtheia* is evident in biotechnology too, and it is this fundamental phenomenon which has saving power, according to Heidegger. In relation to biotechnology, Heidegger's famous reference to the German poet Friedrich Hölderlin might even be understood better and more literally: 'But where danger is, grows// the saving power also.'⁴¹ Biotechnology might be dangerous in the Heideggerian sense,

³⁹ Heidegger, M. (1977), "The Question Concerning Technology", in: David Farrell Krell (Eds) *Basic Writings*, pp 311-341 (New York: Harper & Row), p. 311f.

⁴⁰ It is interesting to see, that Andrew Pickering uses cybernetics similar to the way Alfred Nordmann uses biotechnology, namely as examples of technologies beyond control, but based on this assessment they draw opposite conclusions. This points to the ambivalence, I have described above: 'In The Mangle, I wanted to conjure up a picture of both human and material agency as indefinitely open-ended, bound by no such finite range of possibilities...There is space for a lot of interesting, constructive work to be done here' Pickering, A (2002) "Cybernetics and the Mangle: Ashby, Beer and Pask", *Social Studies of Science*, 32, pp. 413-437, p. 418. 'Genetically modified organisms [elude comprehension]...The most advanced technological research programs are thus bringing about a curiously regressive inversion of the relation between humans, technology, and nature. No longer a means of controlling nature in order to protect, shield, or empower humans, technology dissolves into nature and becomes *uncanny, incomprehensible, beyond perceptual and conceptual control*. Technology might thus end up being as enchanted and perhaps frightening as nature used to be when humanity started the technological process of disenchantment and rationalization. *Good design* might counteract this inversion, for example, by creating human interfaces even with technologies that are meant to be too small to be experienced' Nordmann, A. (2008) "Technology Naturalized: A challenge to Design for the Human Scale", in P.E. Vermaas et al. (Eds) *Philosophy and Design: From Engineering to Architecture*, Springer, pp. 173-184, p. 173 emphasis added)

⁴¹ Heidegger, M. (1977), "The Question Concerning Technology", in: David Farrell Krell (Eds) *Basic Writings*, pp 311-341 (New York: Harper & Row), p. 333; emphasis added.

but its ‘growth’, i.e. its self-unfolding, manifests the phenomenon of truth, which has ‘saving power’ according to Heidegger’s analysis.⁴² In other words, ruled by biotechnology or not, nature demonstrates the event of self-disclosure, i.e. the event of *alêtheia*. The wonder of nature is not lost in biotechnology, but instead re-disclosed and more ambivalent.

The Heidegger-inspired insight into the ‘saving power’ of biotechnology also has another consequence. It now becomes possible to understand that the pre-technological ‘nature’ by itself also must disclose a ‘danger’. This consequence follows from Heidegger’s phenomenology and for this reason he was probably very well aware of it. Heidegger never discussed biotechnology explicitly and this may be exactly because biotechnology would call attention to this aspect of nature and reveal the limits of his own interpretation and thus the same kind of ambivalence in nature as the one he ascribes to *das Gestell*.

Towards the end of ‘The Question Concerning Technology’, Heidegger writes the following about the ambivalence of the essence of technology, which should be taken into account to better understand the argument presented in my paper:

The essential unfolding of technology threatens revealing, threatens it with the possibility that all revealing will be consumed in ordering and that everything will present itself only in the unconcealment of standing-reserve. Human activity can never directly counter this danger. Human achievement alone can never banish it. But human reflection [Besinnung] can ponder the fact that all saving power must be of a higher essence than what is endangered, though at the same time kindred to it.⁴³

Translated into the previous conception of nature and turned upside down, Heidegger’s insight means that through reflection we can come to see how the ‘saving power’ of nature must be ‘kindred’ to a danger as well. If the ‘saving power’ prevails, then it is indeed of a higher essence than the danger, and would prove Heidegger right. However, this outcome is not clear in advance. If this was the case, there would be no real danger – it would only be a matter of time before the ‘saving power’ would triumph. Heidegger’s analysis of modern technology shows that he in fact thinks otherwise and thus deems it possible that the danger will be fully actualised in the end.

But what is the danger of nature that Heidegger is not telling us about? In an interpretation of the work of Hölderlin, Heidegger gives us a first impression of the danger of nature and its affinity to the rule of *das Gestell*. This interpretation dates before his preoccupation with

⁴² See *ibid.* p. 317.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 339.

technology and is thus able to provide us with insight into issues that Heidegger had not tried to coordinate in advance with his interpretation of technology. In 1939 Heidegger writes:

However, nature's 'light embrace' does not at all suggest an impotent weakness. The "all-present' [nature] is, after all, called 'powerful'. From where does nature take her power, then, if she is prior to all that is present? Nature does not have to borrow her power from somewhere else. She herself is that which bestows power... This omnipresence [of nature] holds in opposition to each other *the extreme opposites, the highest heaven and the deepest abyss*. But thereby the opposites that are held out to one another remain separated from one another through a kind of *stubborn unruliness*.⁴⁴

This reflection is written without reference to technology and to depict another perspective on nature than the one Heidegger is referring to in 'The Question Concerning Technology'. Hence this concept of nature can reveal what has been concealed until now: the danger belonging to nature. From this perspective nature is the mighty, omnipotent and unstoppable force that constantly unfolds itself and creates new beings, only to decompose them and let them revive in an endless oscillation. The ontological mobilisation of nature has no final destination – it is circular and just continues to reproduce itself forever. In other words, from this viewpoint nature does not grow old, but goes on unfolding and reviving itself: it is endless.⁴⁵ The endless and repetitive mobilisation of all things reveals nature as a force that has no meaning except from keeping itself in motion – and this is the very definition of a nihilistic power.⁴⁶ To understand nature as a perpetual motion that encompasses all beings through 'stubborn unruliness', as Heidegger calls it, is the same as to reveal nihilism at the heart of all beings. It is at this exact point that the rule of nature stands out as resembling the rule of *das Gestell*. Heidegger is pointing out the danger of the rule of *das Gestell*, because it strives to appropriate all domains of being only to sap their energy in order to sap more energy from other beings indefinitely – a process, which leads to the mobilisation of everything as it transforms everything into the most agile of resources, namely energy. In other words, Heidegger criticises the rule of *das Gestell* for revealing all beings as part of a nihilistic mobilisation process; however, his own concept of nature has the exact same core properties.

⁴⁴ Heidegger, M. (2000) *Elucidations of Hölderlin's Poetry* (New York, Humanity Books), p. 76; emphasis added.

⁴⁵ See also: 'But generation [pertaining to nature] is *this* kind of generation – i.e., *kivnhsi*" in the narrower sense of movement as opposed to rest – *only* insofar as that which is appropriate has *not yet* brought its appropriateness to its end, and so is *aj-telev*" – that is only insofar as the standing-in-the-work is not yet within its end' Heidegger, M. (1998) "On the Essence and Concept of F'uysi" in Aristotle's *Physics* B, I", in *Pathmarks*, pp. 183-230 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p. 218.

⁴⁶ A process that the hypothesis of a God can save us from – but Heidegger makes no *deus ex machina* argument.

The rule of *das Gestell* and the rule of nature are analogue powers, and from a Heideggerian perspective they both manifest the highest saving power and the ultimate danger.

The ultimate synthesis of technology and biology belonging to biotechnology does not automatically actualise the ultimate danger, but rather the ultimate ambivalence. Through an argument based on Heidegger's own insights, biotechnology is much more ambivalent and indeed also has the potential of creating a positive understanding for the event of truth and for leading the way to a new kind of technology, which does not necessarily exploit nature, but has the capacity of bringing-forth in a way that supports and re-vitalises nature.⁴⁷ Biotechnology is not only a way of steering natural growth; it is just as much an admiration of nature and a manifestation of modesty on the part of technology. Carefully re-examined, Heidegger's work not only shows the danger of biotechnology – it can help also understanding biotechnology as the ultimate technology which has the potential of re-disclosing the phenomenon of truth.

⁴⁷ This point has parallels in the two paradigms in the history of science and technology, which Andrew Pickering points out – yet the primary difference is that I situate the two possible paradigms within cybernetics itself: 'The history of British cybernetics offers us a different form of science and engineering, one that does not seek to dominate nature through knowledge. I want to say that one can distinguish two different paradigms in the history of science and technology: the one that Heidegger despised, which we could call the Modern paradigm, and another, cybernetic, nonModern, paradigm that he might have approved of' Pickering, A. (2009) "Beyond design: cybernetics, biological computers", *Synthese*, 168, pp. 469-491, p. 469. And: 'What I have been trying to do is contrast a nonModern cybernetic paradigm with the Modern technoscientific paradigm that Heidegger railed against... Cybernetics placed the inexhaustible powers of nature at its centre, where Modern technoscience has representation instead. Modernity is thus characterised by its enormous detours through knowledge and industry, while cybernetics stays close to the performative world as found, abstaining from the attempt to unwrap Black Boxes. And if Modernity is defined by projects of domination, then cybernetics is marked by a symmetric accommodation to the ultimately uncontrollable' Pickering, A. (2009) "Beyond design: cybernetics, biological computers", *Synthese*, 168, pp. 469-491, p. 490.

Heidegger's Technologies: Pen versus Typewriter

Don Ihde

Stony Brook University

Agriculture is now a mechanized food industry, in *essence* it is no different than the production of corpses in the gas chambers and death camps, the embargoes and food reductions to starving countries, the making of hydrogen bombs. (Martin Heidegger)

For Heidegger, technology is a gloomy drama in which every invention merely strips the mystery from the world and turns all things into a manipulable stockpile of present at hand slag. A mass-produced umbrella is no different from a cinder block or an aircraft carrier...the problem with his analyses is not their pessimism, but their monotony. (Graham Harman)

Philosophy and Technology

Martin Heidegger, often cited as the 20th century founder of philosophy of technology, remains a dominant figure in many, particularly continental, circles. I aim here to re-consider his perspective upon technology by tracing not only stances he took, but by critically examining outcomes related to his own practices and claims. I shall do this by following both uses and transformations relating to his own technological practices, practices central to *producing philosophy*. In so doing, I shall follow the dominant focal activities of philosophers in *language-concerns*, but in this case I shall concentrate upon the *material* or artifactually embedded practices, particularly writing and text production.

First, I will grant that Heidegger provoked an inversion concerning the role and relationship of technology in relation to science. His claim that technology is chronologically later, but ontologically prior to science was to have far reaching consequences. Paul Forman, a leading intellectual historian, has recently stated a thesis which he acknowledges has roots in Heideggerian thinking. Forman, in a special issue of History and Technology (2007), argues that in modernity, science is presumed to be prior to (modern) technology, but in a watershed

turn, postmodernity inverts this priority and technology becomes prior to science. Here is his abstract:

The abrupt reversal of culturally ascribed primacy in the science-technology relationship—namely , from the primacy of science relative to technology prior to circa 1980, to the primacy of technology relative to science since about that date—is proposed as a demarcator of postmodernity from modernity: modernity is when ‘science’ could, and often did, denote technology too; postmodernity is when science is subsumed under modernity.¹

While only now has this shift become apparent, it is clear that Heidegger originated such a shift as early as 1927, *Being and Time*, and then subsumed science into technology as a metaphysic by the time of *The Question concerning Technology*.

In my own case I began my now four decade long reflections on technology as a “heideggerian” of sorts and dedicated *Technics and Praxis* (1979) to Heidegger. But by 1981 with my article, “The Historical and Ontological Priority of Technology over Science” (*Existential Technics*, 1983) I had begun a more critical trajectory. I shall not trace that development here except to note that it had several dimensions, the first historical, then anti-romantic (“De-Romanticizing Heidegger” in my first *Postphenomenology* [1993] book) and simultaneously pragmatist criticisms in the context of developing postphenomenology during the late 80’s. I was learning much from Richard Rorty. His claim was that pragmatism is both non-foundational and anti-essentialist, themes from *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (1979), and again in *Consequences of Pragmatism* (1982). Here, the contrast with Heidegger could not be more dramatic: “The Question Concerning Technology” was an attempt to determine the *essence* of technology which, as Heidegger also claimed, “The essence of technology is nothing technological.” I claimed, pragmatically, that there *is no essence of technology*, although there are many ‘technologies.’ And, the search for *the* essence of technology is necessarily a metaphysical –and *reductionist*—turn, one that determines from the beginning the reason all technologies are reduced to the same analysis as Harman claims. That essence, as readers of Heidegger know, is the way of seeing Nature as a pool of “standing reserve” whereby nature is set up in advance in a restrictive frame, *Gestell*, to be calculatively challenged to produce usefulness for humans, *Dasein*. Here we are back to modern agriculture, the Holocaust, atomic bombs—and more manageably as I will show, *typewriters and work processors*. This essay is part of my new, forthcoming book with Fordham, *Heidegger’s Technologies: Postphenomenological Perspectives*.

¹ Paul Forman, “The Primacy of Science in Modernity, of Technology in Postmodernity, and of Ideology in the History of Technology,” History of Technology, Vol.23, Issue 1&2. March, 2007. p. 1

Now, let us make an “empirical turn” so much discussed in science-technology studies circles. And while I have suggested that Heidegger on technology is historically naïve and romantically biased; and have now hinted that a pragmatic anti-essentialism would show that there are many *varieties of technological experience*—one size does not fit all and one analysis is next to useless—I now want to make a fourth, *postphenomenological* critique and show why even the most Heideggerian of Continental philosopher types won’t be giving their laptops away. Such an empirical or concrete descriptivist turn both avoids the Heideggerian trap of remaining too high altitude and general, and with a microanalysis, can show close-up something else about technologies.

Postphenomenological Analyses:

What I shall be analyzing are Heidegger’s own technologies. As most scholars have noted, his famous ‘tool analysis’ from *Being and Time* is one of the most frequently cited of his texts. But note carefully precisely what he cites as equipment:

Taken strictly, there ‘is’ no such thing as an equipment. To the Being of any equipment there always belongs a totality of equipment, in which it can be this equipment that it is. Equipment is essentially ‘something-in-order-to...’ A totality of equipment is constituted by various ways of the ‘in-order-to’, such as serviceability, conduciveness, usability, manipulability. In the ‘in-order-to’ as a structure here lies an *assignment* or *reference* of something to something... Equipment—in accordance with its equipmentality—always is *in terms of* its belonging to other equipment: [now note what Heidegger lists as equipment as early as *Being and Time*.] ink-stand, pen, ink, paper, blotting pad table, lamp.... [In short, Heidegger’s own technologies.]

The typewriter: I begin with Heidegger, then, on the typewriter. In his *Parmenides* he is talking about the Greek sense of action, *pragma*, which leads to, in this case, the production of writing through the hand.

Human beings “act” through the hand; for the hand is, like the word, a distinguishing characteristic of humans. Only a being, such as the human, that “has” the word can and must “have hands.” ...The hand becomes present as hand only where there is disclosure and concealment. The animal has no hands, nor are hands derived from paws, claws, or talons. ...The hand has only merged from and with the word. The human being does not “have hands”, but the hand contains the essence of the human being because the word, as the essential region of the hand, is the essential ground of being human....As script, however, the word is handwriting...²

² Martin Heidegger, *Parmenides* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1982), pp. 118-119

I am so tempted here to become satirical—is our Heidegger anti-evolutionary? Does he not know about primate hands which form and grasp tools? Or, since speech seems to be associated only with either modern hominids or at most those immediately preceding modern hominids, were not hands ‘at hand’ well before the word? And was not the essential ground of being human possibly tied up with tools first, which were fashioned at least 2.5 million years ago? I will instead turn to take a now close up look at Heidegger himself *acting through the hand*.

One of the most interesting books to be published recently, in my opinion, is Adam Sharr’s *Heidegger’s Hut* (2006). Adam Sharr shows us a glimpse of Heidegger’s world as seen through his ‘dwellings,’ his hut and his Freiburg city house. First the Hut: The photographs of the study in the hut show bookcases which contain only manuscripts—presumably Heidegger’s—the desk is empty except for a number of pens, a blotter and ink container, and papers, precisely the equipment cited in *Being and Time*. This site, Heidegger claims, is where he most often hand-penned his written work. Thus, Heidegger’s site for producing philosophy.

Now turn to his city house. At this site while all the shelves near the desk and even on the desk, are again filled with manuscripts, presumably his own, here, in the background, there are *books*, lots of books. Again on the desk, the plethora of pens—lots of them—blotter and paper. In both cases we have Heidegger at work—using simple technologies.

Now let us turn Heidegger onto Heidegger. Where there is revealing, there is concealing, and whatever is present has also its absence. Absent, of course, is a different writing technology—the typewriter. So listen to what Heidegger has to say about the typewriter:

It is not by chance that modern man writes “with” the typewriter and “dictates”—the same word as “to invent creatively”—into the machine. This “history” of the kinds of writing is at the same time one of the major reasons for the increasing destruction of the word. The word no longer passes through the hand as it writes and acts authentically but through the mechanized pressure of the hand. The typewriter snatches script from the essential realm of the hand—and this means the hand is removed from the essential realm of the word. The word becomes something “typed.” Nevertheless, mechanical script does have its own, limited importance where mechanized script serves as a mere transcription for preserving handwriting, or where typewritten script substitutes for “print.” When typewriters first became prevalent, a personal letter typed on a machine was regarded as a lapse of manners or as an insult. Today, handwritten letters slow down rapid reading and are therefore regarded as old-fashioned and undesirable. Mechanized writing deprives the hand of dignity in the realm of the written word and degrades the word to a mere means for the traffic of communication. Besides, mechanized

writing offers the advantage of covering up one's handwriting and therewith one's character. In mechanized writing all human beings look the same.³

Again, my temptation is to turn satirical, but I will only comment that it is quite obvious to me that Heidegger never learned to type, else he would have eventually understood that the word 'flows through' the keyboard onto the scripted page and even better with an electronic rather than mechanical keyboard. But I will return to this after a detour into a different, but related technology.

In my attempts to try to show that 'one size cannot fit all,' I often revert to *musical* instruments (technologies) which I believe do not fit well into the *Bestand/Gestell* essential reductions of Heidegger's view of technologies. Indeed, woodwinds could be said to be somewhat like windmills, they play only when the performer provides skilled and controlled 'wind' or *breath*. So, here as my example, I draw from the work of Trevor Pinch and Karin Bijsterveld's work on the history and sociology of music, The history of the development of musical instruments is fascinating. In Europe this history parallels the development of instrumentation in both science and art, particularly music. Prior to the Renaissance with its fascination with all sorts of technologies—optics, musical instruments, mechanical devices—much music remained vocal and often highly restricted particularly in sacred music, to preferred tonal systems. But all of the classes of instruments: strings, percussion, winds, and keyboards had emerged during the Renaissance. I shall use only their example: the invention of *keyed* wind instruments.

The turn to keyed mechanisms—for flutes, clarinets, later horns—was largely 19th century. Prior to this development, holes for fingering were pre-mechanical. Mechanical keys were easy to operate, produced more uniform and cleaner tones and allowed for different and faster virtuosity. But not everyone was happy with this development—and here a century before Heidegger there was a Heideggerian moment: Heinrich Grenser objected that the fingers [read hands] were losing their possibilities for making a "vibrato by simply moving the fingers over the sound holes" thus losing control over finger positions "to correct out of tune sounds."⁴ Grenser went on to complain that the use of keys [read typewriter] is "neither complex nor art"

³ *Ibid.*, pp.118-119.

⁴ Trevor Pinch and Karin Bijsterveld, "Breaches and Boundaries in the Reception of New Technology in Music," *Technology and Culture*, 44 (3), 2003, pp.536-339

and that the “the real art” of flute construction should be to build flutes which would enable flutists to play whatever they wanted without the use of keys.⁵

What happens in these parallel ‘Heideggerian resistances’ –typewriters and keys? Part of the answer, I believe, lies in the *phenomenological* notion of *embodiment*. Before a technology can become transparent or withdraw from being more object-like or resistant, the human who interacts and learns to ‘play’ the instrument or technology, there has to be a learning and accommodation/resistance process. This is to say that if ‘present at hand slag’ can occur with breakdown or absence, that there is also a sense in which at the beginning something new also presents a kind of resistance or object-likeness which also must be surpassed. This coming-to-transparency, this acquisition of skills *is not noted in the tool analysis*. It is rather already assumed and taken for granted. Heidegger’s description of the typewriter as “mechanized pressure of the hand” precisely applies to the beginner, the novice, who has not yet experienced the ‘flow’ of composition *through* the keyboard. Then, secondly, once a skill has been acquired and the instrument has become transparent, a shift to a new instrument or technology calls again for the same practice—and while the highly skilled musician, or word processor user, can perhaps easily shift from one to another technology, that is not always the case. A striking example known in science circles is Stephen Hawking. His very badly restricted bodily motility has reduced him to pecking with a mouth-held pointer onto a keyboard he has mastered. And although most computer programmers have pointed out that there are now better and more flexible programs for him, he simply does not want to learn a new and differently patterned set of movements. Is he ‘Heideggerian’? What I am suggesting here is that any new technology in relation to human praxis, before it can become transparent and thus fully accommodated, must be ‘embodied’ if it is to be ‘known’ at all. In short, something like presence-at-hand, although in phenomenologically different ways, lies at both beginnings and breakages.

Here, then, I make a detour to the typewriter in its own setting. Historically, typewriters in workable form go back to the late 19th century. Interestingly, the two earliest major authors who adapted the early typewriters were Mark Twain (Samuel Clemens) and Friedrich Nietzsche. Twain was first with a typewriter purchased in 1874. What Twain said about the typewriter was typically ironic, for example, “...Do not even divulge the fact that I own a machine. I have entirely stopped using the Type-Writer for the reason that I never could write a

⁵ *Ibid.*

letter with it to anybody without receiving a request by return mail that I would not only describe the machine but state what progress I had made of the use of it... I don't like to write letters, and so I don't want people to know that I own this curiosity-breeding little joker."⁶ But he didn't stop using the typewriter and proudly proclaimed, "I will now claim—until disposed—that I was the first person in the world to apply the typewriter to literature...The early machine was full of caprices, full of defects—devilish ones. It had as many immoralities as he machine of today had virtues [obviously noting technological improvements of the time]."⁷

Then, on to Nietzsche: Friedrich Kittler notes, "Sometime in 1882, Friedrich Nietzsche bought a typewriter—a Malling Hansen Writing Ball...His vision was failing, and keeping his eyes focused on a page had become exhausting and painful, often bringing on crushing headaches. He had been forced to curtail his writing, and he feared he would have to give it up. The typewriter rescued him for a time, once he had mastered touch typing, he was able to write with his eyes closed, using only the tips of his fingers."⁸ He went on to produce some sixty manuscripts with the typewriter. Interestingly, one of his friends, a composer, noticed a change in the style of his writing. His already terse prose had become even tighter, more telegraphic, and Nietzsche replied, "our writing equipment takes part in forming of our thoughts,"⁹ to which Kittler adds, "Nietzsche's prose changed from arguments to aphorism, from thoughts to puns, from rhetoric to telegram style."¹⁰

By the 20th century most authors had taken up the typewriter, including Ernst Hemingway, Isaac Bathevis Singer, and even Willard van Orman Quine. In Quine's case there is a notable style result as well. His 1927 special Remington had so many special logic symbols that his keyboard lacked a question mark. Asked whether this bothered him, Quine replied, "Well, you see, I deal in certainties."¹¹ Before leaving this detour on the two competing writing technologies—pen and typewriter—of the last century, I want only so briefly to note that each different equipment required *different embodiment skills before writing could be transparent and the pen or typewriter withdrawn*. But *both are writing with the hand, in one case with one hand, the other with two*. The embodiment analogues, from art for example, are like the brush

⁶ <http://www.desktopdesign.net/moorparkcollege/twain.htm>

⁷ <http://www.twainquotes.com/Typewriters.html>

⁸ Nicholas Carr, "Is Goggle Making us Stupid?" *Atlantic Monthly*, July/August, 2008.

⁹ Friedrich Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, (Stanford, 1999). His chapter on the typewriter, pp. 183-263, includes a full discussion on both Nietzsche and Heidegger, including the observations about 'telegraphic' style.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 183-263.

¹¹ <http://www.wvquine.org/wvq-newspaper.html>

with the pen, or the keyboard or piano with the typewriter! Furthermore, in the seemingly forgotten training for transparency, Heidegger seems to miss how first he had to learn standardization, ‘penmanship’ with the right size letters and capitals, and standardized letter shapes for the text to be read by another who reads the same language. He also does not mention that his favored pens are already transitional equipment. Pre-modern pens, I note, were usually quill, later metal slotted but still ‘dip’ pens. Here the skills for writing entail a very slow thought-to-paper process. One can write only a few words before dipping the pen. Contrarily, Heidegger’s pens were ‘modern’ pens which had reservoirs, i.e., held enough ink to write quite a few words before refill.

Of course, this detour today is already a detour into an antique set of writing technologies. Neither pen nor typewriter are much used today, since word processing and fast electronic keyboards have dominantly replaced the 20th century technologies. In short, the ‘lifeworlds’ of the pen and typewriter are largely past and thus once again show how Heidegger cannot help but be romantically nostalgic if he is going to affirm authenticity only for pen technologies.

I return to Heidegger once again: He is sitting at his desk, writing by hand, this time in the rented room prior to his move to Freiburg, again we see him producing the text, *Being and Time*. He is rushing to complete it, so he can receive his promotion (as Tom Sheehan has so brilliantly described it) It works, and the publisher accepts the manuscript for publication. But what then? Here we enter a context of ambiguity and eventually irony: before printing, the manuscript must be *typed*, reduced as it were, to the uniformity of print and standardization. [In the end, his brother does the typing so the publisher can have a typed copy. This stuttering bank clerk becomes Heidegger’s trusted typist which helps him turn into a published Heidegger.] Does this make Heidegger a human being just the same as every other human being, leveled through a standardized script? I think not—*Being and Time*, in print as a book also *makes Heidegger into Heidegger*. The book, once read and evaluated, shows a result which eventually gets praised as one of the most important philosophical works of the 20th century. Heidegger could not have become Heidegger without the infrastructure of the ‘Gutenberg Revolution’ of printing, publication and circulation. So now, I turn to my final irony: As we know Heidegger in his lifetime had already become famous as ‘the thinker’ and largely by virtue of his published works. But after the War and after investigation by the post-war powers; Heidegger was found to have been involved with the Nazi party, was forcibly retired, pensioned and forbidden to teach or publish from 1946 under de-Nazification terms. He experienced a ‘nervous breakdown’ and retired to his hut and city house away from university life.

In the 50's and through the 60's, however, his former student and mistress, Hannah Arendt, reappeared in Germany, herself now famous in her own right. She again communicated with Heidegger, who now in a rather unfavorable financial position, persuaded her to help him *sell his handwritten manuscript of Being and Time*. Arendt succeeded and managed to get a sum sufficient for him to build a retirement house behind his city house. Here is the irony: the handwritten manuscript, now transformed into commercial—or perhaps an ‘art’ work, but in either case, commodified—brings in more money than the printed editions into Heidegger's *hands*. Arendt also helped get the restrictions of the de-Nazification proscription lifted and thus Heidegger was freed to again lecture and publish, now as the ‘late’ Heidegger—precisely the Heidegger of the question of technology. Do not forget that the question concerning technology appears in the manuscript, *die Kehre*, the turning. Did a turn also occur concerning technology? During his rectoral period Heidegger was arguing that taking technology seriously would allow humanity to fulfill itself (under the regime), but the dystopianism which became stronger in his late period seems to coincide with the turn which de-Nazification may have stimulated.

My purpose is, however, not interpretive but postphenomenological: I claim that technologies are *multistable*, that is they have structured ambiguities which allow what first appears as a ‘same’ technology to be differently situated and have different trajectories. I return to Heidegger's printed *Being and Time*. I have previously suggested that without *Being and Time's* having been ‘reduced’ to standardized print and the printing press, Heidegger could not have become Heidegger. Imagine, for example, if he had to make hand-written copies for distribution—how far would have been his reach? Instead, the now five century old technology of printing made it possible for *Being and Time* to be distributed all over Europe and beyond in a very short time, thanks to the “Gutenberg Revolution” of the printing press. The even earlier Asian inventions of moveable type were differently embedded and restricted to Imperial and religious contexts. At first European printing followed a similar trajectory. Gutenberg's first printings were of the Bible, a sacred use, but as the Reformation began a few decades after the invention of the press, the Bible began to appear in the vernacular. Then paralleling the earlier history of the clock, printing went secular as well. And soon the glimmerings of the Scientific Revolution began in print as well.

Back to Heidegger and the many readers of *Being and Time*. The point is that the same technology—printing—can be, and is differently embedded and with multiple ‘histories.’ We are, I hope, gaining distance on the single essenced notion of *Bestand* and *Gestell*. One size

does not fit all and no young Heideggerians today need feel guilty about not giving up their laptops. Nor shall I ever require my own students to hand in only ‘authentic’ writing, the word as expressed through the hand with a pen.

Heidegger's Philosophy of Science: Towards a Phenomenology of Questioning as Critique of Calculation

Babette Babich
Fordham University

Zeit ist das, was sich *wandelt* und *mannigfaltigt*, Ewigkeit
hält sich einfach.

— Meister Eckhart.¹

Raising the Question of Life in the Life-Sciences: Prelude

I am asked, whenever I recall that I began my studies as a student of biology, why I undertook to change fields. The question is a good one, at least from a practical viewpoint, inasmuch as the sciences continue to enjoy far more prestige — and vastly more economic resources, pay, and such — than do the humanities: and academics know the difference this lack of support makes for a life of research and thinking. In addition to my younger self's idealistically theoretical indignation at biology's flat-out refusal to define *life*, as I heard my teachers, and even Bentley Glass at the time, explain the need to sidestep the question as operatively, functionally essential for the progress of biology *as* a science, I also found myself faced with the task of guillotining hamsters for research purposes in the lab where I was working. I didn't kill them. My choice was solely for my own sake. I didn't save any lives because killing animals is simply how research is conducted in the science of life. But if biological research is conducted by means of the interference with and destruction of life, as a science, biology sidesteps the challenge of defining life.²

I tell this story from my own experience not only because I think it imperative to advert to the fundamental and intrinsic disregard for life that is built into experimental biology on every level including medical and veterinary science, but because it happens to counter Heidegger in the first introduction of *Being and Time*, where he speaks of “freshly awakened tendencies to put [scientific] research on new foundations” (BT 29/9). Detailing these tendencies in mathematics and physics, Heidegger importantly begins with an overt reference to the

¹ Motto to Heidegger, *Der Zeitbegriff in der Geschichtswissenschaft* (1915). In: *Frühe Schriften* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1972), p. 357. (GA 1)

² There are working definitions of life. When I was a student one referred to the cell theory of Schleiden and Schwann dating back to 1838 and one continues to do so today.

Grundlagenstreit (beyond the methodological debates in Heidegger's neo-Kantianism, Heidegger's concerns invoke, quite specifically, Brouwer's intuitionist criticism of Hilbert's 1889 *Grundlagen der Geometrie*). Any *formal* reference to foundations (and a crisis in the same), is perforce a reference to mathematics and thence to (and including Heidegger's own long-standing interest in) logic.³ Thus Heidegger can explain that in "the controversy between the formalists and the intuitionists, the issue is one of obtaining and securing the primary way of access to what are supposedly the objects of this science." (29-30/9) Including an allusion to both Einstein and Heisenberg (this last with a reference to "Nature as it is in itself" [ibid.]), Heidegger notes that the foundational problems of physics are directed to "the structure of its own given area of study — the problem of matter." (30/10) Going on to point to foundational crises in biology (mechanism and vitalism as well as life and organism), Heidegger there supposed that the effort in the biological sciences was securely underway to redefining "the kind of Being which belongs to the living as such" (ibid.). Yet my suggestion above, founded on my own experience in the late 1970s at a research university known for its cutting edge research in biology, is that there he errs and only ironically and only in matter of historical fact. What has been consistently excluded in advance in the scientific study of biology is a precisely foundational reflection, and this exclusion functions for the sake of avoiding theoretical dead ends as was then (and is still) supposed.⁴ It is no coincidental detail that cutting edge biological research can be done today, as the genetic code was famously "cracked," using computers (and the anti-vivisectionist in me is thrilled by this). More practically, speaking of applied physiology or medical research, nearly every problem facing medicine at the time Heidegger was writing remains largely unsolved today: cancer but also tuberculosis, etc., etc.

In his 1929-1930 lecture course: *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, Heidegger alludes to Hans Driesch's account of chemical gradients in embryological development.⁵ In that

³ Heidegger's interest in logic and mathematics is well known but it has taken a great deal to get scholars to take this seriously. But see Michael Roubach, *Being and Number in Heidegger's Thought* (London: Continuum, 2008) as well as Stephan Käufer, "On Heidegger on Logic," *Continental Philosophy Review*, 34: (2001): 455-476, Daniel Dahlstrom, *Heidegger's Concept of Truth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) and Theodore Kisiel, *The Genesis of Heidegger's Being & Time* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993) in addition to the contributions to Alfred Denker and Holger Zaborowski, eds., *Heidegger und die Logik* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2006).

⁴ I would argue that Schrödinger's 1943 lectures on the theme "What is Life?" illustrate rather than controvert this rule. Nor is it irrelevant that Schrödinger writes as a physicist. Cf., by contrast, Erwin Chargaff's several books on the nature of life written from the perspective of biochemistry.

⁵ Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, pp. 261ff. Although Driesch had published his influential theory of organic development using the example of sea urchin development in 1894. When I was a student of biology at Stony Brook (this would be the late 1970s), Driesch's theoretical account was still featured in lectures and then-current textbooks of developmental biology and embryology.

same course, Heidegger also invokes the theoretical biologist Jakob von Uexküll's 1909 expression of the "*Umwelt*," citing the Czech biologist, Emanuel Rádl on the significance of animal phototropism⁶ emphasizing the gulf [*Abgrund*] between human and animal,⁷ in contrast to the Cartesian tendency of modern scientific biology to define both animals and human beings in mechanistic terms.

Including and exceeding Claude Bernard's *milieu intérieur* and the isolation of Cartesian mechanism, Heidegger's references to life and to world are phenomenologically *ecological*,⁸ using the term ecology in Ernst Haeckel's original sense (*assuming* we are able to translate between — as Pierre Duhem in his *German Science* argues that we cannot⁹ — the very disparate sensibilities of 'German' and 'French' science), radically environmental, in today's rather specifically "English" (rather than say American or Canadian or Australian, etc.)¹⁰ terminology: "Life is that kind of reality which is in the world and indeed in such a way that it has a world. Every living creature has its environing world not as something extant next to it but as something that is there [*da ist*] for it as disclosed, uncovered."¹¹ And in 1925, Heidegger emphasized that "for a primitive animal, the world can be very simple," explaining that we run the risk of missing "the essential thing here if we don't see that the animal has a world."¹² Heidegger's original continuum of complexity/simplicity must accordingly be added to contemporary readings of Heidegger's subsequent discussions of the world-poverty of the animal in terms of *indigence*.

Historically, the mechanistic conception of life triumphed over the notion of "vital movement" nascent in Driesch (although it is an error to reduce Driesch's concerns to the mystical vagaries of "vitalism," as is patent in Driesch's own emphasis on electro-chemical

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 242ff, esp. p. 244.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 264.

⁸ It is in this sense my *Nietzsche's Philosophy of Science: Reflecting Science on the Ground of Art and Life* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984) con what I call Nietzsche's eco-physiology.

⁹ Pierre Duhem, *German Science: Some Reflections on German Science. German Science and German Virtues*, John Lyon, trans. (La Salle: Open Court, 1991). Duhem's argument, to be sure, is classically 'chauvinistic,' and he argues that the "principle depository of good science in the world" is French science. Or as he writes in conclusion: "*scientia germanica ancilla scientiae gallicae*." *Ibid.*, p. 112.

¹⁰ Donald Worster contends, not unpersuasively, that ecology as a science and consequently that its history presupposes a very English sensibility. See Worster, *Nature's Economy: A History of Ecological Ideas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), see especially his first chapter on the classically Arcadian ideal of Nature in the writings of Gilbert White. If Worster is right, environmental ethics as such might well be more Anglophone in its orientation (rather than, say, universal or: global).

¹¹ Heidegger, "Wilhelm Dilthey's Research and the Struggle for a Historical Worldview," p. 163.

¹² *Ibid.*

gradients). By contrast, Heidegger took care to explore the living trajectory of life as opposed to its “calculable” course.¹³

Indeed today’s medical practice/paradigm exemplifies not a holistic (aarggh! New age!) attention to individual physiology and metabolism but a mathematical and often effectively numerological¹⁴ preoccupation with calculation and that always means generalization.¹⁵ Manifestly, if now expressed increasingly in terms of information (genomics), this mechanistic or calculating tendency persists in modern experimental biology, a mechanistic orientation that underlies its reliance on “models,” not only computer and other simulations but the very practice of animal experimentation, as this is also a specifically Cartesian legacy.¹⁶ Such experiments hold the promise for us that they do in spite of ethical concerns — concerns biologists and other scientists long ago and in order to be scientists in the first place learned to set aside.

Heidegger’s specific argument in this text thus reprises his hermeneutico-phenomenological case for the interpretive ontology of the human being as an animal bound to world-making or -invention.¹⁷ Despite several efforts, a Heideggerian philosophy of medicine has yet to be fully worked out. But for the sake of phenomenology, it seems evident that one needs to include the

¹³ See Ansell-Pearson, *Viroid Life: Perspectives on Nietzsche and the Transhuman Condition* (London: Routledge, 1997) for an exploration of this theme with particular reference to Bergson.

¹⁴ Life and death choices, i.e., life-style and quality of life vs. a certain calculus of death choices are made on this basis every day. Ivan Illich was a living exception, but the man was also arguably a saint.

¹⁵ There are controversial because political issues at stake here. See for one account of the tension between mainstream and “alternative” medicine. Eveline Richards, “The Politics of Therapeutic Evaluation: The Vitamin C and Cancer Controversy,” *Social Studies of Science*, 18/4 (Nov., 1998): 653-701 for the case of Linus Pauling and cancer in addition to Peter Duesberg, et al., “The Chemical Bases of the Various AIDS Epidemics: Recreational Drugs, Anti-Viral Chemotherapy and Malnutrition,” *J. Biosci.* 28/4 (June, 2003): 383-412 regarding the political influences on accounts aetiology of the AIDS virus. More broadly and more conventionally, see Timothy Lenoir, “A Magic Bullet: Research for Profit and the Growth of Knowledge in Germany Around 1900,” in Lenoir, ed., *Instituting Science: The Cultural Production of Scientific Disciplines* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), pp. 179–202 and John Ziman’s “No Man Is An Island: The Axiom of Subjectivity,” *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 13/ 5 (2006): 17-42 as well as Sheldon Krinsky, *Science in the Private Interest* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003). Feyerabend who argued for citizen direction of scientific research was naïve about the extent of such financial interests — as most of us continue to be.

¹⁶ Very few books engage or take up, and, perforce, very few studies exceed the moral issues raised by Catherine Roberts, *Science, Animals, and Evolution: Reflections on Some Unrealized Potentials of Biology and Medicine* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1980). Roberts, a Berkeley trained biologist, set aside her research and turned to theory or what I regard as philosophy for expressly ethical reasons. For a more politically and sociologically attuned discussion of the epistemological implications of experimentation, see Shiv Visvanathan, “On the Annals of the Laboratory State,” in: Ashis Nandy, ed., *Science, Hegemony, and Violence: A Requiem for Modernity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 257–288. I also address this issue in the concluding chapter of Babich, *Words in Blood, Like Flowers* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2006).

¹⁷ Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, p. 274.

different domains or areas of medical science, and nursing research to date seems the most promising for an articulation of a Heideggerian philosophy of medicine.¹⁸

With regard to human being-in-the-world, in the context of medicine, biology, as well of the environment as scientific or theoretical approximations of life, Heidegger adds to his discussion of specific sciences, Nietzsche's perspectival gloss characterizing the human being not as the 'rational' or the 'political' but as the 'not yet determinate' or 'still as yet unfinished animal' [*das noch nicht festgestelltes Tier*]. (BGE §2) It is in this projective, still-as-yet-unfinished sense of the human qua being-in-the-world that Heidegger reflects that the "world that is closest to us is one of practical concern. The environing world [*Umwelt*] and its objects are in space, but the space of the world is not that of geometry."¹⁹ There are overtones of a battle already fought by Bertrand Russell and the analytic tradition in philosophy and the reductivist tradition in the natural sciences, a battle only appropriated (not coined) by Carnap contra Heidegger, as a conflict between the spirits of finesse and geometry, a conflict expressed in the life sciences, and likewise already then-decided as the battle against vitalism. It is worth noting that Russell had already claimed victory contra the same Bergson Heidegger likewise invokes by proposing as his overarching project — hence the epigraph to this paper — as "the Interpretation of *time* as the possible horizon for any understanding whatsoever of Being." (BT 1/19)

Heidegger's focus on life also recurs in his reference to chemistry in 1929 with reference to the organic and biological sciences, in order to emphasize how little science says about "the living being" when we "define it in terms of the organic as opposed to the inorganic."²⁰ Chemistry itself, it should be noted, is already distinct from physics as Fritz Paneth argued in the 1930s, a distinction which has made little difference to the effort to "elevate" chemistry, like every other science, to the standard of physics.²¹ But as Nietzsche reminds us, the notion that there is "nothing unchanging in chemistry" is little more than "a scholastic prejudice. We have dragged in the unchanging, my physicist friends, deriving it from metaphysics as always. To assert that diamond, graphite, and coal are identical is to read off the facts naively from the

¹⁸ See for just one example, Sandra Mackey, "Phenomenological Nursing Research: Methodological Insights derived from Heidegger's Interpretive Phenomenology," *Nursing Studies*, 42, 2 (2005): 179-186.

¹⁹ Heidegger, "Wilhelm Dilthey's Research and the Struggle for a Historical Worldview," p. 163. This is, of course, the heart of Heidegger's Chapter V, Being-in, in *Being and Time*.

²⁰ Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, p. 212.

²¹ See Babich, "Early Continental Philosophy of Science," in: Alan Schrift, ed., *The New Century Volume Three: History of Continental Philosophy* (Chesham, UK: Acumen Press, 2010), pp. 263-286; here pp. 272ff.

surface. Why? Merely because no loss in substance can be shown on the scales?”²² Echoing Nietzsche’s contrastive differentiation of reductively identical kinds in chemistry, as Nietzsche also reflects on the living and the dead, the organic as suffused through and through with the inorganic, Heidegger echoes Nietzsche’s emphasis to argue in a fashion consonant with 20th century rather than 19th century science, that “organic chemistry is anything but a science of the organic in the sense of the living being as such. It is called organic chemistry precisely because the organic in the sense of the living being remains inaccessible to it in principle.”²³

Heidegger’s Philosophy of Science: Towards a Phenomenology of Questioning

Like Nietzsche, Heidegger argues that philosophy is an explicitly active and engaged, sustained and therefore critical questioning. And this is not less the case when it comes to philosophy of science and technology. It is in terms of the importance of such questioning reflection in philosophy that Heidegger argues that “all science is perhaps only a servant with respect to philosophy.”²⁴ The critical spirit of this early account of the specific difference of philosophical reflection and scientific theorizing finds its’ most famous expression in the later Heidegger’s provocative dictum: “science does not think.”²⁵

Saying as he variously does here and throughout *Being and Time* that “all scientific thought is merely a derived form of philosophical thinking,”²⁶ Heidegger’s claim is that science formally speaking and qua derivative is lesser than rather than, as we today tend to suppose, higher than philosophy.²⁷ Thus Heidegger opposes the creatively foundational activity of philosophic reflection to the then popular articulations of epistemological investigations into the sciences of his era as the kind of “logic” (Heidegger sets this off in quotes) following after

²² Nietzsche, *Sämtliche Werke. Kritische Studienausgabe*. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari, eds., (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1980), 15 volumes. Here Vol. 13, p. 374. Throughout his writings, Nietzsche also defines the human on a continuum with the inorganic world. KSA 1, p. 712, KSA 9, p. 525, etc.

²³ Nietzsche, KSA 13, p. 374.

²⁴ Martin Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude*. Trans. William McNeill and Nicholas Walker. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), p. 5. (GA 29/30)

²⁵ Heidegger, *What is Called Thinking?* F. D. Wieck, and J. G. Gray, trans. (New York: Harper and Row, 1968), pp. 8ff. (WD) Heidegger’s point is far from well-understood and scholars tend, for better or for worse to defend the scientists even while explicating Heidegger. See for instance Jean-Michel Salanskis, “Die Wissenschaft denkt nicht,” *Tekhnema* 2 (1995): 60–85. For discussion, see very broadly, the contributions to the section on Heidegger and science in Babich, ed., *From Phenomenology to Thought, Errancy, and Desire* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1995) as well as see Dmitri Ginev, *A Passage to the Idea for a Hermeneutic Philosophy of Science* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1997) in addition to Babich, ed., *Hermeneutic Philosophy of Science, Van Gogh’s Eyes, and God: Essays in Honor of Patrick A. Heelan, S.J.* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2002).

²⁶ Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, p. 26.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, emphasis added.

science, “‘limping along in its wake,’ investigating the status of [any given] science as it chances to find it in order to discover its ‘method.’”²⁸

By contrast, what Heidegger characterizes as the “*productive logic*”²⁹ of philosophy is ultimately capable of illuminating breakthroughs and even within science itself (but only to the extent that it is ‘philosophical’ as Heidegger emphasises). More than one scholar writing on Heidegger has been able to point to what appears to be an anticipatory parallel with Thomas Kuhn³⁰ (and I have also argued for a parallel with Heidegger’s contemporary, the polish physician and sociological historian of science Ludwik Fleck³¹). On the terms of his own philosophical approach to science, however, it is important to note that Heidegger points to a reflection on methodological rigor that was already available to him in his reading of Husserl and especially, as Joseph Kockelmans, Ted Kisiel and as others have been careful to detail, in and through his work with Rickert as well. And saying this means that Heidegger’s concerns bridge the formal sciences, including logic and mathematics as well as the natural as well as the social sciences *but also* and especially the most fundamental of sciences, philosophy qua fundamental ontology. Yet no sooner have many scholars noted this breadth than they are already engaged with concentrating on the latter, and this at the expense of Heidegger’s focus on the natural and mathematical sciences in *Being and Time* and throughout his writing.³² In this way, mainstream conceptions of philosophy of science are supposed to be the only approaches to philosophizing on science, and this conviction holds even for those who read Heidegger and his constant emphasis on questioning traditional assumptions.

What is clear is that Heidegger speaks of science in the broadest of fashions (and hence and exactly *not only* about the kind of sciences that concern Kuhn) when he speaks (as Heidegger here is speaking) of scientific revolution or change. Writing with a breadth that includes ontology as much as logic as much as “history, Nature, space, life, Dasein, language and the like,” (BT 29/9) Heidegger invokes the very necessity of a Copernican transposition on the

²⁸ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 30. (SZ 10) Translation altered.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, my emphasis here.

³⁰ I include Joseph Rouse but also Patricia Glazebrook and Robert Crease, among a number of others.

³¹ See Babich, “‘The Problem of Science’ in Nietzsche and Heidegger,” *Revista Portuguesa de la Filosofia*, 63 (2007): 205-237 and “From Fleck’s *Denkstil* to Kuhn’s Paradigm: Conceptual Schemes and Incommensurability,” *International Studies in the Philosophy of Science*, 7 1/1 (2003): 75-92.

³² There are exceptions but these exceptions themselves either swim upstream contra traditional conceptions of the philosophy of science or else simply correct Heidegger’s thinking on science to fit the traditional philosophy of science. But see Kisiel and Kockelmans, Glazebrook and Heelan, Roubach, Bast, etc. in addition to the late and on this topic rarely cited Doninique Janicaud in addition to the current author.

level of fundamental concepts, explaining that “The real ‘movement’ [»*Bewegung*«] of the sciences take place when their basic concepts undergo a more or less radical revision which is transparent to itself.” (*Ibid.*) But and this is perhaps significant in the case of the (political) revolution in biological concepts with which we began above, the science *itself* must be up to it: “The level which a science has reached is determined by how far it is *capable* of a crisis in its basic concepts.” (*Ibid.*)

Thus as we all can recall Heidegger continues to write in *Being and Time*: this creative logic leaps ahead “into some area of Being, discloses it for the first time, in the constitution of its Being, and, after thus arriving at the structures within it, makes these available to the positive sciences as transparent assignments for their inquiry.” (BT 31/10)³³

For Heidegger, writing in Husserl’s critical foundational spirit with respect to the development of mathematical physics, “What is decisive” is the creativity of “the mathematical project of nature itself” inasmuch as the project “discovers in advance something constantly objectively present (matter) and opens the horizon for the scientific perspective on its quantitatively definable moments (motion, force, location, and time).” (BR 414/363) The “founding” of “factual science” is “possible only because the researcher understood that there are in principle no ‘bare facts,’” (*Ibid.*) that, in other words, the scientific project of nature must be given in advance, a priori. Only then is it possible for a science to be “*capable* of a crisis in its basic concepts.” (BT 29/9)

Heidegger, who remained committed to phenomenology throughout his life, emphasizes that beyond any superficially obvious call “to the things themselves,”³⁴ phenomenology “presupposed life.”³⁵ To understand this presupposes a specific and hermeneutic attention, in the methodic sense Thomas Seebohm, like Heidegger, has underlined with reference to Dilthey.³⁶ The focus on method for Heidegger himself, in addition to history and the philosophical question of time, was also evident in the *quantitative* transformation of the biological sciences underway at the time and which would ultimately install biology on the path

³³ The notion of constitution is fruitful for the philosophy of science and in addition to others who have written on this, see Dimitri Ginev, *The Context of Constitution: Beyond the Edge of Epistemological Justification*. Dordrecht: Springer, 2006.

³⁴ Heidegger, “Wilhelm Dilthey’s Research and the Struggle for a Historical Worldview,” in Heidegger, *Supplements: From the Earliest Essays to Being and Time and Beyond* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), p. 160.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 162.

³⁶ See Thomas Seebohm, *Hermeneutics: Method and Methodology* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2004).

of a mathematizable science alongside the today better known transformations of physics as a mathematical science, and, to a *lesser* degree, of chemistry in the same vein.³⁷

If Heidegger began *Being and Time* by referring to the crisis in the sciences and just in this context with an argument on behalf of *philosophical* over and against *scientific* reflection, we have already noted with reference to the scientific triumvirate of mathematics, physics and biology that Heidegger also argued that each particular science articulates its own regional ontology in terms of its basic constitution [*Grundverfassung*]³⁸ beginning with already cited example of the foundational controversy of mathematics in his day (a dispute between intuitionism and foundationalism that has yet to be resolved). In good Husserlian fashion, Heidegger adds that what is at stake in this debate turns upon “obtaining and securing the primary way of access to what are supposedly the objects”³⁹ of mathematical science. Heidegger articulates the same foundational revolution in physics as he invokes the theory of relativity. Accordingly, inquiry into these foundations cannot itself be an object of or for scientific research just to the extent that scientific research per se is only possible on the basis of these same concepts. Hence philosophical inquiry or what Heidegger calls “ontological inquiry” can *only* be “more primordial, as over against the ontical inquiry of the positive sciences.”⁴⁰

For Heidegger, philosophy is, and can be, the science of science, in Husserl's terminology now, not because of a venerable tradition of so regarding philosophy but just because specifically philosophical research must and most ontically, most importantly, “*can*” as Heidegger claims, “run ahead of the positive sciences.”⁴¹ Thus, as Heidegger clarifies this point, the contribution of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* “lies in what it has contributed

³⁷ Recent philosophy of chemistry (and better said: the struggle to argue for the singular philosophy of science proper to chemistry) reminds us that there is considerable diversity and the reduction of chemistry to the new physics and its mathematics as Gaston Bachelard some half a century ago had argued, may in the future be more advanced by a nuanced reconsideration of the kind the little discussed philosopher of chemistry Helene Metzger had argued for years ago in France in addition to the challenging conceptual work of Paneth already mentioned above and offered in both German and English (the latter as advocated by Herbert Dingle). It is difficult to read an account of the history and philosophy of science that details such different sciences and the differences these differences make for the philosophy of science, although see for an overview, Babich, “Continental Philosophy of Science: 1890-1920.” For the current essay, it is relevant that the later Heidegger invokes chemistry as one of his examples and it is likewise relevant that Nietzsche does so as well. Indeed the earliest significant and sustained treatment of Nietzsche and science was offered by the chemist, Alwin Mittasch.

³⁸ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 29.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

towards the working out of what belongs to any Nature whatsoever.”⁴² Rather than epistemology, Kant’s “transcendental logic is an *a priori* logic for the subject matter of that region of Being called ‘Nature’.”⁴³

In this productive, disclosing sense, which Heidegger also expresses as the constitutional eventuality of aletheic truth as discovery or “uncovering,” the scientist, reflecting philosophically, effectively opens up the truth of nature. In the aletheic context of such a specifically scientific disclosure, Heidegger observes that *before* “Newton’s laws were discovered, they were not ‘true.’” (BT 269/226)⁴⁴ But to say this is also to say that through “Newton the laws became true: and with them entities became accessible in themselves to Dasein. Once entities have been uncovered, they show themselves as the entities which beforehand they already were. Such uncovering is the kind of Being which belongs to ‘truth.’” (BT 269/227, modified) By way of Dasein’s “being in the truth,” (ibid.) the laws of Newtonian physics only first “became true. “Newton’s laws, the principle of contradiction, any truth whatever — these are true only as long as Dasein *is*.” (*Ibid.*)

Science and World View as a Hermeneutic Phenomenology of Questioning

As we seem inclined to suppose to be well known, well-tread ground, Heidegger’s hermeneutic and phenomenological concern with questioning grew into his thinking the technologically mediated understanding of truth as correctness [*Richtigkeit*] and what he called calculative [i.e., *rechnendes*, *planendes*, *forschendes*] thinking. In the same way, Heidegger poses what may be called the question of the question as he reflects upon questioning itself in the wake of technology. In this Heidegger patently reprises his still too-little reflected upon reflection on questioning in the second sectional paragraph in the first introduction to *Being and Time*. To the extent that Heidegger specifies in his *Question Concerning Technology* that technology is prior to science, the essence of technology is also articulated as a challenging-revealing, a very particular and precisely calculating deformation of questioning, far from its ultimate spirit as the “devotion,” “dedication,” or “piety of thinking” [*Frömmigkeit des Denkens*]. This same opposition between calculative (this includes the casual and very routine or all-too-everyday disposition that merely takes account of reports and information, all the

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ *Ibid.* See Pierre Kerszberg, *Kant et la Nature* (Paris: Les Belles-Lettres, 1999) in addition to his reading of Heidegger and Kant in Kerszberg, *Critique and Totality*. (Albany, State University of New York Press, 1997).

⁴⁴ Heidegger is quick to emphasize that, logically indeed, “it does not follow that they were false, or even that they would become false if ontically no discoveredness were any longer possible.” (*Ibid.*)

news we consume with our morning newspapers and evening television shows) and dedicated or pious thinking recurs in his *Discourse on Thinking*.

Indeed, Heidegger had already unpacked the significance of a questioning after or about [*nach*] in his introductory and very phenomenological hermeneutic of questioning in *Being and Time*. What is essential to recall in the present context is Heidegger's formulation of this hermeneutic reflection: "Questioning has as a questioning concerning . . ." (BT 24/5) just because Heidegger's ellipsis (included in the German text and omitted from the Macquarrie/Robinson translation, the so-called early Heidegger of Heidegger I (to use Richardson's beleaguered distinction) already deploys the same formulation at work in Heidegger's question *concerning* technology (relevant in any reflection on the distinction between the early and later Heidegger as this is also his question concerning Being), as an inquiry *about something*, i.e., ..., fill in the blanks, a questioning *concerning* "that which is asked about." (*Ibid.*) This is its', we all remember this, its "*Gefragtes*."

What Heidegger means by questioning remains more elusive than even his more attentive readers have been inclined to think. More is at stake in any question in general and still more is involved in what, in his 1934 course on *Logic as the Question After the Essence of Language*, he names "authentic and genuine questioning" [*eigentliches und echtes Fragen*],⁴⁵ understanding such questioning as an invitation to reflection, that is, to the kind of thinking that *holds faith* with — and such we see again will be the meaning of piety, dedication, or devotion to — its own task. Delineating the formal structure of questioning in section two at the start of *Being and Time*, Heidegger begins by turning the question upon itself. From this reflexive perspective, he writes:

Every questioning is a seeking. Every seeking is guided in advance by what is sought. Questioning is a cognizant [*erkennende*] seeking for an entity both with regard to the fact that it is and with regard to its being as it is. This cognizant seeking can take the form of an 'investigating,' in which one lays bare that which the question is about and ascertains its character. ... Questioning itself is the behaviour of a questioner, and therefore of an entity, and as such has the character of Being.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe. II. Abteilung: Vorlesungen 1919-1944. Band 38: Logik als die Frage nach dem Wesen der Sprache* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1998), p. 18. (GA 38)

⁴⁶ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 24. (cf. SZ, 7) Nietzsche had deployed a similarly reflexive move in his self-critical preface to his first book, *The Birth of Tragedy*, when he characterized his original project as a "problem with horns," the "double dilemma" of "*the problem of science itself*, science considered for the first time as problematic, as questionable." (GT, "Versuch einer Selbst-Kritik," §ii [BT]) Although Heidegger's approach differs, he concurs with Nietzsche's reflexive emphasis that "the problem of science cannot be recognized on the ground of science" (BT §ii).

Thus as Heidegger attempts to pose the question of Being as a question that has been forgotten, it is characteristic of his thinking that he will first find it necessary to reflect upon the Being of questioning (as such) and indeed as the Being of a seeking that is always guided in advance, in order to be a question at all, by that which is sought. In this way, every questioning (this is the elliptical openness formulaically repeated in Heidegger's text) includes: *das Gefragte* — that which, and to begin with, is asked about; *das Befragte* — that which is interrogated in the inquiry itself; *das Erfragte* — the aim of the inquiry: that which is to be discovered.

A question thus spells out the range, object, or frame of what might be considered as a reply or answer but Heidegger will carefully distinguish between answer-bound or answer-determined questioning — the kind of question that seeks only a pre-given answer — from the kind of question that actually *asks* after what might come forth as an answering reply.

Everything that has been said about questioning now bears on the being question as a question and it is for just this reason that *Being and Time* to the extent that it raises the question of being, turns out to require, of necessity a *Daseinsanalytik*. For from his formal reflection on the *Gefragtes* and the notion of an *anfragen bei....*, Heidegger raises his initial question in *Being and Time* by asking: "From which entities is the disclosure of Being to take its departure? Is the starting point optional, or does some particular entity have priority when we come to work out the Being question?" (BT 26/7) Indeed, everything involved in inquiring for us as inquirers ("Looking at something, understanding and conceiving it, choosing, access to it" *Ibid.*) turns out to matter precisely as "ways of behaving constitutive for our inquiry, and therefore modes of Being for those particular entities which we, the inquirers, are ourselves." (BT 26-27/7)

For this reason we recall that Heidegger argues that "to work out the question of Being adequately, we must make an entity — the questioner — transparent in his [or her] own Being." (BT 27/7) This phenomenological and therefore intentional and as Heidegger parses it, *interpretive* and indeed explicitly *hermeneutic* outline of questioning, of what belongs to any inquiry whatsoever, thus necessarily includes a reflection on the questioner. Using the Cartesian methodology of hyperbolic doubt and moving into it as it were (Nietzsche speaks of doubting more radically than Descartes and see BT 195/153), this reflection brings Heidegger to his first articulation of Dasein: "This entity which each of us is himself which includes inquiring as one of the possibilities of its Being, we shall denote by the term '*Dasein*'." (*Ibid.*)

For Heidegger, philosophical thinking is an active questioning. Hence “authentic” questioning is about the asking as such rather than the answer. With Heidegger, we are not only to reflect on the nature of questioning, but on the meaning of thinking, of thought itself, language, and indeed the embodied mortality of the inquirer. In opposition to calculative thinking, Heidegger opposed *sense-directed reflection* [*Besinnung*] for embodied, mortal beings such as ourselves. It is this sensitively, incarnate reflection that Heidegger contrasts as properly philosophical and/or poetical thought to the rational, calculative (and effectively unquestioning because solution-informed and answer-driven) project of Western technologically articulated and advancing science. Such a poetically attuned task of reflective thinking would open its own way, just as “questioning always builds a way” (QCT, 3), by its questioning advance (ground, object, and aim). Thus questioning “is the unique habitat and *locus* of thinking” (WD 185). This is, again as argued, presaged in *Being and Time* where Heidegger steps out of the logical circle that might be raised as an objection to the “*Fragestellung nach dem Sinn des Seins*” into what will become the hermeneutic circle simply because “*der Beantwortung der Frage nicht um eine ableitende Begründung sondern um aufweisende Grund-Freilegung geht.*” (SZ, 8) Such a “*Grund-Freilegung*” is a questioning that opens its own way. However, and as opposed to the transparent and calculative inquiry that seeks solutions, authentic questioning ultimately turns out to be so rare that it is not clear that we can ever be otherwise than *underway* to questioning. One has, reflecting in this fashion, to take up a position in questioning, a disposition toward thought, an inclination. “To venture after sense or meaning [*Sinn*] is the essence of reflecting [*Besinnen*]. This means more than a mere making conscious of something. We do not have reflection when we have only consciousness. Reflection is more. It is calm, self-possessed surrender to that which is worthy of questioning.”⁴⁷

What matters in questioning then will be thoughtful reflection (cf., SR 180). But this brings us to a precipitously superficial insight — and Heidegger learnt this best from Nietzsche — an insight reduced by trivializing convention. And indeed it is increasingly popular (I am thinking of the very popular, and rightly so, Tom Sheehan), to claim that Heidegger is interested not in Being but only in sense and reflection or sensibility, sort of a Jane Austen style Heidegger, not perhaps, that that would be a bad thing.

⁴⁷ Heidegger, “Science and Reflection” in *The Question Concerning Technology*, p. 180. Hereafter cited in the text as SR. Cf., *What is Called Thinking?*, trans. J. Glenn Gray (New York: Harper, 1968), p. 189. Hereafter cited as WD.

Yet the problem with this and other restricting clarifications is that one has thereby and already forgotten the “sense” of questioning. No sooner does one broach such a set of reflections, Heidegger warns, but “just as quickly, indeed, the next day, it is transmitted as the cliché: everything turns upon question-worthiness [*alles kommt auf die Fragwürdigkeit an*]” (WD 113). Although, “with such an invocation one seems to belong amongst those who question” (ibid.), such questioning is almost always other than authentic or genuine. We need then to be careful as we follow Heidegger in his reflections on thinking (and questioning) to avoid the lure of reductive convention.

As Heidegger distinguishes science (even as philosophy) and what he calls thinking (even as philosophy), when he says that “science does not think” [*die Wissenschaft denkt nicht*],⁴⁸ he also observes that thinking *per se* does not figure in the calculative project of professional and university mathematicians and scientists. But, reciprocally, knowing as such turns out not to be the excellence of thinking (“thinking knows essentially less than the sciences” [WD 57]), and thinking is from its inception, distant from conceptualization as such: “the totality of the great thinking of Greek thought, Aristotle included, thinks non-conceptually [*begrifflos*].” (WD 128).⁴⁹ Heidegger’s most critical claim here is that thinking is effectively impotent, inherently inefficient: “a doing that effects nothing” [*ein Tun, das nichts bewirkt*].⁵⁰

Such “impotent,” “ineffective” reflection remains however “more provisional, more forbearing, and poorer in relation to things” (SR 181) and for this reason, thoughtful reflection is not to be reduced to analytic “problem solving.”⁵¹ In the attempt to learn such reflective or sense-attuned thought (as opposed to the technical culture of problem-solving, manufactured knowledge, or even practicable wisdom, etc.), “we must [instead] allow ourselves to become involved in questions that seek what no inventiveness can find” (WD 8). Heidegger specifies the calculative inquiry characteristic of modern technoscience (and the current environmental crisis, indeed, the current economic crisis, shows that little has changed), by contrast, as a solution-obsessed project: the “inquiry that aims straight for an answer. It rightly looks for the

⁴⁸ Heidegger, WD 8; cf. pp. 33,134,135.

⁴⁹ This is Jean Salanski’s point, which he makes in this case for the sake of a contrary emphasis. Salanskis, “Die Wissenschaft denkt nicht,” *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale*, II (1991): 207-231.

⁵⁰ Heidegger, “Die Neuzeit. ‘Die’ Wissenschaft. Wissenschaft und Denken.” *Heidegger Studies*, 21 (2005): 9-14, here p. 12.

⁵¹ For Heidegger, problem solving as a notion refers to Popper’s definition of philosophy. Analytic philosophy has taken this definition over for its own part, a referential dependency that Steve Fuller’s recent book on Kuhn and Popper presumes for its part. See Fuller, *Kuhn vs. Popper: The Struggle for the Soul of Science* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004).

singular answer, and sees to it that the answer is found. The answer disposes of the question. By the answer, we rid ourselves of the question” (WD 158).⁵² The circumstances of the current array of crises exemplify the limitations of such an approach while indeed underscoring its incorrigibility at the same time.

For an ecologically attuned illustration, today's increasing emphasis on wind power as an 'alternative' energy source to invoke a technical-fix, as it is often called by proponents and critics alike: ignoring the deadly consequences of the technology for the population of hawks and other birds of prey (and the boom in rodents, effects on plant life and soil, etc., etc. among the most immediate of consequences) but we also disattend to or fail to reflect upon the long-range limitations of the wind as such. In other words, technically speaking, as wind-technology currently stands, the wind-towers currently manufactured and installed,⁵³ presuppose, like water power and like power derived from coal and gas, not only constant *but also* relatively intense prevailing winds (precisely like the dynamics of water and carbon fuels). Furthermore, such alternative technology presupposes, giving the parallel limitations of the existing design of wind technology and electricity, well apart from any biotic concerns, that such large structural arrays as the fields erected in the western US or Canada have no influence on those same winds. But what calls for thinking in any modest sense, i.e., not only in Heidegger's, is the question that asks where the effect begins and indeed, like the wind, whither it goes.

Science in the Wake of the Question Concerning Technology

In “Science and Reflection,” Heidegger argues that science is more than a merely human or cultural, activity. In its technological articulation, contemporary research science increasingly defines and takes the measure of what counts as “real.”

Although science orders the object world with exacting precision, it fails to respond to the basic questions of being. More than a failure to respond, science as *the* modern epistemology erases the possibility of such questions in its refusal to accept their presence as that which cannot be arranged as objects. In striving for unmediated certainty, science overlooks the principle that is the precondition for its very possibility as a way in which truth is revealed: all scientific knowledge is *necessarily mediated* through a structure of representational knowing. (SR 167)

⁵² I have argued that the analytic continental distinction turns on this difference. See Babich, “On the Analytic-Continental Divide in Philosophy: Nietzsche's Lying Truth, Heidegger's Speaking Language, and Philosophy,” in C. G. Prado, ed., *A House Divided: Comparing Analytic and Continental Philosophy* (Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 2003), pp. 63-103.

⁵³ This is not the only type of such technology but it is the only type currently receiving contracts for installation but it is not only limited to that, it is also limited to the nature of electrical switching stations.

Denying anything out of its ken as unreal, modern technological science dominates the globe in a singularly irresistible fashion that puts paid to the pluralistic rhetoric of globalization. If one could debate (as has been repeatedly done) the virtues of “folk” (or local) science — be it in terms of castigating Nazi science or the more respectable (because resolutely or conventionally science-celebratory) terms of a Bachelard, or a Foucault, or a Braudel, or if one once considered the case for the insights of alternative traditions, as Feyerabend, in rather more incendiary fashion, argued with respect to astrology (notoriously going so far as to feature his own horoscope as frontispiece to one of his books),⁵⁴ or else to compare Western culture with Eastern acupuncture, these debates and considerations have become increasingly less not more cogent, and this is so in spite of Foucault, Deleuze, and certainly in spite of Lyotard.⁵⁵

Globalization — another name for challenging-revealing — reigns even in the sciences themselves as the very non-technological essence of modern technology. As it might be expressed in an Aristotelian sense, science comes forth as the sheer desire to know and is accordingly accounted a universal characteristic of humanity. If Heidegger uncovers the heart of modern technology as revelatory truth — a claim that turns out to be equally counter-intuitive for both anti-technologists and pro-technologists — arguing that “something else reigns” in modern technology and accordingly in modern science, a “something other” that prevails “throughout all the sciences, but remains hidden to the sciences themselves,” (SR 156) he also argues that this “something other” is an inherently incorrigible state of affairs for the sciences. And we are, in Nietzsche’s words now, “still pious” to the degree that we find this the least forgivable of Heidegger’s many sins against the ideal of modern science. Heidegger argues against the technological fix and consequently against the promises of scientific salvation as the remedy for the global or environmental problems generated in the wake of modern science and modern technology.

When Heidegger explains that “physics as physics can make no assertions about physics” (SR 176), that, as “the theory of language and literature, philology is never a possible object of

⁵⁴ Paul Feyerabend, *Erkenntnis für freie Menschen. Veränderte Ausgabe* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1980). Frontispiece, p. 2.

⁵⁵ Both Slavoj Žižek and Stuart Elden suggest Alain Badiou as exception which would for Heidegger here be an inclusion but we can also add Lyotard to the mix, including his enthusiasm for the liberating potential of modern information technology. I take this up in Babich, “Thus Spoke Zarathustra or Nietzsche and Hermeneutics in Gadamer, Lyotard, and Vattimo,” in: Jeff Malpas and Santiago Zabala, eds., *Consequences of Hermeneutics* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2010). In my reading both Baudrillard and Adorno offer valuable resources for the philosophy of technology (and science).

philological observation" (ibid.), his point, as the reflective priority of philosophy was noted at the outset, is to underscore that no matter whether its object be nature or poetry, science as such can never be "in a position to conceive and represent" its own essence (ibid). But, he continues, "if it is entirely denied to science scientifically to arrive at its own essence, then the sciences are ultimately incapable of gaining access to that which is not to be gotten around [that is nothing less than exactly their respective subject matter] holding sway in their essence" (SR 177). This foundational "not to be gotten around" is the most elusive element of Heidegger's reflection on science (and reflection as such). Jacques Lacan names this the Real as we also hear this in Gaston Bachelard and recently and more popularly in Žižek.⁵⁶ This same elusive/obtrusive inconspicuousness is also for Heidegger, and this is no accident, that same nature that likes to "hide."

The *unscheinbar*, which can be translated as the inconspicuous, unimposing, insignificant, draws no attention to itself because it is, as inconspicuous, precisely not a problem: we do not attend to what is "intractable and inaccessible" (ibid.). Here philosophic reflection on science comes specifically (this is rare) to expression in Heidegger's text. "Today," he writes, "we philosophize about the sciences from the most diverse standpoints." But "through such philosophical efforts, we fall in with the self-exhibition that is everywhere attempted by the sciences themselves in the form of sympathetic résumés and through the recounting of the history of science." (SR 178)

If philosophy has the advantage and if one needs this philosophic advantage or priority for the reflective and indeed creative or revolutionary sake of science itself, why is professional or mainstream philosophy of science (and indeed contemporary philosophy of technology) not more receptive to Heidegger's considerations? The question can sound like a great mystery but it is nothing of the kind and Heidegger already addresses it in his "Letter on Humanism," writing that the gatekeepers of the academy have already ruled on what is clear and what is unclear. Heidegger here like Arendt speaks of the "peculiar dictatorship of the public realm," although echoing a sentiment he might have shared with Adorno: "language comes und the dictatorship of the public realm which decides in advance what is intelligible and what must be rejected as unintelligible"),⁵⁷ and this perfectly politic — and here that means *political* —

⁵⁶ Žižek follows Lacan's praise of theory (qua talking cure) into the imaginary field of the capitalist melt-down qua economic schemata. Žižek, "Don't Just Do Something, Talk," *London Review of Books*, 10 October 2008.

⁵⁷ Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism," trans. Frank A. Capuzzi, in Heidegger, *Pathmarks*, William MacNeill, ed., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 239-276, here p. 242.

ruling works against Heidegger's remonstrance to go back before the very beginnings of philosophy, to "free ourselves from the technical interpretation of thinking."⁵⁸ This manifest difficulty of this undertaking is beside the point given the then and still current "policing" of thought: "'philosophy,'" by which Heidegger means the philosophy that claims the academic title or rank of the same, finds itself "in the constant predicament of having to justify its existence before the 'sciences.' It believes it can do that most effectively by elevating itself to the rank of a science. But such an effort is the abandonment of the essence of thinking."⁵⁹

That means of course, and this remains endemic to the philosophy of science, that philosophers of science so far from emphasizing what Heidegger calls thinking (and a discussion of this is another topic altogether) endeavor instead to imitate the sciences. As philosophers of science are quite self-avowedly party to the scientific cause, this modeling of philosophy on science inevitably excludes critique (or anything that looks like it). To be characterized as anti-science in any fashion is a nightmare for philosophy of science.⁶⁰ But just this anxiety excludes philosophy.

In professional philosophy of science, neutrality or objectivity requires less questioning (Heideggerian or otherwise) than a conscientiously "sympathetic" and even emphatically pro-scientific approach. Philosophers of science stop well short of putting science in question and are consequently as suspicious of Heidegger as they are of Nietzsche but also and not less of both Feyerabend, at one end of the political spectrum, and dialectical critique and its several variations, on the other.⁶¹ To these confessional limitations, Heidegger adds the specific limitations of science itself. Hence and almost inevitably as philosophers of science we are

⁵⁸ Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism," p. 240.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ This is also the reason that, to take a parallel example roughly contemporaneous with Heidegger, Bachelard's work, by contrast with Heidegger, appeals as much as it does to analytic philosophers of science like Gary Gutting and Mary Tiles, despite the overtly poetic and even indeed and emphatically or explicitly alchemical cast of Bachelard's work: whatever Bachelard does, he challenges no part of the scientific project and all his subversion can be said to have been reserved for philosophy. Hence it is significant that and by contrast with Heidegger, Bachelard has always been part of the mainstream tradition of the philosophy of science, if indeed an uneasy part, given his flair and affection for poetry.

⁶¹ See, for example, Alan Woods and Ted Grant, *Reason in Revolt: Dialectical Philosophy and Modern Science* (New York: Agora Publishing, 2003). But see too Robert M. Young, *Darwin's Metaphor: Nature's Place in Victorian Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985) although one would be remiss not to note the resistance to Young's arguments among philosophers of evolutionary science. See too Richard Levins and Richard Lewontin, *The Dialectical Biologist* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985) as well as, on Engels in particular, Paul Thomas, *Marxism & Scientific Socialism: From Engels to Althusser* (New York: Routledge, 2008). See too, including a chapter on J.D. Bernal, Helena Sheehan, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Science: A Critical History* (Amherst, NY: Humanities Press International, 1993). One can mention Robert Cohen here but John Ziman would seem to be about as Marxist as one can be and still be mainstream.

inevitably inclined to miss, as the sciences for their own part likewise miss, what Heidegger named that which “is inaccessible and not to be gotten around,” a circumstance of non-advertence which means, entails that this same inaccessibility “remains in inconspicuousness” (ibid).

But for Heidegger, and this is what confounds most readings of his position on science and the scientific world view, here as in reflections on modern technology, and indeed in his related reflections in the *Spiegel*-interview, the problem is *not* the human inquirer, no matter whether philosopher or scientist or journalist. Like the essence of technology, the problem for Heidegger resides neither within us nor within our power to change.

Heidegger's deliberately gnostic suggestion that the sciences “lie” in this same very “inconspicuous state of affairs as a river lies in its source” (SR 179) is drawn out of his extended hermeneutic reflection on what had been a formerly unremarkable or seemingly obvious (that is, as we now see: *inconspicuous*) claim that “*science is the theory of the real*” (SR 157). Saying that modern science, “is the theory of the real” distinguishes it from its medieval and ancient counterparts. The distinction is not a matter of development or progress and hence it is more than a merely historical distinction.⁶² A perfectly paradigmatic shift characterizes the exactly incommensurable differences between modern, medieval, and ancient Greek science and this shift has inspired several scholars who read Heidegger together with Kuhn on the nature of research science.⁶³ Heidegger's own account here is more historical than sociological in tenor.⁶⁴

An observation that aims at empirical reports, or what counts as the same in the tradition of the medieval schoolman (we may think of Roger Bacon just as Heidegger also invokes him in this context): experience, “remains essentially different from the observation that belongs to science as research.”⁶⁵ For the experiment, as opposed to the contingent, empirical domain of experience, requires a pre-established rule, a stipulated law, and hence the very institutional and empirical framework of modern experimental science constitutes as such the very base-line of

⁶² Expressed in such terms, we are not speaking of the “science of the middle ages nor that of antiquity.” S R, 157.

⁶³ Steve Fuller is perhaps the most informed source of this reading on the side of Kuhn; but from the side of Heidegger, see Patricia Glazebrook, *Heidegger's Philosophy of Science* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1999).

⁶⁴ Thus Heidegger articulates many of the same distinctions made by the historian Peter Dear in Dear's disciplinarily historical reflections on Descartes and the difference between experiential recourse to the empirical and modern scientific experimental research procedure. See Peter Dear, *Discipline and Experience: The Mathematical Way in the Scientific Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

⁶⁵ Heidegger, “The Age of World Picture” in QCT, p. 121. Hereafter cited as WB.

calculability and calculation: “to set up an experiment means to represent or conceive [*vorstellen*] the conditions under which a specific series of motions can be made susceptible of being followed in its necessary progression, i.e., of being controlled in advance by calculation” (WB 121).⁶⁶ Because such an experiment is the expression of a projected law, one has both a criterion for and a limitation upon possible results. This is, of course, the very possibility of measurement.⁶⁷ Heidegger will emphasize that experimental measurement is essentially not a matter of experience *per se*. The scientific observation made through experiment is not a matter of experience, be it personal or common. For Heidegger, it is “only because modern physics is a physics that is essentially *mathematical* that it *can be* experimental” (ibid., my emphasis).

Beginning from a preliminary “ground plan of nature and sketched into it,” literally calculated or built into it, Heidegger observes that “experiment is that methodology which in its planning and execution, is supported and guided on the basis of the fundamental law laid down, in order to adduce the facts that either verify and confirm the law or deny its confirmation.”⁶⁸ This same *formulaic, methodological* rule generates the necessary *specialization* of modern science, which is, in turn, for Heidegger, less a result of the proliferation of results and progressive discoveries of modern science, than the presupposition *for* those same cumulative results and as such.

Almost more fundamental than mathematics and measurement, indeed even more than the scientific method *per se*, it is the ineliminably institutional nature of science that constitutes and only thus exemplifies modern science and it is this institutional character that distinguishes the collective dimension of modern science for Heidegger.⁶⁹ This scientific collectivity is at the same time amenable to a specific concentration or focus. Thus the institutionally calculative project of modern science simultaneously, so Heidegger argues, yields its own isolation or field, that is, its disciplinary specialization. Here too and again an innocently simple

⁶⁶ This point is nicely illuminated by Patrick Heelan’s characterization of our technologies as so many “laboratories,” portable and otherwise.

⁶⁷ Compare Heelan’s phenomenological approach to the question of measurement with Nancy Cartwright. Heelan’s *The Observable* (forthcoming) develops his original study of Heisenberg’s complementarity in *Quantum Mechanics and Objectivity: The Physical Philosophy of Werner Heisenberg* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1965). Cf. Cartwright, *The Dappled World: A Study of the Boundaries of Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

⁶⁸ Precise, scientific measurement is not “precise” observation because it reflects “a methodology essentially different in kind, related to the verification of law in the framework, and at the service of an exact plan of nature.” WB 122.

⁶⁹ For his own part, Merleau-Ponty, would also attend to this same inherently collective group character of objectivity and scientific research.

connection can be made between Heidegger and Kuhn but at this point it is perhaps more important to note the critical potential (socio-critical and historio-critical) of Heidegger's argument.⁷⁰ Everyday *busyness*, i.e., the progressively accelerating enterprises of science in all its variants becomes the *business* of "science as usual," which Heidegger for his part (and it is only at this point that Heidegger introduces a critical reserve), analyses as the motor of the degradation of "ordinary science" (this would be what Nietzsche in a similar fashion named decadence):

Ongoing activity becomes mere busyness whenever in the pursuing of its methodology, it no longer keeps itself open on the basis of an ever-new accomplishing of its projection-plan, but only leaves that plan behind itself as a given; never again confirms and verifies its own self-accumulating results and the calculation of them, but merely chases after such results and calculations (WB, Appendix § 2, 138).⁷¹

For Heidegger, as for Kuhn (and, at least on my reading, even Feyerabend as well), a kind of decadent progress is not the default of science but much rather a sustainable degradation is here the key to the success of modern research programmes.⁷² Here, Heidegger's insight echoes the spirit of similar insights offered by Dingle (in connection with chemistry)⁷³ but also Rom Harré or Peter Medawar and Michael Polanyi, and so on. And yet, the potential of

⁷⁰ It is to be regretted that Joseph Rouse misses an opportunity to make this broader connection in his essay, "Heidegger's Later Philosophy of Science" *The Southern Journal of Philosophy*. Vol. XXIII, No. 1 (1985): 75-92 and although twenty years later Rouse will again have occasion to note the connection to be made between Kuhn and Heidegger, he manages not to address or highlight the critical dimension in Heidegger's thought in his "Heidegger on Science and Naturalism," Gary Gutting, ed., *Continental Philosophy of Science* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), pp. 123-141. It should be noted that in the two decades between these two articles, Rouse curiously introduces his readings of Heidegger's philosophy of science as without precedent — and this in spite of the importantly detailed analyses done by the late Joseph Kockelmans, but also by Kisiel, and Heelan, even if one wished to leave out the chemist Wilhelm Szilasi as well as Hans Seigfried, Hempel (Hans-Peter) in addition, classically enough to Richardson himself, etc., etc., all well before 1985, in addition and to be sure to Patricia Glazebrook's *Heidegger's Philosophy of Science*. Glazebrook herself foregrounds the influence of Jack Caputo himself party to both the discussions of Richardson and Heelan at Fordham.

⁷¹ See on the question of models in science, in a context attuned to both geology and mathematical modeling, Orrin H. Pilkey and Linda Pilkey Jarvis, *Useless Arithmetic: Why Environmental Scientists Can't Predict the Future* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), pp. 27ff.

⁷² I discuss Heidegger's emphasis on this apparently paradoxical character of scientific research in Babich, "Heidegger Against the Editors: Nietzsche, Science, and the *Beiträge* as *Will to Power*," *Philosophy Today*. 47 (Winter 2003): 327B359.

⁷³ See Dingle, *Science at the Crossroads* (London: Martin, Brian and O'Keefe, 1972) and for a current discussion of the ideological concerns or "alternatives" at stake see the letters section of *Physics Today* December 2003, especially noting Dingle's "Modern Aristotelianism," *Nature* 139 (1937): 784. Dingle also notes that "Success in scientific theory is won, not by rigid adherence to the rules of logic, but by bold speculation which dares even to break those rules if by that means new regions of interest may be opened up." *Through Science to Philosophy*, Chapter XV, p. 346. See further, Rom Harré's "Science as the Work of a Community" in Babich, ed., *Hermeneutic Philosophy of Science, Van Gogh's Eyes, and God*, pp. 219-229.

Heidegger's thinking for a radically critical philosophy of science — and I have noted that this has numerous expressions, some continental, some not — continues to remain untapped.

And yet have I not here been developing rather a good bit of text and footnote energy to the case that a number of authors have indeed and already and for a long written on Heidegger and science? Yet the claim that Heidegger's thinking for a radically critical philosophy of science has yet to be tapped gainsays none of this inasmuch as one cannot merely “add” Heidegger to extant philosophy of science, as it were, and stir.

Instead and this was the point of departure for an earlier study of *Nietzsche's Philosophy of Science*,⁷⁴ rather any such proposition entails (and this is why I call it radical and why I say that it is critical) a challenge to conventional or mainstream philosophy of science. This challenge is both implied and explicitly stated in Heidegger's thinking from the start.

It turns out that reflection in philosophy, like revolutions in the sciences, are more appealing in theory than practice. But and like revolutions in the sciences, it is only when philosophy reflects critically or thoughtfully that is genuine philosophy. And this is the case as well for the philosophy of science, if it does mean that such a philosophy of science would be charged as the philosophy of science does not wish to be charged with putting science in question. And just this is why one could say that mainstream or traditional philosophy of science does not, as it were, “think.”

Heidegger for his part challenges philosophy of science to be philosophy of science. Thus he similarly argues that the inherent stultification of regularised, conventionalised science must be resisted or “fought against at all times,” so Heidegger insists, just “because research is, in its essence, ongoing activity” (AWP 138). This focus on institutionalized creativity is one of Heidegger's key insights, an insight anticipating social studies of science and technology and one could take it in another sense to answer some of the more typical objections to Heidegger's understanding of science and technology as limited to (and therefore as only binding for) the science and technology of his own age.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ See Babich, *Nietzsche's Philosophy of Science*. Forthcoming I am delighted to say for all the difference that language turns out to make in Nietzsche's case as *Nietzsche's Wissenschaftsphilosophie* (Oxford/Bern: Peter Lang 2010).

⁷⁵ We hear this from Patrick Heelan but also from Don Ihde who has his own reasons for wanting to present his thought as more “evolved” than Heidegger's own (we recall that Heidegger regarded the question of the cutting edge as irrelevant to philosophy but central to the advertizing gambits of the market place) and so on. To oppose this point of view *is not* to claim that Heidegger's knowledge of science was a knowledge of modern science in its latest most up-to-date phase. Indeed, if this is what we need, none but the scientists themselves (and not even they) may be counted as adequately au courant. Pace Ihde.

The institution that is also the instrumentarium of modern science (its technological being in the world) exemplifies modern science. Because scientific research is necessarily institutional, Heidegger argues (here in complete accord with Max Weber), that modern science is inherently systematic. “Ongoing activity in research is a specific bodying-forth and ordering of the systematic, in which, at the same time, the latter reciprocally determines the ordering. Where the world becomes picture, the system, and not only in thinking, comes to dominance” (AWP 141). To put this in other words, namely in the language of the work of art essay: science has its own fully institutional *world*, its *creators* and co-creators or *preservers*. But where, in the context of art, the world of the ancient work of art is lost, where the world of the past or contemporary artist is likewise temporary and so similarly vulnerable, the world of modern technological science is inherently secure. “Theory makes secure at any given time a region of the real as its object-area. The area-character of objectness is shown in the fact that it specifically maps out in advance the possibilities for the posing of questions” (SR 169).

The world of modern technological science is built into the calculating inquiry of the scientific enterprise, with such overwhelming presence that, so Heidegger would argue, it has literally transformed the earth, and here — as we shall see later in more detail — he makes a distinction. Today, the modern, techno-scientific project is poised to transform or absorb *life* itself. But before we return to the question of life already mentioned at the outset, it is important to consider the physical, already constructed or manufactured, scope of technological enframing.

The technological framework corresponds to the current array of scientific laboratory equipment, including linguistic and logical analysis as well as computer simulations and models, but also universities and government research agencies and the still broader field of technological industry and its influence in the culture of the everyday contemporary world at almost every cultural and social level on a global scale.

We have seen that for Heidegger, and here he goes beyond constructivism, confirmable results (that is, what will count as *viable* predictions) are possible (and indeed *replicable*) just because and that is to say from the start they are built into the project (and often the mechanics) of research science. Thus in 1938, Heidegger could point to the extension of this ground plan from the natural to the social sciences, using historiography as illustration. At the same locus, Heidegger nicely describes (rather like David Lodge without the charm of the academic novel), the life of the modern academic in any field, particularly, to extend his observation on present day terms: the academic researcher equipped with wireless technology or internet access. In

place of the traditionally polymathic scholar, Heidegger observes, we have “the research man engaged in research projects” (WB, 125), and the life of such a new-age research academician is all about the cutting-edge of research: the latest discovery.

This Heidegger opposes to the old-fashioned image of “erudition” or book learning. And the whole point concerns the already at the time growing irrelevance of books. Today and in the current world of on-line and electronic research tools, Heidegger’s observation holds more than ever: “the researcher no longer needs a library at home. Moreover he is constantly on the move. He negotiates at meetings and collects information at conferences. He contracts for commissions with publishers” (ibid.). The consequences of such an emancipation from the culture of reading to the culture of writing (Nietzsche reminds us that the two are mutually exclusive) to today’s culture of “virtual” reading (what else are we doing when we download a text?) is still more volatile than in the era of the journalism Heidegger found so reprehensible because inherently non-reflective.

For such a media critique we need more than the often forgotten insights of a McLuhan, we need, despite their forbidding Francophone complexity (a matter of academic context), a Baudrillard or a Virilio, that is: we need, as a hermeneutic and phenomenological supplement, a sociology of information and, perhaps still more crucially, of misinformation, a sociology of the communication/information market.⁷⁶ Beyond instant messages, blogs that crown themselves the arbiters of good and bad graduate schools, email, cell phones, etc., we have web-only journals, established overnight (and as quickly out of operation), and there is no way here to point to the latest techno-manifestation. In this fashion, “established” scholarship is a self-perpetuating, self-reinforcing structure: one still “contracts” as Heidegger put it, for “commissions with publishers.” But such contracts are the stuff of certification, credibility, legitimacy.

Science as world-view, even philosophy as the same, is inevitably circular and this circularity is its virtue rather than a deficiency or a weakness one might rectify. Apart from this insular circle, everything else will be adjudged “unproven,” everything else, in other words is denied the name of science, dubbed pseudo- or bad science, like “bad” philosophy, and discounted out of hand. Science (and academic scholarship in general) simply denies its attention to dissonant points of view (one does not cite these) or judges them (and this is a circular business that always comes out ‘even’ as it were) solely on its own terms. Thus what

⁷⁶ See for one such analysis, Paul Virilio, *The Information Bomb* (London: Verso 2005).

the philosophy of science calls demarcation (what mainstream philosophy calls philosophy, and science recognizes as science) depends upon just such self-absorbed, self-referring circularity.

For Heidegger (as for almost anyone writing on science), modern scientific research knowledge is all about calculation, as this calculative essence can be discerned in its methods, its corrective self-assessments, its results. In its determinative prescription of the object of science as such, the calculative essence of modern science constitutes the scientific object: “whatever is called to account with regard to *the way in which* and *the extent to which* it lets itself be put at the disposal of representation” (WB, 126, emphasis added). This is also at work in what Heidegger names *Ge-Stell* in his postwar essays on objectification and technology, which he also calls “insight” into what is, and elusively addresses as “the danger” in his lectures to the Club of Bremen.

In “The Age of the [Scientific] Worldview” [i.e., *Zeit des Weltbildes* (1938)], which first appeared in *Holzwege* (1952), but is (instructively) contemporaneous with the composition of the notes that would become Heidegger’s later published *Beiträge*, Heidegger had observed that the “objectifying of whatever is, is accomplished via a setting before, a re-presentation, that aims at bringing each particular being before it in such a way that the human being who calculates can be *sure*, and that means, *certain*, of that being” (AWP, 127, emphasis added).

Security and *certainty* in this case relates to the absolute centrality of the human being as the “measure” of all that is.⁷⁷ The human (this would be Nietzsche’s “last” or “highest” man), takes him- or herself to be the center of the world, as Nietzsche expressed this human-focused perspective, a centrality, as Nietzsche reminds us, that is common to both the religious ascetic ideal as to the scientific ideal). Because Heidegger’s own reference to Nietzsche invokes the then-popular (indeed, *still* popular) reading of Nietzsche as the prophet of nihilistic humanism and because Heidegger seems to condemn Nietzsche in these terms, it can be easy to overlook the extent to which Heidegger for his own part borrows Nietzsche’s analysis of the earth- and body-denigrating (but exactly self-aggrandizing) consequences of the all-too-humanistic ascetic ideal practiced in religion, particularly the Judeo-Christian and Islamic tradition, with its ultimately human-centered doctrine of personal immortality.⁷⁸ Nietzsche summarizes this

⁷⁷ This human centeredness is to be taken less in the Protagorean sense of measure, which for Heidegger (always influenced by Hölderlin in this regard), retains a fundamentally reticent character of balance [*Maß*] than this securing certification is to be heard in terms of Nietzsche’s critique.

⁷⁸ Indeed, as Heidegger read Nietzsche through and against the interpretations current at the time of his lectures on Nietzsche, it is important to distinguish between Heidegger’s criticisms of what Nietzsche’s interpreters argued in his name and Heidegger’s own Nietzsche-indebted suggestions. See further, Babich, “Dichtung, Eros, und

analysis in his *Anti-Christ* (a text which may instructively be alternately translated as *The Anti-Christian*), “the ‘salvation of the soul’ — in plain logic: ‘the world revolves around me’”.⁷⁹ The critique of humanism thus understood as a critique of the central role of humanity *tout court*, is thus the pendant to Heidegger’s reading of Nietzsche’s analysis of the same relative centrality of the human being as “the lord of the earth” which Heidegger articulates, using Nietzsche’s words (although he was hardly the only one to do so), with reference to National Socialism and its broadest ambitions: “Man as a rational being in the age of Enlightenment is no less subject than is man who grasps himself as a nation, wills himself as a people, fosters himself as a race, and, finally empowers himself as lord of the earth.”⁸⁰ For Heidegger, regarded in terms of the “human” in the age of science, this nihilistic or nihilating impetus is not simply the matter of the human as the center of attention in a divine universe. Beyond even the wildest dreams of a medieval sense of the world, today “the human being becomes the relational center of that which is as such” (WB, 128). Modern techno-science is a humanism.

From the perspective of human domination, this would be Nietzsche’s (not Hegel’s) lordship, the modern world is literally transformed into a picture, a transformation that supposes indeed that we have attained the fantastic position first proposed by Archimedes,⁸¹ the ingenious Greek technician commemorated by Descartes at the start of his second Meditation.⁸² Despite the fondness of theorists for discussions of time, this spatial dispositionality is the ecstatic locus for French philosophers of technology such as, on the hand, Bachelard, Simondon, and Lefebvre, and, on the other Ellul, Baudrillard, and Virilio. “Wherever we have the world picture, an essential decision takes place regarding what is in its entirety. The Being of whatever is, is sought and found in the representedness of the latter” (WB 130).

De novo, such a representational understanding of the material world (and of God) was Descartes’ starting point when he began the process that shattered the scholastic conceptual

Denken in Nietzsche und Heidegger: Heideggers Nietzsche Interpretation und die heutigen Nietzsche-Lektüre,” *Heidegger-Jahrbuch II* (Freiburg: Karl Alber Verlag 2005), pp. 239-264.

⁷⁹ Nietzsche, *Der AntiChrist*, KSA Vol. 6, § 43. See too the latter section of Babich, “Nietzsche’s Philology and Nietzsche’s Science: On The ‘Problem of Science’ and ‘fröhliche Wissenschaft.’” in: Pascale Hummel, ed., *Metaphilology: Histories and Languages of Philology*, (Paris: Philologicum, 2009), pp. 155-201.

⁸⁰ *Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis)*, *Gesamtausgabe [GA] 65*. Edited by Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann. Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1989), p. 152. Hereafter cited as B.

⁸¹ This Archimedean vantage point continues to intrigue philosophers and critics. It is the position Thomas Nagel innocently called the “view from nowhere,” further identified by the biologist-turned-science-studies theorist, Donna Haraway, still more innocently but still more aptly as the *God-trick*.

⁸² For Descartes, this Archimedean vantage point need not correspond to an actual point beyond the limits of the earthly globe but could instead be “virtual”: represented within one’s own subjectivity as a thinking thing.

relation of the human being to the world and to God. If the modern view of the world (as picture) differs from the medieval order of creation or chain of being, the modern scientific representation of the world is further still from the ancient Greek interpretation. For the Greek, as Heidegger reads Parmenides's coordination of thinking/knowing and being, τὸ γὰρ αὐτὸ νοεῖν ἐστὶν τε καὶ εἶναι, the relationship to what is is almost perfectly reversed (that is, at least as regarded from the modern perspective or point of view): "That which is, is that which arises and opens itself, which as what presences comes upon the one who himself opens himself to what presences in that he apprehends it" (WB 130). This more surrendered, dispositionally available orientation to that which is (for both Nietzsche and Heidegger, the key to the Greek world), is lost to our modern sensibilities: "in order to fulfill his essence, Greek human being must gather [λέγειν] and save [σωζειν], catch up and preserve, what opens itself in its openness, and he must remain exposed [ἀληθεύειν] to all its sundering confusions. The Greek human being is as the one who apprehends that which is, and this is why in the age of the Greeks the world cannot be a picture" (WB 131).

This same and vulnerable exposition to what is is also what constitutes the possibility of the modern perspective on the world as picture. The world is thus transformed into an objective correlate, set or posed as such: "ready" for a representing subject. Intriguingly, the same insurgence of the human as measure and reference point (objective representation and subjective relevance) is also the era of increasingly leveled uniformity. This humanism describes the trajectory of modernity for Heidegger: "In the planetary imperialism of technologically organized man, the subjectivism of man attains its acme, from which point it will descend to the level of organized uniformity and there firmly establish itself. This uniformity becomes the surest instrument of the total, i.e., technological, rule over the earth" (WB, 152-3). Paradoxically, Heidegger points out, this technological dominion corresponds to the utter loss of liberty: the "modern freedom of subjectivity vanishes altogether in the objectivity commensurate with it" (*Ibid.*).

The global delimitation of "reality," understood in a techno-practical fashion as the realm of what *works* and *can be worked upon*, belongs to the essence of modern science.⁸³ Scientific truth for Heidegger (as for the rest of us too, no matter where we stand, whether for or against Heidegger), proves itself via its efficacy, that is: "the efficiency of its own effects" (SD, 58). As the theory of what works, science is the theory of what is (or counts as) Real [*Wirkliche*] as

⁸³ Thus science is the "theory of the real." SR, 159.

“the working, the worked [*Wirkende, Gewirkte*]; that which brings hither and brings forth into presencing, and this which has been brought hither and brought into presencing. Reality [*Wirklichkeit*] means, then, when thought sufficiently broadly: that which, brought forth hither into presencing, lies before; it means the presencing, consummated in itself, of self-bringing forth” (SR 160).

When we say that “science is the theory of the real” we are already in the sphere of the transformation of the Greek meaning of theory into the Roman precinct of contemplation. “The Romans translate *theōrein* by *contemplari*, *theōria* by *contemplatio*. This translation, which issues from the spirit of the Roman language, that is, from Roman existence, makes that which is essential in what the Greek words say vanish at a stroke” (SR 165). In the age of modern technological science, we have gone from an attentive regard for what presences to “observation [*Betrachtung*]” (SR 167). We now have to do with an encroachment upon the effective, technologically relevant domain of the Real, an ensnaring or a challenging forth, “specifically through aiming at its objectness” (ibid.).

The result here is nothing less momentous for the very possibility of modern science than *causality* itself, that is: the very ideal of causal thinking which is of course the essence of calculation. Henceforth, in its modern aspect, for modern science, what is “real now appears in the light of the causality of the *causa efficiens*” (SR 161). That is to say, “every new phenomenon emerging within an area of science is refined to such a point that it fits into the normative coherence of the theory” (SR 169). As such, this last sentence would hardly be out of place in any expression of the philosophy of science. But Heidegger reflects on the relevance of “objectness” implicit in the “essence of what is called ‘end’ or ‘purpose.’ When something is in itself determined by an end, then it is pure theory” (ibid.). Thus Heidegger argues that the “assertion that modern atomic physics by no means invalidates the classical physics of Galileo and Newton but only narrows its realm of validity” (ibid.). This advance calculability is the essence of the “objectification of the real” (SR 170). This objectifying transition is possible only because we are speaking objectively of the object that is now ineluctably (for whatever use or purpose we suppose we wish to make of it), disposed to use. To use the terms we recall from Heidegger’s essay on technology, “standing reserve” encompasses either immediate or reserved use and this last represents nothing less than the ideal of “sustainable development” as we talk about globalization and the most efficient

development of the resources or “reserves” of the earth today, East and West, and above all: North and South.⁸⁴

So far from the theoretical distance of Greek science, that is, the heart of reflective restraint or contemplation,⁸⁵ contemporary science “sets upon the real” (SR 167). Science further orders reality “into place to the end that at any given time the real will exhibit itself as an interacting network, i.e., in surveyable series of related causes. The real thus becomes surveyable and capable of being followed out in its sequences. The real becomes secured in its objectness” (SR 167-168). This utterly objective, technologically effective, setting upon is the essence of modern science: the “pure” theory of science in every case will draw its applicable and working power from this same essence.⁸⁶ That is, once again, the ideal of a *causa efficiens*. Thus Heidegger explains that “because modern science is theory ... in all its observing [*Be-trachten*], therefore, the manner of its striving after [*Trachtens*], i.e., the manner of entrapping-securing procedure, i.e., [*the scientific*] *method*, has decisive security” (SR 169, expansion and emphasis added).

It is in this securing-calculating context that Heidegger cites Max Planck's definition of “the real” as “that which can be measured” (*ibid.*).⁸⁷ The philosopher invokes the physicist's definition as a philosopher reflecting on science and thus in order to explain that “the decision about what may pass in science, in this case in physics, for assured knowledge rests with the measureability supplied in the objectness of nature and in keeping with that measurability, in

⁸⁴ See Glazebrook, “Global Technology and the Promise of Control” in David Tabachnick and Toivo Koivukoski, eds., *Globalization, Technology and Philosophy* (Albany: SUNY, 2004), pp. 143-158 as well as Visvanathan, “Progress and Violence” in Lightman et al, ed., *Living with the Genie: Essays on Technology and the Quest for Human Mastery* (Washington: Island Press, 2003) and Aidan Davison, *Technology and the Contested Meaning of Sustainability* (Albany, SUNY, 2001).

⁸⁵ Nietzsche, for example, reminds us to note that the Greeks had all the mathematical preconditions necessary for the development of modern science – and yet they did not.

⁸⁶ Heidegger explains, “modern science as theory in the sense of an observing that strives after is a refining of the real that does encroach uncannily upon it. Precisely through this refining it corresponds to a fundamental characteristic of the real. The real is what presences as self-exhibiting.” SR 167.

⁸⁷ There is a complex little tempest in a teapot here for although Planck goes on to distance himself from this claim, but in his lectures at Columbia this is indeed and fairly squarely the claim he makes, asking the question “What lies at the bottom of physics?” (Planck, *Eight Lectures on Theoretical Physics. Delivered at Columbia University in 1909*, trans. A.P. Wills (New York: Columbia University Press, 1915 [Leipzig: Hirzel, 1909]), p. 2). The answer, we are told is: “measurements.” (*Ibid.*, p. 3.) Planck explains that “mathematics is the chief tool with which this material is worked. All physical ideas depend upon measurements, more or less exactly carried out.” (*Ibid.*) Significantly for Heidegger as we note, Planck goes on to observe that talk of objects is arbitrary and one should only speak of “complexes of sense-perceptions” rather than, say, the “rustling,” of the leaves of a tree. (*Ibid.*) — a claim to which Heidegger took well-known exception. Planck goes on much later to emphasize that any discussion of measures “presupposes “that the progress of the phenomena is not influenced by the measuring instrument.” (*Ibid.*, p. 98.)

the possibilities inherent in the measuring process” (ibid.). It is important to emphasize that such calculation is of the essence of modern science as such, not only the putatively mathematical sciences but also the social sciences and hence the rage to appropriate quantificational rather than qualitative models is not merely the default of tradition.⁸⁸ Disciplinary specialization follows upon the nature of modern science as the theory of the real, delimited in each case in terms of object areas but no longer in terms of a focus on explanation (calculation) and understanding (interpretive or hermeneutic reflection).

Specialization is not then a result of the need to delimit and so to manage the sheer accumulated bulk of knowledge today, as we may tend to assume, in contrast say with the “amount” of knowledge to be had a century ago. There is not *less* to know in *superceded* knowledge schemes. One can, as we already noted, call these “folk” sciences but it is more honest if less incendiary to speak, as Foucault reminds us we must, of transcended, discarded or denigrated sciences, that is: “subjugated knowledges,” those sciences we refuse to call sciences as opposed to those currently in favor. This Foucault clarified in his 1976 lectures to the Collège de France by defining “subjugated knowledges” to include “whole series of knowledges that have been disqualified as nonconceptual knowledges, as insufficiently elaborated knowledges: naive knowledges, hierarchically inferior knowledges, knowledges that are below the required level of erudition or scientificity.”⁸⁹

For Heidegger, rather than serving as a means of compartmentalizing and so dividing an otherwise unsurveyable mass of information, specialization is simply a “consequence of the presencing of modern science” (SR 170). In this way, mathematics

is not a reckoning in the sense of performing operations with numbers for the purpose of establishing quantitative results; but, on the contrary, mathematics is the reckoning that, everywhere by means of equations, has set up as the goal of its expectation the harmonizing of all relations of order, and that therefore ‘reckons’ in advance with one fundamental equation for all merely possible ordering (ibid.).

Whether we are speaking of classical physics or of quantum physics, whether of sociology or psychology, Heidegger can say that “nature has in advance to set itself in place for the entrapping securing that science, as theory, accomplishes” (SR 172-3). This entrapping-securing is measurement or calculation, trading upon a certain economically based resentment

⁸⁸ In an odd way, this means that the modern academic endeavor to which Kant seemingly gave voice as the effort to put whatever discipline, (metaphysics or linguistics or sociology), on the secure path of a science, is far further along its way than we are usually inclined to think.

⁸⁹ Michel Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the Collège de France*, trans. David Macey (New York: Picador, 2003), p. 7.

in the process. For Heidegger, everything including the subject-object relation, becomes “sucked up as standing-reserve” and an issue of “standing-reserve to be commanded and set in order” (SR 173). Invoking his own essay on technology, Heidegger emphasizes that the constancy of standing reserve is “determined out of Enframing” (SR 173). Thus the subject-object relation “attains to its most extreme dominance, which is predetermined out of Enframing” (ibid.).

The Question of Science, The Question of Questioning, and *Gelassenheit*

I argue that the watchword of Heidegger's philosophic reflection on modern science and modern technology is nothing less than questioning, albeit and again, to be sure, questioning of a particular kind, expressed with an exigency which he expresses as “piety” or “devotion” as he concludes his essay on the nature of the question in the wake of technology. Indeed, Heidegger had already suggested this “dedication” as safeguarding and would maintain this point throughout his life, “humanity will know, that is, carefully safeguard into its truth, that which is incalculable, only in creative questioning and in shaping man of the future into that ‘between’ in which he belongs to Being and yet remains a stranger amid that which is” (WP 136).

Attentive to the rigor of philosophical thought, that is the later Heidegger would say, to what calls for or impels thinking, Heidegger contrasts ‘authentic’ or genuine questioning to the answer-bound or problem directed inquiry: the kind of questioning corresponding to “curiosity” and investigative “research.” By contrast with answer-bound inquiry, questioning as such, *authentic* or *creative* questioning, has always to overcome itself, that is, to open itself up into its own questioning after.

In this way, questioning is always underway to questioning: questioning to be questioning is inherently a matter of overcoming its initial orientation and disposition.

Against logistics, and against positivism, and, above all, against technological scientism — and there is no other kind, which is not to say that there is no other science — Heidegger proposes the radical poverty, which he speaks of as the “impotence,” of reflective thinking. Heidegger (always stressing the modal dimension), suggests that we *might* yet find a way beyond calculative thought: “the poverty of reflection is the promise of a wealth whose treasures glow in the resplendence of that uselessness which can never be included in any reckoning” (SR 181).

Heidegger's language in *The Question Concerning Technology*, of the “here and now, of the small (as opposed to the great and especially as opposed to the grand), which he invokes in

terms of what “summons us to hope in the growing light of the saving power” (QCT 133) includes a restrained awareness that although one can reflect, “through this we are not yet saved,” that is to say, as he says it again, to “foster the saving power in its increase,” “here, now, and in little things” must “include holding always before our eyes the extreme danger” (ibid.). But at the same time, Heidegger emphasizes that this is exactly not a matter of (human) endeavor or will.

In the age of modern technology it is revealing as such that is threatened “with the possibility that all revealing will be consumed in ordering and that everything will present itself only in the unconcealedness of standing reserve” (QCT 33). In other words, “Enframing,” that is, “the essence of technology, as the destining of revealing, is the danger” (QCT 28). As a “destining,” Enframing, Heidegger had already noted, “banishes the human being into that kind of revealing which is an ordering.” And we recall that wherever “this ordering prevails, it drives out every other possibility of revealing” (QCT, 27). It is this danger, both to Da-sein and also to what is, that is not to be countered by a resolve to control or master technology. And this limitation, I fear, also applies to our current efforts to modify or control today’s technologies. Hence in “The Turning,” Heidegger reminds us, using Nietzschean, and indeed, a very Adornoesque trope to repeat this warning: “we do not yet hear, we whose hearing and seeing are perishing through radio and film under the rule of technology. The constellation of Being is the denial of world, in the form of the injurious neglect of the thing. Denial is not nothing; it is the highest mystery of Being within the rule of Enframing” (T, PLT 48-9).

Reflection and Science: *Discourse on Thinking and the Task of Gelassenheit*

If I hold Heidegger’s reflections indispensable for a philosophy of science (and technology), I also think I do so for reasons shared by almost anyone who reflects on Heidegger and science (and technology). If my views are stronger (or a bit more Nietzschean) than most, it is because I am persuaded that Heidegger’s reflections take us to the very philosophical heart of the philosophy of science as such. As Patrick A. Heelan explains, this hermeneutic method is “the search for the structures of meaning, explicit or latent, in the World horizons, particularly those created by science.”⁹⁰ Hence Heelan reflects that the “labors of the positive sciences precede the labors of philosophy and the labors of the philosophy of science

⁹⁰ Patrick A. Heelan, *Space Perception and the Philosophy of Science* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), p. 17.

is, as it were, a 'recapitulation' of the scientific effort."⁹¹ Thus Heidegger offers an *ontological* recapitulation of science and technology.

Hence I argue that we need Heidegger's reflective sensibility for a philosophy of technology worth of the name: a philosophy of technology that does not merely play into the hands of the technicians themselves, the engineers, the experts as Daniel Kleinman and Langdon Winner among others have undertaken to elaborate the political and social implications of Jacques Ellul's thinking on technology and expert rule.⁹² For Heidegger, we lack a philosophical comportment to the question of the nature of modern science and technology that inquires into the ground of the same. In his *Discourse on Thinking* [*Gelassenheit*], Heidegger uses the enthusiasms of science (at the time his reference was to the proclamation of eighteen Nobel-prize winners who proclaimed "modern natural science" the "pathway to a happier human life" [DT 50/20]),⁹³ as the occasion for a reflection on our failure to reflect on modern science (and modern technology). This reflection Heidegger articulates by attempting to pose the still timely (and still practical) question: "what is the foundation on the basis of which scientific techniques can discover and liberate new natural energies?" (DT 50/20 [*translation amended*]). Heidegger's frame of reference in his 1955 lecture was the atomic era, with all its promises and all its anxieties, just ten years after the US bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki set a pair of unimaginable, still unsymbolizable and all-too-Real (in every Lacanian sense of the Real that endures to the present day) atomic explosions to outline the end of World War II (and this post-datedness should always be emphasized and it rarely is).⁹⁴

Thus Heidegger defines "nature" as "a gigantic gasoline station, an energy source for modern technology and industry." If the enigmatic promise of developing nuclear power has lost none of its appeal (i.e., despite its ongoing unworkability, problems *then* remain largely unsolved today), the current day shows up the hype of 1950's (and the decades to follow)

⁹¹ Heelan's citation of Heidegger's term "recapitulation" echoes the expansive sense of the biological apothegm: ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny. Heelan's footnote addressed to Heidegger and science is instructive for its generosity and the scope of his references. See Heelan, *Space-Perception and the Philosophy of Science*, p. 324.

⁹² This is the long-standing question of technological autonomy and it is far from resolved.

⁹³ Today we can point to any BP or Exxon or indeed BMW advertisement.

⁹⁴ See however chapter four of David S. Bertollotti for an historical representation and discussion, *Culture and Technology* (Bowling Green: Ohio University Press, 1984).

futurology.⁹⁵ Heidegger is guilty here less of *doubting* the technologists of his day than of taking the engineer's word for the deed.

It is hardly surprising but it should nonetheless be underscored that Heidegger was as much a child of the nineteenth and twentieth century as anyone of his time, so that he could only imagine (as we today are not quite free to suppose), that “the decisive question of science and technology is no longer: where do we find sufficient quantities of fuel” (DT 51/18) but the different problem of harnessing and above all of controlling “unimaginably vast amounts of atomic energies” (DT 51/18-19).⁹⁶ If the physicist Freeman Dyson is in perfect accord with Heidegger's reasoning (although the energy issue has turned out not to be as straightforward as Heidegger seems here to have supposed), although neither the physicist's nor the philosopher's optimism regarding nuclear energy is likely to have any effect on our ongoing dependence on oil, gas, coal. Thus it is also to reflect upon our own subscription to this same ideal as it is unquestioned on either side of the environmental debates on global warming and so-called sustainable development.

Heidegger's point is that we have rendered the world vulnerable to “the attacks of calculative thought, attacks” in our own imaginative vision and still more in our ongoing technological practice “nothing is believed any longer to resist” (ibid.). Hence and to this day — this is the heart of all our debates on sustainable development and its technologies — we continue to regard nature “as an energy source for modern technology and industry” (ibid.) and all our programs to solve our energy problems presuppose this same perspective.

But even with the consummation of our wildest technological dreams, there yet remains for Heidegger a key limitation: “in all areas of existence, man will be encircled even more tightly by the forces of technological arrays and automata” (DT 51/19).

This is the substance of his lecture — and it is the reason the translators rendered the title of *Gelassenheit* not as a John Lennon-esque *Letting Be* but as *Discourse on Thinking*. For Heidegger, like the different kinds of questioning with which we began the current essay, there is a gap between what we think we know and what we genuinely (that is to say: authentically and creatively) understand. It “is one thing” to take account of what we hear and read about,

⁹⁵ We remain far from the projected era when, as Heidegger supposed, “the unmediated procurement of new energies will soon no longer be tied to certain countries and continents, as is the localization of coal, oil, and the wood of the forests” (DT 50-51[*emended*]/18).

⁹⁶ Heidegger then assumed, as we cannot, that the dream of the atom age had nothing to hinder it. Thus he imagined that “in the foreseeable future the world's demands for energy of any kind will be ensured forever.” Technological triumphalism was common at that time and we seem to have learned slightly better to our pains, which is not to say that we are today committed to any lesser prospect.

but “another thing to understand what we have heard and read...” (DT 52) Such reflective regard is, of course, nothing less than hermeneutic thought. Where Heidegger cites the Nobel prize winning biochemist Wendell Stanley who had predicted that “the hour is near when life will be placed in the hands of the chemist who will be able to synthesize, split and modify living substance at will” (ibid.), it is clear that merely to take account of this as a news report or a curiosity (or even as a phenomenon linking the promise of science then with current reality today) still fails the meditative reflection Heidegger asks of us.

Thus as much as we like to say when reading Heidegger's remonstrations that science does not think, that we are not thinking that, yes, we are ‘thinking’, yes science does think: no we are not: no science is not.

For we remain despite all our enlightenment, the children of superstition and make believe, as Nietzsche always lamented. We remain, in spite of our scientific sophistication as confident as ever that where nothing is seen (or heard, or felt), there is nothing. Thus we believe in science or the expert testimony of industry. And we believe that the consequences of such needful (whose need?) “development” will be nothing more egregious or more sorrowfully serious than the loss of the bees or birds or bears or giant cats, all a result of the regrettable but somehow tolerable destruction of habitat (and what do we do when we name the living-world of beings other than ourselves a habitat? For whom? How so?)

We then propose to leverage contemporary reflections and corporate and government sponsored research (it's all about the sponsorship isn't it?) on sustainable *development* into different reflections on sustainable habitation (thus we include ourselves with other animals whose collective lifeworld, including our own, is in jeopardy), through our own acts, perhaps offshore, perhaps as in the Jules Verne fantasies of a few decades ago, perhaps undersea, today, still more fantastically, perhaps off-world (and when will this be and for which of us will this be?).

Sustaining means keeping on, maintaining an exhaustive depletion of the riches of the earth that we call a “harvest” when we do not call it “development,” using the medieval schoolman's presumption (this was Lynn White's point) that what is were somehow “incomplete” until being taken up or fulfilled for human purposes. All sustainability projects (for development or for habitation/survival) presuppose that human society can only express itself (and historically this has been true for modern and premodern cultures alike) as so very many technologically sophisticated variants on slash and burn agrarian societies: cultures capable of no more than an

unremittingly aggressive devastation of their environment, followed by colonizing other territories.

The frontier, the wild west, Star Trek.⁹⁷ And so we continue to project ourselves into space, here in a striking literalization of Heidegger's *Zeit des Weltbildes*.

We are not animals, we say to ourselves, at times thinking to quote Heidegger for confirmation. This human hubris is the meaning of humanism as Nietzsche taught us well before Heidegger.

And this humanism is also the reason modern science, so far from being the opponent of religion, is indeed, as Nietzsche argued, its latest and best expression. And historically at least Nietzsche's claim could not be more patent. Philosophers, historians, and public policy theorists have debated Lynn White's thesis regarding the coincidence between Western religious thought and Western technological and scientific progress, passionately so, since it was first published.⁹⁸ In the current context, it is significant that only an expressly *millenarian* thesis can make sense of the conviction/complacency of our thinking on the environment and what we do in actual practice.

Heidegger's perspective here reminds us that even as we attempt to reflect upon the crises of our age, we fail to reflect on the question itself, in the wake of technology.

And to that extent, we fail to reframe, to rearticulate and to rework the same question that happened also to have been the very last public question Heidegger ever posed, addressed in a letter written to a group of North Americans, asking them for their part to revisit the question of the relationship between modern science and modern technology.

Is modern natural science — as is thought— the foundation for modern technology or is it already and for its own part the basic form of technological thinking, the determinative anticipation and constant intervention of technical representation in the fulfilled and institutionalized machination of modern technology?⁹⁹

⁹⁷ Beyond *Star Trek*, beyond *Bladerunner* or any other movie, consider the flat vista and the still flatter presupposition of the fantasy world presupposed by the life-absorbing 'game' (but what good game, really played, is not?) *World of Warcraft*, Mel Gibson's *Beyond the Thunderdome* meets Tolkein's *Lord of the Rings*.

⁹⁸ See Lynn Townsend White, Jr, "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis," *Science*, Vol. 155, Number 3767 (March 10, 1967): 1203–1207 and his *Medieval Technology and Social Change* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962). Elsewhere I argue that Nietzsche makes the same argument, for his part with reference to ancient science, in his *Antichrist*.

⁹⁹ Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe. I. Abteilung: Veröffentlichte Schriften 1910-1976. Reden und Andere Zeugnisse eines Lebensweges* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 2000), GA 16, p. 747. Heidegger directed this question the participants of the tenth meeting of the Heidegger Conference (i.e., Heidegger Circle) in Chicago, 14-16 May 1976. Twenty-five years after Heidegger first wrote his letter, the current author invited participants, as the secretary-convener of the 35th annual meeting of the Heidegger conference, to begin to address in all seriousness

We remain in the grip of technological remedies or problem solving — but that is only to say, as Heidegger constantly repeats throughout *What is Called Thinking*, that we are *still*, all of us, and not only the scientists and technicians among us, not thinking.

In “The Turning,” Heidegger reminds us of what is involved in the project of reflective thinking, the project of catching ourselves in the act, an impossible move, even where the problem we mean to solve by means of such reflection is the problem of modern technological science itself

All mere chasing after the future so as to work out a picture of it through calculation in order to extend what is present and half thought into what, now veiled, is yet to come, itself still moves within the prevailing attitude belonging to technological calculating representation. All attempts to reckon existing reality morphologically, psychologically, in terms of decline and loss, in terms of fate, catastrophe, and destruction, are merely technological behaviour. (T 48)

The challenge for thought is not that of technology (be it the challenge of advancing or mastering those same advances). What is entirely “uncanny” is not the increasing technicization of the world (whether mystified or demystified) but our own lack of unpreparedness “for this transformation” of the world in the veritable image of technology as such. This is, again, “our inability to confront meditatively what is really daring in this age” (T 52). This “daring,” this danger still threatens us.

It is enough to say here, but it would take much, much more to think it through, that when Heidegger turns his reflection on the challenges of modern scientific technology, on an occasion of commemorative recollection, turning to the groundedness of the works of man, Heidegger turns to reflect upon the earth itself.

And it is instructively with reference to the earth that Heidegger suggests the strategy of *Gelassenheit*, with all its echoes of his first reflections on the manifold ways in which Being is said. As a “comportment toward technology which expresses ‘yes’ and at the same time ‘no,’” Heidegger’s yes and no comportment, letting *and* letting be, means, as he tells himself “releasement to things” [*Die Gelassenheit zu den Dingen*] (T 54)

With the paradox, using the *tactic* (if we can borrow a word from the sociological philosophies of de Certeau and Foucault, Bourdieu and Baudrillard), the *practice* of letting and letting be, Heidegger proposes a way to step back, to step apart from, and thus, so we may surmise, a way of going with and beyond technology itself.

“When we look into the ambiguous essence of technology, we behold the constellation, the

the question he posed. Participants at the 2001 meeting who took up the challenge included Patricia Glazebrook, Ute Guzzoni, Patrick A. Heelan, Don Ihde, Theodore Kisiel, and others.

stellar course of the mystery” (QCT 33). Looking into the ambiguous essence, we are moved toward the paradox, the constellation of mystery. This insight is insufficient as it fails to take account of what Heidegger called the high sense of technology’s ambiguity. It is when we are attuned to this “lofty ambiguity” that Heidegger’s practice of *Gelassenheit* has its relevance, a practice that, like any practice, is always easier said than done. As a way of life, such practices require attention and mastery.

Recalling mystery, reminding ourselves that there are unanswered questions, indeed, inherently unanswerable questions, for such questions are the essence of paradox, of mystery, of riddle, of enigma, we can “keep ourselves open to the meaning hidden in technology” (T 54). And that very small effort, so easy to lose or to botch is precisely what there is for us: here and now, and in little things.

Such an “openness to the mystery” (ibid.), the only option we have, is little enough, but for most of us, and it is worth thinking about this: it has been *more* than we can manage.

Heidegger's Encounter with Aristotle: A Theological Deconstruction of Metaphysics

Vishwa Adluri

Hunter College

This paper examines Heidegger's concept of facticity in his writings from the 1920s. The sudden 'discovery' of facticity in these writings and Heidegger's subsequent engagement with Aristotle are related to a decision to rethink existence in terms of Luther's and Paul's interpretation of early Christianity. Central to this interpretation is the experience of the *καῖρός* and the awaiting of the *παρουσία*.¹ Heidegger argues that this primordial Christian experience (*urchristliche Erfahrung*) constitutes a fundamental experience (*Grunderfahrung*) of factual life² and undertakes a destruction of Scholastic theology and the ancient and especially, Aristotelian, ontology upon which it is based.³ Heidegger's philosophical project thus centers in the recovery of this fundamental experience of facticity through a destructive appropriation of the tradition. In this paper, I argue that one of Heidegger's key strategies in turning to Aristotle is to exclude cyclical temporality - whether thought of as transmigration of the soul (Plato) or as eternal recurrence (Nietzsche) - which is incompatible with this Christian experience.

I. The Experience of Time in Early Christianity

Heidegger's interest in Christianity is well-researched.⁴ Recent scholarship (e.g., Yfantis) demonstrates that Heidegger's philosophical project emerges from his intensive engagement with Luther in the early twenties.⁵ Further, in the last few decades, scholarship has significantly

¹ On *καῖρός*, cf. GA 62, 383 and GA 63, 57, GA 22, 312, and GA 19, 52, 364. The term *kairologisch* occurs at GA 61, 137, 139 and GA 63, 101. *παρουσία* occurs at GA 60, 98-105, 106-110 and at GA 19, 334, 463-487, esp. 470, 481, 485 and finally, at GA 22, 200.

² See GA 60, esp. part 2; cf. also GA 64, 81 where the claim that fallen existence comforts itself with the thought "there is still time" has obvious Christian and theological resonances.

³ This project is announced in his *Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu Aristoteles* and carried out in several texts from the 1920s. A good overview of this period in Heidegger's thought is provided in Yfantis, *Die Auseinandersetzung des frühen Heidegger mit Aristoteles*.

⁴ See, for example, Kisiel's *The Genesis of Being and Time* which provides a masterful reconstruction of the early history of this text. See also van Buren's *The Young Heidegger: Rumors of a Hidden King* which provides an excellent overview of Heidegger's early theological motivation.

⁵ For the presence of Luther in Heidegger's thought, see GA 56/57, 18, GA 60, 67f. und 97, GA 60, 237 und 281f., GA 61, 7 and 182, GA 62, 329 and 336, GA 63, 5. Also see *The Young Heidegger*, 157-203. Yfantis' recent book, *Die Auseinandersetzung des frühen Heidegger mit Aristoteles*, provides a provocative and insightful analysis of Heidegger's Lutheran background - see esp. sections 1.1.5.1 and 1.1.5.2. Yfantis notes, "The turn to liberal Protestantism is of decisive significance for the direction and basic tendency of Heidegger's thought during his early lectureship in Freiburg (1919-23) since the lectures of Schleiermacher and Dilthey have undoubtedly contributed essentially to the hermeneutic-historical turn in his thought. However, above all one must point to the intensive study of Luther's writings, which diverse biographic sources document and which several passages in the early Freiburg lectures let us intuit. How powerful the influence in particular of the young Luther and his understanding of early Christianity was on the thought of the young Heidegger lets itself, however, only be assessed through a direct comparison of the central termini, concepts and intellectual motivations of both thinkers,

revised its judgment on Heidegger as Aristotle's great successor.⁶ Thus, one knows now that Heidegger's Aristotle interpretation grows out of a deeply critical attitude toward the content of ancient ontology and especially, toward the process of Hellenization that early Christianity undergoes via Greek thought.⁷

In the 1922 *Natorp Bericht*,⁸ Heidegger for the first time outlines his project of a comprehensive *historical* destruction⁹ in order to recover the meaning of facticity.¹⁰ He takes Aristotle to be the key figure through whom the history of Western thought becomes a history of a fall away from factual life's original being.¹¹ Heidegger thus proposes a hermeneutic and destructive appropriation of Aristotle in order to recover this being. He justifies this choice of Aristotle, above all, through the influence of his ontology on subsequent theology.¹²

An examination of the historical context of Heidegger's interest in Aristotle, however, presents a more complex picture. Heidegger focuses on Aristotle because Aristotle, in rejecting Plato's doctrine of transmigration, prepares the way for a different kind of eschatology by

which provides detailed testimony that the conceptuality and use of language in the early Freiburg lectures... arose, to a great extent, out of translations and reinterpretations of concepts and termini that Heidegger already found in Luther's writings." (72; all translations mine) Also see Jaspers' autobiography for first-hand testimony of the young Heidegger's intense preoccupation with Luther.

⁶ See, for example, the work of Volpi who claims that Heidegger's work is essentially an appropriation of Aristotle's thought. In his earlier period, Gadamer also falls prey to the same misunderstanding, but corrects himself following the rediscovery of the *Natorp Bericht*; cf. his essay "Heideggers 'theologische' Jugendschrift," 83-4; see n. 7 below.

⁷ In fact, Gadamer, on re-reading Heidegger's *Natorp Bericht* after it was rediscovered in the 1980s, writes that he is "surprised" to see how critical Heidegger is of Aristotle in contrast to his earlier recollections, "... Aristoteles [stellt] für Heidegger mehr eine verdeckende Traditionsfigure... [dar], die das eigene okzidentale Denken nicht zu sich selbst kommen und nicht den Weg ins Freie finden ließ." "Heideggers 'theologische' Jugendschrift," 83-4.

⁸ The importance of this 1922 essay is highlighted by Walter Brogan in his insightful and comprehensive commentary of Heidegger's relationship to Aristotle. Brogan writes, "One of the most powerful aspects of this essay is Heidegger's cogent characterization of the nature of philosophy. One could argue that the entire essay is about this. Philosophical research is taking up and carrying out the movement of interpretation that belongs to factual life itself. Philosophy is radical, concerned questioning because it positions itself decisively at the moment wherein the threatening and troubled character of life – *die Bekümmernung der Existenz* – unfolds, and holds itself steadfastly out towards the questionability of life. Thus, Heidegger describes philosophy as letting the difficulty, the *aporia*, of life gain articulation by engaging in an original, unreduplicatable, and unrepresentable moment of repetition. For Aristotle, the focus of this aporetic, philosophical thinking is, of course, the *archē*." *Heidegger and Aristotle: The Twofoldness of Being*, 20.

⁹ As van Buren usefully points out, the term "destruction" (Latin *destruere*) is also used by Luther in his *Heidelberg Disputation*. "Martin Heidegger Martin Luther," 167. The entire article is highly recommended for its careful presentation of Heidegger's interest in Luther.

¹⁰ Cf. GA 62, 368-9.

¹¹ Cf. GA 62, 385, 389-90, 397-8.

¹² Cf. GA 62, 369-70.

defining time as linear.¹³ Thus, in *SZ*, Heidegger claims that Aristotle's "treatise on time" "can be taken as a way of discerning the basis and limits of the ancient science of being." "The Aristotelian treatise on time is the first detailed interpretation of this phenomenon that has come down to us." (26/23)¹⁴

But while Heidegger draws upon the Aristotelian analysis of time as linear, he also critiques Aristotle for thinking time as infinite. Heidegger draws upon a concept of "uniqueness" (*Jeweiligkeit*) in order to critique Aristotle's conception of time as based upon a series of identical and interchangeable "nows."¹⁵ Heidegger's ambiguous relation to Aristotle as well as his turn to facticity in the 1920s must be understood out of this two-fold project, namely, the desire to exclude the thought of circular time and the desire to retrieve an understanding of human existence as radically *jeweilig* and finite and thus in need of salvation.¹⁶

Heidegger's own emphasis upon the *Jeweiligkeit* of human existence and its finitude, however, is drawn dogmatically from his interest in a Lutheran interpretation of time as open to the arrival of Christ, i.e., as the time of *awaiting*.¹⁷ Even when the theological notion of arrival

¹³ Since the soul is not an entity separate from the body in Aristotle's thought, there could be no transmigration for him (cf. especially *De anima* 2.1 412b5, where Aristotle defines the soul as "the first actuality of a natural body that is possessed of organs"). P. F. Conen's analysis of Aristotle's views on time in *Die Zeittheorie des Aristoteles* remains the best account here.

¹⁴ Cf. also the remark made in the same paragraph that Aristotle represents the "scientifically highest and purest stage" of ancient ontology.

¹⁵ See GA 24, 330-361 for his explication of the Aristotelian doctrine of time and 362-388 for the 'derivation' of "vulgar time" out of "original time."

¹⁶ Gadamer, too, notes Heidegger's schizophrenic relationship to Aristotle, but is unable to fully appreciate the complexity of this relationship when he writes, "Offenbar hatte Heidegger zwei Antriebe, die sein Verhältnis zu Aristoteles bestimmten. Der eine Antrieb war seine Kritik an dem Seinsbegriff des Aristoteles und dem Begriff des Göttlichen als des Seienden, das sich ganz in der Gegenwart eines beständigen Vollzuges hält, in dem nichts aussteht und nichts nur gemeint und nur angestrebt ist, sondern das eben göttliches Sein ist und nicht menschliches. Der andere Antrieb, dem er folgt und der damals sogleich, vor allem von der protestantischen Theologie, aufgenommen wurde, war der Appell an die Eigentlichkeit des Daseins, die es galt, in der Faktizität des Daseins bei Aristoteles wiederzufinden." Heideggers 'theologische' Jugendschrift, 84. As I have argued in this paper, in his critique of Aristotle (esp. his "Seinsbegriff"), Heidegger nonetheless wants to retain the thought of time as linear because only it originally lets the thought of "facticity" appear (even though it then almost immediately and necessarily covers it over). This is the meaning of Heidegger's famous claim in the *Natorp Bericht* of a "*Doppelung der Hinsicht*" in which human existence is placed in Aristotle's explication of φρόνησις (cf. GA 62, 385).

¹⁷ For an excellent summary of Luther's replacement of the *theologia gloriae* by a *theologia crucis* and its impact on Heidegger, see Crowe's essay "On the Track of the Fugitive Gods: Heidegger, Luther, Hölderlin." Crowe correctly emphasizes the turn to historicity and to radical finitude as a condition of being "incapable of ever 'having' God except by continuously seeking after him" in Luther's thought as key moments in Heidegger's own philosophy. The distinction between having/seeking god is, in my view, operative in the distinction between *Vollzugs-* and *Gehaltssinn* (see below). I thank Benjamin Crowe for providing me a manuscript version of the text.

is replaced by the “phenomenological” event of death, the basic motif remains the same: Heidegger’s time is radically eschatological.¹⁸

For reasons of length, I forego a comparison of Heidegger’s interpretation of time in this paper with the Lutheran/Pauline¹⁹ model it explicitly draws upon.²⁰ I focus rather, on the key concept in this interpretation: *Jeweiligkeit*.²¹

II. *Jeweiligkeit*

The concept of “uniqueness” (*Jeweiligkeit*, literally “awhileness” or “at-the-while”)²² plays a key role in Heidegger’s interpretation. Especially in the twenties, Heidegger repeatedly emphasizes the character of existence’s *Jeweiligkeit*. Thus, references to *Jeweiligkeit* occur in GA 63 at pages 7, 29-33, 48, and 87, in GA 17 at 250 and 289, and in GA 20 at 205-7, 207-210, and 325f. Although, in *SZ*, *Jemeinigkeit* replaces *Jeweiligkeit* with a slight displacement of accent, the idea continues to permeate Heidegger’s work. In fact, *Jeweiligkeit* constitutes the single most important term that defines Heidegger’s concept of “facticity.” Thus, in GA 63, Heidegger writes:

¹⁸ This paper emphasizes but one aspect of Heidegger’s thought. I am aware that Heidegger’s theological thought is much more complex and indeed, grows increasingly more complex as he matures. For example, although the notion of awaiting is retained in the later writings, he moves away from this notion of radical individuality. His interest in Aristotle gives way partially to an interest in Eckhart’s mysticism and Hölderlin’s neo-Paganism. Although it came to my notice too late to incorporate its views here, Benjamin Crowe’s paper “Heidegger’s Gods” has some interesting reflections on the late Heidegger’s relation to religion; my gratitude to Benjamin Crowe for directing my attention to this work.

¹⁹ That is to say, Heidegger does not so much go back to Paul as to Luther’s interpretation of Paul.

²⁰ There is, however, extensive evidence of the theological resonances of this interpretation. I merely cite passages here from two texts from 1924, both titled *Der Begriff der Zeit*. “Und welcher Weg führt jetzt von dem in der Eigentlichkeit seines Möglicseins explizierten Dasein zu der Zeit? Es bedarf keines Weges mehr. Die Untersuchung hatte die Zeit schon ständig im Thema. Die ontologische Charakteristik des Seins des entdeckenden Vorlaufens war schon das Freiliegen des Phänomens der Zeit in ihrem eigentlichen Sein. *Das jeweilige Dasein selbst ist (die) ‘Zeit’*.” GA 64, 57. “Der Grundcharakter des Zeitlichseins liegt im Zukünftigsein. An der Weise des Zukünftigseins muß daher der Unterschied des eigentlichen Zeitlichseins (des Vorlaufens) und des uneigentlichen (des Verfallens) sichtbar werden. Das gewärtigende Besorgen fragt nach dem Tod im Sinne des ‘wann wird er kommen?’. Daß das Wann faktisch unbestimmbar ist, ändert nichts an der Weise des Fragens und der Antwort, mit der sich das an die Welt verlorene Dasein zu trösten pflegt: ‘es ist noch Zeit’.” GA 64, 81. “Im Zukünftigsein des Vorlaufens in seine äußerste Möglichkeit kommt das Dasein in die Eigentlichkeit seines Seins. In diesem Sein ist es aus dem ‘Man’ zurückgeholt und in die einzige von ihm selbst einzig ergreifbare Diesmaligkeit seines Daseins gestellt und so schlechthin durch ein anderes unvertretbar.” GA 64, 82.

²¹ The most detailed textual study of *Jeweiligkeit* to date is Romolo Perrotta’s work *Heideggers Jeweiligkeit: Versuch einer Analyse der Seinsfrage anhand der veröffentlichten Texte*. Perrotta traces the concept of *Jeweiligkeit* from the earliest writings all the way down to Heidegger’s 1955/56 lecture *Der Satz vom Grund*.

²² Cf. Kisiel’s note on his translation of *Prolegomena zur Geschichte des Zeitbegriffs*. Kisiel translates *Jeweiligkeit* with either “the particular while” or “temporal particularity.” (153) In his view, *Jeweiligkeit* constitutes the “most central of the characters of Dasein.” *Ibid*.

“Facticity” is the designation we will use for the character of the being of “our” “own” *Dasein*. More precisely, this expression means: *in each case* “this” *Dasein* in its being-there *for a while at a particular time* (the phenomenon of the “awhileness” of temporal particularity, cf. “whiling,” tarrying for a while, not running away, being-there-at-home-in..., being-there-involved-in..., the being-there of *Dasein*) insofar as it is, in the manner of its being, “there” in the manner of be-ing. GA 63, 7.²³

Further, Heidegger also uses the related *je* and *jeweils* and plays on the full resonance of these terms throughout the text.²⁴ *Jeweiligkeit* is not limited to defining factual life in a narrow sense, it is also a character of the factual world in which this life lives.²⁵ Further, Heidegger already links the concept of *Jeweiligkeit* to the idea that human existence is always one’s own, my own (*je meines*),²⁶ so that *Jeweiligkeit* expresses not only a temporal uniqueness but is also the foundation for one’s identity, individuality, and ultimately, as is made explicit in *SZ*, for the possibility of existing as either authentic (*eigentlich*) or inauthentic (*uneigentlich*).

In the language of *SZ*, *Jeweiligkeit* is a “definite existential”²⁷ and, as such, a key constituent of existence’s average mode of being, its *Alltäglichkeit* (everydayness).²⁸ In a sense, when Heidegger accuses the philosophical tradition of overlooking *Alltäglichkeit* as a positive

²³ Cf. also the similar definition in GA 20. “The fundamental character of the being of *Dasein* is therefore at first adequately grasped in the determination, *an entity which is in the to-be-at-its time*. This ‘in each particular instance’ [*je*], ‘at the [its] time’ [*jeweilig*], or the structure of the ‘particular while’ [*Jeweiligkeit*] is constitutive for every character of being of this entity. That is, there is simply no *Dasein* which would be as *Dasein* that would not in its very sense be ‘at its time,’ temporally particular [*jeweiliges*].” GA 20, 205-6.

²⁴ “The being-there of our own *Dasein* is what it is precisely and only in its *temporally particular* “there,” its being “there” *for a while*. A defining feature of the awhileness of temporal particularity is the *today* – in each case whiling, tarrying for a while, in the present, in each case our own present.” GA 63, 29. “There for a while at the particular time, *Dasein* is there in the awhileness of temporal particularity. This awhileness is co-defined by the particular today of *Dasein*, its being today for a while.” GA 63, 48.

²⁵ Cf. GA 63, 87.

²⁶ Cf. GA 20, 207. “The *particular while* as such belongs to the structure of the being of this *Dasein*. With this fundamental character of *Dasein*, that I am it in the ‘to be it in each particular instance,’ the initial determination for *Dasein* is secured.”

²⁷ *Jeweiligkeit* is, in fact, the *fundamental* existential underlying *all others* for Heidegger. Cf. GA 64, 113. “Das *Dasein* ist ein Seiendes, das sich bestimmt als ‘Ich bin’. Für das *Dasein* ist die *Jeweiligkeit* des ‘Ich bin’ konstitutiv. *Dasein* ist also ebenso primär, wie es In-der-Welt-sein ist, auch *mein* *Dasein*. Es ist *je eigenes und als eigenes Jeweiliges*. Soll dieses *Dasein* in seinem Seinscharakter bestimmt werden, so ist von der *Jeweiligkeit* als der *je meinigen* nicht zu abstrahieren. *Mea res agitur*. Alle Grundcharaktere müssen sich also in der *Jeweiligkeit* als der *je meinigen* zusammenfinden.”

²⁸ Cf. GA 20, 208. “The *Dasein* is not to be taken by setting some sort of aim and purpose for it, neither as ‘*homo*’ nor even in the light of some idea of ‘humanity.’ Instead, its way to be must be brought out of its *nearest everydayness*, the factic *Dasein* in the how of its factic ‘to be it.’ But this does not mean that we now give a kind of biographical account of a particular *Dasein* as this individual *Dasein* is in its everyday life. We are reporting no particular everyday life but we are seeking the *everydayness of everyday life*, the fact in its facticity, not the everyday of the temporally particular *Dasein* but *to be the everydayness for its particular while as Dasein* is what matters to us.”

phenomenon and thus misunderstanding human existence's genuine kind of being,²⁹ he implicitly also accuses it of failing to recognize the *jeweilig* character of human existence.

In the 1922 essay, Heidegger does not use *Jeweiligkeit* but the related *je* and *jeweilig* appear often. Thus, Heidegger refers to the “jeweilige hermeneutische Situation” (346) and the “jeweilige Hermeneutik der Situation” (347) and to the “je mögliche Existenz” (361) and to the “jeweiligen konkreten *Destruktion* der Faktizität” (361). Heidegger also makes use of *eigene* in the sense of “one's own time” (“der eigenen Zeit”),³⁰ while the related *einmalig* and *Einmaligkeit* occur in a hand-written note to the text.³¹

The temporality that is disclosed by *Jeweiligkeit* is thus essentially unique, personal, and makes the task of salvation *existentially urgent*.³² Having understood the linearity of time disclosed in *Jeweiligkeit*, let us see how this concept relates to Heidegger's wider philosophical project.

III. Eschatology and Salvation

The concept of *Jeweiligkeit* plays a decisive role in Heidegger's thought in two ways: a. it lets him relate his concept of facticity back to the Lutheran/Pauline experience of time as eschatological, while also b. *founding the possibility of personal salvation* through its emphasis upon existence's radical finitude and individuality.

²⁹ See SZ, §5 *Die ontologische Analytik des Daseins als Freilegung des Horizontes für eine Interpretation des Sinnes von Seins überhaupt*, where Heidegger introduces Dasein's *Alltäglichkeit*; see also SZ, §9: “Und weil nun die durchschnittliche Alltäglichkeit das ontische Zunächst dieses Seienden ausmacht, wurde sie und wird sie immer wieder in der Explikation des Daseins *übersprungen*” (p. 44). Of course, my interpretation here suggests a different reason for emphasizing *Alltäglichkeit* than that advanced by Heidegger.

³⁰ “In der Idee der Faktizität liegt es, daß je nur *die eigentliche* – im Wortsinne verstanden: *die eigene* – die der eigenen Zeit und Generation der eigentliche Gegenstand der Forschung ist.” GA 62, 366.

³¹ “Der als *bevorstehende* Tod in der ihm eigenen Weise des Sichtbarmachens der Lebensgegenwart und Vergangenheit (Histor[isches]) ist als Konstitutivum der Faktizität zugleich das Phänomen, aus dem die spezifische ‘*Zeitlichkeit*’ menschlichen Daseins explikativ zu erheben ist. {Aus dem Sinn *dieser Zeitlichkeit* – Tod, entscheidend Einmaligkeit! Dieses ‘Einmal’ ist radikal ‘Alles’ des Lebens.}” GA 62, 359-360. (Heidegger's hand-written insertion marked in braces.)

³² The emphasis on facticity and its temporality are clearly underscored by theologians deeply influenced by Heidegger. For example, Bultmann writes: “Thus, theological thinking—the theology of the New Testament—begins with the *kerygma* of the earliest Church and not before. But the fact that Jesus had appeared and the message which had proclaimed were, of course, among its historical presuppositions; and for this reason Jesus' message cannot be omitted from the delineation of New Testament theology.” *Theology of the New Testament*, 3. Thus Bultmann stresses the *kerygma* even in relation to the appearance of Jesus. What is this *kerygma*? “*That the earliest Church regarded itself as the Congregation of the end of days.*” *Ibid.*, 37. The Heideggerian analysis of *Jeweiligkeit* is transparent in Bultmann's statements about Jesus: “Basically, therefore, *he in his own person is the ‘sign of the time’ ... He in his own person signifies the demand for decision.*” *Ibid.*, 9

In the previous section, we saw that the fact that *Jeweiligkeit* subtends *Jemeinigkeit*, i.e., the possibility of existence being one's own or being something one can personally take over. In *SZ*, *Jemeinigkeit* becomes the foundation for the possibility that existence radically takes itself over or the negative possibility of losing itself. Thus, Heidegger writes:

Da-sein is my own [*je meines*], to be always in this or that way. It has somehow always already decided in which way Da-sein is always my own [*je meines*]. The being which is concerned in its being about its being is related to its being as its purest possibility. Da-sein is always its possibility. And because Da-sein is always essentially its possibility, it can 'have' that possibility only as a mere attribute of something objectively present. And because Da-sein is always essentially its possibility, it can 'choose' itself in its being, it can win itself. It can only have lost itself, or it can never and only 'apparently' win itself. It can only have lost itself and it can only have not yet gained itself because it is essentially possible as authentic, that is, it belongs to itself. The two kinds of being of authenticity [*Eigentlichkeit*] and inauthenticity [*Uneigentlichkeit*] – these expressions are terminologically chosen in the strict sense of the word – are based on the fact that Da-sein is in general determined by always being-mine [*Jemeinigkeit*]. *SZ* 42-3/40.

However, *Eigentlichkeit* and *Uneigentlichkeit* are terms that emerge from Heidegger's philosophical appropriation of the dogmatic content of Christian theology.³³ Although defined as "modes of being" (*Seinsmodi*) in *SZ*, these two terms refer to their theological antecedents insofar as they represent exceptional modes of *being in time* or *relating to time*. Thus, in Paul's *Letter to the Thessalonians*, the distinction between the σωζόμενοι and the ἀπολλύμενοι is expressed as two distinct ways of relating to time: the σωζόμενοι experience time as the time of awaiting, where the arrival of Christ is uncertain, and they are ecstatically open to this event. Yfantis writes:

The second fundamental character of the primordial Christian experience of life accentuated by Heidegger is the situation of decision, which implies a sharp *either-or* and lays out two fundamental ways of existence to choice. At first and preliminarily, the two ways are characterized as 'faith' (πίστις) and "law" (νόμος), while in the further course of the explication the saved (σωζόμενοι) and the damned (ἀπολλύμενοι) are contrasted with each other. The former have, on the basis of an original [experience of] having-become (γεννηθῆναι) completed a radical conversion within the unfolding of life [Lebensvollzug] and, through this, have entered

³³ As Yfantis notes, "The contrast between concerned enduring in hope and faith in the time of being tested and of need, on the one hand, and that of tranquilized and self-forgetful immersion in worldly activity, on the other hand, constitutes a sharp *either-or* between two fundamental modi of existence – characterized in WS 1920/21 by spirit (πνεῦμα) and flesh (σάρξ), in SS 1921 with holding together (*continentia*) and dissolution (*defluxus*) – that anticipates the contrast between *Eigentlichkeit* und *Uneigentlichkeit* in *Sein und Zeit*." *Die Auseinandersetzung des frühen Heidegger mit Aristoteles*, 87. To Yfantis' list one can add several other binary oppositions: *Verfallen/Gegenbewegung* (in GA 62) and *Ruinanz/Gegen-ruinante Bewegung* (in GA 61).

into a relationship [Wirkungszusammenhang] with god. They will be saved, when they in the unfolding of life [Vollzug des Lebens] endure in a genuine and radical concern [Bekümmern], i.e., await the second coming of the lord in hope and faith and, through this, pass the test and the highest need in the time of the Anti-Christ before the second coming.

The ἀπολλύμενοι, in contrast, do not endure, but fall away from the experience [Vollzug] of Christian life and let themselves be deluded in their awaiting, which thereby becomes an expectation according to representations that relates itself to the παρουσία as to an objective outcome. They are immersed in their worldly affairs and try to calculate the arrival of the παρουσία in a fallen concern [Bekümmern], i.e., to determine it objectively. That is why they do not pass the test through the Anti-Christ and are destroyed. *Die Auseinandersetzung des frühen Heidegger mit Aristoteles*, 78.³⁴

Scholars have already noted that this *urchristliche Erfahrung* of awaiting the παρουσία radically informs Heidegger's discussions of death in Division Two of *SZ*. Rather than tracing the parallels between Heidegger's early religious writings and his later work, I wish to emphasize that the concept of *Jeweiligkeit* in Heidegger, when seen against the background of its full theological resonances, plays a key role in preserving space for a form of personal salvation. *Eigentlichkeit/Uneigentlichkeit* or, as we can now say, σωζόμενοι/ἀπολλύμενοι ground in *Jeweiligkeit/Jemeinigkeit* so that *Jeweiligkeit* becomes the key term that enables Heidegger to retain a radically detheologized form of salvation.³⁵

How is this salvation to be understood, if it is not posed in terms of the traditional Christian understanding? What constitutes *Eigentlichkeit*, according to Heidegger, is its specific mode of relating to one's finitude or one's death, where this relation to death itself gives one's life a specific quality. In other words, authentic existence is *lived* as other than inauthentic existence. In Heidegger's radically detheologized conception, *it is not the arrival of Christ itself or one's representations of life beyond but the way or the "how" in which life is lived that constitutes*

³⁴ Cf. also *I Thess.* 1.9f. Cf. also GA 60, 68f., 127, 113, and 93ff. and 149ff, 110ff. 156.

³⁵ The issue is complex, since Heidegger, on the one hand, rejects Catholic theology and wants to "dismantle" (cf. "im *abbaunden Rückgang*," GA 62, 368) the Aristotelian and Scholastic ontology on which it is based and, on the other hand, precisely imports a theological notion of salvation into philosophy. Hence, we should probably refer to Heidegger's project *both* as a "radically detheologized form of salvation" and as a "radically theologized salvation." Thus, what is at stake here is essentially the replacement of one form of theology by another: compare Luther's replacement of the *theologia gloriae* by a *theologia crucis*. Gadamer provides additional evidence of the tension between Catholic and Protestant views in early Heidegger: "Gegenüber der christlichen Rezeption des Aristoteles, und insbesondere gegenüber der katholischen Theologie seiner Zeit, suchte er daher Abstand zu nehmen. So tritt sein eigenstes Anliegen und sein Bestreben um Lebenserhellung in die Auseinandersetzung mit der zeitgenössischen Neuscholastik und bald auch mit der protestantischen Theologie. Beidem gegenüber ging es ihm um die Vorbereitung der Seinsfrage.... Es ist ein kritisches Motiv darin, das Heidegger schon damals leitet, aber es verspricht zugleich die Aporien des Historismus und Relativismus zu überwinden. So steht in Wahrheit hinter seiner Aristoteles-Aneignung der eschatologische Aspekt der christlichen Botschaft und der ausgezeichnete Charakter des Augenblicks." "Heideggers 'theologische' Jugendschrift," 86.

salvation. From Heidegger's perspective, however, this emphasis upon the mode of temporalization of authentic existence is not a detheologization but a *retrieval* of the *original and genuine meaning of the Christian experience itself*.³⁶

Yfantis writes:

Primordial Christian religiosity – according to Heidegger – *lives temporality* [Zeitlichkeit] (the verb understood in an intransitive sense), which is fundamentally different from the fallen objective concept of time insofar as it does not signify a definite schematism, but is rooted in the context of unfolding [Vollzugszusammenhang] itself and constitutes the meaning of its facticity. This unfolding itself is carried by the awaiting of the second coming of Christ, so that every moment of such original experience of life attains its signification through the reference to the event of the end of days. The original meaning of the primordial Christian temporality [Zeitlichkeit], however, has been falsified through the covering over of the eschatological problem and the penetration of Greek philosophy into Christianity, and this has led to specific theological problems, e.g., that of the eternity of god, were no longer appropriately understood in the Middle Ages. *Die Auseinandersetzung des frühen Heidegger mit Aristoteles*, 89-90.³⁷

The “fall” in interpretation lies in the fact that this original dogmatic meaning was not understood in its reference to the mode of temporalization of life, a moment Heidegger calls the “Vollzugssinn des Lebens” but understood in terms of its specific doctrinal content (*Gehaltssinn*).³⁸ The “fall,” interpreted philosophically rather than dogmatically, consists not in the fall from a paradise, but falling to an interpretation that ossifies itself. Such an interpretation

³⁶ Cf. Barash, *Martin Heidegger and the Problem of Historical Meaning*. Barash notes, “As Heidegger saw it, this eschatological sense of original Christian experience was falsified by later Christian tradition. Most fateful in this process was the interjection of neo-Platonic ideas into the interpretation of original Christian experience. With this act, the primordial character of early Christian faith was abandoned, as God became the object of speculation with the aid of Platonic-Aristotelian ideas. In contrast, Luther's distrust of Aristotle and Aristotelian scholasticism gives testimony to the Reformation attempt to return to an authentic Christian experience. Nonetheless, the sense of this attempt has been lost in the morass of more modern ideas [by ‘more modern ideas’ Heidegger means Kant and the neo-Kantians], seeking to integrate the phenomenon of religion within the objectifiable sphere of human meaning.” (142)

³⁷ As Yfantis further notes, “Heidegger sees the specific character of primordial Christian temporality [Zeitlichkeit] unmistakably expressed in the passage where Paul expresses himself concerning the question of the time of the second coming of Christ (παρουσία). In his interpretation, he emphasizes that the Apostle not only does not make any statements as to the time and keeps the Thessalonians from indulging themselves in brooding and speculating about it, but rather, he sharply contrasts two fundamental attitudes to the event of the end of days: on the one hand, the fallen flight of the damned in the face of the constant insecurity of facticity into calculation and expectation according to one's feelings and, on the other, the sober awaiting of the saved in the unfolding of Christian life. The day of the lord will not surprise them; in contrast, it will suddenly befall the others. Heidegger concludes from this that the question of the time of the παρουσία for Paul neither points to an objective time nor to objective outcomes, but rather, points to the individual unfolding of the life of the Christian and to the way he relates to the παρουσία. Therein lies the fundamental character of Christian temporality [Zeitlichkeit].” *Die Auseinandersetzung des frühen Heidegger mit Aristoteles*, 90.

³⁸ Cf. GA 61, 52. For a good overview of the distinction between *Bezugs-*, *Gehalts-*, and *Vollzugssinn*, see C. F. Gethmann's “Philosophie als Vollzug und als Begriff. Die Identitätsphilosophie des Lebens in der Vorlesung vom Wintersemester 1921/22 und ihr Verhältnis zu *Sein und Zeit*.”

no longer understands that life is its “to be,” as Heidegger formulates it in *SZ*, but presents a definite ideal of life so that life now only relates itself to an objectively present content. Specifically, in the case of theology, it is the turn to a *jenseitigen* god or a *Jenseits* in general that Heidegger finds problematic.

For Heidegger, Christianity is neither grounded upon a specific dogmatic content nor upon a specific historical experience. Rather, it centers in the eschatological problem. Christianity, i.e., genuine lived Christianity, gains the unique quality of its existence from the eschatological experience of awaiting the *παρουσία*. This experience, Heidegger argues, can be universalized because it does not refer to the historical experience of Christianity.³⁹ Instead, it points in the direction of a rethinking of the problem of time.⁴⁰

IV. Heidegger's Critique of Aristotle

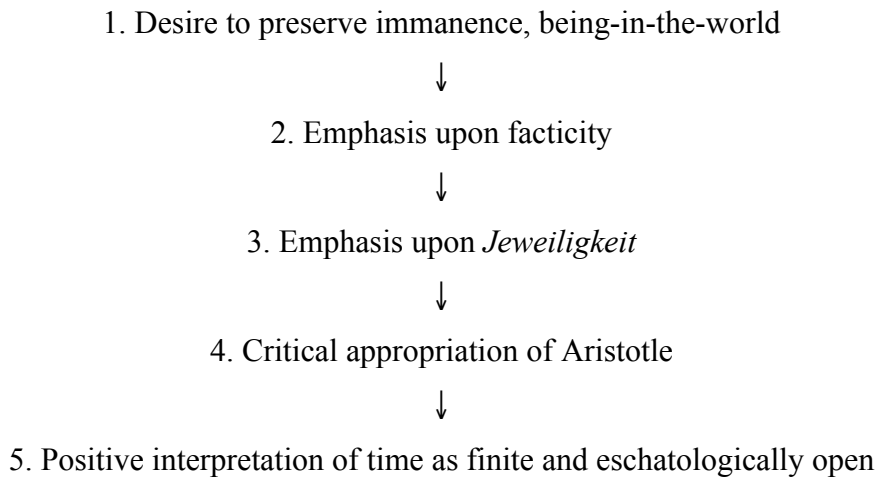
An examination of Heidegger's central determinations of the being of human existence such as *Jeweiligkeit*, *Faktizität*, *Sein-in-der-Welt*, *In-sein* shows how the desire to preserve an experience of immanence of *Diesseitigkeit*⁴¹ is the guiding motivation of Heidegger's thought. Heidegger's central insight into the radically *diesseitig* or *diesmalig*⁴² character of existence is key to understanding the further steps of his philosophy. We can express these steps as follows:

³⁹ Thus, what Heidegger wants to retrieve is, ultimately, not even a specifically Christian experience, even though he sees the life of the early Christians as paradigmatic for this experience. Rather, his project, although rooted in his interest in Luther and Paul, becomes genuinely philosophical at the moment when he disengages himself from all existentiell ideals and insists purely upon the *Vollzugscharakter* of life. But where theology was unable to live up to the truth of this experience, philosophy must undertake a destructive return to the original motivating sources: philosophy is essentially conceived of as retrieval, return, repetition.

⁴⁰ Yfantis thus speaks of the way the “eschatological problem” as “the true center of primordial Christian life” necessarily leads to and together with “the accompanying problem of temporality [Zeitlichkeit]” constitutes “the genuine object of the Heideggerian interpretation.” *Die Auseinandersetzung des frühen Heidegger mit Aristoteles*, 90.

⁴¹ Literally, this-sideness or this-worldliness.

⁴² Both *diesmalig* and the nominal form *Diesmaligkeit* are Heideggerian neologisms. Heidegger seems to prefer them to the more traditional *Diesseitigkeit* because they so pregnantly express the temporal meaning of being ‘on this side.’ But it is also not insignificant that while *Diesseitig* permits an opposite in the form of *Jenseitigkeit* (literally, “other-worldly”), there is no parallel opposite to *Diesmaligkeit*. For *Diesmaligkeit*, see GA 64, 82 and 124. Also see *SZ* 248/230, where Heidegger underscores his emphatic commitment to a philosophy of *Diesseitigkeit*. Heidegger writes, “Nor is anything decided ontically about the ‘other worldly’ [Jenseits] and its possibility any more than about the ‘this-worldly’ [Diesseits]; as if norms and rules for behavior toward death should be proposed for ‘edification.’ But our analysis of death remains purely ‘this-worldly’ [diesseitig] in that it interprets the phenomenon solely with respect to the question of how it *enters into* actual [jeweilig] Da-sein as its possibility-of-being.”



Especially from *SZ* onward, the problem of human existence essentially centers in the problem of time for Heidegger.⁴³ But while this emphasis upon time as finite allows Heidegger to preserve facticity and the this-worldly salvation of authentic existence, he also closes off any transcendence.⁴⁴ It is here that we must seek the reasons for Heidegger's critique Aristotle as Heidegger claims that Aristotle misunderstands the nature of transcendence by locating it in the $\theta\epsilon\acute{\iota}\omega\nu$.⁴⁵

Let us return to the thesis of *Jeweiligkeit*. So far, we have seen that Heidegger's interest in Aristotle emerges out of his interest in dismantling the content of traditional Scholastic theology as a way of retrieving the original Christian, although not only Christian, experience of facticity. However, this historical approach still leaves central questions unanswered. For

⁴³ Cf. *SZ* 18/16, where Heidegger claims that "on the basis of the question of the meaning of being which shall have been worked out, *that – and in what way – the central range of problems of all ontology is rooted in the phenomenon of time correctly viewed and correctly explained.*"

⁴⁴ Still more problematic is the fact that Heidegger ultimately ties the notion of uniqueness to one's specific historical (and thus, implicitly, political) situation. Thus, whereas singularization leads Oedipus out of society (he is unfit as husband, father, king), Heidegger draws particularity from culture, history, *Volk*. This is the political problem with Heidegger. This personal, existential, individuality, cut off from a $\nu\omicron\delta\varsigma$ higher than the practical, is what forces Heidegger to participate in the *Volk*. On this one point, Schürmann provides an antidote. See his *Heidegger on Being and Acting*; cf. especially his remark "[My philosophy of] Anarchic Praxis: this is the *topos* where the man Martin Heidegger undoubtedly would not so much have liked to see himself led." *Heidegger on Being and Acting: From Principles to Anarchy*, 293.

⁴⁵ Heidegger's critique of Aristotle is two-fold: a. Aristotle draws the interpretation of the $\theta\epsilon\acute{\iota}\omega\nu$ not from "the explication of an object that has become accessible in a religious fundamental experience [Grunderfahrung]," but rather, his $\theta\epsilon\acute{\iota}\omega\nu$ "is the expression for the *highest* character of being that results from an ontological radicalization of the idea of being moved." GA 62, 389. b. The Aristotelian interpretation of a detached $\nu\omicron\delta\varsigma$ as the $\theta\epsilon\acute{\iota}\omega\nu$ results in the popular understanding of transcendence, where "the transcendent ... is the other-worldly being [das jenseitige Seiende]. Often one describes God as the transcendent." GA 24, 424. Heidegger criticizes this understanding as the "genuine ontological meaning of transcendence" GA 24, 425. shows that is is human existence rather than some *thing* that is transcendent. When correctly understood, claims Heidegger, transcendence manifests as a characterization of the human's own kind of being and not as a property of some divine entity.

example, why Aristotle rather than Plato or Parmenides? What specifically about Aristotle proves so fruitful for Heidegger's own project? Is there an intrinsic connection between Aristotle's thought and Heidegger's project or can the turn to Aristotle be explained purely in terms of Aristotle's historical role in the formation of scholastic theology?

In the 1924 lecture course *Der Begriff der Zeit*, we find a key passage that links the concept of *Jeweiligkeit* to that of being underway. Heidegger writes:

Dasein is as In-the-world either explicitly or not, authentically or inauthentically, always *mine* [jeweils das *meinige*]. As little as its In-being can (the definiteness thereof) this uniqueness [Jeweiligkeit] of Dasein's be crossed out. This being, which *one* is in one's being at any time [jeweilig], remains as care constantly *underway to* – [unterwegs zu -]. GA 64, 45-6; my translation.⁴⁶

If *Jeweiligkeit* itself indicates a manner of being underway, this must mean the concept of *Jeweiligkeit* itself grounds in a particular understanding of movement as being underway to something. In order to think *Jeweiligkeit*, one must be able to think: a. of movement as such, and b. of movement as a movement out of something toward something. In other words, Heidegger's understanding of *Jeweiligkeit* is based upon the Aristotelian understanding of movement insofar as Aristotle, for the first time, expresses movement as being underway through the concept pair δύναμις and ἐνέργεια/ἐντελέχεια.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ “Dasein ist als In=der=Welt=sein ausdrücklich oder nicht, eigentlich bzw. uneigentlich, jeweils das *meinige*. Sowenig wie das Insein kann (die Bestimmtheit dieser) diese Jeweiligkeit am Dasein durchgestrichen werden. Dieses Seiende, das *man* selbst in seinem Sein jeweilig ist, bleibt als Sorgen beständig *unterwegs zu* -.”

⁴⁷ See especially Heidegger's discussion of Aristotle's analysis of movement in the *Physics*, esp. books A and Γ in GA 18, 282-329. Heidegger claims that Aristotle has to begin with a *critique* because Parmenides, although he sees “a fundamental determination of being” with his determination ἐν τὸ ὄν, thereby nonetheless comes to “a standstill.” (285) Heidegger further claims that Aristotle's determination that κίνησις is not something beside (παρά) movement is “directed against *Plato*, who even in the *Sophist* says that a thing moved is characterized in its being by the fact that we apprehend it as taking part in κίνησις; κίνησις itself is an *idea* like all others – it is παρά and, through the μέθεξις in it, the moved thing must be made intelligible in its being.” (287) Heidegger therefore concludes that “The determination of the ὄν as κινούμενον was always noticed, but not in the sense of being considered as the more proximate character of a being. The possibility of discussing movement was not such that movement itself would be recognized as the distinctive mode of the being-there of a definite being.” (290) For Heidegger, the fundamental significance of Aristotle's discovery for all subsequent investigations into movement, including modern physics, lies in the fact that “Precisely, the fundamental determinations that are not discussed [in modern physics] proceeded from Aristotle. They make it possible to see ahead in the direction of a genuine consideration of being: *change* as a *mode of being-there itself*.” (294) The chapter (and the lecture course as a whole) ends with the observation that “This Aristotelian investigation into movement has a *fundamental significance for the whole ontology*: basic determinations of beings as ἐνέργεια, ἐντελέχεια, and δύναμις.” (329) Most tellingly for his own project, Heidegger claims that “The discovery of ἐνέργεια and ἐντελέχεια takes seriously what *Plato* and *Parmenides* wanted.” (329)

V. From Aristotle to Parmenides

The foregoing analysis raises some critical questions concerning Heidegger's interpretation of Aristotle. Both in *SZ* and in earlier texts, Aristotle is declared to be the highest stage of Greek thought, the first and most radically scientific philosopher, the fulfillment of Greek philosophy, and the seminal thinker for the destiny of the West.⁴⁸ These claims now need to be relativized, since we have seen that Heidegger's approach is in many respects highly prejudicial. I will do so by examining two points: a. The Parmenidean Thesis of Being, b. The Priority of *voεῖν* over *λεγεῖν*.

1. Overturning the Parmenidean Thesis of Being:

In his interpretation of Aristotle, Heidegger focuses overwhelmingly on his *Physics*, as Gadamer has already noted.⁴⁹ Heidegger himself justifies this turn to the *Physics* on the basis of the central role the *κίνησις* problem has in his thought.⁵⁰

As we have seen, the turn to Aristotle is linked to Heidegger's interest in thinking movement *in a highly specific manner*, i.e., as being underway. According to the Parmenidean doctrine of being, as articulated in the philosophical poem *Peri Phuseōs*, being is one and immovable. Heidegger thus first needs to overcome the Parmenidean challenge if his eschatological vision is to hold.⁵¹ Heidegger's interest in the Aristotelian *Physics* can thus be understood out of his need to unseat the Parmenidean thesis.

In his *Physics*, Aristotle challenges Parmenides, arguing that, phenomenologically, being is both plural and in motion.⁵² In fact, the latter becomes key in Aristotle's rejection of the

⁴⁸ See fn. 41, cf. also the remarks at *SZ* 3, 25, and 26 and in GA 19, 11.

⁴⁹ See Gadamer's introductory essay to the *Natorp Bericht*, "Heideggers 'theologische' Jugendschrift." Besides the *Physics*, Heidegger mainly focuses on Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, of which he says that "metaphysics is no less physics than the *Physics*." Indeed, Heidegger's overarching aim in reading the Aristotelian *corpus* is to show that both Aristotle's "theology" and his "ethics" *organically grow out of the Physics*.

⁵⁰ Cf. GA 62, 374. "Die Forschungen also, deren Gegenstand erfahren und vermeint ist im Charakter des Bewegtseins, in dessen Was im vorhinein mitgegeben ist so etwas wie Bewegung, müssen den möglichen Zugang zur eigentlichen Motivquelle der aristotelischen Ontologie vermitteln. Solche Forschung liegt vor in der '*Physik*' des Aristoteles."

⁵¹ Cf. Heidegger's remark "... Parmenides [bekam] erstmals das Sein des Seienden in den Blick... [blieb] aber, ontologisch gesprochen, bei diesem ersten 'Seinseindruck'. Mit dieser ersten, aber entscheidenden Sicht war das ontologische Sehen auch schon an seinem Ende." (393)

⁵² Aristotle takes up a critique of Parmenides *Physics* 1.7-8 and 3.1-8. In *Phys.* 1.8, 191a24-31, Aristotle claims that "In seeking the truth and the nature of things from the philosophical point of view, the first thinkers, as if led astray by inexperience, were misled into another way of thinking by maintaining the following: No thing can be generated or destroyed because a thing must be generated either from being or from nonbeing; but both of these are impossible, for being cannot become something since it already exists, and a thing generated cannot come to

Parmenidean thesis: Aristotle does not so much argue for the plurality of being as defer to the experience of κίνησις in dismantling the Parmenidean account of being. Thus, Aristotle's account of φύσις is specifically oriented toward the problem of movement, as Heidegger himself observes.⁵³ κίνησις is the key concept Aristotle uses in order to disprove Parmenides' thesis that being is one.⁵⁴ Heidegger's valorization of Aristotle and of the κίνησις problem are directly linked to his need to think human finitude and *Jeweiligkeit* as necessary preconditions of salvation. Indeed, whereas the problem of movement is secondary to the problem of the multiplicity of being for Aristotle, Heidegger focuses purely on κίνησις⁵⁵ as it permits him to think time.

2. Heidegger's Reduction of νοῦς to λόγος

Although I have focused overwhelmingly on Heidegger's "ontology" here, a second component, his engagement with "logic," must also be mentioned. There is a second reason for Heidegger's turn to Aristotle. Heidegger argues that whereas the Eleatics lost themselves in arbitrary and speculative theses on being, Aristotle pays close attention to factual life's own

be from nonbeing since there must be some underlying subject [from which it is to be generated]." Also see *Phys.* 8.3, 253a32-b2 (on the importance of κίνησις) and *Phys.* 2.1, 193a3-6 for his ridicule of Parmenides.

⁵³ However, this interest in movement is also highly specific. For example, Aristotle is not interested in the movement of the soul but specifically in two kinds of movements associated with two regions of beings: those that are self-moved and those that whose principle of movement lies in something outside themselves. The distinction between φύσει ὄντα and τέχνει ὄντα is determinative for Aristotle's inquiry. Accordingly, movement (κίνησις) is itself analysed according to two paradigmatic forms of change (μεταβολή): the becoming of living beings (γένεσις) and the being made of artifacts (ποίησις).

⁵⁴ Cf. GA 64, 77-8. "Aristoteles vergegenwärtigt sich den in diesen Aussagen angesprochenen Tatbestand und findet: Zeit ist zwar nicht Bewegung, ist aber an Bewegtem mitgegebenen. Was ist sie selbst? Die Möglichkeit, an dem vorgegebenem Tatbestand das Zeitphänomen zur Abhebung zu bringen und ontologisch zu fassen, gründet darin, daß zuvor 'Bewegung' ontologische verstanden ist. Aristoteles entdeckte die Bewegung als Seinscharaktere des Seienden und brachte ihn ontologisch zu Begriff und gewann damit gegenüber Plato einen ursprünglicheren Boden innerhalb derselben Forschungstendenz. Damit war die Möglichkeit gegeben, zum ersten Mal 'die Zeit' ontologisch zur Abhebung zu bringen. Der Titel 'Bewegung' (κίνησις) begreift in sich alle Phänomene des Umschlagens von-zu (μεταβολή): Anderswerden (in der Färbung z. B.), zu= und abnehmen, Platzwechsel."

⁵⁵ Heidegger ignores the specific kinds of natural motions Aristotle discusses (μεταβολή, γένεσις, φθορά and so on) and focuses instead purely on the ontological and logical interpretation of κίνησις. This one-sided focus can be understood out of his interest in human finitude: whereas the problem of the multiplicity of being points to spatial finitude, the problem of movement points to temporal finitude. Indeed, the κίνησις problem only appears there where the problem of a finite movement (or, more specifically, the possibility of finite movement) appears in it. Put in another way, the entire κίνησις problem first becomes pressing for Heidegger once the finitude has been seen in its relation to temporality as a kind of "movement of human life." Here is where his engagement with Aristotle begins – to show that this possibility both discloses itself and then closes itself off in Aristotle. This places us under the double necessity of having to return to Aristotle but precisely in an "*abbauenden Rückgang*." GA 62, 368.

ways of speaking about itself.⁵⁶ This turn to ordinary speaking or ordinary understanding has two key functions in Heidegger:

- a. It prefigures his own turn to *die faktische Rede* as well *die Selbstausgelegtheit des Daseins* as the ultimate sources to be interrogated.
- b. It lets him *take back* the talk of νοῦς (as well as of σοφώτερον and σοφία) into *faktische Rede*.

The latter point constitutes the core of his method of a hermeneutic destruction of the history of ontology insofar as it is based, since Parmenides, upon the priority of pure intuition and, correlatedly, of being as presence. Thus, at the end of the section §31 *Das Da-sein als Verstehen* in *SZ*, where he argues that all understanding is rooted in existence's being as "being-possible" (*Seinkönnen*), Heidegger claims:

By showing how sight is primarily based on understanding – the circumspection of taking care of things is understanding as *common sense* [Verständigkeit] – we have taken away from pure intuition its priority which noetically corresponds to the traditional ontological priority of objective presence. "Intuition" and "thought" are both already remote derivatives of understanding. Even the phenomenological "intuition of essences" is based upon existential understanding. *SZ* 147/138

But this thesis is no less problematic than Heidegger's one-sided appropriation of Aristotle's analysis of κίνησις, because here as well, Heidegger follows Aristotle – who is not quite objective in his readings of Parmenides and Plato. In his *Sophist* lectures of 1922, Heidegger follows Aristotle in making the εἶδος of the house (which is to be built) the ἀρχή of the activity (i.e., κίνησις) of building. He writes:

Hence the εἶδος is the very ἀρχή; it initiates the κίνησις. This κίνησις is first of all that of νόησις, or deliberation, and then the one of ποίησις, of the action which issues from the deliberation. *GA* 19, 44

This analysis, whereby νόησις is situated within an eminently practical context, allows Heidegger to later discover the origins of both pure νοεῖν as well σοφία within existence's "Being-in-the-World," i.e., its factual and *jeweilig* existence within world in which it lives.

⁵⁶ Cf. *GA* 62, 387. "Gefragt wird: wie ist das, was Aristoteles als Forschung charakterisiert, *ausgänglich* da? Wo wird es and als was vorfindlich? Wie geht Aristoteles darauf zu, und wie geht er damit um? Aristoteles nimmt aus dem faktischen Leben, aus der Weise seines eigenen umgänglichen Sprechens die Rede von σοφώτερον – verstehender sein als – auf; d.h. er hält sich an die faktischen *Dafürnahmen*, in denen das Leben seine eigenen Umgangsweisen ἐμπειρία, τέχνη auslegt: οἰόμεθα, ὑπολαμβάνομεν, νομίζομεν, ἡγοούμεθα."

Heidegger uses this radical hermeneutic of the origins of the positing of pure *voeiv* in order to deconstruct the Greek (i.e., Parmenidean) understanding of being from a second aspect.⁵⁷

Further, insofar as *voeiv* is associated with the *theion* in Aristotle, demonstrating the radically *diesseitig* origins of *voeiv* (within factual life) also enables him to dismantle Aristotle's "theology." This opposition to Aristotle's theology is seen most radically in his discussion of the five modes of *aletheueiv*, where he hints that *phronesis*, which has the being of *human* life as its intentional correlate, rather than *sofia* ought to be the highest mode of revealing possible for humans – before finally taking back the claim.⁵⁸ Although a higher form of *aletheueiv*, the problem with *sofia* for Heidegger is that it ultimately relates to divine movement (i.e., to the movement of the *noesis noeseos*) and thereby leads into theology.

This theology is untenable for Heidegger, because it represents the forgetting of facticity. Only *phronesis*, for him, genuinely preserves human characteristics such as thrownness, finitude, and temporality. *phronesis*, however, ultimately cannot serve as a model,⁵⁹ because, like factual life, it too embodies a tendency to fallenness.⁶⁰ For Heidegger, it is not a question of going back to the Greeks and learning what models they used that we could adopt, but an attitude of "wakefulness" that is decisive.⁶¹

⁵⁷ But *voeiv* is never deliberative reason in Parmenides and it is never pragmatic. In following Aristotle and thinking him to have correctly understood his predecessors Plato and Parmenides, Heidegger makes the same erroneous turn as Aristotle. Heidegger's hermeneutic reading of the origins of the *theion* as the highest being may apply to Aristotle, whose *theion* as *noesis noeseos* does indeed represent a radicalization of a specific logic rooted in *praxis*, but it is hard to see how it can apply to Parmenides or Plato, who radically separate *voeiv* from being that is characterized by *kinesis*.

⁵⁸ See GA 62, 376-386 and GA 19, 21-178.

⁵⁹ Gadamer is therefore mistaken when he argues *contra* Heidegger for a philosophical hermeneutics explicitly modelled upon *phronesis*.

⁶⁰ In my view, Heidegger would be just as critical of neo-Heideggerian appropriations of *phronesis* as he was of existentialism since both make the mistake of not experiencing this twofoldness of being out of existence. For Heidegger, the philosophical task is radically opposed to all speculative and theoretical pronouncements about the being of human life, it is radically limited to the task of interpreting existence out of existence. He thus critiques existential thinkers for not thematizing this task, i.e., for not developing an adequate "hermeneutics of facticity" (or, as in *SZ*, an adequate "analytic of Dasein") as the proper methodological approach to the task. Only this hermeneutic approach will give one proper access to human being's finitude because hermeneutics is itself an index of finitude. That is why Heidegger insists that what existence is can never be inquired into directly and generally, as the inquiry itself must share in the essentially finite nature of this being. In contrast, existentialist philosophy tries to talk straightaway and improperly about existence, but this approach is shortcircuited inasmuch as all ways of speaking about existence are already historically governed.

⁶¹ For references to *Wachsein*, see GA 63, 7, 15, 18. The Christian resonances of the term are unmistakeable (cf. "der Tag des Herrn kommt wie ein Dieb in der Nacht").

In dismantling the Parmenidean thesis of being as one and unmoved and as separate from becoming, Heidegger is able to foreground the *passion* of existence, while undoing the priority of *voûç* over understanding lets him emphasize the radically *diesseitig* and pragmatic situation of existence.⁶² These moves effectively undercut the ontological foundations of the Greek *praxis* of salvation, while making a *renewed* experience of salvation necessary.⁶³ Thus, what is ultimately at stake in Heidegger's philosophical project is the rejection of one kind of soteriology, the noetic salvation of Parmenides and Plato,⁶⁴ and its replacement by another: the eschatological awaiting of the end of days specific to Christianity. Although Heidegger insists upon a philosophical clarification of this experience, its confessional origins are unmistakable.⁶⁵ From Heidegger's perspective, the Parmenidean and Platonic conception of time as cyclical⁶⁶ (especially, their separation of time into two temporalities: the eternity of

⁶² The notion of the uniqueness of human existence in Heidegger is ultimately also tied to one's specific historical (and thus, implicitly, political) situation. Thus, whereas singularization leads Oedipus out of society (he is unfit as husband, father, king), Heidegger draws particularity from culture, history, *Volk*. This is the political problem with Heidegger. This personal, existential, individuality, cut off from a *voûç* higher than the practical, is what forces Heidegger to participate in the *Volk*. On this one point, Schürmann provides an antidote. See his *Heidegger on Being and Acting*; cf. especially his remark "[My philosophy of] Anarchic Praxis: this is the *topos* where the man Martin Heidegger undoubtedly would not so much have liked to see himself led." *Heidegger on Being and Acting: From Principles to Anarchy*, 293.

⁶³ Cf., for example, GA 60, where Heidegger rejects the interpretation of Paul's *Letter to the Romans* as suggesting an ascent from the sensual to the transcendental. Citing Luther's *Heidelberger Disputation*, Heidegger points out that that this represents a fundamental misunderstanding of Paul's meaning, who in the first *Letter to the Corinthians* explicitly and unmistakeably points out that the wisdom of the Greeks was destroyed through the cross.

⁶⁴ Yfantis too notes Heidegger's rejection of Greek rational soteriology, but he tends to accept Heidegger's reason, namely, the covering up of existence's *Vollzugscharakter*. In contrast, I have applied a "hermeneutics of suspicion" to Heidegger to think more radically about the reasons for this rejection. "In his interpretation, Heidegger discusses above all the fundamental existential characteristics of burden (*molestia*) and temptation (*tentatio*) in more detail. These do not represent an objective property of human life, which it could rid itself of through purification and askesis, for example. This was precisely the Greek view/the Christian view [insofar as it was] influenced by Greek [thought]." *Die Auseinandersetzung des frühen Heideggers mit Aristoteles*, 83.

⁶⁵ Especially illuminating here is Heidegger's engagement with Nietzsche, since Nietzsche already articulates a critique of Christianity before Heidegger. For Nietzsche, since everything repeats eternally, there is no individual being here in need of personal salvation. But in spite of his stinging critique of Christianity, Nietzsche holds on to the thought of *Jeweiligkeit* in the doctrine of the "eternal recurrence of the same." Indeed, his critique of Christianity is precisely that it devalues existence here and now in favor of an afterlife. Heidegger, however, rejects Nietzsche's solution. Indeed, when he turns to Nietzsche in the thirties, he insists upon the "will to power" as Nietzsche's central thought, downplaying the doctrine of the eternal recurrence of the same. Heidegger tries to assimilate Nietzsche to a grander history of philosophy and, more specifically, to reinterpret his doctrines of "will to power" and "eternal recurrence of the same" as bespeaking the *essentia* and *existentia* of beings respectively. That is to say, Heidegger tries to shoehorn the Nietzschean determinations backward into the Aristotelian framework.

⁶⁶ For reasons of space, I cannot present a full articulation of the Parmenidean/Platonic conception of time as cyclical here. Proclus' commentary on Plato's *Parmenides* is a useful resource for understanding cyclical time in Plato, see esp. 1226.38-1227.14. An excellent and influential analysis of the concept of time in Plato and Aristotle down to Plotinus can be found in Werner Beierwaltes, *Plotin über Ewigkeit und Zeit*.

being and the cyclical temporality of becoming) disallows the experience of *Jeweiligkeit* and radical finitude and thus makes the *existential urgency* of personal salvation impossible.⁶⁷ The “destruction of the history of ontology using the problem of temporality as its guiding line”⁶⁸ proclaimed in *SZ* turns out to be the clarification of a quite different experience of salvation from the rational soteriology of the Greeks.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ The analysis of *Jeweiligkeit* in this paper demonstrates that the notion of life as *jeweilig* has been used to define philosophy dogmatically. My aim, however, is not to critique Heidegger but rather, to show that implicit in his notion of *Jeweiligkeit* is a notion of hidden transcendence: this unthought incipient transcendence is the insistence upon the *Jeweiligkeit* of the interpreter who is supposed to master his finitude through hermeneutics. In fact, to decide whether existence is *jeweilig* or not itself requires a transcendental perspective.

⁶⁸ Cf. *SZ*, §6 *Die Aufgabe einer Destruktion der Geschichte der Ontologie*.

⁶⁹ Although I cannot enter into a longer discussion here, it seems to me that Heidegger misunderstands Greek thought when he claims it covers over *Diesmaligkeit/Jeweiligkeit*. There are three ways to thematize *Diesmaligkeit*: a. As *erōs*, where I understand and value the other *qua* singular, b. In myth where the unique life of an individual acquires paradigmatic status (e.g., Achilles in Homer or Socrates in the Platonic dialogues), c. As a soteriological moment, where this individual being bound for death is concerned with its salvation. Since Heidegger does not have *erōs* and rejects myth, he can only thematize *Diesmaligkeit* as a soteriological moment.

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⁷⁰ A note on translations: I have used the *Gesamtausgabe* editions almost throughout, but have relied on the Stambaugh edition of *Sein und Zeit* (cited as *SZ* followed by German and English pagination), the Rojcewicz/Schuerer edition of *Platon. Sophistes* (cited as GA 19 followed by German pagination), the Kisiel edition of *Prolegomena zur Geschichte des Zeitbegriffs* (cited as GA 20 followed by German pagination), the Rojcewicz edition of *Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu Aristoteles* (cited as GA 61 followed by German pagination), the Metcalf/Tanzer edition of *Grundbegriffe der aristotelischen Philosophie* (cited as GA 18 followed by German pagination), and the van Buren edition of *Ontologie. Die Hermeneutik der Faktizität* (cited as GA 63 followed by German pagination). All other translations are mine. All references to the *Natorp Bericht* are to the text in GA 62 (also cited as such).

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Commentary on Vishwa Adluri's

"Heidegger's Encounter with Aristotle: A Theological Deconstruction of Metaphysics"

Joydeep Bagchee

University of Essen – Duisburg

In his paper, Dr. Adluri claims that Heidegger's turn to Aristotle in the 1920s can be understood out of a need to conceive of time as linear and finite, an experience of time that is especially significant within Christianity. Adluri further claims that turning to Aristotle allows Heidegger to exclude cyclical temporality which he argues is present in the tradition through Parmenides and Plato and recurs in Nietzsche. Heidegger's ambiguous relationship to Aristotle can be understood through the fact that, in Aristotle's treatise on time (*Physics* IV), time is first conceived of as linear but it is also, problematically for Heidegger, conceived of as an infinite progression of individual "now" points. In his writings, Heidegger critiques Greek philosophy *and all subsequent ontology* based upon it precisely for overlooking the constitute role human finitude plays in the understanding of being *and Dasein*.¹ *Dasein*'s finite temporality proves, as I have argued in my dissertation, to be the common root of both.²

Yet, how are we to understand this desire to make human finitude central to philosophy? According to Adluri, this desire can be understood in terms of Heidegger's enthusiastic reception of Luther in the 1920s, a fact that is well-documented in both biographical and later theoretical accounts, so that Heidegger's philosophical project appears to have its origins in Luther's understanding of temporality, individuality, and salvation. Adluri supports these claims through a close textual reading of Heidegger; he demonstrates how Heidegger's *Jeweiligkeit* allows him to interpret human *Dasein* as radically individual, finite, historically-situated, and in need of salvation. This quadripartite argument is effectively summarized in the

¹ Cf. GA 62, 359: "Es ist ein auf dem Wege bloßer nachträglicher Ergänzung nicht wieder gutzumachendes Versäumnis, wenn immer wieder versucht wird, den *Gegenstands-* und *Seinscharakter* des faktischen Lebens ohne den grundsätzlichen *und die Problematik* führenden Mitansatz des *Todes* und des 'den Tod Habens' zu bestimmen... Der als *bevorstehend* gehabte Tod in der ihm eigenen Weise des Sichtbarmachens der Lebensgegenwart und Vergangenheit ist als Konstitutivum der Faktizität zugleich das Phänomen, aus dem die spezifische '*Zeitlichkeit*' menschlichen *Daseins* explikativ zu erheben ist." For citations for the constitutive role human finitude plays in the understanding of being, see *Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik*, especially the concluding section "C. Die Metaphysik des *Daseins* als Fundamentalontologie."

² Finite temporality enables both human existence's specific kind of being (*Dasein*) as well as the understanding of being that is founded upon *Dasein* as its ontic foundation given through this finite temporality. See my dissertation *Return to Transcendence: The Project of Being and Time and the Problem of Human Finitude*.

chart at the beginning of section IV, which also constitutes the transition to the second half of the paper.

In the second part of the paper, Adluri then turns to Nietzsche and Parmenides as well as to what he terms “the Greek *praxis* of salvation.” In this ‘positive’ section of the paper, Adluri argues for a different conception of temporality, which he interprets as an intersection of *two* temporalities. This section of the paper provides some clues as to how we could think about time (and human existence!) outside of the framework of a strictly linear, strictly individualistic, and highly solipsistic account of temporality. As I read Adluri, he is presenting a highly challenging and more nuanced account of time, where we would have to account for the finitude of human *Dasein* as a “point” on this intersection of two temporalities rather than as an “end” out of which all time would have to be interpreted. I have, of course, sharpened the contrast here, because I have in mind Heidegger’s striking claim in *Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie* that,

[b]ecause the ecstatic-horizonal unity of temporality [Zeitlichkeit] is in itself the self-projection par excellence, i.e., as ecstatic, makes possible the projection upon.... and, together with the horizon that belongs to the ecstasis, represents the condition of possibility of an upon which, a whereto, it can no longer be asked upon what the schemata on their part are projected, and so ad infinitum. The series of projections placed before each other, so to speak, mentioned earlier – understanding of beings, projection of being, understanding of being, projection upon time – has an end in the horizon of the ecstatic unity of temporality [Zeitlichkeit]. GP 437.³

Heidegger continues:

We cannot justify this more originally here, we would thereby have to enter into the problem of the finitude of time. At this horizon, every ecstasis of time, i.e., of temporality [Zeitlichkeit], itself has its end. But this end is nothing other than the beginning and point of departure for the possibility of all projection. GP 437.⁴

I found this theoretically the most fascinating section of the paper and most of my questions relate to this section. However, before I turn to my questions, I would like to suggest a few further avenues for thinking about the claims made in the first half of the paper. In attempting to understand Adluri’s paper, I turned to Reiner Schürmann’s *Broken Hegemonies* for an

³ “Weil die ekstatisch-horizontale Einheit der Zeitlichkeit in sich der Selbstentwurf schlechthin ist, als ekstatische das Entwerfen auf... überhaupt ermöglicht und mit dem zur Ekstase gehörigen Horizont die Bedingung der Möglichkeit eines Woraufhin, Wozu-hinaus überhaupt darstellt, kann gar nicht mehr gefragt werden, woraufhin die Schemata ihrerseits entworfen seien, und so in infinitum. Die früher erwähnte Folge der einander gleichsam vorgeschalteten Entwürfe: Verstehen von Seiendem, Entwurf von Sein, Verstehen von Sein, Entwurf auf die Zeit, hat ihr Ende am Horizont der ekstatischen Einheit der Endlichkeit.”

⁴ “Ursprünglicher können wir dies hier nicht begründen, wir müßten dabei auf das Problem der Endlichkeit der Zeit eingehen. An diesem Horizont hat jede Ekstase der Zeit, d. h. die Zeitlichkeit selbst ihr Ende. Aber dieses Ende ist nichts anderes als der Anfang und Ausgang für die Möglichkeit alles Entwerfens.”

analysis of Luther. Although Schürmann does not explicitly link Heidegger to Luther, it is uncanny just how much of Luther anticipates Heidegger.

I list the points Schürmann discusses below:

1. A critique (anachronistically) of *Vorhandenheit*.
2. The turn to the understanding as the primary locus for any interrogation of phenomena/being.
3. Reinterpreting the question of being as the question of the *meaning* of being, i.e., the question of how being is 'given' to us *qua* phenomenon, and
4. Linking the being of beings to the *Da-sein/Lichtung* in which it is manifested.
5. And finally, the emphasis upon the 'knower' or the relation of the knower to the content of the knowledge, which also leads into a critique of Aristotle.⁵

Schürmann's analysis thus suggests a programmatic appropriation of Luther's thought in early Heidegger. Heidegger does not simply share Luther's theological/eschatological concerns (personal salvation, an intense sense of one's individuality and temporal specificity) but also the basic theoretical framework within which Luther poses his questions. The radical groundlaying for a scientific ontology and the regional sciences founded upon it which Heidegger claims for himself in *Being and Time* appear in a new light when one considers just how much of Heidegger's thought is influenced through Luther.

I conclude with some questions of Dr. Adluri:

1. Could you comment on the theological Heidegger and how he sees this against the background of Nietzsche's claim that god is dead?

⁵ This is not unique to Luther. As Flash has shown, "Seit Paulus davor gewarnt hatte, sich von der Weisheit dieser Welt verführen zu lassen, gab es im Christentum generelle Vorbehalte gegen den 'Hochmut' der Philosophen... 1231 schrieb Papst Gregor IX den Professoren von Paris, sie sollten sich nicht als Philosophen generieren, sondern Gottbelehrte, *theodocti*, sein; er schärfte das Verbot der *libri naturales* von 1201 ein, fügte aber hinzu, es solle solange kein Gebrauch von ihnen gemacht werden, bis sie von allen Irrtümern gereinigt wären, *quousque examinati fuerint et ab omni errorum suspitione purgati* (Chartularium I Nr. 79, pp. 136-139, bes. p. 138).... Spätestens seitdem koexistieren Aristotelesbenutzung und Aristoteleskorrektur, die, auch wenn sie theologischen Ziele dienen sollten, philosophisch argumentativ ausgeführt wurden, zum Beispiel von Johannes Eriugena, von Anselm von Canterbury, von Meister Eckhart, der eine neue Metaphysik, und Raimundus Luullus, der eine neue Logik und Ontologie forderte. Man müsste die gesamte Geschichte des mittelalterlichen Denkens darstellen, wollte man diese mächtige Strömung der Aristoteles-Überwindung bei gleichzeitiger Aristotelesbenutzung in ihrem philosophischen Gewicht sichtbar machen..." "Aristoteleskritik im Mittelalter," 65-66. Heidegger especially stands in a tradition beginning with Scotus of showing through "textual scholarship" that previous Aristotle interpretations had not understood the thinker, and that one's own interpretation therefore is truer to Aristotle. Thus, Flash writes, "Die Aristoteleskritik wurde subtiler und differenzierter, besonders bei Heinrich von Gent und Duns Scotus. Damit öffnete sich aber ein neuer Weg der Aristoteleskritik. Er bestand darin, durch Textarbeit zu zeigen, die bisherige Aristotelesdeutung sei falsch gewesen, man selbst folge dem *wahren* Aristoteles, auch wenn man z. B. den Universalrealismus zerstöre oder die *species*-Theorie des Erkennens verwerfe, die seither als aristotelisch galten." "Aristoteleskritik im Mittelalter," 70

2. How would you respond to the criticism that Parmenidean temporality is, for lack of a better word, “metaphysical,” i.e., that he does not take into account the temporality of being-toward-death and existential time?

3. Could you clarify the sense of what you in your paper have referred to as “the Greek *praxis* of salvation”? In what sense can one speak of a *praxis* here?

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Handout

1. “Luther qualifies this *prestige of things present* as ‘pure madness.’ One will have difficulty accusing him of not knowing what he is doing. He knows, and he says, that he is reorienting an entire mode of thinking; he does so by directing the axis of inquiry elsewhere, thus rendering the old problems problematic in a different way; and he is no less explicit about the old orientation, hereafter senseless, than he is about the new, henceforth the only sensible one: to think no longer according to ‘things’ but according to ‘consciousness.’ Why such anger against the theologians? Because they understand nothing about sin. They treat it as a task which you set for yourself (or with which you are born) and which is lifted from you. They count it amongst the *entia*, beings, claiming ‘that sin can be removed as long as man lives ... as if sinful deeds were removed, in the metaphysical sense, just as one removes a layer of paint from a wall’ (*sch.* 7,1 cor.). It is the ‘havingness’ {*ayance*} (*habitus*) which, according to the Aristotelians, ‘sticks to the soul like paint to a wall’ (*sch.* 7,18). In this polemic against the logic of things, self-consciousness is instituted as the focal point of another logic: transcendental logic.” *BH* 373

2. “This understanding also desubstantializes the I. If the I boils down to the activity of consciousness accompanying the modifications in self-understanding, then, with this, every notion of the entitative I ceases.” *BH* 378

“There, in this place, the site of phenomena is no longer determined by being within reach; nor their essence by constant presence. Their site is determined through the modifications in self-understanding and their essence through their relation to the I.” *BH* 379

3 and 4. “Luther inaugurates the transcendental turn by taking up a simple question in reference to God: How does he become a phenomenon? In a strict sense, a being becomes a phenomenon only in entering into our consciousness and submitting to the rules of reflection. In Luther, these rules are a matter of the capacity to hear the word. His transcendentalism is *critique* in that he separates the functions which necessarily and universally form parts of listening, either (both) to obey the word which renders guilty or (and) that which renders innocent. According to both of these modifications, the being of beings is the very being of the consciousness in which it shows itself.” *BH*, 380.

5. “A proposition ‘S is P,’ where a subject is linked to a predicate through the assertive copula, does not thematize the receiver. It does not matter to whom such a proposition is addressed. It works differently than a proposition such as ‘That S may be P,’ where a subject is linked to the predicate through the copula of desire. Such a proposition expresses a longing. It can concern a state of fact. Witness Luther’s wish that the end of time would come! The which can also concern the receiver of the proposition, however. Then this proposition turns into an imperative. It asks not only that some state of fact be produced or be the case, but rather that the content which it affirms, that which this proposition proposes, be recognized as true. It is addressed directly to the recipient, soliciting his adhesion. And who is the recipient? De facto, everyone. Taken in this sense, the optative seeks to make proselytes.... The copula of desire, substituted for the copula of assertion, brings about the revolution in the mode of thinking just as the invectives against the ‘reist’ conception of sin bring it about. In both cases, the one who is guilty is Aristotle. Against him, Luther maintains that the being of phenomena depends upon givens – on ‘facts’ as we shall see – within self-consciousness.” *BH* 382

Agency, Morality, and the Essential Consciencelessness of Action

Steven Crowell

Rice University

§1. The Analysis of Agency in *Sein und Zeit*

Increasingly, it seems to me that understanding the productive potential for further thinking found in Heidegger's writing requires coming to terms with little noticed assertions in familiar texts, apparent eddies in the stream of well-rehearsed passages that bring all-too-familiar interpretations up short. My aim in this paper is to discuss two such assertions which are closely related: First, "factically . . . any taking-action is necessarily 'conscienceless';" and second, "the existentiell possibility of *being*-'good'" is found only within "an essential consciencelessness" (BT 334/288). I believe that these claims hold the key to understanding the place of moral philosophy in Heidegger's existential analytic, and I will try to sketch that place through an interpretation of the claims.

Though it can stand alone, this interpretation is based on a reading of *Sein und Zeit* Division I as an account of human agency. A word about the approach, and conclusions, of that reading will help to contextualize my interpretation of the Division II passages in question. In the larger project, my approach to Division I starts from the claim – often repeated since Gadamer first floated it – that Heidegger's concept of "conscience" is to be understood as the existential reinterpretation of Aristotle's concept of *phronesis*. For reasons that I cannot elaborate here, I argue that this cannot be the case. (What Heidegger actually says is that *phronesis* is "conscience set in motion," which is an altogether different matter). Against the widespread reading of *Sein und Zeit* according to which Division I provides an existential phenomenology of what Aristotle called *poiesis* (with its attendant virtue, *techne*), while Division II, in its analysis of "anticipatory resoluteness," provides an existential phenomenology of what Aristotle called *praxis* (with its attendant virtue of *phronesis*), I argue that Division I contains the analysis of *both poiesis and praxis*, and that if we are going to understand the ontological place of *phronesis*, we will need to see it in the categories provided by Division I. Above all, this means that we will have to see it in light of the category of *das Man*, the public sphere of norms that shape and determine the meaning of action as such. *Authentic Dasein*, too, is an agent, and to that extent acts in light of norms that belong to *das Man*; and – as I argue – all deliberation (including moral deliberation) takes place on the basis of such norms. While it is

true that in a certain sense inauthenticity is grounded on authenticity – as Heidegger says, “that kind of being-in-the-world which is tranquillized and familiar is a mode of Dasein’s uncanniness, not the reverse,” and “the one-self is an existentiell modification of the authentic Self” (BT234/189; 365/317) – from the point of view of *agency* it is the other way around: authenticity is “only a modified way in which . . . everydayness is seized upon” (BT 224/179), an “existentiell modification of the ‘one’” (BT 168/130).

Crucial to the argument here is a proper understanding of the “for-the-sake-of” (*Worumwillen*). The latter is not merely an *element* within the “totality of involvements;” it is that without which there could *be* no such totality, that without which the *kind* of totality at issue – a totality in which things are related not causally but meaningfully, as *Bedeutungen* – would not be possible. If things show up in an everyday way as equipment – that is, as being “suitable for” something, as being “appropriate to” some task, etc.; in short, if they show up as exhibiting the *normatively ordered* relations designated by Heidegger as “in-order-to” – this is only because they refer back to what Heidegger calls “a potentiality-for-being for the sake of which [Dasein] itself is” (BT 119/86). A “potentiality-for-being” (*Seinkönnen*) is not a logical possibility but an *ability*, and an ability “for the sake of which” I am is an ability I am *exercising* – that is, an *activity* (*praxis*). It can also, following Christine Korsgaard, be called my “practical identity.”

What is important to understand about all this for what follows is that to exercise an ability (to engage in *praxis*) is to *try* to live up to the *norms* of some practice, i.e., to try to *be* a teacher, or father, or auto mechanic, or political actor, or whatever. Only if I try to live up to such norms – that is, only if I try to *do* something as it is *supposed* to be done – is it possible for some item in my environment (e.g., a hammer) to show up as “suitable for” the job or “appropriate to” the task at hand, and so on. Meaning, in other words, depends on a normative structure (*Bewandtnisganzheit*), and such a structure can be sufficiently *specified* only if it refers back to a being (Dasein) whose very being involves the normative possibility of success or failure – a being in whose being that very being is an issue. And because an analysis of human agency – including *authentic* human agency – must concern itself with practices and practical identities of this sort, *phronesis* must always be understood as tied to some concrete “for-the-sake-of,” some concrete “potentiality-for-being,” and the norms that go with it. The analysis of *praxis* – and therefore also the place of *phronesis* – is to be found in Division I, even if (as is the case) *authentic praxis* involves a kind of “transparency” that gets analyzed only in Division II. But if that is so, Division II must have an aim *other* than the aim of

analyzing “authentic *praxis*.” And indeed, a close reading of the two passages with which I began will show that it does not have to do with *praxis* at all, but rather with identifying a condition of minded agency that exceeds the sphere of practices, one that clarifies what makes it possible for Dasein to be *beholden to norms* at all. This is equivalent to an account of what it is to be *I-myself*, and, as I hope to suggest, it is also the ground of something like a moral obligation.

§2. The Essential Consciencelessness of Action

Where does the Division I account of agency leave Heidegger *vis-à-vis* morality? Heidegger says very little about morality in *Sein und Zeit*, and if one looks for an account of what our duties are, or of what is morally good or evil, one will find only what seems to be an irritating swerve from the topic: After remarking that “the concept of moral guilt” has not been “ontologically clarified” in previous philosophy (BT 328/283), Heidegger asserts that Dasein’s “essential being-guilty is . . . the existential condition for the possibility of the ‘morally’ good and for the ‘morally’ evil – that is, for morality in general and for the possible forms which this may take factually” (BT 332/286). Heidegger never returns to the question of what is specific to moral guilt; nor does he say anything about the morally good and evil. Under these circumstances, one might try to construct these missing accounts.¹ On the other hand, if one attends to Heidegger’s Kantian language here, one might be inclined to see his analysis of “essential being-guilty” as itself a contribution to moral philosophy, in the way that Kant’s search for the ground of moral obligation in the *Groundwork* is such a contribution. This will be my approach. Completing the account of minded agency, Division II clarifies how it is that I-myself can be beholden to normative distinctions of better and worse, success and failure, and in so doing it uncovers the ground of a distinctly moral obligation.

What it means to say that being-guilty is the existential condition for the possibility of morality can be approached via Heidegger’s putative equation between *phronesis* and *Gewissen*. In this regard Heidegger makes two intriguing claims: First, “factically . . . any taking-action is necessarily ‘conscienceless’;” and second, “the existentiell possibility of *being-good*” is found only within “an essential consciencelessness” (BT 334/288). Now if

¹ Some interesting, though very different, starts in this direction have been made by Frederick Olafson, *Heidegger and the Ground of Ethics* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Werner Marx, *Is there a Measure on Earth: Foundations for a Non-Metaphysical Ethics*, tr. Thomas Nenon and Reginald Lilly (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987); Joanna Hodge, *Heidegger and Ethics* (New York: Routledge, 1995); Lawrence Hatab, *Ethics and Finitude: Heideggerian Contributions to Moral Philosophy* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000); Frank Schalow, *The Renewal of the Kant-Heidegger Dialogue* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1992).

conscience were *phronesis* Heidegger would not be able to make these statements.² Even if one takes *phronesis* to be embodied only in the practice of explicit deliberation, it cannot be identified with conscience, since conscience does not deliberate – it does not “try to set going a ‘soliloquy’ in the self to which it has appealed” but rather discourses “in the mode of keeping silent” (BT 322/277). It follows that *being-good* is also necessarily conscienceless. For Dasein to “be” something is not to have it as a property but to try to be it, that is, to act in light of its norms. If to be a carpenter, for instance, involves “taking-action” as a carpenter does, then to be a good carpenter is to accomplish, in taking action, an exemplary instance of what it means to be a carpenter. According to Heidegger, then, being-good at *anything* will involve a certain consciencelessness. But what is conscience, such that taking action and being-good essentially exclude it?

The passages about consciencelessness appear among a series of ontological equations in which Heidegger summarizes the phenomenology of conscience that he had provided earlier in the chapter (BT 334/288). Conscience is a “call,” a mode of discourse, and thus something “heard.” To hear *discourse* is to *understand*. To understand, in the existential sense, is not to grasp thematically but to be able-to-be, to exercise an ability. Thus to hear is to *do* something: “Understanding the call is *choosing*.” But it “is not a choosing of conscience, which as such cannot be chosen.” One cannot choose when to have the call call: “it comes from me and yet from beyond me and over me” (BT 320/275). Instead, “what is chosen is *having-a-conscience* as being-free for one’s ownmost being-guilty. ‘*Understanding the appeal*’ means ‘*wanting-to-have-a-conscience*’.” And it is precisely this wanting-to-have-a-conscience that “becomes the taking-over of that essential consciencelessness within which” all taking-action, all *praxis*, and so also any “*existentiell* possibility of *being-‘good’* subsists.”

What does it mean to “take over” the “essential consciencelessness” of *praxis*? In taking over – that is, in the choice that constitutes Dasein’s understanding the call – “Dasein lets its ownmost self *take action in itself* in terms of that potentiality-for-being which it has chosen” (BT 334/288). Taking-over is thus a kind of *doubling* of action: the “potentiality-for-being which [Dasein] has chosen” is nothing other than the practical identity as which it is engaged in

² How then should we explain Heidegger’s claim (*Platon: Sophistes*, 56), noted above, that “[d]ie *phronesis* is nichts anderes als das in Bewegung gesetzte Gewissen, das eine Handlung durchsichtig macht”? The key point is that conscience and *phronesis* are not equated; *phronesis* is “conscience set in motion.” To set conscience in motion is, as I will argue in this section, to “take over” the “essential consciencelessness” of action. To make action “transparent” in this sense is to act in light of one’s responsibility for the normative character (force) of those norms in light of which one acts. *Gewissen* itself, however, belongs to the existential condition in which I *grasp* myself as responsible in this way; it is a mode of self-awareness that is possible only when I *do not* act.

a conscienceless way. Let us call this “choice₁.” In hearing the call this is subtended by another doing – “understanding the call is choosing” – in which Dasein “lets its ownmost self” (that is, its “most primordial potentiality-for-being”) “take action . . . *in terms of*” choice₁. Let us call this “choice₂.” But Dasein’s “most primordial potentiality for being” is “being-guilty [*schuldig*]” (BT 334/288).

Wanting-to-have-a-conscience thus *transforms* everyday *praxis* (choice₁) by taking over its essential consciencelessness in light of my being-guilty (choice₂). Thus, everything depends on what *being-guilty*, in the phenomenological sense, means. Earlier in the chapter Heidegger defined it as *Grundseinübernehmen* (BT 330/284). To take over the essential consciencelessness of *praxis*, then – to understand the call of conscience – is to take over being a ground. What this means becomes clear only if we first understand how the phenomenon of conscience falls *outside* the continuum of minded agency, the continuum of essential consciencelessness that stretches from “mindless” coping to authenticity, to anticipatory resoluteness as the state of *having* taken over being a ground.

Here we must be brief:³ Together with *Angst* and death, the call of conscience belongs to a liminal condition of the Care-structure (disposition, understanding, and discourse): *existential breakdown*. In such breakdown I cannot act because my disposition has alienated me from all those practical identities that provide me with the kind of motivational force necessary for minded agency: *Angst* “takes away from Dasein the possibility of understanding itself . . . in terms of the ‘world’ and the way things have been publically interpreted;” I confront myself not as this or that but as sheer “being-possible” (BT 232/187); public norms appear as lifeless facts, without normative force: “The world has the character of completely lacking significance” (BT 231/186). Belonging to the disposition of *Angst* is the existential ability-to-be (understanding) that Heidegger calls “death” – namely, “the possibility of no longer being-able-to-be-there” (BT 294/251). Death is the form that my self-understanding takes in *Angst*: to be aware of myself as sheer being-possible is to be aware of myself under no description – that is, to understand myself in terms of the “*impossibility* of being-there,” where “being-there” means some practical identity. Hence there is a sense in which I can understand myself – that is, “be” someone – even when all my practical identities have fallen away, and with them all their (moral and non-moral) normative motivational force. Death is my ability-to-be *no-one*, that is, to occupy the *first-person* stance in a radical way, to be I-myself as opposed to one-self.⁴

³ For more, see [deleted to preserve blind review]

⁴ See [deleted to preserve blind review]

This point is crucial for understanding the analysis of conscience. The third aspect of the Care-structure is discourse (*Rede*), which, according to Heidegger, “articulates” understanding. Thus conscience, as discourse, will articulate the self-understanding that belongs to existential death. According to Heidegger, this self-understanding is expressed as “guilty!” (BT 314/269). Such guilt does not derive from the transgression of any “law or ‘ought’” (BT 328/283), since it is *nothing but* the articulation of death “the possibility of the impossibility of being-there;” that is, it articulates the being of first-person selfhood, what it means to be I-myself. And because Dasein’s being is to-be, “guilty” is not a simple *property* of the first-person, in the way that, say, the pre-reflective *cogito* is for Sartre. Rather, it is something I must *try* to be. To be guilty is to try to be I-myself, and that, finally, is to try at taking over being a ground. This is what it means to take over the essential conscienceless of *praxis*, and it is this that brings comportment its mindedness, its beholdenness to norms as such.⁵

Heidegger glosses *being-guilty* in the following passage: “The Self which as such has to lay the ground for itself can *never* get that ground into its power; and yet, as existing, it *must* take over being-a-ground” (BT 330/284). This “must” is not the must of obligation; rather, it expresses the essential structure of selfhood as thrown projection. Dasein can “never come back behind its thrownness,” and so the latter is something like a ground (*Grund*) that Dasein “has not laid . . . itself” but “reposes in the weight of.” We may think of such thrown grounds as reasons in the sense of causes or given conditions of my being – as, for instance, what Kant calls “inclinations.” But Dasein, whose being is essentially an issue for it, does not possess its thrownness, its inclinations, as an apple possesses its color. Rather, Dasein “*is* this thrown ground . . . only in that it projects itself upon possibilities into which it has been thrown.” This is what it means that Dasein *must* take over being-a-ground.

Heidegger continues: In being thrown, Dasein “has been *released* from its ground, *not through* itself but *to* itself, so as to be *as this ground*.” Selfhood, being a self, is to be “the being of its ground,” a ground that “is never anything but the ground for an entity whose being has to

⁵ The crux of my disagreement with Dreyfus is found here, for his interpretation depends on seeing *two* kinds of anxiety in Division II, and so two levels of authenticity. I can find no textual justification for this reading. According to Dreyfus (“What Could be More Intelligible,” 271), the *phronemos* possesses the “anxiety of guilt” – i.e., “the sense that the everyday social norms of its society are thrown rather than grounded and so have no final authority” – but is not yet “fully authentic” because he does not face “the anxiety of death” – i.e., “that Dasein has to be ready at all times to give up its identity and its world altogether.” The sort of distinction Dreyfus draws between two kinds of anxiety is phenomenologically intelligible in existentiell terms. Heidegger, however, does not sever the meaning of “guilt” and “death” in this way, because the point of his analysis is to uncover the ontological condition for what makes *praxis* – *any praxis*, not just some special form – possible, namely, my ability to be I-myself.

take over being-a-ground” (BT 330-31/285). Taking over being-a-ground cannot mean that I create myself; my inclinations are not mine to create. Rather to take over the ground into which I am thrown is to see my inclinations in a *normative* light, that is, as “possible” rather than inevitable grounds of my behavior; it is to see them as potentially *justifying* reasons. In taking them over I become responsible for them either by making them my reasons or refusing to do so. Only by “understanding the call” in this sense can Dasein “*be* responsible [*verantwortlich*]” (BT 334/228).⁶

We are now in a position to understand the concept of authenticity as “anticipatory resoluteness” (BT 349/302). One might think of it this way: Aristotle has a one-level conception of action – *prohairesis* is choice in the sense of choice₁ above. *Phronesis* is excellence in such choices. Heidegger’s notion of authentic choice, on the other hand, is two-tiered: the practical identity in light of which I act (choice₁) is accompanied by a “choosing to choose” (choice₂): to be resolute is to act as I-myself, that is, in “anticipation” of the “possibility” of breakdown. More specifically, it is to act in light of what is *revealed* in breakdown, namely, my responsibility for the normative force of those standards (reasons) in light of which I act. Authenticity is thus “only a modified way in which . . . everydayness is seized upon” (BT 224/179), an “*existentiell* modification of the ‘one’” (BT 168/130).

Anticipation of breakdown – that is, acting as I-myself rather than as the one-self – makes *praxis* “transparent [*durchsichtig*]” (BT 354/307), so that, though still conscienceless, it contrasts with the self-forgetfulness that characterizes everyday *praxis*. To be authentic is to have a certain stance toward the reasons provided me by my practical identity. This is not the stance sought by the rationalist critics of Heidegger – namely, a grasp of some normative concept of reason that could serve as the measure for all the contingent, historically specific, goods and reasons that derive from practical identities. It is rather my *taking responsibility* for those reasons. I am not responsible for their existence; their existence derives from *das Man*. But in being authentic I make them *my* reasons by taking responsibility for endorsing them. To

⁶ How does this notion of responsibility square with Heidegger’s “formalization” of the concept of guilt as “being the null basis of a nullity” (BT 329/283)? This phrase is often understood as indicating Dasein’s “finitude” – i.e., the ontological fact that there are dimensions to Dasein’s being over which it has no control (and so for which it cannot be “responsible” in the ordinary sense). Finitude thus distinguishes Dasein from the hyperbolic claims for the rational, autonomous subject of the transcendental tradition from Kant to Husserl. But while such interpretations are fine as far as they go, they do not go far enough. For Heidegger subsequently *deformalizes* the formally-indicative notion of “being the null basis of a nullity,” articulating it concretely and phenomenologically as *Grundseinübernehmen*, which I interpret to mean treating one’s factic grounds as (potentially) justifying reasons. But to say this is not to say that all action is rational or that Dasein’s ability to give reasons for what it does does not give out at some point. Inhabiting the space of reasons, so to speak, does not conflict with the idea of finitude, i.e., the idea that I do not reason on the basis of any kind of absolute standard.

be authentically I-myself does not mean that I take such reasons to be arbitrary; it means that I recognize their motivational force as stemming from my commitment to them. Stated otherwise, I recognize that the norms embedded in practical identities are simply *claims* to validity, i.e., that second nature is not *nature*. Whether or not such norms can be rationally grounded, they remain at *issue* for me, dependent on my commitment for their status as part of my motivational set. It follows that no deliberation can justify that commitment rationally. To the extent that practical reasoning is *practical* – that is, to the extent that it does not simply yield theoretical conclusions but provides reasons that motivate me – such reasoning will always presuppose a prior commitment of some kind, *some* practical identity to whose norms I am actually trying to live up. Authenticity is simply transparency with regard to this fact, and to be responsible is to take over the one-self as I-myself – that is, to “take over that essential consciencelessness within which alone the existentiell possibility of *being*-‘good’ subsists.”⁷ What are the consequences of this for the question of the *morally* good in *Sein und Zeit*?

If the argument of the previous section is correct, then all deliberation – including moral deliberation – is possible only within the norms of a practical identity and so within an historically specific “world” or culture. By “moral” deliberation I mean reasoning not about what conduces to the good of some particular practical identity but what conduces to the good of “man in general,” what all human beings, simply as such, ought to do. Thus it is the universality of an obligation that makes it specifically moral. But *are* there any obligations that pertain to me simply as being, and not as being this or that? Though the language of obligation is foreign to Aristotle, his idea of a “highest life” for man – a life that cultivates the faculty that makes us human: reason or speech (*logos*) – yields a kind of moral obligation: Act so that your action promotes, in yourself and in others, what is highest or best in human being: rationality. For rationality, as mindedness, is the condition of all other goods in their specifically human form.⁸ Can anything of this sort be found in Heidegger? Does Heidegger have a doctrine of what is highest in us, and so of the “good for man”?

The short answer is no. Certainly, *authenticity* is not such a good. For Heidegger, as for

⁷ From this point of view we can see that Dreyfus’s interpretation in “What Could be More Intelligible” sets the bar of authenticity too high, since authenticity is ascribed only to the *phronemos* or the “fully authentic” cultural master. But while these (rare) individuals may be authentic, surely Heidegger’s concept is not *limited* to them.

⁸ John Drummond develops a phenomenological version of this sort of Aristotelianism on the basis of what he calls “transcendental goods.” See Drummond, “Respect as a Moral Emotion: A Phenomenological Approach,” *Husserl Studies* 22 (2006): 1–27. Korsgaard argues for something like this from a Kantian perspective in *Sources of Normativity* (123), where she presents a “transcendental argument” to the effect that valuing one’s “humanity” is a condition for valuing oneself under any other practical identity.

Kant, the notion of what promotes human flourishing (“happiness”) is an “Ideal of imagination,” that is, too indeterminate to support practical inferences to what one universally ought to do to attain it.⁹ In Heidegger’s terms, what one ought to do derives from one’s practical identity, and being human is not a practical identity.¹⁰ Even in the case of practical identities, however, “*only* the resolution itself can give the answer” as to what one ought to do (BT 345/298), because what it means to be (e.g.) a father cannot be defined with sufficient specificity to yield more than prudential imperatives in deliberating on how to “bring the moving principle back to myself.” Being a father is not a work but a *Seinkönnen*, i.e., something the norms of which are themselves always at issue. If Dasein’s being is Care, then no specific “good for man” can be specified, since what it is to be such a being is always *at issue*. Because this is so, we have no *obligation* to be authentic or to promote authenticity. Might Care nevertheless be the ground of another sort of moral obligation?

Kant located the ground of obligation in our nature as rational beings. He could do so – as Heidegger discusses at length in the Second Part of *Vom Wesen der Menschlichen Freiheit*¹¹ – because he took freedom to be a kind of causality and thus modeled moral reasoning on the kind of reasons relevant in a causal context, namely, necessary connections or laws. As distinct from mere natural things, which act according to (causal) laws, rational beings can act *for reasons* – which means, for Kant, according to the *idea* of law.¹² On such a view, to act for reasons at all is to act *as though* one’s maxim expressed a universal law; and this, for Kant, means that there is an obligation incumbent on all rational beings, namely, to consider their maxims in light of the standard of what could *in fact* be a universal law.

We need not enter into the controversies surrounding this conception in order to appreciate Heidegger’s modification of it. First, in defining Dasein as Care rather than reason Heidegger rejects Kant’s equation of freedom with a kind of causality.¹³ Thus, acting for reasons cannot *eo ipso* be seen as a way of acting in accord with (putatively) universal law, and Heidegger

⁹ Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, tr. H. J. Paton (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), 86.

¹⁰ For the argument here see [deleted to preserve blind review]

¹¹ Martin Heidegger, *Vom Wesen der Menschlichen Freiheit: Einleitung in die Philosophie*. Gesamtausgabe Bd. 31, ed. Hartmut Tietjen (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1982), 139-298.

¹² Kant, *Groundwork*, 80.

¹³ Summing up his argument in the Second Part of *Vom Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit* (303), Heidegger writes: “Freiheit ist die Bedingung der Möglichkeit der Offenbarkeit des Seins von Seienden, des Seinsverständnis.” But if that is so, then freedom *cannot* be thought in terms of causality. “Eine Seinsbestimmung unter anderen aber ist die Kausalität. Kausalität gründet in der Freiheit. Das Problem der Kausalität ist ein Problem der Freiheit und nicht umgekehrt.”

cannot appeal to the idea of law as a criterion for determining which maxims are morally impermissible. Nevertheless the Care-structure does entail something akin to Kant's idea that agency involves acting in light of, and not merely in accord with, reasons – namely, Dasein's essential being-guilty. Though it yields no test for the morality of one's maxim, it does yield something like a moral (that is to say, universal) obligation.

To have Care as one's being – to be an issue for oneself – means to see things in normative terms, to understand one's factic inclinations in relation to the very idea of “what is best” (as Plato would say), of better and worse. This is to treat them as only *potentially* my reasons – that is, to treat them as normative reasons rather than causes. But Dasein is essentially *Mitsein*, and thus to be responsible is *equiprimordially* to be *answerable* (*ver-antwort-lich*) to others, accountable to them. The constitutive horizon of responsibility – in which alone I can be I-myself – thus includes among its “references” *every other* Dasein, all those to whom I am accountable, i.e., all those who may call upon me to justify or give an account of myself. Thus to be I-myself is to be under an *obligation* to offer reasons to others for what I do. My “nature” as Care entails a moral obligation insofar as taking-over-being-a-ground obliges me to take up the practice of giving and asking for reasons, a kind of meta-practice that belongs among the norms of *all particular* practical identities.

Phronesis always remain tied to concrete practical identities, since these alone provide the necessary “ends” or standards of success or failure. And on Heidegger's view, morally practical reasoning is also tied to such identities, since moral responsibility cannot be defined in terms of reason or law as the criterion for a concrete, but identity-transcending, universal good. Because Dasein is always an issue for itself, such goods are also always at issue. Thus, ontologically considered, practical rationality is essentially practical *reasoning* – that is, the dialogical practice of offering reasons to others for what I do and demanding the same from them. What such reasoning “should” find to be the right thing to do cannot be determined in advance by any theory but depends on *actual* argumentation.¹⁴ What it means to be a good father, friend, or carpenter – and so also what it means to be a good person, morally good – is always the substance of “the conversation that we ourselves are.” Nevertheless, we do have something like an moral obligation to engage in practical reason-giving, since that is an essential part of what it means to be a social creature who can say “I.”

¹⁴ On this point, compare Habermas, “Discourse Ethics: Notes on a Program of Philosophical Justification,” in *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*, tr. Christian Lenhardt and Shierry Weber Nicholsen (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1999), 42-115.

Commentary on Steven Crowell's
 "Agency, Morality, and the Essential Consciencelessness of Action"

Lawrence J. Hatab
 Old Dominion University

I want to thank Steven for his excellent paper, which I commend for attempting to address questions in ethics drawn from Heidegger's thought—not in the manner of some "original ethics" expressive of Heidegger's ontological meditations, but specific questions in moral philosophy, in this case agency. My own work has likewise tried to think through standard questions in moral philosophy in the light of Heidegger's phenomenology—not by simply locating these questions in Heidegger's texts, but by revising how such questions are posed and articulated, in a manner consistent with Heidegger's critique of modern epistemology and ontology. In my commentary I will be selective and focus on a few of the important contributions in Steven's paper, and then discuss some questions I have about his treatment.

Steven offers us significant modifications of a familiar reading of *Being and Time*, that Division I represents an existential-phenomenological analysis of Aristotle's concepts of *poiesis* and *technē*, and Division II that of *praxis* and *phronēsis*. While there is much to be said for such a reading, I have found it somewhat forced, and something of a domestication of the text. In any case, Steven helps us be wary of dividing the Divisions apart in this way and of a supposed identification of conscience and *phronēsis*. Steven persuaded me that "conscience set in motion" is different from an identification with *phronēsis*, and this difference helps makes more sense of Heidegger's notorious claim that factual taking-action in a moral sense is "conscienceless."

The key to Steven's analysis is that the ontological and the ontical, as well as authenticity and inauthenticity, are not separate spheres. The possibility of authenticity—arising out of anxious being-toward-death and conscience—involves a "modification" of everyday being-in-the-world, rather than some "new content" (BT, 344: MR trans.). *Das man*, which I have called Dasein's "first world" of socialization, is essential to Dasein's existential constitution (BT, 168). Authenticity is the individuated deliverance from the tranquil self-evidence of Dasein's world involvements, which are now seen as finite *possibilities* that must be taken over *as* finite, as informed by anxious being-toward-death (see BT, 378).

Along these lines, Steven moves to bridge the supposed divide between *phronēsis* and *technē*, ethical *praxis* and productive *poiesis*, by showing that Dasein's world involvements and the meaning of its "for the sake of" cannot be understood as mere practical tasks but as "normatively ordered relations" (p. 2), measured by appropriate and inappropriate, better and worse performance. I agree that at the very least this is implicit in Division I, and Steven does well to remind us that Dasein's potentiality-for-being is not mere logical possibility but an *ability*, a capacity to act in a certain way (captured, I would add, in the Greek word *dunamis*). The sphere of *das Man*, therefore, is a normatively ordered set of practices that guides Dasein's everyday being-in-the-world. I think Steven could have done more to sort out the difference between practical norms, as in the case of an auto mechanic, and ethical norms, as in the case of a father—perhaps in the light of Aristotle's distinction between external production and moral virtue, even though there can be some overlap between being a mechanic and a father. This might help me better understand what Steven means by one's "practical identity," by which I'm sure Steven means a "who" rather than a "what."

Steven concludes that authenticity in Division II should not be taken to involve *praxis* as opposed to *poiesis*, since both are operative in Division I. Moreover, the normative element of being-in-the-world opens up the possibility of focusing on the ethical sense of *phronēsis* in relation to everyday norms, especially given the ethical resonances in Heidegger's concepts of guilt and conscience. Yet here the seeming detachment of ontological conscience from ethical action needs to be addressed. Steven is ingenious, I think, in trying to work out what *phronēsis* as "conscience set in motion" might mean—staying true to Heidegger's insistence that taking-action is conscienceless, while insisting himself that there must still be some *relation* between conscience and taking-action. The suggestion is that authentic conscience "exceeds" *praxis*, not in the sense of having nothing to do with normative action, but as the possibility of being "beholden" to norms in the first place. In this way, authenticity "uncovers the ground of a distinctly moral obligation" (p. 4).

Steven provides an intriguing way in which ontological conscience and guilt, as an existential "breakdown" by force of *Angst* and death, can be connected to the "consciencelessness" of moral action in terms of the *possibility* of being moral, as choosing the *ability* for moral choice, "something I must *try* to be" (p. 8). It is existential breakdown that transforms moral action from inauthentic convention to authentic self-responsibility. In this way Steven is able to show how authenticity is not a sheer departure from inauthentic norms but a transparent taking-over of these norms *as* possibilities that accordingly must be chosen

rather than presumed. Such is the character of a *commitment* to norms that precedes, and therefore cannot be grounded in, rational deliberation (p. 11).

Here are two questions I have for Steven. First, I got the sense that authenticity means little more than appropriating the norms inherited from *das Man*. Perhaps there are other lines thinking on this within Steven's overall project. But I take authenticity to also involve some tension between conventional social norms and authentic individuation. I locate at least four ways in which authenticity can be a modification of the inherited social world (with due references from BT): Dasein's authenticity can mean 1) an *owning*, an appropriating as one's "own" (*eigen*) a tradition that has been handed down, but no longer simply *as* handed down (BT, 435); 2) an *unmasking* of the concealments, disguises, and superficialities that block a deeper understanding of cultural forces and origins (BT, 167, 443); 3) an *innovating*, a discovery of new possibilities that are impeded by inauthentic immersion in the actual and the commonplace (BT, 239); and 4) an *interrogating* of one's inheritance to varying degrees, challenging the normalizing tendency to suppress "new inquiry" and "disputation" (BT, 213). Steven's analysis seems to fit well the sense of owning, but the other senses need to be brought in as well, I think. I would imagine that Steven agrees.

I take authentic action to be characterized by a certain openness and instability, even though it is always situated and responsive as being-in-the-world—with respect to which Heidegger says that the individuated indefiniteness of conscience does not indicate a "free-floating call from which nothing ensues," which he calls an "impossible fiction" (BT, 323-24). Yet here Heidegger also says that conscience, *as* indefinite, cannot refer to something "universally binding." In this regard I note two occasions in Steven's paper where he seems to link his sense of moral obligation arising out of conscience with universality (pp. 11, 14). What is meant by universality here, and how can it be drawn from Heidegger's text?

My second questions concerns the way in which "justifying reasons" functions in Steven's analysis. I assume that he is trying to link a normative responsibility drawn from Heidegger with familiar discursive standards in moral philosophy, but I am not sure what kind of reasoning is meant here; and for me this notion seemed to enter the discussion abruptly, with no evident connection with the nuanced reading of Heidegger's account of conscience, guilt, and being a ground. Even with the different sense of *Grund* in German, I do not see how reasoning applies here. In a footnote (6) Steven indicates a certain limit to reasoning in moral action, but the main text gives it prominence, and I need help in seeing how this is to be drawn from BT. And I want to press Steven a little further on his qualifying footnote.

Dasein's normal mode of being-in-the-world is not grounded in reflection, but inhabitive practices infused with meaning that is tacit until a certain disruption brings the meaning into view. Reason-giving normally arises in such a context, as a response to someone's interrogation that is prompted by some disruption or blockage of sense. Reason-giving, therefore, emerges out of a field of "unreasoned" inhabitive practice and cannot therefore be fundamental to being-in-the-world. Traditional philosophy, in the main, turns this around and makes reason-giving fundamental, so that normal functioning can appear problematic (e.g., skepticism) or deficient (e.g., "folk psychology"). One dramatic feature of Heidegger's phenomenology is that philosophical reflection is drawn *from* normal, already functioning being-in-the-world, not as a foil but as the soil of reflection (cf. formal indication); and reflection is not meant to break free from, or lose sight, that ground. This is one reason why Heidegger's thought can be so frustrating to many philosophical readers.

My work on ethics by way of Heidegger has tried to emphasize this back-ground scenario by showing how moral theories and rational justification generally arrive "too late" in thinking about ethics. As I put it, being-ethical-in-the-world shows how we are *already* ethical, all the way down; from childhood on, various norms are always informing our lives, usually in unreflective, inhabitive ways. When moral philosophy presumes to "ground" ethics in reflective descriptions and measures, it misses this existential origin and even how one is ethical *after* reflection. Steven's analysis certainly can provide the existential setting for how reason-giving arises out of disruption. Yet I would like to know how central reason-giving is in his sense of authentic moral action. Let me draw from a section of my book, *Ethics and Finitude*, to shape the point of my question to Steven.

Not all ethical endeavors can be captured by theoretical models that measure action in terms of rational principles and inferential decision procedures. A clear example would be parent-child relations. Parental obligations to children can be seen as simply *given* in a situation that calls for appropriate responses. This is not to say that reasoning procedures never figure in such a setting. It is simply to say that at a certain level being a parent is being *thrown* in and amidst a situation that *calls* for care (or cries for care). Heideggerian phenomenology is able to articulate the ekstatic, situational, affective, environmental responsiveness that marks most parents' experience. The ethical force is simply *there* in the child's cry and fragile need, and parents dwell *in* that need. A parent is certainly "free" to neglect, abuse, or abandon a child, but such freedom can easily be deemed unethical, even inauthentic, as the fracturing and disowning of a thrown responsibility.

The notion of thrownness, I think, can provide an important ethical configuration for moral philosophy, which has been dominated by subject-based reason even in theories that aim to construct compelling obligations. Thrownness suggests certain situations that exhibit a presumption of ethical obligation, there in the existential environment, claiming the self, not rationally (re)constructed by the self. The task would be to identify situations that might exhibit intrinsic obligations—being a parent, a spouse, a friend, a teacher, an employer, and so on—obligations that are contextually appropriate and that claim a person simply by virtue of inhabiting the situation. The obligations appropriate to such situations can be illuminated by considering the intrinsic elements of trust granted us by others in these circumstances. Being a parent, a teacher, or a spouse elicits presumptive expectations and therefore trust from others that we will treat them in a certain way. When such trust is violated there is commonly an automatic disappointment that opens the space for moral assessment and lays out the social structure of obligations intrinsic to these circumstances.

In modern moral philosophy, usually one is obligated to confront moral skepticism before one can proceed. Ethics is certainly more open than certain other spheres, and contingency is often presumed at the start. It is important, however, to spotlight what I call inhabitive modes of ethical truth so as not to overestimate the contingency of ethical existence. Just as we should not overstate the extent of agreement and stability in scientific thinking, we should not overstate the degree of disagreement in ethics, despite the obvious range of variations and disputes in the moral sphere. From a pedagogical standpoint, although ethical controversies are an excellent setting for cultivating critical thinking skills, and although there is certainly much disagreement and controversy in ethical matters, students are misled when we concentrate primarily on dilemmas and disputes in moral considerations or on the shortcomings of moral paradigms. We should at least start with areas of agreement (for example, all students agree that they should be graded fairly) before we take up controversies, so as to avoid the impression (very common among students) that moral questions are completely undecidable. Stressing "lifeboat" scenarios, for example, is like beginning physics instruction with the uncertainty principle or the wave-particle paradox. Questioning and reason-giving are essential to moral philosophy and much of ethical life, but not all the way down. "Why is my wife sick?" is an appropriate question calling for reasons. So is "How should I take care of my wife?" But "Why should I take care of my wife?" is, to paraphrase Bernard Williams, one question too many.

The Necessity of Distress and the Abandonment of Being
in Heidegger's *Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis)*

Christopher Yates

Boston College

In the portion of his *Contributions to Philosophy (From Enowning)*¹ which sounds forth the *Grounding* of the truth of Beyng, Martin Heidegger comes to a direct point: “In the face of the growing desolation and misshaping of philosophy, something lasting and essential would be gained if one succeeded in asking the question of truth in the right way and out of its necessity” (*Contributions*, 248). Truth’s grounding necessity, that is, is intrinsic to philosophy’s very possibility. In desolation, however, this necessity is forgotten. Can it be restored to ‘asking’? Heidegger finds his answer in what would seem an unlikely resource – “the distress [*Not*] of the abandonment by being” (248).²

In this paper I demonstrate how the distress of the abandonment of being (*Seinsverlasseneit*) displaces human beings from out of the established determinability of man and truth into the crisis and possibility of the between. Oriented by §55 of *Contributions*, and drawing upon Heidegger’s *Basic Questions of Philosophy*³ (1937-38) and *On the Essence of Truth* (1930)⁴, I contend that the ‘depth’ of distress in the first beginning gives distress the essential necessity which the ‘abandonment’ of being lacks in a nevertheless compelling (*nötigend*) way. The ‘suffering’ of metaphysical wonder and the ‘anxiety’ of Dasein are indicative of distress, but cannot accomplish its unconcealing work. For the epochal distress to commence the echo (*Anklang*) of the originary distress, thinking must recognize in

¹ Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy (From Enowning)*, trans. Parvis Emad and Kenneth Maly (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1999). German edition: *Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis)*, ed. F.-W. von Herrmann, Gesamtausgabe, vol. 65 (Frankfurt a.M.: Klostermann, 1989). Hereafter *Contributions*. For the sake of clarity, I have altered certain terms and phrases of the Emad and Maly translation. This is indicated by the placement of an asterisk (*) in front of the alteration. Most commonly this will mean “essential sway” is rendered as “happening,” “be-ing” as “Beyng,” “enownment” as “Ereignis,” and “playing-forth” as “passing.”

² This distressing necessity must also, it is important to note, sustain a “pressing mindfulness” that holds open “a way to the truth of *Beyng [*Seyn*]” from the “ground up” (246).

³ M. Heidegger. *Basic Questions of Philosophy: Selected ‘Problems’ of ‘Logic,’* trans. Richard Rojcewicz and Andre Shuwer (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994). This material first appeared in a 1937-1938 lecture course. Hereafter *BQP*. When *BQP* speaks of “Being” it is appropriate to hear what *Contributions* terms “Beyng [*Seyn*],” though I have not altered the translation.

⁴ M. Heidegger. *On the Essence of Truth*, trans. John Sallis in *Martin Heidegger: Pathmarks*, ed. William McNeill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998 (1930)). Hereafter *OET*.

machination's (*Machenschaft*) willful concealment the self-concealment of Beyng. The distress of a lack of distress must then sound this hint of the truth of Beyng in order to transform the guiding question (*Leitfrage*) of beingness (*Seiendheit*) into the grounding 'mindfulness' of Da-sein. I argue that the unconcealment Heidegger performs in his own inquiry mirrors and manifests the unconcealing work (*Unverborgenheit*) distress itself accomplishes as an abiding necessity for philosophy.

I. Original Soundings: Beyond 'Wonder' and 'Anxiety'

Though "distress" appears in the titles of only three of Heidegger's sections in this work (§§17, 53, 60), it moves prominently through the six 'fugal' jointures. Indeed, from §2 to §272 it clears a path for thinking what is "ownmost" to man from within the happening of Beyng (*Seyn*) (346). In the *Echo* distress "commences from its depth as lack of distress" (80); in the *Passing* its 'ownmost' character is exhibited as the "knowing awareness" necessary for preparing the other beginning (130); in the *Leap* it pairs with the necessity of a "decision" concerning the thrown ground of Da-sein (169); in the *Grounding* it remains as a safeguard against the reduction of Ereignis to "merely a name" (246); and in *The Last God* the distressing "first burst of the storm into Da-sein" (290) tremors again in the "passing of god" and potential restoration of beings (*Seiendes*) within Beyng. Whatever it is, and for whatever reasons it compels, the experience of distress furnishes a "hint" (69) and a "throw" (230), a 'breaking out' (218) of Da-sein from the terrain of thinking truth by way of correctness and assertion (246) to an ongoing "decision" (69) about the truth of Beyng.

These movements suggest that the answer to the question, "How is this [echo of the happening of Beyng] to be experienced?" (75), obtains in the unconcealing soundings of distress. Distress, to be sure, "must still be *experienced*" (19).⁵ This need is derivative of the fact that Da-sein is a "*crisis*." It is at once "the name for the manner and way in which beings are *actually* beings [in metaphysics]," and the ground of a "future humanness" (208-209). The encroachment of metaphysics means the larger possibility of Ereignis is beset by a certain anxiety: "will beings join the jointure of *Beyng?"⁶

⁵ Heidegger continues: "And what if man has become so hardened against this distress and, as it seems, is as stubborn as ever? Then those must come who awaken, who in the end maintain that they have discovered distress because they know that they *suffer* distress. (*Contributions*, 19).

⁶ The entry of man into being-history, says Heidegger, "is unpredictable and independent of all progress or decline of 'culture,' as long as 'culture' itself means consolidating the abandonment of beings by being..." (*Contributions*, 161-162). To offset this predicament, Da-sein must effect a ground (*Grund*) for "deciding the direction and scope of projecting-open" (163). All beings must be "sacrificed to *Beyng," from which they "first receive their truth."

In order to investigate the situational and original needs that carry forward the echo of the truth of Beyng in a compelling distress let us consider the descriptive analysis with which Heidegger begins §55 of *Contributions*.

The *echo* of the truth of *Beyng and its *happening itself comes from within the distress of the forgottenness of being. This distress commences from its depth as lack of distress. *Forgottenness of being* is not aware of itself; it presumes to be at home with ‘beings’ and with what is ‘actual,’ ‘true’ to ‘life,’ and certain of ‘lived-experience.’ For it only knows beings. But in this way of the presencing of beings, beings are abandoned by being. *Abandonment of being* is the ground of the forgottenness of being. But abandonment of beings by being sustains the illusion that beings are now ready to be handled and used, not needing anything else. But abandonment of *Beyng is debarring and warding off of *Ereignis. With the unfolding of the forgottenness of *Beyng—in which the other beginning and thus also *Beyng resonates—the echo must resonate and commence from within the abandonment of *Beyng. (*Contributions*, §55, p.80).

The first and last sentences in this selection speak of an accomplishment which may only be understood after elucidating the interrelated meanings of ‘depth,’ ‘forgottenness,’ ‘abandonment,’ ‘lack,’ and ‘illusion.’ To begin, if the echo arises from distress, the *depth* which provides this ‘commencement’ must first be explored.

In the period in which the thought of *Contributions* takes shape (1936-1938) distress does not enter into Heidegger’s discourse simply as a diagnostic of thinking’s situation under machination. Distress is there at the outset of the first beginning in an original and compelling way: philosophical thinking requires a time-space site for questioning. According to Heidegger’s 1937-38 lecture course, *Basic Questions of Philosophy*, the distress is that of “not knowing the way out or the way in” to this ungrounded, though essential, space where being and non-being await determination. Though man first arises out of this distress, it is markedly a distress *of Being* – a distress pertaining “to the truth of Being itself” and not to man, properly speaking (*BQP*, 132-133).⁷ Man is transported into a “basic relation to beings as such” where beings as a whole, through *wonder*, “can be determined in their beingness” (134). At the same time, man’s need to think the question of the Being of beings, already an “essentially

If this displacement into Beyng is vulnerable to “random caprice,” safe passage must, again, be assured by an utmost necessity, a distress (161,163).

⁷ These two sides of distress anticipate the reciprocal ‘need’ between Beyng and man which will assume greater importance in preparation for the *Leap* (*Sprung*): “The relation of Da-sein to *Beyng belongs in the *happening of Beyng itself. This can also be said as follows: *Beyng needs Da-sein and does not *happen at all without this *Ereignis” (*Contributions*, 179).

misleading” question (*OET*, 151), is bound up in a transformation of the essence (*Wesen*) of truth.

The basic disposition is not, however, simply wonder in the sense of θαυμάζειν (*BQP*, 135). Distinct from mere ‘curiosity’ concerning the ‘unusual’ (according to amazement, admiration, and astonishment, 143), wonder displaces man into a specific perception of beings.⁸ But wonder does not satisfy the instigating distress. There is no “way out or way in,” but rather a movement of man “before and into the unusualness of everything in its usualness.” The result is an experience Heidegger describes as “essentially suffering” (150-151).⁹ Suffering (*Leiden*) arises in what becomes the necessary correspondence between the entity that questioning grasps (*fassen*, *begreifen*) and the thinker who, in grasping, is constrained to “the pure acknowledgment of the unconcealedness of beings” (153).

Readers of Heidegger might wonder whether this ‘suffering’ may be likened to the ‘anxiety’ (*Angst*) of Dasein in *Being and Time*¹⁰, as though anxiety were a factual offshoot of the original, though unrealized, displacing distress. Though this is not entirely the case, what unites the anxiety of *Being and Time*, the suffering of *Basic Questions*, and the abandonment of *Contributions* is the existence of a compelling necessity which drives thinking toward a more originary question. In the later texts Heidegger’s interest lies not in the possibilities for authentic being-in-the-world, but in these possibilities as transformed into the larger possibility of a crossing into inceptual (*anfänglich*) thinking.¹¹ Dasein’s being-in-the-world turns into Dasein’s being in the ‘between’ of two beginnings. Distress will open up the question of the meaning of being onto the question of the truth of Being (*Contributions*, 20). *Being and Time*’s ‘forgetfulness’ and *Basic Questions*’ ‘suffering,’ require the more originary predicament of ‘lack’ that characterizes the crisis of Da-sein. This is perhaps one reason why Heidegger describes *Being and Time* as a “prelude” to the enactment of *Echo* and *Passing* (*Vorbeigang*) (154). The distress of the abandonment of being will pose the meaning, the ‘depth,’ of Being’s original distress, in a more originary way.

⁸ Wonder, that is, displaces man into “the realm where the most usual, yet still as such unthought (beings), are established in their most proper unusualness, namely the one of their Being, and where beings as such then become the most worthy of questioning” (*BQP*, 147).

⁹ Such as in the case of Hölderlin’s later poetry. See *BQP*, 151-152.

¹⁰ M. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1962 (1926)). Hereafter *BT*.

¹¹ The “selfhood” or “self-being” of *Contributions* will be the opening and sheltering of “the most intimate belongingness” to the “enstriving of *Ereignis” (*Contributions*, 225-226).

II. Structuring Abandonment: The Transformation of Truth

If the suffering of wonder in the first beginning and the forgetfulness of the question of the meaning of being described in *Being and Time* exhibit a detachment from distress in its instigating depth, it remains to consider in greater detail the manner in which metaphysics grows deaf to this depth in its very approach to truth. Returning to §55 of *Contributions*, the nature of what Heidegger terms *forgottenness* is positioned within the first beginning's approach to thinking the essence of truth according to the beingness (*Seiendheit*) of beings. As he elsewhere explains:

In the *first beginning* truth (as unconcealment) is a mark of beings as such; and, according to the transformation of truth to correctness of assertion, 'truth' becomes a determination of beings as they are transformed to objectness. (Truth as correctness of judgment, 'objectivity,' 'actuality,'—'being' of beings.) (*Contributions*, §91, p.130)

Basic Questions clearly outlines this same point according to the relationship between Τέχνη, Φύσις, and ἀλήθεια, focusing it as a problem of thinking beings as 'constant presence' (*bestandige Anwesenheit*). The development occurs in the following way.

First, as a result of the displacement brought on by the basic disposition of wonder, man finds himself before beings as beings, and must there "hold fast" to this transformation according to an "acknowledgment" that is itself sustained within the limit of "questioning what beings as such are" (*BQP*, 150). What/how does this questioning intend? Heidegger makes an important distinction: primordial questioning does not jettison the unusualness of beings, but adheres to this unusualness as it belongs to the unconcealing (ἀλήθεια) emergence of beings. The basic disposition remains compelled, but the driving necessity now operates in the questioning of beings. "To sustain the basic disposition," Heidegger explains, "means to *carry out* the necessity of such questioning, toward which the not knowing the way out or the way in compels us" (151). Second, the 'holding-fast' to displacement is paralleled by a resulting 'grasping' of beings. The grasping requires a corroboration of beings, as Φύσις, and beings in ἀλήθεια. But this already implies a perception grounded in something other to Φύσις. Grasping questioning releases, yet grasps, beings. In this way Τέχνη, as knowledge, is "know-how in the processes against beings (and in the encounter with beings), i.e., against Φύσις" (154).¹²

The famous result of these transformations is that ἀλήθεια comes to be thought as "correctness" (155). Correctness implies a determinative standard for the grasping of beings, and this standard takes shape according to "ideas." The heart of the problem, which will be

¹² See *Contributions*, §97.

underscored in our discussion of machination, is this: “The grasping becomes a sort of know-how with regard to the ideas, and that requires a constant assimilation to them” (156).¹³ In *On the Essence of Truth* this standardization leads to the “marked domination of common sense” (OET, 152); thinkers persist in the use of standards “yet without considering either the ground for taking up standards or the essence of what gives the standard” (149).¹⁴ As feared, the original and motivating necessity is lost, just as the original essence of ἀλήθεια is lost – “Beings become. . . objects of representations conforming to them” (BQP, 156).¹⁵ If, then, Τέχνη’s grasping approach to the truth of beings has lapsed into a privileging of beingness (as standard) at the expense of beings, and correctness has overwhelmed ἀλήθεια, we see that beings can no longer point to Being.¹⁶ Together, these results of forgottenness spell a departure from the “primordial need” (155) exhibited in the depth of distress.

A third and pivotal step is now required to see how this forgottenness is grounded in the *abandonment* of being. What was wondrous for the Greeks, the Being of beings, has become all too obvious and common in the “contrivances” of “lived experiences” (a point taken up in the following section). Being is abandoned on the level of inquiry into beings.¹⁷ And yet, right away it must be noted that this predicament might also be recast historically as an abandonment enacted by Being itself. Heidegger states:

The forgottenness of Being dominates, i.e., it determines our relation to beings, so that even beings, that they are and what they are, remain a matter of indifference. It is almost as if beings have been abandoned by Being, and we are heedless of it. (BQP, 159)

Considered henceforth as a predicament for the *truth* of Being itself, this abandonment appears more determinate. “Beings *are*,” says Heidegger, “but the Being of beings and the truth of Being and consequently the Being of truth are denied to beings. . . they remain abandoned by

¹³ In *Contributions* Heidegger specifies the problem of this predominance of ideas in relation to ἀλήθεια: “ιδέα is that interpretation of ἀλήθεια by which the later determination of beingness as objectness is prepared and the question of ἀλήθεια as such is necessarily cut off from the whole history of Western philosophy” (*Contributions*, 145).

¹⁴ In *Contributions* Heidegger sounds the same concern: “Truth as correctness is not capable of recognizing and grounding its own full scope. It helps itself by raising itself to the unconditioned and by dominating everything in order that it does not need the ground (so it seems)” (*Contributions*, 140).

¹⁵ As questioning runs on the track of Τέχνη, so to speak, ἀλήθεια lapses into “the correctness of representations and procedures” (BQP, 156).

¹⁶ This point is sharpened and protested in *Contributions*: “We can never understand a being through explanation and deduction from other beings. A being can only be known in terms of its grounding in the truth of *Beyng” (*Contributions*, 164).

¹⁷ This abandonment, to be sure, not only emerges according to man’s thinking and questioning, but happens to man as the singular being standing in the space of knowing. Says Heidegger, “The abandonment of *Beyng happens to beings, indeed to beings in the whole, and thus also and precisely to that being which as man stands in the midst of beings and thereby forgets their *Beyng” (*Contributions*, 81).

Being and left to themselves” (159). In *Contributions* Heidegger suggests that this is to be thought as an internal division: “beings are abandoned by *Beyng, which belongs to them and them alone” (*Contributions*, 80). The activity which leads to forgottenness and abandonment will, as we will see, correspond to a possibility on the side of Beyng: “*Beyng’s ability to be *forgotten* becomes the principle” (236). For the moment it is enough to note that, insofar as the original distress was the need for a time-space site of questioning being, and yet indifference has come to overrun this point of departure, Being must withdraw from the scene.

In sum, as a predicament stemming from the transformation of truth, there is on the side of the epochal situation of forgottenness the event of abandonment. More mysteriously still, Beyng appears to conceal its truth from questioning in an essential way. Mediating these two movements is the relationship between the mode of questioning and the essence of ἀλήθεια. Just as the distress which gave rise to philosophy (“of not knowing the way out or the way in,” *BQP*, 132) belonged simultaneously to Being and to thinking, the distress resounding in the event of abandonment itself has “no time-space at all” (*Contributions*, 87). The concealment obtaining in Τέχνη’s resulting forgottenness “deprives ἀλήθεια of disclosure” (*OET*, 148).

Having thus come to this multi-faceted event of/by being where the necessity of distress will take on a more robust and productive shape, the peculiar feature of Heidegger’s own style of ‘unconcealing’ discourse becomes all the more apparent. His inquiry does not take the movement of primordial questioning or the transformations in the essence of truth to be a linear, cause/effect passage. Rather, his rigorous thinking toward unconcealments in this history of Beyng opens his thought to possibilities of a renewed grounding even in a situation as apparently stark as the abandonment of beings. And it is here that we gain a sense of the primary meaning of ‘turn’ (*Kehre*) for Heidegger. There is a thrust and a counter-thrust (*BQP*, 159); turning and counter turning [*Widerkehr*] (*Contributions*, 287). The very superlative nature of this abandonment may in fact indicate that in it there lies concealed an “event,” a “most hidden and most proper ground” for a necessity through which Being and its truth may, ultimately, stand ready should a “leap into another knowledge” (*BQP*, 161) be enacted. This is why the abandonment of being “must be experienced as the basic event of our history and be elevated into a knowing awareness that shapes and guides” (*Contributions*, 78). It is the event that commences the echo. How, then, is this event experienced?

III. Unlikely Possibilities: The Will of Machination and the Lack of Distress

Thus far I have shown how the *depth* of distress in the first beginning centered on thinking's inceptual need for a 'way in' to questioning beings, and the truth of Beyng's essential need of the same. Rendering the abandonment of being according to the transformation of truth has illuminated the structure and impetus for distress. What remains is to address more pointedly the being of this distress and the character of Beyng itself in truth's transformation. How, precisely, are these transformations *distressing*? What is the *illusion* through which *lived-experience* sustains a *lack* of distress? How does the distress of a lack of distress nevertheless sound the echo of the truth of Beyng from within the very abandonment of Beyng. In sum, how does a dire situation *turn* into an essential awakening for philosophy?

From the immediacy of thinking's situation resulting from the first beginning, what is distressing is that the forgottenness and abandonment have prevailed because questioning is no longer interested in what is ownmost to truth and Beyng. As noted, beings are thought in terms of 'constant presence' (cf. *Contributions* §61). Worse, the lack of questioning is buttressed by an abundance of confidence in the "will" for "making" (*Contributions*, 76). He describes this "epoch" as a time in which "technicity" ("the priority of the machinational, of the rules for measuring and of procedure vis-à-vis what is absorbed and affected by it") "necessarily assumes mastery" (236). Whether it be manifested in "giganticism," "institutions," or Christianity (79-80), machination admits no limit.¹⁸ The lack of distress is the greatest "where self-certainty has become unsurpassable, where everything is held to be calculable" (87). Thus thought as machination, the abandonment of being is not only an effect of setting beings back against the standard of beingness, but is *willful* (cf. §61, p89). What is ownmost to truth is '*long-hidden*'; man's making, rather than questioning, obfuscates the possibilities for openness. The situation is not, initially, promising: "How can distress be effected *as* distress? Must one not let the truth of *Beyng *light up* – but what for? Who among the distressless ones is capable of *seeing*? Is there ever a way out of such a distress – a distress which constantly denies itself as distress?" (83, my emphasis).¹⁹ The will to make is also a will to conceal, and in the contrivances of lived-experience there is no room left for a distressing will to 'get out.'

¹⁸ He states: "Within machination there is nothing question-worthy, nothing that could be esteemed through enactment of questioning as such, simply esteemed and thus *lit up* and elevated into truth" (*Contributions*, 76, my emphasis).

¹⁹ In a telling way F. Nietzsche, for all of his distress, does not satisfy this need. "Even when Nietzsche – as the thinker who 'goes over to' – is finally twisted out of Platonism *and* its overcoming, no inquiry into the truth of *Beyng and into what is ownmost to truth is made – no inquiry that is originary and overcoming." (*Contributions*, 153).

If the abandonment of being is nevertheless also an abandonment by Beyng, then is the willful concealment in machination paralleled by a willful withdrawal (*Entzug*) of Beyng? If so, for what purpose would distress remain compelling? How could the echo of the truth of Beyng remain necessary? But the parallel cannot be direct. The will of machination is content with concealment, whereas the withdrawal of Beyng shelters in concealment an abiding unconcealment. In fact, Beyng shelters this possibility within machination's very concealment. We know this because machination's withdrawal from Beyng is grounded in Beyng's own withdrawal; the difference is that the latter carries possibilities the former can no longer see. What machination hides Beyng shelters as a held-back concealment.²⁰ This is precisely the moment where distress becomes imperative, where it must sound a possibility that cannot be heard. Distress must be 'effected' for the unconcealment to occur, for something of Beyng's truth to resonate in the epoch of abandonment. "The utmost *happening of Beyng" will require "the innermost distress of abandonment by being" (287). To understand the motion Heidegger gives to these distinctions more must be said about the character of the *lack* – how it is distressing from the side of the original distress, and from the side of what must become Da-sein's mindfulness in preparing for the crossing.

What is distressing about the lack of distress and, conversely, what finally enables machination to prevail as lived-experience, is that "knowing awareness" (130) has been *lost*. This, in turn, is a loss of the recognition that "actual self-being happens by way of a grounding-beyond-oneself, which requires the grounding of the grounding-space and its time." (87). As such, this loss is also a loss of what should have been a compelling need for philosophy. As noted, the instigating necessity of "not knowing the way out or the way in" to the ungrounded "between" space (where being and non-being await determination) was threaded to "to the truth of Being itself" (*BQP*, 132-133). In this sense the distress of a lack of distress is vital not only as a way out of machination, but as a recovery (a resounding we might say) of the ownmost distress which called for knowing awareness. The original necessity would then persist through distress to the thrust into the other beginning. Put differently, if the need for knowing awareness was an instigating necessity in philosophy's origins, it must also come to light in distress as the renewal of the grounding question.²¹

²⁰ Without an openness for its truth, and without even a site for the distress which might recall Being's happening in this openness, Being must maintain in un-disclosedness what is proper to the essence of truth (*OET*, 148).

²¹ By the same token, just as there was an original 'displacement' of man in the first beginning, a subsequent and restorative displacement is envisioned for Da-sein by way of the mindfulness of distress. As Heidegger states in

Here the possibility I have signaled in the comparison between machination's concealment and Beyng's self-concealment is exhibited as a remarkable turn (*Kehre*). Even though it harbors the concealment of Beyng in its reliance on the happening of beingness, machination nevertheless "yields a faint hint of the truth of [Beyng] itself," a hint that we "know too little of" (88-89). The condition of possibility for this hint is, according to *On the Essence of Truth*, already there in concealment conceived as a "*fundamental occurrence*" (OET, 149). Thus, the concealment machination makes willful, if experienced from a posture of distress, proves to be a Trojan horse of sorts for the truth of Beyng to return to the fore. As Heidegger states, "the concealing of what is concealed belong[s] to the originary essence of truth" (151). Being is "in its essence self-concealing" (BQP, 163).

An essential unconcealment must, of course, be approached from the same horizon that evidences its necessity – the 'questioning' which characterizes lived-experience. For this hint to turn such truth out of forgottenness into the open of questioning, its mode of manifestation must be something other to the grasping 'acknowledgment,' standardization, and correctness of metaphysical truth. The question of truth, that is, "is not one we can decide by ourselves and in relation to ourselves precisely as neutral spectators." Rather, it is "the question that will one day or another betray itself as the question of who we ourselves are" (163). As a result, something "unusual and not-conceivable," says Heidegger, must "thrust" us into distress (*Contributions*, 83), something compelling enough to transform the hint of machination into an enactment of the other beginning.²² This 'something' is the echo of the truth of Beyng resounding in distress.²³ When the distress of the abandonment of beings is attuned to (heightened by) the 'not' that is Beyng's self-concealment in ἀλήθεια's openness, it prepares thinking for the transformation from the guiding question of the first beginning to the grounding question of the other. Distress is as old as Beyng, one might say, and equally vigilant. It cannot fall deaf to what abandonment hides and Beyng holds back.

the *Grounding*: "Da-sein itself is attained only by displacing humanness in the whole, and that means by being mindful of the distress of being as such and of its truth" (*Contributions*, 238-239).

²² The unusualness of this 'hint' is inspired by the strangeness of its source in Beyng behind the echo. As Heidegger remarks in the *Leap*: "Beyng becomes what is strange—and indeed in such a way that the grounding of its truth increases this strangeness and thus holds all beings of *this* *Beyng steady in the strangeness of *Beyng" (*Contributions*, 175).

²³ In *The Last God* Heidegger will restate this point, underscoring the contingency of distress in relation to the possibility of something "lasting and essential" (*Contributions*, 248) with which this paper began. "Whether *this* call of the utmost hinting, the most hidden *Ereignis, nevertheless ever happens openly, or whether the distress grows silent and all mastery stays away; whether the call is still received when it occurs; whether the leaping into Da-sein and thus turning from within its truth still becomes history—all of that decides about the future of man" (*Contributions*, 287).

We have seen that the distress some few may feel in the epoch of machination and the abandonment of being – the distress whose concealment is termed ‘lack’ – is necessary in its own historical right, but also necessary in a more originary way. The distress of the abandonment is more than a mere protest against the transformation of the essence of truth under the first beginning. As a distress of a lack of distress, it is a site in which the distress of Beyng and self-concealment of truth may be manifest in a compelling way for Da-sein. The distress of the ‘between’ of beginnings, (between the guiding and grounding questions), that is, illuminates the long-hidden distress which calls for knowing awareness, and which must now, in preparation for the crossing, be reinstated as Da-sein’s ‘mindfulness.’ The unconcealment Heidegger performs in his own inquiry is appropriate to the unconcealing work distress itself accomplishes such that the “path of thinking” may move according to “a transformation of its relatedness to Being” (*OET*, 154) manifest as knowing awareness. The success of asking the question of truth in the right way and out of its *necessity* is now possible, (though not guaranteed). Distress, in sounding its own ‘lack’ in the event of the abandonment of being, has returned to philosophy the originary resonance of its essential necessity.

Commentary on Christopher Yates’
 “The Necessity of Distress and the Abandonment of Being
 in Heidegger’s *Beiträge zur Philosophie (vom Ereignis)*”

Maureen Melnyk
 DePaul University

Christopher Yates’ paper begins with a concern that motivates much of Heidegger’s thinking, namely the way in which the philosophical enterprise has, to his mind, increasingly become degraded or deformed by inadequate and inappropriate forms of inquiry. If the necessity of truth is intrinsic to the very possibility of philosophy, then retrieving this necessity from forgottenness – itself a result of the equation of truth with correctness – will be essential to the transformation from calculative thinking to the open questioning and knowing awareness that characterize Da-sein’s ongoing decision about the truth of Beyng (114).¹ The question, then, is *how* this necessity returns to the forefront of philosophical investigation; following Heidegger’s own path of thinking, Yates argues that it is the distress of the abandonment of being [*Seinsverlassenheit*] that “displaces human beings from out of the established determinability of man and truth into the crisis and possibility of the between” (113).

It is significant that this distress opens Da-sein up to its inherent existence as both a state of crisis and one of possibility, since this conceptualization situates distress alongside a number of other concepts with similar structures, the evidence of a recurring tendency in Heidegger’s thinking. This tendency manifests as a dual-sidedness or twofoldedness, to reference a term – *Zwiespältigkeit* – used in many of Heidegger’s earlier texts, or as the simultaneous occurrence of turning and counterturning moments within one conceptual frame. Somewhat more concretely, this duality shows itself in the existence of a positive potential in the midst of an otherwise seemingly negative process or characterization, or conversely, as a kernel of impossibility or moment of failure residing at the heart of a process or concept with otherwise apparently positive resonances.² Thus, for example, as Heidegger claims and Yates notes, “The

¹ All page numbers cited in this fashion refer to the pagination used in the first electronic version of the Heidegger Circle proceedings (i.e., the version without the supplement).

² I of course use the terms negative and positive with implied scare quotes, since it is neither my intention nor entirely appropriate to what Heidegger is thinking to insert any kind of normative judgment into the analysis. Thus, while it is certainly desirable, from the standpoint of the adequacy of philosophical reflection, to depart from the thinking that characterizes machination and enter into a thinking that hears the echo of the truth of Beyng, it is simply not the case that one is morally superior to the other.

echo of the truth of Beyng and its happening itself comes from within the distress of the forgottenness of being. ... With the unfolding of the forgottenness of Beyng – in which the other beginning and thus also Beyng resonates – the echo must resonate and commence from within the abandonment of Beyng” (*Contributions* §55, p. 80). Simply put, the turning-counterturning character of Heidegger’s concepts means that the seeds of the other beginning are contained within the condition of forgottenness, just as the distress of the abandonment of being marks out both a failure to challenge the determinative standard of calculability that reigns in the first beginning, and an inherent possibility insofar as it opens the time-space needed for philosophical questioning and thus clears a path for the inception of a new mode of questioning and awareness, a future humanness (114-5), that allows philosophy to again ask the question of truth in the right way and according to its essential necessity.

From my point of view, it is the discussion of these turning and counterturning movements within the *Contributions* that constitutes the most interesting and important element of Yates’ analysis, even if they are not precisely its main focus. For starters, emphasizing the dual-sidedness of Heidegger’s concepts helps to clarify the fact that the transition from the first to the other beginning – that is, from the guiding question to the grounding question (124) – is not strictly linear, but rather is enacted via a number of attunements that each provide philosophical insights and participate in unconcealment, but which also in their own way conceal something essential about the truth of Beyng from view. Thus, for example, the distress that instigates philosophical thinking produces the basic disposition of wonder, which in turn displaces humans into a state of suffering in the face of an acknowledgment of the sheer unconcealedness of beings (116). This comportment, however, constrains thinking to the determinative question of what beings are, and thereby sidesteps altogether the more primordial unusualness that belongs to the unconcealing emergence of beings (118). As a result, the need for a thinking of the truth of Beyng, the need which motivated the initial distress, is itself lost and Beyng withdraws (119). But in this withdrawal – in this *lack* of distress – is also sheltered another unconcealment: the distress of the lack of distress re-instigates and renews the grounding question of philosophy (122). Such oscillating transformations, as Yates notes, help to clarify the meaning of ‘turn’ [*Kehre*] in Heidegger’s thinking, and also provide evidence for his departure from the progress narratives that often characterize previous philosophers, lending credence to the claim that Heidegger’s thinking is engaged in a radical confrontation with that history.

Indeed, Heidegger's use of a series of turns and counter turns within his own discourse also signals an important difference from the history of philosophy, which tends to make its arguments follow linear paths that parallel the neat structures and conceptual frameworks contained within its theories. In contrast to this *modus operandi*, Yates argues quite perceptively that "the unconcealment Heidegger performs in his own inquiry mirrors and manifests the unconcealing work [*Unverborgenheit*] distress itself accomplishes as an abiding necessity for philosophy" (114). This insight is quite astute with regard to *Contributions*, but I wonder if it couldn't be taken even further, extended to encompass a broader swath of Heidegger's thinking.

A few years after the composition of *Contributions*, for example, is the 1942 Ister lecture course [GA 53],³ in which the flows of the Rhine are described as turbulent, oscillating, turning and counterturning. In the much earlier 1928 course *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic* [GA 26],⁴ Heidegger presents his famous description of metontology, which in essence also consists of movements of turning and overturning insofar as it describes the way that an inquiry into fundamental ontology must also be an inquiry that turns back toward a self-understanding of the factual ground that makes ontology possible.⁵ While the descriptive use of turns and counterturns, and the analytic call for a turning and re-turning inquiry, may not in themselves be precise analogues to the way that the form of Heidegger's examinations in *Contributions* matches its content – to describe this ingenious philosophical move in a clichéd way – these two examples do help to support the view that there are definite continuities in the methodology and development of Heidegger's thinking and therefore a series of interrelated concerns that weave themselves into and out of those texts during the many years of his career.

Because I am at least partially sympathetic to this interpretation, I also find the very character of the turning and counterturning moves that Yates describes as the 'depth' of distress compelling, since they parallel a structure of simultaneous possibility and impossibility, what I earlier called a duality or twofoldedness [*Zwiespältigkeit*], that exists elsewhere in Heidegger's thinking both proximate to and distant from the time period of *Contributions*. That is, I appreciate the careful commentary on how distress is both the mark of a kind of failure and the

³ Heidegger, *Hölderlin's Hymn "The Ister,"* translated by William McNeill and Julia Davis (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996); translation of GA 53, *Hölderlins Hymne <<Der Ister>>*.

⁴ Heidegger, *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, translated by Michael Heim (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), hereafter MFL; translation of GA 26, *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Logik im Ausgang von Leibniz*.

⁵ See MFL pp. 156-8 for Heidegger's full discussion of metontology.

sign of a possibility, just as its existence is both a catalyst for philosophical inquiry in the first beginning, with all of the concealment that results from the prevalence of machination and calculation in that epoch, and the prompt that commences the echo of the truth of *Beyng* and opens up the possibility for knowing awareness and the inception of the other beginning. The fact that Heidegger's concepts can have this multi-faceted character is one of the things that makes his thought difficult but also radical and highly rewarding.

At the same time, however – and this constitutes my only real criticism of the paper – I am rather suspicious of the metaphor of depth that is used to describe the operations through which distress affects thinking and shapes our relation to the necessity of truth. Since this metaphor is Heidegger's and not Yates' as such – though Yates does pick up on and maintain this language as a description of how distress works – it is difficult to ascertain precisely what is intended by the term, and thus to sort out any potential misinterpretations on my part. With this in mind, the source of my discomfort with the language of depth is as follows: metaphors with these explicitly spatial connotations are often used in traditional metaphysics, especially in mind/body and similar distinctions, and are frequently tied to a conceptualization of subjectivity wherein the exterior surface determines objecthood and the existence of interior depths characterizes a robust subject. Such descriptions not only obscure the temporal dimension of being, but also reduce *Dasein* to a series of inflexible distinctions that both deny its complexity and minimize the importance of Heidegger's conceptualization of *Dasein*'s selfhood and world, which themselves constitute significant revisions of the history of philosophy. While Heidegger here is not talking about subjectivity, there is a connection between the distress of the abandonment of being and the emergence, from out of this forgottenness, of the question of who we ourselves are as active participants in the question of truth (123). Thus, I cannot help but worry that a discussion of distress in terms of depth, which has implications for how Heidegger understands human existence, risks slipping back into precisely the metaphysical framework and the view of truth that it is intended to illuminate as willfully concealing, and that it can subsequently open up to an ongoing decision about the truth of *Beyng*. If Yates' diagnoses are correct, nothing less than the future of philosophical questioning is at stake in the discussion of the distress of the abandonment of being—and so perhaps there is actually quite a lot that hangs on this analysis, making the terms in which it is conducted all the more important.

Marx and Heidegger: The Question of the Human

Christopher Ruth
Villanova University

In the “Letter on Humanism,” Heidegger suggests that the key point of convergence between Marxism and his own thinking is what Marx calls “estrangement,” which Heidegger relates to what he calls “homelessness.” The purpose of this paper is to initiate an inquiry on the basis indicated by Heidegger; that is, not to give a Heideggerian reading of Marx or vice versa, but to sketch out a problematic that takes homelessness and estrangement in the writings of Heidegger and Marx as its point of departure, and to briefly indicate what is at stake in such a problematic and where I see it going. The question of homelessness confronts us with a certain displacement of the human being and, therefore, the question of the proper place of the human, if there is such a place, is what primarily needs to be addressed.

It is difficult to make a general statement about both Marx and Heidegger without incorporating a certain bias due to word choice. However, here the word “economy” can serve as a bridge between them if we take it in a general sense as the regulative distribution of phenomena that assigns everything its place. The guiding hypothesis of this paper is that both communism and the onto-historical event that Heidegger calls the entry into *Ereignis* involve a reversal of priority between the economic and the human. For instance, Marx describes capitalism as “a system in which the worker does not employ the means of production, but the means of production employ the worker...”¹ To this is countered the following: “Let us finally imagine, for a change, an association of free men, working with the means of production held in common, and expending their many different forms of labor-power in full self-awareness as one single social labor force.”² And Heidegger indicates the following possibility in the face of the dominance of modern technology:

Such a transformation of the Enframing into the event of appropriation, by virtue of that event, would bring the appropriate recovery—appropriate, hence never to be produced by man alone—of the world of technology from its dominance back to servitude in the realm by which man reaches more truly into the event of appropriation.³

¹ *Capital I* 798

² *Ibid.*, 171

³ *Identity and Difference* 37

However, both of them reject any metaphysical humanism or essential determination that would situate the human with relation to the economic. In seeking to locate the human in Marx and Heidegger, we discover that for both the human is fundamentally dislocated. Paradoxically, however, we will see that it is this dislocation that indicates the possibility of a reversal of priority between the economic and the human.

In the preface to the first edition of Volume I of *Capital*, Marx announces that “individuals are dealt with here only in so far as they are the personifications of economic categories, the bearers of particular class-relations and interests.” The justification for this methodological exclusion of everything specific to an individual as such is as follows: “My standpoint, from which the development of the economic formation of society is viewed as a process of natural history, can less than any other make the individual responsible for relations whose creature he remains, socially speaking, however much he may subjectively raise himself above them.”⁴

Methodologically, then, the individual must be excluded from Marx’s consideration of economic categories because she has been *actually* so excluded from any meaningful historical agency. Communism, however, is the actual, historical restoration of such agency to the individual, or the supersession in deed of political economy, as can be seen from the following quote from *The German Ideology*:

Communism differs from all previous movements in that it overturns the basis of all earlier relations of production and intercourse, and for the first time consciously treats all naturally evolved premises as the creations of hitherto existing men, strips them of their natural character and subjugates them to the power of the united individuals...The reality which communism creates is precisely the true basis for rendering it impossible that anything should exist independently of individuals...⁵

Communism, then, could be said to be a reversal of priority between the economic and the human, replacing class society with individual existence.

Who, however, are these would-be protagonists of communism, the individuals of whom Marx speaks? First of all, they are not the representatives of a species or kind, a sort of universal human class that would underlie the various economic classes and eventually emerge from them as the universal truth behind a history of contending sub-species. As Marx insists, “it is certainly very easy to imagine that in these individuals the species, or man, has evolved, or that they evolved man—and in this way one can give history some hard clouts on the ear.”⁶

⁴ 92

⁵ 89-90

⁶ *The German Ideology* 86

Rather, we are talking about “individuals, not as they may appear in their own or other people’s imagination, but as they *actually* are, i.e., as they act, produce materially, and hence as they work under definite material limits, presuppositions and conditions independent of their will.”⁷

Marx takes pains to insist that these producing individuals do not have a clear understanding of themselves as such; instead, the worker’s consciousness is determined by the relations of production that prevail in any given epoch, and “the class which has the means of material production at its disposal, consequently also controls the means of mental production, so that the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are on the whole subject to it.”⁸ Communism, then, must arise out of a situation in which the working class no longer recognizes itself in the intellectual productions of the bourgeoisie, and when the relations of production confront it as an alien force. When this happens, the worker can no longer find herself as an individual in the prevailing configurations of sense of the epoch; the worker is divested of any meaningful identity. Every possible meaning reflects the class structure of society; the worker is confronted with the meaninglessness of her own existence, which is to say she is proletarianized.

This, of course, is what Marx means by “estrangement” (*Entfremdung*), which, by 1845, no longer refers to any substantial sense of human nature, because bourgeois society doesn’t represent man’s furthest removal from himself; rather, capitalism paradoxically creates the conditions for the divestment of the individual of any identity of her own at the same time as it produces her as an individual for the first time in history. Thus it is that Marx writes of the capitalist era

Never, in any earlier period, have the productive forces taken on a form so indifferent to the intercourse of individuals *as* individuals, because their intercourse itself was formerly a restricted one. On the other hand, standing over against these productive forces, we have the majority of the individuals from whom these forces have been wrested away, and who, robbed thus of all real life-content, have become abstract individuals, but who are, however, only by this fact put into a position to enter into relation with one another *as individuals*.⁹

This divestiture of content is what allows the process of production to emerge as something alien, not to an eternal human nature or essence, but to the producing individuals on which production is premised. In fully developed commodity capitalism, the individual, who

⁷ *Ibid.*, 41

⁸ *Ibid.*, 67

⁹ 95-6

previously had been the referent of a given class identity, becomes a proletarian, in other words becomes fully alienated from all vested class positions.

Turning to the *Grundrisse*, then, we see that previous historical relations, which do not produce the same degree of alienation as those of capitalism, also do not allow the individual to appear as such:

When we look at social relations which create an undeveloped system of exchange, of exchange values and money, or which correspond to an undeveloped degree of these, then it is clear from the outset that the individuals in such a society, although their relations appear to be more personal, enter into connection with one another only as individuals imprisoned within a certain definition, as feudal lord and vassal, landlord and serf, etc...¹⁰

On the other hand, in capitalist society an abstract individuality is attained:

In the money relation, in the developed system of exchange..., the ties of personal dependence, of distinctions of blood, education, etc., are in fact exploded, ripped up...¹¹

The individual then seems to have freedom, but this is only the abstract freedom of exchange, the freedom to sell her creative capacity, extruded into the total social process, which returns a fraction of it to her in depersonalized form as the quantum of value necessary to sustain her body long enough to produce more value for the capitalist.

In other words, whereas previously there was a determinate social identity involved in individual human existence, for this very reason there were no true individuals, but only social roles. On the other hand, in capitalism there can be individuals only insofar as they are divested of content, or alienated from all available social roles. The proletariat is the class of all those who have thus been divested of human content and stand naked as individuals, which is why the fully consummated constitution of this class coincides with the abolition of all classes. This is why, in the “Communist Manifesto,” Marx addresses the objections to communism that decry the abolition of property, freedom, the family, nationality, and religion, by declaring that, for the proletariat, these things have already been abolished.

Capitalism is that state of affairs where to be human means to be a proletarian or a bourgeois, in other words the meaning of the human is now explicitly reduced to one’s relationship to the means of production. Since these means are constantly being revolutionized, “All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All

¹⁰ *Grundrisse* 163

¹¹ *Ibid.*

that is solid melts into air...’’¹² Class relations, for Marx, have always determined the content of human existence, but now this can be explicitly recognized by those who have been divested of their social agency, which can only show up as a commodity that fuels the valorization process:

The propertied class and the class of the proletariat present the same human self-estrangement. But the former class feels at ease and strengthened in this self-estrangement, it recognizes estrangement as *its own power* and has in it the *semblance* of a human existence. The class of the proletariat feels annihilated in estrangement; it sees in it its own powerlessness and the reality of an inhuman existence.¹³

It is, paradoxically, this recognition of the inhumanity of its existence that allows the proletariat, as the class with no interests of its own to defend, to undertake to overturn the priority of the economic over the human, or as Marx says, “This subsuming of individuals under definite classes cannot be abolished until a class has evolved which has no longer any peculiar class interest to assert against a ruling class.”¹⁴ Thus, for Marx, the human can only be located in its dislocation, which means that the human only has meaning as that which has been disenfranchised by, and divested from, the sense-constituting relational processes of capitalism. In other words, there is no sense of the human as such, no determinate human essence, there are only producing individuals who, at a particular historical juncture, can no longer identify themselves with their social role within capitalist relations of production, and thus come to recognize themselves as other to those relations. This, then, is how I would like to locate the human in Marx, as essentially dislocated and defined by this dislocation.

According to Heidegger, the estrangement that Marx describes is rooted in what Heidegger calls “the homelessness of modern man.”¹⁵ There are in fact two ways of being homeless, and the human being is always in between them: the human being, in belonging to being, is estranged from beings, but also estranged from being insofar as the human being exists in such a way as to be at home among beings. In other words, the human being forgets the event of being to the extent that she occupies a determinate place in a given economy of beings. We might call this latter type of homelessness “metaphysical homelessness.” Metaphysics is that history in which human beings reveal beings, including themselves, as having a particular essence that allows them to appear in a meaningful way, as founded in a particular sense of being. However, the human being never comes to be at home in any mode of revealing, which

¹² *Manifesto of the Communist Party* 476

¹³ *The Holy Family* 43

¹⁴ *The German Ideology* 86

¹⁵ *Basic Writings* 143

is to say never comes to be at home in a final determination of the human essence. Rather, being approaches the human being as an event that displaces the human, uprooting it from its essence:

[T]his displacement places man for the first time into the decision of the most decisive relations to beings and non-beings. These relations bestow on him the foundation of a new essence. I say advisedly *a* foundation for we can never say that it is the absolute one.¹⁶

It is in the nature of a foundation to itself be unfounded. For this reason, we never come to be fully at home among beings.

This is how we must read Heidegger's statements about the human essence. For Heidegger, what characterizes the human being as such is a certain relation to being: "man's distinctive feature lies in this, that he, as the being who thinks, is open to being, face to face with being; thus man remains referred to being and so answers to it. Man *is* essentially this relationship of responding to being, and he is only this."¹⁷ This passage, however, must immediately be referred to Heidegger's statement that "being offers us no ground and no basis—as beings do—to which we can turn, on which we can build, and to which we can cling."¹⁸ What Heidegger wants to think is the fundamental homelessness that characterizes the human being. Being, then, is what uproots the human being from the stability of a determinate essence: "Being is not some thing that is actual, but that which determines what is actual in its potentiality for being, and determines especially the potential for human beings to be; that potentiality for being in which the being of humans is fulfilled: being unhomely in becoming homely."¹⁹

Here we see the double sense that homelessness, or being unhomely, has for Heidegger: "being unhomely in the sense of being driven about amid beings without any way out, and being unhomely as becoming homely from out of a belonging to being."²⁰ In other words, the human being is *estranged from* being to the extent that she is *absorbed in* a particular way of revealing beings. Being unhomely in the second sense, on the other hand, means that the human being belongs to revealing itself, and not to one of its particular historical modes. We become homely, then, only when we recognize our fundamental unhomeliness in the second sense: "Finding what is fitting in being unhomely is becoming homely."²¹

¹⁶ *Basic Questions* 139

¹⁷ *Identity and Difference* 31

¹⁸ *Nietzsche IV* 193

¹⁹ *Hölderlin's Hymn 'Der Ister'* 120

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 118

²¹ *Ibid.*, 128

For Heidegger, the metaphysical type of estrangement or homelessness cuts us off from our essence, which is simply not to have an enduring essence in the ordinary sense, not to have a fixed abode among beings. He sees this as a catastrophe, and the ultimate danger is that we will no longer recognize our belonging to being at all. Metaphysics leads us to a juncture where we must assume our homelessness among beings and our belonging to revealing, or cover over our relation to revealing in favor of a transparent, manipulative relation to beings. The full sense of Heidegger's statement that "homelessness is becoming the destiny of the world," then, is that metaphysics is that history that tends toward a decision between the two different senses of human homelessness.

The current situation of human beings among beings, however, is not one where a metaphysical principle has gained such a hold on us that we are only able to enact one mode of revealing. Rather, the consummation of metaphysics in the epoch of modern technology, or "*Ge-stell*," is one in which a total system anchored in a determinate sense of being no longer has a hold on us. Instead, beings only appear as calculable quanta that are fully available for manipulation. This is what Heidegger calls "machination": "Machination itself means the essence of beingness that is disposed toward the malleability in which everything is made out ahead of time to be 'do-able' and altogether at our disposal."²² Metaphysics, at its historical limit, is pure manipulation.

Beings are revealed as "standing-reserve," and as such they appear as interchangeable storehouses of energy:

The revealing that rules throughout modern technology has the character of a setting-upon, in the sense of a challenging-forth. That challenging happens in that the energy concealed in nature is unlocked, what is unlocked is transformed, what is transformed is stored up, what is stored up is, in turn, distributed, and what is distributed is switched about ever anew.²³

This mode of revealing confronts us with what Heidegger calls "the supreme danger": when everything is revealed as interchangeable, manipulable quanta, there is no longer a place for the human essence to maintain itself; the sense of beings has been reconfigured in such a way that leaves no place for the human, and human beings themselves come to appear as standing-reserve.

²² *Nietzsche III* 180

²³ *The Question Concerning Technology* 16

Human beings, on the other hand, insofar as the manipulation of nature appears as a human project, come to see themselves as “lord[s] of the earth.”²⁴ This leads to what Heidegger calls “one final delusion: it seems as though man everywhere and always encounters only himself.”²⁵ The victory of this delusion is precisely the historical consummation of what we have been calling the metaphysical type of homelessness, our absorption into a mode of revealing and forgetting the relation to being, which is simply our homelessness among beings. This is why Heidegger goes on to say that “*precisely nowhere does man today any longer encounter himself, i.e., his essence.*”²⁶

Again, we find ourselves at a historical juncture where we are faced with a decision between two types of homelessness. This is the decision Heidegger indicates when he quotes Hölderlin: “*But where danger is, grows/ the saving power also.*”²⁷ The human being no longer encounters her essence because there is no longer a place for the human essence in the epoch of *Ge-stell*. But this in itself points toward the saving power, the relation to being as that which uproots us from every historical abode. To become at home in our homelessness is, then, to recognize that we exceed any fixed place among beings, but not toward some impossible transcendent realm; rather, we only exceed beings to the extent that we are homeless among them. It is this poverty of the human essence that allows us to say that, for Heidegger as for Marx, we can only locate the human in its dislocation. The history of metaphysics, then, is the history of a sort of onto-historical proletarianization that brings the human being face to face with her homelessness. Becoming at home in this homelessness is for Heidegger the only possible way to salvage the human in the face of the economic imperative of *Ge-stell*.

For Marx and for Heidegger, we arrive at a sense of the human being as fundamentally homeless, or perhaps we could say essentially without an essence. The differences between Marx and Heidegger’s understanding of such homelessness are not unimportant, but my purpose here has been to sketch out a common problematic rather than to do a comparative analysis.²⁸ We have seen that, for both Marx and Heidegger, the human can only appear as that

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 27

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ Qtd. in *The Question Concerning Technology* 34

²⁸ There is no space here to develop this, but Heidegger’s emphasis on the linguistic group as the properly historical unit precludes the thinking of both class and exchange value that is central in Marx. This is an important qualification to the remarks that follow in the body of my paper, since for Marx collective action on the level of class is essential for bringing about communism, whereas Heidegger insists on the withdrawal and reticence of the thinker in the face of the degradation of language.

which is divested from all sense-bestowing structures (in Marx's case historical relations of production, in that of Heidegger, any determinate sense of being). In other words, at a particular juncture in history the human finds herself confronted with a landscape in which she cannot appear. It must be remembered that the question of this estrangement or homelessness is not raised for the sake of a clever paradox, but rather to indicate the possibility of a reversal of priority between the economic and the human. However, neither Marx nor Heidegger admit the possibility of a return to the fixed abode of an essence. For both, to have a determinate essence is to be economically determined.

The question of locating the human, then, can only be answered by recognizing the dislocation of the human. This question, by its very nature, cannot be merely a philosophical one, but is inherently social, historical and political—it is the question of what Heidegger calls human dwelling. I want to briefly consider where this question is leading us in more concrete terms, and to suggest that when we pursue this question in both Marx and Heidegger, we arrive at a peculiar notion of universality—not of the universal as that which surmounts the particular, but rather as displaced from the particular. Thus it is that a proletarian revolution can lead to a classless society, because the proletariat is divested of class identity, not because it represents a more universal class. But this very divestiture allows us to talk about something like the human.

This brings us to a crucial question, which cannot be answered here but which must nevertheless be raised: the question of a properly human social form. Heidegger insists that “Every nationalism is metaphysically an anthropologism,” in other words, an expression of the human being's metaphysical homelessness. However, he goes on to say that “Nationalism is not overcome through mere internationalism; it is rather expanded and elevated thereby into a system.”²⁹ Marx, of course, maintains that the proletariat has no country, and that communism must be international. But at the same time, the activity of the individual in a communist society is local and personal, not mediated by a world market and hence alienated. In capitalism, the division of labor gives me a determined role and thus an alienated identity, whereas

in communist society, where nobody has one exclusive sphere of activity but each can become accomplished in any branch he wishes, society regulates the general production and thus makes it possible for me to do one thing today and another tomorrow, to hunt in the morning,

²⁹ *Basic Writings* 244

fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, criticize after dinner, just as I have a mind, without ever becoming hunter, fisherman, shepherd or critic.³⁰

This is a portrait of a human being at home in her homelessness, someone who has become universal in the sense that social roles are assumed as tasks but never as identity. Marx repeatedly stresses that the result of communism is the liberation of the individual, who is freed to fully develop her capacities and to reappropriate her life activity.

The question of locating the human, then, places us in this tension between local and global, and raises the problematic prospect of a state of affairs that can perhaps best be described as *generalized particularity*, or perhaps *universal individuality*. Such a state of affairs becomes thinkable on the basis of a notion of the universal as that which is excluded by its very nature from the determination of an essence. It is this notion of the universal that is implied by thinking the human being as arising out of its very dislocation or expropriation. This is not simply an abstract question, but has far ranging social implications, and these are what must be developed based on the problematic of homelessness or estrangement as presented in the work of Heidegger and Marx.

³⁰ *The German Ideology* 44-5

Poets as Prophets and as Painters:
Heidegger's Turn to Language and the Hölderlinian Turn in Context

Robert Bernasconi
Penn State University

Heidegger's approach to language from the 1930s onwards was dominated by his relation to poetry, and his relation to poetry was dominated by one poet, Friedrich Hölderlin. In this essay I will focus on his reading of Hölderlin's poem *Andenken*. I will show that what was at stake for Heidegger in this path to language through Hölderlin's poem had already been indicated by him at the end of "The Origin of the Work of Art" when he described Hölderlin as "the poet whose work still stands before the Germans as a test."¹ Hölderlin was for Heidegger the poet who, if the Germans decided in his favor by listening to the language of his poetry, could lead them to another place, a place where Western metaphysics no longer held sway. This is why Hölderlin was also a destiny for philosophy.²

In the early 1950s Paul de Man was oblivious to this when he asked: "why does Heidegger need to refer to Hölderlin?"³ As de Man explained, Heidegger had little time for philosophical authorities and, as could be seen from his reading of Rilke, whom Heidegger treated very differently from Hölderlin, it cannot simply have been because Hölderlin was a poet. And yet at the end of the essay de Man seems to have been no closer to an answer. He also concluded that Heidegger had denied to Hölderlin the "critical dialogue" (BI 254) which he "wishes so often for among thinkers" (BI 263).

I will show here against de Man that the dialogic character of Heidegger's reading of Hölderlin only becomes fully apparent when one approaches that reading in the context of its time, which means here not only the political context but also contemporary readings of Hölderlin. Defensive readings of Heidegger's politics have led even some of his most distinguished readers to ignore both of these contexts. To be sure, there is some philosophical

¹ Martin Heidegger, *Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes*, Stuttgart: Reclam, 1960, p. 81; trans. Julian Young and Kenneth Haynes, *Off the Beaten Track*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002, p. 50. Henceforth UK and OBT respectively.

² For example, see Martin Heidegger, *Beiträge zur Philosophie*, Gesamtausgabe 65, Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1989, p. 422; trans. P. Emad and K. Maly, *Contributions to Philosophy*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999, p. 297. Henceforth GA65 and CP respectively.

³ Paul de Man, "Heidegger's Exegeses of Hölderlin," *Blindness and Insight*, second edition, London: Methuen, 1983, p. 252. Henceforth BI.

justification for doing so in so far as Heidegger insisted that a work of art establishes its own context.⁴ It is therefore of considerable interest to find that Heidegger, while trying to enable Hölderlin to open up a world for the Germans, as the temples had done for the Greeks, nevertheless does not refrain from engaging his own contemporaries in debate. If such references are not always clear to us at first reading, they would have been clear to Heidegger's immediate audience. Indeed, it would probably have been what was most clear in Heidegger's texts of this time. That is why a scrupulous reading of Heidegger needs to recall the strength of interest in Hölderlin in Germany in the 1930s. This is all the more important because for over ten years Heidegger was willing to allow his public face to be intimately associated with Hölderlin. From the Rectoral Address of 1933, until 1941 his only substantial publications were two essays on Hölderlin. Furthermore, if one were to extend the period to 1945 so as to include "On the Essence of Truth," "Plato's Doctrine of Truth," and the postscript to "What is Metaphysics?," one would also have to add two further essays on Hölderlin.⁵

Heidegger was not hiding behind Hölderlin, but engaging with other readings of him. Philosophers had long entertained readings of Hölderlin which related him to German Idealism. For example, Wilhelm Windelband in 1878 gave a lecture "Über Friedrich Hölderlin und sein Geschick,"⁶ Wilhelm Dilthey included an essay on Hölderlin in *Poetry and Experience*.⁷ and in 1931 Johannes Hoffmeister published *Hölderlin und Hegel*.⁸ But with his conception of a kinship between poet and thinker Heidegger had in mind an entirely different relation with the poet than is offered by these philosophical interpretations. The proximity of thinking and poeticizing was for Heidegger already reflected in the title of the poem, *Andenken*. In his essay on this poem written in August 1942 and published the following year in a volume marking the centenary of Hölderlin's death,⁹ Heidegger highlighted the poet's remembrance as a thinking forward (GA4 83; EHP 108). It is also a thanking (GA4 85; EHP 110) and a greeting (GA4 96;

⁴ "Where does a work belong? As a work it belongs uniquely within the region it itself opens up" (UK 37; OBT 20).

⁵ Heidegger would even select his two shortest essays on Hölderlin, alongside "What is Metaphysics?" and "The Essence of Truth," to be among his first English language publications. See Stefan Schimanski, Foreword to *Existence and Being*, London: Vision, 1949, p. 10-11.

⁶ Wilhelm Windelband, *Präludien. Aufsätze und Reden zur Einleitung in die Philosophie*, Friburg: J. C. B. Mohr, 1884, pp. 146-173.

⁷ Wilhelm Dilthey, *Das Erlebnis und die Dichtung*, fourth edition, Leipzig: B.G. Teubner, 1913, pp. 349-459; trans. Joseph Ross, *Poetry and Experience*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985, pp. 303-383.

⁸ See also *Hölderlin und die Philosophie*, Leipzig: Felix Meiner, 1942.

⁹ Martin Heidegger, "Andenken," in *Hölderlin. Gedenkschrift zu seinem 100. Todestag*, ed. Paul Kluckhohn, Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1943, pp. 267-323. Reprinted in GA4 79-151; EHP 102-173.

EHP 119). Furthermore, the poet thinks: “Noch denket das mir wohl.” On the basis of this dialogue between poeticizing and thinking Heidegger adopted not only a new language, the language of the earth, the heavens, the gods the mortals, dwelling, *Innigkeit* – but also another way with language.

Heidegger did not always thematize language in his readings of poetry because to thematize language was to distort our relation to it. Nevertheless, Hölderlin gave Heidegger an insight into the essay of poetry and thus of language through the fine line of “Andenken”:

Was bleibet aber stiften die Dichter.

But the poets institute what remains.

It is the other side of Stefan George’s line that later also came to obsess Heidegger in *On the Way to Language*:

Kein Ding sei wo das Wort gebricht.

Where word breaks off no thing may be.¹⁰

In the context of an exposition of the closing line of *Andenken* in “Hölderlin and the Essence of Poetry” he explained that poetry establishes being in words (GA4 41). The lecture course on “Germanien” from which that essay is largely drawn explains that. “Our poetry founds and grounds a place of existence in which we are not yet standing, but where poetic saying wants to compel us.” (GA39 115). That place is also announced as the *Vaterland* insofar as *Beyng* (*Seyn*) is the *Vaterland* (GA39 121).

To understand what Heidegger is saying here, it is not enough to know the way that the term *Vaterland*, was used within the politics of his day. One needs also to recognize that the word belonged to the literary discussion of Hölderlin which itself had a political dimension, as can be seen in the work of Max Kommerell.

As a young man Kommerell was part of the George Circle, and while still only in his mid-twenties, he published in 1928, *Der Dichter als Führer in der deutschen Klassik*. Kommerell’s book is a study of such poets as Klopstock, Herder, Goethe, Schiller, and Jean Paul, but it culminates in an essay on “Das Volk” which concentrates on Hölderlin. Kommerell there quoted Hölderlin’s letter to Böhlendorff of 1801, which proved so important to Heidegger, and argued that it should form the basis for a new patriotic literature.¹¹ The book ends with a celebration of the people’s desire for life and an inner serious dawn, where the youth feels the

¹⁰ Martin Heidegger, *Unterwegs zur Sprache*, Gesamtausgabe 12, Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1985; trans. Peter D. Hertz, *On the Way to Language*, New York: Harper and Row, 1971. See Robert Bernasconi *The Question of Language in Heidegger’s History of Being*, Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press, 1985, pp. 49-53.

¹¹ Max Kommerell, *Der Dichter als Führer in der deutschen Klassik*, Berlin: Georg Bondi, 1928, p. 478.

birth of a new fatherland in shining union and in the lack of weapons that had been buried all too deeply.¹² However one should not exaggerate the novelty of these ideas. Already in 1923 Wilhelm Michel had written *Hölderlins abendländische Wendung*, in which Hölderlin was announced as a German leader (*Führer*), the lawgiver of the German realm.¹³ But after Kommerell quaralled with George, he revised his approach so as to sound more like a Professor of German Literature, as can be seen from Kommerell's essays on Hölderlin from that period.¹⁴

Heidegger once said that Kommerell was the only literary historian with whom he had had fruitful conversations about the historical vocation of thinking and poetry.¹⁵ Kommerell together with Hans-Georg Gadamer visited Heidegger in his hut in Todtnauberg in 1937. They returned with Gerhard Krüger five years later and, at Heidegger's specific request, Kommerell posed by letter some questions about the translation between Hölderlin's poetry and Heidegger's philosophy as exhibited in his essay on Hölderlin's "Wie wenn am Feiertage." Kommerell was troubled by the esoteric nature of Heidegger's commentary and the extent to which it was almost impossible to understand without a knowledge of the transformation within Heidegger's thinking that was available only to his students. Kommerell conceded to Heidegger that Hölderlin was a destiny but he asked Heidegger whether it would not be worthwhile to distinguish between religious prophets, prophets who established religions, and poets who are prophetic in a different sense.¹⁶ In a brief passage in the essay "Andenken," which can probably be taken as a direct response to Kommerell, because it is not found in the lecture course from the winter-semester of 1941-42 on which it was based and which he had just completed before his second meeting with Kommerell, Heidegger explained that the poets

¹² Kommerell, *Der Dichter als Führer*, p. 483

¹³ Wilhelm Michel, *Hölderlins abendländische Wendung*, (1923).

¹⁴ See Max Kommerell, "Hölderlins Empedokles-Dichtungen" in *Geist und Buchstabe der Dichtung*, Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1940, pp. 255-294; "Hölderlins Hymnen in freien Rhythmen" in *Gedanken über Gedichte*, Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1943, pp. 456-481; and, most importantly, his Florence lecture of 29 May 1941, "Das Problem der Aktualität in Hölderlins Dichtung" in *Dichterische Welterfahrung*, ed. Hans-Georg Gadamer, Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1952, pp. 174-193. On Kommerell's quarrel with George, see Robert E. Norton, *Secret Germany. Stefan George and His Circle*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002, pp. 702-712.

¹⁵ Martin Heidegger, "Max Kommerell, Zum Gedächtnis," *Redem und andere Zeugnisse eines Lebensweges*, Gesamtausgabe 16, Frankfurt: Klostermann, 2000, p. 364. In 1962 Heidegger flew to Berlin to give a speech at the commemoration of Kommerell as an indication of his high regard for him. Gertrud Heidegger, "Mein liebes Seelchen!" *Briefe Martin Heideggers an seine Frau Elfriede*, Munich: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 2005, p. 345. On Heidegger's relation to Kommerell, see ed. Bernard Zeller, *Max Kommerell-Wiedererinnert*, Marbach: Deutsche Schillergesellschaft, 1985, pp. 80-91 and Joachim W. Storck, "'Zwiesprache von Dichten und Denken.' Hölderlin bei Martin Heidegger und Max Kommerell," in *Klassiker in finsternen Zeiten. 1933-1945*, ed. B. Zeller, Marbach: Deutsche Schillergesellschaft, 1983; vol. one, pp. 345-365.

¹⁶ Max Kommerell to Martin Heidegger, 29 July 1942 in Max Kommerell, *Briefe und Aufzeichnungen 1919-1944*, ed: Inge Jens, Otfen: Walter, 1967, pp. 400-401.

are prophetic in the strict Greek sense of foretelling, but they are nevertheless not prophets in the Judeo-Christian sense.¹⁷ The poet who is only beginning to learn the free use of what is his own “is not the mighty booming ‘prophet’” (GA4 138; EHP 160).

In 1939 a philosopher from the Circle around Stefan George, Kurt Hildebrandt, published his own book on Hölderlin, *Hölderlin. Philosophie und Dichtung*, which went through three editions. Hildebrandt, who had already offered a racialized reading of Plato, now did the same for Hölderlin. For example, he read Hölderlin’s references to the Caucasus and to India as references to the Caucasian race and to the Aryan race respectively.¹⁸

Before either Kommerell or Hildebrandt, there was Norbert von Hellingrath, who was on the outskirts of the George Circle. He published a new edition of the poems and was the first to publish Hölderlin’s translations of Pindar. His understanding of Hölderlin as someone concerned about what it meant to be German and what it might mean for the Germans to become a people allowed him to present the Germans as the people of Hölderlin. In a lecture he delivered in 1915 as part of the war effort. Heidegger dedicated his first essay on Hölderlin, “Hölderlin and the Essence of Poetry,” to Hellingrath recalling that he had been killed in action in 1916. Kommerell thought the dedication inappropriate.

By establishing this context, we can see that the novelty of Heidegger’s reading of Hölderlin did not lie in taking him seriously as a prophet, which was characteristic of the circle around George. Nor did it lie in his attempt to have Hölderlin take a leadership role in shaping the German people as a people, which, as I have shown, was also a widespread belief of the George circle, and particularly of the early work of Max Kommerell. Heidegger’s originality is much more specific and it concerned the power of language.

Language had been a major focus of the first lecture course on Hölderlin from 1934-35 which had been distilled into the 1935 essay “Hölderlin and the Essence of Poetry.”¹⁹ In his remarks on language in this essay Heidegger emphasized its relation to history, to the earth and to the freedom of decision. The conjunction of these themes made it possible for the essay to

¹⁷ Martin Heidegger, *Erläuterungen zu Hölderlins Dichtung*, Gesamtausgabe 4, Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1981, p. 114; trans. Keith Hoeller, *Elucidations of Hölderlin’s Poetry*, Amherst: Humanity Books, 2000, pp. 136-7. Henceforth GA4 and EHP respectively.

¹⁸ Kurt Hildebrandt, *Hölderlin*, Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1940. pp. 245-246.

¹⁹ Martin Heidegger, *Hölderlins Hymnen “Germanien” und “Der Rhein.”*, Gesamtausgabe 39, Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1980, esp. pp. 59-77. Henceforth GA39. The essay in part drawn from it was originally published in *Das Innere Reich*, December 1936, III, 2, pp. 1065-1078.

receive a positive reception from Nazi philosophers like Bruno Bauch.²⁰ Furthermore, the fact that Heidegger placed the essay in the journal *Das innere Reich*, which had been introduced by its editors in its opening issue in 1934 with a statement dedicating the journal to the completion of the Revolution around the Germans as a single people, cannot be ignored.²¹ This was a journal in which politics and culture were closely aligned. The basic philosophical point about language is clear: language is not a tool but is the event (*das Ereignis*) which disposes of the highest possibility of human existence (GA4 38; EHP 56). Language makes history possible (GA4 36; EHP 54). On this basis Heidegger took up the final verse of “Andenken” which he translated into his own terms to read “Poetry in the founding (*Stiftung*) of Being in the word” (GA4 41; EHP 59). This final verse of “Andenken” is so well-known today we are tempted to assume it always was, but, for example, Wilhelm Michel did not refer to it in his discussion of Hölderlin and language. Instead, he presented the highest concept of the poet is that of the inner connectedness of things. It is on this basis that, according to Michel, the poet experiences the resistance of language which is intent on separation.²² Heidegger saw things differently. The problem is not separation, but that language can also create the danger of dangers: confusion and the possibility of loss of Being (GA4 37; EMP 55).

Most commentators on Hölderlin’s “Andenken” do not know what to say about the final line of the poem. They leave it standing unexplained.²³ Heidegger’s problem was the opposite. His reading of the final line of “Andenken” in “Hölderlin and the Essence of Poetry” abstracted it from its context, but already in a posthumously published text from 1939 Heidegger began the task of restoring it to the poem.²⁴ This latter text is also noteworthy for the way in which he renounced the terms blood, soil, *Volkstum*, and *Reich* as means by which the Romantics concealed the abandonment of the Being of beings, but which had no place in the interpretation of what Hölderlin meant by “the Germans”(GA75 8). This is a clear example of language creating danger. Nevertheless, the very nature of the poem made an even more sustained reading necessary. On the face of it the five stanzas are disjointed and the final verse appears to

²⁰ Bruno Bauch, “Review of Martin Heidegger, Hölderlin und das Wesen der Dichtung,” *Blätter für Deutsche Philosophie*, vol. 13, 1939-40, pp. 217-218.

²¹ Paul Alverdes and Karl Benno von Mechow, “Inneres Reich,” *Das Innere Reich Zeitschrift für Dichtung, Kunst und deutscher Leben*, April 1934, p. 7.

²² Michel, *Hölderlins Abendländische Wendung*, p. 57.

²³ For example, Rolf Zuberbühler, *Hölderlins Erneuerung der Sprache aus ihren etymologischen Ursprüngen*, Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 1969, p. 114.

²⁴ Martin Heidegger, *Zu Hölderlin*, Gesamtausgabe 75, Frankfurt: Klostermann, 2000, pp. 10-26. Henceforth GA 75.

be at most an after-thought. To offer a reading that made it central called for a more detailed reading, one that would read the poem as a poem is about poetry and not simply about, for example, memories of a journey to Bordeaux. By the time Heidegger offered a full reading of the poem in a lecture course delivered in the winter semester 1941-1942, much had changed.²⁵ I have insisted that Heidegger was not hiding behind Hölderlin at this time, but we should also not forget Kommerell's remark that contradicts recent claims that Heidegger's standing did not suffer in those years. After his visit to Todtnauberg in 1942 Kommerell wrote that the enigmatic character of Heidegger's writing on Hölderlin and the difficulty of seeing its place in his work as a whole, arose from the difficulty of his philosophical situation within Germany at that time.²⁶

The means by which Heidegger integrated the line about the poets establishing what has permanence into his reading of the poem as a whole was by understanding what Hölderlin about the mariners or sailors of the poem as a reference to poets. When he introduces this interpretation, it seems abrupt but the idea is not far-fetched given that Hölderlin frequently described the poet as on a journey, a journey that is for the sake of the homecoming (GA4 83; EHP 108), Hölderlin wrote of the sailors that they are like painters:

Sie,
Wie Maler, bringen zusammen
Das Schöne der Erd' . . .
They,
Like painters, bring together
The beauties of the earth...

But what does it mean to say that the poets are like painters? The poets are not like painters because they are engaged in representation. That is not how Heidegger views painters either. He distinguished these poets who are like painters, who gather the beautiful (GA 4 138; EHP 159), and who say the holy (GA4 86; EHP 111), from the poets who have returned home, and of whom alone one can say that the poet establishes what remains. (GA4 144; EHP 165). According to Heidegger, Hölderlin who, comes to us from the future, was preeminent among the latter. The poet who writes the poem has already fulfilled the journey into the foreign land and so has met one of the conditions for becoming at home in what is proper to one (GA4 96; EHP 119).

²⁵Martin Heidegger, *Hölderlins Hymne "Andenken"*, Gesamtausgabe 52, Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1982.

²⁶Kommerell to Karl Reinhardt, 19 January 1942, *Briefe*, p. 388.

Heidegger is at pains to insist that to describe some poets as being like painters is not to say that they write “descriptive poetry,” which he associates with journalism. The poets who are like painters have the vocation to let beauty appear in the project of the beautiful (GA4 135; EHP 157). In a passage in parentheses in the lecture course, which probably means it was written later, speaks with a clarity that Heidegger rarely allows himself: “That the poets are here thought of as ‘like painters’ contains the concealed truth about the essence of the poeticizing (*Dichtertum*) of the poets who have not yet crossed over to the other side. They are poets in the essential realm of metaphysics.” (GA52 178). This supplies the basis for what Heidegger announces in 1943: “now poetry must be different from the presentation that brings beauty together *like painters*” (GA4 137-138; EHP 159).

Heidegger’s reading of the poem in the 1941-1942 lecture course is explicitly directed against three of the dominant interpretations of Hölderlin’s turn to the fatherland in his late poetry. First, he rejected Wilhelm Michel’s idea of an occidental turn (*abendländische Wendung*) as a turn away from Greece.²⁷ The second misinterpretation was also proposed by Michel. It specified that the occidental turn was a turn to Christianity.²⁸ It was also proposed by Paul Böckmann and Heidegger’s student, Roman Guardini.²⁹ The third misinterpretation was far more widespread in Heidegger’s time and it employed Hölderlin’s own phrase “die Vaterländische Umkehr.” It was associated with Friedrich Beissner who highlighted it in 1931.³⁰ Beissner presented an interpretation of Hölderlin that, drawing heavily on both of Hölderlin’s letters to Böhlendorff, rejected the idea of the Germans as a continuation of the Greeks.³¹ Furthermore, he did so specifically in opposition to the Kantian conception of Hölderlin proposed by Böhm who saw Hölderlin to be promoting a cosmopolitan conception of history in terms of the development of mankind as a whole. In its place Beissner highlighted

²⁷ Wilhelm Michel *Hölderlins Abendländische Wendung*, Jena: Eugen Diederich, 1923.

²⁸ Michel, *Hölderlins Abendländische Wendung*, pp. 42-46.

²⁹ Roman Guardini. Paul Böckmann, *Hölderlin und seine Götter*, Munich: Beck, 1935, p. 367.

³⁰ Friedrich Beissner, *Hölderlins Übersetzungen aus dem Griechischen* Stuttgart: Metzler, 1931, pp. 147-186. Heidegger cited this book at GA53 156-7; HH 126. For a helpful review of Heidegger’s relation to the interpretations of Michels and Beissner, see Peter Trawny, *Heidegger und Hölderlin oder das Europäische Morgen*, Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 2004, pp. 85-181.

³¹ Beissner, *Hölderlins Übersetzungen*, p. 157.

Hölderlin's conception of the Vaterland.³² It was a reading that became increasingly widespread in Germany with political overtones at that time.³³

Already in 1939 Heidegger insisted that the *Vaterländische Wendung* was not political but was about the gods (GA73 277). He repeated this same warning in 1942, and on this occasion referred the *Vaterland* to the holy (GA52 141). However, Heidegger was subsequently persuaded by Beda Allemann that his interpretation of the *vaterländische Umkehr* needed modification,³⁴ and this was reflected in 1959 in his essay "Hölderlin's Earth and Heaven" (GA4 90n; EHP 206n). But in the early 1940s Heidegger's turn to language was still a turn to the fatherland. And yet it was one in which Heidegger was highlighting the poet – and by implication the thinker – above the politician as the one who creates. This contrasts with the way that politics was presented in the 1934 lecture-course on Hölderlin where the founder of the state is put alongside, the poet and the thinker (GA39 51). However, his comments on "Andenken" at least allow for the possibility that any regime with a deficient relation to language and to its poet cannot establish anything. The political is subordinated to the poet because the political is subordinated to the *polis* which is determined by the holy (GA4 88; EHP 112). In this lies the poet's relation to "the foundation (*Grundung*) of the history of the 'fatherland'" (GA4 87; EHP 112).

According to Heidegger every people has its assignment (*das Aufgegebene*) as well as its endowment (*das Mitgegebene*) (UK 79; OBT 49). Heidegger understood these in relation to the dialogue between the Greeks and the Germans set out in Hölderlin's letter to Böhlendorff from 4 December 1801 before he left for France. As Heidegger understood it, the Germans are endowed with clarity of presentation as what is most proper to them, but they could not take possession of it until they took up their assignment which is the fire from heaven. Almost all of Heidegger's discussions of Hölderlin's poetry drew heavily on Hölderlin's two letters to Böhlendorff, one written before his journey to Bordeaux commemorated in the poem and the other written soon after. Their importance to Heidegger is not limited to his use of them as a

³² Beissner, *Hölderlin's Übersetzungen*, p. 155.

³³ See, for example, the section entitled "Völker und Vaterland" in ed. Ludwig Friedrich Barthel, *Das Seher des Vaterlands*, Munich: Carl Gerber, 1944, pp. 107-119.

³⁴ See Beda Allemann, *Hölderlin und Heidegger*, Zurich: Atlantis, 1954. See Martin Heidegger to Hannah Arendt, 21 April 1954, *Briefe 1925-1975*, Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1999, p. 142. See also Hans-Joachim Kreutzer, "Kolonie und Vaterland in Hölderlin's später Lyrik," *Hölderlin Jahrbuch*, vol. 22, 1980-1981, pp. 18-46. Heidegger marked this shift in a footnote to "Hölderlin's Earth and Heaven" where he rehearsed his rejection of Wilhelm Michel's notion of a "western turn" and questioned the current interpretation of Hölderlin's own phrase the "Vaterländische Umkehr": "Hölderlin finally left behind him, by overcoming it, that part of the way that he thought through under the title 'patriotic reversal' (GA4 90n; EHP 206n).

key to deciphering Hölderlin's poetry. They also guided him in his formulation of the task of establishing "another beginning." This beginning would be German not Greek, but the Germans could only learn who they might become in struggle (*Kampf*) (GA39 293) or confrontation (*Auseinanderstzung*) with the Greeks. On this basis Hölderlin supplied Heidegger with a much needed escape from Nietzsche which is why he was so critical of attempts to join them together (GA52 78).³⁵ In the "Andenken" course Heidegger was clear that Hölderlin, not Nietzsche, was the one who prepared the way for the overcoming of metaphysics. This is also why, in the "Der Ister" course, Heidegger repeatedly insisted that Hölderlin's hymnal poeticizing fell outside of all metaphysics (GA53 21, 30, 66; HH 18, 26, 53). From this perspective Hölderlin had announced in his letters to Böhlendorff poetically what Heidegger sought to do in thought.³⁶

Hans-Georg Gadamer in response explicitly to Beissner, but also one suspects to Heidegger's essay "Andenken," which had recently appeared in a volume to which Gadamer had also contributed an essay, remarked: "What hermeneutical naiveté to base one's views on the letter to Böhlendorff instead of acknowledging the context of the poem as first appeal."³⁷ But what is the context of the poem? Is it the world that, according to Heidegger, the poem itself opens up (UK 37; PLT 20)? Or is it the circumstances that surrounded the writing of the poem, particularly if those are incorporated into the poem? The latter was the option that Dieter Henrich adopted in his explicit attempt to rescue Hölderlin from Heidegger by using old maps, travel diaries and lithographs to refer the details of the poem to "the concrete reality of a landscape."³⁸ Henrich aims only at the content of the poem, whereas Heidegger explicitly

³⁵ For an example, see Wilhelm Michels, *Das Leben Friedrich Hölderlins*, Bremen: Carl Schünemann, 1940, pp. 561-565.

³⁶ In this way Heidegger's dialogues with Hölderlin transform his relation to Western metaphysics and especially the Greeks, who are now seen as foreign to the Germans rather than as "our" source.

³⁷ Hans-Georg Gadamer, "Hölderlin und das Zukünftige," in *Asthetik und Poetik II* Gesammelte Werke 9, Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1993, p. 28 n; trans. Robert H. Paslick, "Hölderlin and the Future" in *Literature and Philosophy in Dialogue*, Albany: SUNY Press, 1994, p. 176. Translation modified. Gadamer recorded in a note that the essay was written in 1943 but that permission to publish the essay was withheld by the Nazi regime because Gadamer closed the essay by quoting from Hölderlin's poem *Der Frieden* ("Peace"). None of the endnotes including this one were included in the original edition: *Beiträge zur geistigen Überlieferung*, Godesberg: Helmut Küpper, 1947, pp. 53-85.

³⁸ Dieter Henrich, *The Course of Remembrance and Other Essays on Hölderlin*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007, pp. 235-242. Henrich argues that Hölderlin in "Andenken" "lets loose a range of experiences and a context of meanings that have their own horizons and that must be conceived and appreciated in their own right, on the basis of their 'totality' before one asks how they fit into Hölderlin's work as a whole" (CR 193). This objection repeats Gadamer's objection many years earlier and the book is dedicated to Gadamer. However, the fact that were trees on the promontory, ships going to the Indies, and sailors bringing back goods, does not impact Heidegger's reading, especially as Henrich has nothing to say about the introduction of Bellamin from Hölderlin's *Hyperion*.

evokes something else: what is composed into the poetry (GA4 82; EHP 107). Subsequently Gadamer himself offered a reading of “Andenken” and unlike many other reading it had the virtue of being organized around the concluding line which he understood in terms of the overcoming of distance.³⁹ However, even if one accepted Gadamer’s interpretation that would not diminish the interest in Heidegger’s reading following the criteria established by Gadamer himself in “Hölderlin and the Future”: it belongs to “the history of his work and its effect” and was written at a time when Hölderlin’s poetry was “absolutely contemporary.”⁴⁰

Even though Heidegger’s readings of Hölderlin are almost always directed to whole poems and are, furthermore, line by line readings that attempt to disappear in the poem, they are still dialogues in which the thinker not only seeks to learn but also brings something to the encounter. That means not only reading the poem in the light of the task of thinking, but also bringing something of his own time. Both aspects are more visible in the lecture course only because by the time of the essay Heidegger has been more successful in making them disappear, and not because they are not present. Indeed, it is when this aspect is removed from Heidegger’s reading so that it seems that he is attempting merely another reading of the poem like those of de Man or Henrich, rather than like those of Kommerell or Beissner, that it appears ultimately more arbitrary because less motivated. The dialogue between the poet and the thinker also puts their two contexts in dialogue: the world which the poet opens up and the world from which it is read. That is why Heidegger should not be treated as if he was writing in isolation but through his dialogue with his contemporaries.

³⁹ Hans-Georg Gadamer, “Thinking and Poetizing in Heidegger and in Hölderlin’s ‘Andenken’,” trans. Richard Palmer in *Heidegger toward the Turn*, ed. James Risser, Albany: SUNY Press, 1999, pp. 145-162.

⁴⁰ Gadamer, “Hölderlin und das Zukünftige,” pp. 20 and 22; trans. “Hölderlin and the Future” pp. 88-89.

Introduction to and Commentary on
 Christopher Ruth's
 "Marx and Heidegger: The Question of the Human"
 and
 Robert Bernasconi's
 "Poets as Prophets and Painters:
 Heidegger's Turn to Language and the Hölderlinian Turn in Context"

Gregory Fried
 Suffolk University

Today I have an enviable but difficult task: to introduce and comment upon two very interesting papers on what a first glance would seem two very different topics: {name the papers}. Marx and Hölderlin — what unites such disparate figures in the third term, Heidegger? What, apart from the language they worked in, German? What brings them together in a panel on "Heidegger and the Political" — apart from the suggestion that the papers might have political themes or implications? I will say more about all this in a moment, but really my greatest difficulties today are *diplomatic*. Let me say why.

I am tasked with both introducing and commenting upon these papers. I have no trouble with introducing: that is an honor and a pleasure. But I have to confess that I have qualms about commenting on papers that have not yet been delivered: I do not want to rob my colleagues of the wind from their sails before they have even gotten underway. Furthermore, this annual meeting of the Heidegger Circle should be an occasion for questions and conversation, and so I feel strongly that as a commentator, my task should be one of provoking and instigating that dialogue, not pre-empting it.

Therefore, with the permission of the Chair of this session, I would like to propose the following: that I begin with some brief introductory remarks here, and then, after the papers have been delivered, follow up with commentary and suggestions for questions that might be worth asking.

Introduction

Very well, so let me introduce these two papers by saying that what I think unites them are the political implications of an existential homelessness as a distinctly modern phenomenon

and as distinctly modern problem. Again, I prefer to let the authors speak first for themselves, but I don't think it gives too much away to say that Christopher Ruth's theme is what he calls the "onto-historical proletarianization" (6) — a remarkable phrase — of human beings by the uprooting imposed on us by the successive waves of Western metaphysics. Ruth does a very fine job of lucidly comparing Marx and Heidegger on the *dislocation* (6) of human beings from their existence, an dislocation brought to its greatest crisis by modern industrial capitalism (Marx) and by the nihilistic sway of the essence of technology, the last and most extreme phase of Western metaphysics (Heidegger). Ruth is nothing if not bold to bring together Marx and Heidegger, for reasons I will say more about later, but I would simply say now that in philosophy boldness has its place in waking us from our dogmatic slumbers.

Similarly, Robert Bernasconi suggests — correctly, I would venture — that for Heidegger, Hölderlin was, or is, the poet who might lead us "to another place, a place where Western metaphysics no longer held sway" (1). For Heidegger, Hölderlin is that almost unspeakably rare figure who escapes the entanglements of metaphysics and points to a new shore; if not yet beyond metaphysics, then at least through it and towards a home that properly accommodates what it means to be human. But I have to correct myself: as Bernasconi reminds us, for Heidegger, it is not an amorphous "us" whom Hölderlin might lead to another place, a renewal of the home, but rather a very specific "we": the Germans. It is no accident that Heidegger turns to Hölderlin in the 1930's: this is the time when the proponents of a radical German nationalism are fighting over the meaning of the poet as a prophet of the national revolution of 1933.

This brings me to another diplomatic difficulty. Here we are, at the annual meeting of the Heidegger Circle. We are here, presumably, because we think that Heidegger is of no small importance as a philosopher. Presumably, many, most or all of us have been inspired by his work and have devoted much of our own labors to understanding and writing about him. And yet, to paraphrase Marx, a specter is haunting us: the specter of Heidegger's politics. For those of us who respect Heidegger as a thinker (and I include myself among them), that specter causes discomfort, fear, and even loathing. But I also believe we must confront this specter, or else risk lapsing into irrelevance. We all know that Emmanuel Faye's book, *Heidegger: The Introduction of Nazism into Philosophy*, has caused quite a stir, even beyond academic philosophy, which is unusual indeed, at least in the United States. Faye himself has become something of a bogeyman for Heideggerians; for example, he haunts the footnotes of one of Bernasconi's forthcoming papers ("Race and Earth in Heidegger's Thinking During the Late

1930s,” forthcoming in *The Southern Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 48, issue 1 (2010), pp. 49-46). Many of us resent Faye deeply, because his analysis is often so flawed, and his conclusions so extreme, and the implications so inflammatory — most of all, that we must secretly or at best unwittingly be spreading Heidegger’s Nazism if we admire his thinking in any way. This imputation is indeed unjust, but nevertheless, I would suggest that in the matter of “Heidegger and Politics,” we ourselves are partly to blame. The specter frightens us, too, so we avoid it. But if we cede the field, we should not be surprised when those completely unsympathetic to Heidegger take up the task, shake the skeletons in his closet, and scare the living hell out of people. Nazism still has the power to appall, and it is only now, in the 2000’s, that some of Heidegger’s most troubling texts are being published. If Heidegger truly is a destiny for Western thought, we who continue to reflect on his questions must do more to face the ghost of his politics if we do not want to embrace increasing marginality.

Commentary

Robert Bernasconi’s paper on Heidegger and Hölderlin embodies the kind of scholarly courage I think we need today in the study of Heidegger. He has taken on unsettling topics, such as racism and Heidegger, while at the same time never losing sight of what remains philosophically important in Heidegger’s work. This is the difficult balancing act we must accomplish. In the case of Heidegger and Hölderlin, Bernasconi reminds us that Heidegger’s turn to language is connected to his turn to Hölderlin, and that turn, in turn, is connected to the special place of Hölderlin in the cultural politics of German nationalism. I find quite convincing Bernasconi’s explanation of Heidegger’s turn to Hölderlin in the context of his times, but not as simply defined by those times.

The link between Bernasconi’s paper and Ruth’s that I want to explore has to do with the meaning of the homelessness that Heidegger seeks both to save us from and restore us to, a seeming paradox that Ruth so clearly explains. I think that Bernasconi is quite right to emphasize that for Heidegger, the “other beginning” to Western history, one that would confront Western metaphysics, “would be German not Greek, but the Germans would only learn who they might become in struggle (*Kampf*) (GA 39, 293)” (11). Those who know my work won’t be surprised when I underline that Heidegger grounds this struggle, this *Kampf*, in his understanding of *polemos* in Heraclitus’ fragment 53. For Heidegger, *polemos* (war, *Kampf*, *Auseinandersetzung*, confrontation) is the name that he gives, at least in this decisive period of 1933 to the end of the war, to the human relationship with Being. He links Heraclitus

and fragment 53 directly with Hölderlin in that first lecture course on the poet in 1934 (see GA 39, 123ff), and connects the German people's role in the other beginning to a *polemos* between that other beginning and the first beginning with the Greeks. Again I agree with Bernasconi that Heidegger believed that the Germans could only *be* German by taking on the fate of this *polemos* as futural question, but it is clear that for Heidegger, the revolution past metaphysics and the restoration of home and homeland is a special and exclusively *German* mission.

Christopher Ruth's comparison of Heidegger and Marx, by contrast, intimates a revolution past metaphysics that is most decidedly not national but rather post-national, one couched in what he designates "a peculiar notion of universality — not of a universal as that which surmounts the particular, but rather as displaced from the particular" (7). In Ruth's provocative comparative analysis, he emphasizes that both thinkers "reject any metaphysical humanism" (1), and he connects the crisis of our age to something both Marx and Heidegger see: that human homelessness and estrangement drives the necessity of confronting the ill fruits of metaphysical humanism. Ruth further ties human homelessness to a two-fold displacement in Heidegger (what I think Heidegger frequently referred to in the 1930s as our *Ver-rückung*, our de-rangement): on the one hand, "the human being is *estranged from* being to the extent that she is *absorbed in* a particular way of revealing beings," and, on the other, being unhomeily "means that the human beings belongs to revealing itself, and not to one of its particular historical sites" (5). In Ruth's plausible analysis of Marx-cum-Heidegger, it is the estrangement of absorption in a particular world that leaves us vulnerable to worst uprooting of metaphysics, because we forget that our historical facticity is contingent, as revealed by Being. We only find our home when "we recognize our fundamental unhomeliness in the second sense" (5) of our being the locus for the historizing revealing of Being in its event.

For Ruth, the importance of Marx is that he recognizes that capitalism has created a whole class of people for whom their identity is to be stripped of all identity, to be the homeless in themselves in an age of seemingly endless possibility: "The proletariat is the class of all of those who have thus been divested of human content and stand naked as individuals, which is why the fully consummated constitution of this class coincides with the abolition of all classes" (3). The planetary reach of industrial capitalism in Marx thus coincides with the planetary *Ge-Stell* of modern technology in Heidegger. Ruth, probably rightly, therefore sees another convergence between Marx and Heidegger: both thinkers understand the historical significance of the planetary crisis to be pregnant with both danger and opportunity. The opportunity depends on our realizing that human beings have no metaphysical essence in the conventional

sense of “an enduring essence” (5). Only then may we live up to the potential of an essence that is unfixed, one that is to remain thankful for and alive to the revealings of Beings, rather than hubristically attempting to bring Being to a stand and master it.

This is a compelling vision, but I have my concerns about it. First, there is Heidegger’s own hostility to Marx, which we would need to make sense of fully (which we cannot do here). So, just to start, in his lecture course of 1933-34, Heidegger proclaims:

The entire spiritual being-here of the West is determined to this day by [Plato’s] doctrine of ideas. Even the concept of God arises from the idea, even natural science is oriented toward it. Christian and rationalist thought are combined in *Hegel*. Hegel, in turn, is the foundation for currents of thought and world views, above all for *Marxism*. If there had been no doctrine of ideas, there would be no Marxism. So Marxism cannot be defeated once and for all unless we first confront the doctrine of ideas and its two-millennia-long history. (GA 36/37, 151; trans. Fried & Polt, forthcoming)

For Heidegger, Marx is an extension of Platonism and metaphysics, not a repudiation of it. Why? Because Marx is merely a reversal of Hegelian idealism, and that idealism has its roots in a Platonism that locates reality in a transcendent other world. For Heidegger, Marxism inherits Christianity’s universalism and its eschatological historiology, while bringing the eschaton of history down from heaven and on to earth. Perhaps Heidegger is wrong about Marx, but the question to pose for Ruth is, how so?

Second, a point closely connected to the first. While I agree with Ruth that Heidegger wants human beings to recover their home-in-homelessness, it is important to remember that this does *not* mean renouncing belonging to a historical place and to a historical people. Heidegger’s notion here is extraordinarily subtle, but to cut through to it, perhaps a bit messily, I think he means that we must accept our finite givenness *as* groundlessly given, and no less precious for that — but it must remain open, and question-worthy as a gift with a historical trajectory, not a stable essence in the metaphysical sense. Hence Heidegger’s hostility to crude biological racism, as Bernasconi has shown us in his previous work. This is why I think Heidegger would reject Ruth’s “peculiar notion of universality” – taken from Marx — “as displaced from the particular” (7). Heidegger wants to reclaim the finite from the universal, but not as a merely thoughtless absorption in the finite. So the question here is, how can Marx’s planetary universalism be reconciled with Heidegger’s insistence on finite belonging?

Third, recovering the sense of a groundless home brings us back to a point emphasized by Bernasconi: Heidegger conceives of an epochal confrontation between the first and an other

beginning as the locus of a revolution against Western metaphysics, a revolution to be carried out by the Germans in confrontation with the Greeks. For Heidegger, the salvific role in the revolution against metaphysics is to be played by the Germans (the supposedly only metaphysical people), as for Marx, in Ruth's account, by the proletarians (the class which supposedly has no essentialist class interest). About that grand *polemos* of history, Heidegger says something truly terrifying in his interpretation of Heraclitus, fragment 53 in the lecture course of 1933-34:

One word stands great and simple at the beginning of the saying: πόλεμος, war. This does not mean the outward occurrence of war and the celebration of what is "military," but rather what is decisive: standing against the enemy. We have translated this word with "struggle" to hold on to what is essential; but on the other hand, it is important to think over that it does not mean ἀγών, a competition in which two friendly opponents measure their strengths, but rather the struggle of πόλεμος, war. This means that the struggle is in earnest; the opponent is not a partner but an enemy. Struggle as standing against the enemy, or more plainly: standing firm in confrontation.

An enemy is each and every person who poses an essential threat to the Dasein of the people and its individual members. The enemy does not have to be external, and the external enemy is not even always the more dangerous one. And it can seem as if there were no enemy. Then it is a fundamental requirement to find the enemy, to expose the enemy to the light, or even first to make the enemy, so that this standing against the enemy may happen and so that Dasein may not lose its edge.

The enemy can have attached itself to the innermost roots of the Dasein of a people and can set itself against this people's own essence and act against it. The struggle is all the fiercer and harder and tougher, for the least of it consists in coming to blows with one another; it is often far more difficult and wearisome to catch sight of the enemy as such, to bring the enemy into the open, to harbor no illusions about the enemy, to keep oneself ready for attack, to cultivate and intensify a constant readiness and to prepare the attack looking far ahead with the goal of total annihilation. (GA 36/37, 90-91; trans. Fried & Polt, forthcoming)

I have quoted this passage at length because if we are going to confront the question of Heidegger and politics, we must come to terms with passages such as this. Can there be any question that the enemy here in this struggle, an enemy who latches on almost invisibly to the "innermost roots of the people," an enemy who brings on his own head "the goal of total annihilation" (*dem Ziel der völligen Vernichtung*) is none other than the Jew? Or perhaps the communist, if we want to be generous? Is it enough to say that this is just a regrettable exaggeration on Heidegger's part that has nothing to do with his sense of the history of Being

or what it means to be liberated from the false universalism of metaphysics and the rectification of Dasein's groundless grounding in exclusive finitude?

Let me come to it, then, and not beat about the bush. Marx shares something more with Heidegger: a conviction that *Kampf*, struggle, *polemos* is the driving force of human history. For Marx of course, that struggle is the history of *class* struggle, and it will result in an end of history and an end of struggle (Marx's Platonic eschatology again), but until then, it is every bit as all-encompassing and merciless as the *polemos* in Heidegger. The class enemy is an enemy indeed; there can be no reconciliation beyond temporary strategic alliances: one's consciousness, one's whole being is defined by class (or revolutionary classless class, in the case of the proletariat); a class foe is not just an adversary but a true enemy in the existential sense. I would also point out that Marx comes quite close to Heidegger when he write, in "On the Jewish Question" that "As soon as society succeeds in abolishing the *empirical* essence of Judaism — huckstering and its conditions — the Jew becomes *impossible*, because consciousness no longer has an object"; and: "In the final analysis, the *emancipation* of the Jews is the emancipation of mankind from *Judaism*" (Tucker, 52 and 49). The question here then is: to what extent does Marx's eliminationist understanding of class struggle bear a relation to the political liquidation of human beings by class-type under the regimes directly inspired by his understanding of what drives history and individuals human beings? And how is this any less appalling than the elimination of human beings by race-type under the type of fascism Heidegger supported?

And since I am pulling no punches, let me suggest that, despite all its power and promise, the very idea that the human essence is to have no essence is a profoundly dangerous one. Ruth cites the famous passage in the *German Ideology*, where Marx envisions a communist society where each of can fish, hunt, engage in criticism, etc. at will, without ever being defined by any one of these activities. For Ruth, this infinitude of human potential is the fullest expression of the human non-essence. Presumably, one would need to couple this freedom of action and freedom from definition to Marx's proclamation from *The Critique of the Gotha Program*, that the banner of communist society will read "From each according to his ability, to each according to his need!" (Tucker, 531). Under communism, we will each freely develop our productive potential, without being coerced to do so, and we will apply those abilities when and where they are needed out of a natural identification with our species-being.

Two things about this. One is that it sneaks in a conception of fully realized human nature through the back door: to be truly human is to be a self-actualized yet undefined contributor to

the collective good of humankind on a planetary scale, while acting locally in response to the needs that manifest in ever widening circles of relevance. The other is to observe what Leszek Kolakowski pointed out in “The Myth of Human Self-Identity,” namely that there are only three possible inducements for work: “material incentives, moral motivation, and physical coercion” (*My Correct Views on Everything*, 56-57). Communism presumes that human nature is so malleable that moral devotion to the people alone will be sufficient to motive work — “from each... to each!” But what if there is indeed a human nature that necessarily resists the total identification of self and society? Communism, as well as many forms of fascism, forbids individual self-interest as a viable option. What does that leave? Fear and coercion. As Kolakowski wryly observes, that’s exactly what we get from the history of communism made actual. So I suppose it’s now less a question than a challenge, but I will phrase it as a question: does not the reliance, in both Heidegger and Marx, upon a notion of human nature as non-essential and infinitely malleable, leave us utterly vulnerable to unhinged politics, liberated not from metaphysical constraints, but from practical wisdom, decency, and moderation? Isn’t Marx’s salvific valorization of the proletariat just as mistaken as Heidegger’s of the Germans? And shouldn’t the recognition of our finitude leave us more humble and less reckless than Marx and Heidegger?

If I may conclude with a question for Bernasconi: given Heidegger’s attempt to appropriate two of the most potent concepts of National Socialism, homeland and struggle, through his dual and interconnected interpretations of Hölderlin and Heraclitus, which he links through the *polemos* in GA 39, what are we to make of the context that he, Bernasconi, elucidates so well? What would Bernasconi point to as still philosophically question-worthy, despite or perhaps even because of that context? If it has anything to do with Heidegger’s contention that Hölderlin is the poet who points us past metaphysics, is there a way to follow that lead without Heidegger’s valorization of a particular people as the unique bearer of that burden, and what would that then have to do with the work of the poet? What might the fact that, as Bernasconi points out, the “political is subordinated to the poet” (11) in Heidegger’s later work on Hölderlin?

The Singularity of Being and the Fourfold in the Later Heidegger

Jussi Backman

University of Helsinki

Abstract

The paper studies the notion of the unique singularity (*Einzigkeit, Einmaligkeit*) of Being in Heidegger's work, first and foremost in *Contributions to Philosophy*. I argue that whereas the Aristotelian metaphysical tradition regards Being as the most universal or "transcendental" notion that comprehends all instances of "to be," Heidegger, by contrast, addresses Being in a "postmetaphysical" sense as the *singularization* of each meaningful situation into a unique configuration of a multidimensional meaning-context. I show that the theme of singularity was present in Heidegger's thinking all the way from his 1915 dissertation on Duns Scotus and the notion of the singular instant (*Augenblick*) in *Being and Time*. Finally, I suggest an interpretation of the fourfold (*Geviert*) as Heidegger's most developed articulation of the structure of this context-specific singularity of meaningfulness.

1. Ontotheological Universality vs. Transitional Singularity

In Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, a central problem facing a possible science of Being *qua* Being¹ (*on hē on*) is the radical universality of Being (*to on*). Since Being pertains to every instance of "to be (something)," it excludes nothing and therefore transcends all differentiating determinations.² In Scholastic terms, it is a "transcendental" notion. Moreover, Being pertains to its instances in different senses that are irreducible to any common definition. However, Aristotle stresses that "to be" is not simply an equivocal expression with many separate meanings. Everything that is said to "be," in one sense or another, shares a common point of reference, which eventually turns out to be an exemplary instance of Being.³ Rather than attempting to define Being in general, Aristotle's study of Being *qua* Being therefore achieves its goal as theology, i.e., as the study of the supreme being.⁴ All instances of "to be" stand in a hierarchical relationship to this supreme instance—that which "is most"—as their ultimate

¹ Aristotle, *Metaphysics* (*Aristotle's Metaphysics*, Vol. 1–2, ed. W.D. Ross [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924]), Γ.1.1003a21–24 (hereafter, *Met.*).

² Aristotle, *Met.* B.1.996a4–9; 3.998b22–27; 4.1001a4–b25; cf. *Topics* (*Topica et Sophistici elenchi*, ed. W.D. Ross [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958]), VI.6.144b4–11.

³ Aristotle, *Met.* Γ.2.1003a33–b16; cf. Joseph Owens, *The Doctrine of Being in the Aristotelian "Metaphysics": A Study in the Greek Background of Mediaeval Thought* [1951], 2nd ed. (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1963), 265.

⁴ Aristotle, *Met.* E.1.1026a18–32.

ideal and standard.⁵ The Aristotelian God is neither a spatiotemporally situated particular nor a universal instantiated in particulars; it is determinate without being enmattered and spatiotemporally situated. It is a universally valid instance of Being.

Settling the question of what it means to *be* by referring to a supreme instance of “to be” is what the later Heidegger designates as the “ontotheological” structure of Aristotelian metaphysics.⁶ Ontotheology, Heidegger maintains, was already present in Plato’s *Republic*, in which all specific Ideas are referred back to a supreme Idea, the Idea of the Good.⁷ According to Heidegger’s grand historical narrative, ontotheology remained a basic feature of all Post-Aristotelian metaphysics, attaining its culmination at the end of Hegel’s *Science of Logic*, where the Absolute Idea—the absolutely universal determination into which all finite determinations are subsumed—is declared to be identical with Being (*Sein*) itself.⁸ Through this utter conflation of Being with its supreme instance, the ontotheological project as Heidegger understands it reaches its extreme limits and becomes, in this sense, “complete.”⁹

Heidegger’s notions of the completion of metaphysics with Hegel and its subsequent exhaustion and end (which he situates in Nietzsche’s thinking)¹⁰ were, to a certain extent,

⁵ Aristotle, *Met.* A.7.1072a19–b14.

⁶ See, e.g., Heidegger, “Die seinsgeschichtliche Bestimmung des Nihilismus” [1944/46], in *Nietzsche*, Vol. 2, 6th ed. (Stuttgart: Neske, 1998), 311–15 (hereafter, N II); “Nihilism as Determined by the History of Being,” in *Nietzsche*, Vol. 4: *Nihilism*, trans. F. A. Capuzzi, ed. D. F. Krell (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991), 207–10; “Einleitung zu ‘Was ist Metaphysik?’” [1949], in *Wegmarken*, 3rd ed. (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1996), 378–79 (hereafter, WM); “Introduction to ‘What is Metaphysics?’,” trans. W. Kaufmann, in *Pathmarks*, ed. W. McNeill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 287–88; “Die onto-theo-logische Verfassung der Metaphysik” [1957], in *Identität und Differenz*, 12th ed. (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 2002), 31–67 (hereafter, ID); “The Onto-theo-logical Constitution of Metaphysics,” in *Identity and Difference*, trans. J. Stambaugh (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 42–74.

⁷ Heidegger, “Platons Lehre von der Wahrheit” [1940], in WM, 235–36; “Plato’s Doctrine of Truth,” trans. T. Sheehan, in *Pathmarks*, 180–81.

⁸ G.W.F. Hegel, *Gesammelte Werke*, Vol. 12: *Die Wissenschaft der Logik*, Vol. 2: *Die subjektive Logik* [1816] (Hamburg: Meiner, 1981), 236; *Science of Logic*, trans. A. V. Miller (London: Routledge, 2002), 824.

⁹ Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe*, Vol. 66: *Besinnung* [1938–39] (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1997), 383–84 (hereafter, GA 66); *Mindfulness*, trans. P. Emad & T. Kalary (London: Continuum, 2006), 339–41. To be precise, as the “conclusion” of metaphysics, Hegel’s absolute idealism is only the first phase of the end of metaphysics. The ultimate metaphysical step, according to Heidegger, is taken by Nietzsche, who renounces Hegel’s speculative metaphysics in favor of a redefinition of subjectivity—and of Being itself—as *will to power*. (Heidegger, “Überwindung der Metaphysik” [1936–46], in *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, 9th ed. [Stuttgart: Neske, 2000], 72 [hereafter, VA]; “Overcoming Metaphysics,” in *The End of Philosophy*, trans. J. Stambaugh [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003], 89.)

¹⁰ Heidegger, “Der europäische Nihilismus” [1940], in N II, 177–80; “European Nihilism,” in *Nietzsche*, Vol. 4: *Nihilism*, 147–49. Cf. “Überwindung der Metaphysik,” in VA, 79; “Overcoming Metaphysics,” in *The End of Philosophy*, 95–96; *Gesamtausgabe*, Vol. 45: *Grundfragen der Philosophie: Ausgewählte “Probleme” der “Logik”* [1937–38] (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1992), 124–25; *Basic Questions of Philosophy: Selected “Problems” of “Logic”*, trans. R. Rojcewicz & A. Schuwer (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1994), 108–09.

shared by other Post-Kantian and Post-Hegelian thinkers, not least by the 19th-century empiricist, naturalist, and positivist trends that converged in the Vienna Circle. From the view that traditional metaphysics had become obsolete, the logical positivists concluded that the metaphysical way of questioning should simply be abandoned as meaningless in order to integrate philosophy into empirical science as a formal technique. However, in the wake of Husserl's attacks on naturalism and positivism, Heidegger chose to explore another possibility: that of addressing the original topic of metaphysics—Being as such—in an essentially different manner, which could be characterized as “postmetaphysical.”¹¹ This latter alternative is what Heidegger calls the “transition” (*Übergang*) from the end of metaphysics into another beginning or “onset” (*Anfang*) of Occidental thinking.

This transition is most comprehensively traced out in his *Contributions to Philosophy* (1936–38).¹² It would, of course, be an immensely complicated process, and is never exhaustively “systematized” by Heidegger, who is mostly content with tentatively pointing out individual aspects of this transition. In what follows, I will argue that one aspect of this transition is the transformation of the Aristotelian understanding of Being as transcendental universality to a postmetaphysical perspective on Being as singularity, or rather as *singularization*—as spatiotemporal instantiation that is never “the same” in two different instants, but rather renders every instance “of” Being possible as a *unique* constellation of meaningful presence.

2. Be-ing as Singularization: Heidegger's “Last Word”

The vocabulary of “singularity” (*Einmaligkeit*) and “uniqueness” (*Einzigkeit*) in the later Heidegger has sometimes been suspected—most famously by Jacques Derrida¹³—of being

¹¹ The term “postmetaphysical” has been made famous by Jürgen Habermas (*Nachmetaphysisches Denken: Philosophische Aufsätze* [Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1988]; *Postmetaphysical Thinking: Philosophical Essays*, trans. W. M. Hohengarten [Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992]).

¹² On the transition to another onset, see Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe*, Vol. 65: *Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis)* [1936–38] (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1989), 4–6 (hereafter, GA 65); *Contributions to Philosophy (From Enowning)*, trans. P. Emad & K. Maly (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1999), 3–5; cf. “Die ewige Wiederkehr des Gleichen und der Wille zur Macht” [1939], in N II, 21; “The Eternal Recurrence of the Same and the Will to Power,” in *Nietzsche*, Vol. 3: *The Will to Power as Knowledge and as Metaphysics*, trans. J. Stambaugh & D.F. Krell & F.A. Capuzzi, ed. D.F. Krell (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991), 182.

¹³ In his 1987 essay “Desistance,” Derrida asks: “What if Heidegger's unthought (for example) was not one, but plural? What if his unthought was believing in the uniqueness or unity of the unthought?” (“*Désistance*” [1987], in *Psychè: Invention de l'autre* [Paris: Galilée, 1987], 616; “Introduction: Desistance,” in Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, *Typography: Mimesis, Philosophy, Politics*, ed. C. Fynsk [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989], 20. Translation modified.) Cf. “La différence” [1968], in *Marges de la philosophie* (Paris: Minuit, 1972), 29; “Différance,” in *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. A. Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 27; “La

simply a remnant of traditional metaphysical hierarchies, of the quest for an ultimate and absolute unity beyond apparent multiplicity. Other scholars, however, have pointed out the transitional character of Heidegger's notion of singularity. Reiner Schürmann writes:

The singular event [sc. *Ereignis*, the “taking place” of Being], thought from out of the singular *there*—that is the other of the ontological tradition. [...] the singular is his [sc. Heidegger's] penultimate word and singularization—thus time—his last word.¹⁴

The fact that what Schürmann characterizes as Heidegger's “last word” has attracted relatively little emphasis in Heidegger scholarship is at least partly due to the general vagueness of Heidegger's relevant formulations.¹⁵ Being as singularization is perhaps most clearly elaborated in the following passages from *Contributions* and the subsequent treatise *Mindfulness* from 1938–39:

Within the realm of the leading question [sc. the Aristotelian metaphysical question concerning Being *qua* Being], [...] the essentiality of essence [*Wesens*] lies in its greatest possible universality. [...]

main de Heidegger (*Geschlecht II*)” [1985], in *Psychè: Invention de l'autre*, 439; “*Geschlecht II*: Heidegger's Hand,” trans. J. P. Leavey, Jr., in *Deconstruction and Philosophy: The Texts of Jacques Derrida*, ed. J. Sallis (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 182; *De l'esprit: Heidegger et la question* (Paris: Galilée, 1987), 24; *Of Spirit: Heidegger and the Question*, trans. G. Bennington & R. Bowlby (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 9. See also Dieter Thomä, *Die Zeit des Selbst und die Zeit danach: Zur Kritik der Textgeschichte Martin Heideggers 1910–1976* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1990), 801, 805, 810, 829, 838; John D. Caputo, *Demythologizing Heidegger* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1993), 4–5; Edward Casey, “Origin(s) in (of) Heidegger/Derrida,” *The Journal of Philosophy* 81/10 (1994): 603; Herman Philipse, *Heidegger's Philosophy of Being: A Critical Interpretation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), 187

¹⁴ Reiner Schürmann, *Broken Hegemonies* [1996], trans. R. Lilly (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2003), 581, 594. Cf. Schürmann, *Heidegger on Being and Acting: From Principles to Anarchy* [1982], trans. C.-M. Gros (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1990), 12–13, 219; “Ultimate Double Binds,” trans. K. Blamey, in James Risser (ed.), *Heidegger Toward the Turn: Essays on the Work of the 1930s* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1999), 243–46. See also David A. White, *Logic and Ontology in Heidegger* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1985), 194–95; Jean-Luc Nancy, *La communauté désœuvrée* [1986] (Paris: Bourgois, 1990), 191–92; *The Inoperative Community*, ed. P. Connor (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 103–05; *L'expérience de la liberté* (Paris: Galilée, 1988), 91–93; *The Experience of Freedom*, trans. B. McDonald (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993), *; Jean Greisch, “La parole d'origine, l'origine de la parole: Logique et sigétique dans les *Beiträge zur Philosophie* de Martin Heidegger,” *Rue Descartes* 1 (1991): 204; Hans Ruin, *Enigmatic Origins: Tracing the Theme of Historicity through Heidegger's Works* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1994), 206; Jean-Marc Narbonne, *Hénologie, ontologie et Ereignis: Plotin-Proclus-Heidegger* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2001), 204, 211–12, 244–82; Miguel de Beistegui, *Truth and Genesis: Philosophy as Differential Ontology* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2004), 147; Jeff Malpas, *Heidegger's Topology: Being, Place, World* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006), 16, 86, 173, 244, 313.

¹⁵ Heidegger also seems to use the expression in a wider and indeterminate sense in which it encompasses even the traditional metaphysical notion of Being as the unique “one over many.” See *Einführung in die Metaphysik* [1935/36], 6th ed. (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1998), 60; *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. R. Manheim (New Haven, CO: Yale University Press, 1959), 79; *Gesamtausgabe*, Vol. 51: *Grundbegriffe* [1941], 2nd ed. (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1991), 51–54; *Basic Concepts*, trans. G. E. Aylesworth (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1998), 43–46.

Where, by contrast, Be-ing [*Seyn*] is conceived of as taking-place [*Ereignis*], essentiality is determined from the originality and uniqueness [*Einzigkeit*] of Be-ing itself. Essence is not the universal, but rather precisely the abidance [*Wesung*] of uniqueness in each instance [...].¹⁶

The uniqueness and singularity [*Einmaligkeit*] of Be-ing are not propositional properties, let alone deduced determinations [...] Rather, Be-ing itself is uniqueness, singularity [...].¹⁷

Even though the theme of Being as singularization does not explicitly emerge as a theme in Heidegger's work until the mid-1930s, formulations foreshadowing this topic can be found in texts from the very outset of his philosophical career. In his 1916 habilitation dissertation, Heidegger chose to study John Duns Scotus because of the latter's "greater proximity to real life" in comparison to other Scholastics. Heidegger specifically points to the concept of *haecceitas*, "thisness," coined by Duns Scotus in order to highlight, over against the universal and specific "whatness" (*quidditas*) of an entity, the "this-here" character that makes a particular thing particular and distinguishes it from other instances of the same species.¹⁸ The traditional priority of the universal, the formal, and the abstract, Heidegger argues, has prevented the Aristotelian tradition from "grasping [...] the *historical* in its *individuality*."¹⁹ Echoing the Baden Neokantians Windelband and Rickert, Heidegger calls for a radically "individualizing" historical science, the aim of which would be to "depict the [...] context of the objectifications of human life in the uniqueness [*Einzigartigkeit*] and singularity [*Einmaligkeit*] of these objectifications [...]."²⁰

In Heidegger's early work, however, the problem of giving an account of the historical situatedness of singular lived situations is not addressed simply as a problem for the methodology of historical science. It is rather meant as a challenge to the entire philosophical tradition. In 1923 Heidegger announced the task of elaborating a radicalized *ontology*—a new

¹⁶ GA 65, 66; *Contributions to Philosophy*, 46. Translation modified.

¹⁷ GA 66, 128; *Mindfulness*, 108. Translation modified.

¹⁸ Heidegger, "Die Kategorien- und Bedeutungslehre des Duns Scotus" [1915], in *Gesamtausgabe*, Vol. 1: *Frühe Schriften* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1978), 203 (hereafter, GA 1).

¹⁹ Heidegger, "Die Kategorien- und Bedeutungslehre des Duns Scotus," in GA 1, 262.

²⁰ Heidegger, "Die Zeitbegriff in der Geschichtswissenschaft" [1915], in GA 1, 427; "The Concept of Time in the Science of History," trans. H. S. Taylor & H. W. Uffelmann & J. van Buren, in *Supplements: From the Earliest Essays to Being and Time and Beyond*, ed. J. van Buren (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2002), 56. Translation modified. Heidegger is here picking up Wilhelm Windelband's famous distinction between the "nomothetic" generalization characteristic of natural sciences and the "idiographic" study of individual historical phenomena that is particular to the humanities. This distinction became a central theme in the Southwest or Baden School of Neokantianism, which had an unmistakable influence on the young Heidegger, first and foremost through the supervisor of his habilitation, Heinrich Rickert. Cf. Jeffrey Andrew Barash, *Martin Heidegger and the Problem of Historical Meaning* (Dordrecht: Nijhoff, 1988), 44.

approach to the question of Being as such—by way of a “hermeneutics of facticity,”²¹ i.e., a radically interpretive phenomenology of original lived experience, which, rather than simply abstracting universal structures of experience from matter-of-fact experiential situations, would articulate the context-specific, situated, and singular character of all lived meaningfulness. This task of elaborating a new fundamental ontology of situatedness then set the course for *Being and Time*. In a structural analogy with Aristotle’s metaphysics, fundamental ontology was to articulate the meaning or sense (*Sinn*) of Being as such by way of an analysis of an “exemplary being,” an outstanding instance of Being.²² The exemplary being of fundamental ontology is, however, fundamentally different from the Aristotelian God. It is precisely the mortal and finite human *Dasein*, “exemplary” simply by being the situated receptive place of Being, the singular “There” (*Da*) for any possible Being-there.²³

The first stage of fundamental ontology, the analytic of *Dasein*, aims at disclosing temporal situatedness as the Being-structure of *Dasein*’s Being or existence.²⁴ After an analysis of the different categories or modes of existence, the “existentials,” they are referred back to three temporal ecstases, i.e., aspects or vectors²⁵ of *Dasein*’s unitary temporal happening (“tempering,” *Zeitigung*) as contextual and situated.²⁶ In its futurity or “forthcoming,”²⁷

²¹ Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe*, Vol. 63: *Ontologie (Hermeneutik der Faktizität)* [1923], 2nd ed. (Klostermann: Frankfurt am Main, 1995), 1–3; *Ontology: The Hermeneutics of Facticity*, trans. J. van Buren (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1999), 1–3.

²² This structural analogy with Aristotelian metaphysics is emphasized by Heidegger himself: *Gesamtausgabe*, Vol. 23: *Geschichte der Philosophie von Thomas von Aquin bis Kant* [1926–27] (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 2006), 60; *Gesamtausgabe*, Vol. 24: *Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie* [1927], 3rd ed. (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1997), 26 (hereafter, GA 24); *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, trans. A. Hofstadter, revised ed. (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1988), 19–20; *Gesamtausgabe*, Vol. 26: *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Logik im Ausgang von Leibniz* [1928], 2nd ed. (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1990), 201–02 (hereafter, GA 26); *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, trans. M. Heim (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1992), 158.

²³ Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* [1927], 18th ed. (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2001), 6–7 (hereafter, SZ); *Being and Time*, trans. J. Macquarrie & E. Robinson (Oxford: Blackwell, 1978), 26–27; cf. SZ, 439n7(c).

²⁴ On the somewhat ambiguous determinations of the analytic of *Dasein* as the outset *as well as* the main content of fundamental ontology, see SZ, 12–14, 38; *Being and Time*, 32–35, 62; GA 24, 26; *Basic Problems*, 19–20; GA 26, 199–202; *Metaphysical Foundations*, 156–59; *Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik* [1929], 6th ed. (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1998), 232, 239, 242; *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, trans. R. Taft, 5th ed. (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1997), 163, 168, 170. Cf. Barbara Merker, *Selbsttäuschung und Selbsterkenntnis: Zu Heideggers Transformation der Phänomenologie Husserls* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1988), 25–26; Jean-François Courtine, *Heidegger et la phénoménologie* (Paris: Vrin, 1990), 78n24.

²⁵ For the characterization of the ecstases as “vectors” of the unitary movement of “tempering” (*Zeitigung*), see John Protevi, *Time and Exteriority: Aristotle, Heidegger, Derrida* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 1994), 126.

²⁶ For the analysis of ecstatic temporality as the sense of *Dasein*’s Being, provisionally determined as “care” (*Sorge*; SZ, 180–200; *Being and Time*, 225–44), see SZ, 323–31; *Being and Time*, 379–80.

(*Zukunft*), *Dasein* “comes forth to itself” by grasping the fact that it has always already come to be in a specific situation—its “already-having-been” (*Gewesenheit*)—in terms of the finite possibilities orienting this precise situation. On the basis of this initial temporal contextuality, *Dasein* is receptive to the concerns of the present (*Gegenwart*), in which things are primordially given as meaningful in a practical context (availability, *Zuhandenheit*), i.e., within a temporally multidimensional network of references. The most “proper” or “appropriate” (*eigentlich*), i.e., ontologically most primordial, mode of temporal existence is *resolve* (*Entschlossenheit*), a primarily futural mode in which *Dasein* is released from its ordinary preoccupation with the present in order to experience the full temporal dimensionality of its own Being.²⁸ The present is thereby singularized into an *instant* (*Augenblick*)²⁹, an instantaneous “glance of the eye” into the unique context-specificity of a singular situation and into the situated identity of *Dasein* as “in each instance mine” (*je meines*)³⁰. As Heidegger puts it in his 1929–30 course, the instant is what

[...] properly makes *Dasein* possible [...]. It is the glance of *Dasein*’s resolve into Being-the-There [*Da-sein*], which, in each instance [*je*], is as existing in the fully seized situation, as this in each instance singular [*einmalige*] and unique [*einzig*] existing.³¹

What fundamental ontology seeks is a path from *Dasein*’s “timeliness” (*Zeitlichkeit*)—its structure as the temporally singular “There” of Being—to the temporality (*Temporalität*) of Being—the temporal singularity of Being as such. Heidegger’s potentially misleading characterizations of the disclosure of Being as a “transcendental cognition” and of Being as the “*transcendens* pure and simple” are modified by the following remark: “The transcendence of the *Dasein*’s Being is distinctive in that it implies the possibility and the necessity of the most

²⁷ For the apt translation of *Zukunft* as “forthcoming,” see Alexei Chernyakov, *The Ontology of Time: Being and Time in the Philosophies of Aristotle, Husserl and Heidegger* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2002), 192.

²⁸ On resolve, see SZ, 295–310, 325–30, 338–39, 382–87; *Being and Time*, 341–58, 372–79, 387–89, 434–39.

²⁹ On the instant, see SZ, 328, 338; *Being and Time*, 376, 387–88.

³⁰ SZ, 41; *Being and Time*, 67.

³¹ Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe*, Vol. 29/30: *Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik: Welt–Endlichkeit–Einsamkeit* [1929/30] (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1983), 251; *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude*, trans. W. McNeill & N. Walker (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1995), 169. Translation modified. As William McNeill (*The Glance of the Eye: Heidegger, Aristotle, and the Ends of Theory* [Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1999]) has argued, the instant (*Augenblick*) is Heidegger’s reappropriation of the kind of intuitive apprehending of a singular situation that Aristotle attributes to prudence (*phronēsis*); designating it as *Dasein*’s most primordial receptivity inverts the Aristotelian subordination of *phronēsis* to comprehensive understanding or wisdom (*sophia*), which is characterized by an intuitive apprehending of the supremely *universal* determinations. Cf. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* (*Ethica Nicomachea*, ed. I. Bywater [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1894]), VI.7.1141a16–b16; 8.1142a23–30, 11.1143a32–b5. In Heidegger the singular and circumstantial becomes ontologically prior to the universal and absolute.

radical *individuation*.³² Being is no longer “transcendental” in the sense of what is most universal and transcends all particularity, but rather in the sense of the contextualizing horizon that transcends simple presence and, in its structural correlation with *Dasein*’s temporally contextual existence, gives presence as singular.³³

The completion of fundamental ontology would have required a radical turnabout or reversal (*Kehre*) of this approach in order to reconsider *Dasein* on the basis of the temporal sense of Being and to thereby finally make visible the reciprocal correlation between Being and *Dasein*.³⁴ This reversal was to be accomplished in the projected Division I.3 of *Being and Time*, “Time and Being.” However, it turned out to be unfeasible within the conceptual framework of fundamental ontology.³⁵ During the years 1930–35, Heidegger therefore concentrated his efforts on developing his discourse with the help of “reversed” expressions. Most conspicuously, fundamental ontology’s vocabulary of going outside and beyond—“existence,” “ecstasis,” “transcendence,” terms that could be construed as implying an outset in a self-immanent subjectivity that is subsequently exceeded—is replaced by a vocabulary of entering and remaining within. The seemingly converse turn from characterizing *Dasein*’s Being as existence (*Existenz*) to characterizing it as “insistency” (*Inständigkeit*) in the “There” is, I argue, first and foremost an attempt to emphasize the fact that the singular and situated disclosure of Being is “entered” *from* a preceding, singularizing background context.³⁶ An

³² SZ, 38; *Being and Time*, 62; cf. SZ, 3; *Being and Time*, 22.

³³ Cf. SZ, 440n38(a).

³⁴ Already in *Being and Time* (SZ, 38, 436; *Being and Time*, 62, 486), Heidegger points out that *Dasein* is the point from which fundamental ontology sets out and to which it must again *revert*. In the 1928 lectures (GA 26, 199–202; *Metaphysical Foundations*, 156–59), Heidegger explicitly announces that after the completion of the temporal analytic, fundamental ontology is to undergo a “reversal” (*Kehre*) into “metontology” or a “metaphysical ontic,” in which beings are once again approached from Being. Cf. “Preface/Vorwort” [1962], in William J. Richardson, *Heidegger: Through Phenomenology to Thought* [1963], 4th ed. (New York: Fordham University Press, 2003), XVII–XXII; “Protokoll zu einem Seminar über den Vortrag ‘Zeit und Sein’” [1962], in *Zur Sache des Denkens*, 4th ed. (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2000), 34 (hereafter, ZSD); “Summary of a Seminar on the Lecture ‘Time and Being,’ ” in *On Time and Being*, trans. J. Stambaugh (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 31. See also Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann, *Die Selbstinterpretation Martin Heideggers* (Meisenheim am Glan: Hain, 1964), 264–78; *Wege ins Ereignis: Zu Heideggers “Beiträgen zur Philosophie”* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1994), 67–68; Hans-Georg Gadamer, “Martin Heidegger 75 Jahre” [1964], in *Gesammelte Werke*, Vol. 3: *Neuere Philosophie*, Vol. 1: *Hegel-Husserl-Heidegger* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1987), 191; “Martin Heidegger—75 Years,” in *Heidegger’s Ways*, trans. J. W. Stanley (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1994), 20–21; Thomas Sheehan, “*Kehre* and *Ereignis*: A Prolegomenon to *Introduction to Metaphysics*,” in Richard Polt & Gregory Fried (ed.), *A Companion to Heidegger’s Introduction to Metaphysics* (New Haven, CO: Yale University Press, 2001), 3–5.

³⁵ Heidegger, “Brief über den ‘Humanismus’ ” [1946], in WM, 327–28; “Letter on ‘Humanism,’ ” trans. F. A. Capuzzi, in *Pathmarks*, 249–50.

³⁶ GA 65, 319, 467; *Contributions to Philosophy*, 224, 329; GA 66, 144–145; *Mindfulness*, 123; Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe*, Vol. 49: *Die Metaphysik des deutschen Idealismus: Zur erneuten Auslegung von Schelling*:

“instant” of meaningful presence is literally a “stand within” (Latin *in-stans*) a specific meaning-context. On the other hand, Heidegger now reconsiders the development of the metaphysical tradition in the light of a deepened understanding of the radical historicity of Being itself (*Geschichte des Seins*).³⁷ The various epochs in the metaphysical tradition are now regarded as articulations of the respective experiences of Being itself in its historically situated configurations. The transitional experience of Being as singularization is not supposed to be a genial insight into some underlying suprahistorical truth that was “there” all along but was simply missed by the entire metaphysical tradition. This experience is simply a new instant—presented by Heidegger as being purely virtual, for the time being—in which the entire tradition from which it has emerged would gain a transformed meaning in the light of new possibilities.³⁸

The fruit of these reconsiderations was *Contributions to Philosophy*. This work can be understood as a contribution to “philosophy,” in the sense of the now-concluded metaphysical tradition, from a standpoint that is no longer contained within this tradition (but is nevertheless rooted in it). *Contributions* casts a glance at Heidegger’s own transitional situation with a view to an emerging possibility of thinking, namely, articulating Being postmetaphysically as *Ereignis*. *Ereignis* is the event or “taking-place” of historical singularity in which meaningfulness “finds its place,” i.e., is contextualized and situated within the There, the “instantaneous place” (*Augenblicksstätte*) of spatiotemporal situatedness (*Zeit-Raum*) furnished by the human being as *Da-sein*. As such a situated place, *Da-sein* “corresponds to the uniqueness of Be-ing [*Seyn*] as taking-place [*Ereignis*].”³⁹

In German, *Ereignis* has a strong connotation of an individual historical event. However, as Heidegger later notes, he uses the word as a *singulare tantum*, as a noun that is singular by definition.⁴⁰ *Ereignis* no longer refers to single events in their multiplicity, but rather to Being as the singularization of the singular as such. As the parenthesized subtitle of *Contributions*—

Philosophische Untersuchungen über das Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit und die damit zusammenhängenden Gegenstände (1809) [1941] (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1991), 54; “Brief über den ‘Humanismus,’ ” in WM, 325–26; “Letter on ‘Humanism,’ ” in *Pathmarks*, 247–49.

³⁷ On the history of Being, see “Die Erinnerung in die Metaphysik” [1941], in N II, 439–48; “Recollection in Metaphysics,” in *The End of Philosophy*, 75–83.

³⁸ Cf. “Protokoll zu einem Seminar,” in ZSD, 44, 53–58; “Summary of a Seminar,” in *On Time and Being*, 41, 49–54.

³⁹ GA 65, 375; *Contributions to Philosophy*, 262. Translation modified. Cf. GA 65, 323, 384; *Contributions to Philosophy*, 227, 268. Cf. Ruin, *Enigmatic Origins*, 200–01; Beistegui, *Truth and Genesis*, 147.

⁴⁰ “Der Satz der Identität” [1957], in ID, 25; “The Principle of Identity,” in *Identity and Difference*, 36.

Vom Ereignis, “of” or “from taking-place”—emphasizes, Being is no longer approached by way of *Dasein* as an “exemplary being.” The point of departure is rather *Ereignis*, the reciprocal correlation between Being and *Dasein*, itself. However, as Heidegger notes, the preposition “from” also indicates the preliminary nature of *Contributions*. The fragmentary formulations of *Contributions* are indications and intimations of *Ereignis* from a transitional point of view. *Contributions* is not yet the properly postmetaphysical “work” that could only be called simply *Das Ereignis*—a work that Heidegger never wrote.⁴¹

Heidegger’s textual strategy in *Contributions* is to emphasize the difference between the transitional approach to Being as singularization and the traditional metaphysical approach to Being as universality. For example, the former is designated with the obsolete German orthography *Seyn* and thereby set apart from the latter.⁴² A consequence of this attempt to avoid all traditional connotations is that *Contributions* is experimental to the point of being impenetrable without a long preliminary habituation to Heidegger’s later work. It is quite understandable that its publication was held back by Heidegger during a “prolonged hesitation.”⁴³

3. The Fourfold Contextuality of Singular Presence

Rather than entering into a detailed study of *Contributions*, I will use a simple example to illustrate what I argue to be at stake in the notion of Being as singularization. The foundational

⁴¹ GA 65, 77; *Contributions to Philosophy*, 54 (translation modified): “‘Taking-place’ [*Das Ereignis*] would be the proper title for the ‘work’ that here can only be prepared for; and therefore instead of that the title must be *Contributions to Philosophy*.” Cf. GA 66, 427; *Mindfulness*, 377–78. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann (“*Contributions to Philosophy* and Enowning-Historical Thinking,” in Charles Scott et al. (ed.), *Companion to Heidegger’s Contributions to Philosophy* [Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2001], 107–08) stresses that this “work” is not to be identified with the recently published 1941–42 treatise *Gesamtausgabe*, Vol. 71: *Das Ereignis* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 2009). See also Hans-Georg Gadamer, “Der eine Weg Martin Heideggers” [1986], in *Gesammelte Werke*, Vol. 3: *Neuere Philosophie*, Vol. 1: *Hegel-Husserl-Heidegger* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1987), 426; “Martin Heidegger’s One Path,” trans. P. C. Smith, in Theodore Kisiel & John van Buren (ed.), *Reading Heidegger from the Start: Essays in His Earliest Thought* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1994), 29; Richard Polt, *The Emergency of Being: On Heidegger’s Contributions to Philosophy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006), 1–2.

⁴² I adopt here Parvis Emad’s and Kenneth Maly’s (“Translator’s Foreword,” in *Contributions to Philosophy*, xxii–xxiii) English rendering of *Seyn* as “Be-ing” (Emad and Maly do not capitalize the word). Heidegger adopts the use of this 18th-century orthography in his first lecture course on Hölderlin (*Gesamtausgabe*, Vol. 39: *Hölderlin’s Hymnen “Germanien” und “Der Rhein”* [1934–35] [Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1980] [hereafter, GA 39]). It may therefore be understood as a reference to Hölderlin as the “postmetaphysical poet.” It should be noted that Heidegger later drops even this spelling, noting that it is improper to use any cognate of *Sein* for postmetaphysical purposes (“Der Spruch des Anaximander” [1946], in *Holzwege*, 8th ed. [Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 2003], 364n[d] [hereafter, HW]; “Anaximander’s Saying,” in *Off the Beaten Track*, trans. J. Young & K. Heynes [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002], 275n[a].)

⁴³ GA 65, XVII; *Contributions to Philosophy*, xlix.

metaphysical move of Aristotelian ontotheology is the Platonic orientation of philosophical inquiry to the realm of *ideality*.⁴⁴ This orientation is motivated precisely by the recognition that any concrete and particular spatiotemporal thing is, to a certain extent, in each instant singular. My desk in its particularity is never *exactly* identical in two different instants. What does persist as identical is its whatness, its ideal deskness: its numerical self-identity (its being *this* selfsame desk) is based upon its specific identity (its being a *desk*). Without such conceptual determinacy there would be no stable identity at all in the realm of things, only a “Heraclitean flux” of pure singularities.⁴⁵ That is why Aristotle concludes, with Plato, that the primary aspect of beings *qua* beings is their conceptual determinacy, i.e., their universal form. It is an ontological deficiency of particular things that they are not simply equivalent to their form, but always require spatiotemporal instantiation in matter in order to be actualized as “there,” as a “this-here-now.”⁴⁶

In the transitional perspective delineated by Heidegger, however, the *self-identity* of my desk, in each instance, would no longer be the primary and predominant feature of its Being-there. Account would rather be taken of the full contextuality that makes my desk *singularly* meaningful to me in each concrete practical situation: it is now a storeroom for my books, now a support for my computer, now a surface on which to place my cup of coffee, now a concrete example to be used in my work, and so on. The whatness of the desk is, of course, there as a constitutive element of permanent identity in each instant of the desk’s presence. If at any moment I distance myself from my current practical involvement with the desk and ask myself *what* this thing before me is, the answer will always be: it is my *desk*. However, as Plato himself makes explicit in the *Republic*, the “Idea” that guarantees the applicability of the name is, above all, a certain kind of *functionality*.⁴⁷ In my example, the applicability of the name “desk” obviously depends on whether the thing at hand can function as a desk. The desk can be painted red and it will still be a desk, but if its legs are cut off, it is no longer worthy of the name “desk.”

⁴⁴ Cf. GA 65, 208–22; *Contributions to Philosophy*, 145–55..

⁴⁵ This is, arguably, the point made by Socrates—against the purportedly “Heraclitean” Cratylus—in the dialogue *Cratylus* (in *Platonis opera*, Vol. 1, ed. E.A. Duke et al. [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995], esp. 435d4–440d2), which is one of the first sustained arguments for the Platonic “doctrine of Ideas.”

⁴⁶ See Aristotle, *Met. Z*.17.1041a6–b33.

⁴⁷ Cf. Plato’s argument for the ontological inferiority of an artistic representation of a bed in comparison to a bed made by a craftsman. Even though neither of these is “bedness” itself, the craftsman’s bed is superior because of the craftsman’s knowledge of the *function* proper to a bed (*Res publica*, in *Platonis opera*, Vol. 1, X.596b12–608b10).

An account of what it is that constitutes this functionality must therefore distinguish other factors besides

(1) conceptual identity,

which is itself based on functionality.

(2) For example, the meaningful presence of my desk is in each instant determined by its sheer *materiality*, in other words by its material makeup and implementation and its current material condition (e.g., its being worn down and cluttered with books and papers), since this materiality delimits its capacity to fulfill its function as my desk. As Plato recognizes, an understanding of what a desk *is* involves an understanding of what kind of material implementation can fulfill this function.

Yet there are more aspects to a functioning desk.

(3) On another level, it can be argued that I can encounter my desk as a functioning desk only in the context of a *purposive project*, such as writing a dissertation or organizing my papers. Moreover, such a project is arguably meaningful to me only with regard to more and more comprehensive “purposes of life” in general, i.e., to ultimate ends and aims that orient my particular projects: academic scholarship and scientific research, being an academic professional, professionalism and self-development in general, and so on.

(4) A fourth meaning-constituting factor, immediately connected to (3), is the historically specific *cultural and communal* dimension that delimits in advance the kinds of projects I am likely to be involved in. It is within a given historical community that certain overarching purposes (e.g., academic scholarship) are shared and certain individual projects (e.g., writing academic papers) make sense. Arguably, something can function as a desk—and consequently be subsumed under the concept “desk”—only in a certain kind of culture sharing certain practices, projects, and ends. Preliterate and non-literate cultures do not have desks because they have no use for them, lacking the relevant practices.

Beyond the dimension that the Platonic-Aristotelian tradition has perceived as alone or primarily constitutive of the beingness of my desk—namely,

(1) its *whatness*—

three interrelated dimensions of functional meaningfulness can therefore be distinguished:

(2) its particular *materiality*, acknowledged by Aristotle as a secondary aspect of thinghood;

(3) the *practical and purposive* context to which it belongs; and

(4) the *historical and cultural* context in which such practices and projects are shared.

My point in distinguishing these four dimensions is to suggest an interpretation of the enigmatic central figure of Heidegger's later work: the quadrate or fourfold (*Geviert*), consisting of two pairs of meaning-dimensions—heaven (*Himmel*) and earth (*Erde*), divinities (*die Göttlichen*) and mortals (*die Sterblichen*)—that intertwine in a “onefold of four,” i.e., in the complicated unity of a singular thing.⁴⁸ I argue that this is Heidegger's most developed articulation of Being as an event of contextual singularization—or rather could have been, were not Heidegger's explicit discussions of the fourfold so concise and highly allusive. In order to make my case, I must therefore make a few rather audacious interpretive moves.

Firstly, my preliminary interpretation of the fourfold is the following:

(1) “Heaven” can be understood as the realm of shared and visible openness, of articulated appearing and appearance. It is analogous to the conceptual form (*eidōs*, *logos*) of Aristotelian metaphysics in being the dimension of shared visibility and articulated meaning. However, it is clearly not the Platonic “heaven” of eternally stable Ideas,⁴⁹ but rather a historical and cultural sphere of appearing that is constituted only in an interaction with the other dimensions. This is indicated by the fact that in the texts of the 1930s, Heidegger still speaks of “world” (*Welt*)⁵⁰ rather than heaven, obviously thinking of the notion of world in *Being and Time* as a context-specific network of practical meaning.

(2) The earth, as the counterpart of heaven, is the opaque dimension of inarticulate materiality, the “ground” or “soil” that grants here-ness to things. Its function is analogous to the Aristotelian matter (*hylē*). However, whereas Aristotle subordinates matter to form as the ontological “residue” in things that are not simply identical with their form but require spatiotemporal instantiation in order to be actualized, Heidegger's characterization of the

⁴⁸ The figure of the fourfold is intimated already in the first lectures on Hölderlin (GA 39) and in “The Origin of the Work of Art” (“Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes” [1935–36, 1950], in HW, 1–74; “The Origin of the Work of Art,” in *Off the Beaten Track*, 1–56) and makes its first explicit appearance in *Contributions* (GA 65, 310; *Contributions to Philosophy*, 218). However, it is fully elaborated only in the 1949 Bremen lecture on “The Thing” (original text published as “Das Ding,” in *Gesamtausgabe*, Vol 79: *Bremer und Freiburger Vorträge* [Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1994], 5–23; lightly revised 1950 version published as “Das Ding,” in VA, 157–75; “The Thing,” in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. A. Hofstadter [New York: Harper & Row, 1975], 163–86) and in texts from the 1950s (“Bauen Wohnen Denken” [1951], in VA, 139–56; “Building Dwelling Thinking,” in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, 143–61; “Die Sprache” [1950], in *Unterwegs zur Sprache*, 13th ed. [Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 2003], 9–33 [hereafter, US]; “Language,” in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, 187–210; “Das Wesen der Sprache” [1958], in US, 157–216; “The Nature of Language,” in *On the Way to Language*, trans. P. D. Hertz [San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1982], 57–110; “Hölderlin's Erde und Himmel” [1959], in *Erläuterungen zu Hölderlin's Dichtung*, 6th ed. [Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1996], 152–81; “Hölderlin's Earth and Heaven,” in *Elucidations of Hölderlin's Poetry*, trans. K. Hoeller [Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 2000], 175–208).

⁴⁹ In the *Phaedrus* (in *Platonis opera*, Vol. 2, ed. J. Burnet [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1901], 247c3), Plato famously locates the Ideas in a “place beyond the sky” (*hyperouranios topos*).

⁵⁰ HW, 35; *Off the Beaten Track*, 26; GA 65, 310; *Contributions to Philosophy*, 218.

relationship between heaven/world and earth as “strife” (*Streit*)⁵¹ emphasizes that they are equally primordial and irreducibly interdependent aspects.

(3) The mortals (*die Sterblichen*) or humans refer to the dimension of culture and community—i.e., of historical and cultural facticity and of communal receptivity to shared experience with a view to shared ideals and values.

(4) The divinities (*die Göttlichen*) or gods are the orienting dimension of ideals, aims, final purposes, or “values.” However, as the plural form indicates, they do not simply correspond to the Aristotelian single God as an absolute “final cause” for all things.⁵² The Heideggerian gods are the gods of a specific people, i.e., historically and culturally situated ideals and ends.

4. The Fourfold as Singularization

My final step is to connect this interpretation of the fourfold back to the theme of the singularity of Being. When each instance of Being is regarded as constituted by *all* of these dimensions, none of which has any independent subsistence but is irreducibly intertwined with the other three, it becomes evident that no two instances are simply “equivalent” to one another. Each situation is rather a heterogeneous and complicated configuration of multiple dimensions. This singularity of particular configurations of the fourfold is indicated by Heidegger’s words: “Each thing arrests the fourfold into a simplicity of the world that is there for the while [*je Weiliges*]. [...] Only what was wrought from world becomes a thing once [*einmal*].”⁵³

What is “identical”—in Heidegger’s sense of *das Selbe*, “selfsame,” consistently distinguished from the “equal” or “alike,” *das Gleiche*⁵⁴—in each situation is simply the *singular situatedness* in a meaningful context as such. Being is not something that precedes individual situations or instants in order to be instantiated in them. Being is rather this *event of instantiation as such*.

Singularity does not mean that each instant flashes forth once and then vanishes into the past without a trace. Each instant rather remains as part of a tradition, an already-having-been

⁵¹ HW, 35–36; *Off the Beaten Track*, 26–27.

⁵² Aristotle, *Met.* A.7.1072a21–27.

⁵³ “Das Ding,” in VA, 173, 175; “The Thing,” in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, 181, 182.

⁵⁴ On the distinction *das Selbe/das Gleiche*, see, e.g., “...dichterisch wohnet der Mensch...” [1951], in VA, 187; “...Poetically Man Dwells...” in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, 218–19. Cf. Gianni Vattimo, *The End of Modernity: Nihilism and Hermeneutics in Post-modern Culture*, trans. J. R. Snyder (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1988), 154–55; *The Adventure of Difference: Philosophy after Nietzsche and Heidegger*, trans. C. Blamires & T. Harrison (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993), 168.

that admits of being “repeated,” in Heidegger’s emphatic sense of *retake* or *retrieve* (*Wiederholung*), in the context of another instant in which it will, however, have a transformed meaning. “Only the singular [*Einmalige*] can be re-taken.”⁵⁵ It is precisely because of its singularity that Being can “have” a “history.” Or rather, Being *is* the historical unfolding of meaningfulness in singular situations that are never mutually “equivalent,” yet constitute a continuous tradition of retake and inheritance.

The unity and belonging-together of history are determined from the uniqueness of Be-ing. In uniqueness each thing is in each instance unique and only *thereby* belongs to the One. The essential relations to history are grounded not by the commonness of a multiplicity [...] but by the uniqueness of the simple.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ GA 65, 55; *Contributions to Philosophy*, 39. Translation modified. Cf. GA 39, 144–45.

⁵⁶ Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe*, Vol. 70: *Über den Anfang* [1941] (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 2005), 44. Cf. L. M. Vail, *Heidegger and Ontological Difference* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1972), 45; Ruin, *Enigmatic Origins*, 206; Beistegui, *Truth and Genesis*, 147; Polt, *The Emergency of Being*, 86.

Dilthey, Destruction, and the Early Heidegger's Philosophy of Life

Scott Campbell

Nazareth College of Rochester

The problems of facticity persist for me with the same intensity as they did in my Freiburg beginnings, only much more radically now, and still in the perspectives that were guiding me even in Freiburg.¹

The 'one' has something definitely positive; it is not just a phenomenon of fallenness, but as such a How of factual Dasein. (G63 17/14)

From his earliest lecture courses, Heidegger was interested in the relationship that the facticity of life has to the meaning of Being. This connection between ontology and human existence crystallizes in the notion of Dasein, which, as the *there* of Being, we might also call the Being of factual human life. As he will say explicitly in 1923, "*Dasein (factual life) is Being in a world*" (G63 80/62). Throughout all his early philosophical investigations into science, religion, history, language, and the Greeks, this notion of Dasein, factual life, as a worlding being persists.

Since the publication of *The Genesis of Heidegger's Being and Time*, numerous commentators have looked at what Heidegger says about factual life. There is, however, a fundamental ambiguity in Heidegger's depiction of it, and this has led to confusion about what, exactly, he means by it. At times, factual life is a dynamic source of vitality, while at other times, it is a source of fallenness, inauthenticity, and ruinance. One of the most important developments in Heidegger scholarship to address this ambiguity connects destruction to the problem of factual life and the achievement of authenticity. On this account, destruction is a method of retrieving genuine meaning from out of a fallen and inauthentic life. While it is especially helpful in clarifying the religious dimension of Heidegger's thought, in particular the relationship between Heidegger's early work and Luther's *destructio*, this view, nonetheless,

¹ Martin Heidegger, Letter to Karl Löwith, August 20, 1927. This letter exchange with Karl Löwith can be found in *Becoming Heidegger: On the Trail of His Early Occasional Writings, 1910-1927*, ed. Theodore Kisiel and Thomas Sheehan (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2007), pp. 289-303.

presents authenticity as a choice between conformity on the one hand and resolve on the other, where the goal is to eliminate the ambiguity in factual life. This view suggests, consequently, that Dasein might be able to remain authentic. With this kind of binary opposition, where Dasein is either authentic or inauthentic, the notion of Dasein as a worlding being ceases to make sense, for there is, then, no meaningful context of life into which concepts from the past can be meaningfully imported.

If we look at what the early Heidegger says about factual life, chiefly through the lens of Dilthey, we can recognize the extent to which pre-philosophical meanings are embedded within the factual life of Dasein. These meanings, together with modes of fallenness, constitute the essential ambiguity of Dasein and thus present a meaningful and nuanced sense of human life. There is a fundamental ‘richness’ (G17 37/28) and ‘vitality’ (G56/57 90/70) in factual life, to use Heidegger’s own words, that must be countenanced together with – and not, even in authenticity, separated out from – its negativity and fallenness. Authenticity becomes not simply a matter of destroying or overcoming human fallenness, but, with that, a moment of revelation (*kairos*) through insight (*phronesis*) into who we are, that is, into who the human being is as a whole.

Dilthey and the Being of Life

Looking at Heidegger’s reading of Dilthey, we see that the primary object for philosophical investigation in the early Heidegger is life, a claim he makes often in the early lecture courses. This would seem to validate Robert Scharff’s claim that in terms of method and of how one should approach philosophy, Heidegger was influenced more by the work of Dilthey “than from *anyone else*.”² In his lectures on Aristotle, St. Paul, Plato, and others, Heidegger’s method is to retrieve the factual life context which inspired their concepts and ideas, attempting to develop the context of meaningful relationships from out which they philosophized.³ He was thus as interested in method as he was in philosophical content.⁴

² Scharff 1997, p. 117: “To state my thesis bluntly, I think the new information about the early Heidegger shows that in working out the problem of how to *approach* the Being-question – i.e. in determining how to *be* a phenomenological philosopher – Heidegger receives more help from ‘the researches of Dilthey’ than from *anyone else*.”

³ What distinguishes Heidegger from classical philosophers of life is the method he uses. As Fehér points out, Heidegger agreed with life-philosophy about the object of investigation, namely life, itself, but he did not conclude, as many of them did, that life and the myriad concepts surrounding it are either irrational or static. According to Fehér, the failure to develop an appropriate method to investigate life either leads to the claim the life is irrational or ends up in the reification of the concept of life. He identifies history and existence along with life as concepts which philosophers of life ultimately claim are irrational. He notes, further, that in Heidegger’s analysis of Jaspers, he shows how Jaspers’s methodology, with its Bergsonian influences, results in a static notion

The work of Dilthey is not often the explicit subject matter for Heidegger's lecture courses from the early period.⁵ A sustained treatment, though, appears in "Wilhelm Dilthey's Research and the Current Struggle for a Historical Worldview," the Kassel lectures he delivered in April of 1925.⁶ Clearly, Heidegger was reading Dilthey throughout the early to mid-1920's.⁷ Furthermore, in recent years, numerous readers of Heidegger have explicated the specifics of Dilthey's influence. As Scharff demonstrates clearly, what Heidegger saw in Dilthey was that the proper approach to the different modes of being, and thus the proper approach to Being, itself, was through life, thus expressing a fundamental and intimate connection between life and Being.⁸

We can isolate two major themes in Heidegger's encounter with Dilthey, both of which demonstrate Heidegger's appropriation of historical life from Dilthey into his own understanding of Dasein as the Being of life. First, through Dilthey, Heidegger wanted to grasp life as a whole. In *Being and Time*, grasping life as a whole means to understand Dasein temporally, as both Being-towards-birth and Being-towards-death. In the Kassel lectures from 1925, which as Kisiel points out is one of the first drafts of *Being and Time*, we find one of the first major treatments of the problematic of death. But in the early lecture courses, with Dilthey's help, Heidegger attempts to grasp life as a whole differently. It is not strictly the temporal or even historical structure of life that he intends. Rather, it is the whole of the human being as a worlding being, the historical happening of life as a unified, meaningful context.⁹

of existence. In both cases, the problem is not with the topic under investigation, be it life, history, or existence, but with the importation of a method that cannot grasp that topic. See Fehér 1994, p. 88.

⁴ Many of the early courses reveal a sustained effort to develop a method that is able to grasp and to articulate the topic of factual life in the right way. Heidegger's development of hermeneutics, a milestone in the evolution of his thought, grew out of an attempt to find a method that was appropriate to the investigation of life. In 1920/1921, he will call this method formal indication; in 1923 he will call it ontology, which he takes to be the hermeneutics of facticity; in 1927, this method becomes fundamental ontology. Throughout, his effort is to find a method and a language appropriate to the Being of factual life.

⁵ Heidegger's first significant treatment of Dilthey appears in G56/57 from 1919.

⁶ A translation of these lectures can be found in *Supplements: From the Earliest Essays to Being and Time and Beyond*, ed. John van Buren, Albany: SUNY Press, 2002, pp. 147-176. Hereafter abbreviated as 'S.'

⁷ Kisiel 2007, pp. 238-239.

⁸ Scharff 1997, p. 117. Scharff also shows how Heidegger's struggle with Dilthey over a ten year period leading up to *Being and Time* resulted in his elucidation of hermeneutics as Dasein's method for understanding itself and its own factual situation, not from the standpoint of consciousness, but rather from the standpoint of life.

⁹ This is in contrast to the epistemological perspective that one gets from looking on at life from the standpoint of consciousness. As Scharff points out, Heidegger is setting Dilthey's standpoint of life against the Cartesian – as well as the Husserlian – standpoint of consciousness, in spite of some of the Cartesian elements in Dilthey's own epistemological method Heidegger was working both with and against Dilthey, who was not aware of the intellectual milieu within which he was working and the effect that it had on his own understanding of life and

The second major element in Heidegger's appropriation of Dilthey is the notion of *Selbstbesinnung*. This notion suggests a kind of self-awareness that is not on the order of consciousness.¹⁰ As Scharff writes, "[Dilthey] shows us *how* life 'is' for us when understood as experienced, instead of merely *what* it looks like as an object when theoretically constituted from the 'Cartesian' standpoint shared by natural science and traditional epistemology."¹¹ In Heidegger's confrontation with Dilthey, we thus find both poles of the formal indication: an attempt to grasp the whole of life together with an effort to apprehend the particularities of the happening of life in its own self-elucidation and self-awareness.¹²

In the Kassel lectures, therefore, there is an identification between life and Dasein. He will say, for example that, "the primal givenness of Dasein is that it is in a world. Life is that kind of reality which is in a world and indeed in such a way that it has a world" (S 163). We see further that he will affirm that life is there (Dasein), as when he claims that, "This whole context of self and world is there [*ist da*] at every moment" (S 158) and, later, that "all life, on the other hand, is there [*ist da*] in such a way that a world is also there for it" (S 163). Dilthey's efforts to grasp the whole of life provided Heidegger with a model for apprehending the factual life situation of Dasein as Being in the world.¹³ It is Kisiel who shows most clearly the way in which existential concerns combine with ontological concerns on the way to BT. The early Heidegger's genius was to bring together Being with life, ontology with existence, openness

history. At the same time that he was trying to grasp the historical reality of human life, Dilthey often viewed life from the perspective of the internal workings of consciousness, as a subject looking on at objects (Scharff 1997, pp. 112 & 120). Heidegger was able to recognize that in spite of the epistemological orientation of Dilthey's time, he was nonetheless able to have in view the whole of life as a pre-theoretical and pre-scientific phenomenon.

¹⁰ Though not directly, Scharff seems to imply that Heidegger's notion of taking cognizance (*Kenntnisnahme*) from G56/57 derives from Dilthey's notion of *Selbstbesinnung*. Whether that is true or not, Scharff is certainly correct when he says that what Heidegger saw in this notion is a way to grasp life in its *How*, that is, as possibilities that are lived through, rather than apprehending what life is.

¹¹ Scharff 1997, p. 118.

¹² It is remarkable that in the Kassel lectures, Heidegger is much more interested in the phenomenon of life than he is in *Being and Time*, where he will state with clarity that the philosophy of life has led to a philosophical anthropology that lacks an adequate ontological foundation (BT 47/73). Even in *Being and Time*, however, he will assert that 'the philosophy of life' is just like saying 'the botany of plants' (BT46/72). In the same way that botany implies the study of plants, philosophy implies the study of life. This was a point that he had also made much earlier, in G18, from 1924. As it has been since 1919 and as it still is in *Being and Time*, for Heidegger, philosophy is about life. Thus, the Kassel lectures do not take such a remarkably different view of the phenomenon of life from *Being and Time* as it may at first appear. Heidegger recognized in Dilthey an effort to grasp the whole of life, but he also saw that Dilthey, Bergson, Scheler, and other philosophers interested in life were not able to do so. A sense of the whole of life requires an investigation into the Being of life.

¹³ Working through what Dilthey says about trying to grasp the reality of historical life, Heidegger concludes the Kassel lectures by saying, "We focus our treatment on the history of philosophy on a fundamental problem, one that we already constantly have had in view but have not expressly formulated, namely, the question of the *being of beings*" (S 175).

with that which opens.¹⁴ In this, he is attempting to show how one might achieve a kind of pre-theoretical insight, along the lines of Aristotelian *phronesis*, into life as a whole.

The Problem of Destruction

Recognizing that the early Heidegger was interested in the Being of life helps in clarifying a confusion that runs through our understanding of the notion of Dasein as a worldly being.¹⁵ Consider the following readings of what Heidegger means by 'worldly'. In his essay on formal indication, Dahlstrom points to an inconsistency in Heidegger's understanding of formally indicative concepts. On the one hand, formal indications are drawn from factual experience, and thus from life.¹⁶ But when Heidegger describes, in BT and elsewhere, the average way of living in the world, he says that the human being is fallen and inauthentic. The 'worldly', therefore, offers us only a fallen and, on Dahlstrom's reading, a theoretical and objectified understanding of ourselves. Therefore, formal indications require a reversal, in order to overcome the fallen, theoretical foundation on which they are based. Here, worldly (*weltlich*) means fallen, theoretical, and scientific.

Contrast this reading of 'worldly' with what Guignon says about 'worldliness' in his article on authenticity. He writes, "*Being and Time* attempts to combat the groundlessness (*Bodenlosigkeit*) of the contemporary world by uncovering enduring values and meanings within the framework of "worldliness" (*Weltlichkeit*) and human finitude."¹⁷ Here we see that for Heidegger 'worldliness' refers neither to fallenness nor to theory, but rather to the vitality of lived experience reminiscent of the descriptions of factual life in G56/57 and G60. Some readings of Heidegger, like Guignon's, make reference to his successful attempt to deconstruct theories back to their ground in the vital experience of factual life. Other readings, like

¹⁴ Sheehan alludes to this when he writes, "The most extraordinary thing about all of Heidegger's thought, both early and late, is his unwavering insistence that *human being* is that 'open' and thus *is* 'the thing itself.' From the beginning to the end of his career, he never got beyond that point." Sheehan 2001, p. 193. Sheehan suggests that the focus on Being can drain the sense of humanity from Heidegger's philosophical experience. This is correct. But on the other hand, a focus on the human being and its finitude could mark something of a paradigm shift *back* to the way Heidegger was initially understood (or, as Richardson and many others have claimed, misunderstood), namely, as an existentialist.

¹⁵ He gains access to the notion of world by looking at the word 'life,' which is immediately connected to the phenomenon of world (G61 85/65). We get sense of Heidegger's understanding of phenomenology here, going through the meanings of words to the phenomena (*phainomena*) opened up by those words (*logoi*). In this connection between life and world, however, we encounter a confusion.

¹⁶ He affirms, "they are themselves derived from the way of life that informs the normal use of language" (Dahlstrom 1994, p. 785).

¹⁷ Guignon 1984, pp. 321-322.

Dahlstrom's, show how authenticity individualizes Dasein, distancing human beings from the fallen or theoretical interpretations of the common understanding found in factual life. Kisiel addresses this problem by pointing to the essential ambiguity of factual life. He writes, "We now see that factic life experience, which is to be the starting point of philosophizing, is also the starting point of that which hinders philosophizing."¹⁸ Kisiel and others recognize this essential ambiguity, which includes both deception as well as moments of insight. On some recent interpretations of destruction, however, it seems as though Heidegger's understanding of factual life is not a presentation of the ambiguity of life but rather a dichotomy between two different ways of life, one of which might be able to be overcome. For van Buren, Heidegger employs destruction as a way of retrieving the more genuine, historical origins of human existence.¹⁹ But in the same article, he also writes that, "Heidegger's position is that in moral action one's 'possibilities' are bound up with one's 'actuality,' one's destiny or heritage, which is enacted interpretively within one's current situation."²⁰ If Heidegger is saying simply that the history of philosophy needs to be deconstructed (or destroyed), so that the philosophical resources within our heritage can surface, and so that individuals might then cultivate their moral possibilities, then a number of philosophical problems arise. First, the present, fallen and inauthentic, would not have enough philosophical substance for individuals to 'enact interpretively' their authentic moral possibilities within their current situation. One might achieve authenticity, but there would be no meaningful context within which their authentic life could have any real sense, and it would then be unclear what authenticity would mean. Kisiel's reading of factual life attempts to preserve its ambiguity and indeterminacy. He writes, "phenomenological destruction is not a senseless devastation but a very precisely guided and systematic deconstruction (*Abbau*). Individual meanings must first be regarded as indeterminate and unclear, just as they emerge in factic life, and must be retained in this indeterminacy."²¹

The second problem emerges with the sense that authenticity and inauthenticity are a dichotomy or binary opposition which might somehow be overcome. Since the publication of Kisiel's *The Genesis of Heidegger's Being and Time* and van Buren's *The Young Heidegger*,

¹⁸ Kisiel 1993, p. 156.

¹⁹ He writes, "Heidegger proposed an ontological destruction or deconstruction of the history of philosophy, so as to expose its unacknowledged origins in concrete historical life, in terms of which philosophy could be repeated or retrieved in a new beginning" (van Buren 1992, p. 171.)

²⁰ van Buren 1992, p. 177.

²¹ Kisiel 1993, p. 126.

the best book on the early Heidegger is Ben Crowe's *Heidegger's Religious Origins*. Crowe presents in great detail the influence of Luther on the early Heidegger's approach to philosophy. He argues, correctly, that the early Heidegger – and not just BT – is guided by an attempt to show how human beings can achieve authenticity in their lives. In his conclusions, however, he moves closer to van Buren than to Kisiel by contrasting resolve against conformity and then suggesting that authenticity might be a way to overcome its opposite.²² He writes, for example, that “The ‘how’ of our belonging to a tradition is either a matter of conformity and superficiality (inauthenticity) or of clear-sightedness and self-critical resolve (authenticity).”²³ Interpreting history can happen in one of two ways, “either by abdicating self-responsibility to the anonymous public discourse of the ‘one’ or by facing up to the task of living one’s own unique life and making a vocational commitment.”²⁴

Even in BT, however, Heidegger will say that, “Dasein is already both in the truth and in untruth” (BT 222/265). Moreover, in G61, which discusses factual life’s ruinance, he shows just how profoundly the human being lives in deception²⁵. That deception can be resisted, but it cannot be overcome, so the difference between authenticity and inauthenticity is not a dichotomy but, rather, the elements of light and darkness which are intrinsic to human life.

Worlding

If we look at two texts from the early Heidegger, we find that Heidegger did not simply view the world as inauthentic. He recognized the deceptions and errors that are built into worldly experience, but he also discerned the ‘vitality’ and ‘richness’ of living in the world. Thus, he is not interested in simply ‘clearing away’ ‘distortions,’ ‘deformations,’ and ‘objectifications.’²⁶ His goal, rather, was to grasp the ambiguity and indeterminacy of factual life in order to show how authenticity involves not just destruction and resistance, but also the cultivation of contexts of meaning. Error and deception belong to human life inevitably and

²² Given the way that Heidegger talks about authenticity and inauthenticity in BT, it is not surprising that one might reach the conclusion that he is presenting a choice between two different ways of life. Further, viewing Heidegger from the perspective of Luther, as van Buren and Crowe both do, one might see in Heidegger’s destruction a religious dismantling of one’s sinful life and a subsequent rebirth into a new life.

²³ Crowe 2006, p. 257.

²⁴ Crowe 2006, p. 255. Crowe says, further, that Heidegger is advocating “a way of life that is not beholden to the common ways ‘one’ thinks or acts, but rather is a genuine attempt to confront one’s cultural inheritance, freed from the constraining hegemony of the ‘idle talk’ of the ‘today’” (Crowe 2006, p. 263).

²⁵ In doing so, he draws upon Aristotle’s claim in the *Nicomachean Ethics* that in trying to be virtuous, “it is easy to miss the mark, difficult to hit it” (NE II.1106b28).

²⁶ Crowe 2006, pp. 241-242.

unavoidably. Authenticity was, for him, not a matter of overcoming fallenness, but rather of making phronetic insights into the meaningfulness of human life in spite of those distortions, and as we will see, by going through those distortions, and not abandoning them.

From as early as 1919, Heidegger was developing ways of thinking about human life as an active, dynamic context of meaningful relationships. This is a theme that continues in his lecture courses up through 1925 and into *Being and Time*. In KNS 1919, as a prelude to his attempt to explore the way in which philosophy is a primordial science, he will identify the various contexts within which and through which life happens. For Heidegger, it was essential that we recognize the extent to which human beings live within meaningful contexts. As academics, scientists, artists, people of faith, and even in our everyday lives, we are open to these contexts, which consist of people, things, and ideas.²⁷ These contexts constitute a horizon of relationships, and while these relationships are subject to corruption, they can, indeed they must, be continually transformed and renewed: “life-relations renew themselves only by returning to the genuine origins of the spirit” (G 56/57 4/4). There are various ways in which Heidegger develops these contexts of meaning, with respect to both life and language.

The goal of the lecture course is to determine how philosophy (phenomenology) is a primordial science and thus a method for conducting philosophical research and analysis.²⁸ What is important for philosophy is not the establishment of a worldview or of a transcendental, universal and necessary, standard or ought; rather, for Heidegger at this time, philosophy describes the way in which the ought gives itself and, even more importantly, the

²⁷ Heidegger writes here, “Every personal life has in all moments within its particular predominant life-world a relationship to that world, to the motivational values of the enviroing world, of the things of its life-horizon, of other human beings, of society. These life-relations can be pervaded – in quite diverse ways – by a genuine form of accomplishment and life-form, e.g. the scientific, religious, artistic, political.

The scientific man, however, does not stand in isolation. He is connected to a community of similarly striving researchers with its rich relations to students. The life-context of scientific consciousness expresses itself in the formation and organization of scientific academies and universities” (G56/57 4/4).

²⁸ According to George Kovacs, this course must be seen as being exclusively a meditation on method in philosophy: “In the final analysis, the entire course ‘The Idea of Philosophy and the Problem of Worldview,’ i.e. the idea of philosophy as primordial, pretheoretical science, is concerned with the problem of method (GA 56/57 110)” (Kovacs 1994, p. 102). The reference to Heidegger here is somewhat misleading, and Kovacs overstates the point. Heidegger claims, rather, that, “this whole lecture course has actually pivoted around the problem of method” (G56/57 110/84). For Heidegger, method is inextricably bound to content. Accordingly, he writes, “the sense of every genuine scientific method springs from the essence of the object of the science concerned, thus in our case the idea of philosophy. Primordial-scientific method cannot be derived from a non-primordial, derivative science. Such an attempt must lead to blatant nonsense” (G56/57 16/15). It is important to see that the method that Heidegger is developing springs from his object of investigation, which in this course is, first, the nature of philosophy, itself, and subsequently, the phenomenon of life, or lived experience.

way that value-relations are experienced in human life.²⁹ He writes, “The universality and necessity of the *should* is not *factual* and empirical but *ideal* and absolute” (G56/57 36/30). Once we recognize this, then we can develop an approach to philosophy that sees the ought not as a “primordial objectivity” but rather as a mode of factual life. Heidegger says, “I experience it, I ‘live’ it as an ought” (G 56/57 46/37). He finds it best, however, to cast this experience of the ought as an intransitive formulation: “The value ‘is’ not, but rather it ‘values’ in an intransitive sense: in being worth-taking, ‘it values’ for me, for the value experiencing subject. ‘Valuing’ becomes an object only through formalization” (G56/57 46/37). For Kisiel, the German impersonal sentence, which Heidegger uses extensively, such as “there is” or “it worlds” or, as here, “it values”, points to a dynamic and original event: “The original something is an original motion, the facticity of our being is an event or happening, the facticity of Time itself.”³⁰ I experience values, but values are open to me and available to me prior to any attempt to discern, through the critical-teleological method, universal and necessary norms or standards. What makes these values open and available? Heidegger writes, “In the morning I enter the study; the sun lies over the books, etc., and I delight in this. Such delight is in no way an ought; delightfulness as such is not given to me in an ought experience” (G56/57 46/37). The primordial event or happening of life, to which Kisiel refers, is an event which broadens the experience of life, from a narrow conception of norms discerned through a philosophical method to the value-rich texture of life as it is lived.³¹

In 1919 Heidegger refers to the self as the historical-I, probably the very first incarnation of what he will eventually name Dasein. What is most important for the sake of the argument that I am trying to make is the fact that this historical-I experiences different levels of intensity. When we experience the world theoretically, as a world of things, then the historical-I becomes both deworloded and dehistoricized; it becomes an experience of life that has been devivified, stripped of its vitality. The only way in which experience can be given is in the theoretical attitude, wherein the historical-I is bracketed and, essentially, dismissed (G56/57 85/67). Heidegger is grasping here not simply the givenness of experience, but rather the way in which

²⁹ In his analysis of this course, Kovacs connects this discussion of worldview with what Heidegger will later say about philosophy in his essay from 1964 on “The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking” (Kovacs 1994, p. 95). In both texts, Heidegger’s interest is in the nature and task of philosophy, so the connection is, in that regard, an appropriate one.

³⁰ Kisiel 1993, p. 25.

³¹ This experience is not something theoretical, like being-true. “In value-taking there is nothing theoretical; it has its own ‘light’, spreads its own illumination: ‘*lumen gloriae*’” (G56/57 49/39).

experience is lived. In factual life, we do not collect data of experience. Lived experience is not the accumulation of sensations. Although that is one way to apprehend experience, such an apprehension would be a derivation of the way life is experienced primordially. Admittedly, Heidegger is attempting in this course to show how one can apprehend the vitality of experience. But the situation he is describing is not either/or. He is not claiming that either the world is experienced theoretically or it is experienced factically. His claim is that, "There are levels of vitality of experience, which have nothing to do with individual chance 'life-intensity', but which are on the contrary prefigured in the essence of modes of life-experience and their worlds, i.e. in the unity of genuine life itself" (G56/57 90/70).

It is from this perspective that we need to understand what Heidegger says about about worlding in this course, which he takes to be a non-theoretical or pre-theoretical experience of the intensity of life.³² That intensity is constituted by contexts of meaning. This is why the lectern, in Heidegger's examples, is seen in such different ways. He writes, "I see the lectern in an orientation, an illumination, a background" (G56/57 71/57). The peasant from the Black Forest sees "the place for the teacher" while the Senegal Negro sees "Perhaps something to do with magic, or something behind which one could find good protection against arrows and flying stones" (G56/57 71/57). What none of them would see, except in a purely theoretical, abstract, deworlde d way, is "intersecting brown surfaces" (G56/57 71/57). Apprehending the world in terms of contexts of meaning is how Heidegger conceived of a philosophical life. For him, in 1919, a genuine life is one that is lived, experienced, and such a life "is not achieved by any constructed system of concepts, regardless of how extensive it may be, but only through phenomenological life in its ever-growing self-intensification" (G56/57 110/84). In the years leading up to and including in *Being and Time*, in spite of all that Heidegger will say about ruinance, fallenness, and inauthenticity, he maintains this positive sense of lived experience as worlding, and as intensification (we might even think of anxiety as the pinnacle of that intensification) prior to the development of a theoretical, pure seeing of phenomena. In 1923, for instance, he claims that, "The 'one' has something definitely positive; it is not just a phenomenon of fallenness, but as such a How of factual Dasein" (G63 17/14). We can see here that in Heidegger's thinking about the experience of life, at least in 1919, he is not

³² For Heidegger, the question as to whether or not the external world is an absurd question. In that this question is a question for both critical idealism and critical realism, both succumb to this absurdity. Both positions maintain a theoretical view of the world. (Heidegger writes: "This primacy of the theoretical must be broken" (G56/57 59/47)). Given the absurdity of the question, what any philosophy would call 'real' is thus a theoretical object. These 'real' objects are able to 'world', Heidegger says, but there is more to worlding than simply that which is thought to be 'real' (G56/57 91/71).

suggesting that life is inauthentic and needs to become authentic, nor is he saying that the primordially of lived experience is not genuine experience. On the contrary, from the beginning Heidegger wanted to develop an approach to the vitality of life in its various intensities.

Being-There and Being-True According to Aristotle

In this lecture he gave in 1924, Heidegger looks at why human beings live in deception. With reference to Aristotle, he claims that if we define the human being as a rational animal, a *zoon* which has *logos*, which Heidegger understands as a living being that speaks, then we can see quite clearly that the primary source of deception for human beings is *logos*, speaking. Human beings live in deception as they live in language, in speech. Accordingly, the truth of the human being would involve an uncovering of that deception, through true speaking, a correct *logos*. This is exactly what Aristotle says the prudent person does. Prudence, for Aristotle, allows one to discern the mean, and the mean is a correct *logos*.

The lecture identifies three modes of concealment. It is worthwhile to note that Heidegger's reading of language here is based on Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, which, he claims, is, "none other than the interpretation of the basic phenomenon of speaking-with-one-another" (BH, 222).³³ As such, it provides us with an analysis of the "modes of speaking" present in the natural, everyday language of the Greeks. The first mode of concealment has to do with the way that common opinions hide the truth from us. The second has to do with ignorance or unfamiliarity. This would be a straightforward concealment. The last one is a kind of concealment based on objectification and conformity.³⁴ Corresponding to these three modes of concealment are three modes of unconcealment: 1) disclosure through common opinion, 2) disclosure of completely concealed domains, and 3) the struggle against common speech.

What is important about all of this is that the unconcealment which Heidegger is describing here is a comportment of *Dasein* in the world. He is reading Aristotle in order to discern a more original understanding of the truth of life conceived as the disclosure or unconcealment of the

³³ Kisiel and Sheehan 2007, pp. 214-237.

³⁴ It is, Heidegger writes, "something that was already originally discovered once and at one time had been a proper possession of someone who had original knowledge of it sinks away once more, becoming something everyone understands, everyone repeats and says to each other until it becomes valid. What was once brought forth in an original and creative manner now becomes uprooted. It loses its ground." See Kisiel pp. 284-285. An example of this, for Heidegger, would be the meaning of *logos* itself. *Logos* is always understood to mean reason, rationality, or logic. But that is because it has lost its ground. The original meaning of *logos*, what it meant to the Greeks, has been lost. To them it meant speaking. It meant Being in the world with others and speaking with them.

world. Book VI of the *Nicomachean Ethics* outlines the five different modes of truth, including *phronesis*. In the Sophist course, Heidegger says, “A person can be concerned with things of minor significance; he can be so wrapped up in himself that he does not genuinely see himself.” We see here the problem of factual life’s ruinance, wherein life avoids itself. But there is hope: Heidegger says here, “Therefore, he is ever in need of the salvation of *phronesis*” (G19 51-52). “Circumspection regarding himself and insight into himself must again and again be wrested away by man in face of the danger of corruption and distortion” (G19 52).

Phronesis is an insight into the whole of human life, as Aristotle says in the *Ethics*, which involves, as Heidegger believes, an unconcealment from that which has been concealed, “a constant struggle against a tendency to cover over residing at the heart of Dasein” (G19 56). Phronetic insight, which develops into the structure of conscience in BT, works against deception and concealment through insight into who we are. It is not simply the destruction of modes of conformity and objectification, nor does Heidegger believe that those modes of error in human language and in life are meant to be cleared away. Rather, his effort is to *pass through* those modes of concealment in order to achieve truth as unconcealment or revelation; this happens as a phronetic moment of insight into the Being of factual human life.

Conclusion

In his early work, Heidegger was attempting to connect existential and ontological concerns. His reading of Dilthey, as we saw, attempted to think about the relationship of history and Being to the whole of life, which is meant in both in a temporal sense and in the sense of being a unified context. His interest in Being and his existential interest in factual life reach their terminus in the notion of Dasein.³⁵

If that is the case, then it becomes necessary to view what he says about authenticity in light of what it means for human beings *to be* or, in other words, for human beings to be *there* (Dasein) in the world with others and in speaking relationships with them. Heidegger’s understanding of destruction needs to be moderated by what he says about the human being as a worlding being who lives within contexts of meaningful relationships characterized by levels of intensity. There is no denying that factual life is riddled with the darkness of ruinance, fallenness, objectification, conformity, and idle talk, what Crowe rightly calls, with eloquence,

³⁵ The Greeks were particularly important to his turn toward more ontological concerns, but even there, through close readings of Aristotle’s *Ethics* and *Rhetoric* and in his interest in Socratic dialogue, we still see the attempt to connect the existential to the ontological.

“the idols of self-satisfaction and fugitive self-abdication that have accumulated on life like tumors.”³⁶ We might go even further and say that there may very well be a level of perversity at the heart of the human being. But as a worlding being, Dasein cannot simply ‘clear away’ these distortions. The course on factual life (G61) demonstrates so convincingly the extent to which human beings suffer ruination, it is difficult to imagine how Heidegger would ever conceive of a life without distortion. (Certainly, his own life was not free of distortion and conformity.) Nonetheless, he presents a way of grasping human life as riddled with deception but also charged with meaning and open to revelation and insight. I think that I could go on to connect this approach to human life with what the later Heidegger will say about *aletheia* as a confluence of errancy and revelation. Instead, allow me to conclude by saying that only by looking at Heidegger’s work in this way can we appreciate the force of what William Richardson has said about fallenness, namely that, “there is in [Heidegger’s] conception of finitude, especially in the notion of fallenness, a ground for human contrariness – even of human perversity – which lets us see how failure can be integrated with authenticity as well as success, like shadows in a Rembrandt painting.”³⁷

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Commentary on Scott Campbell's
 "Dilthey, Destruction, and the Early Heidegger's Philosophy of Life"

Did Heidegger Ever Have a "Philosophy of Life"?

Robert C. Scharff

University of New Hampshire

I. Introduction

In his paper, Scott Campbell analyzes Heidegger's treatment of facticity in the decade before *Being and Time* [SZ] and argues that Heidegger's approach to this topic is deeply indebted to Dilthey. I agree with this claim, but I am not sure that we interpret this indebtedness in quite the same way. To explain why, I will follow Campbell in considering first Dilthey's influence on Heidegger's treatment of factual life as such, and then second, more briefly, what Campbell calls Heidegger's "ambiguous" conception of the relation between everyday factual life and the possibility of authenticity. I will suggest that Campbell's perceived ambiguity disappears—at least as a problem of inauthenticity vs. authenticity—if we get the Dilthey connection right.

II. (Philosophies of) Factual Life:

First, then, about the young Heidegger on facticity.¹ As I see it, his treatment of "factual life" has everything to do with Dilthey—but absolutely nothing to do with the so-called philosophies of life, and for the same reason that it also has nothing to do with, say, existentialism or philosophical anthropology. According to the usual story, Heidegger ontologizes Dilthey's epistemology of science. Dilthey defends the possibility of a second kind of science. He argues that the natural sciences "explain" the external world by theorizing how we observe it, but the human sciences "understand" historical life by interpreting how we live it. And, since the subject matter of each kind of science calls for its own sort of method, this implies that Nature and Life are ontologically distinct. With this conclusion, Dilthey's own self-identified project would seem to reach its terminus. Once historical Life is ontologically

¹ Although Campbell does not explicitly say so, I assume from his discussion that he is drawing only on the writings from the KNS 1919 lecture on, which is the point at which Heidegger's still earlier concern for the factual, factuality, and the things themselves is finally formulated in terms of the subjection of the "historical (situated, factic) I" to "worlding," and "factic life-experience" is explicitly interpreted in terms of *Faktizität* for the first time (in SS 1920). See Theodore Kisiel, "On the Genesis of Heidegger's Formally Indicative Hermeneutics of Facticity," in *Rethinking Facticity*, ed. François Raffoul and Eric Sean Nelson (Albany: SUNY Press, 2008), 41-67, esp. n.13.

distinguished from objective Nature and the ground for the sciences of historical life is secured by linking its distinctive method with its proper subject matter, the projected *Critique of Historical Reason* will have completed its task.

At this point, however, one faces a further question, and here the usual story serves us poorly. Dilthey's works strongly suggest that there is, in principle, something much more intimate and basic about how everything is for us when "live" it from within, than when we merely observe it from without. It thus seems obvious that Life is not just the subject matter of one kind of science; rather, it should be construed as the ground and origin for all conceptualizations of anything, whether we stay concrete and hermeneutical, or step back to explain things more abstractly. In one "radical" move, it thus seems possible—in the name of experienced life itself—to overcome philosophical naturalism, positivism, scientism, and traditional metaphysical bias. In any case, this is the conclusion drawn in various ways by philosophers of life, as well as by existentialists, philosophical anthropologists, and philosophers of *Existenz*. But it is emphatically not the conclusion reached by Heidegger.

For him, the very existence of the two-sciences debate, whatever its form, is already the problem. Of course, it does raise immediately the question of Nature vs. Life and how to treat them; but this is merely the visible and misleading part of a generally ignored iceberg. The whole notion of kinds of realities or regional ontologies—to say nothing of the idea that one sort of reality has ontological priority over the others—is a puzzle, not a starting point. The real question is what sort of outlook is being enacted by those taking sides in the debate and by those who presume to rank order ontologies. The issue is not whether *Verstehen* is as scientific as *Erklären*, or whether there can be sciences of both Nature and Historical Life. The issue is how "science" is already being understood; and if the idea itself is contested, then we cannot continue to assume we know what a philosophy "of" science is. This in turn implies a still more fundamental question—the one towards which Heidegger sees Dilthey already moving—namely, how does one become the sort of philosopher who can properly ask these questions?

As I read him, Campbell seems to miss here what Heidegger finds most important about Dilthey. Granted that, like Dilthey, Heidegger is deeply interested in factual life, and that with Dilthey's help² he eventually comes to think of it as Dasein's being-in-the-world. Granted also

² Indeed, we now know that that Heidegger was already reading Dilthey seriously in his student days, at least as early as 1909-10, when he developed the habit of hand-copying "detailed excerpts" from Dilthey's writings (Letter to Karl Löwith, September 13, 1920, in Theodore Kisiel, *The Genesis of Heidegger's "Being and Time"* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 100 n.43). Among these excerpts are two revealing chapters from Dilthey's 1883 *Einleitung in die Geisteswissenschaften* on early Christianity and Augustine, which emphasize the "original Christian experience" and the rise of a "historical consciousness" that struggles to give expression to the

that, in Campbell's words, Heidegger "connects" this interest in "human existence" with a concern for "ontology." But the question is, How does he make the connection, and why?

During this era, lots of untraditional and anti-naturalistic descriptions of life are being given, and Heidegger often praises them for being phenomenological. But he has much less praise for those who give these descriptions. For example, even as Husserl's assistant, he is urging students to distinguish what phenomenology promises to be from what Husserl says it has to be.³ Husserl's concrete accounts of the things themselves are often clearly superior to those given by the positivists, neo-Kantians, and traditional metaphysicians of the day. But in order to maintain focus on phenomena as phenomena, says Heidegger, a philosopher must "be" a phenomenologist.⁴ And in the disputes among the members of the various schools including Husserl, what is most striking to Heidegger is the unphenomenological character of their sense of themselves as philosophers. Each speaks authoritatively for scientists regarded as too busy to reflect on their own practice; each defends an epistemic model of its "essential" structures not relative to place/time; and all of them are eager to settle first what deserves to be called *scientific*, and only then turn to everything else.

In short, the young Heidegger sees himself surrounded by thinkers who still talk as if they were Cartesian meta-knowers, resolutely removing themselves from not only from the circumstances of scientific practice, but from culture, society, and history. The real problem with Husserl's phenomenology, or the philosopher of life, does not lie in what they try to *do*. It lies in their still very traditional understanding of "*who*"—that is, what sort of philosopher—does it. Husserl still sees himself as founding a school, defending a traditional "scientific" ideal, teaching a method, and looking for all meaningfulness in modes of a "consciousness" that intends all sorts of "objects." Philosophers of life still see themselves as anti-positivist positivists, judging (from where?) the epistemic worth of various forms of knowledge, only this time privileging experienced life instead of observed nature.

"unfathomable living element at the heart of [its "factual," religious] self-examination" in ways that the traditional language of objective cosmological categories cannot. See *Gesammelte Schriften* [hereafter, GS], 23 vols. (Stuttgart: B.G. Teubner; and Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1913-), GS 1: 250-67 [*Introduction to the Human Sciences*, trans. Ramon J. Betanzos (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1988), 228-39].

³ Heidegger maintained this distinction throughout his life, insisting in the end that "in what is most its own phenomenology is not a school. It is the possibility of thinking,...of corresponding to the claim of what is to be thought" (*Zur Sache des Denkens* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1969), 90 [*On Time and Being*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), 82])—an observation that in 1969 he pointedly juxtaposes with the famous passage in *Being and Time* that makes the "possibility" of phenomenological philosophy higher than its "actuality" (*Sein und Zeit*, 10th ed. (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1963). 38.

⁴ The reference here is to SZ, §7, but Heidegger's early lecture courses are full of passages in which the sentiment expressed in SZ as "phenomena must be treated phenomenologically" (27) is phrased in other preliminary ways.

The problem, says Heidegger, is that none of these thinkers seem to realize that “even unbiased seeing *is a seeing*” that becomes the specific way of seeing it is by explicitly taking it over in a “critically purified” form.⁵ The lesson to be drawn is obvious. Before plunging into any more explorations of what there is and how to respond to it, we need some “preparatory” reflection on the question of what it means to BE a thoroughly contextualized, historically determinate philosophical questioner....of *anything*. This, famously, is SZ’s lead topic; and as we now know, Heidegger initially conceived his approach to this topic as an appropriation (*Aneignung*) of Dilthey.

This is no place to rehearse all the particulars, but the basic idea of this appropriation is important here. Heidegger calls it a “destructive retrieval” consisting of two related tasks. On the one hand, it involves a critical dismantling of Dilthey’s own philosophical self-portrait in a way that points us back to what his thinking really promises to accomplish. On the other hand, this pointing-back involves the development of a “foreconception” (*Vorgriff*) of what is “underway” in his thinking, so that we can carry it forward ourselves.⁶ In the case of Dilthey, this foreconception focuses on his “fundamental interest,” namely, his desire to understand and articulate from its own standpoint our active involvement in historical life. The aim is to retrieve from Dilthey’s work everything that is somehow promisingly expressive of this fundamental interest, by finding and neutralizing the destructive power of all those traditional common-sense and scientific (i.e., “surface”) conceptualizations—including Dilthey’s own—that continually threaten to obscure it. In this way, Heidegger explains, Dilthey helps us “bring the reality of the historical into view” and thereby broach “the problem of the historicity of Dasein.”

Heidegger finds a “productive tension” between Dilthey’s announced project and his actual accounts of life in numerous places. One case will have to suffice here. To Dilthey the critical epistemologist, natural science is a type of knowing. But to Dilthey the student of life, it is a human practice. And when he interprets its theories in terms of this practice, he says that they

⁵ “Sehen ist ein Sehen und hat als solches seinen Blickstand, so sehr, daß es ihn gerade in der ausgezeichneten Weise einer ausdrücklichen kritischgereinigten Aneignung hat” (*Ontologie (Hermeneutik der Faktizität)*, GA 23: 83-4 [*Ontology: The Hermeneutics of Facticity*, trans. John van Buren (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), 64, trans. altered, emphasis added]).

⁶ In Dilthey’s 1905 “Studies toward the Foundation of the Human Sciences” that Heidegger first read around 1909-10, the section immediately following the one he cites (which concerns thought’s bond of “inner necessity” with experienced life) is entitled “*Deskriptive Vorbegriffe*.” In it, Dilthey discusses the special sort of guiding concepts needed for any explication of the possibility of *verstehende* human sciences, GS 7: 13 [*Selected Works, Vol. 1: Introduction to the Human Sciences* (hereafter SW), trans. Rudolf A. Makkreel, et al. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 34].

belong to a class of life-expressions (*Lebensäußerungen*) comprised of “concepts, judgments, and larger thought-formations.” The prime feature of these life-expressions is that they are “detached from the lived experience in which they arose, and...adapted to logical norms,” in order to insure that their content “remains the same in every context,” so that their meaning “is the same for the one who formulates them and the one who understands them.”⁷ In other words, for observation reports and predictive theories to BE observation reports and predictive theories, they must be thought solely in the direction of their use and never in the direction of their genesis. Collectively speaking, explanations in the natural sciences continue to be efficacious, so long as one ignores the whole story of “how the[ir] logical content...is related to the dark background and the fullness” of the historical life out of which such theories develop.

In Dilthey’s actual descriptions, then, natural science is said to involve a kind of principled disinterest in any disclosure of itself *as a human practice*. Indeed, it can only exist as the practice it IS, precisely through its *suppressed* utilization of “the standpoint of experienced life” itself. The phenomenological implication of this fact is crucial. Natural science becomes the success it is by a studied forgetfulness of its lifeworld origins. But when philosophers do the same thing, they simply become arrogant and “metaphysical.”

The question then arises, what should philosophy’s standpoint be instead? In his late work, Dilthey rethinks the foundation of the human sciences in terms of what he calls the “standpoint of life.” Most of the time, he depicts the idea more narrowly as simply the standpoint of human science. Yet occasionally, he depicts it much more generously—apparently driven by a sense of the radical philosophical implications of his refusal to ground human science in external observation. Ultimately, he says, the issue is not about two methods, or two subject matters, or even the foundation for two research perspectives. It is about the “general epistemological task” of a “hermeneutics” that defines its concerns relative to a “standpoint” from which we are able to make and explain all these other distinctions. This, too, Dilthey depicts as the “standpoint of life”⁸—what he also calls our inevitable “starting point” (*Anfang*) from within the world of

⁷ GS 7: 205-206; cf. 227 [*Selected Works, Vol. 3: The Formation of the Historical World in the Human Sciences*, trans. Rudolf A. Makkreel, et al. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 226-27; cf. 247]. This volume contains all the notes for Dilthey’s unfinished *Critique of Historical Reason*.

⁸ The full quotation is “Today hermeneutics enters a context that assigns the human sciences a new, important task. It has always defended the reliability of understanding against historical skepticism and subjective arbitrariness...[but] now [it] must define its task relative to the [general] epistemological task of demonstrating that it is possible to know the nexus of the historical world and to find the means for bringing it about” (GS 7: 217-18 [238]). It is too easy to be satisfied with the narrow construal of “*allgemeinen erkenntnistheoretische Aufgabe*” if one translates it as “the epistemological task.” It is more difficult after one reads the numerous exchanges on the “general” epistemological significance of hermeneutics in the correspondence between Dilthey and Count Yorck

human experience. It “is always there,” he says, as what makes us “historical beings before being observers of history” (GS 7: 277-78 [297]). In this sense, the “standpoint of life” is not really the name of a standpoint at all; it simply identifies the general everyday, lived-through sense of things in terms of which we already *understand in a pre-scientific way* ALL of our “manifold powers”—including, of course, our powers to develop both natural and human science.⁹

Campbell fails to highlight the fact that Heidegger interprets that these cryptic remarks as evidence of Dilthey’s “restiveness” (SZ: 398)—that is, of the fact that he is “*on the way*” *toward the fundamental problem of life*, and thus toward the problem of Dasein’s historicity. We must be careful with this idea. Heidegger calls it a foreconception (*Vorgriff*), and foreconceptions, he says, are formal indications, not assertions or fixed propositions.¹⁰ A foreconception is not an idea we posit and start from. A formal indication only “guides us toward the right *path of looking*”—in this case, a path that helps us move farther in the same direction as Dilthey in his descriptions of how is it to “be” human, by warding off “certain dominant but irrelevant positions... in today’s research situation.” Dilthey himself is thus subjected to a destructive retrieval. We have a chance to take a more phenomenological and less epistemological “look” at what Dilthey’s descriptions “indicate” is there to be “seen.” In Dilthey himself, a certain objectivistically obligatory but phenomenologically unnecessary defensiveness pervades his accounts of his main topic—as for example, when he calls *Verstehen* “another” way of knowing, one which is interested in the “subjective” rather than objective, and concerns feelings not just thoughts, etc. Heidegger carries the matter forward by looking first to what Dilthey’s look at life actually tell us—not to what Dilthey and others say about the status of such looking—and asking “who” can look in this way and in what “mode of being-related” (*Bezogensein*) to things “are” they when they do so? In several lecture courses, including SS 1923 course that Campbell cites, Heidegger even says that his hermeneutic

in *Briefwechsel zwischen Wilhelm Dilthey u. dem Grafen Paul Yorck von Wartenburg 1877-1897*, ed. Erich Rothacker (Halle: Niemeyer, 1923), e.g., 185-87.

⁹ See, e.g., GS 1: 384-85 [217]. From the start, Dilthey sees his task as including not only the epistemic analysis of the human sciences but also a demonstration that these sciences are destined to replace the traditional sort of “metaphysics of society and history” that has been fending off a reductive naturalism about life for the right reasons but with the wrong tools. The historical development and eventual displacement of metaphysics, first by natural science and now also by human science (i.e., the “euthanasia of metaphysics”) is the main topic of Book II of his *Einleitung* (GS 1, 121-408). For details about Book II, see Jos de Mul, *The Tragedy of Finitude: Dilthey's Hermeneutics of Life* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004), 263-68.

¹⁰ Campbell draws the statement, “Dasein (factual life) is being in a world,” from this same page (*Ontologie*, GA 63: 90/62), but without acknowledging its formally indicative status.

approach amounts to ignoring whatever philosophers actually say and asking instead about “what goes on in philosophy before it becomes what it is”¹¹—in other words, before it becomes a program with a task and a way of looking, that allegedly tells what there “really” is.

III. “Authentic” Factual Life?:

For me, it is this formally indicative treatment of what he takes to be Dilthey’s deepest tendency of thought—not, as Campbell puts it, any quest to “grasp life as a whole” (e.g., 3, 8, 13)—that motivates Heidegger’s study of Dilthey. Granted the passages Campbell cites from Dilthey are important to Heidegger, but not because he agrees with what Dilthey asserts in them. This is where Heidegger’s saying that Dilthey is “*on the way to the question of life*” must be carefully understood. He means Dilthey is moving in the direction of the general (and typically ignored) issue of *how we live through life*—that is, how it is to BE human-historical, no matter what *Lebensäusserungen* are its manifestations. He does not mean that Dilthey is proposing a conceptual scheme that “grasps” life better than the conceptual schemes of his competitors. Perhaps I am not being fair to Campbell, but I find it difficult not to interpret him as if he is reading these passages as *statements* of what Dilthey thinks life is, and what Heidegger thinks life is, too. One reason I have this impression has to do with the way in which Campbell frames the inauthenticity/authenticity “problem.” He says that

in spite of all that Heidegger will say about ruinance, fallenness, and inauthenticity, he [also?] maintains [a] positive sense of lived experience as worlding, and as intensification ...prior to the development of a theoretical, pure seeing of phenomena (11).

I am not clear what Campbell means by “intensity” here, but more importantly, I do not see Heidegger juxtaposing inauthenticity and authenticity in this way when he describes how it is to be-in-the-world. In places, it seems as if Campbell would agree, but then come assertions that Heidegger sometimes describes existence this way and sometimes that—as if Campbell were thinking of an entity on which one can take two different perspectives. This, however, is precisely the kind of conceptualization that Heidegger thinks he is learning to avoid by turning Dilthey’s (albeit still too epistemically conceived) account of “understanding of life in its own terms” into SZ’s “hermeneutics as [ontological] self-elucidation.” Historical existence never just IS inauthentic or authentic; it is always a matter of letting whatever we live through “be.” Usually philosophers, like all of us, do this letting-be unreflectively—by interpreting things as

¹¹ *Ontologie*, GA 63: 51, 58/43, 46. In the course, both “historical consciousness” and philosophy are analyzed this way. I have simplified the quotation to refer only to philosophy.

“one” does; but as Dilthey’s work if not his philosophical self-conception shows, it is possible to transform this ordinary interpreting to make it more responsive to what is actually being lived through.

IV. Conclusion:

In any case, Campbell and I certainly do agree that Dilthey's influence is far greater than anyone initially guessed. Heidegger’s early lecture courses now show us that his treatment of the phenomenon of "being historical" antedates all his plans for SZ, and that he first addresses not just this phenomenon itself, but above all the question of “who” is up to the job of treating it. SZ’s main structural features are responses to this "hermeneutical" problem, that is, formal indications of the problem of “being” phenomenological that he is already addressing in the decade before SZ—with Dilthey's help, but still under the burdensome shadow of the traditional understanding of philosophical inquiry.

Heidegger's Poietic Meditations in *Das Ereignis* (GA 71)

Daniela Vallega-Neu

CSU Stanislaus

The publication of Heidegger's *Contributions to Philosophy* opened up to the readers of his work a view not only into some basic thoughts and relations that underlie his work since the late thirties, it also provided insight into the core activity of Heidegger's thought. We can witness Heidegger's thinking "at work" as he writes down what comes to thought as it comes to thought in the attempt to speak in the disclosure of being as a historical (*geschichtlich*) event. One may argue (as it has been done) that this book and the volumes following it – all of which attempt to articulate the historical event of being out of its own occurrence – are simply notebooks, but in itself that is no reason to dismiss them as being less important than the writings that were published during his life time or his lecture courses. I believe that we may compare these previously unpublished volumes to the sketches or sketchbooks of an artist who gives free reign to his hands and imagination, searching for a direction, a shape or color pattern that will eventually find its way into a painting. It is in a similar way that *Contributions to Philosophy* is "the straightedge of a configuration."¹

We are informed right away that *Contributions* are only an attempt to speak "vom Ereignis," i.e. "of" in the sense of "out of" the event in transition from the first to the other beginning of Western history. The task is not to speak "about" being, but to let being eventuate in a "poietic"² thinking and saying that brings forth (*poiesis*) and articulates its own historical eventuation. Given the care with which Heidegger selects and comments on the title of this "work," when looking at the title of the recently published volume *Das Ereignis*,³ one has to wonder whether this volume (GA 71) of Heidegger's collected works – at least in Heidegger's view – accomplishes something that *Contributions* could not yet do.

¹ Martin Heidegger, *Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis)*, ed. by F.-W. von Herrmann, vol. 65 of the *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt a. M.: Klostermann, 1989). In the following referenced as GA 65. All translations of *Beiträge zur Philosophie* are taken from the manuscript of the new translation of this book by Richard Rojcewicz and Daniela Vallega-Neu (forthcoming with Indiana University Press).

² See Daniela Vallega-Neu, "Poietic Saying," in *Companion to Heidegger's Contributions to Philosophy*, ed. By Scott, Shoenbohm, Vallega-Neu, and Vallega (Bloomington, Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2001), pp. 66-80.

³ Martin Heidegger, *Das Ereignis*, ed. by F.-W. von Herrmann, vol. 71 of the *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt a. M.: Klostermann, 2009).

When reading *Das Ereignis*, it became clear to me quite soon why this volume had not been announced with the same anticipatory promise that preceded *Contributions to Philosophy*.⁴ Despite the fact that *Contributions* cannot be called a philosophical work in the transitional sense and that it often displays sketches of thought and unfinished sentences, it has a certain amount of structure. I am alluding to the *Fugen*, the “conjunctures,” which are “the resonating,” “the interplay,” “the leap,” “the grounding,” “the future ones,” and “the last god”.⁵ *Das Ereignis* lacks even such a structuring,⁶ and Heidegger’s experimentation with language is even more pronounced and hard to follow if it can be followed at all. *Das Ereignis* is (if I may say so) even more of a “notebook” than *Contributions* appear to be and I can find no argument in favor of the possibility of defending the idea that they are a “work” of some kind (just like one cannot call the sketchbook of an artist a work of art). The reader cannot but wonder, “How should I read this book?” “How should I engage Heidegger’s experimentation with language in this volume?” and “What has Heidegger to say here that he did not say before or after in works that are more accessible than *Das Ereignis*?”

I am proposing, then, in this paper, a first reading of *Das Ereignis*, especially in light of *Contributions to Philosophy*. I will place special emphasis on the language in *Das Ereignis*, both in terms of how Heidegger speaks and of what he says concerning language.

From Contributions to Philosophy to Das Ereignis

Das Ereignis reconfirms the importance of *Contributions to Philosophy* as a work that opens up venues of thinking and saying that Heidegger continues to pursue in his paths of thinking. *Contributions* begins a long practice of a meditative thinking in which Heidegger attempts to think “of” the event as which being occurs historically, every time anew, without any particular plan or goal that would guide his meditations. As one reads progressively from GA 65 to GA 71, one can notice a stronger shift in language between, on the one hand, GA 66 and 69⁷ (written between 1938 and 1939) and, on the other hand, GA 70⁸ and 71 (written between 1941 and 1942). The earlier volumes after *Contributions* remain more closely within

⁴ I am alluding here to remarks made by von Herrmann and Pöggeler, who both had access to the manuscript of the *Beiträge* prior to its publication and announced it as Heidegger’s second major work after *Being and Time*.

⁵ *Anklang, Zuspiel, Sprung, Gründung, die Zukünftigen, der letzte Gott*.

⁶ This means that Heidegger did not continue to think along the sequence of these conjunctions.

⁷ GA 66: Martin Heidegger, *Besinnung*, ed. by F.-W. von Herrmann (Frankfurt a. M.: Klostermann, 1997). GA 69: Martin Heidegger, *Die Geschichte des Seyns*, ed. By Peter Trawny (Frankfurt a. M.: Klostermann, 1998)

⁸ GA 70: *Über den Anfang*, ed. By P.-L. Coriando (Frankfurt a. M.: Klostermann, 2005)

the horizon of the conjunctures that make up this work and focus especially (but by no means exclusively) on meditating on the first beginning, in its inception and its ending, which includes extensive sections on machination and power. This focus makes sense if one keeps in mind that during this time Heidegger continues to lecture on Nietzsche such that he places Nietzsche more and more into the position of the one who completes the history of metaphysics by thinking will to power as the will to will. The later volumes following *Contributions* (GA 70 and 71) reveal maybe a more daring enterprise: Heidegger seems to dive more deeply into thinking *of (from)* the event (*Ereignis*).

With *Über den Anfang* (GA70) and *Das Ereignis*, Heidegger appears to take a fresh start at the practice of inceptive (*anfänglich*), inventive thinking (*Erdenken*) and saying of being as event. I will lay out some of the recurring concepts and movements of his thought in these last two volumes shortly. For now, let me just indicate that over and over, Heidegger thinks the event as beginning (*Anfang*), and that the meditations on language, on *Sage* and *Wort* recur in a more pronounced way along with extensive sections on the relation between thinking and poetizing. The latter makes sense in view of the fact that at the same time, Heidegger gave his lecture courses on Hölderlin's "*Andenken*" and "*Der Ister*". Heidegger's attempt to let go of any preliminary structure, direction, or order of thought and to speak as originally as possible out of the event, is most pronounced in *Das Ereignis*, and I believe that in many cases, making some sense of what he says in this last volume requires the prior reading of *Über den Anfang*, since here he clarifies much more a number of words and concepts that appear in *Das Ereignis* without any attempts at elucidating them.

Das Ereignis (GA 71)

The thoughts gathered in *Das Ereignis* are divided into 11 parts⁹. One may find some similarity between the structuring of *Contributions* and *Das Ereignis*, since the latter starts out with thoughts concerning the first beginning and the end of metaphysics, and after a part titled "Verwindung"¹⁰, progresses to parts with sections concerning the event. In *Das Ereignis* one may see some progression from speaking of the first beginning (I.) both in Greek thought and

⁹ The eleven parts have the following titles: I. Der erste Anfang, II. Der Anklang, III. Der Unterschied, IV. Die Verwindung. V. Das Ereignis. Der Wortschatz seines Wesens, VI. Das Ereignis, VII. Das Ereignis und das Menschenwesen, VIII. Das Da-seyn, IX. Der andere Anfang, X. Weisungen in das Ereignis, XI. Das seynsgeschichtliche Denken. Denken und Dichten.

¹⁰ *Verwindung* usually is translated as "overcoming" or "twisting free", but when one looks at how Heidegger thinks "Verwindung" neither of these translations seem to fit.

in its completion in the will to will (II. The Resonating) to articulating the difference (between beyng and beings; III.), to the “*Verwindung*”, which relates to the overcoming of metaphysics in the “descent” into the abysmal occurrence of beyng as event (IV.),¹¹ to sections on the event (V., VI., and IX.), Da-seyn (VII.), the other beginning (VIII.) and the thinking of the historicity of beyng as well as thoughts regarding the relation between thinking and poetizing (XI.). However, *Das Ereignis* cannot be read, like the six conjunctures of *Contributions*, as a progression from a first resonance of beyng in the experience of the abandonment of beings by beyng to the grounding of the truth of beyng.¹² Already in the first part of *Das Ereignis*, Heidegger speaks more thoroughly from within what he conceives as the experience of the event as beginning. He speaks of the very inception of the first beginning attempting to think it out of the event as beginning. Consider, for instance the very first section of this first part of *Das Ereignis*, which bears in it a reference to Parmenides’ poem:

1. The first beginning

Aletheia holds sway as beginning.

Truth is the truth of being.

Truth is “the goddess” *thea*.

Her home is well rounded, not closed off, never [a](trembling) disguising heart, but unconcealing and lighting up everything throughout. In the first beginning, *Aletheia* is the concealed one – *truth*: the concealing safe-keeping of what is cleared—of the open span, the granting of the emergence, the allowing of presencing.”¹³

So Heidegger reads *aletheia* right away as primarily concealing (“the concealed one”) and not as unconcealing. This reading of the inception of the first beginning performs the movement that Heidegger emphasizes already in *Über den Anfang*: the downgoing into the

¹¹ One might think of a similar “function” of the “leap” in contributions, since they mark the point at which thinking finds itself appropriated in the event such that it may begin to articulate the event, but what Heidegger does in the part titled “*Verwindung*” is different.

¹² I believe that *Contributions* invites such a sequential reading despite Heidegger’s insistence that the six conjunctures should not be read as a linear sequence constituting “a step-by-step ascent from the low to the high” (section 1) and that “in each of the six junctures, a saying of the same about the same is attempted, but in each case out of a different essential domain of that which is called the event” (section 39).

¹³ 1. *Der erste Anfang*.

Die *Aletheia* west als der Anfang.

Die Wahr-heit ist die Wahrheit des Seins.

Die Wahrheit ist ‘die Göttin’ *thea*.

Ihr Haus ist wohl gerundet, nicht geschlossen, nie (erzitternedes) verstelltes Herz, sondern entbergendes Durchleuchten von Allem. Die *Aletheia* ist erstanfänglich die Verborgene—die *Wahr-heit*: die verbergende Wahrung des Lichten—Offenen, die Gewährung des Aufgangs, die Zulassung der Anwesen. (GA 71, 9f)

beginning (*Untergang in den Anfang*)¹⁴. “Downgoing is inception¹⁵ of the beginning in its inceptiveness [Der Untergang ist *Anfängnis* the *Anfangs* in seiner *Anfänglichkeit*.]”¹⁶

The following part of *Das Ereignis*, titled “*Der Anklang*” also offers a more inceptive meditation on what occurs in the resonating (of beyng as event). In *Contributions*, Heidegger says that the resonating, together with the interplay of the first and other beginning, *prepare* for the leap into the truth of beyng.¹⁷ But in *Das Ereignis* the resonating already transposes into the occurrence of the beginning. One may say, then, that resonating and leap are no longer thought as sequential in a transitional thought; rather they occur at once.¹⁸ There is still some similarity in the themes that accompany “the resonating” in *Contributions* and *Ereignis*, since in connection with the resonating, Heidegger thinks the end of metaphysics and the abandonment of beings by being, which disclose only for a thinking that discovers the unthought abysmal ground of metaphysics (i.e beyng in its truth, beyng as event). But the relation between the end of the first beginning and the moving into the other beginning is different. Whereas in *Contributions*, Heidegger emphasizes the necessity to withstand the plight of the abandonment by being (*Not der Seynsverslassenheit*) such that this withstanding disposes the thinking that experiences a first opening of the truth of beyng,¹⁹ in *Das Ereignis* the reader is told that the abandonment by being and the resonating of the other beginning *pass by each other*, i.e. in a certain sense, they do not touch each other. In *Das Ereignis*, Heidegger speaks of the “*Vorbeigang*” as “the passing by each other of [on the one hand] the abandonment of beings by being and [on the other hand] the *Seynsverwindung* [the twisting free of being] into the beginning.”²⁰ “*Verwindung*” (twisting free) into the beginning contrasts with what Heidegger calls the “*Entwindung*” (twisting away) into metaphysics. “*Verwindung* is allowance of beyng (not first

¹⁴ GA 70, sections 64-87.

¹⁵ *Anfängnis* is not part of the regular German vocabulary. In GA 70, Heidegger explains what this word names: “*Die Anfängnis* of the beginnings [*Anfänge*] is the way they begin [...] *Die Anfängnis* determines and ‘is’ the holding sway of the beginning.” (p.13)

¹⁶ GA 70:142. This movement of thought is reflected as well in the (in normal German) grammatically incorrect expression “*Erinnerung in den Anfang*,” literally translated, the remembering into the beginning, which recurs in the first part of *Das Ereignis*. GA 71:54ff.

¹⁷ GA 65: 9.

¹⁸ See the only place in *Das Ereignis* where Heidegger seems to allude to the conjunctures of *Contributions*: “Every thought of such [inceptive/saying/inventive] thinking already is at once resonating, interplay, leap, and grounding out of the appropriated steadfastness in da-sein.” (GA 71:298f)

¹⁹ This leads Polt to speak of the “emergency of beyng” in Heidegger’s *Contributions to Philosophy* (see Richard Polt, *The Emergency of Being: On Heidegger’s Contributions to Philosophy*, Cornell University Press: 2006), emphasizing both the aspect of urgency or need and the one of emergence.

²⁰ GA 71:84.

of beings)” and is “downgoing into the departure [*Untergang in den Abschied*].”²¹ “*Entwindung*” addresses the occurrence by which beings emerge in their presence such that the truth of being is concealed, which ultimately leads to metaphysics and “letting being loose into what is without truth.”²²

With the resonating, then, already occurs a downgoing into the beginning as which Heidegger thinks the event in *Über den Anfang* and *Das Ereignis*. Thinking seems to have become more inceptive; more a saying granted out of the abysmal occurrence of being.

From here, we can understand some of the points of critique that Heidegger offers at the beginning of *Das Ereignis* with respect to *Contributions*.²³ He says that in some places *Contributions* is “too doctrinal [*lehrhaft*]” and leans too much onto the differentiation between “grounding question” and “guiding question.” In this work, the event does not yet receive the purely inceptive holding sway of the abyss, and da-sein “is still thought to unilaterally in the direction of man.”²⁴

The Event as the Inception of the Beginning (*Anfängnis des Anfangs*)

Part V. of *Das Ereignis*, titled “Das Ereignis: Der Wortschatz seines Wesens” begins with the remark “Concerning the introduction to ‘Das Ereignis’”. It starts with section 184, in which Heidegger meditates on *Ereignis* and words related to *Ereignis*.²⁵ I will interpret some lines from this part in order to try to elucidate at least to some extent how Heidegger thinks the event

²¹ GA 70:19.

²² GA 71:115.

²³ This is my translation of the six points of critique, which Heidegger presents at the end of the foreword of *Das Ereignis*:

1. In some places, the presentation is too doctrinal [*lehrhaft*].
2. Thinking leans onto the differentiation between “grounding question” and “guiding question” within the “question of being”, which is legitimate only in a doctrinal way. The question of being itself is still captured more in the style of metaphysics, instead of being thought according to the way of the already grasped history of being.
3. Accordingly, “the beginning” too is still seized out of the performing of the thinker and not in its essential unity with the event.
4. Together with this, the event does not yet receive the purely inceptive holding sway of the abyss, in which is prepared the advent of beings and the decision over the reigning of the gods [*Göttertum*] and humanity [*Menschenwesen*]. The thought of the last god is still unthinkable.
5. Although da-sein is thought essentially out of the event, it is still thought to unilaterally in the direction of man.
6. Humanity not yet sufficiently historical [*geschichtlich*]. (GA 71:4f)

²⁴ GA 71:4f. This may be the reason why, in *Das Ereignis*, Heidegger begins to write “Da-seyn” with a “y.”

²⁵ *Ereignen*; *Vereignung*, *Übereignung*, *Zueignung*; *Aneignung*; *Eigentlichkeit*; *Eignung*; *Geeignetheit*; *Enteignung*; *Eigentum*.

as beginning in order then to move to the critical issues I want to focus on, namely Heidegger's language and reflections on language in *Das Ereignis*.

"The event names the inception of the beginning that properly clears itself [*die eigens sich lichtende Anfängnis des Anfangs*]. [...] The appropriation that occurs in the event is "in itself counterturning [*gegenwändig*] out of the inceptive emerging, which is at the same time downgoing into the abyss." [GA 71:147] This counterturning motion echoes the way Heidegger describes the truth of beyng in *Contributions*, namely as an unconcealing concealment, as appropriating and withdrawal at once, but now he tries to think even more the "keeping to itself" of the beginning as which the event occurs.²⁶ In *Über den Anfang* he writes: "Beginning is the taking into safe keeping [*An-sich-nehmen*] of the departure into the abyss."²⁷ This occurrence is at the same time the occurrence of a difference²⁸ between emerging and concealing. In the German word for difference, *Unterschied*, resonates the same word as in departure, *Abschied*, namely "scheiden", "to divide" or "sever". In the departure into the abyss occurs a differentiation, which I understand to be the articulation of the different "aspects" at play in the turning of the event: beyng and being, beyngs and nothing, beyng and beings, beyng and humans, da-seyn, non-being (*das Unseiende*), and (here comes another new concept in Heidegger's thinking) "*das Seinlose*" (literally, "the without-being" or "what 'is' ['is' needs to be crossed out here] without beyng").²⁹

In *Das Ereignis* Heidegger says the following concerning *das Seinlose*:

The difference divides being and what is without being. But the *Seinlosigkeit* [the quality or state of the *Seinlose*] is an event of beyng itself. [...]

The *Seinlosigkeit* (of beings) is the inceptive event of disappropriation [*Enteignung*]; the inceptive disappropriation in the sense of the *withholding*. This disappropriation is inceptive, still unwound essencing back into the groundless beginning.³⁰

In *Über den Anfang* Heidegger writes, that the *Seinlose* is not a being that is abandoned by beyng (this would be the non-being, *Unseiendes*). "The *Seinlosigkeit* is *disappropriation* of beings."³¹

²⁶ See also the way Heidegger describes what "*Anfang*" says in GA 70:10.

²⁷ GA 70:11.

²⁸ *Unterschied* is a prominent basic concept in *Das Ereignis*.

²⁹ See GA 71:122f.

³⁰ GA 71:132.

³¹ GA 70:122.

The disappropriation, of which Heidegger speaks, is not the withdrawal that occurs in the coming to presence of beings, it is not the occurrence that leads to the abandonment of beings by being. Rather, it is a more originary negativity (more originary than the nothing that belongs to being) at the heart of the event insofar as it occurs as inception. One may say that it is the not yet or no longer begun beginning in the beginning.

Heidegger himself meditates on the difficulty of thinking this *Seinlose*; he calls it daring (*eine Zumutung* requiring *Mut*) and opposing itself to being thought.³²

The Question of Interpretation

At this point, a serious question poses itself to me, as an interpreter of Heidegger's thinking in the light of the "experimentation" with language at work in *Das Ereignis*. Up to now, I have approached the text in a preliminary way, with reference to a text I am more acquainted with, namely *Contributions to Philosophy*, and I may continue on this path by attempting to recognize in what Heidegger says structures of thinking I have been finding in other texts by Heidegger. For instance, I may relate appropriation and disappropriation to the movement of the originary unconcealing concealment as which truth occurs and contrast this with a concealment that conceals the originary unconcealing concealment. For Heidegger, this concealing of the unconcealing concealing is what marks metaphysics insofar as it rests on the primacy of the presencing of beings. Or I might point ahead to what Heidegger writes in *Time and Being* and interpret the inception of the beginning as the *Geschick*, the sending of being. Thus, I would retranslate Heidegger into Heidegger, retranslate Heidegger's strange text into what is more familiar to me and also to most of you.

But would I thereby not be missing precisely what Heidegger attempts to do in *Das Ereignis*, namely a saying of the event as beginning, a saying that does not hold on to preconceived structures of thinking but that tries to be poietic, originary language "of" (out of) the event? So, should I then interpret what Heidegger says *within* the relations of thought and with the help of the words that Heidegger himself uses? In other words, should I do a strictly immanent reading of this volume? Yet, what would the point of such an immanent reading be? Considering that many words and word formations Heidegger uses are not part of the regular German language, considering that he speaks without wanting to mediate and thus "communicate" – where would such an immanent reading take us?

³² GA 70: 121-123.

Let us look at some thoughts concerning language that Heidegger offers in *Das Ereignis*. Heidegger attempts to speak “of” the event, to let the event come to words in what he calls the “saying of the beginning” (*die Sage des Anfangs*). In section 335 he says:

The saying of the beginning – its expression and presentation can only be simple. Here, this means: emerging out of the one and the unity of the beginning: in the manner of the event.

Any discovering, any teaching, but also any awakening, any thrusting must stay away; in the same manner any “ordering” of “contents.” Only the pure word that rests in itself must resonate. No listener must be presupposed and no room for the listening-belonging (*Gehören*).³³

Heidegger’s saying of the event is a solitary saying, a saying that searches without an “other” for words that he lets emerge in a disciplined exercise of meditation turned towards the *Seinlose*, towards no being, towards the abyss, words that come out in continuous repetitions of related words and word formations, like in a “free variation” not of images or representations, but sounds with reverberating sense.³⁴ I will give you a few examples of these word-sound iterations in German:

187. *Das Er-eynis* ist Er-eignung, Er-sagen des Eigensten. Das Eigenste ist das Anfängliche in seiner Anfängnis: die Stille der hütenden Anmut ist als Er-eignung die Über-eignung des Ereigneten in das so erst er-sagte Eigentum (Da-sein).³⁵

188. *Er-eynis und Rührung*. Rührung – das scheue, nicht zugreifende Anrühren, das kaum berührt; nur *rührt*. [...] ³⁶

314. *Das Wort* (die Sage) – das Stimmen. [...] Was ist das Wort? Die lautlose Stimme des Seyns. Was heißt hier Stimme? Nicht ‘Laut’, sondern das *Stimmen*, d.h. Er-fahren lasen. Wie dies?

Stimmen in die Erfahrung des Anfangs (der selbst unerfahrbar). Stimmen durch Bestimmen.

Bestimmen durch Denken der Stimme des Wortes des Anfangs.

Denken durch bildloses Sagen des Anfangs.³⁷

³³ GA 71:297.

³⁴ Compare the very sensitive reading of Heidegger’s language in *Unterwegs zur Sprache* by Marcia Cavalcante Schuback: “The Poetic of Language: Readings of Heidegger’s *On the Way to Language*” in *Metaphysics, Facticity, Interpretation* (Dordrecht/Boston/London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2003). Schuback shows how Heidegger’s language enacts a thought from within experience by emphasizing rhythm and interruption in the way he speaks.

³⁵ GA 71:181.

³⁶ GA 71:182.

³⁷ GA 71:283.

This last passage tells something more about how Heidegger thinks the inceptive saying of the event: The word he speaks of here is more originary than spoken or written words; it is “the soundless voice of beyng.” The voice [*Stimme*] is an attuning [*Stimmen*]. The attuning occurs in the event of appropriation. It is in this sense that Heidegger can also say “the event is the inceptive word because its assignment [*Zueigung*] [...] attunes the essence of man to the truth of beyng.”³⁸ Thus the thinker who thinks the event as beginning, speaks what is assigned to him in the attunement appropriated in the event.

The attunement or disposition that Heidegger refers most to in *Das Ereignis* is *der Schmerz* (the ache), which includes the fright of the abyss and the delight of the departure,³⁹ and which, of course, Heidegger says, we should not understand simply as a emotional dispositions but as a way in which the event holds sway since it is the event that resounds in the word that speaks the soundless voice of beyng.⁴⁰ The ache is a “seynsgeschichtlicher Schmerz”,⁴¹ an ache pertaining to the historicity of beyng.

Intellectual honesty leads me to admit that I do not share this attunement, this ache, with Heidegger, but I find at once a draw and a resistance toward the language of *Das Ereignis*, with all its incomprehensibility, its refusal to let itself be organized, systematized, translated. I am puzzled by the repetitive character of Heidegger’s words, which works like an enchanting chant that condenses meaning by virtue of repetition, a chant that encircles the listener, drawing her to nothing, to the *Seinlose* maybe, in the multiple reverberation of sounds with diffusing meaning.

Heidegger meditates on this latter aspect of the language of the beginning as well: “*The word of inceptive thinking* has the equivocality (*Mehrdeutigkeit*) of the beginning, which neither rests on negligence, nor is it tailored for a dialectic. The equivocality lets the word hold sway and thus disposes into the unrest of thinking.”⁴²

Should we take Heidegger’s repetitive attempts at saying the event as attempts to find the ultimate word for beyng as Derrida suggests?⁴³ Or – if we take into account the transformation of language happening throughout the years in Heidegger’s writings – are they precisely

³⁸ GA 71:170.

³⁹ “Der Schmerz: der Schrecken des Abgrundes und die Wonne des Abschieds.” GA 71:211.

⁴⁰ GA 71:217ff.

⁴¹ GA 71:218.

⁴² GA 71:294.

⁴³ Jacques Derrida, *Marges de la Philosophie* (Paris, 1972), p. 29.

attempts to resist a univocal language, to resist a solidification of language that loses the original freshness of the poietic word? For sure these are exercises in poietic thinking and saying. Yet at the same time, Heidegger does not view these exercises as “personal exercises”. For Heidegger, the saying he attempts, responds to being in its historicity (*Geschichtlichkeit*). It emerges with the sense of being as an inceptive occurrence that grants epochal ways of disclosing/hiding being; and this sense arises out of the experience of the ending of the first beginning of being's history (metaphysics), which is tied to the sense of a more originary other beginning, hidden within the first.⁴⁴

This leads me to my final reflections on *Das Ereignis* in this paper. *Das Ereignis* belongs to a series of esoteric writings (esoteric in the sense of the Greek word)⁴⁵ that think being in its historicity. Heidegger's claim throughout these writings is that his thoughts are not properly his in a “subjective” sense; he speaks *out of* being as it occurs inceptively, which is made possible, according to Heidegger, by the experience of the ending of metaphysics and the possibilities that lie in this ending.⁴⁶ This thinking of being in its historicity is no longer philosophy, as Heidegger tells us,⁴⁷ and, indeed, *Das Ereignis* defies philosophy in any traditional sense.

I believe that Heidegger's critique of metaphysics and of the domination of productivity in our contemporary world are powerful and illuminating, but *Das Ereignis* makes me wonder about this space of inceptive thinking that carves out an undercurrent that “passes by”⁴⁸ a world abandoned by being, a world with (in 1941-42) a raging devastating war. I begin to wonder if with these repetitive exercises in poietic thinking and saying over so many years, and by holding on to the thought that his thinking prepared the possibility of initiating a new destiny of being, Heidegger did not encircle himself into a solitary space of thought, a space that – although daring in its own pursuits – kept him safe from the madness of a world.

⁴⁴ For Heidegger, *Geschichtlichkeit* does not address history in a chronological sense of a series of events. It means at once that being is an occurrence, a *Geschehen*, and that it occurs through epochal sendings of ways being unfolds and is hidden. For Heidegger's understanding of the historicity of being see Alejandro Vallega, “Being-Historical Thinking” in *Contributions to Philosophy*” in *Companion to Heidegger's Contributions to Philosophy*, ed. by Scott, Schoenbohm, Vallega-Neu, and Vallega (Bloomington, Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2001), pp. 48-65.

⁴⁵ See the afterword of Daniela Vallega-Neu, *Contributions to Philosophy: An Introduction* (Indiana University Press: Bloomington & Indianapolis, 2003), p.115.

⁴⁶ I am alluding to Heidegger's thought that being in its holding sway resonates (as withdrawal) out of the abandonment of beings by being. See, for instance, section 50 of *Contributions*.

⁴⁷ Martin Heidegger, GA 69, p.167.

⁴⁸ I am thinking here of the notion of *Vorbeigang* that I mentioned earlier.

On the other hand, simply “psychologizing” Heidegger in this way would be too reductive and would not do justice, I believe, to a work with language and a sense of being that has opened new venues for thought already. The originating of a poietic language in a listening to nothing resonates with many of us, it is like the attempt at staying with the empty page while writing, the empty canvas while painting, the silence in a room while playing music; it is like waiting for the words or the gesture or the sound to emerge without self-consciousness, without a sense of an “I”, freely, like a gift. Creativity needs emptiness of such a kind, it needs a space of non-determination; yet not for the sake of non-determination. But it is difficult to let these spaces of emptiness and non-determination be without reading into them senses and meanings that work like a concentric force that structures our thinking.

It is way too soon to come to conclusions regarding *Das Ereignis*, and how we should read this book, but we may say this much: it does not lend it self to a systematic reading and calls for a response that defies academic ways of approaching texts. It may reveal to us the originating of Heidegger’s engagement with language in the fifties, but we cannot find in it “the” word uttering the event. What we find rather is an exercising of poietic thinking that - if anything - displaces (at least some of us) from thinking in all too familiar structures of thought.

Commentary on Daniela Vallega-Neu's
 "Heidegger's Poietic Meditations in *Das Ereignis* (GA 71)"

Pol Vandavelde
 Marquette University

Professor Vallega-Neu raises the interesting question of how to interpret Heidegger, especially in the works linked to the *Contributions* like the volume *Das Ereignis*, a work that, Prof. Vallega says, even challenges the view of what a work is. She purports to focus on Heidegger's language and what he says about language. Hence the presence of the word "poietic" in the title of the paper. In this poetic reading she intends to "retranslate Heidegger into Heidegger, retranslate Heidegger's strange text into what is familiar to me and also to most of you."

This question of how to interpret Heidegger is most welcome and crucial, especially when dealing with the works linked to the *Contributions* like *Das Ereignis*. When Heidegger tells us that "the event names the inception of the beginning that properly clears itself" (GA 71, 147), we can rightly ask, as Prof. Vallega-Neu does, what the point of an immanent reading would be. It would be like the response of a professional violinist to someone who wanted to know the meaning of a beautiful piece he just played. He responded: "Let me play it again." Heidegger was best at speaking like Heidegger and a retranslation, by moving from the Heideggerean framework into another, has the promise of bringing intelligibility to his difficult formulations. Now of course, when re-translating Heidegger and reading him poetically, we have to pay heed to the warning Donald Davidson: "The trouble is, as so often in philosophy, it is hard to improve intelligibility while retaining the excitement."¹ And retaining the excitement is precisely what we want to do.

Prof. Vallega-Neu wonders whether Heidegger in these works linked to the *Contributions* was not creating a space of thought for himself that would keep him "safe from the madness of a world." I am not sure about Heidegger's intent, but I certainly agree that the component of performance is crucial for understanding what he does. His thinking is not a presentation of his research and does not represent contents of thought, but effectuates thought. It is an effort to perform the *Er-denken* or rather to participate in it. In the *Contributions* Heidegger

¹ "On the Very idea of a Conceptual Scheme," 184.

distinguished what he terms a “Thinking I” and a “Thinking II.” “Thinking II” is thinking as we normally understand it, which takes the form of judgments and propositions. “Thinking I,” on the other hand, is the very production of thinking, the thinking in the making or the bringing into thought. The challenge Heidegger’s language offers lies in interpreting what he says by attending to the performance of his thinking. Since he claims that the “essence” of any entity is in fact an “unfolding,” that the *Wesen* is a *Wesung*, we cannot ask Heidegger the “what” question: What does he mean? The question must rather be: How does he perform it? I would like to follow this performance by focusing on the notion of “beginning.” This may illustrate how *Er-denken* functions.

If we examine this *Anfang* is, we can say, as Heidegger let us believe and as Prof. Vallega-Neu notes, that it is the beginning of Western history. Thus, when Heidegger speaks of a first and another beginning, both beginnings would be of the Western history. But then uneasy questions arise. What about other traditions? In an era that values diversity and opens up the canon of works to non-canonic readings, this gesture may look like Eurocentric. In addition, understanding the beginning in this way does not seem to avoid a historical claim. Somehow, the beginning had to be an event that took place and was recorded. Although Heidegger often suggests that the beginning he speaks of is indeed the beginning of our tradition and he even locates it in Greek philosophy, he also tells us that the beginning was not a historical event.² This in turn indicates that the other beginning is not to be thought as another event that will take place sometime, in some point of time in the future. As Heidegger himself acknowledges, “what... this other beginning of the history of being ‘means,’ nobody knows” (GA 66, 59). The fact that he says “other” beginning and not “new” beginning reinforces the non-event aspect of this “event.”³

In order to approach this performative thinking, besides the poetic reading Prof. Vallega advocates, we could also appeal to previous works in order to show how radical such a thinking is. Although “The Origin of the Work of Art” was written at the same time as the *Contributions*, in 1936, the beginning mentioned in “The Origin” is not contrasted with another beginning. In “The origin” the beginning is part of a threefold foundation, a *Stiftung*: the first

² “The event [Ereignis] does not mean here something that happens [ein ‘Vorkommnis’], which immediately goes under in what is occurring and appears and disappears like a phase in a development, in which case the development would still be first” (*Das Ereignis meint hier nicht ein ‘Vorkommnis’, das sogleich im Vorkommenden untergeht und wie eine Phase eines Verlaufs auftaucht und verschwindet, wobei dann der Verlauf doch das Erste wäre*) (GA 70, 17).

³ “It must be called the “other” beginning so as not to fall in counting and not to ascribe the number 1 to the first beginning” (GA 70, 12).

component of this foundation is a bestowing (*Schenken*), the second component is a grounding (*Gründen*), and the third one is a beginning (*Anfangen*). Heidegger understands this beginning as the opening of a world and even mentions several worlds: “This foundation happened in the West for the first time in Greece. What was in the future to be called Being was set into work, setting the standard” (77). But besides this first beginning, there was, Heidegger tells us, a transformation of the realm of beings in the Middle Ages and another transformation in the modern age (77). And Heidegger qualifies these transformations as another opening of a world: “At each time a new and essential world arose” (77). This already indicates that each of those three worlds Heidegger lists was a beginning: “history either begins or starts over again [...*fängt Geschichte erst oder wieder an*]” (77). The use of the word *wiederaufnehmen* suggests that the beginning that follows the first is a new beginning, not another beginning. The new beginning is somewhat in continuation with the previous one and is, as Heidegger says in “The Origin,” a “transformation” (*verwandeln*). In addition, the foundation that leads to the opening of a world is performed by activities: art is at the center of the lecture, but there are others, like “the act that founds a political state,” “the essential sacrifice,” or “the thinker’s questioning” (62).⁴

This kind of activism has disappeared in the *Contributions* and the other works linked to it, like *Das Ereignis*. Instead, the beginning is now presented as a correlation between the first beginning and the other beginning. “The beginning is that which the future history so determines that in the other beginning the beginning finds its ground in the open (it is not the case that the beginning is as it were, replaced by the other beginning)” (GA 69, 136).⁵ As part of the poetic reading Prof. Vallega advocates, we can attend to the opposition between the two, rather than to each of the members in the opposition. As with the opposition between “thinking I” and “thinking II,” or “essence” (*Wesen*) and “unfolding” (*Wesung*), we may come to see these terms not as referring to something, to a *was* of which we could question the *Wesen*, but rather as parameters. It is not “first beginning” or “other beginning” that matter in their singular meaning, but the opposition between the two. The first beginning becomes a retrospective qualification and the other beginning becomes a prospective qualification. And these qualifications are made from within the history of being. This would explain why Hölderlin,

⁴ Heidegger mentions another one: “the nearness of that which is not simply a being, but the being that is most of all” (62).

⁵ “Der Anfang ist Jenes, was die künftige Geschichte so bestimmt, dass er im anderen Anfang sich in das offene gründet (nicht etwa durch ihn ersetzt wird).”

although from another century, is considered “the poet of the other beginning” (GA 70, 160) or why Heidegger says that there is something inceptual (*anfänglich*) in what can be said or done now: “When we do not preserve the beginning we fall out of history” (GA 66, 316).

The thinking from within the history of being, the one that is inceptual (*anfänglich*) is, Heidegger remarkably says in contrast with the *Stiftung* of “The Origin,” an *Ent-stiften*: the undoing of the foundation. It does not mean that the foundation has to be annulled (*rückgangig gemacht*, GA 239). *Ent-stiften* positively understood means: “separated from the foundation in the proper ‘counter’-essence” (*getrennt von dieser [Stiftung] im eigenen ‘Gegen-wesen,’* GA 71 243).

This is what being in a transition toward another beginning consists in: the performance of an another kind of thinking that attempts to recover the moment of “beinglessness” (*Seinlosigkeit*) in beings. This term *seinlos* or *Seinlosigkeit* is striking, for it is precisely what cannot be presented and what cannot appear. It is not the “non-being” (*das Unseiende*) of the abandonment of being that Heidegger in the late 1930s and early 1940s associates with *Amerikanismus*, of which Bolshevism is only another form. The moment in things of their *Seinlosigkeit* is precisely the inceptual moment, when we experience the abyss of the beginning: “In the other beginning, where the inceptualness of the beginning [*die Anfängnis des Anfangs*] comes into its truth, the abyss of the beginning opens itself” (GA 71, 239).⁶

Prof. Vallega-Neu drew attention to Heidegger’s own language, to the poietic aspect of his work. For, Heidegger’s use of language is one way to perform the *Er-denken* in order to retrieve the moment of “beinglessness” (*Seinlosigkeit*) in beings. The reason Heidegger operates on language is that language has an inceptual nature. “The word... does not have inceptually [*anfänglich*] the mode of ‘meaning’ and ‘sense’” (GA 71, 171). Words are “the echo of this, that beings, which were before beingless [*seinlos*], enter into the appropriation to being” (GA 71, 171). The “counter-essence” (*Gegen-wesen*) Heidegger mentions as what thinking tries to bring to the fore as a mode of *Ent-stiftung* consists in using words in such a manner as to make way for that to which they respond. There is a voice (*Stimme*) that first addresses human beings and this address is a mood (*Stimmung*). “We are not yet capable of grasping that this claim of the beginning (*Anspruch des Anfangs*) is an address and an appeal [*in den Anspruch nehmen*], which holds sway when we are speechless [*im Sprachlosen*]” (GA

⁶ “What is beingless ‘is’ the pre- and post-inceptual; not to the extent that it has an inceptual character, but because it is only in the beginning that it ‘becomes’ a being” (Das Seinlose ‘ist’ das Voranfängliche und Nachanfängliche und zwar nicht, sofern es Anfangscharakter hat, sondern je nur im Anfang das Seiende ‘wird’” (GA 70, 122).

71, 171). Heidegger then mentions several moments when we are speechless: in astonishment (*in einem Staunen*), in joy (*in einer Freude*), in terror (*in einem Schrecken*), in bliss (*in einer Wonne*) (GA 71, 171-72). Astonishment was the mood of the first beginning and *Schrecken* is the mood of the transition to the other beginning. The beginning is what seizes human beings (*fangen*) and this moment of being caught is a mood. What human beings say about beings can thus be approached as a response. *Er-denken* thus consists in retrieving the address from the response.⁷ Heidegger's radical thinking attempts to think a moment of beginning that escapes history as what could be recorded and weaved into a narrative, but is instead what makes history. Or he tries to think an event that did not happen, but opened the framework in which a happening is a possibility.⁸

Still, we may wonder whether it is possible to speak of "events" in a history of being that are not historical events, like the abandonment of being, or to go back to the moment of "beinglessness" (*Seinlosigkeit*) in things. If we do it as I understand Heidegger doing it, not by focusing on one moment of a beginning in time, but in the opposition between a first beginning and another beginning, what motivates the whole effort of *Er-denken* is the address we perceive in our own history either when we perceive an inceptual moment in what is happening or the absence of such inceptual moment. However, in either case it is the concrete history around us that has the initiative, putting us in a certain mood (*Stimmung*) and leading us to hear a particular voice (*Stimme*). When Heidegger qualifies *Amerikanismus* as a mode of the abandonment of being, he assesses current history from the perspective of the history of being, but he obfuscates the fact that this history of being can only be a "counter-essence" (*Gegenwesen*) to current history, not a court of appeal from which a judgment can be pronounced upon particular events.

⁷ This thinking within the history of being is not a questioning back like the one Husserl performed, for example in "The Origin of Geometry." For, Husserl's mode of thinking aimed at a re-activation and re-effectuation of the acts that led to the production of idealities, for example of geometry, but also, Husserl claims, of all cultural products. Husserl's mode of questioning was also, like Heidegger's, a form of a de-construction, what he calls an *Abbau*⁷ and, analogous to Heidegger, the aim of the process was to grant some traction to thought, to address a crisis. However, different from Heidegger, the questioning back also aimed at building a community with those whose idealities we try to recover. As he proclaimed, "I can transport myself in all times, in all historical times" (Husserl 1973 Hua XV, 239). This seems to prevent radical ruptures in our world and take away the possibility of something that would be "another beginning." Although Husserl consents to the view that the world itself is not a finished product, but is completable and that each ego is only a concretion of a "we" with open boundaries, the process of becoming is one that is continuous and the open-ended intersubjectivity is governed by a rule, what the prefix "inter" of "intersubjectivity" means.

⁸ And like an inverted self-transcendence of Husserlian provenance, the goal is not to think beyond one's own empirical self, but to bring oneself back into a process that made thinking possible. It is "Thinking II" trying to recover the movement of its own origin, as *Er-denken* or "Thinking I."

Horizon and Open-Region:
Epistemology in Heidegger's *Country Path Conversations* (GA 77)

Bret Davis
Loyola University Maryland

In 1959 Heidegger published the well-known imaginary conversation between a scientist, a scholar, and a teacher: “Zur Erörterung der Gelassenheit: Aus einem Feldweggespräch über das Denken.”¹ (An English translation of this text was published in 1966 as “Conversation on a Country Path about Thinking.”²) The 1959 text was in fact excerpted from a much longer text originally written in 1944/45, a text that was finally published in 1995 as the longest of the three “*Feldweg-Gespräche*” that make up volume 77 of Heidegger's *Gesamtausgabe*, forthcoming in English translation as *Country Path Conversations*.³

Especially in its full-length version, this remarkable text is noteworthy for its early formulations of Heidegger's critique of technology, for its pivotal critique of “thinking as willing,” for its development of the notion of *Gelassenheit* as the proper fundamental attunement of human being, and for its “topological” conception of being as *die Gegnet* (which I translate as “the open-region”). The central theme of this text that I wish to focus on here is *the situatedness of human horizons within the open-region of being*.⁴ The conversation suggests that the “circle-of-vision” (*Gesichtskreis*) of our human horizons of thought and experience should be understood as delimitations of a surrounding “open-region” of being.

The original version of this text is titled “Ἀρχιβασία: A Three-way Conversation between a Scientist, a Scholar, and a Guide.” *Anchibasie* is a one word fragment from Heraclitus that at

¹ Martin Heidegger, *Gelassenheit* (Pfullingen: Neske, 10th ed. 1992), pp. 29–71.

² In *Discourse on Thinking*, trans. John M. Anderson and E. Hans Freund (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), pp. 58–90.

³ Martin Heidegger, *Feldweg-Gespräche (1944/45)*, *Gesamtausgabe* vol. 77 (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klosterman, 1995, second edition 2005); *Country Path Conversations*, trans. Bret W. Davis (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2010). All parenthetical page references in this paper refer to this volume. Only a few differences between the 1959 excerpt and the corresponding sections of the original version, the most noteworthy of which being the leading character's name. The Teacher (*der Lehrer*) was originally called *der Weise*, which would normally be understood as “Sage,” but which the text explains means “one who indicates [the way].” I translate *der Weise* as “Guide.”

⁴ For an explication of other major themes in the text, see the Translator's Foreword to *Country Path Conversations*. On the topic of will and *Gelassenheit* in this text, see my *Heidegger and the Will: On the Way to Gelassenheit* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2007), esp. chapter 7, as well as my chapter on “Will and *Gelassenheit*” in Bret W. Davis (ed.), *Martin Heidegger: Key Concepts* (Durham, UK: Acumen, 2010).

the end of the conversation is translated as “going-into-nearness.” The conversation begins by taking up the epistemological question of the nature of “knowing” or “cognition” (*Erkennen*), and it proceeds to gradually develop a contrast between *thinking as willing* and *thinking as waiting*. The conversation calls for a releasement from the anthropocentrism of transcendental-horizonal representation and technological calculation, and a releasement into a participatory belonging to the open-region of being.

The conversations suggests that, rather than by means of objectifying representation and technological manipulation of the world, it is by way of an attentive waiting upon and responding to the surrounding open-region of being that our horizons of thought can be properly delimited. Rather than willfully attempting to transgress all limits and transcendently posit the horizons of thought and experience ourselves, it is by way of a non-willful engagement in the open-region—an expanse that essentially lies beyond all limits, that is, beyond all horizons—that we take part in the disclosive events which let the horizons of our world and thought be formed and reformed.

Having given a preview of the matter at issue, let me proceed more carefully now to address the following three questions.

1. What are “horizons” of perception, experience, and thought?
2. What is the open-region of being which surrounds or envelops these horizons?
3. How are these horizons formed—that is to say, determined or delimited—within the expanse of this open-region?

1

Let me begin with the first question: What are “horizons”? *Horizon* is a Greek word that derives from *horizein*, meaning “to bound or limit,” and from *horos*, meaning “boundary.” So the horizon, as the line where the sky meets the earth, marks the boundary of what can be seen from our vantage point. In everyday as well as philosophical senses of the term, a “horizon” is an open and yet limited field of possible perceptions, thoughts, memories, wishes, and so on. The horizon of my thought is the range of what I am able to think, a range in the sense of a *limited openness*. It is crucial to note—as Heidegger often does—that horizons and boundaries do not only *limit*, but also *enable* perception and knowledge. Human knowledge is essentially finite, not just because it happens to have limits, but first of all because the kind of knowledge we have depends on those limits.

Indeed Heidegger tells us that delimitation is a condition of the being of things. A thing (*Ding*) can only be if it is conditioned (*bedingt*). For the Greeks, “limit” or “boundary” (*peras*) was appreciated as that which grants form to something. And so Heidegger writes: “The limit [*Grenze*] is not that at which something stops, rather, as the Greeks recognized, the limit is that from which something *begins its presencing* [*Wesen*].”⁵ And again elsewhere: “The limit [*Grenze*] in the Greek sense [of *peras*] does not block off; rather, being itself brought forth, it first brings to appearance what presences. The limit sets free into the unconcealed.”⁶

According to the Greeks, for something to be unlimited meant that it was indefinite, formless, chaotic. Anything unlimited or indefinite is also unintelligible, since knowledge requires definition of order and form.⁷ To “define” something, after all, means to show its limits, the boundaries which set it off from other things.

So when the Greeks thought of the horizon as a *horizon kyklos*, a “bounding circle,” this meant that the horizon not only sets a limit, it also delineates a field wherein events can take place, wherein things can take their places in relation to other things. A horizon not only limits how far we can see; it also provides us with a demarcated space in which we can orient ourselves in relation to things from a particular vantage point. It is because our perception and knowledge takes place from a particular perspective and within the bounds of a particular horizon that we can see in any organized and meaningful sense.

In order to understand how delimitation enables knowledge, let us try to imagine for a moment what it would be like to see without any perspectival-horizonal limits. For an infinite vision without a horizon, there would be no distance, and hence no real nearness. The world would completely lack any spatial depth and orientation. And what would it be like to see a thing, or a person, all at once from everywhere? In this blinding cubist plenum, there would be no back and hence no real front, no inside and hence no real outside, no shadow and hence no real light. Alexander Nehamas illustrates this point with the example of painting. “There is no sense in which painters ... can ever paint ‘everything’ that they see. ... [The] understanding of

⁵ Martin Heidegger, *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, 7th edition (Pfullingen: Neske, 1994.) p. 149; *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper & Row, 2001), p. 154. Hofstadter translates *Grenze* as boundary.

⁶ Martin Heidegger, *Holzwege, Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 5, p. 71; *Basic Writings*, 2nd edition, edited by David Farrell Krell (New York: Harper & Row, 1993), p. 208, translation modified.

⁷ Recall that, according to Nietzsche, Apollo, the god of sobriety and form, is associated with the “principle of individuation,” which allows us to distinguish between things, and thus analytically understand the world; whereas Dionysus, the god of intoxication and revelry, is associated with breaking down all boundaries and losing oneself in the both terrifying and liberating experience of chaotic mystery.

everything would be like a painting that incorporates all styles or that is painted in no style at all—a true chimera, both impossible and monstrous.”⁸

Nietzsche claims that perspectival-horizonal limits are what makes life and knowledge possible.⁹ As Heidegger puts this idea in his interpretation of Nietzsche, “Forming horizons belongs to the inner essence of living beings themselves. Initially, horizon simply means setting limits to the unfolding occurrence of life with a view to stabilizing the onrushing and oppressive torrent.”¹⁰

In a general sense Heidegger agrees with Nietzsche that knowledge and meaning require perspectival-horizonal delimitation. And yet, Heidegger turns decisively away from Nietzsche’s perspectivism *insofar as* it interprets the setting of limits in terms of “the will to power.” If knowing delimits the known, everything depends on *how*—through what “fundamental attunement”—this delimitation takes place. Are limits imposed on things by a will to know as species of a will to power; or does delimitation occur through a non-willing participation in an event of letting be?

This distinction between a willful and a non-willful determination of the horizon of knowledge anticipates Heidegger’s response to the third of our three questions; but let us return to the first, the question of the nature of “horizons.” Husserl understood horizons as the range of possible perceptions, recollections, thoughts, or other fulfillments of the various intentionalities of consciousness. As Husserl puts it, “horizons are ‘predelineated’ potentialities.”¹¹ The horizons of my possible experience are the range of what “I can” see, remember, imagine, think, etc. For example, when I see a chair from this angle, this perception includes within it the anticipation (or “protention”) of being able to walk around it and see it

⁸ Alexander Nehamas, *Nietzsche: Life as Literature* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985), pp 50–51.

⁹ Again Nehamas is helpful here: “To engage in any activity, and in particular in any inquiry, we must ultimately be selective. We must bring some things into the foreground and distance others into the background. We must assign a greater relative importance to some things than we do to others, and still others we must completely ignore. We do not, and cannot, begin (or end) with ‘all the data’. This is an incoherent desire and an impossible goal. ‘To grasp everything’ would be to do away with all perspectival relations, it would mean to grasp nothing, to misapprehend the nature of knowledge” (*Nietzsche*, 49).

¹⁰ Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Vol. II, *The Eternal Recurrence of the Same*, trans. David Farrell Krell (New York: Harper & Row, 1984), p. 86.

¹¹ Husserl, *Ideas I*, §19; *The Essential Husserl*, edited by Donn Welton (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), p. 109.

from the other side.¹² Every perception (etc.) is situated in such a horizon of further possibilities of perceiving (etc.).

Heidegger was clearly influenced by Husserl's phenomenological account of horizons. But he was critical of what he saw as Husserl's fall back into "transcendental idealism," and in *Country Path Conversations* he is concerned with thinking out beyond the limits of what he calls "transcendental-horizonal thinking." For Heidegger, the horizon of all horizons, or rather the region of all regions, is not the "transcendental ego," but rather the open-region of being. Human Da-sein always exists in a particular locale within this open expanse of being (*Sein*). The open-region of being—as what the second conversation rather cryptically calls "*der Enthalt*"—both holds or contains (*enthält*) all horizons as well as withholds itself (*sich enthält*) from the horizons of human thought (see 182).

Let us now look at how Heidegger characterizes the notion of horizon in the first of the *Country Path Conversations*. After claiming that "The human is ... a horizonal being [*ein horizontales Wesen*],"¹³ the Scholar explains that "...to the essence of what is horizonal belongs an open circle-of-vision [*Gesichtskreis*] or a receding depth of vision [*Gesichtsflucht*] (*fuga*), which surrounds it in all directions" (83).

Gesichtskreis is a common term meaning "field of vision" or literally "circle of vision," and it is often used as a synonym for horizon. We can understand it to mean the range of possible perceptions one is able to have from a particular vantage point. We can think of it as the field of vision I have in front of me, around in which I can shift my attention; but we can also think of it as the circle that surrounds me, insofar as I can see what lies behind me by just pivoting around in the same vantage point. Although I am not presently seeing what is behind me, I *can* see it if I turn my head around, and so it is within my circle of potential vision even if not in my present field of vision.

Heidegger links this common term *Gesichtskreis* with the uncommon term *Gesichtsflucht*, presumably in order to indicate here the *perspectival depth* dimension of the horizonal circle-of-vision. In architecture or painting, a *Gesichtsflucht* is understood in the sense of a *Fluchtlinie*, a perspectival "line of sight," such as of a row of houses down a street or of a row

¹² There is of course no guarantee that this fulfillment will happen, that I am not in fact being fooled by a very good painting of one side of a chair, but the point is that to any perception (or thought or memory, etc.) there belongs a whole range of as yet unfulfilled potentialities.

¹³ The German *horizontal*, commonly used as a synonym for *waagerecht* meaning "horizontal," can also be understood as the adjectival form of *Horizont* (horizon), and in this sense it is translated here and below as "horizonal." Likewise, *das Horizontale* is translated as "the horizonal" or "horizonality."

of rooms down a hallway. Like the English “flight,” however, *Flucht* has two etymological sources. *Flucht* in the sense of a straight line or alignment is related to flight in the sense of “to fly,” as in a row of flying geese. But Heidegger connects *Flucht* here rather with the Latin *fuga*, and thus with flight in the sense “to flee,” as in the case of an animal fleeing from a hunter. I take it that Heidegger supplements the term *Gesichtskreis* with *Gesichtsflucht* in order to draw attention to the fact that this circle of vision has a *receding depth* to it, that is to say, it is a dimension of *nearness and farness* as well as one of left and right, up and down, front and back. The horizon allows things to be not just in or out of my field of possible perception, but also to be situated closer to or farther away from me.

The human, then, is the horizontal being, the being who is surrounded by a *Gesichtskreis* and a *Gesichtsflucht*. In the language of *Being and Time*, the human is a being who lives in and who is aware of an environment, an *Umwelt*, literally a surrounding world. Indeed the human is the axis point on which this horizontal environment pivots. The horizon can be understood as the borders of the environment, of the circle-of-vision that encompasses meaningful human habitation.

2

Yet how are the boundaries of our meaningful worlds demarcated? How are our horizons of intelligibility delimited? Heidegger famously says that “language is the house of being.” In other words, language marks off the perimeters of a horizon of intelligibility. So being is housed within the limits of language, limits which, as we have seen, enable things to show themselves in a definite manner, and so which provide us with a livable environment. Language domesticates being for us. But what about the undomesticated region of being which lies outside the walls of our linguistic habitats?

In *Country Path Conversations* it is said that the horizons of our linguistically determined worlds are situated within a “region” (*Gegend*, which can also mean “countryside”), indeed within the “region of all regions,” and an old and dialect form of the German word for region is used to name this ultimate region, “*die Gegnet*.” The *Gegnet* is described as a “*freie Weite*,” a free expanse. “Free” should be understood in the sense of “open,” as when we speak of “free time” or “free space.” In a limited sense, a horizon is an open space of possibilities. But *die Gegnet* is not just another bounded enclosure that contains an open field of possibilities; it is not even the final horizon of all horizons (see 94), but rather, as “the region of all regions,” it

must be approached as “what the open that surrounds us is in itself” (see 112–113). I therefore translate *die Gegnet* as “the open-region.”

The open-region does not, cannot, appear as such, insofar as the appearance of anything requires the demarcation or delimitation of this openness into a horizon. And the delimited openness of the horizon, Heidegger says, is but “the side of the open-region turned toward us” (128). If we were to think of a region (*Gegend*) literally as that which comes to encounter us (*uns entgegenkommt*), then we would once again reduce the region to a horizon. The “open-region draws itself back, goes away from us [*uns entgeht*], rather than comes to encounter us [*uns entgegenkommt*]” (114). Hence, the open-region as such withdraws into the background as it reveals part of itself as this or that horizon, that is to say, this or that side turned toward us.¹⁴

The open-region allows things to be the things that they are, to rest in their own “being for themselves,” rather than being reduced to representational objects or technological reserves.¹⁵ It is the technological reduction of nature to a “standing-reserve” of resources that ultimately refuses to allow things to keep anything of themselves in reserve; technology is a way of revealing that aims at “boundless unconcealment” (*schrackenlose Unverborgenheit*). But boundless unconcealment, as we have seen, is a contradiction in terms, insofar as things can only be revealed within certain perspectival-horizonal limits. Technology, and the modern scientific world-view in general, proves to be a vain “attack on nature” which tries to force the open region into a particular horizon of disclosure without recognizing these limits, indeed without recognizing the horizonal limits of disclosure as such.

Heidegger goes so far as to claim that in the entire Western tradition, from Greek theoretical and technical thinking to Kant’s transcendental thinking and finally to the thinking

¹⁴ Heidegger implies that the open-region should ultimately be thought of as the self-concealing source of the open, rather than the open itself. “The open itself ... comes out of the open-region” (116).

¹⁵ Heidegger writes that the open-region is “not the horizon for things, insofar as we don’t experience them as objects for ourselves. Yet we also do not experience things as “things in themselves,” but rather as things for themselves” (139). Just as the *Gegnet* cannot be reduced to the side turned toward us (i.e., horizon), things cannot be reduced to objects, to *Gegenstände*. Rather than representing it as an object standing over against us, Heidegger says elsewhere that we need to learn “for once to let [the tree] stand where it stands Because to this day, thought has never let it stand where it stands” (*Was heißt Denken?* 4th edition [Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1984], p. 18; *What is Called Thinking?*, trans. J. Glenn Gray [New York: Harper & Row, 1968], p. 44). A thing has an essential “backside,” not just the potentially perceivable backside that belongs within the horizon of our conception of it as an object, but a way of being for itself as a thing that remains concealed from its way of being for us as an object. We only become aware of this backside of things, as what they are for themselves in their resting in the open-region, when we cease reducing them to objects of our representation. Ceasing to reduce things to objects situated within the horizons of disclosure that we transcendently project, we mindfully attend to the horizon in which things appear as what the open-region “has left behind for us of what is held in reserve” (96, cf. 218 and 226).

of the modern natural sciences, has tended toward a conflation of thinking with the willful projection of a horizon, and has thus failed to attend to the open-region of nature or being in which things rest and in which the horizons of our experience of them are formed.

The reduction of things to objects situated within human horizons of representation is what Heidegger calls “transcendental-horizonal thinking.” It is an essentially voluntaristic manner of thinking in the sense that the human willfully and preemptively transcends or “climbs over” things in order to posit the horizons through with, and only through which, they can show themselves as objects set out before and turned toward the human subject. Heidegger thus writes: “thinking, conceived of in the traditional manner as representing, is a willing; even Kant conceives of thinking in this manner when he characterizes it as spontaneity. Thinking is willing, and willing is thinking” (106).¹⁶

This human spontaneity is problematic, however, insofar as it involves the willful projection of anthropocentric horizons which delimit the manner in which things can show themselves, namely as objects to a subject. This transcendental-horizonal thinking is not limited to certain modern philosophers, says Heidegger, but rather forms the worldview or “world picture” of our sciences as well as our technology.

Heidegger claims that theoretical sciences do not simply neutrally describe nature, but rather first of all project a horizon—a conceptual grid—with which nature must conform when it responds to human observation and experiments.¹⁷ As Heisenberg once wrote: “Natural science does not simply describe and explain nature; ... it describes nature as exposed to our method of questioning.”¹⁸ And Einstein is said to have remarked: “It is the theory which decides what we can observe.”¹⁹

Science clearly reveals nature—but does it reveal all of nature or even what is most essential to it? Technology certainly makes natural resources available—but does it conceal

¹⁶ According to Kant, the transcendental categories of our understanding are products of human spontaneity. Plato’s transcendent metaphysical Ideas are not produced by humans, but they are nevertheless, according to Heidegger, conceived in terms of the model of technological craftsmanship. Just as the craftsman can make a bed because he has the Idea of bedness in mind, we see something as a bed because we first step over and beyond it to see it in terms of bedness. Heidegger writes: “insofar as the horizonal – that is to say, the relation to the horizon – is what distinguishes the human, while thinking is the distinguishing characteristic of the human, thinking must, as it were, embody the essence of the horizonal. Thinking is really nothing other than the representational setting-before [*Vor-stellen*] and setting-toward [*Zu-stellen*] of the horizon, that is, of the circle-of-vision, in which the outward look and the essence of objects – Plato named it the Idea of things – becomes visible to us” (91).

¹⁷ See *Basic Writings*, pp. 271ff., where Heidegger refers to Heisenberg and others to support this claim

¹⁸ Werner Heisenberg, *Physics and Philosophy* (New York: Prometheus Books, 1958), p. 81.

¹⁹ See Shimon Malin, *Nature Loves to Hide: Quantum Physics and the Nature of Reality, a Western Perspective* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 31.

the essential nature of these natural sources in the process? Heidegger defines technology as a “way of revealing,” namely, as an “enframing” (*Gestell*) of nature. Before making this or that device, technology constructs an anthropocentric framework which arranges things according to a human will to power over nature, and ultimately according to a cybernetic “will to will” that turns even human beings into human resources. Technology, we could say, is first of all the work of enframing the world; it is the reduction of the horizon of nature to a framework of extraction, distribution and consumption of resources.

3

We have begun to address our third question: How are our horizons formed—that is to say, determined or delimited—within the expanse of this open-region? Technology is one way of framing the world, of delimiting the horizons of our environment. It is a willful manner of horizontal delimitation, insofar as it reduces the meaning of the being of beings to their use value as objects—or as standing-reserve—for human subjectivity. Moreover, technology can be said to be an inauthentic manner of horizontal delimitation, insofar as it does not recognize what it is doing. Technology as a way of revealing remains oblivious to the open-region, that is, to the limits of its horizons and the open field of possibilities that lies beyond those limits. Technology is a species of horizontal-transcendental thinking, which, as a willing, hubristically attempts to overstep its own limits and to transcendently posit these limits itself. It is a will to self-delimitation, a will to determine its own ground of being. But underneath every ground lies, by definition, an abyss. Self-grounding is thus, on its own terms, doomed to failure.

So then, what would be an authentic manner of being within the abyssal open-region of being? To begin with we need to bear in mind that Heidegger does not think we should or could do away with horizons. It is after all horizons which make our worlds meaningful. What he calls for is not a heroic plunge into the abyss of meaninglessness, but rather a dwelling with an awareness of our mortal limitations. For this, we need to radically rethink the relationship between humans and the open-region, and how horizons are formed in the midst of this relationship.

Heidegger calls for us to fundamentally rethink our relation to the horizons of thinking by seeing these horizons as the sides turned toward us of an open-region that surrounds us. But this requires a radically different kind of thinking from the transcendental-horizontal thinking that seeks to know something by climbing over it in order to place it within an anthropocentric horizon of representation. We become aware of the limits of transcendental-horizontal thinking

as such when we realize that we cannot come to know the horizon itself in this way, since this would lead to an infinite regress (or rather infinite trans-gression). To get in view the horizon itself, we would have to go beyond it to a wider horizon; but then we would have to repeat this transcendence or “climbing over” once again to get that horizon in view, and so on *ad infinitum* (see 101), such that “what ensues is an endless succession of horizons encased in one another” (94).

Insofar as the open-region is that which encompasses all horizons, it cannot itself be thought, if thinking means to comprehend within a wider horizon. The open-region is thus not a “horizon of all horizons,” but rather the unlimited dimension in which all horizontal delimitation takes place. It thus lies forever beyond our transcendental-horizontal thinking. How then can we think it, or rather, how then can we think the horizon in relation to it? Heidegger suggests that “in order to grasp the essence of transcendence, we must refrain from climbing over it and remain with [*bei*] it itself” (102).

This “remaining with” requires a twofold *Gelassenheit*: a releasement from thinking as *willing* and a releasement into thinking as *waiting*. As opposed to willfully transgressing one horizontal limit after another in a vain quest for the horizon of all horizons, we must attentively remain at the limits of our horizons of knowledge, that is, at the limit of transcendental-horizontal thinking as such, in order to “go into nearness” to the open-region as the surrounding field of being wherein things rest in their being for themselves. This involves a releasement from the will to transcend all horizontal limits, or to construct these horizons ourselves, and a releasement into a responsive waiting upon the horizontal delimitations of the open-region (see 117).

Gelassenheit names both a releasement from the will and a releasement into a comportment which is other than willing. Although releasement is spoken of in terms of non-willing and waiting, it is thought of as an other-than-willing that is not simply passive. Indeed passivity and activity are considered to be opposite poles within what Heidegger calls the “domain of the will.” *Gelassenheit* is first off all a releasement from this entire domain of subjective activity vs. passivity. Secondly, *Gelassenheit* bespeaks the “higher activity” of a thoughtful corresponding to being and an attentive involvement with things. It intimates a way of non-willful participation in events of artistic building, poetic speaking and meditative thinking, events which open up horizons or “clearings” of meaning within the wider mystery or “forest” of the open-region of being.

The authentic way of thinking, which Heidegger characterizes as non-willing, releasement, waiting upon, and meditative thinking (*Besinnung*), does not attempt to transgress horizons toward a transcendental horizon of horizons, but rather takes place as *Anchibasie*, “going into nearness.” It is crucial, however, that, in contrast to the “climbing over” of transcendental thinking which tends to abolish the difference between the open-region of being and the ultimate horizon of transcendental subjectivity, the nearness that Heidegger speaks of here is a nearness that preserves, rather than cancels out, distance. Meditative thinking is said to be a “coming into nearness to the far” (116). That is to say, by standing out (*ek-stasis*) near the limits of human horizons of thought, but not attempting to hubristically exceed these limits, humans are most authentic when they listen and correspond to the ways the open-region of being addresses itself to them, rather than seeking on their own to willfully master the horizontal delimitations of their environment.

The essence of “conversation” (*Gespräch*) that is sought in *Country Path Conversations* is thus not primarily a matter of interpersonal discourse; it is originally a matter of that essential dialogue that takes place between the address (*Ansprechen*) of being and the correspondence (*Entsprechen*) of human being. It is in this conversation with(in) the open-region of being—which takes place at the limits of human speaking and thinking, but without willfully or hubristically transgressing these limits—that our horizons of thought are formed and, eventually, at the right moments, transformed.

Commentary on Bret Davis's

"Horizon and Open-Region: Epistemology in Heidegger's Country Path Conversation (GA77)"

Cathy Leblanc

Université Catholique de Lille

By courtesy towards Bret Davis' oncoming translation of GA77, the author of this response has chosen not to translate the quotation borrowed from that volume.

In his remarkable paper Bret Davis tells us of the story of a text: that of Country Path Conversations (GA77) whose roots are (according to the editor's words) to be found in 1944/1945. On March 11th 1945, a few days before Easter, as he has had to isolate himself in order to receive psychiatric cares after a deep depression, Heidegger will explain in a letter he addressed to his wife that a new and unexpected spring is leading him towards the achievement of a new form of writing: that of the dialogues¹. The first conversation is dated April 7th and 8th 1945. The GA 77 will thus contain three dialogues including that between "the younger one" and "the elder one" (*der Jüngere and der Ältere*) in a Russian camp for prisoners of war that cannot but reminds us of Heidegger's own sons (Jörg, and Hermann who will be sent back because of health problems) who were prisoners there. A later and reduced version of the first conversation will be published together with the text *Gelassenheit* written and said publicly in commemoration of the 175th anniversary of Conradin Kreutzer's birth in 1955, that to say ten years later: we will come back to this later. These very special circumstances are directly leading to a question. In the second dialogue, the "Weise" (the Wise Man) says:

Wir wissen über den Ursprung der Bestimmung unseres eigenen Wesens noch wenig.²

[That is to say: we only know little about the origin of the destination of our own being.]

And this is precisely when the Wise man, will give his understanding of the origin of the definition of the essence of the human being in his experience of being as an animal.

Bei der Besinnung auf den Ursprung der Wesensauslegung handelt es sich darum, zu wissen, ob überhaupt ein Horizont, und wenn ja, in welchem Sinne und in welcher Weise der Horizont bei der Wesenserfahrung des Menschen als Zoon mabgebend ist.³

¹ See introduction to the French translation of one of the dialogue called *Abendgespräch*, by Philippe Arjakovsky and Hadrien France-Lanord, *La Dévastation et l'attente*, Paris, Gallimard, 2006, p.7-16.

² Heidegger, Martin, *Feldweg-Gespräche*, GA, Bd. 77, Frankfurt-am-Main, Vittorio Klosterman, 1995, p.103.

³ *Ibid.*, p.103.

Possibly the will arises only in connection with that animality but the very essence of human being sought by the Wise man is that of a human being deprived of will or, to be more accurate, of some exercise of his will :

Der Weise : Darum antwortete ich Ihnen ja auch auf Ihre Frage, was ich bei unserer
Besinnung auf das Wesen des Denkens eigentlich wolle, dies : ich will das Nicht-Wollen.⁴

I think Heidegger's depression has to be taken into consideration not so much because he would have found a way to overcome it through his writing as because this experience of mood and thinking can have provide him with new epistemological tools. Indeed depression is connected to will. When depressed the human being is not capable anymore of adapting his will and strength to his goals. He is not either able to form those goals or project himself in the future. Consequently, the question I would formulate is: cannot we consider that in that very dialogue, we attend a metaphysical or rather post-metaphysical translation of a pathological crisis as though there were a bridge between the disease and the necessity for another thinking called *Gelassenheit*, serenity. Answering Bret Davis' critique of my approach, I would like to precise here that I am not reducing Heidegger's way to a sheer psychological process but I want to emphasize how the context can bring epistemological element that contribute to build the greatness of a thinking.

Opening a parenthesis, I would mention Emmanuel Levinas' last book, which has just been published in France thanks to Jean-Luc Marion and a team of French specialists. This book is made of pages he wrote during his five-year captivity and it is clear that the origin of his thinking of the "visage" is the result of his experience and of the way he has given shape to this experience through an original formulation. I think it is not radically different for Heidegger. I close the parenthesis.

Let us also mention that we have a work in which Heidegger proceeded from the context and with the context : the Zollikoner Seminaren⁵ held together with Medar Boss, a well-known psychiatrist from Switzerland.

We know that Heidegger did not enjoy that *Gelassenheit* understood as restraint of will, when his own will went all to the call for *Nationalsozialismus*.⁶ This raises the question of the

⁴ *Ibid.*, p.106.

⁵ Heidegger, Martin, *Zollikoner Seminare*, Frankfurt-am-Main, Vittorio-Klostermann, 1987.

⁶ This is not a judgment of Heidegger's engagement. He probably had reasons to believe that Nationalsocialism was going to bring solutions to the situation of material and also intellectual poverty in which Germany had been thrown in the aftermath of the WWI. However he seems to have been completely unaware of the barbarity it would involve, which others clearly understood (Einstein, Fritz Lang, Eric Weil...).

compatibility between nationalism or even patriotism and the very exercise of the will that is here at stake and that was also at stake in Meister Eckhart's spiritual guidance when he advise the man to, so to speak, abandon himself to God.

But if this theme adopts particular meaning at this time of Heidegger's life, it remains that the non-will is also a step forwards in Heidegger's enterprise began eversince *Sein und Zeit* and that consists in the conversion of the thinking of the subject into that of Being, a progress in the ontological translation. Logically enough, we understand that the will appears as an epistemological problem, that is to say an obstacle to *Gelassenheit* itself. In German, the word *Gelassenheit* implies the let-being : *lassen* means to let or let free. Not that *Gelassenheit* is a matter of passivity but it is not exactly a matter of activity:

Nur daß dies höhere Aktivität doch keine Aktivität ist.⁷

The *Gelassenheit* is then connected to *Denken* (thinking) and could very well shelter the essence of thinking:

Vielleicht ist das Wesen des Denkens, das wir erst suchen, in die Gelassenheit eingelassen.⁸

And if we have difficulties to reach *Gelassenheit*, that comes from the way we represent ourselves things. We radically want to separate subject and object instead of opening ourselves to another kind of *Horizont*. This idea could correspond to the classical reference of the *Weltanschauung* but it becomes relatively difficult to conceive of this *Horizont* as soon as it is connected with and delimited by an open circle (*Kreis*) containing the very domain of freedom and where everything is being gathered (to gather = *sammeln*):

Der Forscher : Der Horizont, den Sie da noch einmal beschreiben, ist der Gesichtskreis, der die Aussicht umkreist.

Der Weise : Er übertrifft das Aussehen der Gegenstände.⁹

What kind of glasses do we wear then, to see things in such a circular way? To what kind of necessity does it answer? This is exactly when we can understand how Heidegger's enterprise works. In GA77, Heidegger will insist on the necessity to abandon the thinking of representation. In his book¹⁰ Bret Davis explains very clearly that this necessity is the result of the thinking of *Gelassenheit*: representation requires our will. We can also understand that the thinking of *Gelassenheit* particularly rests on our capacity to withdraw ourselves, or abandon

⁷ Heidegger, Martin, *Feldweg-Gespräche*, GA, Bd. 77, Frankfurt-am-Main, Vittorio Klostermann, 1995, p.109.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*, p.111.

¹⁰ Davis, Bret, *Heidegger and the will, on the way to Gelassenheit*, Evanston, Northwestern University Press, 2007.

ourselves and, consequently to our involvement in doing so. Active passivity. However, this movement of withdrawal seems radically foreign to our Western tradition although it is present in some religious spheres (Christianism, Buddhism, and others). On this particular point, I believe Heidegger has in no way abandoned religion *as a method*, as a structure for thinking. I am not saying that he has preserved religion in his consideration. He clearly stated his position. But I think, just as the context provided him with epistemological matter and tools, that his religious training (he had been an altar boy in Messkirch, his native town while his father was a sacristan, received a religious education and went “to the seminar”) has also shown him very specific ways of thinking. I would just draw your attention on the narrative structure of meditation, in which repetition or circular thinking provides the “user” with a strength of involvement into that thinking.

The relation and implication of the “relocalisation” of the subject from the center to the periphery of a key entity, is already present in religion, in any religion. And this leads to a kind of humbleness. Thus defined, the subject does not will, but takes, does not boast but remains humble, does not create but receives what is given by a more or less definite source. This is exactly the meaning of the “*es gibt*” in which “es” refers to an impersonal source, while “gibt” means “gives”, from the verb given (to give). We believe that this is how the “re-baptized” Subject (*Dasein*) can find him/her-self at the periphery of the central Being/*Sein* and in the position of receptor rather than initiator.

At this stage of things, I would like to come back to abridged version of *Gelassenheit* (1955), which contains a speech that was delivered in connection to Conradin Kreutzer, THE composer of Messkirch. One may reasonably wonder what the connection between Kreutzer and *Gelassenheit* is. It lies within the same kind of structure as that of the disengagement/withdrawal of the subject. I’m not going to make any narration of Kreutzer’s life but he has not been a very happy man. At that time the child mortality rate was high, etc. Kreutzer’s creativity was affected by those events. He did not manage to transfer his grief into his genius as some other composers did (I am thinking of Chopin, for instance). He just had to remain in constant mood, in a kind of *Gelassenheit* in front of events. We can imagine that in 1955, which marks his first public discourse or rehabilitation, after having been forbidden to teach and search at the University, Heidegger may have felt in the same disposition : unhappy, miserable, disengaged with a son that was kept prisoner in Russia, thus his depression.

That process of will withdrawal alone, thematized in an enterprise of de-subjectivization, enables the nearness/proximity (*anchibasie*) to Being but this, provided a whole change takes

place in language itself. While the will is not anymore a warrant of the autonomy of the subject as it could be in a Kantian philosophy, the language does not belong anymore to the subject as a refined weaving now includes structural and semantic features inherent to the Greek *Logos* or even to the religious *Logos*. A reversal of agency is being installed within the relation *Dasein/world*. The activity of the will as it has been conceived of all along the history of philosophy, could not epistemologically enable that reversal that is also one of the pillar of the 34/35 Turn, date at which the *Ereignis* is itself endowed with a notion I borrow to the field of linguistics, namely : agency (cf. *Beiträge zur Philosophie* and *Besinnung*).

From then on, language ceases to be structured by a simple connection sign/meaning, which is the big issue of modern philosophy, but which was clearly explained in Augustine's dialogue called *De Magistro*. It was also at stake in Plato's *Cratylus*, in which the problematic of arbitrary naming is being discussed. This reconsideration of the initial relationship between words and things now follows the logical architecture of the Heideggerian *Bauen*. An illustration of the quest for a new linguistic relationship is present in a poem that was published much later in *Der Erfahrung des Denkens* (GA 13) in 1972.

SPRACHE (1972)

Wann werden Wörter

wieder Wort?

Wann weilt der Wind weisender Wende?

Wenn die Worte, ferne Spende, (notice that the word is also „given“)

sagen,-

 nicht bedeuten durch bezeichnen

wenn sie zeigend tragen

an den Ort

uralter Eignis,

-Sterbliche eignend dem Brauch-

wohin Geläut der Stille ruft,

wo Früh-Gedachtes der Be-Stimmung

sich fügsam klar entgegenstuf.

In this poem we will also notice the use of the word “*verweilen*” to qualify the sojourn (*ethos*) within the let-free and through which we also attend another reversal: that of the spatial referred to by the circle and the *Gegnet*, into the temporal *Weilen*. It seems the circle has become a clock.

Further qualifiers are used. The Circle of the open-region is also calm (*ruhig*):

Der Forscher : Aber wo ruhen die Dine, und worin besteht das Ruhen ?

Der Weise : Sie ruhen in der Rückkehr zur Weile der Weite ihres Sichgehörens.

Another epistemological problem arises then: it is that of the compatibility between calm and movement. As usually in Heidegger's weaving, paradoxes seem to arise on our way:

Der Gelehrte : Kann den in der Rückkehr, die doch Bewegung ist, eine Ruhe sein ?¹¹

The Scientist will admit that he has difficulties in understanding the compatibility and connection of all these words. He cannot represent himself their being. We understand that the problem lies in the art of description itself (*beschreiben*). And this is when we have to understand that this way of thinking is by no means a way of representation. Only through this absence or refusal of entering the representation process can we, are we now able to- reach the essence of thinking or rather remain in the a-waiting of the liberation of Being, which corresponds to the authentic *ver-weilen*, the full experience (*Erfahrung*) of the moment. In no way can this waiting be compared to what is called "expectation" (*Erwartung*). That means that we do not project (which implies the exercise of the will) ourselves into the field of thinking but so to speak attend to the unfolding of thinking. This is the timely space that Heidegger calls *Gegnet*. This is a space where there is literally no object (*Gegenstand*) for that would be contrary to the principle of non-representation :

Der Gelehrte : Das Warten jedoch läßt davon ab ; oder ich muß wohl sagen : Das Warten läßt sich auf das Vor-stellen gar nicht ein. Das Warten hat eigentlich keinen Gegenstand.¹²

This little commentary has, we hope, contributed to shed light on some epistemological steps of the Heideggerian enterprise of de-subjectivization. However, we may reasonably wonder about the limits of this enterprise of de-subjectivization. How radical can such an ontological enterprise be? Is it really new in the history of philosophy or can we find traces of its origin in previous thinkers? Can Heidegger really initiate a brand new system of thinking? And yet, is it a system at all?

As regards its originality or sources, we may emphasize analogies that remain between the openness or open and Kant's transcendental theory, the Husserlian horizon or even Plato's world of forms.

There are some analogies, which suggest that Heidegger found epistemological tools in his predecessors and that, it is thus impossible for him to initiate a completely new way of thinking. In Hegel's *Phenomenology of spirit*, we find a specific orientation that requires one to

¹¹ Heidegger, Martin, *Feldweg-Gespräche*, GA, Bd. 77, Frankfurt-am-Main, Vittorio Klostermann, 1995, p.115.

¹² Heidegger, Martin, *Feldweg-Gespräche*, GA, Bd. 77, Frankfurt-am-Main, Vittorio Klostermann, 1995, p.115.

abandon that which the loss threatens, in order to move ahead in the direction of the next category and this of course is close to the withdrawal of the will that we have just pondered upon.

As regards Husserl, and although Heidegger broke with the orientation of his professor, one also finds striking analogies, namely that between the *epoche*, in which one has to withdraw (here one's judgment) and *Gelassenheit*, devoid of will. The *epoche* seems to prefigure or correspond to the decision/will of withdrawal of will present in *Gelassenheit*, (not the absence but the withdrawal of will) which requires itself to be "will-ed": it is the result of a will not "to will" or in German of a *Wollen nicht zu wollen*. And if that movement can be found in the Eastern thinking, let us also remind that this is at Husserl's own home place that Heidegger first met and discussed with "the Japanese".

As a conclusion we may wonder if the conceptual tools or epistemological paths and orientations borrowed by Heidegger, and which he found in the history of philosophy do not make it impossible to reach a thorough translation of the world of the subject or subject-centered world, such as the same history of philosophy initiated. It follows that the exercise of *Gelassenheit* has to be repeated and repeated again, meditated, to reach its presupposed aim.

“Learning in Dialogue”: The Letter to Böhlendorff and Hölderlin’s
Conception of History

Julia A. Ireland
Whitman College

In the fall of 1941, Heidegger changed the topic of his one-hour Winter Semester *Vorlesung* from “Nietzsche’s Metaphysics” to what he simply titled “Hölderlin’s Hymns.” As he outlined at the very beginning of the first lecture, these “hymns” were to include “Remembrance,” “The Ister,” “The Titans,” “Mnemosyne,” and “Ripe are bathed in fire...,” and reflect if not so much a systematic approach to Hölderlin’s poetry, then at least an articulate and comprehensive vision. At the center of this vision is the hymn “Remembrance [*Andenken*],” which Heidegger understands to guide both the selection of the other hymns and to anticipate key themes that he will go on to elaborate by way of them. As Heidegger writes in a series of numbered points included by the German editor Curd Ochwadt as an “Appendix” to the course, “The interpretation of ‘Remembrance’ supplies the basis, overview, and individual orientations for all that follows” (GA52, 197).

While Heidegger, of course, did not carry through on this larger project (he completed sustained interpretations of only the “Remembrance” and “The Ister” hymns, which were published in the *Gesamtausgabe* as separate volumes), the lecture course on “Remembrance” is arguably the most important work for understanding the genesis of his interpretation of Hölderlin: It refines conceptual insights and language first introduced by Heidegger in the 1939 *Hölderlin’s Hymns “Germania” and “The Rhine”* (GA39), the 1942 *Hölderlin’s Hymn “The Ister”* is a *direct* continuation of “Remembrance,” and a number of pieces included in *Elucidations of Hölderlin’s Poetry* and *Zu Hölderlin/Griechenlandreise* (GA75) are clearly derived from the “Remembrance” course or are fragments of Heidegger’s original working plan. In providing both a ground and an overview, the structure of Heidegger’s interpretation of “Remembrance” is both extraordinarily compressed and provocatively ahead itself; it presupposes and signals toward the interpretation of the other hymns, which not only complete the analysis of “Remembrance,” but allow its own organizing dynamics to be read for the first time.

This is nowhere more apparent than in Heidegger’s turn to Hölderlin’s Dec. 4, 1801 Letter to Böhlendorff, which addresses the unvoidability of the Greeks for the Germans if they are to

“learn” the “clarity of presentation” (*Klarheit der Darstellung*) as what is their own. Thus although Heidegger does not offer an interpretation of the Letter until the final part of the course—it is essential for motivating his transition to “The Ister” hymn—references to and language from it pervade the “*Remembrance*” volume, beginning already with its opening address to the blowing of the Northeasterly wind and the poet’s sending of his greetings southwards. At the risk of reducing the complexity of Heidegger’s analyses of individual passages from Hölderlin’s poetic corpus (or perhaps with the intent of clarifying what might be forcing their direction), I want to make the strong claim that the Letter to Böhlendorff is the single most important document for understanding Heidegger’s dialogue with Hölderlin in both the “*Remembrance*” and “*The Ister*” courses. The conception of history that Heidegger finds in it not only structures his approach to Hölderlin’s poetry as the enacting taking into remembrance of Hölderlin’s own encounter with the Greeks (this takes place through Hölderlin’s translations), it informs the specific themes that Heidegger singles out from the poems and the way that he treats them. In this paper I offer an interpretation of the Letter to Böhlendorff that begins by contextualizing the way that both Hölderlin and Heidegger each approach the underlying “paradox” that structures the Letter. I then turn to how Heidegger interprets the Letter in each of the three Hölderlin lecture courses, which culminates in “*The Ister*” course with his understanding of the relationship between foreign and own, Greek and German as “guest-friendship” (*Gastfreundschaft*).

Hölderlin’s Dec. 4, 1801 Letter to Böhlendorff was written on the eve of his departure for Bordeaux and toward the end of what, in retrospect, would prove to have been one of his richest creative years. While the letter is clearly intended to praise and congratulate his friend Casimir Böhlendorff on the successful execution of his tragedy, *Fernando*, by in part supplying the terms for that success (“you have achieved so much in precision and suppleness, and not lost anything in warmth”), Hölderlin scholars have read the Letter as addressed more to Hölderlin himself than to Böhlendorff.¹ In falling more than two years after his Sophocles translations (and likely shortly before his great Pindar translations), the Letter serves as the articulation of the poetic theory Hölderlin came to work out in the context of those translations. And as his 1803 “Remarks” to the *Oedipus* and the *Antigone* further reveal, it continues to

¹ A complete citation of the Letter can be found in *Hölderlin: Werke und Briefe*, vol. 2. Edited by Friedrich Beißner and Jochen Schmidt. (Insel Verlag: Frankfurt am Main, 1960) 940-942. For a translation of the Letter, see *Friedrich Hölderlin: Essays and Letters on Theory*. Translated and Edited by Thomas Pfau. (SUNY Press: Albany, NY, 1988) 109-116, as well as Dennis J. Schmidt’s, *On Germans and Other Greeks: Tragedy and Ethical Life*. (Indiana University Press: Bloomington, 2001) 165-7. I have drawn from both translations in coming up with my own translation of the Letter.

guide Hölderlin's increasingly radicalized attitude toward translation whose logical extension is to "correct" the Greek original as this is possible only through its translation into German.²

Heidegger first cites the Letter at the conclusion of his 1934-5 *Hölderlin's Hymns "Germania" and "The Rhine,"* echoing its words in the concluding lines of the course by calling on the Germans to "learn the free use of the national."³ While Heidegger is generally unconcerned with the larger historical and literary context that situates the Letter (and this includes the debt it owes to Herder's conception of a people and the answer it issues to Schiller on cultural formation), it is central to how Heidegger comes to understand his own encounter with the Pre-socratics and Sophocles, beginning with the 1935 *Introduction into Metaphysics*. I quote Heidegger's own citation of the first half of the Letter from the "*Germania*" and "*The Rhine*" course, which is Heidegger's most complete reproduction of the Letter⁴:

We learn nothing with greater difficulty than the free use of the national. And, as I believe, that it is precisely the clarity of presentation [*Klarheit der Darstellung*] which is so originally natural to us, as the fire from the heaven is to the Greeks. It is for that reason that they will need to be *surpassed* [*übertreffen*] in beautiful passion, which you too have retained, rather than in that Homeric presence of spirit and gift for presentation.

It sounds paradoxical. But I will put it forward yet again, and submit it to your test and free employment, that in the progress of culture, the properly national always assumes less precedence. For that reason the Greeks are less masters of holy pathos because it was inborn in them whereas, from Homer onward, they excel in the gift for presentation because this extraordinary man was sufficiently soulful to capture the Western *Junonian sobriety* for his Apollonian realm, and thereby to truly appropriate the foreign. With us it is the reverse. That is why it is also so dangerous to abstract the rules of art solely and in isolation from the model of Greek excellence. I have long labored on this and now know that, with the exception of what must be the highest for the Greeks and for us, namely, to have a living relation and destiny [*Geschick*], we must not bear any resemblance to them. But what is one's own [*das Eigene*] must be learned just as well as what is foreign [*das Fremde*]. That is why the Greeks are unavoidable for us. Only we will not keep up with them precisely in what is our own, the national, because, as I said, the *free* use of *one's own* is the most difficult.

² I offer an analysis of the Letter to Böhlendorff in relationship to both Hölderlin's and Heidegger's understanding of translation in the forthcoming article "Heidegger, Hölderlin, and Eccentric Translation" in *Heidegger, Translation, and the Task of Thinking: Essays in Honor of Parvis Emad*. Edited by Frank Schalow. Fordham University Press.

³ Martin Heidegger. *Hölderlins Hymnen »Germanien« und »Der Rhein«*, vol. 39. (Vittorio Klostermann: Frankfurt am Main, 1989) 294.

⁴ Martin Heidegger, *Hölderlins Hymnen »Germanien« und »Der Rhein«*, 290-291. For a citation of this portion of the Letter in German, see "Appendix A."

Though I will return to Heidegger's specific interpretation of the Letter in the "*Germania*" and "*The Rhine*" course, I want to clarify its basic structure by way of a schematic outline included in Heidegger's fragmentary notes, "Zu Hölderlins Übersetzung der Pindarfragmente," provisionally dated 1944. This schematic not only has the advantage of making the basic moves of the Letter visually clear, its dating places it shortly after "*The Ister*" course, whose thematic interest in Pindar it continues:

"living relation" ("destiny"), "the highest"

"free use"

"the *national*," "*one's own*," what has been endowed (E), what is

"originally natural." From whence, in the first instance, this difference?

(Animal rationale? No! The crossing over: what is ownmost and foreign.)

"*what is foreign*." A task (T) laid claim to. [bold print mine]

"the most difficult" to be achieved, and thus what is most readily "to be surpassed."

what is *easier*—what? The "foreign" (taken in itself). — "What is most difficult": the winning of what is one's possession in the service of its dispensation.

For the Greeks:	E " <i>the fire from the heaven</i> ." "Apollonian realm." "Holy pathos" ("consumed in flames," untamed) " <i>Apollonian realm</i> ."

T	"Junonian sobriety," "presence of spirit," "gift for presentation" (Homer).

For the Germans "the reverse."	E "clarity of presentation," calculation, spiritual self-presence, self-consciousness, ratio. ("boxed up in a coffin.")

T	" <i>the fire from the heaven</i> ." (Realm of the living.)

E and T; own and foreign; both must be learned.

That for us, from out T "fire" *does not come into the freedom of its destined ordering!*⁵

While this schematic helps to make vivid the inverted and seemingly symmetrical apportioning of foreign and own, Greek and German (Hölderlin's "with us it is the reverse"), the conceptual originality of Heidegger's interpretation of the Letter lies in his posing of the

⁵ Martin Heidegger. *Zu Hölderlin/Griechenlandreisen*, vol. 75. (Vittorio Klostermann: Frankfurt am Main, 2000) 346-7.

question, "From whence, in the first instance, this difference? [*Woher, zunächst, diese Unterscheidung?*]," and his answer, "The crossing over: what is one's ownmost and foreign [*die Überkreuzung: Eigenstes und Fremdes*]," which is indicated graphically, by the doubly-directed arrow.

As Heidegger's adoption of the terms "*Mitgift* [endowment]" and "*Aufgabe* [task]" for Hölderlin's "*Eigene*" and "*Fremde*" suggest (Hölderlin twice uses the word "*Darstellungsgabe*"), what is one's ownmost cannot be understood as simply 'given' and thus as a function of what is native or "originally natural." The still further implication of this insight is that the difference between Greek and German also cannot be assumed as 'given' in, for example, the way that a Goethe or Winkelman straightforwardly assumes the final accomplishment of Greek culture as the basis for imitation by the Germans. Instead, if we follow what Heidegger is after here, the endowment, so to speak, 'invests,' a task through which the givenness of the endowment *as an endowment* is realized or comes into its own only *by way* of the task. With regard to this apportioning of endowments and tasks between the Greeks and the Germans respectively, the Greek "fire from heaven" and the German "clarity of presentation" "intersect" or "cross over" one another as each "surpasses" the other not in what is their own, but in what is in each case foreign to them. What emerges from out of the peculiar 'givenness' of this structure is not a logic of identity nor an easily mapped binary, but instead the reciprocal exceeding by the foreign in what is in each case other to them. As we will see in Heidegger's two quite different interpretations of the space necessary for any learning, this excess serves to bring forward the fact of difference between foreign and own, Greek and German, without thereby presupposing that difference as either essentially given or even fully accomplished as a difference.

Hölderlin himself is acutely aware of the counter-intuitive nature of what it means for the Germans to surpass the Greeks in what is their own, characterizing it as "paradoxical" ("*Es klingt paradox*"). While this paradox in part derives from, as Heidegger writes, the foreign "taken in itself" being "easier," Hölderlin is positively interested in the structure of this excess as creatively, which is to say, differentially generative. As the subsequent content of the Letter makes clear—and this is variously captured in Heidegger's parentheticals—absent the encounter with the foreign, what is one's own is subject to a version of *deficient excess* that turns its original tendency back onto itself. For the Greeks, the native "fire from heaven" is threatened by the impulse to be "consumed in flames" through which the desire for immediacy is recuperated in the undoing of the experience of difference that constitutes self-consciousness.

This is understood as the nostalgic desire for “unboundedness” or unification with the One, and it is exactly this repressed impulse that Hölderlin will seek to bring forward in his “eccentrically enthusiastic” and corrective translation of Sophocles. For the Germans, by contrast, the native “clarity of presentation” is impelled by the tendency toward excessive conceptualization and self-consciousness (Heidegger’s otherwise surprising reference to “*ratio*”), whose literally final manifestation is, as Hölderlin later writes in the Letter, being “boxed up in a coffin.” Hölderlin’s calling on the Germans to surpass the Greeks in “holy pathos” is thus to serve as a kind of *corrective* excess for the deficient excess to which what is one’s own is otherwise subject.

Heidegger’s interpretation of the Letter in the “*Germania*” and “*The Rhine*” course is governed by this insight into deficient excess together with his specific concern for the German “national.” Though Heidegger does not cite Hölderlin’s “Remarks to *Antigone*,” he interprets the Letter in terms of a passage that directly resonates with its basic structural framework in contrasting the “primary tendency”—here described by Hölderlin as a “weakness” (*Schwäche*)—that distinguishes the Greek and German styles of representation: “...our poetic art must be patriotic such that its materials are selected in accordance with our view of the world, and its representations patriotic, differing from Greek representations insofar as their primary tendency is to be able to grasp themselves [*sich fassen*] because their weakness lies therein; whereas, in contrast, the primary tendency in the modes of representation in our time is the ability to hit on [*treffen*] something, to have destiny, since the lack of fate, *dusmoron*, is our weakness.”⁶ Notably, however, and in a way that directly anticipates his own 1935 interpretation of Sophocles, Heidegger not only approaches the Letter through the terminology of this passage, he approaches this passage through Hölderlin’s early translation of the opening lines from the second choral ode of the *Antigone* in which Hölderlin translates the Greek word *deinon* with “*gewältig*” (violent). That is, Heidegger translates back into the Letter what Hölderlin’s translation and commentary on the *Antigone* enact as the German confrontation with the Greek foreign, which is, of course, itself already informed by the Letter. In this terminological crossing over, the Greek endowment of the “fire from heaven” becomes for Heidegger “the

⁶ “...und unsere Dichtkunst vaterländisch sein muß, so daß ihre Stoffe nach unserer Weltansicht gewählt sind, und ihre Vorstellungen vaterländisch, verändern sich die griechischen Vorstellungen insofern, als ihre Haupttendenz ist, sich fassen zu können, weil darin ihre Schwäche lag, da hingegen die Haupttendenz in den Vorstellungsarten unserer Zeit ist, etwas treffen zu können, Geschick zu haben, da das Schicksallose, das *dusmoron*, unsere Schwäche ist.” In *Hölderlin: Werke und Briefe*, vol. 2., pp. 783-790. A full translation of Hölderlin’s “Remarks to Antigone” can be found *Friedrich Hölderlin: Essays and Letters on Theory*. Translated and Edited by Thomas Pfau, pp. 109-116. For Heidegger brief discussion of this line in “*The Ister*” lecture course see p. 136 in the English and p. 169 in the German.

having become struck by the violence of *beyng* [*das Betroffenwerden durch die Gewalt des Seyns*]” and “the passion for the overpowering [*die Leidenschaft zum Überwältigenden*],” while the Greeks’ task is the “taming of the untameable in the struggle over the work, grasping, bringing-to-stand [*die Bändigung des Unbändigen im Erkämpfen des Werkes, das Fassen, Zum-Stand-bringen*]” (GA39, 292-3). The “Western Junonian sobriety” first captured by Homer is thus here being conceived in terms that Heidegger subsequently takes up in the *Introduction to Metaphysics* as *techne*.

While the problem Homer presents for both Hölderlin and Heidegger goes beyond the scope of this paper, the latent connection between the “clarity of presentation” and *techne* is important to keep in mind as Heidegger goes on to parse out what is endowed and tasked to the Germans. For in contrast to some interpretations, Heidegger is not about ‘out Greeking’ the Greeks, as though the surpassing of the foreign were something that could be “taken in itself.” (This would be simply to substitute how the foreign is “easier” for the “weakness” of what is one’s own as a further avenue to evade the difficulty of appropriating one’s own.) Rather, the problem for Heidegger is precisely the deficient excess inherent in what is the German’s own as this is bound to his nascent insights into *techne*. As Heidegger writes: “To the Germans it is endowed: the ability to grasp, the getting straight and planning of domains and spaces, ordering to the extreme of organizing. Tasked to them is the becoming struck by *beyng*.” As this passage reveals, the weakness inherent in the “grasping” of the “clarity of presentation” shows up precisely in the drive toward compartmentalization, which substitutes the buoyant aliveness of the outline of the work for a frame and framework. In his later interpretation of the Letter in “*The Ister*” course, Heidegger thus comments on the danger of mistaking the excess that shows up in the setting up of limits for the sake of the setting up limits for “the fire itself.”

At this juncture it is necessary to return to how Heidegger understands the endowment to be realized as an endowment only by way of the task. Thus where what is one’s own is natively original, this originality curiously comes into its own only by way of the task, which as Heidegger repeats in the “*Germania*” and “*The Rhine*” course is something “won through struggle” (*erkämpfen*). Acknowledging that Heidegger’s martial language has a rhetorical urgency in relation to the “national,” the task—though appointed—is something that the Germans and the Greeks each freely give themselves precisely in its being taken up *as a task*. While this, of course, includes the appropriation of the “fire from the heaven” and the “clarity of presentation” respectively, the struggle to make one’s own the task serves to transform the very structure of what it means for the endowment to have been given as an endowment. This is

simply to reiterate that for both Hölderlin and Heidegger it is the excess implicit in the appropriation of the task that uniquely opens up the space for “learning.”

Where this certainly presupposes a kind of distance, the movement here is not the encounter with the foreign followed by the return to what is one’s own (this would be to resolve the generative creativity of Hölderlin’s paradox into a dialectic), but the transposition or, again, “crossing over” of foreign and own as this is accomplished only through the task. In an important, but underdeveloped, passage Heidegger writes, “Historical determination is always about transforming what has been given, the ‘national,’ into a task”—an insight echoed and given a still more compelling formulation at the conclusion of the “Origin of the Work of Art”: “History is the ecstatic transport of a people into its task as the returning into what has been endowed to it [*Geschichte ist die Entrückung eines Volkes in sein Aufgegebenes als Einrückung in sein Mitgegebenes*].”⁷ This highlights a crucial point. Within the context of Heidegger’s interpretation of the Letter in the “*Germania*” and “*The Rhine*” course, the Germans’ encounter with the Greek foreign is never just the encounter with the Greek foreign. Rather, it is conceived as always simultaneously the encounter with the Greeks’ own excessive appropriation of the “clarity of presentation” through which the Germans are ecstatically *transposed* into differential relation with what is their own, and *transposed* into differential relation with what is their own only by exceeding the Greeks in what is the Greeks’ own. (The German word for “surpass” in the Letter to Böhlendorff is “*übertreffen*,” suggesting that the Germans learn how to “hit the mark” (*treffen*) only by overshooting it.) It is first through the excess of the task that the German’s enter into the possibility of learning what is their own not just *as* foreign, but from the position *of the foreign*.

Heidegger goes on to reformulate precisely this insight when he returns to the Letter to Böhlendorff five years later in the 1941/42 “*Remembrance*” course. For although he retains and even deepens Hölderlin’s original paradox, he no longer speaks of either the “violence of being” or of “struggle.” Instead, the encounter with the Greek foreign is characterized as having its own necessity—a necessity that in *first* constituting the Greeks as historical in turn allows the Germans to *become* historical—and whose difficulty is taken up within and is itself an expression of the difficulty inherent in appropriating what is one’s own. This is evident in the schematic cited above where Heidegger writes, “own and foreign; *both* must be learned [emphasis mine]” (GA75, 347). In direct contrast to the “*Germania*” and “*The Rhine*” course,

⁷ Martin Heidegger. *Holzwege*. (Vittorio Klostermann: Frankfurt am Main, 1994) p. 65.

the space opened up for this learning does not take place through an ecstatic transport as return (*Einrückung*) as the Germans enter into differential relation with what is their own by surpassing the Greeks in what is the Greeks' own, but as the poet's literal journeying into the Greek foreign in which the German and the Greek foreign and own "cross over" each other in a "remembrance that thinks backwards and forwards" (*zurück- und vor-denkende Andenken*). Significantly, this is again enacted through Heidegger's confrontation with Hölderlin's translations of Sophocles' *Antigone* and, less obviously, Pindar's "Victory Odes" (*epinikia*) in the 1942 "*The Ister*" lecture course. The necessity of the Germans' journeying into the Greek foreign is thus here approached by way of Hölderlin's "historical-poetic" encounter with the Greek poets of the foreign fire, which is not only commemorated by Hölderlin in the themes of journeying and homecoming, but in his conscious attempt to transform the disclosive possibilities of the German language on, for example, the level of meter.

Heidegger's re-interpretation of the Letter in the "*Remembrance*" course is informed in its most basic dynamics by a draft of the final strophe from Hölderlin's elegy "Bread and Wine":

nemlich zu Hauß ist der Geist
Nicht im Anfang, nicht an der Quell. Ihn zehret die Heimat.
Kolonie liebt, und tapfer Vergessen der Geist.
Unsere Blumen erfreun und die Schatten unserer Wälder
Den Verschmachteten. Fast wär der Beseeler verbrandt. (GA52, 189)

namely at home is spirit
not at the commencement, not at the source. The home consumes it.
Colony, and bold forgetting spirit loves.
Our flowers and the shades of our woods gladden
the one who languishes. The besouler would almost be scorched.

What proves essential for Heidegger's interpretation is the way that "spirit"—and Heidegger means river-spirit (*Stromgeist*) as the figuration of the poet/demigod—is initially not home at its source, which is to say that it is initially not at home in the "clarity of presentation" as what is its own. As Heidegger goes on to elaborate: "In the beginning, the home is still closed up within itself [*in sich verschlossen*], is unlighted, and unfree, and has thus not yet come to itself. The coming-to-'itself' requires a coming forth from an Other" (GA52, 190). Following along the same lines as his interpretation in the "*Germania*" and "*The Rhine*" course, lacking the encounter with the Greek foreign, the Germans' own becomes subject to an excess that turns it against itself as the "powers" (*Kräfte*) of the "clarity of presentation" bump into and rub up against one another as they threaten to "consume" the poet by quite literally

rubbing themselves out (GA53, 163; HHI 131). The home's being closed up within itself is thus here understood in terms of the poet's unhomeliness (*Unheimlichkeit*) with respect to what has been given to him and through which he first enters into relation with what is his own in what the Letter to Böhlendorff twice refers to as a "free use." As Heidegger remarks in commenting on this unhomeliness, "The one who is unhomey [*Der Unheimische*] remains undecided about what is foreign and what is one's own. Neither the one nor the other has been found. For it is not just one's own, but the foreign that must also be learned" (GA52, 188). Significantly, then, it is the poet's unhomeliness with respect to the "clarity of presentation" that initiates his encounter with the Sophocles and Pindar as the Greek poets of the foreign fire.

In a critical interpretive move, Heidegger understands this decision to be expressed in spirit's "love of colony" as this is taken up in its "bold forgetting." In contrast to either an adventuring or a desire for the exotic, Heidegger reiterates that the poet's journeying into the foreign is undertaken for the sake what is his own, characterizing it as a "tarrying that no longer thinks on what is one's own [*nicht mehr an das Eigene denken*]" (GA52, 190) and as a "peculiar not-thinking on [*Nicht-denken an*] the home" (GA53 166; HHI 133). In a manner that I again want to stress is creatively generative, the excess implicit in this forgetting as a *not* thinking on what is one's own enacts remembrance precisely through the decision *not* to remember as this is taken up in the poet's journeying into the Greek foreign. And it is, in turn, this "not-thinking on" that *first* opens up the space for the learning of the foreign—a space and a learning that simultaneously create the possibility of a return that would constitute the home's "coming-to-'itself'" by first allowing a coming forth from an Other.

The paradoxical relationship between forgetting as a not-thinking on and remembrance emerges in both Heidegger's reading of "our flowers...and the shades of our woods" and in his concluding interpretation of Hölderlin's reference to the ocean in the penultimate line of "Remembrance" ("Yet what takes/and gives memory is ocean [*Es nehmet aber/Und giebt Gedächtnis die See*]"). Within the context of the Greek foreign, the poet risks being "burned up" (*ausbrennen*) by the heavenly fire so that he can first enter into the learning of what is his own. (Heidegger, not doubt, also has in mind here Hölderlin's November, 1802 Letter to Böhlendorff in which Hölderlin returns from Bordeaux writing that he has been "struck" by Apollo.) The Greek foreign, rather than being presented as something that the Germans can readily access as a task, provides the "clarity of presentation" with, so to speak, its proper 'subject matter' through which the Germans can first learn to appropriate what is their own. To the extent that the Germans can at all be said to "surpass" the Greeks, it is not in the creation of

a new "Apollonian realm," but in what Heidegger interprets as the historical necessity of Hölderlin's naming of the holy, which in first instituting the relation to the divine would allow any *new* god to arrive. "Free use," Heidegger writes, "needs and uses [*braucht*] the inner relationship to that which is to be presented [*das Darzustellende*], that is, to the holy, for which the soil of the home must be consecrated" (GA52, 191). It is in the poet's almost being "annihilated" by the intensity of the foreign fire that he is "gladdened" by "our flowers...and the shades of our woods," whose "soft illumination" (*sanfte Erleuchten*) and cooling offers him some measure of protection. As Heidegger goes on to elaborate, in remembering *back* to the home, the poet first finds the proper use of the "clarity of presentation" not as a "grasping," but as the cool clarity that Heidegger gestured toward at the beginning of the "*Remembrance*" course in describing how the sharpness of the Northeasterly wind cleared the air. However, Heidegger also understands this remembrance *back* to be at the same time a remembrance *forward* to the appropriation of the "clarity of presentation" at home through which it first "gifts its gladdening and rescuing" (*schenkt ihr Erfreundes und Rettendes*) in the joy and greeting that accompanies the poet's return from the foreign (GA53, 167; HHI 134).

This remembrance backwards and forwards receives its most important articulation in Heidegger's brief remarks on the ocean at the conclusion of the "*Remembrance*" course. In a passage that should be read as the structural continuation of the poet's sending of his greetings along with the Northeasterly, whose coming and going, staying behind and accompanying is characterized in terms of a "reciprocal overtaking" (*wechselweise überholen*), Heidegger writes: "However, it is in the taking of remembrance back to the abandoned and as yet unappropriated home that ocean first gives, in the foreign to which it leads as something foreign, the remembrance forward to that Other of the foreign. That is one's own" (GA52, 193).⁸ Recalling now Heidegger's doubly-directed arrow, the poet's remembrance thinks *back* on what is his own as that which has not yet been fully realized, which can only take place within the context of his appropriation of the "clarity of presentation" *at home*. However, the poet's remembrance can only think back on what is his own as something yet to be appropriated from out of the Greek foreign to which the ocean leads in the taking up of the *not*-thinking on the home as this is itself enacted in spirit's "love of colony." Yet, it is in this remembrance *back* that the poet undergoes the still deeper insight into the nature of memory

⁸ "Allein indem die See das Zurückdenken an die verlassene und dabei noch unangeeignete Heimat nimmt, gibt sie im Fremden, zu dem sie als einem Fremden führt, doch erst das Vordenken an das Andere des Fremden. Das ist das Eigene."

occasioned by the taking and giving of the ocean; namely, that from the position of the Greek foreign, it will have been he who was the foreign, he who was Other. The ocean's giving of remembrance *forward* thus first opens up the space for the poet to appropriate the "clarity of presentation" within the context of the foreign and, again, from the position *of the foreign* as he looks back in looking ahead to his anticipated return home. Here foreign and own "cross over" in the manner in which the remembrance back is overtaken by a remembrance forward that transposes the poet into what is his own by placing him into differential relation with that own as what is Other to the foreign. This allows the poet to learn that what is his own both needs to be and *can* be appropriated.

While structure articulated here may seem precariously close to Hegel's treatment of recognition in his analysis of the relationship between Lord and Bondsman, Heidegger's interpretation of the Ister-river's having invited the demigod Heracles as "guest" both serves to bring forward and transforms the structural asymmetry that underlies Hölderlin's statement of the original paradox in the Letter to Böhlendorff. For where Hölderlin as the poet of the Germans can journey back to the Greek foreign, the Greek poets Sophocles and Pindar cannot journey forward to encounter Hölderlin as the German poet of the "clarity of presentation". Homer's "soulfulness" notwithstanding, this means that the Greeks were never able to appropriate the fire from heaven from the position of the German foreign through which they could first learn the appropriation of what is their own—a point Hölderlin touches on in a fragment to a late hymn that refers to the Greeks' neglect of the "patriotic" as leading to their downfall.⁹ The relevant passage from "The Ister" hymn reads:

So wundert

Mich nicht, dass er <der Ister>
Den Heracles zu Gaste geladen.
Fernglänzend am Olympos druntun.
Da der, sich Schatten zu suchen
Vom heissen Isthmos kam
Den voll des Muthes waren
Dasselbst sie, es bedarf aber, der Geister wegen
Der Kühlung auch. (GA53, 175)

Thus it surprises

Me not, that he, <the Ister>

⁹ "Namely they [the Greeks] wanted to found to found/A kingdom of art. But in this/The patriotic was neglected/by them and wretchedly went Greece, the most beautiful, to its downfall" (GA39, 292).

Invited Heracles as guest.
 Gleaming from afar down there by Olympus.
 When he in search of shade
 From the sultry Isthmus came.
 For full of courage were
 They even there, yet there was need, for the spirits' sake,
 Of cooling. (HHI, 140)

Where the German poet's journeying into the foreign enacts a remembrance backwards and forwards traveling in one direction, the Ister-river's inviting Heracles as a "guest" takes up this same movement going in the opposite direction. And here it is important to note that Pindar's third "Olympian Ode" makes reference to Heracles' having brought back olive leaves "from the Ister's shaded source." In other words, by in effect quoting Pindar within the context of "The Ister" hymn—whose opening line reads, "Now come, fire!"—Hölderlin commemorates Pindar within in his own poem, at the same time that he transforms the Greek poet's original journeying into the German foreign into the invitation to share in the "shade" and "cooling" provided by the demigod river himself. There are two moves implied in this invitation: First, the presence of the Greek poet brings the fire from heaven to the source of what is the German's own. And second, Hölderlin's remembering ahead to his own appropriation of the "clarity of presentation" allows him to extend the invitation *back* to Pindar's Heracles, whose search for cooling has itself anticipated made possible the German poet's appropriation of what is his own. This means that it is Hölderlin's poetic guest-friendship that retroactively allows the Greeks to enter into relation with the German foreign, which is not completed by the Greeks, but by Hölderlin, whose poetry reveals how the Greeks and the Germans first become historical through one another in an anticipatory remembrance. Heidegger makes this point in "*The Ister*" lecture course: "Hölderlin's word concerning the Ister, who has invited Heracles as guest, thinks an entirely other and new relation that could not be a necessity for the Greek poet and therefore was not even possible" (GA53, 177; HHI 142).

The presence of the guest-friend at the source of what is the Germans' own in turn transforms how the poet experiences his having journeyed into the foreign. Thus where spirit's "love of colony" takes up the remembrance of the home through a forgetting that journeys into the foreign, the presence of the guest as the presence of the foreign in the home takes up the poet's journeying into the foreign as an enduring thinking on the home while in—or better, alongside—the home: "The guest makes the thinking of the homely into a steadfast remembrance of the journeying to the foreign (to "colony"). The appropriation of one's own *is*

only in the guest-like dialogue (*gastliche Zwiesprache*) with the foreign” (GA53, 177; HHI 142). The foreign is thus not just indeterminately over there, but is already at the very source of what is one’s own.

It is important to be clear about just what Heidegger is doing here when he points to the internal relationship between colony and guest-friendship. For guest-friendship is not a structure of mediation, nor is it a nostalgic return “home,” as though “home” were itself something given apart from the very movement articulated here. Instead, Heidegger’s final reading of the Letter to Böhlendorff in terms of guest-friendship is his radical attempt to think foreignness and difference at the very source of what is one’s own *as* one’s own, and to do it in a way that disrupts the purity of any identity as “given” rather as than historically constituted by an Other whose presence has already temporally preceded and exceeded it in determining the tasks and endowments that are its own to take up. (This is surely an as yet unappropriated resource for contemporary discourses concerned with identity and Otherness.) While Heidegger attempts to capture this graphically in his doubly-directed arrow, the relationship between foreign and own, German and Greek, is finally articulated in the eddying movement of the Ister-river as it appears to flow backwards toward its source. To conclude with Heidegger’s own words:

In the hesitancy [of the upper Donau’s swirling backwards (*Im Wirbeln*)], the poet intimates the mysterious concealment of the intertwining relations toward the foreign and one’s own. The Ister almost goes backwards, because remaining at the source, it has arrived alongside it from the East. In hesitating, its flowing appears in one direction *and* the other. The flowing is not directly in either of the two directions. The relation between foreign and own is never a mere taking over of the Other. The relation to one’s own is never a mere self-assured affirmation of the so-called “natural” or organic. (GA53, 178-9; HHI 143)

Appendix

Hölderlin's Dec.4, 1801 Letter to Böhlendorff as cited in *Hölderlins Hymnen »Germanien« und »Der Rhein«*, 290-291.

Wir lernen nichts schwerer als das Nationelle frei gebrauchen. Und wie ich glaube, ist gerade die Klarheit der Darstellung uns ursprünglich so natürlich, wie den Griechen das Feuer vom Himmel. Eben deswegen werden diese eher in schöner Leidenschaft, die Du Dir auch erhalten hast, als in jener homerischen Geistesgegenwart und Darstellungsgabe zu *übertreffen* sein.

Es klingt paradox. Aber ich behaupt' es noch einmal, und stelle es Deiner Prüfung und Deinem Gebrauche frei, das eigentlich Nationelle wird im Fortschritt der Bildung immer der geringere Vorzug werden. Desswegen sind die Griechen des heiligen Pathos weniger Meister, weil es ihnen angeboren war, hingegen sind sie vorzüglich in Darstellungsgabe, von Homer an, weil dieser ausserordentliche Mensch seelenvoll genug war, um die abendländische *Junonische Nüchternheit* für sein Apollonsreich zu erbeuten, und so wahrhaft das Fremde sich anzueignen. Bei uns ists umgekehrt. Desswegen ists auch so gefährlich, sich die Kunstregeln einzig und allein von griechischer Vortrefflichkeit zu abstrahiren. Ich habe lange daran laborirt und weiss nun, dass ausser dem, was bei den Griechen und uns das höchste sein muss, nemlich dem lebendigen Verhältniss und Geschik, wir nicht wohl etwas *gleich* mit ihnen haben dürfen. Aber das Eigene muss so gut gelernt seyn, wie das Fremde. Desswegen sind uns die Griechen unentbehrlich. Nur werden wir ihnen gerade in unserm Eigenen, Nationellen nicht nachkommen, weil, wie gesagt, der *freie* Gebrauch des *Eigenen* das schwerste ist.

Buried Treasure

Greeting and The Temporality of Remembrance in Heidegger's Lectures on '*Andenken*'.

William McNeill

DePaul University

Der Nordost wehet,
 Der liebste unter den Winden
 Mir, weil er feurigen Geist
 Und gute Fahrt verheißet den Schiffern.
 Geh aber nun und grüße
 Die schöne Garonne,
 Und die Gärten von Bourdeaux
 ...

Noch denket das mir wohl ...

Was bleibet aber, stiften die Dichter.

The Northeasterly blows,
 Most beloved of the winds to me
 For it promises fiery spirit
 And good voyage to those at sea.
 But go now, and greet
 The beautiful Garonne,
 And the gardens of Bordeaux
 ...

Still it seems to think of me ...

Yet what remains, the poets found.

In a condensed commentary of just a few pages, Heidegger in his 1941-42 course on Hölderlin's hymn "Remembrance" claims that the single line "But go now and greet" conceals the entire mystery of what is called remembrance.¹ (49, 55) Remembrance, *Andenken*, is

¹ Hölderlin's Hymne "Andenken." Gesamtausgabe Band 52. Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1982. A condensed and substantially revised version of the lecture course was published by Heidegger as an essay in *Erläuterungen zu*

poetized as a greeting. As a greeting, it is a thoughtful turning toward that which is greeted. Yet this thinking in the direction of what is greeted does not lose itself in something that is past, in the poet's past experience of Bordeaux. Something more than a personal "experience" (*Erlebnis*) is at stake, Heidegger insists, something that demands of us an "other thinking" (50); and the mystery of this "other thinking," as remembrance, is perhaps that of thinking itself, the very essence of thinking, which is something entirely other than what Western philosophy conceives as "logic." (55)

Yet Heidegger unfolds the structure of greeting, thus of remembrance, from a meditation on the opening line of the poem, "The Northeasterly blows." For earlier in the lecture course he had indeed insisted that with this opening line, in its naming of the Northeasterly, there begins the mystery. The first three words contain "the mystery of the entire poem"; the opening line "resonates in every line that follows." (32) Yet what can be so mysterious about what seems to be so straightforward and self-evident as the blowing of the wind? For one thing, the time and space of this blowing. Heidegger articulates it thus:

It might now appear as though we were looking for mysteries even in those places where "rational human beings" find none. And yet, we must assert the following: "The Northeasterly blows"—taken by itself, this word indeed leaves indeterminate the point in time and the location of that of which it speaks. Nevertheless, it names the time-space from out of which comes the attuning favor of the poetizing that is now needed and is yet to come, in order that this poetizing may fulfill its essence and that poets may be. "The Northeasterly blows"—that is to say: the time-space of the poetizing that is poetized in this poem stands open. We avoid saying that the first line is an "image" for this "thought." We are indicating only that, if the first line says what we have named, then between the beginning of the poem and its conclusion there lies an essential relation that at once embraces this poem in its totality: "The Northeasterly blows"—"Yet what remains, the poets found." (32)

The opening line of the hymn is a naming, a poetic naming that institutes or founds "the poetizing that is now needed and is yet to come." The opening line, therefore, is not just the first line, the beginning of the poem, but the line that opens and founds the time-space of the poetizing: indeed, it poetizes and names this very opening, the event that inaugurates the time-space of the poetizing itself. And this is of course one of Heidegger's central claims about Hölderlin's hymns: that they poetize the essence of poetizing. Yet this inaugural event, this opening that originates the poem, is not straightforward. It names something that has happened and that is thus, presumably, to be remembered and commemorated through the poetizing itself.

Hölderlins Dichtung. Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1971. A translation of the essay appears in Martin Heidegger, *Elucidations of Hölderlin's Poetry*, translated by Keith Hoeller. New York: Humanities Books, 2000.

Yet this event is not identifiable as a particular moment, a particular point in time or location. The poetizing, Heidegger is careful to insist, "is *now* needed *and yet to come*": the "now" of the poetizing is already the trace of the inaugural event, the event whose essence, however, lies in its being yet to come. Heidegger here presumably reads the opening line in terms of that temporality which is more explicitly poetized in the opening line of the "Ister" hymn, on which he would lecture the following semester: "Now come, fire!" The "now" names something that has already happened, an inaugural event or *Ereignis*, and yet the time of its poetizing, its "now," is already that of a coming.

"The Northeasterly blows." Yet the blowing of the wind, Heidegger elucidates, the wind's movement, its going, is possible only as a coming: "The wind goes in that it comes. 'The Northeasterly blows' means: it is arrival [*Ankunft*]." (48) The line "But go now..." does not dismiss the wind or send it away, does not seek to stop its blowing. It means "go," certainly, but in the first instance means "Blow, wind, and be." The being of the wind is its remaining (*Bleiben*) as the wind that it is, its prevailing in its blowing, in a going that is at the same time its coming, a going that is inseparable from its arrival. The poetic addressing of the wind holds the wind toward this very naming, beckons it, yet in so doing does not stop or arrest it, but lets it be the wind that it is. It is a letting be of the wind that calls upon the Northeasterly to be, to be the "most beloved."

Yet the "going" enunciated in the fifth line is ambiguous. It means, certainly, for the wind to blow and thus to be, to fulfill its essence as the most beloved of the poet. Yet it also marks a departure (*Abschied*), marks it by the word "But" (*aber*): "But go now, and greet...." The departure, however, is not a dismissal (*Verabschiedung*); it neither sends the wind away nor abandons it. Rather, Heidegger insists, the poet remains within the blowing of the wind by going with or accompanying (*Mitgehen*) the going of the wind. His going with the wind is not a traveling or journeying in the wind itself that takes its actual path toward the Southwest, but a remaining with the wind in the manner of its greeting. "Just as the blowing of the wind is a coming and a going that reciprocally exceed one another, so a greeting is a remaining back and yet an accompanying that reciprocally demand one another." (49)

In what way is the phenomenon of greeting to be understood as both accompanying and remaining back? In greeting someone we send a greeting to them. But the sending of a greeting is not the conveyance of any kind of report about ourselves. It does say something about us, but what it says is merely that we seek and wish nothing for ourselves, but rather are entirely turned toward the one who is greeted, so that he or she may present themselves in, as Heidegger puts

it, “everything that behooves the one greeted as the one that they are.” Genuine greeting, as an address (*Zuspruch*) turned toward the one greeted, is recognition: the recognition that recognizes the one greeted in “the nobility of their essence” and through such recognition lets them be what they are. Greeting is thus “a letting be of things and of human beings.” (50)

While greeting manifests itself in various forms, from what Heidegger identifies as the fleeting, conventional form, to the seldomness of a genuine greeting, it is “the uniqueness of this poetic greeting” of Hölderlin’s that is his focus here, as a letting be that is at once belonging and departure, unfolding as the supreme intimacy (*Innigkeit*) of the poetic embrace. I would like to quote at some length Heidegger’s further elucidation of greeting that meticulously unfolds the phenomenality of such embrace, only to interrupt itself at a certain, decisive point, in order to let Hölderlin’s words speak for themselves, as though for the very first time:

Greeting is a reaching out to what is greeted, a touching that yet does not touch [*ein Rühren an...*, *das doch nicht berührt*], an embracing [*Fassen*] that yet never has need to ‘take hold,’ because it is at the same time a releasing.... Greeting in this way always remains a will to belong to the one greeted, and yet never in the manner of imposing oneself or of a calculative reckoning with one another. In the genuine greeting there even lies concealed that mysterious stringency whereby, each time, those greeting one another are directed into the remoteness of their own essence and its preservation; for everything essential is, by virtue of what is its own, in each case unconditionally remote from the other. Yet this remoteness alone also assures the moments of transition from one to the other. Genuine greeting is one instance of such transition. The most simple, yet at the same time most intimate greeting is that whereby that which is greeted itself first returns to its essence anew, appears as something incipient [*Anfängliches*], and finds itself as though for the first time. Only if we think the greeting in such an essential manner may we have some intimation of how Hölderlin, through the Northeasterly and by its “going” lets be greeted:

The beautiful Garonne,
And the gardens of Bourdeaux
There, where by the steep bank
Runs the path and into the river
The brook falls deep, while above
There watch a noble pair
Of oaks and silver poplars;

The essential greeting of the poetic embrace not only lets beings first come into being, letting them appear and come to stand in “the radiance of the poetic word” (53): it also at the same time directs them into the remoteness of their own essence, preserving them and letting

them prevail from out of this very remoteness. It first raises those beings that have been greeted and appear in the naming of the poetic word into their actuality and their truth, as the "pure illumination" of what has been poetized. The actual landscape of Bordeaux once experienced by Hölderlin has now been poetized by way of this greeting. What was once actually experienced by the poet, notes Heidegger,

has presumably long since changed—and yet, how much everything remains, how preserved [*gerettet*], despite the indefiniteness of the whole, everything comes to shine. The beautiful river, the gardens of the town, the path running beside the steep bank, the deep falling brook—are brought together in the rapture of one *single* embrace [*in ein Entzücken*]:

... while above

There watch a noble pair

Of oaks and silver poplars; (52)

For what appears here as something incipient, finding itself as though for the very first time, is preserved in its staying power by virtue of the poet's love—a love that has taken the course of a departure, and that yet itself precisely remains, prevailing out of such departure: "an enduring love, over which the magnificent silence of these words lies." (53) That which remains is not only that which is manifestly poetized in this greeting—the beings themselves—but also the poet's love, which stays behind, remaining back, and from out of this remoteness remains mindful of that which has been and which still now prevails in its essence (*des Gewesenen und jetzt noch Wesenden*: 53)²: "Still it seems to think of me...." This "still," Heidegger notes, names the same time as the "now" of "But go now and greet...": it names the moment of the poetic greeting itself. And yet, it introduces something else into the greeting, the greeting that the poet, remaining behind, sends on its way with the words "But go now and greet...." It is almost as though the moment of poetic greeting, the "now," were suddenly and unexpectedly arrested, detained in the very moment by the countermovement marked by the word "Still." As though this "Still" (*Noch*) first let the greeting unfold into the full richness of its essence, "radiating an intimacy that must come from a source of its own." (53) For the poet does not say what one would expect here: he does not say "Still I seem to think of it," or "Still well I remember it" (Hamburger's translation), but quite the reverse "Still it seems to think of me." Heidegger: "That which is greeted itself inclines toward the one greeting, thinking toward the one greeting. So mysterious is this greeting assigned to the Northeasterly." (54)

² Cf. GA 52, 81; 87.

The line “Still it seems to think of me,” Heidegger comments, appears to interrupt the greeting and our tarrying in the presence of what is greeted. Yet “in truth, it is like a catching breath in the midst of the fullness of that which is simple, which the greeting Northeasterly blows toward the poet, even though this wind goes away from the poet.” (54) In remembrance, our thinking departs in the direction of what has been, in so doing taking leave of the present. Yet at the same time, that which has been comes in the opposite direction, approaching the one who is thinking. That which returns in this way, Heidegger insists, does not merely become present: it does not take up residence in the present so as to become a kind of substitute for what is past. Rather, when we let that which is remembered unfold entirely in its own essence, when we in no way disturb its prevailing, then we experience the following: “That which is recollected arches over beyond our present and stands suddenly in the future. It comes toward us, and is in some way still unfulfilled....” It is, Heidegger says, a buried treasure, *ein ungehobener Schatz*, whereas if we consider it something past, we take it to be somehow finished and unalterable.³ (54)

The poet’s thoughtful greeting that gives itself over to the wind and lets itself be carried off by the wind now suddenly comes to stand in the counter wind of this very wind—in the wind that comes in its very going, comes toward the poet from out of the future. It is, Heidegger comments, “as though a river that runs out and goes into the sea suddenly flowed backward in the opposite direction, toward the source.” (54) It is not only *as though* this were the case, for this is of course what is poetized by Hölderlin not only in the closing lines of the hymn: “...It is the sea, however, / That takes and gives memory,” but also in the Ister hymn, which poetizes the apparent backward flow of the Danube toward the source.

I would like to conclude these all too cursory and circumstantial remarks—remarks that would have to be integrated into the much richer and incredibly intricate structure of the *Andenken* lecture course—by suggesting something of how this course might be read in relation to a few of Heidegger’s other, published texts, and thereby proposing its claim as an absolutely central text in Heidegger’s oeuvre. That *das Gewesene*, that which has been, is not merely that which is past, bygone and concluded, *das Vergangene*, but that which still prevails in the claim of its essential unfolding, its *Wesen*, and is thus more appropriately thought as *das Gewesende*, that which is in having been, is of course a theme that reaches back to *Being and Time*. There, indeed, Heidegger already insists upon the futural unfolding of such having-been:

³ Cf. 52, where Heidegger asserts that what is greeted is first “raised [*gehoben*] into its actuality” through the greeting.

Having been, he insists, “springs from the future in a certain way”: “Having been springs from [entspringt] the future, and in such a way that the future that has been (or better, that is in having been: *gewesende*) releases the present from itself.” (SZ, 326)⁴ By the time of the *Andenken* course, the release intrinsic to this temporal articulation of Dasein's being-in as dwelling is understood as the temporal “essence” of poetizing, in keeping with Hölderlin's word “... poetically man dwells / Upon this Earth.” Furthermore, it is not simply the being of Dasein, or now of the human being, but being itself that is seen to be thus articulated or configured, in accordance with a destining. A key text in this transition of thinking is the 1935 “The Origin of the Work of Art,” itself written at the time of Heidegger's first major lecture course on Hölderlin, reading the hymns “Germania” and “The Rhine.” There already, it is art, whose essence is poetizing, *Dichtung*, that is said to “let truth spring forth [entspringen]”—truth as the unconcealment that is happening of presence, the presencing of beings themselves from out of self-concealment.⁵ The self-concealment of beings, their never to be overcome remoteness from one another, is indeed, in “The Origin of the Work of Art,” understood already as the articulating flow of a river, not yet in terms of the blowing of the wind. In an astonishing passage in that essay, Heidegger writes:

All things of the Earth, the Earth itself as a whole, flow together into a reciprocal accord. Yet this confluence is not a blurring of their outlines. Here there flows the bordering stream, restful within itself, that delimits everything present into its presencing. Thus, in each of the self-secluding things there is the same not-knowing-of-one-another [*das gleiche Sich-nicht-Kennen*]. (H, 36; BW 172-73, translation modified.)

Finally, I would note only the absolutely central importance of the *Andenken* course for that last lecture course that Heidegger would deliver, some ten years later. *Was Heißt Denken?*, *What is Called Thinking?* is in essence a further unfolding of, and meditation upon, the essence of thinking itself as *Andenken*. Its central claim, “*What is most thought-provoking is that we are not yet thinking*,”⁶ is an invitation to think precisely this “not yet,” the futural “essence” of thinking. Thinking occurs as our being drawn in and by the wind (*Zug*) of a withdrawal (*Entzug*), a withdrawal that, in its approach, draws us toward and into it, such that we point into this very withdrawal, and are thus “a sign that is not read”. (WHD, 5-6) Socrates himself, we

⁴ *Sein und Zeit*. Halle a. d. S.: Niemeyer, 1927.

⁵ “Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes.” In *Holzwege* (H). Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1950, 64. Translated by Albert Hofstadter as “The Origin of the Work of Art.” In *Basic Writings* (BW), ed. David Farrell Krell. New York: HarperCollins, 1993, 202 (translation modified).

⁶ *Was heißt Denken?* (WHD). Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1984, 2.

recall, “the purest thinker of the West,” is characterized as having done nothing else, his life long, than hold himself into the wind of such withdrawal. (WHD, 52) Yet, in identifying the essence of thinking from its very first page as *Andenken*, *What is Called Thinking?* also alludes unmistakably to the earlier readings of both *Andenken* and *Der Ister*: Memory, the gathering of remembrance, conceals within it that which is to be thought, before all else, in everything that claims us in its essential presencing (*wesen*), as prevailing, presencing in its having been (*als Wesendes, Gewesendes*). Memory, Heidegger writes, is *Andenken*, remembrance directed toward what is (yet) to be thought, and as such is the wellspring and source of poetizing. “Poetizing is thus the waters that, from time to time, flow backward toward the source, to thinking as remembrance.” (WHD, 7)

The Swaying Skiff of Sea
A Note on Heidegger's—and Hölderlin's—*Andenken*

David Farrell Krell

DePaul University/Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg

What does Heidegger want above all from his lecture course and his chapter¹ on Hölderlin's *Andenken*? He wants to establish the historical or destinal mission or sending, the *Schicksal-Schickung-Geschick-Geschichte*, of the poet who, like a river, is born to be a demigod. What does he most want to avoid? Anything that smacks of a "life-experience," *Erlebnis*, in either the poet's own work or the philological-biographical literature surrounding that work, anything that smacks of the human, all-too-human, by which that mission might be degraded. Hölderlin uses the word *beschwätzet* once, with its negative connotation of blab, and Heidegger loves to cite it: one does not blab or gossip about a poet with a mission, much less a demigod. (Heidegger neglects to mention that in the poem *Stuttgart* Hölderlin blesses the *kindlich Geschwätz*, the "childlike banter" of his countrymen; see CHV 1:386). Among the things a destinal poet will have to sacrifice for the mission, in Heidegger's view, are all those "experiences" that lesser mortals "live." And yet.

Who serves on the Board of Censors that decides whether the events in a poet's life and work are destinal or ephemeral? Presumably, the thinker. The thinker, Heidegger remarks once in his lecture course (x:x), holds out in the foreign even more stubbornly than the poet. Yet what if the very desire on the thinker's part that a poet found or ground a destiny were the most homegrown of desires, albeit one not freely and insightfully developed, never truly exposed to the fire of heaven? That would be a predicament.

Some of our ablest readers of Heidegger—I am thinking of Dominique Janicaud and Jacques Derrida—have worried about Heidegger's tendency, visible on every page of both the lecture course and the book chapter now in question, to bring it all back home, to capture the foreign for the sake of one's own, proper mission. For this is what Hegel in his metaphysics of

¹ The chapter on *Andenken* appears in *Erläuterungen zu Hölderlin's Dichtung*, nth ed. (Frankfurt am Main: V. Klostermann, 19x), xx-xx. The lecture course of x appears in the Martin Heidegger Gesamtausgabe volume 52, *Hölderlin's Hymne "Andenken"* (Frankfurt am Main: V. Klostermann, 1982); see also volume 65, *Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis)* (Frankfurt am Main: V. Klostermann, 1989), "Die Zu-Künftigen" and "Der letzte Gott," 395-417. I cite Hölderlin in the three-volume Carl Hanser Verlag edition, ed. Michael Knaupp (Munich, 1992) by volume and page.

the absolute called the labor of the concept, namely, *Besitzergreifung*, “taking possession.” One of our most apoplectic respondents to Heidegger—I am thinking of T. W. Adorno—stresses the violence of Heidegger’s militant nostalgia for the homeland: Adorno decries Heidegger’s *Beschlagnahme*, his “confiscation,” of Hölderlin’s poetry. I want to begin with Adorno’s apoplexy, but then take up the more considered, more Junonian side of his “Parataxis.”² The more sober side of Adorno’s reading of Hölderlin has to do with the asyntactical, asyndetic, anacoluthic, and well-nigh *serial* sequences of *names* in Hölderlin’s hymns. The apoplectic side of Adorno’s reading involves Heidegger’s response to the procession of women near Bordeaux, women the poet calls “brown,” *die braune Frauen*. The more sober side of his reading leaves Adorno himself quite defenseless: he can say as little as Heidegger or anyone else about these paratactic rows of names, names of persons and places, names extrinsic to all asseveration—and yet these names may have been what Hölderlin meant by “the pure word,” *das reine Wort*. For Adorno such a word or name opens upon the hope of utopia; nevertheless, in the end, it is unavailable for any and every “destinal” use.

Adorno is quite right to observe that Heidegger, soon after introducing these “brown” women, the women of the Dordogne and the Garonne, hurries back to *den deutschen Frauen*. Heidegger appears to be following Hölderlin in this, dashing back to sing the praises of those very pale women who are to be made pregnant with river gods and national poets. And yet Heidegger’s celebration of the homey virtues of German womanhood is quite different from Hölderlin’s. Adorno unmasks Heidegger’s Schillerian moralizing tendency in matters of sex and gender as an attribute of the authoritarian personality, for whom the erotic poses a threat, the threat of a foreign invasion—perhaps from across the Rhine. Adorno’s comment on Heidegger’s rapid retreat from Hölderlin’s “brown women” of the Gironde to the virtuous women of Germany is that Heidegger’s subtlety is nothing less than Neanderthal: *Sie* [that is, the women of Germany] *werden an den Haaren herbeigeschleppt* (458), they are dragged into Heidegger’s lecture hall or *Hütte* by the hair. Of course, Adorno is here savoring his sardonic cruelty, exacting his revenge on the Heidegger whom he, for reasons, so hates. The problem with revenge is not that it does not last (in Adorno’s case it endures without modification or moderation up to the end) but that it always recoils: every reader of the third treatise of

² *Parataxis. Zur späten Lyrik Hölderlins* was first a lecture given at the annual meeting of the Hölderlin-Gesellschaft in Berlin on June 7, 1963. An expanded version was then published in *Neue Rundschau* 75:1 (1964). The piece appears now in Theodor W. Adorno, *Noten zur Literatur*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1981), 447-91. I will refer to the Suhrkamp volume throughout, citing it by page number in the body of my text. For an English translation, see *Notes to Literature: Volume Two*, tr. Shierry Weber Nicholson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 109-49; notes on 338-41.

Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morals* knows that. Hölderlin himself says that revenge, even if it endures, has no future, because it is always walking backwards, its gaze glued to the past (CHV 2:224). Revenge against Heidegger recoils upon Adorno, for example, when he tries to formulate the meaning of Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde*, invoking something very much like the end of metaphysics in Mahler's great work; Adorno himself, at least at some level, can hear that he is paraphrasing the enemy in order to reach the heart of a composer he loves. And, again, when in "Parataxis" Adorno seeks a word for the essence of Hölderlin's poetry he chooses the word *Abgeschiedenheit*, "apartness," or even "departedness," we recognize the word. Heidegger had used it a decade earlier to designate the essence of *Trakl's* poetry. True, Trakl and Hölderlin are blood-related. Yet Adorno's borrowing of Heidegger's word for Trakl, while quite fitting, shows how devastatingly unkind the unconscious can be. Perhaps it is the same with women, whether pallid or golden brown? So much for apoplexy.

The more affirmative side of "Parataxis," to repeat, notes the asyntactical procession of names in the late hymns and fragments, for example, in the final pages of the Homburger Folioheft. No one knows what to make of these pure words, these names of heroes and princes and places sketched into the poems and into the margins of the poems: Mahomed Rinaldo Barbarossa . . . Konradin Ugolino Eugen . . . Kaiser Heinrich Demetrius Poliorcetes Peter der Große . . . Anson und Gama und Flibustier und Äneas . . . Doria Jason Bouillon Bougainville (CHV 1:425-26). As for places, one travels on a page or two of Hölderlin's late poetry from Rom Frankenland Schottland Wartburg Westphalen Eisenach Tyrol Lombarda Loretto Patmos and Morea back to Roma (432-33). Whenever the names of the Greek heroes are spoken—raging Ajax and weeping Achilles—the ancient myths once again sweep us away; and when all those other names are sung we can only think of Nietzsche's letter from Turin to Burckhardt in Basel: "All the names of history I am."

Of the place names, the two that concern us here are from the Gironde. Hölderlin himself concedes in his second letter to Böhlendorff that southern France has given him insight into the Greek body and Greek athleticism, and Heidegger is quick to say, over and over again, that for Hölderlin "the south" is simply Greece, ancient Greece. Yet even the Greece of *Hyperion* is not ancient Greece but the Greece that is struggling to liberate itself from Ottoman domination. And is Bordeaux in Hölderlin's mouth simply Athens or Thebes? Is there no Italia in Hölderlin? Nothing beyond the Alps? Is there no France to the west and south? Recall those wonderful French marginalia in the Homburger Folioheft, for example, these words that seem to represent the cries of the mutinous mariners against Columbus:

they cry turn about, and shut down the house,
 You are an I don't know what

ils crient rapport, et fermés maison,
 tu es un sais rien (CHV 1:427)

The names *Dordogne* and *Garonne*, sung more than once in *Andenken*, are names that are irreducible to Greece, whether ancient or modern. As far as I can see, they find no place in Heidegger's reading. Together, these two rivers form a stream as wide as the sea, sings Hölderlin, but Heidegger will refer to them only as *der Strom*. Each river is unquestionably a demigod or goddess of her own, the Dordogne and the Garonne sisters to not only the Rhône and Saône but also the Rhine and the Ister. Why does Heidegger not accept their appellation?

The names are difficult for a German (or an American) to pronounce. *Dordogne* sounds to the German ear a bit like *dort unten*, *là-bas*; *Garonne* sounds like something between *geronnen* and *gerinnen*, between rapid flow and a sinking into silt. Why, however, should a thinker who wants us to dedicate ourselves to the word of the poet and to hold out in the foreign feel himself absolved from enunciating them, whereas the poet appears to take joy in the exotic noises they make, joy perhaps also in their very singular relation to the Atlantic and the westward routes, the routes toward Columbus's "Indians"? And then there is the name of the city they feed: *Die schöne Garonne / Und die Gärten von Bourdeaux*. Hölderlin employs the old spelling of the city's name, Bo(u)rdeaux. One gets thirsty just hearing it. Yet none of these names, while southerly, are Greek:

Dort an der luftigen Spiz'
 An Traubenbergen, wo herab
 Die Dordogne kommt,
 Und zusammen mit der prächt'gen
 Garonne meerbreit
 Ausgehet der Strom. (CHV 1:474-75)

There on the windy peak
 On vineyarded mountains, where
 Plunging the Dordogne comes,
 And together with the splendid
 Garonne seawide
 The outflowing stream.

If you have seen one rivergoddess, have you seen them all? The poet may be put in mind of rivers back home, but the Dordogne and the Garonne are the rivers of his *Andenken*, his

thinking-back. Together, wide as the sea, they flow out into memory. Even if one traces them back to their sources, as Heidegger wishes, those sources will remain foreign, the Dordogne cascading from the Auvergne, the Garonne from the Pyrenees. In *Andenken* Hölderlin is not in Donaueschingen. Why not? Is he bound for Bordeaux, “the water’s edge,” merely because he needs to appropriate the foreign in order to master his native gift?

The poet felt compelled to leave familiar towns—Nürtingen, Stuttgart, Homburg vor der Höhe, Frankfurt am Main—because of his friends’ refusal to support his journal project and because of the catastrophe in his relationship with Susette Gontard. These were experiences that he lived through, albeit only barely. Are we allowed to remember them? Are we required to obliterate them? The question for thinking is not “Who serves on the Board of Censors?” but “How do censorship, repression, and all polemic bear upon poetizing thinking?” Hölderlin had to leave these familiar places, and so in December and January of 1801-1802 he walked from Nürtingen to Bordeaux. He walked to work, as it were. An everyday *Erlebnis*, although a difficult commute. The atlas tells us that it is 1,198 kilometers. After six months of tutoring in the household of the Hansa consul Meyer, and after refining his translations of *Oedipus the Tyrant* and *Antigone* by seeking a more lively, more foreign, more “Oriental” vocabulary for them, Hölderlin walks home, this time via Paris. He visits the Louvre, although we do not know what he sees there. He continues on to Strasbourg, and finally Stuttgart. The homecoming is not nostalgic. His friend Landauer does not recognize him. Hölderlin has to say his own name. “Hölderlin,” he says, almost in parataxis. Landauer then hands him a letter that Sinclair had sent for addressing. Here are some extracts from the letter:

Homburg vor der Höhe / June 30, 1802

Dear Hölderlin!

As terrible as the news is that I have to communicate to you, I cannot leave it to chance to inform you of something for which even the aid of friendship is too meager. . . . The noble object of your love is no more. . . . I don’t know how to console you, except to state the consolation that is already yours. You believed in immortality while she was alive; surely you will believe in it now more than before—now that the life of your love has departed from this transient world. . . .

On the 22nd of this month, G. died of the measles, after ten days of illness. She had her children with her; happily, they survived her. During the past winter she suffered from a severe cough that weakened her lungs. She remained equal to herself up to the very end. Her death was like her life.

It has moved me deeply, and I weep as I write this. . . .

It could be that you will find down there the peace you need. Let me know your decision. I'll also travel down to Bordeaux, if you like, in order to bring you back. ...

Yours,
Sinclair

Would not one prefer to have a mission rather than to receive this sort of news, a mission that would outlast and outweigh the mortality of others and oneself, a mission that would obliterate with thoughts of destiny a bereavement that is well-nigh beyond speech? In his second letter to Böhlendorff, Hölderlin writes these words: "I have seen the sad and lonely Earth, . . . and, as one says of heroes, I believe I may well say that Apollo has struck me" (CHV 2:920-21). Hölderlin identifies himself here with Patroklos, struck in the back by Apollo where Achilles' armor is fastened; the armor falls and a dozen Trojan spears do their work. The god Apollo is not celebrated here as Germany's rescue; this is Apollo the Rat, who not only cures but also carries the plague. His practice is what Hölderlin calls "divine betrayal." About such betrayal, I believe, Heidegger remains silent, even in his most radical confrontation with Hölderlin, which is also one of his first, namely, in the final pages of the *Beiträge* typescript. For the poet of *Andenken*, however, divine betrayal is one of those "mortal thoughts" that cannot be either silenced or discussed "soullessly."

What would the junction of the Dordogne and Garonne have looked like to someone—whether poet or thinker—who had crossed the Auvergne on foot, barely escaping the bandits who infested the mountains, traversing the final pass through the vineyards, with Bordeaux spread out below and in the distance the Atlantic? It would have been at the end of January. With winds out of the northeast, Hölderlin would have had the chill on his back but a clear vision before him, a vision of the sea that takes and gives memory and of the two rivergoddesses that feed the ocean.

At some point in March of 1802—perhaps it was Eastertide?—he watched the women, those brown women, processing across "satiny soil." Where were they going? What did they intend? Were they all gussied up? That would be a translation of Heidegger's postulation that the women were *geschmückt*, although he does not mean by that what Baudelaire meant by *parure*. Even without tanning lotion, these women are brown. It's the sun. Heidegger warns the women not to stay out there too long: the sun threatens to cook them. Heidegger knows that we are in the south; he sees the fig tree, although he is careful not to comment on it. The women walk along lonely paths—whither or why the poet does not tell us, perhaps because he doesn't know. He says that "they," either the women or the paths, are "heavy with golden dreams." Heidegger speculates on the meaning of this "gold," but there is an obvious reference that he

misses. Hölderlin had just translated in Bordeaux those enigmatic lines in Sophocles' *Antigone* about the golden shower that Zeus visited upon the imprisoned Danaë, enigmatic lines partly because of Hölderlin's self-confessed, deliberate mistranslation. Instead of Danaë merely passively receiving the golden rain of Zeus, Hölderlin has this:

Sie zählte dem Vater der Zeit
Die Stundenschläge, die goldenen. (CHV 2:353)

She counted off for the father of time
The strokes of the hours, the golden.

She teaches time to the father of time. Who to this day has understood those Sophoclean lines as Hölderlin translates them? What *is* the poet's mission?

In the vineyarded hills where the paths mount, the brown women are in procession, who knows why? Are they reminiscent of a French Huguenot woman back in Frankfurt, a much paler woman, to be sure? There is a breeze where the brown women walk, unless it is the women themselves who cause a stir. *Einwiegende Lüfte ziehen*, sings Hölderlin. "Swaying breezes blow." It may seem perverse to say so, but these cradling, swaying winds suggest, at least to my ear, swaying hips: *einwiegende Lüfte* rhymes with *wiegende Hüfte*. *Sich in den Hüften wiegen*: think of that line of women who dance across the screen at the very end of Almodóvar's *Habla con Ella*, "Talk to Her." True, thoughts of the cradle occur to Heidegger: how else can rivergods and poets be engendered? Yet whether a thinker can see the hips is a difficult question—Heidegger would call it "the most difficult problem." However, there is yet another *wiegen*, another rocking or cradling, which Heidegger comes close to citing, inasmuch as he cites the two lines prior to it, although he then stops. Yet the following lines from *Mnemosyne* are all about the sea, and memory, and mission—the destinal sending of the poet. What are poets for in destitute times? Hölderlin sings his reply:

. . . Und immer
Ins Ungebundene gehet eine Sehnsucht. Vieles aber ist
Zu behalten. Und Noth die Treue.
Vorwärts aber und rückwärts wollen wir
Nicht sehen. Uns wiegen lassen, wie
Auf schwankem Kahne der See. (CHV 1:437)

. . . And always
Into the unbounded a languor goes. Yet much is
To be kept. We need fidelity.
But forwards and backwards we will not want

To look. Let ourselves be cradled, as
On the swaying skiff of sea.

What does it mean to be a German poet? Heidegger is right to think that a German poet has to make it through the night. The poet can survive the night only by remembering the foreign, a place close to the sea, a place perhaps where he was cradled *in* the sea. And those brown women? He can see them. “And love too busily fixes our eyes.” And if “fixed eyes” are closed, he can dream, can’t he? Near the end of the Homburger Folioheft, which ends with *Mnemosyne*, Hölderlin sings:

Nicht will wohllauten
Der deutsche Mund
aber lieblich
Am stechenden Bart rauschen
Die Küsse. (CHV 1:434)

It just won’t sound sweet
The German mouth
but how lovely when
A prickly beard is smothered
With kisses.

Natorp and Heidegger: From Reconstruction to Destruction.

Sophie-Jan Arrien

Université Laval

It is well established nowadays that far from being of secondary importance, Heidegger's first classes in Freiburg (1919-1923) led to essential insights, namely within the scope of his so-called "hermeneutics of facticity". But what is at stake in this "hermeneutics"? To put it briefly, I would argue that it is the possibility (and the elaboration) of a rigorous foundation of theoretical thought in the more primordial sphere of the prethoretical meaning, that is to say in the sphere of the lived experience (*Erlebnis*). And "destruction" is a key word to this undertaking. There is no "hermeneutics of facticity" without a gesture of destruction. Destruction is to young Heidegger's hermeneutics of life what reduction is to Husserl's phenomenology. Concepts *and* lived experience have to be "destroyed" in order to access the originary mobility of factual life. In this paper, I'd like to uncover what I consider to be the most probable genesis of the terminological use of "destruction" in Heidegger's thought. To that aim, I will go back to the rarely discussed lectures of Heidegger on the Neokantian Paul Natorp (WS1919-1920: *Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie-GA58*)¹.

This interest of Heidegger for Natorp first emerged within the sphere of problems associated with the idea of philosophy as an "originary science", wherein Natorp notably criticized Husserl's notion of givenness. In fact, Natorp's criticism of Husserl also called into question Heidegger's own "thought of the origin". So by confronting his own views with those of Natorp, while simultaneously taking up Natorp's objections against Husserl, Heidegger could engage in a three-way dialogue, which opened the way to the more specific theme of phenomenological destruction. This dialogue, in which fundamental themes of his philosophy

¹ On Heidegger-Natorp debate: C. von Wolzogen, « "Es gibt". Heidegger und Natorps "Praktische Philosophie" », in *Heidegger und die praktische Philosophie*, A. Gethmann-Siebert, O. Pöggeler (eds), Suhrkamp, 1988, pp. 313-337; C. von Wolzogen: "Den Gegner stark machen – Heidegger und Natorp", in *Neukantianismus, Perspektiven und Probleme*, E. W. Orth et H. Holzhey (eds.), Würzburg, Königshausen & Neumann, 1994, pp. 397-417; J. Stolzenberg, «Ursprung und System. Probleme der Begründung der Philosophie im Werk Hermann Cohens und Paul Natorps beim frühen Heidegger », in *Neue Studien zur Philosophie*, R. Bubner, K. Cramer, R. Wiehl (eds), vol. IX, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1995, pp. 207 sq.; D. ZAHAVI: "How to investigate subjectivity: Natorp and Heidegger on Reflection". *Continental Philosophy Review*, vol 36: 155–176, 2003 ; J.-L. Marion, « Remarques sur les origines de la *Gegebenheit* dans la pensée de Heidegger », in *Heidegger Studies*, vol. 24, 2008, pp. 167-179.

were fruitfully discussed (eg. the limits of the theoretical regard and the problem of givenness), will be the starting point of this paper.

By, first, recalling Natorp's criticism of Husserl, and by, then, presenting Natorp's theory of reconstruction and Heidegger's subsequent criticism, I aim to show that Natorp provided Heidegger with the means to distance himself from Husserl, while simultaneously helping him define his own "destructiv" method of access to the originary meaning of factual life.

Natorp's criticism of Husserl²

For Husserl as well as Natorp, the givenness of lived experience is the primary philosophical question. Under which mode is this pre-theoretical experience given? And firstly, what does "given" itself mean? In Heidegger's own words:

"Is [lived experience] simply lying there[...]? Is it simply given or pre-given? What does "given", "givenness" mean — this magic word of phenomenology and the "stumbling block" for all others?"³

This ironic terming of givenness as the "magic word" of phenomenology might very well have been Natorp's, since he considered, contrary to Husserl on that issue, that nothing is *immediately* given to consciousness. For Natorp, we are always only conscious of objects, and therefore conscious of something mediated or constructed.

Let's not be mistaken here: in a way, Natorp feels close to Husserl⁴. They are both trying to understand consciousness as the constitutive domain of all *Erlebnisse*. And whereas Husserl defines consciousness as the "infinite field of absolute lived experiences", Natorp speaks of the "ultimate and concrete unity" which leads to "all we can be conscious of, the fullness and immediacy of lived experience"⁵. These two definitions aren't exclusive, and might indeed very well be linked — for the great divergence between these two philosophers concerns less the *originary field* of investigation than of the *way of access* to such a field.

² GA 56/57 [KNS 1919], 101: "To this day, [Natorp] is the only one to have upheld any worthwhile scientific objections to phenomenology."

³ GA 58 [WS 1919/20], 5.

⁴ Natorp readily admits to some convergences between his own project of a "reconstructive psychology" and husserlian phenomenology. As early as 1901, he wrote a review of the first tome of the *Logical Investigations* and recognized a kinship between the aims of phenomenology and Marburg's Neo-Kantianism. (Cf. P. Natorp : "Zur Frage der logischen Methode. Mit Beziehung auf Edmund Husserl 'Prolegomena zur reinen Logik", *Kant-Studien*, vol 6, 1901, pp. 270-283).

⁵ Cf. Husserl, E. : *Ideen...*[1913], *Op. Cit.*, p. 95 as well as Natorp, P. : "Philosophie und Psychologie", *Logos*, vol. 4, 1913, pp. 176-202, p. 183. Cf. also Heidegger's developments on the subject, GA 58 [WS 1919/20], 132 sq.

Like Husserl, Natorp tries to define the subjective sphere of consciousness "absolutely", but he doesn't agree that this "absolute" should become an equivalent of immediacy, and even less of "evident and absolute givenness". Contrary to Husserl, Natorp refuses to grant any founding legitimacy to a "giving intuition" or to "phenomenological evidence". For Natorp, no lived experience even "reduced", can ever be "simply" given in the immediacy of evidence, but only through a specific methodical work which he calls *reconstruction*.

In other words, while Husserl recognizes an evidently given, reflexive lived experience, Natorp denies the possibility for consciousness to possess such an "immediate and absolute" access to itself. Indeed, how can one grasp such a lived experience without pulling it out of the stream of life, without "immobilizing [its] flow"⁶? How can one speak of *one* lived experience if not by opposing/comparing it to *another* lived experience, and thus by already having objectivated both of these lived experience? Can lived experiences ever be apprehended as immediate and evident, or only *mediated* by a determinative and thus objectivating process? For Natorp, one can't do without this objectivating process of thought: it is "itself the 'giving' element for the 'principles' [...]; only in this way does 'it give' (*gibt es*) something"⁷.

Thus, contrary to Husserl who describes consciousness through evidently given "reflexive acts", Natorp starts from the fact that reflexion is always an analytical and objectivating process, a distortion of the lived experience as it originally appeared within consciousness. From this point forward, natorpian reconstruction's challenge is to follow backwards objectivation's path in order to reconstitute the concrete life of consciousness "as it was given *before analysis*"⁸.

This reconstruction takes place within a domain whose limits are represented on the one hand by consciousness (or the subjective) as that which determines and on the other hand, by objectivation as the "result", as that which is determined. As such, only the determinations of the pre-thereotical lived experience are given and accessible⁹.

Thus for Natorp, everything takes places in between the subjective pole of consciousness (characterized by the continuous becoming of thought) and the objective pole of the given which refers to discrete and singular positions of thought. The pre-thereotical level is never given as such; it always comes under the legislative activity of thought and can't be considered

⁶ Cf. Natorp, P. : *Allgemeine Psychologie*, *Op. Cit.* p.190. Cité par Heidegger, GA 56/57 [KNS 1919], 101.

⁷ Natorp, P. : "Husserls 'Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie'" [1917/1918], *Op. Cit.*, p. 230.

⁸ Natorp, P. : *Allgemeine Psychologie nach kritischer Methode* [1912], *Op. Cit.*, 192.

⁹ Natorp, P. : "Husserls 'Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie'" [1917/1918], *Op. Cit.*, p. 229-230.

in itself but only from the standpoint of an active giving. Therefore, the reconstructive method consists in "following back" the objective and discrete construction of lived experience, i.e. to follow in reverse objectivation's process up to its subjective origin: the determinative consciousness.

This procedure of *reconstructing* the subjective moment and the originary acts of consciousness is the process of *subjectivation* which, as we just saw, necessarily implies the moment of objectivation as its starting point. Through it all, Natorp never denies —on the contrary, it is precisely what he is striving for — the access to an originary pre-objective (*Vorgegenständlich*) and pre-theoretical domain, prior to any division between consciousness and world, but he refuses the possibility of a "jump", to use Heidegger's term¹⁰, into this originary domain. And the refusal of this jump is not a simple metaphor, but a precise epistemological orientation.

Natorp's Reconstruction as Access to the Origin

Reconstruction indeed aims to solve the problem faced by every theory of knowledge at the turn of the 20th century: to bridge the gap between ontic and categorial, irrational and *a priori*, empirical and theoretical. Natorp's solution consisted in following through the apriorical model per excellence: pure mathematics. More precisely, Natorp based his reconstructive psychology on the mathematical model of integrals found in calculus¹¹. Very schematically, he sees the integration of discrete moments (concrete lived experiences) inside a function explaining their possible continuity (consciousness). In this model of integral resolution, objectivation and subjectivation represent two directions towards the infinite of a same function. By aiming "at the limit" the consciousness, one can then "integrate" the series of discrete lived experience; in return, one can conceive and explain this series of discrete lived experience on the basis of the "continuous function" embodied by consciousness¹².

¹⁰ Cf. GA 56/57 [KNS 1919], 63 : With the question of givenness, writes Heidegger, "we are at the crossroads which decides the life or death of philosophy as such, facing an abyss: either we sink into oblivion, i.e. the absolute reign of thinghood, or we 'jump' into another world, or more precisely: within the world itself for the first time."

¹¹ "Truth be told, in this way the ultimately individual remains indeterminate, if by 'determined' one means a thorough determination, an *integral* calculation; [it] remains unknown, if by 'knowing' one means an *exhaustive* knowledge. But it is all the more determined and known that the function *isn't* considered, the way and progression never curbed as an absolute goal to attain". Natorp, P. : "Bruno Bauch's 'Immanuel Kant' und die Fortbildung des Systems des Kritischen Idealismus", *Kant-studien*, vol. 22, 1917, pp. 426-459, p. 454 (cited by Heidegger, GA 59 [SS 1920], 114). Cf. also the presentation of Natorp's position by Heidegger in GA 59 [SS 1920], 120 sq.

¹² "By reconducting the finite towards the infinite, the discrete towards the continuous from which it was taken, the lived experience's concrete cohesion can be reproduced up to a certain degree." Natorp, P.: *Allgemeine Psychologie nach kritischer Methode* [1912], *Op. Cit.*, 192.

On this basis, Natorp doesn't expect to list every possible determination of consciousness. He doesn't pretend to exhaust either the initially constructed objective sphere or the reconstructed subjective sphere since the process is infinite in both directions. Subjectivation refers to the moment that carries us from the discrete moments to the continuous function while objectivation refers to the inverse process of originary "construction" of experience as we apprehend it *de facto*. Strictly speaking, objectivation and subjectivation are not independent or even distinct moments. Their opposition is relative, in the sense that they are following the same movement of thought in one way or the other¹³.

According to Natorp, within this space of (re)construction is thus uncovered the very movement of thought. The continuous and dynamic correlation of objectivation and subjectivation within every lived experience constitutes the principle of givenness: "the alleged *fixed points* of thought must be resolved, dissolved within the continuity of thought's process. Therefore, nothing is 'given', but something *becomes* 'given'."¹⁴ In this way does Natorp strive towards his goal of grasping the "active giving" correlative to any givenness, which *represents* thought's own movement, the life of consciousness.

The uncovering of the dialectic of objectivation and subjectivation constitutes more precisely the logic and the ultimate "legislation"¹⁵ of consciousness, but also of any possible object¹⁶. Reconstruction thus elevates itself beyond the *factum* of consciousness in order to reveal its "production" or becoming as such. It explains that "there is" (*es gibt*) something in general, and makes conceivable the *factum* from which we started¹⁷. In this way, the work of reconstruction "lets something of the originary life of consciousness, then always something more, be theoretically reconquered"¹⁸.

Therefore, Natorp accounts for the manifestation of lived experience by virtue of a radical logification of experience representing the originary process of thought. But does this

¹³ Cf. P. Natorp : *Allgemeine Psychologie nach kritischer Methode* [1912], *Op. Cit.*, p. 71. GA 59 [SS 1920], 100. Cf. aussi GA 59 [SS 1920], 103 *sq.* See also P. Natorp : *Allgemeine Psychologie nach kritischer Methode* [1912], *Op. Cit.*, p. 134, 192, 195 *sq.* as well as "Bruno Bauchs 'Immanuel Kant' und die Fortbildung des Systems des Kritischen Idealismus", *Op. Cit.*, pp. 432-433.

¹⁴ Natorp, P. : "Husserls 'Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie'", [1917/1918], *Op. Cit.*, p. 230.

¹⁵ (*Gesetzlichkeit*) Cf. Natorp, P. : "Bruno Bauchs 'Immanuel Kant' und die Fortbildung des Systems des Kritischen Idealismus", *Op. Cit.*, p. 434.

¹⁶ P. Natorp : *Allgemeine Psychologie nach kritischer Methode* [1912], *Op. Cit.*, p. 95.

¹⁷ Natorp, P. : "Husserls 'Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie'", [1917/1918], *Op. Cit.*, p. 230. (Cf. Heidegger's criticism of Natorp's *fieri*, GA 59 [SS 1920], 152.)

¹⁸ P. Natorp : *Allgemeine Psychologie nach kritischer Methode* [1912], *Op. Cit.*, p. 192.

mediation of the origin, which Natorp opposes to Husserl's absolute immediacy of a giving intuition, offer a more forceful and economical solution? Heidegger: "We ask: does the method of reconstruction achieve what it had set out to accomplish? *No*.¹⁹"

Heidegger's Criticism of Reconstruction

For the young Heidegger, the stake of an "originary science" is the possibility of not reducing lived experience of our surrounding world to thinghood. When he speaks of lived experience, it primarily refers to our day-to-day experience of the world. It is the lived experience of our surrounding world (*Umwelt*), the meaningful yet non-theoretical experience of things. Every lived experience, no matter how trivial, initially refers to a situated understanding, a pre-theoretical context of open meaningfulness. The lived experience is an "enworlding" event of meaning by which "I" appropriate myself²⁰. Now, how will we methodically access this sphere of pre-theoretical meaning without removing what constitutes precisely its originaryity, i.e. its historical, factual and "evential" character? In order for its "rhythm" to appear, a lived experience must escape reification²¹. But is it really possible to respect this "rhythm of lived experience"? This is precisely the horizon of objections Natorp had the merit of raising against husserlian phenomenology.

Heidegger is fully aware of the problem: "I have no choice but to isolate any lived experience I wish to observe; I must bring it to the fore, dissect its cohesion, break it so that I find myself, however much I loathe it, with a heap of *things*²²". Whichever science of lived experience is initially considered, it seems it "must reify and objectify [lived experiences], which would precisely evacuate their non objectifiable character of appropriating event²³". Then, how can an originary access to the lived experience be secured? Doesn't the simple description, or even the simple consideration of a specific *Erlebnis*, inevitably destroy its character of "appropriating event", which Heidegger upholds to be its true meaning?

If Heidegger recognizes that Natorp clearly laid down the problem, he refuses Natorp's proposal of a theoretical mediation as a solution to this problem. In his mind, Natorp only pushed back one step the problem of an originary givenness without solving it, since nothing

¹⁹ GA 56/57 [KNS 1919], 107.

²⁰ (*Ereignis*) Cf. GA 56/57 [KNS 1919], §§ 14-15.

²¹ Cf. GA 56/57 [KNS 1919], 98.

²² GA 56/57 [KNS 1919], 76.

²³ GA 56/57 [KNS 1919], 76.

proves this theoretical mediation truly reaches the immediate, nor why it should be the case. Strictly speaking, no one can say where reconstruction finds the criterion of originarity that it uses. No proof is provided that the "reconstructed consciousness" corresponds to the lived experience prior to analysis, since it's assumed we know nothing of lived experiences *prior* to analysis²⁴. Reconstruction's problem thus lies in its dependence, right from the start, upon objectivation. It *structurally excludes* the possibility of reaching anything but the objective and the theoretical. In a word, Natorp's system *leaves no place* for the non-theoretical and the non-logified to be accounted for²⁵.

Natorp can indefinitely follow "upstream" the lived experiences, but reconstruction only leads to a logical and objectivating sphere. In such a context, where every lived experience is handled by an objectivation process, no principal differentiation is possible within factual experience. Furthermore, should this process aim for the originary life of consciousness, nothing could help us calculate the "angle of refraction" it necessarily generates. At the term of subjectivation's process the way unto the originary domain of consciousness is as closed as it was from the start.

In other words, under the pretext of assuming the necessarily mediated character of lived experiences, reconstruction *locks* itself inside an objectivated domain with no possible escape, on the outside of the sphere of lived experience and its givenness²⁶.

In Heidegger's mind, the reason for Natorp's necessary failure in theoretically grasping the "givenness" of pre-theoretical experience lies in the concept implicitly guiding his whole investigation: the idea of constitution²⁷. At first glance, Natorp neither presupposes any fixed "I"/subject, nor any existence, factuality or concrete determination befalling the subjective pole of reconstruction²⁸. But in presupposing "nothing", Natorp still presupposes one thing — which gives meaning to his whole problematic — namely the ideal of a constitution of objectivity within consciousness. While going further than anyone else in shaking the

²⁴ Cf. GA 56/57 [KNS 1919], 107.

²⁵ Cf. GA 59 [SS 1920], 105. Cf. also GA 56/57 [KNS 1919], 107.

²⁶ GA 56/57 [KNS 1919], 108.

²⁷ (*Vorbegriff*) Cf. GA 59 [SS 1920], § 15 where Heidegger analyses the resolutely theoretical orientation thrust upon the question of the subject by the idea of constitution.

²⁸ Cf. P. Natorp : *Psychologie : Einleitung in die Psychologie nach kritischer Methode*, Freiburg, 1888, p. 11. See also P. Natorp : *Allgemeine Psychologie nach kritischer Methode* [1912], *Op. Cit.*, chapter 2 ("Das Bewusstsein, die Bewusstheit und das Ich") to which Heidegger refers (Cf. GA 58 [WS 1919/20], 247).

foundations of the subject-object polarity with his essentially dynamic conception, Natorp's thinking still remains dependant upon this initial assumption which is the idea of constitution²⁹.

In other words, if the "I" doesn't appear within reconstructive method as an object to be questioned by consciousness, it's because the former is not merely one problem amongst many, but is rather *the* problem, *the* fundamental presupposition. But, as Heidegger reminds us, the "I" is a fundamental problem solely for a "problematic dominated by the idea of constitution"³⁰. The only reason why Natorp's theory needs a "subject", as formal as it remains, is to ground the possibility for every lived experience to be constituted as an object.

Problem: in this horizon of constitution the whole of our concrete living becomes undifferentiated in its *mode* of being(-there). The contents of consciousness, apprehended in their constituted-being, require no fundamental distinctions in terms of concrete lived experiences. Hearing a sound, seeing a color or smelling a perfume, loving or hating, knowing something or admiring a work of art, the differences between these lived experiences have no incidence on their mode of apprehension within the unity of a consciousness³¹. Within the horizon of constitution, the most concrete lived experiences of meaning appear as simple figures referring to unified contents of consciousness. This is why Natorp doesn't see and can't see the vitality of consciousness in the grasping of lived experiences "in the flesh". For him, the movement of life in its purest form lies in the originary process of thought or logic, not in experience.³²

Thus for Heidegger, the reconstruction Natorp sets against phenomenological givenness fails in granting an access to the lived experience that preserves its factual and mobile character. Nothing in Natorp's position seems capable of preserving the lived experience of our surrounding world, with its meaningful, "evential" and pre-theoretical character, from a fatal analytical dismemberment — unless one were to suppose that the reconstruction of the subjective sphere was capable of (re)producing the very thing its presuppositions opposes, namely the unified grasp of pre-theoretical lived significances, prior to the subject-object distinction and understood as an appropriating event.

²⁹ Cf. GA 56/57 [KNS 1919], 63.

³⁰ GA 59 [SS 1920], 131.

³¹ Cf. GA 59 [SS 1920], 134.

³² And so "the system succeeds in resurrecting the dead, not for the living, but for the dead who dared to commit existence's suicide in exchange for the life of thought." GA 59 [SS 1920], 193. Cf. also GA 59 [SS 1920], 143.

From Reconstruction to Phenomenological Destruction

What path can we then concretely and methodically envisage in order to access the pre-theoretical sphere of lived experiences without betraying it? At this point, it is important to understand that Heidegger criticized Natorp to better heed certain lessons. Following Natorp, he believes the evident givenness of phenomena mustn't become an epistemological shortcut, but a methodological requirement: "The more evident the grasped phenomena, the harder it is to find the path leading to their viewing, to describe and to express it. The phenomenologically visible mustn't be reinterpreted as the phenomenologically *given*³³". On principles, Heidegger stands alongside Natorp. Givenness, "this magic word of phenomenology" must be considered anew because "the sphere of phenomenology's problems isn't immediately and simply given, it must be mediated³⁴". Heidegger writes still: "The region of the origin need not be given, it must first be conquered³⁵".

This conquest will be the task of philosophy as the "originary pre-theoretical science"³⁶, as young Heidegger describes it³⁷. But why resort to this notion of *pre-theoretical* science? Because Natorp's objection that any science of lived experience must always already be an objectivation of this lived experience is unanswerable as long as one remains inside the theoretical perspective. Hence the only way out of this impasse will be to "break the supremacy of the theoretical"³⁸, i.e. to access the pre-theoretical lived experience from a pre-theoretical horizon. And this is precisely what Heidegger will do:

There must be a pre-theoretical or supra-theoretical (Übertheoretische) science, in all cases a non-theoretical science, a true originary science from which the theoretical originates. This science of the origin must be apprehended in such a way that not only it won't need to make any presupposition, but won't even be able to do so since it won't be a theory.³⁹

Here, Heidegger considers nothing less than the possibility of deriving the *concept* itself from the pre-theoretical domain, mindful of the lived experience understood *as* pre-theoretical. The challenge is enormous: in which science can the "evential" character of lived experience,

³³ GA 58 [WS 1919/20], 218. Cf. also GA 58 [WS 1919/20], 26-27.

³⁴ GA 58 [WS 1919/20], 27.

³⁵ Cf. GA 58 [WS 1919/20], 29. Cf. also GA 58 [WS 1919/20], 203 : "the region of the origin is not given to us. [...] It is distant from us and we must methodically bring it close to us".

³⁶ Cf. GA 57-57, KNS 1919, p. 95 sq.

³⁷ as early as the fall of 1919.

³⁸ Cf. GA 56/57 [KNS 1919], 59 : "*Diese Vorherrschaft des Theoretischen muss gebrochen werden.*"

³⁹ GA 56/57 [KNS 1919], 96.

alien to any objectivation, be safeguarded? Isn't a pre-theoretical science a contradiction in terms? Doesn't disqualifying the theoretical presuppositions of objective knowledge necessarily mean the disqualification of all possible knowledge? As we already know, the demonstration of the possibility of such an "originary pre-theoretical science" boils down to the hermeneutics of factual life, which embodies the answer to Heidegger's watchword of a necessary conquest of the origin.

Without going into details, let us recall the unfolding of young Heidegger's hermeneutical phenomenology of life, which refers mainly to life's concrete possibility of grasping itself through a pre-theoretical and self-interpretative understanding. This possibility corresponds to life's self-sufficiency (*Selbstgenügsamkeit*), i.e. its capacity to possess itself⁴⁰, to relate to and explain itself without ever leaving itself. Since every individual life always expresses and signifies itself in the world and as a world, it is always open in way or another to itself. It can assign its own tasks, follow its own motivations and accomplish its own tendencies, *from* and *to* itself. Everyone is capable of leading his or her own life because it is neither alien nor completely opaque to oneself: "every human being holds in himself a core of immediate comprehensibilities and immediate possibilities of access"⁴¹. Because it progresses within, and always relates to, a sphere of meaningfulness it discovers within itself, life *structurally* "doesn't need to come out of itself (to 'unscrew' itself) to unfold its own tendencies. It only ever hails itself in its own 'tongue'⁴²".

With this notion of life's self-sufficiency, which refers to a non-theoretical dimension of factual life, we possess a crucial element of Heidegger's hermeneutics, with the help of which he will pit himself against Natorp's ultra-theoretical perspective. Life's self-sufficiency manifests itself in each and every lived experience, thereby understanding itself (from and for itself) without any recourse to the theoretical sphere of meaning.

Nevertheless, this doesn't mean a return to Husserl's reflexive evidence of a giving intuition: for Heidegger, the givenness of the lived meaning doesn't manifests itself inside the ideal horizon of an adequate originary intuition, but rather in the constant unfolding of an interpretative understanding⁴³ which accedes to its own meaning through an effort of

⁴⁰ to "have" itself

⁴¹ GA 58 [WS 1919/20], 34.

⁴² GA 58 [WS 1919/20], 31. Cf. also GA 58 [WS 1919/20], 34, 42, 231.

⁴³ Without such a "comprehensive-interpretative turn", Heidegger insists, the "problem of phenomenological description is absolutely not laid down". (Cf. GA 58 [WS 1919/20], 146) Cf. also GA 58 [WS 1919/20], 240: "Description must always be guided by comprehension's aim".

destruction (rather than reconstruction)⁴⁴. There is need of a "critical destruction", as Heidegger puts it (paradoxically echoing Natorp), because "factual life is given through a determined deformation. This shaping in object-figures must be undone"⁴⁵.

Against the reconstruction of the life of consciousness, underlain by the idea of constitution, Heidegger will put forward a destruction of life's self-interpretative tendencies, capable of freeing its originary effectuations of meaning. This destruction represents an attempt to free the constitutive mobility of factual experience through an interpretative understanding, without determining it with objectivating concepts. In this way, Heidegger will assert his idea of philosophy as an "originary pre-theoretical science" against reconstruction's hyper-logification. And rather than be overseen by traditional concepts destruction will be guided by "formal indications" whose characteristic is to preserve the meaning of lived significations as pre-theoretical and historical effectuations⁴⁶.

But does this mean that the originary sphere of lived experience so uncovered is completely transparent? Surely not, since one of factual life's features (as well as Dasein's, later on) is to constantly lose sight of its own accomplishment. Spontaneously, factual life evolves under the guise of "ruination" (*Ruinanz*), which Heidegger defines more precisely as "the movement of factual life which factual life 'effectuates', i.e. 'is', in itself, as itself, from itself and, through it all, *against* itself"⁴⁷. Far from being evidently given, life always progresses through a certain "fogginess" (*Diesigkeit*) in regards to itself. The aim of phenomenological destruction is precisely to uncover indications which will allow us to clarify the mobility of life, without ignoring this foggyiness. While expressly taking place within life's mobility itself, philosophy must travel against its current. Therefore, whereas Natorp's reconstruction aimed to follow the objective construction of lived experience back to its subjective principle, in Heidegger's

⁴⁴ The possible origins of the term of "destruction", characteristic of Heidegger's reflections during the winter of 1919-20 are varied (cf. GA 58 [WS 1919-20], 240, 248, 255, 257) Here, the aim is not to establish a direct filiation between reconstruction and destruction but to notice, beyond the literary reference which unites them, the fact that destruction is diametrically opposed, in its very unfolding, to Natorp's reconstruction. And this seems particularly significant to us, even though destruction can simultaneously be considered as an overtaking of the reduction and the husserlian *Abbau* or refer to the "destruction" of Aristotle by Luther.

⁴⁵ GA 58 [WS 1919/20], 240.

⁴⁶ To lay down a formal indication is to lay down a "concept" which names a phenomenon without defining it, marking an horizon of meaning towards which we must advance, and which must be *accomplished* rather than fulfilled in the husserlian sense. Neither a position nor an intrusion into a reified domain, the formal indication is on the contrary: "a defense, a preliminary *precaution* to safeguard the accomplishment character [of phenomenon]" (GA 60 [WS 1920/21], 64). Through this accomplishment which hermeneutical phenomenology must specify, the factual dimension of phenomenon is stamped upon the meaning of the concept, endowing it with the indefinitely renewable character of life itself.

⁴⁷ GA 61 [WS 1921/22], 131.

hermeneutical phenomenology we find a destruction of lived experience which takes the form of a *counter-movement* to life's "downfall" (*Sturz*)⁴⁸. In this ascension of the lived experience towards the originary and always open meaning of its appropriation, there is neither constitutive aiming nor theoretical predetermination, but only the possibility of acceding to a pre-theoretical event of meaning from whose appropriation I "receive" myself.

Against the theoretical reconstruction of lived experience, Heidegger will set a destructive gesture capable of bringing out the primacy of the pre-theoretical, and to Natorp's formal categories he will substitute formal indications capable of guiding the situated understanding towards the originary mobility of life. Thus the parallel we are trying to bring out between Heidegger and Natorp becomes clear. And not only negatively, through the word for word opposition of reconstruction and destruction, but also in their common goal to reach the pre-theoretical origin of lived meaning without any recourse to a giving intuition, and lastly in the fact that destruction, as reconstruction, initiates an ascending movement towards the origin against constructions of meaning. Heidegger certainly contradicts the viability of Natorp's attempt, but this confrontation precisely reveals the echoes of Natorp's reconstruction within phenomenological destruction.

Therefore, in spite the general aspect of these reminders, we are capable of understanding why young Heidegger, who wished to account for the lived experience through an "originary pre-theoretical science", took the time to discuss Natorp's epistemological reasoning. By doing so, Heidegger reaped a double benefit. Firstly, he could take up Natorp's objections against Husserl and distinguish his own views on problematical notions such as lived experience, givenness or the objectivity-subjectivity coupling. But secondly, it appears that Natorp's position acted as a decisive foil to the elaboration of an originary pre-theoretical science. Through the radicality of its theses, reconstructive philosophy deploys in the utmost consequent manner the gist of theoretical possibilities ensuing from an *a priori* explanation of the pre-theoretical. By attacking Natorp, Heidegger wishes to present in the clearest possible manner the failure of any derivation, however rigorous it may be, of the pre-theoretical from the theoretical. Thus does he demonstrate *via negationis* the necessity of attempting the opposite with equal radicality and rigorousness — what phenomenological destruction, counter to theoretical reconstruction, aims to accomplish.

⁴⁸ Cf. GA 61 [WS 1921/22], 131-132, 145, 147 sq, 160.

Commentary on Sophie-Jan Arrien's
 "Natorp and Heidegger: From Reconstruction to Deconstruction"

Wayne Froman
 George Mason University

It seems fitting that as we come near the close of our conference we turn our attention, with Sophie-Jan Arrien's help, to the topic of origin, both in the sense of how Heidegger's thought got started, so to speak, as well as in the sense of Heidegger's abiding interest in the question pertaining to origin. My commentary is going to take the form of three questions and I will definitely be brief so as to allow the remaining time people have to be devoted to discussion of Sophie-Jan Arrien's stimulating and to my mind insightful reading of Heidegger's complex gesture in response to Paul Natorp's disagreement with Edmund Husserl.

Heidegger sided with Natorp in regard to the initial claim that Husserl's understanding of "givenness" must be radicalized. This pertains specifically to Husserl's understanding of evidence, or more strongly, the self-evident, and correlatively to Husserl's understanding of intuition. However, while Natorp would proceed in the direction of theory and a "reconstructive" procedure, guided by the mathematical, Heidegger will proceed in the other direction by virtue of his assessment to the effect that such "reconstructive" procedure does not legitimate itself and is going to come up short, always. What is called for is a "destructive" approach that proceeds by way of the "formal indication," which marks neither a position nor a reified domain but to begin with remains closer to the "pre-theoretical" than any "reconstruction" ever gets. Because of the extremity of Natorp's proposal, Heidegger can find in Natorp's attempted radicalization of Husserl's sense of "givenness" an occasion to establish the superiority of the formal indicative hermeneutics that proceeds to the "pre-theoretical" by way of "destruction." What is ultimately at stake is nothing less than a decision between oblivion and the reign of thinghood, on the one hand, and a "jump" into another world, or more precisely, "a jump within the world for the first time." At stake, in other words, is the possibility of access to a "meaning giving event" that is more radical than transcendental *Sinngebung*, meaning-giving, as understood by Husserl, and ultimately, more radical than the dynamic of "constitution" that still governed Natorp's "reconstructive" procedure. In a word, philosophy is what is at stake.

What calls for the “destruction,” in effect, is that, in Heidegger’s words, “factual life is given through a determined deformation.” Heidegger continues: “[t]his shaping in object-figures must be undone.” Furthermore, “[s]pontaneously, factual life evolves under the guise of “ruination” (*Ruinanz*), which Heidegger defines more precisely as [in Heidegger’s words]

‘the movement of factual life which factual life “effectuates,” i.e. “is,” in itself as itself, from itself and, through it all *against* itself.’” Philosophy must proceed by way of a “counter-movement” to life’s “downfall” (*Sturz*), and this “counter-movement” is itself the “destructive” feature of hermeneutic phenomenology.

Sophie-Jan Arrien’s primary text is Heidegger’s early lectures on the work of the Neo-Kantian Paul Natrop, but clearly the topic is also what impetus and lasting insight may have been gleaned from those lectures. Consequently, some comparison with later work is in order. “Later” here must include *Being and Time*. But given the very early mention of the appropriative or propriative event that gets obscured or lost from sight by virtue of the assumption of a “process” leading to the acquisition of knowledge, an assumption characteristic of the Neo-Kantians in general, and Natrop, in particular, the reappearance of the special term *das Ereignis* after *Being and Time* is pertinent too. What I want to do all too briefly is to probe, with reference to a few points in later work, your understanding of the impetus and the lasting insight gleaned from the Natrop lectures.

My point of departure for doing so is your characterization of the “ruination” intrinsic to factual life in the following terms: “one of factual life’s features (as well as *Dasein*’s later on) is to constantly lose sight of its own accomplishment.” My question concerns the conjunction of “facticity” and “accomplishment.” Heidegger is cited as characterizing the horizon of meaning toward which we must advance as an “accomplishment.” He specifies what is meant by a “formal indication” as follows: “[t]o lay down a formal indication is to lay down a “concept” which names a phenomenon without defining it, marking an horizon of meaning towards which we must advance, and which must be *accomplished* rather than fulfilled in the Husserlian sense.” From this it would appear that it is by way of advancing “against the current” that the horizon of meaning is accomplished, and not that an “accomplishment” comes first.

Later, in *Being and Time*, the first “existential” studied in the *Dasein*-analysis, *Befindlichkeit*, disposition, discloses *Dasein* in terms of movement away and movement toward. Heidegger emphasizes here that movement away, which is forgetting, comes first. This is an indication that no initial “accomplishment” comes first where facticity is concerned.

Heidegger reiterates his enigmatic finding to the effect that forgetting comes first elsewhere in his writings. But staying with *Being and Time* for the moment, Heidegger makes explicit that *Verfallenheit*, fallenness, the successor to *Ruinanz*, is not to be understood as a matter of falling from a previous height. Fallenness, moreover, is a feature of *Dasein*'s existential structure. Authenticity does not mark an end to this, and moreover, authenticity is not an "ascendency" back to a previous height. Heidegger is also explicit in *Being and Time* with regard to how *Dasein* cannot grasp itself, so to speak, from the ground up. *Dasein* is pervaded, in fact, by a "nullity," and this "nullity" is not to be understood as it has traditionally, particularly in terms of dialectics, as a negative mediation between positive levels. Heidegger pointedly specifies that the tradition has simply not raised the question concerning the origin of the "nullity." This is all in *Being and Time*.

Later, at the point where *das Ereignis* reappears very prominently, Heidegger specifies in *Contributions to Philosophy: from das Ereignis* that *das Ereignis* "is" an *Enteignis* as well, and he adds here that a *Verweigerung*, a denial, is the "highest gift of Being," a point that can hearken back to the issue of "givenness" in the early lecture course. All I will add to this is that in his discussion of *aletheia*, in one of the texts devoted to Heracleitus, Heidegger makes explicit mention of how the "lethic" is prior, but does not pursue the point. My concern in all of this is simply that to understand philosophy's counter-movement within factual life as an "ascendency" back to an initial "accomplishment" could lend itself to a sense of "making present," and the very mention of an initial "accomplishment" may lend itself to the metaphysics of presence. In other words, it is, in fact, a question of the radicality of Heidegger's thought, and I think that Sophie-Jan Arrien is right that this was at stake already in the challenge to Natorp in regard to the disagreement with Husserl. My first question, then, asks whether understanding what is "pre-theoretical" in terms of an initial "accomplishment" is indispensable to what you are telling us, or might it be the case that the "pre-theoretical" has more the character of an initial distress, or perhaps, discord. Is that not consistent with the sense of factual life's movement against itself, provided one does not understand that as following upon the "itself"?

Consider for a moment the description of life's "self-sufficiency" provided in the paper. Life's "self-sufficiency" is "its capacity to possess (or to have) itself, to relate to and explain itself without ever leaving itself. Since every individual life always expresses and signifies itself in the world and as a world, it is always open in [one] way or another to itself. It can assign its own tasks, follow its own motivations and accomplish its own tendencies, *from* and

to itself. Everyone is capable of leading his or her own life because it is neither alien nor completely opaque to oneself: [in Heidegger's words] 'every human being holds in himself a core of immediate comprehensibilities and immediate possibilities of access.' ...life *structurally* [in Heidegger's words] 'doesn't need to come out of itself (to "unscrew" itself) to unfold its own tendencies. It only ever hails itself in its own 'tongue.'" In these words where so much is indeed latent, not least of all, the question concerning language, is it conceivable that life could "have" itself, or "hail" itself, or indeed be "open...to itself," if it were not first of all outside itself? Heidegger specifies in *Being and Time* that *Dasein* is outside. Is this not already indicative of factual life's movement against itself?

To my mind, an initial distress or an initial discord could be especially pertinent to a specific feature of facticity that is mentioned more than once in the paper but is not addressed as such and that is "historicality." Pertinently, when the needed "destruction" is announced in the Introduction to *Being and Time*, it is aimed, so to speak, at "the tradition." What we know from other texts, in particular the 1927 *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, about how that "destruction" might have proceeded in the second Part of *Being and Time*, is indicative of how this sense of "destruction" took a certain precedence for Heidegger. My second question, then, asks whether this may have been signaled in the challenge to Natorp by virtue of how Natorp's "reconstruction" is not only pertinent to a radicalization of the sense of "givenness" but is also associated with what could be characterized as Natorp's post-critical reading of Plato. The paper mentions a certain commonality between Natorp and Husserl and it strikes me that this may well involve the sense of "idealism" associated with Plato, in contrast to German Idealism, which brings with it the issue of mathematics as understood by each of the three. In this regard it may be worthy of mention that along with his support for Heidegger when Heidegger was under consideration for a professorship, Natorp served as mentor to Hans-Georg Gadamer as well. My question about the two senses of "destruction," one in opposition to factual life's movement against itself, and the other vis-à-vis the tradition, is prompted by the aim, specified at the opening of the paper, to shed light on the genesis of "destruction" in Heidegger's thinking.

My third and final question is perhaps more afield, although it is prompted by the paper and it bears in mind the previous questions about historicality and about an initial distress or discord as it pertains to the "pre-theoretical." Given the extreme divergence between a "reconstruction" aimed at a "hyper-theoretical" and a "destruction" aimed at a "pre-theoretical," is there a possibility that there is a commonality in the opposition that could tend

to take on a metaphysical character? This could actually be suggested by the terminology employed in the paper's opening characterization of Heidegger's aim as that of "grounding an originary science." Is it possible that Heidegger would end up wrestling with this issue directly when it came to the challenge of Nietzsche's "inverse platonism"? Could it be that this is where "destruction" gives way to a stepping back out of the ground of metaphysics, not toward a "pre-theoretical" as such, but at the same time toward the heart of factual life's movement against itself, or in a word, "the Open?"

I will end by thanking Sophie-Jan Arrien for prompting these questions, which is to say, thank you for your illuminating paper, to which I add thanks as well to Bob Crease and to Tim Hyde for their extensive work that went into the preparation of the occasion.

