

Letter from the Editor

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Unfortunately, the 2020 Heidegger Circle gathering at Gonzaga University had to be canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We hope to convene there next year. Meanwhile, this issue of *Gatherings* should provide plenty of food for thought, starting with Kevin Aho's and Robert Manning's reflections on uncanniness, technology, and responsibility in this time of disease and social distancing.

This volume also features a summation of Heidegger's philosophy by Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann, general editor of the *Gesamtausgabe* and author of numerous works on Heidegger, translated with an extensive afterword, notes, and glossaries by Thomas Sheehan.

Three more articles discuss authenticity, attention, and truth. The participants in our second annual symposium tackle the topic of destiny. I am also pleased to publish a review essay, four book reviews, and an open letter to the Heidegger Circle.

Editors of *Gatherings* serve for three-year terms, and it is now time for me to step down. In accordance with the procedure adopted at the 2012 Heidegger Circle meeting, the editorial board has accepted nominations for a new editor, and has selected Scott Campbell as the editor for the next three years. Dr. Campbell teaches at Nazareth College in Rochester, New York. He received his Ph.D. from Boston College in 2000 with a thesis on the concept of facticity in Heidegger's early lecture courses. He is the last student to have completed a dissertation under the direction of William J. Richardson, S.J. Dr. Campbell's primary areas of research include Heidegger studies, life-philosophy, hermeneutics, and American Philosophy. In 2012, he published *The Early Heidegger's Philosophy of Life: Facticity, Being, and Language*, and in 2013 he published his translation of GA 58, *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*:

Winter Semester 1919/1920. Also in 2013 he co-edited a volume of essays on *The Science, Politics, and Ontology of Life-Philosophy*. Dr. Campbell hosted the annual meeting of the Heidegger Circle in 2019. He serves on the editorial boards for *Gatherings* and for the New Heidegger Research series with Rowman & Littlefield International. I wish Scott Campbell much success as editor of *Gatherings*.

I would like to conclude these notes with a tribute to Charles Guignon, who died on May 23. Charlie, as his friends and students called him, taught primarily at the University of Vermont and the University of South Florida. He was the author of *Heidegger and the Problem of Knowledge, On Being Authentic*, and *Re-envisioning Psychology* (with Blaine Fowers and Frank Richardson). He edited or co-edited several anthologies, including *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*, *The Good Life*, *The Existentialists*, *Richard Rorty*, and *Existentialism: Basic Writings*. With Kevin Aho, Charlie hosted the 2014 meeting of the Heidegger Circle in St. Petersburg, Florida.

I had the good fortune to take Charlie's course on *Being and Time* at Berkeley in the fall of 1984. He was able to make this dense and challenging text come alive and light up. He also modeled what it was like to exist philosophically, to care about the issues personally while rigorously studying the texts. In later years, he was my most generous mentor.

The final exam for his course in 1984 asked us to write essays on any two of the following topics.

1. In his hip self-help manual *Your Erroneous Zones* Dr. Wayne Dyer says, "YOU ARE THE SUM TOTAL OF YOUR CHOICES, and I am just 'far out' enough to believe that with an appropriate amount of motivation and effort you can be anything you choose." How would Heidegger criticize the claim that "you can be *anything* you choose"? What constraints are there on human freedom? In what way precisely would Heidegger agree that our choices *do* determine our being, and that we are therefore responsible for who we are? Explain how *either* anxiety *or* conscience might lead us to recognize this responsibility. Do you think Heidegger's conception of freedom is satisfactory? Explain.

2. We are often told that if we will just be “objective” – i.e., impartial, disinterested, uninvolved – we will be able to see things the way they “really” are. How does Heidegger criticize this picture of the privileged position of the scientific or theoretical attitude as a way of arriving at “ultimate complete knowledge of the way things are”? How do the accounts of care, existence as goal-directedness, situatedness, and language lead us to see that our most basic understanding of the world can never be arrived at through a purely objective, disinterested, presuppositionless standpoint? Defend or criticize Heidegger’s attempt to show that “pure theory” is derivative from and parasitic on a more primordial way of existing as practical agency.

3. Do you think you are authentic, an inauthentic Anyone-self [*Man-selbst*], or something other than these two existential modes? Explain your answer. What, according to Heidegger, are the “essential structures” of Dasein that make it possible for you to be either authentic or inauthentic? What does he mean by “Being-toward-death,” and how is the authentic relation to death supposed to be able to transform a person’s life? What is “authentic historicity,” and how can it give a distinctive content to a person’s life? Critically evaluate Heidegger’s account of authenticity as a possible way of life.

4. Heidegger’s description of Being-in-the-world may be seen as an attempt to recapture or “retrieve” a deeper and more original understanding of the self and world which existed prior to the Rise of Modern Science and the “disenchantment of the world.” How does his description of everyday practical activity reveal that we are, at a most primordial level, engaged in contexts of “significance” and participants in a communal context? Why, given this description, is it wrong to think of the self as a substantial “ego,” “mind,” or “consciousness” distinct from the world? Critically evaluate Heidegger’s account of Being-in-the-world.

5. The inquiry into the “meaning of Being” is said to be possible because we always already have a “vague average understanding of Being” which makes up our “pre-ontological understanding” of what it is

to be. Why, according to Heidegger, do we have such a “fore-structure” of understanding, and how is his hermeneutic phenomenology supposed to work from that pre-understanding to enable us to uncover the *hidden* “meaning and ground” of what we ordinarily think of as the nature of self and world? Why does Heidegger’s method seem to lead to a circle, and why does he think this circle is not “vicious”? How are the results of fundamental ontology supposed to be confirmed? Do you think the project of working out a “fundamental ontology” is possible? Defend your answer.

I am still daunted by the exam, and still inspired by Charles Guignon’s life and work.