

The Unity in the Transformation of Martin Heidegger's Thinking

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction: The *Gesamtausgabe* three decades on
2. The experience of meaningfulness in hermeneutic phenomenology
3. *Existenz* – ex-sistence – transcendence and horizon
4. Appropriation: The reciprocity of
 - a. the clearing as appropriating ex-sistence and
 - b. ex-sistence as appropriated by the clearing

APPENDICES

1. Translator's afterword
2. Notes on the translation
3. Lexicons: German-English, English-German

INTRODUCTION: THE GESAMTAUSGABE THREE DECADES ON

The thirtieth anniversary of Martin Heidegger's death also marks thirty years since the publication of his *Gesamtausgabe* began. We are now in a position to review the path his thinking took from the beginning to the end of his six-decade career and to understand the inner motives and intentions of the three phases of his thinking.

1. 1919-1923: The ten Freiburg-1 courses mark the inception of his thinking and determine the path that led to *Being and Time*, his first and fundamental magnum opus.
2. 1923-1928: The subsequent ten courses at Marburg guided Heidegger through the genesis and elaboration of *Being and Time* I.1 and I.2 and, immediately after the book's publication, provided both the general outline of *Being and Time* I.3 and the crucial answer to the basic question about how being is intelligible. The Marburg courses devoted to Kant, Descartes, and Aristotle dealt with *Being and Time* II, "Basic Features of a Phenomenological Destruction of the History of Ontology, Using the Problematic of the Time-Character [of Being] as the Clue."
3. 1928-1944: Most of the twenty-eight courses of the Freiburg-2 period hold to the perspective that emerged in the 1930s and guided his work from then on, namely the immanent transformation of his thinking from its first path – the transcendental-horizonal approach to the question of being – into its second path focused on the clearing as appropriating ex-sistence.

How the second approach emerged from the first, along with the decisions guiding the later approach, is spelled out in the seven major treatises of 1936 to 1944 on appropriation. Most importantly, the first of those treatises, *Contributions to Philosophy (of Appropriation)*, provides the outline of his thinking on appropriation while highlighting the interrelated connections constituting appropriation's basic structure. *Contributions to Philosophy* also points to the specific turning points where the transcendental-horizonal structure gets transformed into

that of appropriation. Thereafter, appropriation will be the focus sustaining Heidegger's second approach in all the later loci of his thinking with their ever-new linguistic formulations. A good example are Heidegger's thoughts on releasement, where the relations of appropriation shine through clearly.

The publication of Heidegger's extensive and important *Nachlass* – the three sets of courses (Freiburg-1, Marburg, Freiburg-2) along with the treatises on the clearing as appropriating ex-sistence – throws new light on the sixteen books that Heidegger published during his lifetime (= Division 1 of the *Gesamtausgabe*). This compels us to reread and re-appropriate those books in light of the *Nachlass* – which entails jettisoning some still current but outdated opinions about the unpublished *Being and Time* I.3 (“Time and Being”) and about how Heidegger's second approach relates to his earlier transcendental-horizonal approach.

The following pages discuss three texts from the *Nachlass* that are important for understanding the trajectory of Heidegger's thinking:

1. his first Freiburg course, *The Idea of Philosophy and the Problem of Worldviews* (1919)
2. his Marburg course *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* (1927), delivered right after he had published *Being and Time*
3. his 1936–37 *Contributions to Philosophy (of Appropriation)*, which outlines his thinking on the clearing as appropriating ex-sistence.

1. THE EXPERIENCE OF MEANINGFULNESS IN HERMENEUTIC PHENOMENOLOGY

Heidegger's thinking has its origin in the utterly fundamental experience that

- the world of human life and experience is a *world of meaningfulness*, an ensemble of meaningful things;
- our lives are essentially a *correlative experience of meaningfulness*;
- and our lives amidst what is meaningful are enacted *within the intelligibility that is our proper and ownmost being and movement*.

Heidegger designates the structure of that intelligibility by the formally indicative concept of *Er-eignis*, ap-propriation (GA 56/57: 70-76/59-64).

Our experiences of the environment (which are always experiences of meaningfulness) are, in Heidegger's words, "*Er-eignisse*, instances of ap-*propriation*, in that they are lived from out of what is *proper* to us" (GA 56/57: 75.27-28/64.7-8). "Ap-propriation" thus names our original *proprium*, that from out of which we enact our lives both as a whole and in each single experience. It is what allows us to understand the significance of whatever we encounter within the world, whether things and events in various regions of being, or our fellow human beings. The life-world that is our environment is not primarily a world of things serving as a foundation for the values of culture and convention. It has no such foundational function; rather, it is primarily a world of the significant and meaningful (GA 56/57: 71.27-31/60.20-24). Nor is it just "given" to us. We experience this world only by "encountering" it, that is, not by theoretically observing it but by understanding various ways of *dealing* with things, broadly speaking, while relating to them as fraught with meaning. Such dealings express the primary and most basic way we inhabit the world.

Hermeneutical phenomenology's *hermeneutical understanding* is the method for gaining access to the intelligibility that is the very being of life and experience. The unique thing about hermeneutical understanding is that it prescind from the seemingly obvious preconceptions that epistemology would foist on us and instead "follows out explicitly" the direction that intelligibility takes in our experience of the environment (GA 56/57: 117.5-7/99.2-5).¹ The only modification our experience of meaningfulness undergoes in the process is that of rendering explicit the implicit pre-phenomenological life we usually live. Explicitly following out the full intelligibility of life is the one and only way to arrive at the key insight of hermeneutic phenomenology, namely that our original, natural experience of the environment is an experience of what matters for knowing how to deal with things in the broad sense of that term. It is not an experience of sense data that then serve as a foundation [for higher levels of cognition]. It has no such

function. While sense perception certainly is an element in our natural experience of meaningfulness, it is not a [lower] stratum serving as the foundation [for higher levels]. Rather, it is always imbedded in and guided by our understanding of meaningfulness.

An astonishing fact comes to light in this earliest of the Freiburg courses. In a single stroke Heidegger has already secured the thematic and methodological starting point for what he will properly launch at *Being and Time* §12: the analysis of ex-sistence as concerned, foresightful being-in-the-world-of-meaningfulness. In the subsequent and related Freiburg-1 courses, Heidegger's analyses of the experience of meaningfulness and the meaningful world succeeded in hermeneutically disclosing and spelling out what the structural concept of *Er-eignis* had formally indicated as most proper to, indeed the very core of, life and experience, namely:

- factual life: life as lived in its most basic and core facticity
- the lifeworld, differentiated into (1) the most immediate world of everyday living, (2) the world we share with others, and (3) one's self-world
- the lived possibilities of factual life
- everydayness: the undifferentiated and most immediate possibilities of life
- the world of meaningfulness as the primary locus of factual living
- the directions intelligibility takes in factual life as regards
 - content (the world)
 - relation (the movement of one's very life as caring/concern)
 - enactment (either just falling into various forms of meaningfulness or gaining one's own self)
- "the historical" in the sense of *being historical* [shaping one's own future]
- the temporal unfolding of factual life
- *Existenz*: the *being* and *being-structure* of life or ex-sistence

- the ex-sistentials: the structural characteristics of the being of factual life/ex-sistence
- as regards the intelligibility of relation: the ex-sistential characteristics of inclination, distancing, and self-isolating
- reflectedness and projective structuring as discernable characteristics of life-as-movement
- averageness, the public, and “everyone” as ways of being

And the last of the Freiburg-1 courses, *Ontology: The Hermeneutics of Facticity* anticipated *Being and Time*'s analysis of tools and world (GA 63: 93-97/71-74).

Soon after these early lectures were published, a widely circulated opinion alleged that Heidegger began his work in connection with Dilthey's philosophy of life and only later made the transition to ontology when he took up Aristotle (in a so-called “ontological turn”!). This opinion is based on a superficial analysis of the texts and fails to see that those courses were already clearly aimed at something other than a philosophy of life. Their hermeneutical-phenomenological focus on explaining the sphere of pre-theoretical life and experience was searching for the original, fundamental source from which philosophy and its most basic questions arise. From the very beginning, and in clear distinction to Dilthey, Heidegger connected his analyses of life and experience to the meaning of ex-sistence as the understanding of world/being.

2. EXISTENZ – EX-SISTENCE – TRANSCENDENCE AND HORIZON

To adequately understand Heidegger's first Freiburg course we have to grasp a decisive and pathbreaking fact, namely that the hermeneutical perspective he adopted as his own unprecedented method in 1919 is the vital source of everything his phenomenology would lay out thereafter, whether in the other Freiburg-1 and Marburg courses or in his fundamental systematic work, *Being and Time*. Not a single question in those subsequent texts stems from another kind of reflection that got smuggled into the hermeneutical-phenomenological insights he had already acquired. Heidegger's unswerving adherence to this

methodological perspective in his *hermeneutical* philosophy is comparable to Husserl's unwavering commitment to the phenomenological *epoché* in all the presentations and analyses of his *reflexive* (transcendental) phenomenology. The hermeneutical viewpoint of the Marburg courses and *Being and Time* is the same one Heidegger embraced as his basic methodological approach in 1919. Throughout his phenomenological analysis of ex-sistence, his ex-sistential and categorial explanations all originate without exception from this hermeneutical perspective. When he adopted it for the first time in the 1919 course, he established the essence of "the hermeneutical" in the only sense that term has in this paper.

Being and Time and the related Marburg courses are where Heidegger decisively determined what he meant by the issues of and the terms for

1. *Existenz* as the basic structure of being-in-the-world: an ex-sisting entity's ownmost way of being; and
2. ex-sistence [*Dasein*]. Heidegger calls entities that ex-sist "*Dasein*" – "ex-sistence" – not because they simply "have *existentia*," but because the being of the "ex-" or *Da* is simply and solely *Existenz*.

In turn, the "ex-" of ex-sistence (the *Da* of *Dasein*) means "openedness," and that in two senses: (1) the self-openedness of *Existenz*, along with its ex-sistential characteristics; and (2) the supervening openedness of being itself, being as a whole. The 1927 course *Basic Problems of Phenomenology* (GA 24) provides an important clarification of these issues. In its very *Existenz*, an ex-sisting entity is opened up in and for itself. But in its ex-sistential *self*-openedness, *Existenz* is ex-statically transposed not only into that self-openedness but also into the openedness of being itself: the *universal horizontal* openedness of the non-ex-sistential being that pertains to *all* entities. Thus the "ex-" of ex-sistence is both *ex-static self*-openedness and *universal horizontal* openedness. Heidegger calls the ex-sisting entity "*Da-sein*," written with a hyphen, for the sole reason that, in and through its *Existenz*, it holds open the "ex-" or *Da*: the universal openedness of being.

Existenz as the ex-static being of the universal “ex-” has a basic threefold structure. It is an ex-sistent

1. *thrownness* into the “ex-”
2. *projective opening up* of the “ex-”
3. *holding open* of the projectively opened “ex-” in disclosing entities, letting them enter their disclosedness within the world.

Heidegger shows that, as a whole, this threefoldness is structured as concern [*Sorge*] in the sense of ex-sistence’s caring about

1. its own ex-static self-openedness,
2. the horizontal openedness of being as a whole, and
3. the disclosedness of entities.

The openedness of being is the ontological condition that makes possible the disclosedness of entities; and between the openedness of being and the disclosedness of entities the ontological difference is in play.

The openedness of being ($\acute{\alpha}\lambda\eta\theta\epsilon\iota\alpha-1$) is its “truth,” whereas the disclosedness or pre-predicative manifestness of entities is *their* “truth” ($\acute{\alpha}\lambda\eta\theta\epsilon\iota\alpha-2$). Propositional truth ($\acute{\alpha}\lambda\eta\theta\epsilon\iota\alpha-3$) derives from these two original phenomena of $\acute{\alpha}\lambda\eta\theta\epsilon\iota\alpha$, which themselves are discoverable only within a hermeneutical perspective. Any philosophy that claims sense experience is our primary access to entities and that insists the environment is first and foremost a world of sense-perceptible things will inevitably fail to see all three: *Existenz*, the clearing as the “truth” of being, and the disclosedness of entities. Hermeneutical phenomenology grew out of the experience of the world of meaningfulness, and as such it is the underlying factor making it possible to bring those two original phenomena – the openedness of being and the disclosedness of entities *within* the openedness of being – into the scope of hermeneutical insight.

Ex-sisting is the enactment of concern for the openedness of being-in-the-world and of being itself. An ex-sistent entity *stands out ahead of* entities – the ex-sistent entity it itself is as well as those it is not – out into both the ex-static openedness of itself and the horizontal openedness of the world/being itself. But it does this so as, from out of this openedness, to *come back to itself* as the entity that stands out-ahead, and to

understand itself *as* such an entity. This standing-out-ahead is what Heidegger means by “transcendence” as transcending, and thematizing that phenomenon was one of the major tasks of the course *Basic Problems of Phenomenology* (GA 24: 418–29/294–302). Ex-static self-openedness is a matter of being-qua-*Existenz*, whereas horizontal openedness is the essential locus of all forms of the being of non-ex-sistent entities.

Transcendence constitutes the ontological intelligibility of the movement of *Existenz* and concern, and as such it is grounded in the most fundamental and original ontological sense of *Existenz*: temporality as unfolding.

- In unfolding as projectively-opening-up, temporality yields ex-sistence as coming *to* itself.
- In unfolding as factually thrown, temporality yields ex-sistence as coming *back* to itself.
- And this coming-*to*-itself-as-coming-*back*-to-itself renders entities present, i.e., discloses them, holds them open.

In unfolding, an ex-sisting entity transcends, and in such transcending, temporality unfolds. Each of the three ex-static unfoldings transposes ex-sistence, with understanding, into a horizontal openedness, that of “time.” Moreover, each of temporality’s ex-static unfoldings has an intrinsic directionality, an “objective” towards which its ex-static unfolding moves, and each of those “objectives” constitutes a horizon that has a horizontal schema. The course *Basic Problems of Phenomenology* (the second draft of *Being and Time* I.3, “Time and Being”) shows that the correlate of the ex-static unfolding of making-present is the horizontal schema of being-present. It is in terms of this horizontal openedness that the being of non-ex-sisting entities gets its time-determined intelligibility as presentness (GA 24: 429–45/302–13). With his presentation of [the horizontal schema of] being-present, Heidegger has answered his fundamental question about how being is intelligible. The being of *Existenz* is intelligible in terms of ex-static temporality, and the being of non-ex-sisting entities is intelligible in terms of the horizon of being-present that is correlative with ex-static temporality. Heidegger analyzes the time-determined horizon of being-present within the

horizontal openedness of the “ex-” or *Da*, and he presents this analysis under the rubric of either “Zeitlichkeit und Temporalität” or “Temporalität und Sein.”

As with everything else, Heidegger’s uncovering of transcendence and of ex-static temporality with its correlative time-determined horizon has its hermeneutical source in life as the understanding of meaningfulness. Only a hermeneutical perspective that explicitly and consistently tracks the experience of meaningfulness can disclose the phenomenon of being-present as a time-determined horizon within the horizon of openedness. This hermeneutical perspective ultimately shows that ex-static temporality and the horizontal time-character of being are the source of life lived in terms of meaningfulness, i.e., the origin of ex-sistent being-in-the-world as an understanding of being.

3. APPROPRIATION

Heidegger’s transition from his first approach of working out the question of being within a transcendental-horizontal framework to his second approach, focused on the clearing as appropriating ex-sistence, grew out of a crucial experience in his thinking. He realized that not only is ex-sisting, in its possibilities as being-in-the-world, *geschichtlich* (= the “historicity of ex-sistence”), but also that the clearing – the openedness of being itself, being as a whole – holds forth as, and intrinsically is, *geschichtlich* (albeit in a different sense of the term).² This experience of the *Geschichtlichkeit* of the clearing entailed the further insight that the thrownness of ex-sistence has its ontological (vs. ontic) origin in the clearing’s ex-sistential “thrownness to” – i.e., its appropriation of – ex-sistence. In that regard, *Contributions* says that “the important thing is not to step beyond entities (= transcendence)” but to move beyond both

1. the transcendental-horizontal distinction between the openedness of being and the disclosedness of entities and
2. the ontological difference that is linked with it.

In Heidegger's words, what matters is to get beyond transcendence and to question from out of the origin, from out of being itself/"truth." (GA 65: 250-51/197.29-30).³

Without abandoning the thrown-openness of the clearing as such, Heidegger stopped characterizing it as a matter of transcending entities to their being-as-horizon or as a "thrown-projecting-open" of the clearing, as soon as he realized that

- the clearing's prior and primary appropriation of ex-sistence is what holds open the clearing;
- the holding-open of the clearing is therefore not carried out by transcending to it but is always already accomplished in and through the appropriation of ex-sistence; and
- ex-sistence holds the clearing open by "taking it over," letting it have priority in the opening up.

Contributions formulates the matter as follows: "The throwing-open of the clearing is enacted...as the transposition [of ex-sistence] into the open in such a way that the "throwing-open thrower" experiences himself as thrown – i.e., ap-propriated – by the clearing." (GA 65: 239.3-6/188.23-26)

In short, the clearing's claiming of ex-sistence (= its "thrownness to" ex-sistence) for the sake of holding open the clearing occurs as the appropriating of ex-sistence. Thus, ex-sistence's own thrownness is due to the clearing's "thrownness to" (its appropriation of) ex-sistence; and ex-sistence's holding-open of the clearing is therefore always an appropriated holding-open.

Ap-propriation is not an event that occurs in time. What it is can be gathered from another crucial text in *Contributions*:

143. *The Clearing*

as Ap-propriation. This ap-propriating determines human being to be 'owned' by the clearing. (GA 65: 263.12-14/207.14-16)

Heidegger's early notion of appropriation pointed to *Existenz* as what is proper to and ownmost in life and ex-sistence. But in his later focus

on the clearing as claiming ex-sistence, ap-propriation means that the holding-open of the clearing is “owned” by the clearing insofar as ex-sistence, as appropriated, “takes over” the clearing by holding it open. But why speak of ex-sistence as “owned”? Answer: (1) The clearing as appropriating ex-sistence “needs” the appropriated holding open that is the sein of Da-sein, the very being of ex-sistence; and in turn (2) ex-sistence’s appropriated holding-open of the clearing “belongs to” the clearing. Thus, *Contributions* says: “This reciprocity of needing and belonging constitutes being itself as appropriation” (GA 65: 251.24-5/198.14). The reciprocity is that of

- the clearing as “thrown to” ex-sistence – appropriating and as such needing ex-sistence; and
- ex-sistence as holding open the clearing – appropriated by and as such belonging to (“owned by”) the clearing.

It is clear, then, that in his second approach Heidegger’s notion of appropriation encompasses two principal interconnected elements: the clearing as appropriating the being of ex-sistence; and ex-sistence’s appropriated holding-open of the clearing that appropriates it. The reciprocity of these two interconnected elements is what *Contributions* calls “a *Kehre*, in fact *the Kehre*, a term that indicates the essence of being itself, namely appropriation as intrinsically reciprocal” (GA 65: 251.25-26/206.2-3). Here the “essence” of being itself does not mean *essentia* as the “whatness” of something. Instead it means what *Contributions* calls *Wesung* (GA 65: 8.3/9.7 et passim), the way-of-being or prevailing and perduring way that something comes to pass and is. Whereas in the earlier approach the relation between entities and the clearing’s way of being was a matter of transcendence, *Contributions* can now say: “*Entities belong within the clearing’s very way of being*” (GA 65: 269.12-13/212.2-3) – in fact, in such a way that the clearing, which is always and ever “thrown to” and held open by ex-sistence, is concealed in entities as their manifestness/disclosedness. That is, along with (1) its appropriating thrownness-to and (2) the appropriated holding-open, the clearing’s full way of being also includes (3) the “concealing” of the clearing in and as the disclosedness of entities (GA 65: 389-92/307-10).

In Heidegger's second approach, the manifestness of entities now signifies the concealedness of the "thrown to"/appropriating clearing *in* entities. This concealing is both (1) *intrinsic to the clearing* as "thrown to" and held open by ex-sistence and (2) *enacted by ex-sistence* when it uncovers/discloses entities. Thus, the later approach reads the ontological structure of the "ex-" of ex-sistence as having a threefold articulation:

- It is appropriated (= thrownness).
- It holds open the clearing (= projection).
- It is the concealing of the "thrown-to"/appropriating clearing in entities when those entities are rendered manifest (= disclosedness).

Nonetheless, a distinction remains between the clearing as *always and ever* appropriating ex-sistence and the clearing as appropriating ex-sistence in *particular [epochal] forms*, i.e., as specific historical clearings [such as those of Aristotle, Kant, and Nietzsche]. The former is never exhausted in the latter, i.e., in any particular [epochal] form of the clearing.

In Heidegger's transcendental-horizonal approach, the thrown-open clearing was seen as the condition that makes possible the disclosedness (or "truth") of entities. But in his later approach that transcendental-horizonal difference between being itself and entities is transformed into the distinction between, on the one hand, the clearing as "thrown to" and held open by ex-sistence, and, on the other, the clearing as concealed in entities. Moreover, this distinction is now part of the clearing's full way of being. The difference between the earlier and later approaches is that the distinction between the clearing and disclosed entities (entities-in-their-disclosedness) is now *integral to the clearing itself*. Henceforth the concealing of the appropriating-and-held-open clearing *is* the disclosedness of entities. In addition, both transcendence and its accompanying horizon are finally overcome as such. What the first perspective envisioned as the horizontal dimension of openness now disappears as *horizontal* into the clearing seen as appropriating ex-sistence.

We have characterized some fundamental elements of the transition Heidegger's question of being made from a transcendental-horizonal approach into one based on the clearing as appropriating ex-sistence. But we would completely misunderstand this transition if we saw it as a leap from one position to another. Instead, the transition proves to be an *immanent transformation* of the first approach into the second, while remaining within the same hermeneutical perspective. The sole text that provides an insight into this immanent transformation is *Contributions*. It shows that Heidegger never abandoned his principled hermeneutical way of presenting matters, even as he went on to conceive of the clearing in terms of the structures of appropriation rather than in terms of a transcendental horizon. The experiences that prompted the transition from the first to the second approach remained entirely embedded in his hermeneutical perspective.

Appropriation is the structure of the clearing's (1) appropriating of ex-sistence for the sake of both (2) the appropriated holding-open of the clearing and (3) the concealment of the clearing in the disclosure of entities. This structure shaped Heidegger's perspective throughout his second approach, including his "topological" thinking as one of the ways he worked out his later thoughts on appropriation. *Contributions* formulates the matter in this way:

Appropriation is the self-establishing, self-mediating center. From the very outset we have to think the clearing's way of being back to appropriation. [...] All notions of the clearing must be articulated from out of appropriation (GA 65: 73.20-22/58.35-59.2).

Heidegger's focus on appropriation emerged from the immanent transformation of his transcendental-horizonal approach as sketched out above, and both approaches, early and late, grew out of the hermeneutical-phenomenological focus that he first adopted in 1919.

* * *

Heidegger inserted an illuminating remark into the protocol of his 1962 Todtnauberg seminar on “Time and Being”: “The relations and connections that constitute the basic structure of appropriation had been worked out between 1936 and 1938” (GA 14: 52.22–24/43.20–22).

That is, the thoughts he published on appropriation in the 1950s and 1960s (which were the only texts we had on the topic until *Contributions* came out in 1989) actually originated in the mid-1930s. This means we have to go back and rethink those later texts on appropriation (e.g., GA 11: “The Principle of Identity” and GA 14: “Time and Being”) in light of *Contributions to Philosophy*. But there are other texts that do not use the language of appropriation but nonetheless were conceived in terms of the relations of appropriation. A prime example is “Ἀρχιβασιίη,” the first of Heidegger’s *Conversations on a Country Path* (GA 77), where he thinks “releasement” as the essence of human being (and of a future thinking focused on the clearing as appropriating ex-sistence). “Release-ment” refers to our being allowed into – and in turn letting ourselves into – the clearing as the openness (“truth”) of being. Here the clearing is interpreted as the “countryside” as “encountering” us and letting our *Existenz* into the openness of being itself.

- The “countryside” as letting *Existenz* into the openness of being corresponds to the clearing as ap-propriating ex-sistence.
- In turn, the relation between being let into and letting one-self into the “countryside” corresponds to the reciprocity of being appropriated by and holding open the clearing.

Heidegger’s thoughts on releasement are bound up with his focus on appropriation; they translate the language of appropriation into that of releasement.

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The constant change of the language in which Heidegger expressed his thinking should not obscure the single structural relation that perdures throughout those changes and guarantees the unity of his thinking. We have tried to show how the structure of appropriation emerged from an immanent transformation of the transcendental-horizonal framework. This is a transformation not only within Heidegger's language but also within the structures of his central issue. Nonetheless, even in that latter transformation, as throughout the whole of Heidegger's thinking, a single phenomenal field holds constant, what he termed "the intimacy of the relation of being itself and ex-sistence" (GA 66: 414.24/367.20-21). It is the utterly fundamental relation that he worked out in both his earlier and later approaches. It is a relation that shows up only within a hermeneutical-phenomenological perspective. And that perspective, along with the relation of being and ex-sistence, constitutes the unity in the transformation of Heidegger's thinking.

APPENDIX 1: TRANSLATOR'S AFTERWORD

Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann's *Wege ins Ereignis* (1994) is arguably the clearest exposition of two fundamental issues in the later Heidegger – *Ereignis* and the *Kehre* – and yet it is too little read, if read at all, in Anglophone scholarship.⁴ In turn, von Herrmann's *Transzendenz und Ereignis: Heideggers "Beiträge zur Philosophie," Ein Kommentar* (2019) is an important expansion and elaboration of what he had argued in the 1994 text. The present essay, composed in 2006 to mark the thirtieth anniversary of Heidegger's death and not yet published in German, is a masterful overview of the unity of Heidegger's thinking from 1919 to 1976. Its third section offers an incisive summary of issues expounded in both of the aforementioned texts.

Now that virtually all of Heidegger's *Gesamtausgabe* is available, his pre-*Being and Time* courses (in Division 2) along with the seven major treatises on *Ereignis* (in Division 3) shed important new light on his focal topic. Therefore, Prof. von Herrmann invites us to review the entire oeuvre and to revise and even jettison what he calls "still current but outdated opinions" about it. His present essay provides principled arguments supporting that revision and, among other things, offers decisive clarifications of the following important issues.

1. HEIDEGGER'S METHOD, GOAL, AND FIRST APPROACH

1.1. The essay shows that, from beginning to end, Heidegger's work was phenomenological and hermeneutical, i.e., focused exclusively on meaningfulness and its source (*Anwesen* and *Anwesenlassen*, GA 14: 45.28–30/37.4–5), both of them in correlation with ex-sistence (*Dasein*).

1.2 Whereas *Being and Time* I.1 showed how *entities* are intelligible, Heidegger's final goal was to show how *being* is intelligible ("die Frage nach dem möglichen Verständnis des Seins überhaupt," GA 24: 444.30–31/313.1–2). The heuristic title for that goal was *der Sinn von Sein*, and his early transcendental-horizonal approach argued that being is intelligible thanks to the thrown-open clearing's time-determined horizon (GA 24: 428–45/302–313).

2. HEIDEGGER'S SECOND APPROACH

2.1 Von Herrmann argues, as Richardson had in *Heidegger*; 623–41, that there is no rupture between the early and later Heidegger, only an *immanent transformation* of the transcendental-horizonal approach into the *Ereignis*-oriented approach. Whereas *Being and Time* read ex-sistence as being thrown forward (*geworfen-entworfen*) to hold open the clearing, *Contributions* reads that thrownness as ex-sistence's being appropriated (*Ereignetsein*) to holding open the clearing. In both cases, what thrownness aka appropriatedness is inevitably *for* is: to hold open the clearing. (“Ent-wurf besagt: Er-öffnung und Offenhalten des Offenen, Lichten der Lichtung”: GA 49: 41.25–26.) What remains constant in both approaches is the fact that ex-sistence *cannot not* hold open the clearing – because ex-sistence's very way of being is *to be* the clearing (*Lichtung-sein*: GA 15: 380.11/69.4–5; GA 69: 101.12/85.23), and “being the clearing” means holding it open (*Zollikoner Seminare* 351.12–13/281.31–32).

2.2 Thus, ex-sistence does not take the initiative to “project the clearing open” *sua sponte et ex nihilo*; nor is the clearing a Separate Something, endowed with agency, that occasionally drags ex-sistence over into the clearing. Rather, the clearing is the *Worumwillen*, the *raison d'être*, the τέλος of the ἐν-τελ-είχθεια that *determines ex-sistence to be the clearing*, analogous to the way, in traditional philosophy, your human essence determines you to be your mind. Ex-sistence cannot *not* be the clearing, any more than you cannot not be your mind. We are “condemned” to hold the clearing open: that is our *Schicksal* and *Geschick*. And resolve in the early Heidegger (GA 2: 395.27/SZ 298.25) and the *Einkehr in das Ereignis* in the later Heidegger (GA 14: 51.33–34/42.30–31) are *ex aequo* names for the enactment of *amor fati*.

3. EREIGNIS

3.1 Heidegger frequently repeated – although with virtually no effect on Anglophone scholarship – that *Ereignis* is most certainly not an event, hence not even the “event of appropriation” (GA 11: 45.19–20/36.18–19; GA 12: 247.10/127.26–27; GA 14: 25.33–26.2/20.29–33; GA 70: 17.19; GA 98: 341.25). *Ereignis* is nothing chronological. It did not operate once upon a time (say, with Parmenides and Heraclitus), only to stop with Plato, but hopefully to return one day “when Being finally reveals itself.” No, *Ereignis* is always already at work wherever there is ex-sistence. It is our very way of being, our *Wesen/Wesung*. As such, it is “ontologically prior” (*ontologisch vorgängig*) and “always already operative apriori” (*das jeweils schon voraus Wesende*: GA 2: 114n). In Aristotle’s terms, it is “prior by nature” (πρότερον τῆ φύσει: *Posterior Analytics* I 2, 71b34) insofar as it is “what and how human being always already is” (τὸ τί ἦν [ἀνθρώπῳ] εἶναι: *Metaphysics* VI 1, 1025b28–29).

3.2 Heidegger terms *Ereignis* the *Gegenschwung* – which in turn is *die Sache selbst* of all his thought. This *Gegenschwung* is the reciprocity (Latin: *reci-proci-tas*) of ex-sistence ↔ clearing, the back-and-forth oscillation of (1) *ex-sistence as fated* to hold open the clearing, and (2) the *clearing as needing* ex-sistence to hold it open. Hence, there are not two different “somethings” – ex-sistence over here, the clearing over there – that need a *tertium quid* to relate them to each other. Their reciprocity *is* the relation (“Der Bezug ist das Seyn selbst, und das Menschenwesen ist der selbe Bezug”: GA 73.1: 790.5–8), something Heidegger had already intimated in *Being and Time* (8.17/28.11) when he spoke of the remarkable *Rück- oder Vorbezogenheit* of being and the questioning of being.

3.3 This reciprocity is also the primary meaning of the *Kehre*, which was not some mid-course correction in the 1930s, a supposed “turn” in Heidegger’s thinking from Dominant Dasein to Big Being. Rather, it is baked into the very *Sachverhalt* of his thinking as the reciprocity that sustains the realm of being itself. The *Kehre* in its primary sense is the ever-operative *Ur-Faktum* that defines human facticity. That is to

say: our ineluctable *Worumwillen*, our very reason-for-being – that *into* which we are thrown, that *for* which we are appropriated – is to hold open the clearing.

4. GESCHICHTE

4.1 Professor von Herrmann’s works have clearly shown (and a private communication has recently confirmed) that Heidegger’s *Seinsgeschichte* in its primary and basic sense does not fit any of the current meanings of either the English “history” or the German *Geschichte*. Rather, the primary sense of *Geschichte* bespeaks the determining claim (*Anspruch*) that the clearing has on ex-sistence, whereby ex-sistence cannot *not* hold open the clearing as the locus of intelligibility. This claim is what Heidegger means by the appropriation of ex-sistence.

4.2 In *Contributions* and elsewhere, Heidegger speaks of that claim as a *Zuruf* – the clearing’s “call” to ex-sistence to hold open the clearing (an offer ex-sistence can’t refuse) – or as a *Zuwurf*, as if the task of holding open the clearing were “thrown to” ex-sistence (into its lap, as it were), a “throw” that ex-sistence cannot not “catch” and that ideally it would resolutely take over as its own (GA 2: 431.13–15/SZ 325.41–42; GA 65: 322.7–8/254.36–37). Given the difficulty of rendering *Zuwurf* and *Zuruf* smoothly and elegantly into English, I employ “appropriation” – which is what those two terms actually mean – to translate them.

4.3 The various forms the clearing takes in the course of metaphysics (e.g., Platonic, Aristotelian, Thomistic, etc.) are what Heidegger calls *Geschicke* or *Schickungen*. Those epochal “sendings” of the clearing *reveal* entities within a certain form of being (i.e., render them intelligible in such ontological forms as εἶδος, ἐνέργεια, *esse*) while *concealing* the clearing-as-appropriating-ex-sistence. These revealing-concealing *Geschicke*, taken together, constitute the *Geschichte des Seins*: metaphysics as disclosing entities while overlooking and forgetting the clearing.

The *Geschichte des Seins* comes to an end once one resolutely embraces one’s appropriation (*die Einkehr in das Ereignis*). That

entails actively allowing the clearing its intrinsic hiddenness (φύσις κρύπτεσθαι φιλεῖ) instead of overlooking and forgetting it.

4.4 Section 3 of the essay notes the difference between the *Geschichtlichkeit* of ex-sistence and that of the clearing. Both, in fact, have to do with the appropriation of ex-sistence, but in different ways. In the early Heidegger, ex-sistence's *Geschichtlichkeit* is the ability to shape one's present-future in terms of one's mortal thrownness into sustaining the clearing (GA 2: 509.8–16/SZ 385.11–18). In the later Heidegger, the clearing's *Geschichtlichkeit* is bound up with the epochal appropriation of key metaphysical thinkers – “epochal” insofar as the appropriation of ex-sistence remains in ἐποχή, bracketed out, while entities get disclosed in various forms, from Plato's εἶδος to Nietzsche's Will to Power.

4.5 Just as the *Seinsgeschichte* in its primary sense should not be translated as the “history of being,” so too *seinsgeschichtlich* should never be translated as “being-historical” and even less so as “onto-historical.” The reason: “historical” is a misreading of *geschichtlich*, and “onto-” refers to entities rather than the clearing.

APPENDIX 2: REMARKS ON THE TRANSLATION

1. EXISTENZ, DASEIN

Von Herrmann helpfully distinguishes the (inseparable) ontological and ontic aspects of human being by using “*Existenz*” to name the *Sein* of human being and “*Dasein*” to name the human being as *ein Seiendes*. The present translation leaves *Existenz* in the German and renders *Dasein* as “ex-sistence” (etymologically: *sistere*: “made to stand” + *ex*: “out ahead”).

2. SEIN SELBST, SEIN DES SEIENDEN

I translate *Sein selbst* qua *Aufgeschlossenheit* as “openedness” and *Sein* qua *Entdecktheit des Seienden* as the “disclosedness” of entities.

3. UMSICHT

Heidegger's *Umsicht* is his retrieval of the unsaid in Aristotle's φρόνησις, the ability to act well in human affairs. The Latin translation of φρόνησις is *prudentia*, which is a contraction of *pro-videntia*, to see ahead (*pro-videre*) to what one wants to accomplish. *Umsicht* is not a matter of "looking around" (*circumspicere*, "um"-sehen) but, rather, of *foresight* into one's goal or purpose.

4. WAHRHEIT DES SEINS/LICHTUNG

Von Herrmann makes it clear that the phrase *die Wahrheit des Seins* is a synonym for *die Lichtung* (see above, p. 50.22–23), and therefore I translate that more cumbersome phrase by the less unwieldy term "the clearing."

5. WAHRHEIT, ἀλήθεια, "TRUTH"

At the beginning of his career (GA 2: 4–9/SZ 219.33–37), and again in the middle (GA 45: 98.8–12/87.20–24), and yet again in two *retractationes* towards the end (GA 14: 86.16–20/70.2–5; GA 15: 262.5–10/161.31–34), Heidegger made it unambiguously clear that ἀλήθεια should never be translated by *Wahrheit* except when it refers to "correctness" or *adaequatio intellectus et rei* (ἀλήθεια-3). That notwithstanding, in 1967 he admitted that "*Wahrheit*" had occasionally "slipped in" to his work (*schob sich dazwischen*: GA 15: 262.10/161.34).

Accordingly, as above, I translate the *Aufgeschlossenheit* of the clearing (ἀλήθεια-1) as "openedness" and the *Entdecktheit des Seienden* (ἀλήθεια-2) as "disclosedness," and I put scare quotes around the word "truth" when it "slips in" to Heidegger's texts as a name for either *Aufgeschlossenheit* or *Entdecktheit*.

6. ZEITIGUNG, ZEITLICHKEIT, ZEIT, TEMPORALITÄT

6.1 In keeping with Heidegger's clarifications, I translate *sich zeitigen* and *Zeitigung* as "to unfold" and "the unfolding" (cf. *Zollikoner*

Seminare 203.7-8/158.10-11: “Zeitigung als Sich-zeitigen ist Sich-entfalten, aufgehen und so erscheinen” and GA 73.1: 85.18-19: “φύσις: das Sichentfaltende Aufgehen”). *Sich zeitigen* and *Zeitigung* are usually mistranslated as “to temporalize” and “temporalization,” terms that say nothing and obscure everything.

6.2 In the “remarkable reciprocity” of ex-sistence ↔ clearing, *Zeitlichkeit* pertains to ex-sistence, and *Zeit* (aka *Temporalität*) pertains cor-relatively to the clearing. Heidegger made it clear that *Zeit* was only a preliminary name for the clearing (*Vorname*: GA 9: 376.11/285.26-27 *et passim*), and therefore I use scare quotes in translating *Zeit* as “time.” To distinguish *Zeitlichkeit* and *Temporalität* in English, I translate the former as “temporality” and the latter as the “time-character” of the clearing/being.

6.3 Ex-sistence as the temporal movement of being-ahead-of-itself-as-coming-back (*Sich-vorweg-sein als Zurückkommen*: GA 21: 147.23-26/124.19-20) is what makes possible the disclosure of entities. But it is important not to confuse two different kinds of “coming back” or “returning”: ex-sistence returning to *entities* vs. ex-sistence returning to *itself*.

1. Disclosing entities (e.g., *Being and Time* §18) is a matter of ex-sistence
 - being ahead of entities, directed to purposes, while simultaneously
 - returning *to those entities* to disclose them in terms of those purposes.
2. But self-disclosive temporality (e.g., *Being and Time* §65) is a matter of ex-sistence
 - being ahead of *itself* (as coming-to-itself, *zu-kommen*) while simultaneously
 - *returning to itself* in the sense of *remaining with* what and how ex-sistence always already is, “das heißt sein ‘Gewesen’” (GA 2: 431.17/SZ 326.1).

3. Heidegger holds that

- like all forms of κίνησις, ex-sistence has its *present* in terms of its *becoming*, its being-ahead-of-itself; and
- ex-sistence’s present and becoming are grounded in how ex-sistence always already is: its *Gewesen* or *Gewesenheit* (GA 2: 455.20–21/SZ 344.15–16: *aus ihr [Gewesenheit] erst Zukunft und Gegenwart sich zeitigen*);
- ex-sistence’s becoming thus is a matter of “returning to” itself in the sense of *remaining with* its ἀρχή, the very source of its becoming, namely: how it always already is (GA 9: 293.10–11/224.5–7).

In short, ex-sistence’s *Wesen* or way of being is *becoming* as coming-to-itself; and becoming, for all the “progress” it may entail, is a matter of ex-sistence’s remaining with – i.e., *being* – what it always already is. Ex-sistence’s *Wesen* is its *Ge-wesen*.

Confusion on the two meanings of “coming back” is widespread in Heidegger scholarship and has fundamentally obscured the kinetic structure of temporality. However, in Section 2 of the essay von Herrmann gets the matter exactly right.

6.4 The unspoken but absolutely basic presupposition informing Heidegger’s concept of temporality is the structure of κίνησις in Aristotle. On May 12, 1971, Heidegger told a young visitor that if he wanted to understand Heidegger, he first had to understand the two issues that guided him to the heart of his thinking: Husserl’s categorical intuition of being (*Logical Investigations*, vol. 2, VI/6) and Aristotle’s doctrine of κίνησις (*Physics* III 1–3). Thus, what Heidegger said in 1951 about studying Aristotle (GA 8: 78.9/73.33) applies here as well. Aristotle famously declared that if you don’t understand κίνησις, you can’t understand φύσις (*Physics* III 1, 200b14–15) – which Heidegger might gloss: If you don’t understand κίνησις, you’ll never understand *temporality*, much less φύσις.

7. HEIDEGGER'S "FIRST" AND "SECOND" APPROACHES

Each time he refers to Heidegger's two *Wege* (approaches, paths), von Herrmann tends to write out the full description of each one, e.g., *der transzendental-horizontale Weg* and *der seins- oder ereignisgeschichtliche Weg*. The repetition becomes a bit awkward when translated each time into English. Therefore, after the essay has made it clear what the structure of each approach is, I generally simplify the two *Wege* into "the first approach" and "the second approach" – which might equally be rendered as "the first phase" and "the second phase." (Re *geschichtlich*, see above, "Translator's Afterword, no. 4.")

APPENDIX 3: LEXICONS

GERMAN-ENGLISH

Abriegelung	self-isolation
Abstand	distantiation
Anwesenheit	presentness
Aufgeschlossenheit	openedness
bedeutsam	meaningful, significant
begegnen	to encounter
Begriff	concept, notion
Bekümmern	care, caring
Bergen	concealing
Blickbahn	perspective, focus
Blickstellung	viewpoint
Dasein, Da-sein	ex sistance
Differenz	distinction, difference
eigen (see also ureigen, ureigenst)	own, proper
Eigentum	is "owned" by
einrücken	to enter
entrücken	to transpose
enthüllen	to disclose, uncover
Entschluss	resolve (noun)

entwerfen	to project, throw open, hold open
Entwerfendsein	projectively opening up
ereignen	to appropriate
Ereignis, Er-eignis	appropriation, ap-propiation
erleben	to experience
Erleben, Erlebnis	experience
Erschlossenheit	openedness
Existenz	Existenz (rarely: ex sistence)
existenzial	ex-sistential
Existieren	ex-sisting (gerund)
existierend	ex-sistent; ex-sisting (adj.)
ekstatisch	ex-static
Gegenschwung	reciprocity
Gegewärtigen	making present
Gegnen	encountering (gerund)
Gegnet	countryside
gehören in	belongs to, is integral to
Gelassenheit	releasement
Geschichtlichsein	being historical (italicized)
geworfen, Geworfenheit	thrown, thrownness
historisch	“historical”
je und je	always and ever
jeweilig	particular, (occasionaly:) always
Man, das	“everyone”
mit-gehen	to follow out, to track
Neigung	inclination
Praesenz	being present
Sein	being
Sein als solches, Sein überhaupt	being itself
Selbsterschlossenheit	self-openedness
Sinn	intelligibility; sense
Sinnrichtung	the direction intelligibility takes
Sorge	concern (following William J. Richardson)

Sorgetragen	concern for
Temporalität (cf. Zeit)	time-character [of being]
übersteigen	to stand out beyond
Umsicht	foresight
umsichtig	foresightful
Umwelt	environment;
	most immediate world
Unterschied	distinction, difference
ureigen	own unprecedented
ureigenst	most basic and core
ursprünglichst	most fundamental and original
Währen und Walten, Wesensgeschehen	the prevailing and perduring way something comes to pass and is
Wahrheit des Seins	clearing (see “Notes on the Translation,” 4)
Wandel	transformation
Weg	approach; path, trajectory
Wesung	way of being
Zeit (cf. Temporalität)	“time”
zeithaft	time-determined
Zeitigung	unfolding
Zeitlichkeit	temporality
Zusammengehören	reciprocity (of ex sistance and the clearing)
Zuwurf	the clearing as thrown to ex-sistence

ENGLISH-GERMAN

always and ever	je und je
approach (cf. “way”)	Weg
appropriated, ap-propriated	ereignet, er-eignet
appropriation, ap-propriation	Ereignis, Er-eignis
basic	fundamental

most basic and core	ureigenst
being (noun)	Sein
being itself	Sein als solches, Sein überhaupt
being historical [shaping one's future]	Geschichtlichsein des Daseins
being present	Praesenz
belong to	gehören
care, caring	Bekümmern
caring about	Sorgetragen
clearing (see "Notes" 4)	Lichtung, Wahrheit des Seins
concealing (gerund)	Bergen
concern	Sorge
concern for	Sorgetragen
concept (cf. "notion")	Begriff
core (adj., as in "most basic and core")	ureigenst
countryside	Gegnet
difference	Differenz
disclose	entdecken, enthüllen
disclosedness	Entdecktheit
distinction	Unterschied
direction intelligibility takes	Sinnrichtung
encounter (verb)	begegnen
encountering (gerund)	Gegnen
enter	einrücken
"everyone"	das Man
experience (verb); experience (noun)	erleben; Erleben, Erlebnis
ex-ist	existieren
Existenz	Existenz
ex-sistence	Dasein, Da-sein
ex-sistent	existierend
ex-sistential	existenzial
ex-sisting (gerund)	Existieren
ex-sisting (participle)	existierend
ex-static	ekstatisch
focus	Blickbahn

follow out	mitgehen
foresight, foresightful	Umsicht, umsichtig
fundamental	fundamental
“historical”	historisch
hold open, holding open	Offenhalten, offenhaltend
immediate world	(See “most immediate world”)
inclination	Neigung
intelligibility	Sinn
is integral to	gehören
making present	Gegenwärtigen,
meaningful, meaningfully present	bedeutsam
meaningfulness	Bedeutsamkeit
most fundamental and original	ursprünglichst
most immediate world	Umwelt
notion (cf. Cicero, <i>Academica</i> I 7, 22)	Begriff
openedness	Aufgeschlossenheit
own (adj.)	eigen
“owned” by	Eigentum
particular	jeweilig
perspective	Blickbahn
presentness	Anwesenheit
prevailing and perduring way	Währen und Walten,
something comes to pass and is	Wesensgeschehen
project (verb), projectively hold open	entwerfen
proper	eigen
reciprocity	Gegenschwung
releasement	Gelassenheit
resolve (noun)	Entschluss
self-isolation	Abriegelung
self-openedness	Selbsterschlossenheit
sense	Sinn
significant	bedeutsam
stand out beyond	übersteigen
temporality	Zeitlichkeit

thrown	geworfen
thrown open	entworfen
throwness	Geworfenheit
“throwness to,” “throw to” (re the clearing)	Zuwurf
“time”	Zeit
time-character [of being]	Temporalität
time-determined	temporal
track (verb)	mitgehen
transformation	Wandel
transposed into	einrückt
transposition into	Einrückung
“truth” (see “Notes” 4)	Wahrheit
uncover	enthüllen
unfolding (noun), to unfold	Zeitigung, sich zeitigen
viewpoint	Blickstellung
way	Weg
way of being	Wesung, Wesen
world	Welt

NOTES

- 1 For an interpretation of this course as a whole, see F.-W. von Herrmann, *Hermeneutik und Reflexion: Der Begriff der Phänomenologie bei Heidegger und Husserl*. Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 2000.
- 2 [Translator's note] The *Geschichtlichkeit* of the clearing, unlike that of ex-sistence, has to do with the clearing's *Entzug* and *Zukehr/Zuwurf*, i.e., its remaining intrinsically concealed (*entzogen*) even as it appropriates ex-sistence (*sich zukehren/zurwerfen*) to hold open the clearing. Cf. F.-W. von Herrmann and F. Alfieri, *Martin Heidegger*, 47.8–10: “Die Geschichtlichkeit der Wahrheit des Seins zeigt sich in ihrem Walten zwischen Entzug oder Zukehr der Wahrheit des Seins. Die Zukehr faßt Heidegger als die Ereignung des Ereignisses, den Entzug dagegen als die Enteignung des Ereignisses.”
- 3 For an interpretation of this entire issue see F.-W. von Herrmann, *Wege ins Ereignis*, esp. 1–84.
- 4 [Translator's note] The book was highly recommended to me years ago by William J. Richardson and was essential in shaping the “paradigm shift.”