

Heidegger's Birth

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We are born with the dead

T. S. Eliot

The intention of this paper is to address the question of inception, or beginning (*Anfang*). It will focus on the volume *Über den Anfang* (GA 70), which dates from 1941 and is a key moment in the configuration of texts that revolves around the *Beiträge zur Philosophie* (1936–38). The reason for this focus is not only because the conception of *Anfang* receives sustained attention in that text. It is also because it is in the course of its development there that the conception of *Anfang* becomes aporetic. Heidegger pushes upon and expands the concept to the point at which it is exposed to significant tension. This tension is not resolved, and the failure to do so has considerable significance. However, in the course of its exposition, altogether new possibilities of thinking are generated; it is with these new possibilities that we will be concerned here. They represent the fullest consequence of the direction in which the tensions surrounding the concept of *Anfang* tend. These tensions, as with so many of the tensions with which the thinking that belongs to this configuration of texts is concerned, largely recede from view in Heidegger's later work. It is because of this recession that the generative possibilities opened up in the tensions that surround the conception of *Anfang* may, and should, be addressed in a vocabulary somewhat foreign to Heidegger's own discourse. This vocabulary is that of birth, of natality and of the natal. It is in these terms that the possibilities that Heidegger finds lodged in the idea of incipience (*Anfängnis*) can

be articulated. To do so is to run against the grain of much received wisdom about Heidegger's thinking. In this respect, the opinion most often ventured is that Heidegger, having begun, very briefly in *Being and Time*, to address the question of birth, fails to properly engage the matter. It is said that, despite the thinking of historicity initiated there, and occasional reference in later writings, the question of the natal is not properly addressed in his work. Instead, we are told, it is Hannah Arendt who picks up this neglected thread, turning it into a cornerstone of her thinking. This paper seeks to show that this story is inaccurate: that the development of a conception of *Anfang* in the texts of the late 1930s can be seen to address in a decisive manner the question of what will be called "natality." It is not my intention here to cast doubt on the originality and importance of Arendt's thinking of natality, nor to control the impact of highly significant work that has been developed in its wake. The intention here is, much more simply, to use this vocabulary to help clarify a difficult text and a difficult concept. Nevertheless, if Heidegger's understanding of *Anfang* can be expressed, in part, as an address to the question of natality, then it seems to me possible that, in filling this apparent lacuna, his work in fact answers the implicit criticisms of Arendt and others; and that, in turn, by an intensification, it can be said to open those very criticisms to question.

We can begin by exploring the moment of *Sein und Zeit* in which the question of birth appears to emerge explicitly, and to which considerations of Heidegger's thought in relation to this question are most generally restricted.

I. DASEIN'S BEGINNING

There is, without doubt, a startling quality to the appearance of the figure of birth in §72 of *Sein und Zeit*. Encountering the figure for the first time, the sense is often of a sudden conceptual re-orientation, almost literally a change in direction. The sense of surprise remains intact despite the realization that this appearance has in fact been fully prepared by the thematic of *Geworfenheit*, the "thrownness" or sense of having-already-arrived which characterizes Dasein's self-experience

as “being-in-the-world.” And in the idea, too, of *Sorge*, of the care with which Dasein attends to that being-in-the-world, we might have caught a glimpse of its emergence: it is the absolute inaccessibility of the end that determines the disposition of Dasein toward his or her end; and in this very inaccessibility itself, a question might have been asked about the nature of that end, and about the possibility of its determination. The question might well have been posed, right there: Given this inaccessibility, why death? Why not birth? But it is only now that Heidegger appears to draw our attention to these questions, and begins to address them by means of a re-orienting that will come to seem, to many, inadequate. Heidegger approaches the question by reminding us that what has always been at stake in the inquiry is the “whole” of Dasein. The idea of wholeness has of course been infinitely problematized by what has come before: what is at stake can certainly no longer be a “whole” in the sense of the discrete entity of modern metaphysics. Rather, it is a question of a *Ganzsein*, a way of being a whole: not so much a “what” as a “how.” This whole, thus, can in no way be expressed by merely filling out or “completing the picture.” Instead, another re-formulation of Dasein will be required. Heidegger in fact now admits to the appearance of a “one-sidedness” and acknowledges that articulating a “whole” Dasein will involve an engagement with its “other end,” with birth, and thus with an entirely different kind of being-towards than that with which the book has so far seemed to concern itself. This re-orientation can be said to represent a multiplication and diffracting of the sense and direction of the “towards,” a diffraction that has the effect of engaging a sense of Dasein as “between”: the “whole” of Dasein, its *Ganzsein*, will be “stretching” between the twin limits that determine it, even as – and because – they remain indefinitely inaccessible. As so determined – held in thrall to what will have always eluded it – Dasein is, as Peg Birmingham says, “an endurance saturated with loss.”¹

That Heidegger is nonetheless uneasy with the possibility that this re-orientation towards a “between,” in so far as it is induced by the thought of the “other end” of Dasein, might be reduced to a simple matter of a necessary symmetry of ends may be gleaned from the strange

proliferation of inverted commas that invades the text of *Sein und Zeit* at this moment: “end,” “beginning,” “birth,” “one-sided,” “forward,” “behind,” “between” – all are subject to this strange and temporary suspension, only death (or “death”) seemingly able to evade its pull. When, indeed, Heidegger returns, albeit briefly, to the question of birth in the lecture course *Einleitung in die Philosophie* of 1928–29 (GA 27), it is precisely this idea of a simple symmetry that appears to give him most pause: “Necessarily we must approach birth in a return [*Rücklauf*], but that is not simply the inversion of being-toward-death. For this returning what is required is the development of a starting-position entirely different from that of any other traversal [*Grenzgang*] of *Da-sein*” (GA 27: 124–25).²

If this passage suggests, at the very least, an opening onto a future inquiry, it seems that such a possibility is not pursued in what follows. We are left, then, with an uncertainty, an appearance of indecision, from which we seem to be able only to turn back to *Sein und Zeit*. And indeed, although the final published chapters of that work address the question of history in a way that has been unlocked by this shift in orientation, these chapters can easily seem to be inhabited, as Derrida puts it, by a kind of *essoufflement*, a breathlessness, always to be again overwhelmed by the insistent appearance of the “futural.”⁵

So it is that despite this opening, the question of birth appears to have been left to lie fallow in Heidegger’s thinking. Indeed, it is the received wisdom that this abandoned promise is instead taken up by Hannah Arendt who, we are often told, reverses Heidegger’s preoccupation with “mortality” by insisting instead on the “natality” of the human, on the possibilities for an understanding of action and activity that can only be understood in relation to a natal impulse. It is not my intention, here, to revisit the territory of this “comparison.” Instead, I would like to consider whether Heidegger’s development of the sense of *Anfang* might not, after all, be said to address the question raised in §72 of *Sein und Zeit*, or at the very least attenuate and thereby intensify that question.

In order to approach the question in this way, then, we can begin by addressing the sense of Dasein as a “between” that emerges first in these pages of *Sein und Zeit* and is taken up in the apparently wholly different context of the *Beiträge zur Philosophie*. If we can think a correlation in these terms, it will then be possible to address the sense of a bifurcated “beginning” or inception in the latter text in a way that maps onto the diffracted sense of “end” that determines the “between” for the Dasein of the former. This is the intention of what follows.

II. THE TENSION OF THE BETWEEN

“Dasein,” writes Heidegger in the *Beiträge zur Philosophie*, “is the crisis between the first and the other inception” (GA 65: 295/233, tm).⁴ Immediately, in this “between,” the parallel with *Sein und Zeit* leaps out. What is being expressed here is a sense of Dasein as *caught* – as determined in, by and as a between-space, as a *crisis* of between-ness, in a way that resonates distinctly with §72 of *Sein und Zeit*. The sheer, constitutive inaccessibility of these twin inceptions, into the midst of which Dasein finds itself pitched, mirrors structurally the Dasein of *Sein und Zeit*, caught in the between-space of different and equally inaccessible ends. But the moment the parallel leaps out, it also instantly recedes. After all, Heidegger’s concerns appear to be entirely different here: *Anfang* (beginning, inception) is surely being thought here in some relation to an experience of the historical (however “history of being” is to be understood) and not in terms of an existential analytic, so the between of birth and death articulated in *Sein und Zeit* cannot possibly, it seems, occupy the same ground as that of the *Beiträge*. Furthermore, whatever “other inception” might mean, it seems more than anything to suggest some kind of “renewal,” and thus something far from the possibility of death that guides the Dasein of *Sein und Zeit*. If, then, these two ways of thinking Dasein as a “between” are to be brought together, it will be against the grain of the most evident interpretive axes. What we will do here is to describe the outlines and some of the ramifications of the model that appears to be most clearly operational in the *Beiträge*, before indicating the ways in which Heidegger’s own

explorations stretch beyond these limitations, albeit inconsistently. It is possible to discover the warrant for such a double interpretation in Heidegger's own comments regarding the *Beiträge*: the book is, he tells us, "the straightedge of a configuration" (GA 65: xvii/1), a straightedge that, according to a later text, is still "too didactic" (GA 71: 4/xxiv). The circumscription on the project that is implied here is mirrored in the opening of the text itself. Heidegger claims there that the "official title must by necessity now sound dull, ordinary and empty," seeming to suggest that a reading beyond the evident, apparent, "official" surface is not just warranted, but essential (GA 65: 3/5).

In order to describe this "official" surface, we can remind ourselves that the question of inception is presented in the *Beiträge* in terms of two "poles": a "first inception" (*erster Anfang*) and an "other inception" (*anderer Anfang*). It is certainly worth lingering, already, on the fact that inception is always thought as doubled, as always more than one. This will be of importance later. Nonetheless, leaving that observation in parentheses for now, at first glance it would seem that "first" and "other" are difficult to conceive except in terms of priority and dependence: the "other" is the "other" of the first, and so on. They are both distant and interconnected. In this distance and interconnection, and in the difference that these modalities express, we can say that a space is opened – the space of a "between." The text of the *Beiträge* will be preoccupied, greatly, with the "between"-space of these poles, with the transition (*Übergang*) or movement between them. But it is this "between" that also enables the emergence of a kind of linear narrative: a story of sorts, which can escape only with difficulty the structure of the historiographical from which Heidegger is at such pains to distance himself. Never coalescing explicitly, this linear narrative will be nonetheless always operative as a kind of spectral background organizing the work of a text which will play, insistently, within its shadow.

If one wanted to describe this narrative outline in its most obvious form, it could be reduced and described quite simply. The story would go like this: a chronologically identifiable *erster Anfang*, we are told, has given way, in exhaustion, to a period of transition (*Übergang*).

Operating within this transitional moment, given the exhaustion of the resources of the “first beginning,” our obligation is to await a “new beginning” (*anderer Anfang*), attending the “future ones” who will emerge to supply such a possibility. In the meantime – while we wait, as it were – we must occupy ourselves with “preparation” for this supposed re-invigoration. Expressed thus, this narrative is quite familiar, even banal. Or worse: it is a tale of decline and the possibility of renewal that is regrettably familiar in terms of the cultural milieu within which it was composed. Recent, well-known publications have made it distressingly clear that Heidegger remained, in some measure, attached to this narrative; that he was never able to relinquish it entirely; and that it is this that chains him to a dark political arena, despite possibilities in his own thinking that might have pulled him in another direction. What will concern us here, though, are certainly not the ramifications or the working-out of this narrative as such. Instead – beyond the historiographical, though still within its pull – what will engage our attention is the way in which the central terms of the narrative – “the first beginning,” “the other beginning,” “transition/crossing” – can be seen to exceed the orbit that the constraints of a chronology would impose on them.

III. INCEPTION AS MULTIPLICITY

As the *Beiträge* opens, Heidegger announces that what will be at stake is “an attempt at a thinking which would arise out of a more originary basic position” (GA 65: 3/5, em). He describes this thinking as “inceptual.” By this he means both a thinking “from the inception,” but also one that is “of” or “about” inception. But this second sense is not meant to imply simply a speculative reflection from the outside, but – as we shall see – a kind of thinking “from inside” or “within” inception. This is to be achieved by thinking through the sense of crossing or transition (*Übergang*) in which thinking finds itself pitched into a between: at once a “having-left-behind” of one inception and an “on-the-way” towards another. So, this “between-thinking” is one that emerges out of a bi-directional pull, a thinking oriented by the limits that occasion

and determine it. What this thinking from the between is to think is the difference, the juxtaposition of these limits: this is what Heidegger calls “confrontation” (*Auseinandersetzung*). We can begin, thus, to see how this thinking is to be “of inception” in a double sense: “about,” but at the same time “within.”

Crucially, though, in a move that will be decisive for the later text *On Inception* (*Über den Anfang*), the confrontation of limits that defines the possibility of a transitional thinking is said by Heidegger to be “no counter-movement” (*Gegenbewegung*): however the otherness of the “other inception” is to be understood, it is not to be thought as a “counter-direction” (*Gegenrichtung*) to the first. In fact, as Heidegger explains, it is not an oppositional otherness at all. Rather, “the other inception helps the first, out of a new originality, toward the truth of its history and thereby its inalienable, most proper otherness” (GA 65: 187/147, tm). We could say, then, that the “other inception” is not a reaction to the “first.” Rather, the “firstness” of the first is discovered *in* otherness. Reciprocally, though, the otherness of the “other inception” is to be discovered *within* the first, within the initial, not apart from it or subsequently. Thus, for the kind of thinking that is proposed and attempted in the *Beiträge*, it is reciprocity, intertwinement, imbrication that is at stake: inception becomes what it is by becoming other. “Because every inception is unsurpassable, it must constantly recur, set – in confrontation – into the uniqueness of its incipience.... This confrontation is original when it is itself inceptual, but this, necessarily, is as *another* inception” (GA 65: 55/44, tm).

It is, then, in repetition, in recurrence, that inception is “set...into the uniqueness of its incipience.” This does not just mean, however, that repetition is somehow to be expected of inception, that an inception necessarily repeats itself. Rather, it says that inception takes place *in and as* its repetition. Inception constitutes itself *as* repetition, *as* recurrence. It thus can be said to *become* singular in its repetition: it is singular precisely as divided from itself. The paradox of inception is this: that it is a singularity that is always already multiple. Inception *is* the event of this tension – the ἄρον of a wholeness that is not just fractured, but whole *in* its fracturing.⁵

A reminder of the significance of this figure: If we are to think beyond a continuum, beyond the linearity of the dark and spectral narrative that haunts the text of the *Beiträge*, it can only be by thinking entirely differently the structure of inception. This thinking must be directed against the idea that inception just marks a moment of archaic instauration (this would be the archaic origin of historiography) which would then require recovery, renewal, or rejection. Instead, we will be asked to think inception in such a way that, at its core, it is already surrendered to multiplicity. It is in this sense that we can understand the significance of the following, from a later point in the “configuration” of the *seynsgeschichtlich* treatises: “Of the first inception and of the other inception – *which are not two separate inceptions, but rather one and the same in their incessant incipience* – we are equally lacking experience, or are perhaps even entirely without experience” (GA 71: 253/218–19, tm, em).

It is the nature of this “incessant incipience” that needs to be understood: a sameness that is also separated, a first that is also other. More than anything, it is in this figure that the narrative linearity of a forgotten past and an unreachable “to-come” is suspended. Now, however – if we have succeeded, provisionally at least, in holding at bay the trap of a linear chronology – we need to find a way of thinking about inception itself, inception *tout court*: not as instauration, but as singular multiplicity. To do that, a more radical step will be required.

IV. INCEPTION – EVENT – BEING

It is this step that is taken in the texts of the *seynsgeschichtlich* configuration that revolve around the question of event and inception (*Das Ereignis* and *Über den Anfang*). The former, for instance, presents the following claim: “Event *is* the incipience of inception” (GA 71: 227/195, em, tm). What is being suggested, here, is a kind of equivalence: event (*Ereignis*) is to be thought of *as* inception, as its very incipience. So, given this equivalence, an “inceptive thinking” will at the same time be a thinking of event, of the evental – and will be subject to the conditions already noted earlier: in other words, it will be not just a thinking

“about” event or events, but a thinking *of* event, in the double genitive sense. And if inception is to be conceived in a way that moves beyond the confines of a chronological historiography, then event, too, must be thought in an equivalent manner. In the domain of the historiographical, “event” becomes simply a kind of “significant occurrence,” in which sense the equivalence ventured in the claim that “event is the incipience of inception” becomes merely platitudinous, saying only that every historical “beginning” has an “event-like” significance. Instead, we are being asked, here, to think inception – beginning – not at all in terms of a determinate location along a historical continuum, but entirely outside linear chronology. What is at stake, in fact, in thinking together inception and event in this way is the attempt to think being itself, not as chained to a linear temporality, which it is somehow “outside.” Instead, being itself is to be thought as emergence, as irruption: “This ‘unasked’ conceals itself as such and allows inceptual thinking alone the uncanniness of emergence, which constitutes the essential occurrence of the constant presencing of beings in the open (*ἀλήθεια*)” (GA 65: 189/148, tm).

It is this sense of being as emergence that conjoins it to the thinking both of the evental and of inception. And this is how we can understand Heidegger’s response to the rhetorical question he poses in the *Beiträge*: “What, then, is inception?” The response comes as follows: “It is the essential occurrence [*Wesung*] of *being* itself, but *this* inception is only executable as the other inception, in confrontation with itself. Grasped inceptively, inception is being itself. . . . *inception is being itself* as event. . . . And being, as event, is inception” (GA 65: 58/47, tm).

Being *is* inception. It is not merely inceptive, having the qualities of a commencement: it is inception itself, and is so in that it is event.⁶ In that it is evental, it is always multiple, and indefinitely so. The project of thinking inception in the later texts of the *seynsgeschichtlich* period is the project of thinking being as emergent, incipient, irruptive. Inception is not and never has been a unitary concept: it is and always must be multiple, subject to refraction, repetition, re-iteration. And here we can remind ourselves that this thinking – “inceptual

thinking" – is a between: arising from and pitched into the midst of this incipience – a *Dazwischenkunft*, a coming-into-the-midst, as Heidegger's text *On Inception* will have it (GA 70: 67).⁷ The singularity (the uniqueness, *Einzigkeit*) of being is its multiplying, its diffraction or splitting apart.⁸ Inceptual thinking will be the thought that *sustains* the diffraction. The "history of beyng" that emerges in this thinking will be a way of marking the joints, of experiencing the fracture lines – their leaps, resonances, and interplay. And – decisively for this investigation – it is in and as this fractured incipience that a "there" – the *Da* of *Da-sein* – will transpire: "Dasein," after all, "*is* the crisis between the first and the other inception."

V. THE INCIPIENCE OF THE DA – TOWARDS NATALITY

We could express the distance we have covered so far with disarming simplicity: it is a movement that begins, in *Sein und Zeit*, with the thought of a *Sein zum Anfang*, and passes through a rigorous interrogation in the *Beiträge*, at the end of which we find that the thought has transformed: what was the thinking of a *Sein zum Anfang*, has now become, quite simply: "Sein ist Anfang" (GA 70: 48, em). The transformation is a radical one because, if the *zum* is to be jettisoned, then the *Da* of *Da-sein* will have to be rethought entirely: no longer will it be possible to think our "thereness" – our being-there (*Da-sein*) – in terms of a directedness-towards. Rather, just as being itself is to be thought as inception, so too the *Da* of *Da-sein* will have to be thought in terms of an "incessant incipience."

What will be required – and it is this project with which the volume *Über den Anfang* struggles – is an entirely new topology of inception, one that tries to distance itself, as far as thinking may, from the narrative linearity of beginnings that still holds together the *Beiträge*. Always this topology will be threatened with collapse, always the knot of inception will want to unravel into the successive, into a before and after, a call and a response, a first and an other. All too easily, says Heidegger, "there awakens the craving to reckon up connections and dependencies." But this is an empty craving: instead, "in each and every

singular, the same must be named – but inceptively, without relation” (GA 70: 61): the hierarchy, and the connectivities out of which a linear history might emerge, are to be indefinitely suspended. What will be at stake now is not the “first inception” and the “other inception.” Inception is to be thought now in its irreducible plurality – not *Anfang* but *Anfänge* – a plurality of inceptions that now “name always their fissured singularity.”

But how, then, are we to understand this dynamic of inception, this difficult new topology? Heidegger suggests that we might begin by suspending our tendency “to think beginning...from out of what is no longer beginning” (GA 70: 57). In other words, we always tend to think inception retrospectively, from the point of view of that which has begun (*das Angefangene*). And because what has already begun “seems to us closer, more real and more complete, inception is through and through what is *not yet...*” Inception is the not yet; it is what somehow precedes the “actual.” And this essential and necessary habit of thought is the reason why inception appears to be always somehow detached from or “in advance” of being. But what if – and this is the leap that Heidegger’s text will attempt – we were to reverse this, and to try to think instead inception *itself* – to think, in a literal sense, *from* the beginning: not in the first instance in relation to what has already begun? And *this*, says Heidegger, is “the hardest, and the most proper, of what is demanded of thinking” (GA 70: 57). Within this difficult reversal, it is *beings* that will be thought of as “what has begun” (*das Angefangene*), and thus – again, from the point of view of this reversal – they will be thought as what has been cast away, divested (*abgelegt*) from being. Being – inception itself – is, then, that which withdraws (*zurückgeht*) in this divesting. Beings are separated (*abgeschiedet*) in emergence; and in this new topology, it is this separative withdrawal that “bears in itself the possibility of the unleashing (*Loslassung*) of what has begun.” This unleashing is “the unleashing of beings into being only ‘beings’ and into no longer needing being” (GA 70: 57). A being, then, is that which has already left behind, abandoned the event of its emergence. This is why Heidegger will say,

not just that being is inception (*Sein ist Anfang*), but also that it is an *Untergang* – a downgoing, separative withdrawal that allows for the emergence of beings.

It is here, then, that we can see at work something like a natality: this thinking of being is a thinking of natality to the extent that it is a thinking of incipience, of a dynamic of emergence and withdrawal. The *Da* of *Da-sein* – our own “being-there” – is a taking place⁹ in the midst of being, in the midst of incipience. For Heidegger, what has begun, what has emerged in the separative withdrawal of being, carries with it “a final echo,” a resonance, a trace of its inception.¹⁰ So, too, the *Da* that finds itself in this emergence carries with it a resonance of its inception, a generative memory of the natal impulse that brings it into its “thereness.”

The difficult sense of what we are now able to call natality in Heidegger is that which is most powerfully deployed in his work to contest the sway of the historiographical. This latter is represented by the linear narrative of decline and redemption that brought his darkest political instincts into line with that of his generation. His work from this period is remarkable not just for its allegiance to this narrative but also for the ferocity with which he struggles against it. That the struggle remains an obscure one, largely buried later in other concerns, is certainly our loss. But nonetheless, what we can recover from this thinking are elements that might still be powerfully used to contest the simplicity of our own narratives.

NOTES

- 1 See Peg Birmingham, “Heidegger and Arendt: The Birth of Political Action and Speech,” in François Raffoul and David Pettigrew, eds., *Heidegger and Practical Philosophy* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2002), 198.

- 2 The passage is quoted and valuably discussed in Anne O’Byrne, *Natality and Finitude* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 166, n. 2.
- 3 Jacques Derrida, *Heidegger: la question de l’Être et l’Histoire* (Paris: Éditions Galilée, 2013), 229; *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, trans. Geoffrey Bennington (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2016), 153.
- 4 Generally, though not always, I will translate *Anfang* as inception, adapting the existent translations where necessary.
- 5 Here, we can begin to observe, albeit in a cursory and inadequate way, how these texts respond to the kinds of reading that assume that Heidegger’s thinking of being involves the refusal of an “otherness.” In this respect we might consider Luce Irigaray’s reading as exemplary (Luce Irigaray, *The Forgetting of Air in Martin Heidegger*, trans. Mary Beth Mader [Austin: University of Texas Press, 1999]). “Surely,” Irigaray asks, “Being must assimilate something in order to have begun to be?” (26). The temptation here is to regard Being as unitary, a force of assimilation which would covertly depend on a latent exclusivity: it is this assumption that enables Irigaray to speak of “the outside of being there” (31). However, as I hope to make clear, this really does underestimate the force of Heidegger’s thinking here and elsewhere: that it is crucially directed towards a thinking of being which is precisely non-unitary, which involves and includes its own outside in radical and abyssal ways. From the perspective of these texts, the desire that Irigaray elegantly expresses to “confront him not with what supports him in the safety and serenity of a re-adhesion to the whole within sameness ... but with that which ... re-opens the question of his relation to the other” appears misplaced, to such an extent indeed that it might be better applied to her own elaborate yet oddly reductive reading.
- 6 As if in deliberate contradiction of Heidegger’s own words – difficult to understand, to be sure, but entirely explicit at the same time – Irigaray asks: “Whence the oblivion of the being’s

beginning?" (*Forgetting of Air*, 102). I believe we can now respond succinctly: there is no such "oblivion."

- 7 The term *Dazwischenkunft* reappears in many different guises throughout the text, becoming quite central as the text progresses, especially where a new understanding of *Da-sein* is sought.
- 8 On *Einzigkeit* and *Einmaligkeit*, see Krzysztof Ziarek, "On Heidegger's *Einmaligkeit* Again: The Single Turn of the Event," *Gatherings: The Heidegger Circle Annual* 6 (2016): 91–113. Ziarek's concern is with the language of singularity; as such, his approach is different from that adopted here. Nonetheless, in the concern to think through the relation between singularity and repetition in these texts of Heidegger's, his paper offers an interesting point of comparison and dialogue.
- 9 I am borrowing this phrase and the sense of a "taking-place" of the human from Marcia Sá Cavalcante Schuback, in an unpublished talk given at Boston College, March 2017. I gratefully acknowledge the debt.
- 10 Contra, once again, Irigaray, who writes: "The Being of man will become constituted on the basis of a forgetting: of the gift of this *from which* of which he is": *The Forgetting of Air in Martin Heidegger*, 30. The forgetting of the "from which" is at the center of Lisa Guenther's exemplary article (which also cites this passage from Irigaray), "Being-from-Others: Reading Heidegger after Cavarero," *Hypatia* 23:1 (2008): 99–118. Guenther's expressed intention is to "elaborate this forgotten *from which* into a fundamental structure of Dasein, which I will call Being-from-Others" (101). Again, this reading seems to rest on the assumption that "being-there" is a unitary and somehow pre-given whole, which would then necessarily depend upon a hidden gesture of exclusion – here, quite specifically, the exclusion of a generative origin. Guenther limits her reading to the passages from *Sein und Zeit* that presented us with a starting point. I have tried to show the extent to which Heidegger's thinking of being *as* inception renders this position untenable, at least with respect to the texts under consideration here.