Gatherings

THE HEIDEGGER CIRCLE ANNUAL

2025

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Gatherings is a publication of the Heidegger Circle, a group of scholars who have been meeting annually in North America since 1966 to discuss the work of Martin Heidegger.

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SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

All submissions other than letters and brief responses to articles (under 1000 words) should be formatted for blind review and include a title page with paper title, author name, and affiliation (if applicable). Papers should be submitted single space, Times New Roman font, 12 point, under one of the following file formats: PDF, RTF, DOC, or DOCX. Any Greek words or text should be entered as Unicode characters. Papers should adhere to *The Chicago Manual of Style* and follow the citation scheme provided at the end of each issue. The same paper may be submitted to the yearly meeting of the Heidegger Circle and to *Gatherings*. All papers should be sent as an attachment to gatherings@heidegger-circle.org.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Letter from the Editors

Kevin Aho and Shane Ewegen

To begin, we want to remind readers that the 59th Annual Meeting of the Heidegger Circle conference took place May 15–18, 2025, at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, PA, with Doug Peduti as Convener. The 60th Annual Meeting will be held May 14–17, 2026, at Emory University in Atlanta (Decatur), GA, with Benjamin Brewer and Andrew Mitchell serving as Conveners.

After four successful years serving as editor of *Gatherings*, Scott Campbell (Nazareth University) has stepped down, and Kevin Aho (Florida Gulf Coast University) was elected to serve as the new editor. As a wave of submissions came in to meet the February deadline for the 2025 issue (Vol. 15) of *Gatherings*, Kevin quickly realized he needed additional editorial support to help manage and expedite high quality reviewer reports. Shane Ewegen (Trinity College) graciously agreed to step in as co-editor and together they added several new members to the editorial board, including Dana Belu (California State University, Dominguez Hills), Tobias Keiling (University of Warwick), Morganna Lambeth (California State University, Fullerton), Ian Moore (Loyola Marymount University), and Kate Withy (Georgetown University).

Gatherings Vol. 15 features a mix of articles from new and emerging scholars as well as established and internationally renowned figures. The volume begins with an article by Mat Messerschmidt that applies Heidegger's notion of *Unheimlichkeit* to William Wordsworth's autobiographical poem *The Prelude* to reconcile interpretative differences in Romanticism scholarship and broaden and deepen our understanding of "nature" in general. Former *Gatherings* editor Richard Polt follows with a paper that engages the opening section of *Über den Anfang* (GA

70) as a point of entry that can help make sense of some of the denser and more esoteric themes in Heidegger's later thought, including concepts of inception (*Anfang*), event (*Ereignis*), and bearing out (*Austrag*). Benjamin Brewer's article, "Thinking Ontological Difference in the Atomic Age," draws on archival research to illuminate the extent to which Heidegger was involved in the anti-nuclear protest movement (*Kampf dem Atomtod*) in Germany in the late 1950s and how his recurrent engagement with the destructive power of nuclear energy exposes tensions in Heidegger's thought on the essence of technology, the ontological difference, and the question of what it means to be human. Daniela Vallega-Neu follows by expanding on her earlier work on the body-problem in Heidegger by situating the problem within the context of his beyng-historical writings (esp. GA 65 and GA 71), arguing that the revealing/concealing event of beyng is to be grasped as always prior to and more originary than the body. Rylie Johnson develops another thread in Heidegger's beying-historical writings by interpreting the history of beyng in terms of the dynamic interplay of emergence (*Aufgang*) and submergence (*Untergang*). Against the Spenglerian view, she argues that *Untergang* does not indicate doom or decline but rather the inevitable submergence that lays open the possibility for another beginning. Joshua Fahmy-Hooke provides the final article in the volume, focusing on §44 of *Being and Time* to show the unacknowledged influence of Husserl's *Logical Investigations* on Heidegger's account of truth. Fahmy-Hooke goes on to show the limitations of Husserl's influence that prompted Heidegger's turn to a heterodox reading of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*.

Following a tradition in recent issues of *Gatherings*, Vol. 15 also includes a book forum, in this case on Ian Moore's *Dialogue on the Threshold: Heidegger and Trakl* (SUNY Press 2022), with accompanying commentary by Alberto Moreiras, Katherine Davies, and John Rose, with Moore offering a reply. The volume concludes with reviews of Filippo Casati's *Heidegger and the Contradiction of Being: An Analytic Interpretation of the Later Heidegger* (Routledge 2022), Marlyn Stendera and Emily

Hughes' *Heidegger's Alternative History of Time* (Routledge 2024), and Erik Kuravsky's *Transcendence in Heidegger's Early Thought: Toward Being as Event* (Palgrave Macmillan 2023).

In closing, the editors would like to acknowledge the passing of Professor John Sallis (1938–2025). Sallis was a giant in continental philosophy, having published seminal books and articles on Heidegger as well as other key figures such as Plato, Kant, Hegel, Nietzsche, and Derrida. Over the course of six decades, he influenced and mentored countless students and served as *Doktorvater* for many current members of the Heidegger Circle. Sallis held named chairs at Penn State University, Vanderbilt University, Loyola University of Chicago, and Boston College, where he spent the last twenty years of his career. Both Shane Ewegen and *Gatherings* book review editor David Abergel were doctoral students of his. Sallis's influence is as far reaching as it is enduring: his profound insights into the nature of things will continue to shape the landscape of academic philosophy for generations to come.

"The Presence of the Unhomely in the Home": Reading Wordsworth with Heidegger

Mat Messerschmidt

ABSTRACT: I apply Heidegger's notion of *Unheimlichkeit*, unhomeliness or uncanniness, to a reading of William Wordsworth's *Prelude*. Wordsworth thematizes a kind of paradoxical being-at-home-while-not-being-at-home, which is a stance of authenticity in the work of Heidegger, and can be read as treating "nature" as a name of Being. Heidegger's notion of unhomeliness proves to be a powerful tool in aiding our understanding of the dynamics of Wordsworthian nature poetry. In closing, I raise the possibility of Heidegger's thought as the basis for a broader rethinking of Romantic poetry that could reconcile the differences between some prominent historical scholars of Romanticism.

KEYWORDS: romanticism; nature; poetry; uncanniness; abode

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> "Eine *seltsame* Sache oder *gar* eine *unheimliche* Sache, daß wir erst auf den Boden springen müssen, auf dem wir eigentlich stehen."
> "A strange thing or even an *uncanny/unhomely* [*unheimliche*] thing, that we must first leap onto the soil on which we truly stand."
> Heidegger, *What is Called Thinking?* (GA 8: 44/41)[1]

HEIDEGGER, HÖLDERLIN, *UNHEIMLICHKEIT*

How does one read poetry with Heidegger? The question might seem strange at first blush, since, when we are reading Heidegger, we are very often literally reading poetry with Heidegger. It would seem, then, that we already have the answer in concrete form.

When reading poetry along with him, though, Heidegger's readers almost universally have mixed feelings as to whether we are reading poetry the way we should read poetry. I would like to briefly focus here on Heidegger's writings on Hölderlin, since in this article I will propose that we can use Heidegger's reading of Hölderlin to powerfully enhance our reading of another Romantic poet, namely, William Wordsworth. Scholars tend to acknowledge that there is something profound in Heidegger's decision to read Hölderlin's engagement with nature as an *ontological* meditation, and they typically feel there is something right about reading him as a kind of poet of finitude.[2]

There is, however, strong consensus around the notion that Heidegger's nationalist insistence upon reading Hölderlin as a poet of the Germans foreshortens the potential of his overall interpretation. Hölderlin is the poet of the "other beginning," an event that, on Heidegger's telling, is to be radical in its unfamiliarity. Yet in Heidegger's writings on Hölderlin, this event seems always to be domesticated in being forced to belong to the familiarity of the German's native soil.[3]

Charles Bambach illustrates how, in order to make Hölderlin's poetry entirely about the German encounter with the event of Being via the recollection of the Greek ontological experience, Heidegger ignores much of the specificity of people, things, and locales in Hölderlin, much of which does not align with his nationalist reading.[4] It is due to this sort of suppression of details that, for Jennifer Anna Gosetti-Ferencei,

the greatest point of distinction between Hölderlin's sense of poetic thinking and Heidegger's comes down to "the problem of the subject."[5] Heidegger denies that the poet qua poet *is* a subject, and believes that poetry has the power to overcome subjectivism as a metaphysical paradigm. This implies the unimportance of contingent, individual experience: "In Heidegger's account, the poetic self, such as there is one, has no history of experiences as a being among beings."[6] Hölderlin, in violation of this reading of his work, places great emphasis on individual subjective experience in the production of poetry.[7] To sum up, we might take Michel Haar to be offering a synopsis of critical discontent with Heidegger's reading of Hölderlin when he says, "[It is] paradoxical that the philosopher of *Unheimlichkeit*, of anxiety, as well as of estranged joy, the thinker of the abyss of being as the wholly other than beings … has so fully privileged the poetic question for the Homeland and for the proper, familiar, domestic abode."[8]

The scholars cited above stick with the Heidegger-Hölderlin encounter, seeking to recover its promise from the pitfalls and blind spots borne of Heidegger's nationalism. That is an intuitive approach, and one that I certainly do not want to denounce here. I, however, propose to do something different. With the remainder of this article, I will use Heidegger's articulation of the poetic dynamics he sees in the work of Hölderlin to put forth a reading of William Wordsworth's *Prelude*. My premise is not at all that the Heidegger-Hölderlin relationship must be left behind, but only that moving the Heideggerian poetic lexicon that is developed around the notion of *Unheimlichkeit* to a non-German context might allow us to think in a fresh way about Heidegger's usefulness as an aide in reading poetry, especially Romantic poetry. Ultimately, we will see that Heidegger can help us resolve a critical impasse in historical Wordsworth studies, and that the experience of allowing Heidegger to help us through this impasse might even be able to help us think about what Romantic poetry is, in a broader sense. All of this is based on the conviction that Heidegger's term *Unheimlichkeit* is able to express a certain sense of the finitude of human language and existence that is either missed or

misrepresented in some other ways of talking about Romantic poetry, a claim that will be elucidated in what follows.

Before diving into the *Prelude* text, let me first offer some birds-eye observations about what motivates the task of reading Wordsworth via Heidegger. One of the catalysts for Heidegger's lengthy engagement with Hölderlin is that nature as φύσις is a Greek name for Being; Hölderlin's *Natur* can thus be mapped onto φύσις such that the nature poet becomes a poet of Being.[9] My sense is that the same can be done with Wordsworth, and that this does not represent a great departure from the assumptions of the Wordsworth scholars whom I engage here. The human being's relationship to nature-as-Being in Hölderlin's poetry is characterized by Heidegger as a kind of *Unheimlichkeit*, which I will mostly translate as *unhomeliness*, and not "uncanniness," in order to highlight the importance of the notion of the home. Human beings are unhomely in that they arrive at home among beings via the self-concealment of Being, thereby losing the source of homeliness as they gain a home. The poet is doubly unhomely in turning back toward the concealed home that is Being – an act which undermines the easy familiarity, the homeliness, of life in the world among beings. There is a very basic sense in which Wordsworth's story in *The Prelude* resonates with this dynamic. Wordsworth leaves the literal home of the Lake District in order to find himself at home on solitary and unfamiliar mountain passes in Switzerland and in other similarly unfamiliar environs. He leaves the natural scenes and natural entities that have always been emblematic, for him, of nature, precisely in order to seek nature. In what follows, I will show that the Wordsworthian "unhomeliness" in relation to nature corresponds to the unhomeliness Heidegger sees in Hölderlin in a more profound way than this, however.[10]

WORDSWORTH: ONTOLOGICAL DIFFERENCE AND NATURE

Wordsworth begins *The Prelude* with the stated intention of offering up "some philosophic Song / Of Truth that cherishes our daily life" (1805 VI.230–231).[11] What follows over the course of the work is the story of *his* life, narrated as the story of the poet's winding relationship with

nature. To begin, I will introduce the passage that will be our focus, the so-called Simplon Pass episode, and then will lay out some established readings of the dynamics of this relationship in *The Prelude*, before showing how Heidegger can help us read the poem.

Here are the opening lines of the Simplon Pass scene, which serve as a convenient place to begin a discussion of those dynamics.

> Imagination! – lifting up itself
> Before the eye and progress of my song
> Like an unfathered vapour, here that power,
> In all the might of its endowments, came
> Athwart me. I was lost as in a cloud,
> Halted without a struggle to break through,
> And now recovering, to my soul I say –
> 'I recognize thy glory': in such strength
> Of usurpation, in such visitings
> Of awful promise, when the light of sense
> Goes out in flashes that have shown to us
> The invisible world, doth greatness make abode,
> There harbours whether we be young or old.
> Our destiny, our nature, and our home
> Is with infinitude, and only there … (1805 VI.528–539)

The passage above, which bursts into the middle of Wordsworth's narration of a hiking trip he took through the Simplon Pass in the Swiss Alps, marks the first point in *The Prelude* at which imagination is unreservedly celebrated as triumphantly having come into its own. The poem as a whole is the tale of the "growth of the poet's mind," and the growth of the poet's mind qua poet necessitates the growth of imagination.

From the first lines of the poem, the journey that imagination will take is depicted as that of a homeless being in search of a home. In the opening passage of *The Prelude*, Wordsworth asks, "What dwelling shall receive me, in what vale / Shall be my harbor, underneath what grove / Shall I take up my home?" (1805 I.11–13). Any reader's

understanding of the poem's meaning as a whole will be informed by the way in which she reads the dynamics of imagination's interaction with nature in this search for a home.[12]

The dynamics of this interaction – whether it is a confrontation, a vanquishing, a reconciliation, or something else – have been interpreted in many different ways. Generally, however, the debate has seemed to focus more on the task of defining the character of imagination than on considering that of nature. Instead, I will start here from the "nature" with which imagination is engaging: what it is, ultimately, but first, what it is not.

Nature is often taken to be suppressed, hidden from view, or overcome when imagination comes into its own in *The Prelude*, and the Simplon Pass episode is taken by some critics of very different stripes to be the paradigmatic case of this agonistic relationship. As a first example, I will briefly summarize *The Prelude* as understood by M. H. Abrams, whose reading is influential. The poem's story is a secularization of the biblical narrative as recounted in *Paradise Lost* and *Regain'd*. The poet starts as a child in Edenic harmony with nature. As imagination grows in strength, it rebels against nature, but it ultimately is led back to nature, by the end of the poem, by "spots of time," which only are made possible by imagination, and which remind the poet of who he is, namely, a child of nature. *The Prelude* is thus a story of "unity achieved, lost, and regained."[13]

The Simplon Pass episode stands directly in the middle of this saga and thus would be the high point of imagination's rebellion against nature, for Abrams as for others. Wordsworth and a traveling companion are sojourning across Europe and have just realized that they have crossed the peak of the Swiss Alps without knowing, at the time, that they were crossing it. Suddenly, in the midst of their dejection at having missed the climactic moment of the hike, Wordsworth is arrested by imaginative vision. The language suggestive of blockage and covering is indeed plentiful, offering potential confirmation of Abrams's thesis of a loss of nature in this climatic moment of the work's middle books. Imagination "lifts itself up" before "the eye." The imaginative "cloud"

is heavy enough to prevent further movement; the poet's view of the path is "usurped," and, most importantly, "the light of sense / Goes out," revealing "The invisible world."

There can be no disagreement over the fact that a tradeoff exists between perception of outward objects of sense and imaginative perception of "the invisible world" here. This tradeoff reveals something fundamental about the self:

> … in such visitings
> […]
> … doth greatness make abode,
> There harbours, whether we be young or old.
> Our destiny, our nature, and our home
> Is with infinitude, and only there … (1805 VI.532, 535–539)

We will return to the topic of what exactly has been revealed, what the meaning of these lines is.

But what happens to nature in these lines? Is it really "lost," as Abrams's reading suggests? It is not right to say, as opponents of Abrams's interpretation such as Geoffrey Hartman do, that, in this moment, Wordsworth's "blindness to the external world which is the tragic, pervasive, and necessary condition of the poet" amounts to "the independence of imagination from nature."[14] To call this "blindness" the *necessary* condition of the poet implies the rejection of Abrams's belief that, ultimately, union with nature is "regained" by the end of *The Prelude*, after the Simplon scene. But our ability to arbitrate this dispute is hampered by the fact that we have not yet established what exactly nature is, in the passage or in *The Prelude*. We *can* say, though, what Wordsworthian "nature" is according to the assumptions of Hartman's claim. The notion that nature is suppressed relies on the observation that "the light of sense / Goes out," that sensible objects in the natural world are lost to sense. If this is right, though, then his belief that imagination blocks out "nature" in this passage receives its justification from the unstated assumption that nature is coextensive

with, and even identical with, the sum total of objects in the natural world.[15] This is not a warranted assertion about the meaning of nature in the poetry of Wordsworth. The "universe of death" (1805 XIII.141), the mechanical universe mentioned in Book XIII, is the material world viewed with "vulgar sense" (1805 XIII.140) and is by no means "nature."

I would rather like to propose that Wordsworth's "nature" is governed by a logic similar to Heidegger's Being. As Being is distinguished from beings by the so-called "ontological difference," so nature is distinguished from the things of nature. The moment when the light of sense goes out and the things of nature are lost is the moment that those same things of nature open up for the poet, via their own self-sacrifice, an encounter with nature itself. The loss of the things is not the loss of nature, because the two are not the same. Abrams believes that Wordsworth's status as a nature poet depends on somehow *growing out* of this moment, whereas Hartman believes that Wordsworth cannot be a nature poet because the Simplon Pass experience is not a moment to be overcome, but instead expresses the zenith of Wordsworth's development. Both views assume that, momentarily (Abrams) or finally (Hartman), an absolute disjuncture between poetic vision and nature takes place here. To the contrary, I read this passage as a depiction of abyssal insight into nature. A Heideggerian frame thus gives us a means to move beyond this critical impasse. To a certain extent, we can read the *Natur* of his Hölderlin lectures onto Wordsworth's *nature*, reading nature, in both cases, as a name for Being.

As with the Hölderlinian poetic insight of the *Ister* lectures, we can speak here of a disorientation of the homely and the unhomely, of "the presence of the unhomely in the home" (GA 53: 177/142). This occurs on the most basic level as the imposition of a suddenly alien "natural" scene upon the traveler on the Alpine pass who, through five and a half books of the *Prelude*, has shown himself to be nowhere more at home than among natural scenes. Beyond that, though, the identity of the homely and the unhomely is enacted explicitly by the temporal rhetoric of the passage. "Our nature" is with infinitude – and yet this infinitude is temporally strange:

> Our destiny, our nature, and our home
> Is with infinitude – and only there;
> With hope it is, hope that can never die,
> Effort, and expectation, and desire,
> And something evermore about to be. (1805 VI.539–542)

To say that "our nature, and our home / Is with infinitude" sounds initially triumphant. Yet this home turns out to be revealed, in the immediately following lines, to be a home we can never reach: our destiny is not to dwell *in* infinitude, but to be oriented toward it, in "hope," "effort," "expectation," and "desire." None of these futurally oriented stances are compatible with already being at one's destination, being simply *at home*. We discover, in imagination's most soaring moment, that "our nature" is to be oriented toward "something evermore about to be," but something that is never here. We are never, then, at home – despite the fact that coming to this realization requires precisely the process of coming to be at home in natural settings that unfolds during the poet's childhood. We might sense a resonance here with Heidegger's term *Aufenthalt*, simultaneously "abode" and "sojourn," indicating at one and the same time a state of being at home and of being away from home. Our nature is *unheimlich*, *Nicht-zuhause*, sensing, even from within the abode, that it belongs elsewhere, that it is at home elsewhere, in an infinitude that we cannot reach.[16] The hoped-for union *would* occur in the future, if it ever occurred; it is placed in a future in that it is hoped for, desired, and expected, but the union is "evermore" delayed. This infinitude that we cannot reach, this ambivalent home, is nature.

DER ISTER: HOMELINESS, UNHOMELINESS, TRAGEDY, COUNTERTURNING

At this point, before continuing on with Wordsworth, a brief description of the Heidegger text that is arguably most germane to this reading is in order. The text I have in mind is the 1942 summer semester lecture course, *Hölderlin's Hymn "The Ister."* While the ostensible topic of the course is clearly Hölderlin's poem "The Ister," just over half the volume, its middle, is dedicated to a reading of Sophocles' *Antigone*, especially its choral ode, through Hölderlin's translation of

it. This is motivated by the fact that Hölderlin (sometimes) translates δεινόν as *unheimlich*, uncanny or unhomely – the word, Heidegger believes, that characterizes the Ister (the Danube River), which symbolizes the German poet. Not just unhomeliness, but (Sophoclean) tragedy, is thereby read into the "Ister" poem. Like a river, a human being is destined to lose sight of the ultimate source, as Being conceals itself in bestowing meaningfulness onto beings. In this way, the human being comes to be at home in a quotidian, mundane sense, becoming occupied with the beings with which it has familiarized itself, as a river could be said to become occupied with the streambeds it claims, away from the source and only by departing from the source. This very process of making a home, however, involves a straying from home in a deeper sense, in that Being is thereby lost - always already lost, we might say – to concealment. The term *Gegenwendigkeit*, counterturning, is used in the course of the lectures in two important and mirroring ways, both of which have to do with this dynamic of concealment. One way is the "counterturning of Being itself," which refers to Being's own dynamic of concealing-in-revealing as it conceals itself in the bestowal of the beinghood of beings (GA 53: 95/77). Reflecting the counterturning of Being is the counterturning of the human being as δεινόν, as unhomely. The human being loses Being to concealment as she takes her place among beings, such that Heidegger feels authorized to speak of "the unhomely as the ground of the human being" (GA 53: 83/68). The counterturning of the human being is the turning back to the always already lost (and therefore itself always unhomely) home that is Being, appropriately represented in *Antigone*'s choral ode, Heidegger claims, by the hearth, the center of the home (GA 53: 139–142/111–114). This turning back toward the hearth of Being, associated with (Sophocles' or Hölderlin's) poetry, involves a kind of dislodgement from beings.[17] Antigone as tragic hero is thus an embodiment of counterturning and a figuration of the poetic in her tragic readiness to face death, to depart from the world of beings: "It is [death] to which Antigone already belongs, which she knows, as one who already belongs to Being. For this reason,

since she is becoming homely in Being [*im Sein heimischwerdend*], she is, among beings, the most unhomely [*die Unheimischste*]" (GA 53: 150/120).[18] Heidegger returns to the "Ister" poem in order to associate this counterturning with the Ister River, which, for Heidegger, is the poet: the river "appears almost / To go backwards" towards its source or home.[19] It is in the figure of the wandering river that Heidegger's sense of *Aufenthalt*, a simultaneous sojourning-abroad-and-coming-home, is illustrated most clearly: "This wandering that the river itself *is* determines the manner in which the human being becomes homely upon the earth … The wandering that the river *is* holds sways and essences in the determination to win the earth as the 'ground' of the homely … Wandering determines what it is to become homely upon the earth" (GA 53: 35–36/30–31).

It seems best, for the sake of distilled clarity, to add to the above a synopsis of Heidegger's thinking in the lectures without reference to the imagery of a Hölderlin poem or the plot of a Sophocles play. I could not hope to do so better than Katherine Withy does here:

> In entering [B]eing's *polemos* and becoming pervaded by [B]eing, the human being gives up [B]eing. *In coming to its own essence or home, the human being gives up its essence or home* [emphasis mine]. In coming to presence, the human being absences … The human being's absencing, in turn, is the finding of [B]eing's self-concealment – which here includes the concealment of the origin of the disclosive power … Being gives itself and refuses itself to the human being, who is thus always seeking the homely.[20]

All that I would add to this is that the "seeking" that follows from the absencing is most essentially associated with tragic heroes or, more germane to our purposes here, poets.

THE INFINITELY DEFERRED HOMECOMING: TIME AND DEATH IN *THE PRELUDE*

I have already made reference to some of the *Ister* lectures' claims about poetry in relation to Wordsworth's *Prelude*, but at this point, we can describe in a more comprehensive way how it manifests the *Ister* lectures' vision of poetry. The loss of nature – a loss which has always already happened (more on this temporal claim below) – takes place of *necessity*, as both Abrams and Hartman agree. The poet *qua human being* is compelled to wander in search of nature, the lost home, a task which Wordsworth ultimately undertakes in the most literal fashion possible, on a hiking journey, an *Aufenthalt*, through continental Europe. The poet *qua poet* looks always back to nature and, in a scene like the Simplon Pass episode, which we began discussing above, is subjected to a violent "counterturning" back toward nature as the lost home. But this home remains constitutively, tragically, out of reach, the poet's union with it always "evermore about to be."

Let us continue further with the Simplon scene in order to see more fully how this plays out. I earlier made the claim that the "infinitude" that the poet cannot reach is nature, but this is a claim that becomes firmer, I think, in what follows in the passage. After the text cited above, a frenzied vision of the natural world unfurls:

> The brook and road
> Were fellow-travellers in this gloomy pass,
> And with them did we journey several hours
> At a slow step. The immeasurable height
> Of woods decaying, never to be decayed,
> The stationary blasts of waterfalls,
> And everywhere along the hollow rent
> Winds thwarting winds, bewildered and forlorn,
> The torrents shooting from the clear blue sky,
> The rocks that muttered close upon our ears-
> Black drizzling crags that spake by the wayside
> As if a voice were in them-the sick sight

> And giddy prospect of the raving stream,
> The unfettered clouds and region of the heavens,
> Tumult and peace, the darkness and the light,
> Were all like workings of one mind, the features
> Of the same face, blossoms upon one tree,
> Characters of the great apocalypse,
> The types and symbols of eternity,
> Of first, and last, and midst, and without end.
> (1805 VI.553–572)

The vision simultaneously affirms motion and stasis, change in time and a status outstripping the flow of passing time: "woods decaying, never to be decayed," "stationary blasts," "first … last… and without end."[21] The concrete things of the natural world appear in a state of dissolution, and imagination has initiated this scene, but it seems far more intuitive to read these lines as an encounter with nature than to see it simply and solely as an encounter with the imagination itself. Before, we learned that what is met is something that cannot be joined, and now we learn that it is something of absolute permanence. In a poem filled with premonitions of human mortality, it seems far more intuitive that this permanence is nature, than that it is human imagination – even if imagination is required for the kinds of visions of mortality that nature invites us to. The beings of nature indeed melt away here – there is nothing literal about the "Rocks that muttered close upon our ears- / Black drizzling crags that spake by the wayside" – but the poet is (counter)turned overbearingly toward nature. I would like to suggest that this is *not*, then, a vision of nature as hopelessly *distorted* by imagination, which "comes athwart" some clearer view of nature and reveals its own truth rather than the truth of nature; rather, imagination, by suppressing the light of sense, opens up a view onto nature – nature in a more deeply Wordsworthian sense, not thought of as merely the things of nature. There is not a tradeoff between insight into nature and the awakening of imagination, but a positive correlation. There is also a dearth of one where there is a dearth of the other. This is the case in London, for example. The following passage repeats the logic of unity in multiplicity present at the end of the Simplon scene, but in a bad way:

> An indistinguishable world of men
> …
> Living amid the same perpetual flow
> Of trivial objects, melted and reduced
> To one identity by differences
> That have no law, no meaning, and no end— (1805 VII.700, 702–705)

In neither case is a straightforward union with nature entertained as possible, but in the case of Simplon, imagination allows the poet, or perhaps compels him, to face the nature that he cannot join. This inability to join nature should make us hesitate before speaking of the *presence* of nature in that scene. To speak as Heidegger might, the poet does not dialectically achieve a union with nature, but is turned toward the home that remains unattainable (in Heidegger's language: concealed, *verborgen*). The poet is unhomely, *unheimlich*.

He cannot join nature because it lies in a future that is never to be obtained – and yet, nature is often spoken of as a kind of mother, which was there at his "sweet birthplace" (1805 I.277) and ensured that he "grew up / Fostered alike by beauty and by fear" in the "seed-time" of his soul (1805 I.305–306). Here, we might be tempted to draw a hard distinction between Wordsworthian nature and Heidegger's Being: it would not be right to say of the unhomely human being of the *Ister* lectures, such as the character Antigone, that Being *was* "present" in the "seed-time" of her soul, her childhood. Consider, though, Wordsworth's phrasing when he recalls the development of a "dim earnest, of the calm / Which Nature breathes among the hills and groves" (1805 I.284–285). Several layers of mediation place nature "itself" at a distance from the content of the memory. The "earnest" here spoken of is not knowledge of nature but of its "calm," and this calm is found in the tangible hills and groves. This "earnest," dim to begin with, is further mediated by memory. Once we distinguish between the things of nature and nature itself, even the nurturing power of nature in childhood is not exactly the *presence* of nature, even in the "dim" past of recollection.[22] In the Simplon scene, too, nature is not only associated only with futurity, but

also with a distant past: the "Characters of the great apocalypse" in the Simplon Pass are, taken most literally, the rock formations believed, in Wordsworth's time, to have been caused by the waters of the Flood of Genesis, the first Apocalypse. Nature is before and behind us in time, but not with us. This bears a resemblance to the eschatological structuring of the human present presaged in Heidegger's *Phenomenology of Religious Life* (1920–1921) and taking shape in the *Contributions* and *The Anaximander Saying*: the present, governed by a metaphysics of presence that immerses itself in present beings, is a time of the forgetfulness of Beyng.[23] The apocalyptic breakthrough must take place, for Wordsworth as for Heidegger, through a futural projection instantiated via a remembering of the past – which requires a self-projection beyond beings at hand in the present, which melt away, like the rocks turned into "black drizzling crags that spake by the wayside."[24]

Nature, in these ways, serves as a sort of origin which cannot be recovered, in a past that cannot be reclaimed, and as a future which can never be obtained. It is not the case, then, that nature is all the objects of "the light of sense" – a claim which no one has ever made, but which must be assumed in order to subscribe to the critical consensus that in this passage, imagination obscures and distorts the speaker's view of nature. The beings in nature point to nature, but the final two lines designate them as "types and symbols" of nature, not nature itself.[25]

To epitomize what has been said: in the Simplon Pass scene, nature is articulated as a permanence and a home which the poet can never take part in, which is, for him, as a human being, "evermore about to be." Yet the relationship is not one of simple disjunction. We are always, "evermore," oriented toward this "home" in which we cannot partake – it is our "destiny" and our "nature." Our "nature" is an orientation towards nature that is a self-projection never to be finalized in an obtainment of the goal. This is a sort of tragic stance, a recognition of an infinitude that forces us into an awareness of our own finitude. Wordsworth, to speak in a Heideggerian way, is a poet of human finitude. Perhaps it is not quite that nature *is* time, but it can only be experienced in relation to time. Our orientation toward nature

must be fundamentally temporal, the experience of something "without end," absolutely unlike ourselves. Time is the axis on which the poet confronts nature: he is "with" nature, "at home" in nature, when he experiences himself as mortal, unable to share in the "infinitude" that nature embodies. He is at home, then, only when he experiences himself as absolutely not at home, and with nature only when he experiences himself as absolutely not with nature. Imagination is the power to have this experience, to have this insight into what it means to be human. This is why imagination is a "power growing *under weight*" (1850 VIII.706).[26] The growth of the poet from childhood to maturity is the growth of this burdensome power.

Heidegger speaks of imagination in the Appendix attached to *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, where he says of Kant's imagination that it is the "*ground* [*Grund*] of the possibility of the essence of ontological knowledge" (GA 3: 273).[27] We can confirm via what we have seen that the same can plausibly be said for Wordsworth, as long as we are right to read insight into nature as insight into Being – that is, as ontological insight.[28]

But what sort of insight into nature is won in the spot of time? Abrams speaks of "an intersection of eternity with time" in spots of time.[29] In some sense this is right, but "intersection" sounds more optimistic than the reality depicted by Wordsworth. "Intersection," with its intimation of direct physical contact, leads one to think that the poet might in some sense experience himself as dwelling momentarily *in* eternity in some way, but this is not the case. Imaginative "spots of time" are linked, in *The Prelude*, with death – not just with the thought of mortality, but with literal death. They thus do not depict a union with infinite, eternal nature, but rather display our finite, non-eternal humanity. The Winander Boy passage tells of a boy who loves to blow "mimic hootings to the silent owls" (1805 V.398),

> And when it chanced
> That pauses of deep silence mocked his skill,
> Then sometimes in that silence, while he hung
> Listening, a gentle shock of mild surprize

> Has carried far into his heart the voice
> Of mountain torrents, or the visible scene
> Would enter unawares into his mind
> With all its solemn imagery, its rocks,
> Its woods, and that uncertain heaven, received
> Into the bosom of the steady lake.
>
> This boy was taken from his mates, and died
> In childhood ere he was full ten years old.
> (1805 v.404–414)

Here we have much of the same constellation of imagery as in the Simplon scene: "torrents," "mountain," "rocks," "woods," and "heaven." The subject is only a young boy, whom we might not expect to already be in possession of imaginative powers, but "torrents" are clearly associated with the arrival of imagination. By writing about the imaginative subject in the third person, he can link imagination directly with death. The boy sees into nature, but nature does not respond. It is not the boy but the "rocks," "woods," and "that uncertain heaven" which are "received / Into the bosom of that steady lake." The imaginative vision into nature is the vision of a refusal, as nature collapses in on itself before the boy's eyes, turning its back on him as all the "solemn imagery" of nature, even "heaven," falls into the lake, whose "steadiness" is the steadiness of enduring nature.[30] As by Heidegger's Kant, imagination opens up, in "spots of time," a view of human finitude that is grounded in a certain experience of time (GA 3: 178–186/182–184). Imagination opens up an abyssal insight onto not beings or the things of nature but onto Being or nature. Nature is "the speaking face of earth and heaven" (1805 v.12) – not just the things on earth and the things in heaven. In the Simplon Pass, nature begins to speak:

> The rocks that *muttered* close upon our ears-
> Black drizzling crags that *spake* by the wayside
> As if a *voice* were in them-the sick sight
> And giddy prospect of the raving stream … [emphases mine]

If nature is the speaking face of earth, and if it here begins to speak, these lines are not a sign that nature has been lost at the hands of imagination, as on the diverse readings referenced above, but, instead, that imagination has brought the poet overbearingly close to nature.

Everything we have said so far implies a notion of "imagination" that is not exactly "creative." The most important thing about imagination is not, in other words, that it creates anything new; it orients the poet in a certain way to a nature that absolutely precedes and outstrips him. It opens him up to a reality that is not his reality and that he could never change: in this sense it even circumscribes the limits of his creativity. Imagination in the *Prelude* is a kind of stance of authenticity, or perhaps the catalyst for a grounding mood, in which ordinary relations with beings are suspended. We are always mortal, but we do not always recognize, or face up to, our mortality. It is only when we face nature that we do this.[31] To face nature is to authentically face infinitude, which, in turn, is to confront the fact that this infinitude is always, from our mortal standpoint, "something evermore about to be." This is why those who live in London and Cambridge, and who do not live in the proximity of natural scenes, are characterized by artifice. They live inauthentically, as mortal beings excusing themselves from awareness of their own mortality. One chooses whether to live oriented toward nature or not, and much of *The Prelude* concerns this choice. To choose London and Cambridge over nature implies a kind of bad faith, whereas to choose to face nature is to open oneself up to the "sick sight" of one's own finitude. Heidegger distinguishes between being "authentically unhomely" and inauthentically unhomely (GA 53: 146/117). The way of the poet, the way of imagination, is to be authentically unhomely, soberly aware of one's mortal inability to join infinite nature.

When "the light of sense / Goes out" in the unexpected moment of imaginative visitation, we are taught "our nature." Our nature is to be with-out nature. We are with nature only by seeing it as something we are irremediably outside of, by recognizing it as existing on a supratemporal plane on which we do not ourselves exist and that we cannot reach. We do not always see this, as we generally find ourselves, perhaps inevitably, living inauthentically in a "world [that] is too much with us,

late and soon" (1994, 259, l. 1).[32] When our vision cannot advance past the things of the world, we lose our orientation toward nature. In the moment that imagination unexpectedly restores our authentic sense of our connection to nature, our irretrievably lost home, *truly* seeing becomes seeing abysses, to use the phrase from Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (2007:199).[33] We see into the truth of things, which means to see into the abyssal gap between ourselves and the infinitude of nature, implying the limits of our own vision. In Heideggerian terms, starting from what seemed the firmest and most homely ground, we experience the "ground as abyss [*Grund als Abgrund*]" (GA 65: 346). We see, as Richard Polt succinctly puts it, that "be-ing *has to* withdraw" [emphasis in original],[34] and that this is in some sense the result of, or is at least coeval with, our basic constitution as human beings.

There is thus a deeply Heideggerian irony in Wordsworth's phrase "our nature," as our nature is shown, in a sense, to be empty, its home and destiny residing in a future that is never to come, "evermore about to be," in a future in which the self *would*, but *will not*, regain unity with nature. "Our nature" is thrown projection, which cannot be a nature at all.

It would not be right to treat this emptiness, and the homelessness it implies, simply as Wordsworth's final word. By the end of *The Prelude*, the poet clearly seems to take himself to have come home, in some sense, to himself and to nature. We might view as analogous Heidegger's claim, in his 1946 "Letter on Humanism," that the "homelessness" of the forgetting of Being is a merely epochal event, suggesting that there might be a way home, even if we are constitutively sojourning, constitutively *unheimlich* (GA 9: 339/258).[35] For both of these writers, it is indeed the unhomely experience itself in which, to use Wordsworth's phrasing, "greatness *makes abode*" or comes home. Perhaps we might conjecture that the natural world can only become a home when it is refounded in the authentic temporality that is opened up in imagination's encounter with nature. The beings of nature could be read as "naturalized" in this authentic projection. The "growth of the poet's mind" would then be the story of Wordsworth's growing ability to find himself at home in this way.

Yet, just as Heidegger can speak of Antigone's "becoming homely" while simultaneously insisting that she remains tragically unhomely (GA 53: 144, 150/115, 120), Wordsworth's poetic soul will have to make an abode with a nature that it cannot strictly join. The abode, the home, will have to remain unhomely. This has to do, if we follow Heidegger, with what it means to be a human being at all. Here, I will depart from my practice of translating *unheimlich* as unhomely in order to render the following passage translatable: "The uncanniness [*Unheimlichkeit*] of the unhomely [*Unheimischen*] consists here in the fact that the human being herself is, in her essence, a καταστροφή – a turning-about that turns away from her own essence" (GA 53: 94/77). The catastrophic loss of the home in the pursuit of the home is as unavoidable and as human in *The Prelude* as it is in the *Ister* lectures.

CONCLUSION: READING ROMANTICISM WITH HEIDEGGER

We began by cataloging the justified complaints of recent scholars with regard to Heidegger's reading of Hölderlin. But, taking both that reading and our application of that reading to Wordsworth into account, what might Heidegger be able to contribute to our thinking about Romantic poetry?

We can answer that question beginning with an engagement with literary theorist Paul de Man. What follows is a discussion of de Man's characterization of the Romantics generally, and then of the way de Man situates Heidegger's reading of Hölderlin against this general picture. In *Blindness and Insight*'s famous essay "The Rhetoric of Temporality," de Man stages what he understands as a great debate over the meaning of Romantic poetry, and then, later in the book, in "Heidegger's Exegeses of Hölderlin," he might be said to implicitly throw Heidegger in with his opponents as discussed in "The Rhetoric of Temporality." By briefly reenacting this debate and interrogating de Man's response to Heidegger in light of it, we can come to an articulation of what it is that Heidegger can bring to our understanding of Romantic poetry. If de Man sees two quintessential Romantic poets, they are Wordsworth and Hölderlin, making his work a convenient starting point, given our concern here

with Wordsworth as a potential salve for the shortcomings of Heidegger's reflections upon Hölderlin.

The main opposition animating the divide delineated by de Man in "The Rhetoric of Temporality" is that between symbol and allegory as candidates for the basic mode of Romantic expression.[36] De Man says that New Critics like William Wimsatt, and also M. H. Abrams, claim or assume that symbolism is Romanticism's foundational mode of expression. The symbol, as defined by Coleridge and inherited by these scholars, is characterized by the supposition of a *natural* connection between the material sign and its transcendental referent.[37] This creates a happy point of intersection between the material plane and the eternal at which the utterance and the consciousness of the mortal human being can experience union with infinitude.[38]

For de Man, this is nearly the opposite of the real lesson of Romanticism, embodied for him by "Wordsworth's or Hölderlin's wisdom,"[39] which is the wisdom of allegory, where allegory is understood as refusing to indulge in symbolism's "nostalgia and [...] desire to coincide" with eternity.[40] Elsewhere, illustrating this idea, he argues that Hölderlin's poetry has a precisely "non-apocalyptic structure," by which he means that the apocalyptic union that is for Abrams definitional to Romanticism (and described above in Abrams's reading of Wordsworth) never takes place – and that this exclusion is essential to who Hölderlin is as a poet. De Man claims in his essay "Wordsworth and Hölderlin" that Romanticism, as exemplified by these two poets, finds its voice in its consciousness of a "failure" that is the awareness of a fractured self whose language can never achieve unity with the narrated self.[41] To de Man, the apocalyptic readings of the Romantics fail to see this central aspect of Romantic poetic thought. We might say, then, to import a Heideggerian word, that de Man chides these critics for failing to see a certain human finitude that he believes is central to Romanticism.[42]

It should be clear that there is a certain degree of overlap between the Heidegger-inspired reading of Wordsworth we have just performed and "Wordsworth's or Hölderlin's wisdom" as the foundation of Romanticism as seen by de Man.

Interestingly, however, after "The Rhetoric of Temporality" in *Blindness and Insight*, in the essay "Heidegger's Exegeses of Hölderlin," Heidegger is depicted not as an ally, but almost as someone who shares in the delusions about language that de Man sees in Wimsatt and Abrams. For de Man, Heidegger's Hölderlin yields Being in absolute presence: "Hölderlin states the presence of Being, his word is Being present, and he knows this is the case."[43] This is basically a repetition of the ideology of the symbol, as laid out earlier in de Man's book (and which I relayed above): the word, the finite material signifier, achieves perfect union with the infinity of nature (as Being). While de Man does agree with Heidegger that Hölderlin's nature is Being, he claims that Heidegger sees Hölderlin as accomplishing the perfect phenomenalization of Being, whereas the real poetic insight, de Man claims, is the non-participation of the self in nature and the *failure* of poetic language to adequately name nature: "[A]s soon as the [poetic] word is uttered, it … discovers that instead of stating Being, it can only state mediation."[44]

But, while we admittedly began this essay by sympathizing with scholars who have criticized Heidegger for failing to consistently allow Being to remain unhomely, de Man's characterization of Heidegger's position vis-à-vis Hölderlin is unfair: in the very commentary on the poem "As when on a holiday…" that de Man is citing, Heidegger confirms that Being-as-nature is the "un-approachable" for Hölderlin (GA 4: 63/85). There is no evidence that Heidegger says or believes that "Hölderlin states the presence of Being." This assertion is contradicted by the entire discourse of *Unheimlichkeit* in the *Ister* lectures.[45]

Yet, if Heidegger's readings of Hölderlin share with de Man an appreciation of a certain kind of human finitude expressed in the poet's work, this appreciation does not take exactly the same form. What de Man calls *failure* is not the same as Heidegger's *counter-turning*: the one indicates a complete disjunction between the human being, or human language, and Being, whereas the other indicates the complex dynamics of unhomely homeliness. For all their complaints about Heidegger's reading of Hölderlin, it seems that Bambach,

Gosetti-Ferencei, and Withy do agree that the "positive" project implied in the notion of unhomely homeliness, if we can call it that, does correspond to a real project in Hölderlin: namely, the founding of a human abode on earth, in an unhomely relation to nature. In closing, we can distill the difference between what the above critics see in Heidegger's Hölderlin and what I have sought to bring forth in the above Heideggerian reading of Wordsworth, on the one hand, and de Man's sense of the two poets, on the other, by pointing to the closing comments of de Man's lecture called "Heaven and Earth in Wordsworth and Hölderlin", where de Man says, "in the long run, both Wordsworth and Hölderlin are equally poets of the earthly soul, of consciousness, and of historical time – *and not poets of nature*, of eternity [emphasis mine].[46] In Wordsworth, he says, "The mind … [asserts] its unbreachable separation from Being."[47] I have argued that Wordsworth is, perhaps like Hölderlin, a poet of precisely that from which he stands in "unbreachable separation," and the concept of unhomeliness names his position of simultaneous orientation-towards and separation-from nature as Being. The stance that corresponds to the making of the human abode is, in Withy's wonderful phrasing, that of "owned uncanniness," or, to stay true to our translation of *Unheimlichkeit*, owned unhomeliness.[48] When we own our own unhomeliness, we turn toward that from which we are unbreachably separated. In the Simplon episode, Wordsworth comes home, to the extent that he can do so, by owning his unhomeliness, recognizing the unsurpassable distance separating himself from the home. Imagination gives him a powerful experience of his own human limits in the face of nature.

This reading has been made possible by an implementation of Heidegger. Heidegger can offer us a way of thinking about Romantic insight that avoids the pitfalls of either Wimsatt's symbolism or Abrams's apocalypticism, on the one hand, which efface the finitude that we might want to call "Wordsworth's or Hölderlin's wisdom" – but it also offers us an alternative to de Man, on the other hand, who, in seeking to defend this wisdom's authenticity regarding its own

finitude, seems to reduce this wisdom almost to pure "failure." This approach allows us to respect previous scholars' vigilance regarding Heidegger's failings as a reader of Hölderlin but also provides a way for us to help Heidegger help us think about Romantic poetry in a fresh way.[49]

NOTES

1 Unless otherwise noted, all translations from German are mine. Also, I follow convention in citing Heidegger's Gesamtausgabe in the manner above, where "GA 8: 44/41" indicates citation of page 44 of volume 8, followed by 41, the page number of the standard English translation, which I do not use except where noted.

2 Heidegger does this in the Ister lectures through his thematization of the word *unheimlich*, Hölderlin's translation of δεινόν in Antigone (how the word *unheimlich* relates to human finitude will become clear later).

3 Thus, while Günter Figal claims compellingly in his essay "Radikalität" that Heidegger's political radicality, his anti-Semitic Nazism, is accommodated by the radicality of inceptual thinking (i.e., the thinking of the [other] beginning), it may also be true that his political commitments tame that very radicality. (See Günter Figal, "Radikalität," in *Heideggers „Schwarze Hefte" im Kontext*. Ed. David Espinet, Günter Figal, Tobias Keiling, and Nikola Mirković [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2018], 25–36). How this occurs is illuminated in work done by Rafael Winkler and Charles Bambach. Winkler observes that, in the Ister lectures, the poietic event, as the happening of Being, requires a "Hospitality [that] is a being-open to the foreigner in his foreignness without reservation … Hospitality is a letting-be of the stranger in his strangeness" (Rafael Winkler, "Dwelling and Hospitality: Heidegger and Hölderlin," *Research in Phenomenology* 47 [2017]: 366–387, 382). As Bambach argues, however, "Heidegger's Hölderlin lectures [are] marked … by a political vision that often undermines this Hölderlinian openness" (Charles Bambach, "Who is Heidegger's Hölderlin?", *Research in Phenomenology* 47 [2017], 39–59, 57). Rather than being experienced in its otherness, the "foreign Other serves the purpose of helping to bring the native dweller into closer relation to its home by offering such a stark contrast to its own sense of homeliness. In this way, it enters into the *territorium* of the native, on the native's terms, and

solely for the sake of the native's own sense of its native and national identity. In this way, Heidegger never comes to genuinely experience the "foreign" in the sense of Hölderlin's own poetic ideal of hospitality." (Charles Bambach, *Of an Alien Homecoming: Reading Heidegger's "Hölderlin."* [Albany: State University of New York Press, 2022], 225).

4 Bambach writes, "Heidegger suppresses certain essential features of Hölderlin's understanding of the foreign – the brown women, the allusions to the West Indies, to Columbus, to political revolution, and to Asia. Instead, Heidegger reduces them all to indications of Hölderlin's attachment to Greece as evidenced in the Böhlendorff letter. … [W]e will have to come to terms with Heidegger's violent suppression of these traces of the Other in the name of Graeco-German affinity" (Bambach, *Of an Alien Homecoming*, 119). It hardly needs to be said that these are foreign people, places, and concepts whose consideration does not fit easily with the National Socialist Heidegger's nationalist reading of Hölderlin.

5 Jennifer Anna Gosetti-Ferencei, *Heidegger, Hölderlin, and the Subject of Poetic Language* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2004), 17.

6 Gosetti-Ferencei, *Heidegger, Hölderlin, and the Subject of Poetic Language*, 108.

7 The obligation scholars have felt to point out this discrepancy between the text of Hölderlin and Heidegger's reading of him might be said to create a hard limit to their appreciation, which I referred to above, of Heidegger's strategy of "ontologizing" Hölderlin. As Hölderlin becomes the German poet of Being, his preoccupation with specific places and entities is systematically forgotten. Gosetti-Ferencei is concerned particularly with Heidegger's refusal to engage the specifics of Hölderlinian geography: "The specificity of locale in Hölderlin's poems – landscapes, rivers, particular sites and experiences – is rendered by Heidegger as the intimacy of Being and its eschatological

'coming'" (Gosetti-Ferencei, *Heidegger, Hölderlin, and the Subject of Poetic Language*, 67). Ironically, this elision of the "specificity of locale" can lead one to question why exactly it must be German soil that prepares the coming of the other beginning. As Katherine Withy observes of the *Ister* lectures, "the reading of Hölderlin … is supposed to clarify Germany's historical situation," but "it is unclear … precisely how it does so, given that [the *Ister* lecture course] fully ontologizes the reading of the ode" (Katherine Withy, *Heidegger on Being Uncanny* [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015], 67).

8 Michel Haar, *The Song of the Earth: Heidegger and the Grounds of the History of Being*. Trans. Reginald Lilly (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 142.

9 "Being discloses itself to the Greeks as φύσις" (GA 40: 108/110), and Hölderlin's *Natur* is φύσις, Heidegger's essay on "Wie wenn am Feiertage …" asserts (GA 4: 49–77/67–100).

10 Admittedly, the original motivation for the project of reading Wordsworth with Heidegger had to do with far more general dispositional associations that seem to me to create some overlap in the atmosphere of the Wordsworth and Heidegger oeuvres. Both writers depict themselves as thinkers whose thinking must take place away from urban environs. This tendency can be expressed, in both, either positively as a celebration of natural or rural scenes or negatively as a disdain for modernity. Not unrelated to this is a certain pride in understanding oneself as a thinker whose thought is not merely abstract, certainly not academic, but somehow *embodied*. Both are famous walkers, who think while they walk – and, as a visit to Heidegger's hut outside Freiburg or to the environs of Wordsworth's youth makes clear, much of their walking must have been solitary walking, in sparsely populated areas. Along with this self-presentation of ruggedness comes an interest in everyday language (even if we might question for obvious reasons, in both Wordsworth's and Heidegger's case, whether the valorization of everyday language is consistent). I will not

return to these similarities, but they may come to mind in the following discussion of *The Prelude*.

I am not suggesting that these proclivities all fit together in any necessary way, even though it seems as if they do stand in a unified constellation in both Wordsworth's and Heidegger's self-understanding. Wordsworth scholar Celeste Langan briefly discusses Heidegger's description of Van Gogh's *Old Boots with Laces* in "On the Origin of the Work of Art" to suggest that both thinkers' conflation of the "rustic" and the "common" is anachronistic in their respective time and place (Celeste Langan, *Romantic Vagrancy: Wordsworth and the Simulation of Freedom*. [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995], 7–12).

11 I will cite Wordsworth's *Prelude* according to the following rubric. In (1805 VI.230–231), 1805 identifies the specific version of the poem (1799, 1805, or 1850 – I will typically be working with the 1805 version). VI identifies the book of *The Prelude*, and 230–231 specifies the lines of verse within the book. Edition cited: William Wordsworth, *The 1805 Prelude*. In *The Prelude, 1799, 1805, 1850*. Eds. Jonathan Wordsworth, M. H. Abrams, and Stephen Gill (New York: Norton 1979).

12 In this opening scene, one additional element that is relevant to the reading that follows is the fact that imagination is associated with "clouds" or "vapour": Wordsworth declares that "should the guide I chuse / Be nothing better than a wandering cloud / I cannot miss my way" (1805 I.17–19). The imagery of the cloud (as a "vapour") famously returns in the Simplon passage that orients my reading. As Wordsworth is "A captive … coming from a house / Of bondage" (1805 1.6–7) at the outset, this detail may be a reference to Moses, who also escaped bondage without knowing where he would find a home and followed a cloud.

13 M. H. Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism* (New York: Norton, 1971).

14 Geoffrey Hartman, *Wordsworth's Poetry 1784–1814* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1967), 41.

15 Paul de Man comes close to saying this. He justifies his conclusion that Wordsworth is not a nature poet via the notion that Wordsworth is one of "the first modern writers to have put into question, in the language of poetry, the ontological priority of the sensory object" (Paul de Man, *The Rhetoric of Romanticism* [New York: Columbia University Press, 1984], 16).

Paul Fry in 1996 pointed out that "in the Wordsworth criticism of the last thirty years … all the influential rereadings have but one refrain: Wordsworth was not a nature poet" (Paul Fry, "Green to the Very Door? The Natural Wordsworth." In *Studies in Romanticism* Vol. 35 No. 4 [1996], 535–551, 535). He observes that, after scholars like de Man, "in the eighties' return to the issue of social determinants theorized in its most sweeping form by Alan Liu, history manifested as ideology takes over the role hitherto played by language or imagination and reveals, through commentary, a parallel truth: 'there is no nature except as it is constituted by acts of political definition made possible by particular forms of government'" (here Fry cites Alan Liu, *Wordsworth: The Sense of History*. [Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989], 104).

Fry's statement would have to be revised today, in light of ecocriticism's subsequent engagement with Wordsworth, although the "nature" that is at issue there is largely not the nature we are dealing with here.

16 C.f. Heidegger's discussion of *Angst* in *Being and Time* (GA 2: 250/188).

17 The notion that inceptual thinking and the greatest art need to dislodge themselves from beings is repeated in many ways and contexts by Heidegger in the 1930s and beyond, but the exact character and severity of this dislodgement is not necessarily consistent. Matt Dill is very right to say that "Heidegger is primarily interested in the kind of art that may allow for the overcoming of metaphysics as such" (Matt Dill, "Heidegger, Art, and the Overcoming of Metaphysics." In *European Journal of Philosophy*

25.2 [2017], 294–311, 298–299). In the *Contributions to Philosophy* and elsewhere, the need to break free from beings in order to overcome metaphysics is expressed in the starkest possible terms: only if "the human being … cast[s] herself loose from beings" can metaphysics be overcome (GA 65: 452). Does art need to "cast itself loose from beings" in order to overcome metaphysics? This sounds complicated and perhaps unfeasible.

Richard Polt convincingly points out, however, that in "On the Origin of the Work of Art," roughly contemporaneous with the *Contributions*, inceptive (we might say, post-metaphysical) thinking is associated with the sensuous happening of art. At least in context, his conclusion seems right when he says that "the emergence of be-ing from beings" is "not as un-Heideggerian as it may seem" (Richard Polt, *The Emergency of Being: Heidegger's "Contributions to Philosophy"* [Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006], 248).

It may not be the case that these two positions suggested by Heidegger can be reconciled.

18 I recognize here that I break from the translation approach of Will McNeill and Julia Davis in translating both *unheimlich* and *unheimisch* as "unhomely" (Martin Heidegger, *Hölderlin's Hymn "The Ister,"* trans. William McNeill and Julia Davis, [Bloomington: Indiana Press University, 1996]) . Clearly, a full-length translation of the *Ister* lectures should, as they do, distinguish between the two words. That said, I do not think that "unhomely" is a fundamentally wrong translation of *unheimlich* in isolation, but is one that emphasizes a certain element in the word, and I have accordingly made this translation choice in order to highlight the concept of the home as inherent to the word. It admittedly puts me in a worse position to translate passages such as this one, since it is hard to come up with any possible translation of *heimisch* and *unheimisch* other than the (in my case, repeated) choices of "homely" and "unhomely" (McNeill and Davis also translate *heimisch* and *unheimisch* this way).

19 First cited at GA 53: 4/3,5. This passage is the original pretext for Heidegger's introduction of the notion of "counterturning."

20 Withy, *Heidegger on Being Uncanny*, 136. Withy does not capitalize Heidegger's "Being" like I do. I have capitalized it in citing her for clarity, to distinguish it from "beings."

21 Paul de Man: These are "instances of what Goethe calls *Dauer im Wechsel*, endurance within a pattern of change, the assertion of a metatemporal, stationary state beyond the apparent decay of a mutability that attacks certain outward aspects of nature but leaves the core intact" (Paul de Man, *Blindness and Insight*. Second edition [University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis, 1983], 196–197).

It is worth noting that the word "nature" here has a kind of provisional status for de Man, as will be discussed later.

22 Although we must acknowledge a clear tonal difference, we might think here of Katherine Withy's reference to the "obscure whence" of thrownness in Being and Time in which, despite in some sense being a source, "Being is … withheld" (Withy, *Heidegger on Being Uncanny*, 99).

23 Although Wordsworth explicitly pairs "hope" and "expectation," the tragic impossibility of this hope finds something of an analogue in Heidegger's assertion in *The Phenomenology of Religious Life* that "The structure of Christian hope [*Hoffnung*] … is radically different from all expectation [*Erwartung*]" (GA 60: 102/71–72).

24 In both Wordsworth scholarship and Heidegger scholarship, the assumption of a secular eschatological stance has been said to be basic to the kind of thought each writer pursues. Abrams frames his reading of Wordsworth around the notion of "apocalypse by imagination" (Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism*, 335) whereas Ryan Coyne speaks of "the eschaton as origin" as a thread running through Heidegger's thinking from the lecture course on Paul in 1920–1921 to the notion of *Verhaltenheit* and the eschatology of being as developed in the 30s and 40s (Ryan

Coyne, "Eschatology and Metapolitics in the *Black Notebooks*." In *Heideggers „Schwarze Hefte" im Kontext*. Ed. David Espinet, Günter Figal, Tobias Keiling, and Nikola Mirković [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2018], 69–86, 79).

25 A rather Heideggerian question related to this discussion (very fleetingly named in the body text below) is not quite directly asked, but is very much invited, by certain critical engagements with Wordsworth: Is nature time? Or, rather, is time the horizon upon which nature must be confronted? Or is Wordsworth in fact deluded, taking the self's relationship with what is actually time to instead be its relationship to "nature"? Something like this last claim has been made before. Paul de Man holds that what seems to be a confrontation with nature turns out in Wordsworth to be more fundamentally a confrontation with time (Paul de Man, *Romanticism and Contemporary Criticism: The Gauss Seminar and Other Papers*, ed. E.S. Burt, Kevin Newmark, Andrzej Warminski [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1993], 74–94). Harold Bloom in *The Anxiety of Influence* sees it as really a confrontation with the past of the poetic tradition and the striving after a future that is discontinuous with this past (Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry*. Second edition [New York: Oxford University Press, 1997], 38–39 and 125–126). The appreciation of the centrality of temporality in *The Prelude* is a breakthrough, but it seems overhasty and uncharitable to Wordsworth to jettison the concept of "nature." If we are to think with him and not against him, we need to address the key words "imagination" and "nature" as they appear in – and dominate - his text. When de Man says in his review of Bloom's *Anxiety of Influence* that Bloom is to be celebrated for moving beyond the "catch-all term 'imagination'" and "the category of nature" in his study of Romantic poets – and, furthermore, that the use of these terms by Frye and Abrams has "driven a fatal wedge between the accepted interpretation of the romantic poets and *their actual statement*" [emphasis mine] (de Man, *Blindness and Insight*, 269–270) – one has to

wonder which strange version *of The Prelude* de Man had gotten his hands on. To read Wordsworth without central consideration of "imagination" and "nature" is not to read Wordsworth's "actual statement" at all.

26 The 1805 version is "Power growing with the weight" (1805. VIII.1805. VIII. 706).

27 This formulation comes in the *Gesamtausgabe*'s included Davos dispute lecture notes.

28 In the Kant book, Heidegger says that the "radicalism" of this thought should not be underestimated, despite the fact that Kant himself "shrank back in fright" before it: it implies that the "point of departure in reason has been blown up," and indicates "the demolition of the bases of Western metaphysics hitherto" (GA 3: 273). If Wordsworth's nature is Being, then Wordsworthian imagination's power is no less radical, nor less ontological.

29 Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism*, 387.

30 Another passage associating imagination and death comes in the case of the drowned man at Esthwaite's Lake, and yet another comes in a flashback to childhood in Book XI. Eight-year-old Wordsworth goes to Esthwaite's Lake on two consecutive days. The first day, he sees a pile of clothes on the shore with no owner in sight. The next day, he sees a group of men in a boat, fishing a dead man out of the water.

> the dead man, 'mid that beauteous scene
> Of trees and hills and water, bolt upright
> Rose with his ghastly face, a spectre shape –
> Of terror even. And yet no vulgar fear,
> Young as I was, a child not nine years old,
> Possessed me, for my inner eye had seen
> Such sights before … (1805 V.470–476)

Imagination has already shown the poet-to-be visions of death. Similarly, the "spot of time" that immediately follows the only actual use of that famous phrase, in Book XI, tells the story of six-year-old Wordsworth finding a valley where a murderer has been

hung long ago, in which some visual reminders of his hanging still remain. Wordsworth calls this a scene of "visionary dreariness" (1805 XI.310), the word "visionary" implying imaginative perception.

31 A natural comparison to make here would be between the authenticity we might say we are tracing in Wordsworth's imaginative moment and Heidegger's authentic being-toward-death in *Being and Time*.

32 From "The World is Too Much With Us:"

> The world is too much with us; late and soon,
> Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers;
> Little we see in Nature that is ours;
> We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon! [...]

(William Wordsworth, "The World is Too Much With Us." In *The Works of William Wordsworth* [Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions, 1994], 259, ll. 1–4)

33 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Also Sprach Zarathustra*. In *Sämtliche Werke: Kritische Studienausgabe in 15 Bänden* (Munich: de Gruyter 2007), Volume 4, 199.

34 Polt, *The Emergency of Being*, 142. Polt renders *Seyn* as "be-ing" where I have been using "beyng."

35 The human being, says Heidegger, is not *yet* able to take up or take over her abode, or dwelling, in the world: "What throws in the projecting [*im Entwerfen*] is not the human being, but Being itself, which sends the human being into the ek-sistence of being-there as her essence. This destiny takes place [*ereignet sich*] as the clearing of Being, which it is. It protects the nearness to Being. In this nearness, in the clearing of the 'there,' the human being lives as the ek-sisting one, without yet being able today to truly experience this dwelling and to take it over" (GA 9: 337/257).

36 I am aware that Heidegger has much to say on symbol and allegory, but since the point here is to use de Man's position as a foil, to go into that would be a distraction, as it would force us to depart in a prolonged way from the vocabulary with which we have been engaging Wordsworth through Heidegger.

37 De Man, *Blindness and Insight*, 192.

38 This summary of de Man's position is tailored to our concerns here. To give a slightly less context-dependent sense of what that position is, de Man's charge is that the notion of an intersection between mind and eternity involves completely submitting the ostensible infinitude of nature to the allegedly mortal human mind, with the result that Romanticism becomes, for these critics, a kind of idealism. Despite speaking of "Wordsworth's naturalism," Wimsatt summarizes the Romantic achievement – in the same sentence as the one in which he uses that phrase – by saying that "the common feat of the romantic nature poets was to read meaning into the landscape" (W.K. Wimsatt, "The Structure of Romantic Nature Imagery." In *The Verbal Icon: Studies in the Meaning of Poetry* [Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1954] 103–118, 110). This strong interpretation tends to make nature so much like the subject that what we have, "in the last analysis," says de Man, "is a relationship of the subject toward itself … and we end up with something that resembles a radical idealism" (de Man, *Blindness and Insight*, 196). Abrams's talk of apocalyptic union shares, de Man thinks, in this wish for an easy union between mind and nature.

39 De Man, *Blindness and Insight*, 226.

40 Here again, for the sake of focus, I omit any extensive explanation of how the link between allegory and this "wisdom" is justified. However, I will cite de Man's statement at fuller length here: "Whereas the symbol postulates the possibility of an identity or identification, allegory designates primarily a distance in relation to its own origin, and, renouncing the nostalgia and the desire to coincide, it establishes its language in the void of this temporal difference. In so doing, *it prevents the self from an illusory identification with the non-self*, which is now fully, though painfully, recognized as a non-self. It is this painful knowledge that we perceive at the moments when early romantic literature finds its true voice" [emphasis mine] (de Man, *Blindness and Insight*, 207).

41 De Man, *The Rhetoric of Romanticism*, 58.

42 In "The Rhetoric of Temporality" in *Blindness and Insight*, this finitude is largely discussed through de Man's articulation of Wordsworth's self-conscious failure to become one with nature in *The Prelude*. The literary device that corresponds to the recognition of this failure or this finitude is allegory.

43 De Man, *Blindness and Insight*, 250.

44 De Man, *Blindness and Insight*, 259.

45 Admittedly, de Man did not have access to the *Ister* lectures – although, again, his claim here is contradicted by the text he is discussing, as well.

It seems possible that part of what leads de Man's understanding of Heidegger on Hölderlin astray is the fact, as de Man rightly puts it elsewhere, that "Heidegger … sees Hölderlin as an eschatological figure" ("Temporality in Hölderlin's 'Wie wenn am Feiertage…'" [de Man, *Romanticism and Contemporary Criticism*, 65]). The eschatological stance described by Heidegger with regard either to Hölderlin or to the other beginning, as referenced by both me and Gosetti-Ferencei as I cite her earlier, does not correspond to the happy, uncomplicated union with Being-as-nature-made-present that de Man in "The Rhetoric of Temporality" associates with Abrams's Romantic imaginative apocalypse. The eschatological stance of the poet is unhomely and therefore recognizes that it cannot force Being into unconcealment.

46 De Man, *Romanticism and Contemporary Criticism*, 146.

47 De Man, *Romanticism and Contemporary Criticism*, 146. That de Man, with this statement, might be read as serving as a precedent for reading Wordsworth's nature as Being admittedly occurred to me only late in the writing of this article. The oppositional stance I have staked out against him here is, as a result, perhaps a tad one-sided.

48 Withy, *Heidegger on Being Uncanny*, 178.

49 Thank you to David Wellbery for his rich response to this paper at the Literature & Philosophy Workshop at the University of Chicago.

On Beginning *Über den Anfang*

Richard Polt

ABSTRACT: As a taste of the challenge of Heidegger's posthumously published texts, this essay interprets the opening of *Über den Anfang* (GA 70, 1941) – not without some preliminaries that are necessary before we can begin. How can we approach this "treatise" on its own terms? What mood does it call for? How do we get a feel for its idiosyncratic vocabulary, especially if we are discussing it in English? What other texts can come to our aid? What are some questions that arise as we make our way into the dense language of its first section? This initial approach to the text touches on some fundamental themes in Heidegger's later thought, including inception (*Anfang*), event (*Ereignis*), and bearing out (*Austrag*).

KEYWORDS: appropriation; *Austrag*; beyng; event; inception

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The posthumously published texts in the Third Division of Heidegger's *Gesamtausgabe*, "Unveröffentlichte Abhandlungen," are in a genre of their own. Readers were first exposed to them in 1989, with the appearance of *Beiträge zur Philosophie*. This text is "no longer an edifice of thinking but apparently randomly strewn blocks quarried from bedrock, with the chisels and crowbars remaining invisible. Are the blocks sealed configurations or disjoined pieces for holding up an invisible bridge?" (GA 65: 436/344, tm). This volume and its successors (GA 66, GA 69, GA 70, GA 71, and presumably the forthcoming GA 72) offer thoughts that are grouped thematically, but avoid any systematic form. Often Heidegger packs his sentences with clusters of opaque words, or keeps circling around one word in an attempt to uncover its revelatory potential. These manuscripts are, above all, experiments. Heidegger is thinking on paper and speaking to himself – and, sometimes, to an audience in the indefinite future. We are now that audience.

As we try to digest these texts, we are tempted to look for doctrines that we can extract and coordinate with texts Heidegger published during his lifetime. The widespread availability of unauthorized searchable PDFs makes the hunt for such statements easier, at the risk of disregarding the context or the particular work Heidegger is doing in a passage. Another temptation is to latch on to particular German words or their English counterparts, learn to mirror Heidegger's turns of phrase, and present an imitation as if it were an interpretation.

These texts challenge us to read them closely and in order, gradually getting a feel for Heidegger's vocabulary and concerns – all while avoiding the rush to identify theses, and trying to find our own words that do justice to his thoughts but do more than repeat them. This is a tall order. My goal here is simply to show how challenging the task is, by translating and interpreting the opening of *Über den Anfang* (GA 70, written 1941, published 2005). This initial inroad into this text will touch on some fundamental themes, including inception (*Anfang*), event (*Ereignis*), and bearing out (*Austrag*).

All translations from GA 70 here are my own, because I have challenged myself to interpret the text at the level of individual sentences and words. I also supply the German, so that readers who can read the

original may easily compare Heidegger's text to my version and perhaps find alternative translations of their own. Peter Hanly's translation (*On Inception*, Indiana University Press, 2023) is a fine and thoughtful achievement, and often offers viable solutions that I have adopted or slightly modified. Unless otherwise indicated, parenthesized references are to GA 70, followed by references to Hanly's translation for those who wish to consult his version.

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How do we start to read *Über den Anfang*? How do we begin at the beginning of Heidegger's treatise on beginning – or his treatise *On Inception*, as the English title has it? Or should that be *On the Inception*? I will keep this question open for the moment.

What is the difference between inception and beginning, *Anfang* and *Beginn*? And whatever that difference may be, is this actually a treatise "on" inception, "about" it?

Heidegger warns us, even before the first section of the text proper, that inception cannot be surveyed from above:

DAS VORWORT	THE FOREWORD
Das versuchende Wort vom Anfang kann stets nur im Schein einer Darstellung bleiben und lautet oft wider seine Bestimmung wie ein Bericht. Deshalb ist solchem Versuch als Titel gemäß nur die Überschrift:	The word that attempts to speak of the inception always has to remain in the semblance of a mere presentation and often, contrary to its purpose, sounds like a report. This is why the only suitable title for such an attempt is the heading:
Über den Anfang	*On Inception / On the Inception*
Dieser Titel hat den Schein bei sich, als sei das Denken auch noch und schon »über« den Anfang hinaus; während doch dieses nie möglich ist und nie versucht sein kann.	This title makes it seem as if thinking were already "on beyond" or "over" the inception; but this is never possible, and can never be attempted. (1/xiii)

In this manuscript which was not to see publication for 64 years, Heidegger is already resigned to having it misread in the future as a factual discussion of some object. His title, *Über den Anfang*, or at least its first word, is a concession to this inevitable misreading of the character and intention of the text – much as *Beiträge zur Philosophie* is the most generic, empty title imaginable, while the subtitle *(Vom Ereignis)*, enclosed in protective parentheses, is esoteric and mysterious. (Even so, the *vom* can be mistaken for an *über*; rather than a kind of thinking that comes from, and belongs to, its topic: GA 65: 3/5.)

But then, if we speak of "Heidegger's treatise *On Inception*," we misspeak. A treatise is a scientific or academic account of some object, a theory about something, which is precisely the approach he is warning us against. It is unfortunate, then, that the entire Third Division of the *Gesamtausgabe* has been titled "Unveröffentlichte Abhandlungen," "Unpublished Treatises." This is a double misnomer, since as soon as every volume in the Division appears, it *has* been published – and more importantly, these are not *Abhandlungen* at all.

For example, in the very volume that we are trying to begin, Heidegger writes that he does not want to "compose treatises [*Abhandlungen*] on moods and their types, in general, as if mood were a present-at-hand object. The steadfastness in mood first becomes necessary and essential in carrying out [*im Austrag des*] the transition to the other inception" (134/110). Even *Being and Time*, Heidegger's most systematic *magnum opus*, is no *Abhandlung*, "but rather a 'domain' that is to be opened up and into which the *essence* of the human is to be transformed" (143/118).

So what should we call these texts we are trying to read? Rather than "unpublished treatises," I would prefer "private writings," but that remains external and accidental. They are not essentially private, since it is clear that Heidegger anticipated their possible publication, and (unlike some passages in the *Black Notebooks*) they never describe his personal experiences. However, they may be essentially esoteric – not as a result of the author's choice to conceal what he could have said plainly, but due to the intrinsic elusiveness of their theme, which loves to hide.

We are having trouble getting started: we have not yet reached section 1. But these preliminaries to beginning have already offered us a few clues. The text is not a treatise because it belongs to its topic, rather than standing over it, and because it demands a "transition" and "transformation." To combine these thoughts: the text belongs to a transition; it is part of an attempt at transformation. It is not just *about* an inception, but *is* an inception – insofar as that is possible.

The default academic assumption about philosophers is that they have philosophies – theories about things that they express in their treatises. This assumption seems innocuous enough. But Heidegger says, as early as 1925, "I have no philosophy" (GA 20: 417/301–2). It would be better to say that he *does* philosophy – or still better, that philosophy has (and does) *him*. Or, in late-Heideggerian language, thinking must belong to, and happen together with, what is to be thought. This is *das Erdenken des Anfangs*, the creative or inventive thinking of inception (89/69).

Let's turn a page in GA 70. We still have not begun the text proper; instead we encounter an epigraph in the form of a poem (3/xv). Or perhaps this is not a *Gedicht*, but *Gedachtes*, as the title of GA 81 has it: a thought, presented in verse-like lines with a touch of rhyme.

> Einstige kommen
> Vom Seyn übernommen
> Sie wagen
> Das Sagen
> Der Wahrheit des Seyns:
> Ereignis des Anfangs
> Zum Austrag im Abschied

The last two lines here say "the truth of beyng." But the new reader hits a wall in attempting to grasp this truth, and dictionaries are of little help. Here is Peter Hanly's translation:

Sometime coming
Undertaken from beyng
They risk
The saying
Of the truth of beyng:
Event of inception
Toward issuance in the parting

An alternative might run:

Erstwhile ones come
taken over by beyng
they venture
to say
the truth of beyng:
appropriation of the inception
to the bearing-out in farewell

Frankly, neither translation helps much. How are we even to judge the appropriateness of a translation? A reasonable suggestion would be to look at all the contexts in which Heidegger uses these key words, and try to find English words that seem to resonate in similar ways in these contexts.[1] But then, we can't even begin to read the book until we have finished reading it.

Is it *translation* that's standing in the way? Why don't we just read this text in German? *Austrag* means *Austrag*; *Abschied* means *Abschied*. Obviously, that would not help. Even when we stay within one language, we must keep translating. As Heidegger says, "To speak and to say is in itself a translation .... In every dialogue and in every soliloquy an original translating holds sway" (GA 54: 17/12). And in every reading, he could have added. Without the continual transposition of words into fresh contexts, they die and become mere *Wörterdinge* – objectified corpses of language (GA 2: 214/SZ 161). Some studies of these esoteric texts show that the authors have mastered Heidegger's patterns of usage and can produce very faithful reproductions of his style. That is an impressive achievement – yet these are among the

least helpful, most opaque interpretations. There is almost no interpretation at all, no translation of the original into a context that provides perspective.

As Heidegger likes to point out, "nearness [is] warded off by the restless removal of distances" (GA 79: 3/3–4). True closeness requires separation – and this means risk. It is safe but sterile to repeat Heidegger's words as if they were terms, or simply to create some counterparts in English and parallel his patterns. We need perspective – but that inevitably means that the perspective may be inappropriate. In this sense, "All interpretation is overinterpretation" (GA 78: 58).

A perspective is especially inappropriate, of course, if it tries to reduce Heidegger's thought to everyday, common-sense concepts. But there may be other perspectives from which we can leap into his texts, not to transpose them into some alien dimension but in order to begin to read them. Then we have to engage in a hermeneutic circle: we must allow what we discover in the texts themselves to refine our perspectives.

This all means that there is no immediate beginning. So maybe we will be better able to start reading *Über den Anfang* if we do not start with it, but consider some potentially useful perspectives first.

For one, we can look at Heidegger's less private writings: the texts he published during his lifetime and his lecture courses. But he seems to warn us against doing this. In the epigraph to his *Anmerkungen* IV, he quotes Leibniz: "Whoever knows me only from my publications does *not* know me" (GA 97: 325/276 tm). As for his courses, he claims in Zurich in 1951 that as a teacher, he has focused on interpreting other thinkers and poets because "I hesitate to say directly what I might be able to say." Speaking about others "is a sort of protective measure. In my 30 or 35 years of teaching, I have spoken about my own things only once or twice" (GA 15: 426).

Certainly, we should not take a lecture course as the ultimate key to Heidegger's esoteric texts; but fortunately, what he said in Zurich was simply not true. Consider the 1937–38 course *Basic Questions of Philosophy: Selected "Problems" of "Logic."* The text overlaps significantly

with portions of the *Beiträge*, and the course discusses the first and the other inception (e.g. GA 45: 124–26/108–110). We also find comments on inception in several other public texts, including the 1935 *Introduction to Metaphysics*, which, in 1953, was Heidegger's first course to be published. Surely comments such as these are potentially helpful:

> Whatever is great can only begin [*anfangen*] great. In fact, its inception is always what is greatest. … The great begins great, sustains itself only through the free recurrence of greatness, and if it is great, also comes to an end in greatness. (GA 40: 18/17)

> The inception is what is most uncanny and mightiest. What follows is not a development, but flattening down as mere widening out; it is the inability to hold on to the inception. (GA 40: 164/173)

> The ground of the collapse lies first in the greatness of the inception and in the essence of the inception itself. … The inception, as incipient, must, in a certain way, leave itself behind. … The inception can never preserve its initiating [*Anfangen*] as directly as it initiates; it can never preserve it in the only way that it can be preserved, namely, by re-trieving it more originally in its originality. (GA 40: 199–200/213, tm)

> We meet the challenge of Greek philosophy as the inception of Western philosophy only if we also grasp this inception in its inceptive end [which] covered up the inceptive inception. (GA 40: 188/199–200)

> To ask: how does it stand with Being? – this means nothing less than to *repeat and retrieve* the inception of our historical-spiritual Dasein, in order to transform it into the other inception. … But an inception is not repeated

> when one shrinks back to it as something that once was, something that by now is familiar and is simply to be imitated, but rather when the inception is begun again *more originally*, and with all the strangeness, darkness, insecurity that a genuine inception brings with it. (GA 40: 42/43)

To Heidegger's students in 1935 these remarks must have sounded like unargued expressions of his idiosyncratic opinions on history. They must have seemed tangential to his main goal – explicating the Greek concept of being. But we will learn from *Über den Anfang* that "inception" is actually more important to Heidegger than "being."

The comments on inception in the lecture courses are small glimpses of a great theme, but they offer some important perspectives. First, they make it clear that *we* are at stake in the question of inception – "we" Westerners, anyway. It is a fair hypothesis that none of Heidegger's sayings about inception should be read as descriptions of some process that we merely watch, a process that is incidental to who we ourselves are. The cover of the translation features a lovely flower in early bloom. But is that the kind of inception at stake? We can *observe* the flower, but we have to *retrieve* the inception as part of our own being.

The phenomenon of crisis – the disruption of selfhood and the question, "Who are we?" – can also help us make sense of Heidegger's middle period.[2] According to *Being and Time*, Dasein understands being as such because its own being is at issue for it (GA 2: 16/SZ 12). We project into possibilities in terms of which we make sense of ourselves, our world, and the people and things we encounter in the world. We are displaced from the actual into the possible, and return to the actual in the light of possibilities. In turn, these possibilities are drawn from our thrownness, which is not simply a given set of facts but a living "having-been" (GA 2: 431/SZ 325–26). We are thus permanently exposed to the question of who we are, or rather who we will have been: our origins are not a foundation or necessity, but a source of possible self-interpretations that can never be certified as final. Our inception is always capable of becoming an *other* inception.

In Heidegger's middle thought, Dasein itself becomes a possibility: humans may or may not enter a condition in which we fully engage in thrown projection and wrestle with the meaning of being. He wavers on whether and how we have entered Dasein. The second version of "On the Essence of Truth" (October 1930) claims that Dasein involves the "freedom of letting beings be," and that "with this liberation philosophy begins," albeit "before all explicit philosophy" (GA 80.1: 365). The third version (December 1930) claims that the "existence [of Dasein] began at *that* moment when the *first* philosopher *arose* with the *question* of what beings themselves are" (GA 80.1: 393; cf. GA 80.1: 417, GA 9: 189/145). In 1932, he asserts that not all humans "exist" in his sense (GA 35: 84/64). In 1936 he goes farther: *none* of us is yet Dasein. *Being and Time* was purely a description of a possibility into which humanity might leap (GA 82: 56–57). In the *Beiträge*, he hedges his bets: "somehow it is humanity and yet not humanity after all, and always in an extension and a derangement, who is in play in the grounding of the truth of beyng. Precisely what is thus question-worthy is what I call Da-sein" (GA 65: 313/248, tm).

This line of thought gives us some more clues to inception. However and whenever it happened – perhaps in the "first inception" among the early Greek thinkers – or even if it has never yet happened, the inception is the origination of Dasein, the outbreak and grounding of the "there." This brings inception into the vicinity of *Ereignis*, which is an abbreviation for *das Ereignis der Dagründung* (GA 65: 183/144, 247/195). The there is a place where being can become an issue. The inceptive event is a grounding of a question (Who are we? What does being mean?), a grounding of a problem, a grounding of a displacement. This means that it is an abyssal grounding, an *Ab-grund*, rather than an identity or a certainty.

If the inception is uncertain, and we are even uncertain about whether or when it happens, then thinking of the inception has to be an exploration of a "what if," a subjunctive. This approach might seem to distance the thinker from the thought, but for Heidegger, subjunctive thinking requires *greater* intimacy than indicative thinking

about what is actual and present. This inventive thinking requires us to leap into what we are thinking of. We do not create our topic through an act of will, but we respond to a possibility and enter into it, helping it happen.

Some brief glosses of a few key words can sum up my interpretive approach:

> *das Sein* = *das Sein des Seienden* = the difference it makes that what is, *is*, rather than is not. (This sense of "being" is focused on beings. It is what it means for beings to be: beingness, *Seiendheit*, *ousia*.)
>
> *das Seyn* = the happening of this difference, the event in which it is granted
>
> *Dasein* = the condition we enter if that event takes place, becoming those to whom what *is* makes a difference in a "there," and for whom this difference can become a problem
>
> *Ereignis* = the grounding of the there, the (abyssal) founding of the place where we belong if we enter Dasein
>
> *Anfang* = the inception of the there, its original and inexhaustible opening

One more point before we return to the text of GA 70: all experience, including reading, is attuned, according to Heidegger. We are always already in a mood. What is the mood appropriate to inception? This difficult question cannot be answered as if it were a matter of objective fact. But when I read this text, I feel something like a longing for a home that I have never known, a nostalgia for the coming dawn. The best German word may be *Sehnsucht*.

Getting us in tune with the appropriate mood is surely one function of Heidegger's epigraphs. Consider the three short epigraphs that are left before we finally begin *On Inception*:

Lernet danken Und ihr könnt denken	Learn to thank and you can think
*	*
Nicht ist umsonst Alles ist einzig	Nothing is in vain All is unique
*	*
Seyn – ein Ergebnis des Denkens? Denken ist stets Ereignung des Seyns	Beyng – a product of thinking? Thinking is always beyng's appropriating

In thinking, we must be grateful for the *Ereignung*, the event of beyng itself. It becomes our own when we become its own. This owning takes place in an atmosphere of supremely significant singularity. Heidegger denies that there is a general rule or law of inceptiveness; each inception is unique (13/6). Perhaps, then, we should translate the *den* in the title of the book: *On the Inception*. (The line "Nicht ist umsonst" is almost surely an error for "Nichts ist umsonst," as in the very similar lines in GA 13: 30. I have translated it accordingly.)

Now we finally turn to Part I: *Die Anfängnis des Anfangs* ("The Incipience of the Inception") and to section 1. I offer a step-by-step translation of this section along with brief commentary.

(translation and commentary begin on following page)

1. Was sagt »Anfang«?

Aus einer aufgegriffenen Wortbedeutung läßt sich nichts herausdröseln. Und wenn dies auch gelänge, dann wäre das »Wort« doch nicht das Wort, das hier Wesentliches sagen soll. Das Wort ist hier die Sage der Wahrheit des Seyns. Also muß das Denken des Seyns das Wort sagen und rechtfertigen oder gar fordern, sofern das Seyn selbst in dieses »Wesen«, das Anfang heißen soll, zurückwinkt und mit dem Wesen dessen Wesung und Wesenheit bestimmt.

1. What Does "Inception" Say?

Nothing can be squeezed out of some grabbed-up definition. Even if this were possible, that "word" still would not be the word that is supposed to say the essential here. Here, the word is the saying of the truth of beyng. So the thinking of beyng must say and justify the word, or even demand it, inasmuch as beyng itself beckons back into this "essence" that is to be called inception, and with the essence determines its essential happening and essentiality. (9/3)

COMMENTARY: We must begin not with a contrived definition of a word, but with beyng itself. It has to point the way to this x – this distinctive happening – that we call *Anfang*. Then we may find the appropriate way to speak of it. Heidegger does not define his terms before starting his substantive investigation; the thing itself is to determine the word.

Das Denken des Seyns als Anfang denkt vor in das Wesen des Seyns als Ereignis. Beide Wesungen, Er-eignis und Anfang, gehören zusammen. Durch dieses Denken wird das »Seyn« als Wesenswort nicht ausgelöscht; wohl aber verliert es seinen ausschließlichen Vorrang, der vor allem in der Gestalt der metaphysischen Wesensprägung (»Seiendheit«) jede Wesensfrage nach dem Seyn selbst verwehrte, indem jenes Gepräge den Schein bestärkte, in der Gestalt der Frage nach der Seiendheit des Seienden (worin alle »Ontologie« sich erschöpft) sei alles Bestimmen des Seins enthalten.

The thinking of beyng as inception thinks forward into the essence of beyng as event. Both essential happenings – appropriating event and inception – belong together. Through this thinking, "beyng" as an essential word is not erased; it does, however, lose the exclusive primacy that, especially in the form of the metaphysical characterization of essence ("beingness"), ruled out every essential question about beyng itself, inasmuch as that characterization strengthened the semblance that every determining of being is contained within the form of the question about the beingness of beings (within which all "ontology" plays out). (9/3)

COMMENTARY: *Anfang* is tied to *Ereignis*. (According to the *Beiträge*, "*Inception* is *beyng itself* as event": GA 65: 58/47.) These words displace the word "being" (or "beyng"), not eliminating it but relegating it to secondary importance. We need new words because in metaphysics, being as beingness (*Seiendheit*, *ousia*) blocked the way to the key issue. Metaphysics is ontology: the theory of τὸ ὄν ᾗ ὄν, what *is* as such. This theory presupposes and overlooks the question of what allows the *is* to be available and meaningful to us in the first place. *Being and Time* tried to answer this question by pointing to Dasein's temporality. Now, *Ereignis* and *Anfang* play that role. These words suggest that meaning arises in an inceptive event, an initiation.

Wenn der »Anfang« die Wahrheit des Seyns sagt, wie wissen wir dann vom Sein? Zunächst durch die Erinnerung daran, daß wir das Sein kennen und verstehen, ohne freilich von diesem Verstehen eine besondere »Kenntnis« zu nehmen. Das Verstehen von »Sein« ist wesentlich entfernt von enem Wissen des Seyns. Denn jenes Verstehen neigt stets dazu, das Sein aus dem Seienden zu erklären. Das Wissen des Seyns kann nur in einem Absprung aus dem Verstehen des Seins vorbereitet, jedoch auch dann nicht geradehin erlangt werden. Das Er-denken des Seyns in seinem Wesen bleibt für den Menschen das Schwerste und dies gerade aus Gründen, die sonst das Gegenteil vermuten lassen. Weil das Wesen des Menschen – allzu verborgen noch – im Bezug des Seyns zum Menschen hängt und schwingt, gelangt das Denken erst nur aus der Ferne in diesen einzigen Wesensbereich des Einzigen, das ist der Wahrheit des Seyns als Ereignis und Anfang.

If the "inception" says the truth of beyng, then how do we know of being? At first, through recollecting that we are familiar with being and understand it, though admittedly without taking any special "notice" of this understanding. The understanding of "being" is essentially distant from a knowing of beyng. For that understanding always tends to explain being on the basis of beings. The knowing of beyng can be prepared for only in a leap from the understanding of being and, even then, cannot be achieved directly. The creative thinking of beyng in its essence remains what is most difficult for the human being, and for the very reasons that otherwise suggest the opposite. The essence of the human – still all too secretly – is suspended and swings in the relation of beyng to the human. For this reason, it is only from afar that thinking reaches this singular essential realm of the singular: the truth of beyng as event and inception. (9/3)

COMMENTARY: Our familiarity with being is far from knowledge. We tend to understand being on the basis of what *is*, but the knowledge of beyng as event requires a new leap. Our very essence lies in our intimate connection to beyng as event, which would seem to make this leap easy; in fact, it makes it supremely difficult. Here Heidegger echoes the thought in *Being and Time* that we are ontically closest to ourselves, but ontologically farthest (GA 2: 22/SZ 16). Thinking about one's own essence is more difficult than thinking about what one is not. This is a thinking that actively *is* what it thinks – yet it is not self-absorption, since we cannot understand ourselves apart from the event of beyng to which we are tied, yet which we do not determine. This paragraph also echoes thoughts in *Introduction to Metaphysics* and elsewhere on the "originary leap," the *Ur-sprung* in which we leap into our own essence by leaping away from our familiar, seemingly secure relations with beings (GA 40: 8/7).

Dem Wort nach meint Anfang zunächst soviel wie »Beginn« und dieser meint eine ausgezeichnete Stelle und Phase in der Abfolge eines Verlaufs.

Wenn aber hier das Wort »Anfang« das Wesen des Seyns und die Wesenheit des Wesens nennen soll, wenn zugleich das Seyn sich nicht herleiten läßt aus Seiendem, und wenn das Seyn gleichwohl nicht das Absolute und Unbedingte ist, was nur von Seiendem ausgesagt werden kann, dann muß »Anfang« solches nennen, was in sich west und aus dieser Wesung doch gerade verwehrt, das Wesende wie ein bedingnisfreies Ding an sich zu nehmen. Das Seyn und sein Wesen als Anfang (Er-eignis) west (fängt an, er-eignet) außerhalb der Bezirke des Absoluten und Relativen und ihrer Unterscheidung.

Das Hinausdenken in dieses Außerhalb ist das eigentliche Denken und der einzige »wirkliche« Sprung.

Inception, according to the familiar meaning of the word, is just a "beginning," and this means a special position and phase in the course of a process.

But if here the word "inception" is supposed to name the essence of beyng and the essentiality of the essence; if, furthermore, beyng cannot be derived from beings; and if beyng is nevertheless not the absolute and unconditioned, which can be asserted only of beings; then "inception" must name something that essentially happens in itself and yet, on the basis of this essential happening, forbids us to take what essentially happens as an unconditioned thing-in-itself. Beyng and its essence as inception (appropriating event) essentially happens (initiates, eventuates appropriatingly) outside the domains of the absolute and the relative and the distinction between them.

The thinking that thinks out into this outside is thinking proper and is the only "actual" leap. (9–10/3–4)

COMMENTARY: *Anfang* is normally a synonym for *Beginn*, the start of a process within beings. But if *Anfang* can serve as a word for *beyng*, it cannot be part of an ontic process. This means that it lies outside the distinction of relative and absolute: it is neither conditioned (*bedingt*) nor unconditioned, because it is not a thing (*Ding*). Heidegger suggests that the entire tradition of conceiving of events and processes in terms of *causes* will be irrelevant to his inquiry. A cause is normally conceived as a thing that is responsible for other things. The question of beginning then arises in the form of the first cause. If our question is not about things but about their *disclosure*, the unconcealment of what *is* as such, then this thinglike, ontic sense of beginning cannot be relevant.

Der »Anfang« ist daher nicht Anfang von einem Anderen; sondern dies Wort denkt hier das An-sich-nehmen und Auffangen dessen, was im an-sich-nehmenden Aus-langen er-eignet wird: die Lichtung der Offenheit, die Entbergung. Das An-sich-nehmen ist Entbergung und Verbergung zumal.

The "inception" is therefore not the inception of something else; rather, here this word thinks the taking-to-itself and taking up of what is appropriated in the reaching out that takes to itself: the clearing of the openness, the unconcealing. The taking-to-itself is at once unconcealing and concealing. (10/4)

COMMENTARY: This passage illustrates why "inception" is a good translation for *Anfang*. "Inception" stems from Latin *incipere*, from *in-* + *capio*: to take, catch, or seize. We initiate an act by seizing an opportunity, by catching hold of something. But here, what is caught is not a thing, and we are not the catchers. Some *x* that we can call *Seyn* or *Ereignis* is seizing the clearing, making the clearing its own – hence, an event of appropriation.

The translation of *Ereignis* as "event" is controversial. There are quite a few postwar passages where Heidegger distinguishes *Ereignis* from a process, incident, or happening (e.g. GA 91: 458; GA 97: 382). But it is at least worth trying to think of it as an "event" that cuts deeper than any ordinary occurrence: not a process within what is, but the disclosing of what it means to be. In several texts of the thirties he speaks of "the happening of being," which certainly sounds like a special *event* (e.g. GA 40: 218–19/233). Is it a continual happening, or an occasional one? We will soon see.

Problems:

Why is the disclosure of the clearing also a closing off?

What does it mean to speak of catching and owning here?

What is appropriating, other than gaining control over an entity?

Der Anfang ist die Er-einigung dieses Einen. Der Anfang ist anfänglich das An-sich-nehmen der Verbergung und d. h. des Ab-schieds. (vgl. der Abschied). Der An-fang ist Er-eignis. Das Anfangen ist das Sichfangen und Sichauf-fangen im Ereignis selbst, als welches die Lichtung west, die durch den Schleier des Nichts überschleiert ist.

Der An-fang ist das Sich-auf fangen in der Entgängnis zum Ab-grund.

The inception is the appropriating unifying of this One. The inception is, inceptively, the taking-to-itself of concealing, that is, of divisive parting (cf. the parting). The in-ception is appropriating event. The initiating is the self-seizing and taking-itself-up in the event itself, as which the clearing essentially happens, the clearing that is veiled by the veil of the nothing.

The in-ception is the taking-itself-up in the egress to the abyssal ground. (10/4)

Das Wesen der Entbergung, darin Verbergung ist als Bergung und Verhüllung, hat seine Auszeichnung darin, daß es das Seiende zu ihm selbst erstehen läßt und so das Seiende als solches auf nimmt; und als dieses Aufnehmende ist es Grund in dem Sinne, wie wir in »räumlicher« Hinsicht von Vorder-, Mittel- und Hinter-grund sprechen.

The essence of unconcealing, within which concealing is as sheltering and veiling, has its distinctive mark in letting beings arise to themselves. Thus, it takes up beings as such; because it takes them up, this essence is a ground, in the sense in which we speak of fore-, mid-, and back-ground in a "spatial" sense. (10/4)

COMMENTARY: Heidegger's language gets more condensed and cryptic here. It may be tempting to take "self-seizing and taking-to-itself" as something that *we* do to ourselves: we wrest ourselves into *Ereignis*. But that sounds too subjectivist and humanist for Heidegger's thinking at this point. We can't pull ourselves into inception by our own bootstraps. What, then, is doing the seizing? The inception is seizing itself.

COMMENTARY: It becomes clearer here that concealment is a question of focus. We focus on beings within the clearing while the origination of the clearing itself fades into the background; we take the clearing for granted. This is a sort of blockage and entanglement that is not our doing, but happens to us – although we may be capable of resisting it. The same could be said of "falling" in *Being and Time*.

In der Einfachheit eines einzigen Entwurfs wirft sich das Wesen des Seyns als Anfang dem Wissen also zu:

Der An-fang ist An-sich-nehmen des Abschieds in den Abgrund.

Dies An-sich-nehmen ist die anfängliche Aneignung und daher Er-eignung der Anfängnis.

Der An-fang ist anfänglich und d. h. abgründig das Er-eignis.

Im anfänglichen Er-eignis fängt sich der Anfang selbst über seinem Abgrund auf und läßt diesen so allein als den Ab-grund in seine Tiefe stürzen und zu seiner Höhe steigen.

Das anfängliche Er-eignis aber hat sein volles Wesen erst darin, daß es, als Er-eignung austragend, die anfängliche Lichtung lichtet und so die Offenheit ereignet. Solche Er-eignung ist die Dazwischenkunft der Lichtung als Zeit-Raum. Diese übereignet das Inzwischen (als Inmitten und Unterdessen) an das bis zur jeweiligen erst aus ihr wesenden Frist Nichtslose, was dann als das Seiende ersteht.

In the simplicity of a unique projection, the essence of beyng as inception thus casts itself toward the knowledge that:

The in-ception is the taking-to-itself of the parting into the abyss.

This taking-to-itself is the inceptive owning and thus the appropriating event of incipience.

The in-ception is inceptively, and this means abyssally, the appropriating event.

In the inceptive appropriating event, the inception itself takes itself up over its abyss, thus allowing the abyss to plunge into its depth as the abyssal ground and rise up to its heights.

But the inceptive appropriating event has its complete essence only in that it, bearing out as appropriating eventuation, clears the inceptive clearing and thus eventuates the openness. Such an appropriating eventuation is the coming-amidst of the clearing as time-space. The clearing assigns the in-between (as in-the-midst and meanwhile) to the nothing-less, up to its particular time-span that first essentially happens from the clearing; the nothing-less then arises as what is. (10–11/4)

COMMENTARY: Heidegger now pours out a stream of words that echo each other. This performance can be imitated in English, imperfectly, but cannot be "translated" as if we were flat-footedly declaring "what Heidegger means." Rather than making assertions as we normally understand them, he is establishing a vocabulary that responds to the matter at issue. The new words here include *Dazwischenkunft*, the coming-amidst-the-there or "inter-vening" (Hanly) involved in clearing as time-space. Betweenness is both spatial and temporal: in-the-midst and meanwhile. The clearing as time-space joins the between to "the nothing-less" in its allotted timespan; this "nothing-less" comes forth as what is.

The word *Dazwischenkunft* is ungainly, but it sums up the idea of an arrival of the there itself, the clearing; within the clearing there is clearance and opportunity, space and time, amidst and among which beings can emerge.[3] These beings are *das Nichtslose*, "the nothing-less." This could be taken as a striking way of saying that they are something, not nothing. They have been deprived, as it were, of nothingness by entering an interval in which they can come forth as *some*thing. But Heidegger will explain the expression in somewhat different terms a few paragraphs later.

Aber dieses aufnehmende und bewahrende Gründen west nur so, daß der Grund selbst nicht mehr Grund ist und wesenhaft sich vom Grundhaften und stets abkehrt und sonach Ab-grund bleibt. Die Verbergung, darin die Entbergung west, ist Entgängnis in den Ab-grund.

But this embracing and protective grounding essentially happens only in such a way that the ground itself is no longer ground, and essentially and always turns away from what is ground-like, thereby remaining abyssal ground. Concealment, in which unconcealment essentially happens, is the egress into the abyssal ground. (11/4)

Das An-fangen fängt den Anfang je anfänglicher an.

Diese »Steigerung« ist keine nach der Art des Seienden nach Graden und Stufen und Folgen. Sie ist anfanghaft und deshalb immer einzig; unstetig; ein Anfangen klafft gegen das andere.

Im Ereignis west das Sich auf fangen in die Klüftung des Abgrundes.

The in-cepting initiates the inception ever more inceptively.

This "increase" is not like that of beings, with degrees, steps, and sequences. It is incipient, and therefore always singular; intermittent; one initiating gapes open against another.

The taking-itself-up into the fissuring of the abyss essentially happens in the event. (11/4–5)

COMMENTARY: Heidegger expands on the idea of an abyssal ground. This idea echoes the earlier thought that the inception lies outside the entire logic of *things*. There is nothing, no thing, that can ground the inception; it takes place, and makes place, without a why.

COMMENTARY: These paragraphs introduce a new idea: an ever more inceptive seizing of the inception – not an ontic progression, and not continuous, but singular inceptions that sometimes run into each other. The image of gaping or yawning inceptions, ever more radical or abyssal, is a striking way to conceive of the relation between the "first" and the "other" inception. This passage strengthens the impression that *Ereignis* – which is so closely associated with *Anfang* – is, indeed, an extraordinary *event*. A few pages later, Heidegger will say that "Beyng is at times [*zuzeiten*], inasmuch as it itself, as appropriating of the in-between, lets the clearing arise as time-space" (15/8). Our displacement into the condition where being is at issue for us takes place rarely and unpredictably. These are also the moments, Heidegger is about to say, when beings enter being – that is, beings as such gain significance.

Das Seyn als Anfang und Ereignis hat einzig jenes Wesen, das erlaubt zu sagen: »das Seyn ist«. Alles Seiende ersteht nur in das Sein; das Seiende ist nie; sondern »ist« stets nur das Seiende.

Das Seiende ist nicht, sofern es beim »ist« sein Bewenden und d. h. hier den Anfang haben soll. Das Seiende ist nur als das Seiende; und das sagt: das Seiende gelangt zu Zeiten in das Sein, aber ist es nicht selbst.

Das Seiende bleibt so entschieden gegen das Seyn durch dieses von diesem unterschieden, daß dem Seienden nicht einmal eigen bleibt das Nichts; denn nur das Seyn hat die Wesung des Nichts. Das Seiende ist das Nichtslose.

Im Seienden läßt sich der Anfang nie finden.

Beyng, as inception and event, uniquely has that essence that enables one to say: "beyng is." Beings only ever arise into being; a being never is, but "is" always only a being.

A being is not, insofar as the "is" is supposed to be the last word (that is, the inception). A being is only as a being, and this says: a being, at times, arrives at being but is not itself being.

Beings remain so decisively differentiated from and against beyng, by beyng itself, that not even the nothing remains to them as their own; for only beyng has the essential happening of the nothing. Beings are the nothing-less.

The inception can never be found in beings. (11–12/5)

COMMENTARY: Heidegger expands the thought of beings as "the nothing-less." Exactly how one interprets these paragraphs depends on how one reads *Sein*, *Seyn*, and *Seiendes*. That which *is* is sometimes allowed to enter being, and by the same token, to enter nothing: in other words, entities come into a space of meaning – and threatened meaninglessness – where they can make a difference to us. Beings are nothing-less and being-less, and in this sense, what is "is" not. This sounds like a contradiction, and it does not fit Heidegger's usual way of speaking, but here he is experimenting with reserving the word *ist* for beyng – perhaps inspired by Parmenides' ἔστι γὰρ εἶναι (cf. GA 66: 89).[4]

Der Anfang bestimmt sein Wesen nicht aus dem Fortgang, sondern der Fortgang ist eine Möglichkeit des Anfangs. Vom Fortgang aus erscheint der Anfang leicht im Schein des bloßen »Beginns«. Aber der Anfang west auch im Fortgang. Dieser ist nur anfänglich. Und darin beruht allein seine Geschichte.

The inception does not determine its essence in terms of progress; rather, progress is a possibility of the inception. In terms of progress, the inception easily appears in the semblance of the mere "beginning." But the inception also essentially happens in progress. Progress is only inceptively. And in this alone consists its history. (12/5)

Der Anfang ist je als Anfang. Die Einzigkeit zerklüftet sich in Anfänge und erreicht so allein das Einfache der Anfängnis. Die Rede von mehreren Anfängen ist richtig, weil sie bereits von außen kommt. Aber sie wird unwahr, wenn die Anfänge historisch aufgerechnet werden. Anfänglich denken, im Sinne der Anfängnis denken heißt eigentlich Denken, wenn Denken hier die Inständigkeit des Entwurfs des Seyns meint, der ein geworfener ist aus dem Wurf, der in aller Ereignung schwingt.

The inception, in each case, is as inception. The singularity fissures into inceptions and only thus arrives at the simplicity of incipience. The talk of several inceptions is correct, because it already comes from the outside. But it becomes untrue if the inceptions are reckoned historiographically. To think inceptively, in the sense of incipience, means properly thinking, if thinking here means the steadfastness of the projection of beyng, a projection thrown by the throw that sweeps through all eventuation. (12/5)

COMMENTARY: This paragraph presents a thought on *Fortgang*, "progress" or, literally, going forward. Whatever is genuinely historical in progress consists in whatever ongoing inceptiveness it has, even though the inception looks like a mere beginning when judged in terms of progress. We might apply this to modern technical advancement. Those who are caught up in it tend to look back at its origins (if at all) as a primitive stage; but technology has its real meaning as an outgrowth of the first inception of being as presence.

COMMENTARY: "Der Anfang ist je als Anfang." Does *je* here mean "ever" (as Hanly translates it) or "in each case" (as I translate it here)? Either way, the paragraph challenges our usual ways of thinking about unity, plurality, and singularity. The talk of many inceptions is superficial, since they should not be calculated historiographically, but should be entered into as instances of beyng's singular "throwing." Although beyng "is at times," this is no license to count up its manifestations as if they were just ordinary incidents.

Wir ahnen den Anfang in der Erinnerung zur Wahrheit des Seyns und nennen diesen so erinnerten Anfang den »ersten Anfang«. Wir ahnen die Anfängnis und denken ihr gemäß vor in die Anfänglichkeit des Anfangs und ahnen so den »anderen Anfang«. Der »andere« soll er heißen, um nicht in das Zählen zu geraten und auch den ersten nicht mit der Nummer 1 zu belegen. Der erste ist der »erstmalige«, von dem alle Wesung des Seyns ausgeht. Der erstmalige Anfang ist »einmal«; er ist zugleich »einst« und »einzig«. Und deshalb in sich bleibend die Austragsamkeit der Lichtung, in welcher Austragung der Anfang den Abschied an sich nimmt.

We intimate the inception in recollecting the truth of beyng and name this recollected inception the "first inception." We intimate incipience and, accordingly, think ahead into the inceptuality of the inception, in this way intimating the "other inception." It should be called "other" in order not to lapse into counting, and so as not to allocate the number one to the first. The first is the "initial" from which all essential happening of beyng emerges. The initial inception is "once"; it is simultaneously "one-time" and "unique." And therefore, keeping to itself, [it is] the clearing's trait of bearing out; in bearing out, the inception takes the parting to itself. (12/5)

COMMENTARY: This paragraph develops Heidegger's expressions "first inception" and "other inception." They do not mean inceptions #1 and #2, to be listed by historians. The first is a unique, singular initiating; the other is intimated through thinking of the inceptiveness of the first. In its very character as an inception, the first inception suggests possibilities that are undeveloped in it and call for the other inception.[5] This paragraph ends with a difficult sentence featuring the words *Austrag* and *Abschied*, which Heidegger develops in the concluding paragraphs of section 1.

Das Auslangen in den Abschied trägt zu diesem vor und erträgt dieses wesenhafte An-sich-nehmen des Abschiedes. Der Anfang trägt sich aus in seine Anfängnis und bringt so alles Entscheidbare in die Einfachheit der einen Entscheidung (entweder das Seyn oder das Seiende). Der Anfang ist Austrag.

Was dem Anfang zugehört, ist deshalb ausgetragen und reif.

Nur Anfängliches ist Reifes.

The reach out into the parting draws forth to it, and endures this essential taking-to-itself of the parting. The inception bears itself out into its incipience and thus brings all that is decidable into the simplicity of the one decision (either beyng or beings). The inception is bearing out.

What belongs to inception is therefore borne out and ripe.

Only the inceptive is ripe. (12/5)

COMMENTARY: The inception bears itself out by enduring the parting. The inception implies a falling away from itself, a division. But this is also a ripening, a richness, because it opens the field of the decision between beyng and beings. In this way, it anticipates the other inception (95/75).

Two passages we already cited from *Introduction to Metaphysics* suggest an interpretation of *Abschied*, "parting":

> The inception, as incipient, must, in a certain way, leave itself behind. … The inception can never preserve its initiating as directly as it initiates; it can never preserve it in the only way that it can be preserved, namely, by re-trieving it more originally in its originality. (GA 40: 199–200/213, tm)

> To ask: how does it stand with Being? – this means nothing less than to *repeat and retrieve* the inception of our historical-spiritual Dasein, in order to transform it into the other inception. (GA 40: 42/43)

If the inception "must … leave itself behind," it will have to depart from itself. Parting is thus an essential part of inception. (According to §7, "Parting is not end and cessation, but it is the ultimate [*das Letzte*] in inception, through which it withdraws into itself": 25/16.) This also means that *we* have left our own inception behind, and are charged with retrieving it. To retrieve it is not to reproduce it, but to find a way to bear its distant legacy and carry it forward into new possibilities.

As for *Austrag*, it is a frequent yet opaque word in Heidegger's esoteric texts. In everyday German, the word is normally used in the phrase *zum Austrag kommen*, to reach a settlement or resolve a conflict. *Austrag* can refer to the completion of a responsibility, or to an emission or output. More frequent in German is the verb *austragen*, which can mean everything from *staging* or *holding* a competition, to *deciding* a conflict, to a pregnant woman's *carrying* a child, to *working out* differences. *Austrag* surfaces only occasionally in texts published during Heidegger's life, but "The Onto-theo-logical Constitution of

Metaphysics" (1956–57) helpfully speaks of "thinking the [ontological] difference as *Austrag*" (GA 11: 74). Joan Stambaugh adds a more human interpretation based on her own direct "consultation" with Heidegger. She explains the word as "literally carrying out, holding out. … Heidegger pointed out the relationship of this word to man as 'the stand-in [*Platzhalter*] of nothingness' (*What is Metaphysics?*). He stated that its basic meaning is to bear, to hold out, but without any connotation of suffering or exertion. The *Austrag* is the carrying out of the 'relation' of Being and beings, endured with an intensity that never lets up."[6]

Two primary senses of *Austrag* thus emerge. First, it is a German counterpart to the Greek διαφορά and Latin *differentia*: it is the "carrying out" that differentiates beingness from beings, or world from things. It establishes distance between the particular things that *are* and the context or meaning within which they appear. Secondly, *Austrag* is a task for us. We must carry or bear the differentiation; we must abide the opening of a meaningful space in which beingness differs from beings. The expression "bearing out" may suggest both of these senses.

***

This has been only a first, concise, and partial reading of the first few pages of a nearly 200-page book, which is only one of several such volumes. Whether or not we adopt Heidegger's mode of thinking as our own, we have to admire his capacity to produce texts of such density and such intensity.

Where does the beginning of *On the Inception* leave us? Heidegger has invited himself, and us, to strive to recover an opening – the initial eruption of a space where things have sense, where what *is* comes forth as significant. This event of opening, represented in terms of chronology and historiography, took place in ancient Greece, when the first experience of being as presence came to words. But this representation of the inception makes Heidegger's project seem like the revival of some bygone moment, some neo-classical fantasy. What he wants to experience is not that, but the incipient quality of the inception, which launches possibilities that have never been exhausted and await deeper

exploration. That would require stepping back from our absorption in using and observing what there is, in order to ask about the initial differentiation of what *is* and what it *means* to be – a meaning always shadowed by the possibility of meaninglessness, and always resisting our attempts to ground it on some entity or other.

These thoughts resonate with many others in Heidegger, early and late. But what matters is not a formula that can unlock all his texts; what matters is the attempt to think the inception, to enter it, to get it going – an attempt that can easily be paralyzed by doctrines and theories. A close reading of a short text – especially a text that Heidegger placed at the opening of a manuscript, inviting readers to plunge into his way of thinking – may initiate us into the inception more effectively than sweeping interpretations of his thought as a whole. What will come of Heidegger's attempts, and whether anything will come of them at all, is now up to us – and up to the inception.

NOTES

1 For example, *Einstige* is illuminated by GA 55, 288/217tm, where Heidegger works with the double meaning of the adverb *einst*: "what the beginning of thinking *einst* (once) began is *einst* (someday) coming toward humanity, because what is *einstig* in this twofold sense is always 'earlier' than human musing and activity." The adjective *einstig* usually means "former" or "erstwhile," but in Heidegger's sense it characterizes the once and future inception; the *Einstige* may be those who honor it.

2 For further justification of this interpretive approach see Richard Polt, *Time and Trauma: Thinking Through Heidegger in the Thirties* (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2019), 37–45.

3 In what sense do beings "emerge"? Are they "coming into being" in the usual sense, emerging from nothingness into actuality? Or are they emerging into the light *for us*, becoming accessible to Dasein? As Daniel Neumann puts it, "One of the biggest disagreements among interpreters has been … whether we should take the unconcealment of beyng as the proffering of a real, mind-independent totality or as a cipher for our transcendental ability to understand and make sense of the appearance of being": review of *On Inception* by Martin Heidegger, *Review of Metaphysics* 77:3 (March 2024), 549. For Neumann, "To think beyng as inception puts emphasis on the emergent nature of the opening of the clearing in which beings can come to presence for someone … 'inception' names the very opening up of the possibility to consider the truth of beyng, that is, to think the event" (549–50). Neumann thus seems to endorse the second option he described. In brief, I agree, with the caveats that Heidegger wants to avoid the subjectivism of transcendental philosophy in the tradition of Kant and Husserl, and that "presence" is a particular understanding of being that, according to Heidegger, originated in the first inception: see Richard Polt, *Heidegger on Presence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2025).

4 Is Heidegger expressing a contradiction when he says that being is, and beings are not? According to Filippo Casati, yes – but this is acceptable, since his propositions can be accommodated by a "dialetheist" system of formal logic that offers a circumscribed place for contradictions: *Heidegger and the Contradiction of Being: An Analytic Interpretation of the Late Heidegger* (New York: Routledge, 2022), 94. The flaw in this approach is that Heidegger's language is not meant as a set of correct propositions, but as a series of gestures that point toward what he insists cannot be said directly.

5 As Thomas Kalary observes, "a proper grasping of the first beginning [i.e. *Anfang*] is dependent upon the other beginning": "Historicality and Inceptualness: The Systematic Place of Der Begriff der Zeit and *Über den Anfang* in Heidegger's Thinking," *Heidegger Studies* 22 (2006), 45. Peter Hanly agrees, but reminds us that the two inceptions are interdependent: "the 'firstness' of the first is discovered in otherness. Reciprocally, though, the otherness of the 'other inception' is to be discovered within the first …. inception becomes what it is by becoming other": "Heidegger's Birth," *Gatherings* 7 (2017), 47.

6 Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), 17. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann offers a similar explanation in *Die Selbstinterpretation Martin Heideggers* (Meisenheim am Glan: Anton Hein, 1964), 34.

Thinking Ontological Difference in the Atomic Age

Benjamin Brewer

ABSTRACT: This paper argues that the "atomic age" was a central concern of Heidegger's from 1945 to the late 1950s. It begins by presenting evidence that Heidegger may have been involved in the *Kampf dem Atomtod* movement, an anti-nuclear protest movement that gained wide public support in the German Federal Republic from 1957–58. The second part of the paper reexamines Heidegger's writings on nuclear energy and technology, which it argues were paradigmatic examples of technology's ontological structure that allowed him to make key distinctions between different modes of destruction and of futurelessness. In the final part of the paper, I argue that Heidegger's own response to the challenge of the atomic age for thinking is ambivalent and that this ambivalence points to fundamental difficulties for Heidegger's conception of thinking, ontological difference, and the essence of the human in this period.

KEYWORDS: ontological difference; atomic age; nuclear energy; biological life; *Ge-stell*

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> Le monde va finir ; la seule raison pour laquelle il pourrait durer, c'est qu'il existe. Que cette raison est faible, comparée à toutes celles qui annoncent le contraire…Car, en supposant qu'il continuât à exister matériellement, serait-ce une existence digne de ce nom?
>
> -Charles Baudelaire, *Fusées*[1]

In May 1956, Martin Heidegger delivered the keynote lecture titled "Gespräch mit Hebel beim 'Schatzkästlein'" at the annual *Hebeltag* ("Hebel-Day") in Lörrach. At the end of this lecture, he claims that J. P. Hebel's poetry can help us understand that "the human will not live through atomic energy but will, at most, perish through it" (GA 16: 545). This is not Heidegger's only such warning against the utopian aspirations of the dawning "atomic age," nor even his only scornful reference to Gerhard Löwenthal and Josef Hausen's breathlessly titled manifesto, *Wir werden durch Atome Leben!* (1956).[2] In fact, Heidegger makes some mention of nuclear weapons, nuclear energy, or nuclear physics in a great many of the public talks and essays delivered and published from 1949 until 1960. They appear, for instance, in *Insight into that Which Is*, *What is Called Thinking?*, *The Principle of Reason*, *Fundamental Principles of Thinking*, "Gelassenheit," "The Country Path," and nearly all of the lectures on J. P. Hebel. These comments, frequent as they are in this period (especially in the mid- to late-1950s), have so far received scant attention in the secondary literature.[3]

This is perhaps because, at first glance, Heidegger's most well-known comments – those about the bomb – appear scandalously dismissive of the horror of total nuclear annihilation (what is known as nuclear "omnicide," or the murder of the human species).[4] Take, for instance, Heidegger's claim that the detonation of the atomic bomb "is only the crudest of all crude confirmations of the annihilation [*Vernichtung*] of the thing, which has long since occurred" (GA 79: 9/8; cf. GA 7: 172/PLT 168). In the blinding light of the bomb, Heidegger argues, we repeat the metaphysical gesture that led us here (fixating on beings at the expense of being) if we merely stare slack-jawed at the bomb instead of asking after the *ground* upon which such an invention

is even thinkable. To *think* nuclear weapons (and not merely to calculate with them) requires inquiring into their belonging to the same technological world (or perhaps "unworld") in which the mechanization of agriculture, the massification of media, and the industrial killing of human beings also become possible (GA 79: 27/27). The bomb, in other words, does not *cause* the atomic age, much less the reign of technology's essence, *Gestell* (positionality). Rather than being satisfied with tracing its origins to the discovery of the convertibility of matter and energy or of the radioactive decay of uranium, we must understand how these scientific breakthroughs presuppose the determination of truth as certainty, the specification of reality as actuality, and ultimately the decision of being as presence. What calls for thinking in the atomic age, Heidegger insists, is the fact that the availability of nuclear energy belongs to *Gestell* as the reigning mode of how beings appear to us, that is, as the definitive characteristic of our epoch in the history of being.

Günther Anders and Richard Rorty – the two most famous thinkers to address these comments – are decidedly unconvinced. Günther Anders retorts,

> *The answer to fire is not Prometheus but water. There are situations in which it is immoral to insist upon origins* … Each thing has its time. *Even mysticism.* But to give the mystical prescription in the time of the atomic bomb is cynicism…It is indecent to speculate inside a burning house.[5]

An exasperated Richard Rorty writes,

> Passages such as these help to remind us what a self-infatuated blowhard Heidegger was. He is a perfect example of the idiot, the sort of person who has no sense of citizenship…The idea that we might gather together in public assemblies and agitate for a reform of the United Nations, one that would enable it to cope with nuclear proliferation, would have struck Heidegger as showing

> a ludicrous failure to understand the priority of *Denken* (thinking) over mere politics.[6]

Rorty and Anders make essentially the same two interrelated arguments. First, they dismiss Heidegger's comments about the bomb as not to be taken seriously (since he himself did not take the bomb seriously), and second, they suggest that his nonchalance towards the very real issue of nuclear annihilation attests to his own hermetic abandonment of politics after the disaster of his involvement in the Third Reich.

There is, however, historical evidence to contradict the second point and significantly complicate the first. The 1956 Hebel address lecture in Lörrach mentioned above was later published as part of a collection of *Hebeltag* lectures titled *Hebeldank*. In the author biography appended to Heidegger's text, two brief sentences offer a summary of Heidegger's involvement in public life: "In 1933, he was rector of Freiburg University. Martin Heidegger is a member of the Working Committee 'Against Atomic Death.'"[7] While the first sentence delicately glosses over the most notorious period in Heidegger's life, the second sentence's claim is totally unheard of. If Heidegger *did* belong to one of the committees "against atomic death" that sprang up as part of the *Kampf dem Atomtod* ("struggle against atomic death") movement of the Federal Republic, then we not only need to reexamine the received narrative about his relation to the atomic age but also our historical understanding of his involvement in politics after the war.

In what follows, I will first lay out the historical evidence of Heidegger's involvement with the *Kampf dem Atomtod* movement, before returning to Heidegger's comments about the bomb and nuclear technology more generally. A central thread of these reflections, I will argue, is the distinction between the threat of ontic "annihilation" (*Vernichtung*) posed by the bomb and the more insidious or uncanny threat of ontological "ruin" (*Zerstörung*) or "devastation" (*Verwüstung*) posed by *Gestell*. In the earliest period of his reflections (roughly 1945–50), Heidegger makes this contrast by comparing the bomb to the threats posed by "mass media" or "publicity" (*Öffentlichkeit*). By the 1950s, however, Heidegger will come to place this distinction *within*

the ambit of nuclear technology, which he will also increasingly see as not simply one example of technology among others but a paradigmatic technology. Here, the question of ontic annihilation versus ontological destruction comes to a head in the distinction between two distinct forms of "futurelessness." The task of thinking in the atomic age, for Heidegger, is to recover the power of thinking to free us from being bound to either the spectacular horror of the bomb or the utopianism of the "friendly atom." By framing things this way, however, Heidegger sidesteps another issue that the threat of nuclear annihilation poses: the entanglement of the history of being and its truth with those ontic conditions that Heidegger otherwise figures as dependent upon it. The evasion of this question, I conclude, indicates that this entanglement touches upon what remains unthought of Heidegger's mature thinking.

HEIDEGGER'S SECOND *VOLKSBEWEGUNG*?

Though protests against atomic weapons began almost immediately after their use in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, anti-nuclear protest in the German Federal Republic first began to gain broad popular support in 1957. On April 5th of that year, Chancellor Konrad Adenauer argued during a press conference that tactical nuclear weapons were simply "a further development of artillery" which the *Bundeswehr* could hardly afford to go without.[8] Three days later, his defense secretary Franz Josef Strauss, who had served as "Minister of Atomic Questions" in 1955, argued that such weapons were necessary in order for West Germany to pull its weight within NATO.

On April 12th, in response to these "test balloons" from the Adenauer administration, 18 leading nuclear scientists (including Werner Heisenberg, Otto Hahn, Max Born, Wolfgang Paul, and Friedrich von Weizsäcker) published the "Göttingen Declaration" (which had been drafted by Weizsäcker). The declaration rejected as rhetorical any distinction between "tactical" and "strategic" nuclear weapons, expressed grave skepticism that lasting peace could be achieved through nuclear proliferation, and committed the signatories to non-participation in any West German nuclear weapons program.[9] Several of the signatories,

including Heisenberg, Hahn, and Weizsäcker, had been key participants in the Third Reich's nuclear program (the "Uran-Projekt"), and, crucially, none of the signatories "could be accused of having communist or socialist sympathies" (though Adenauer certainly tried to portray them as unknowing dupes of the Soviets).[10] The Göttingen Declaration is today widely recognized as the opening salvo of what came to be known as the movement *Kampf dem Atomtod* (Struggle Against Atomic Death), which moved mass opposition to nuclear armament from the left into the mainstream of German politics.[11]

The Göttingen Declaration is also important to the question of Heidegger's relation to this movement, because if Heidegger was involved in the movement, Weizsäcker might have been his link to it. Weizsäcker was one of Heidegger's most valued interlocutors from the mid-1930s to the end of his life. The two men met in 1935 in Todtnauberg at a meeting that had been arranged for Heidegger, Werner Heisenberg, and Viktor von Weizsäcker (Carl Friedrich's uncle and an old acquaintance of Heidegger)[12] to discuss "the subject of natural science."[13] Carl Friedrich went along as both a student of Heisenberg and the nephew of Viktor von Weizsäcker, and he and Heidegger became close, meeting, according to (C. F.) Weizsäcker's estimate, at least once every two years for the rest of Heidegger's life. When Weizsäcker was eventually named to a chair in philosophy in Hamburg, Heidegger gave several seminars for Weizsäcker's students and junior researchers at the Weizsäckers' home.[14] At the celebration of Heidegger's work held in Freiburg after his death, Weizsäcker was one of three speakers, along with Gadamer and Werner Marx.

An examination of Heidegger and Weizsäcker's correspondence did not yield any confirmation of Heidegger's direct involvement with the movement, but there is an exchange of letters from 1957 that seems to hint that Heidegger may have been eager to discuss the Göttingen Declaration (or perhaps simply nuclear weapons more broadly) with Weizsäcker. On May 22, 1957, about five weeks after the publication of the declaration and in the heat of the uproar it caused, Heidegger and Weizsäcker met in Lindau with Martin Buber and Clemens von

Podewils (director of the Bavarian Academy of Fine Arts); the goal of the meeting was to plan a conference on language.[15] Just before the meeting, on May 6, Heidegger sends Weizsäcker a letter congratulating him on being named to a chair in philosophy in Hamburg and asking to arrange a meeting to speak with him privately before the meeting with Buber and Podewils.[16] He writes that "for many reasons, it is high time" to make good on the meeting they had been planning and rescheduling for the last two years. High time, above all, because, as Heidegger notes, "there will now be demands on you from all directions." Accordingly, Heidegger insists again, he is eager to speak "thoroughly and calmly" with Weizsäcker about the plans for the conference in Munich "although clearly not *only* about this topic." Weizsäcker should let him know as quickly as possible whether this will be possible, partly because, if so, Heidegger would like "prepare himself with regard to certain questions" beforehand.

We, of course, cannot know for certain what Heidegger is referring to when he speaks of the *multiple* reasons that he and Weizsäcker have to meet. Nevertheless, it seems likely for at least two reasons that Heidegger would be referring to the question of nuclear weapons and nuclear armament. First, the explicit references to the timing of the letter and to the increasing demand on Weizsäcker's time and energy seem to indicate that Heidegger has Weizsäcker's entry into the center of German politics in mind. It seems Heidegger was right to think that this would complicate future meetings between the two men: in a letter to Heidegger immediately following the meeting in Lindau, Weizsäcker makes passing reference to the fact that he has to decline an invitation to attend a session of Heidegger's course on "The Principle of Reason" because he will be attending a meeting of the "Ecumenical Commission on Questions of Atomic War."[17] Second, the fact that Heidegger feels the need to do his own preparatory research before the conversation may indicate that what he wants to discuss with Weizsäcker has to do with Weizsäcker's areas of expertise rather than his own. Without a record of the actual conversation, of course, we cannot know what Heidegger and Weizsäcker discussed in their

meetings during this period. Still, the correspondence confirms that Heidegger had a personal and intellectual link to a central figure of the non-leftist opposition to nuclear proliferation, with whom he was in regular contact during the movement's most active period.

There is a complication, however, with the thesis that Weizsäcker was Heidegger's link to the movement. While Weizsäcker's publication of the Declaration in 1957 helped to broaden and intensify the popular movement against nuclear armament, he was not himself a participant in the partisan "Kampf dem Atomtod" movement which followed, which was organized in 1958 by SPD politician Walter Menzel and others. Indeed, though he was asked to sign on to further declarations and actions by Menzel himself, Weizsäcker was one of several signatories to the Declaration who politely but firmly declined these invitations.[18] Indeed, after the Göttingen Declaration, Weizsäcker's next high-profile intervention into the public debate around the question of nuclear strategy was a series of articles published in *Die Zeit* at the end of 1958 under the title, "Living with the Bomb [*Mit der Bombe leben*]." As the title suggests, these were of a far more "realist" bent, still advocating for the abolition of nuclear weapons but acknowledging the need for "graduated deterrence" while that aim was pursued through multiple strategies.[19] This attitude put him firmly out of step with the more strident tone of the Atomtod movement.[20] Accordingly, even if Weizsäcker somehow put Heidegger into contact with activists who would later go on to form one of the "Working Committees" referred to in the author biography, he was not himself a part of any such committee.

Heidegger's friendship with Weizsäcker and the line in the author biography of *Hebeldank*, however, are not the only pieces of evidence. The Atomtod movement reached its peak in 1958,[21] and two more pieces of epistolary evidence stem from that year. The first is a letter from Hannah Arendt to her husband Heinrich Blücher from June 1.[22] Traveling in Switzerland and Germany, Arendt is reporting to Blücher about the political environment in Europe. Ever the Atlanticist, Arendt is concerned about what she sees as a rapprochement between France and the Soviet Union:

> And this, together with the German Atomic-Death Movement, may well be the end of NATO. In Germany, the matter is not truly serious but still highly agitated. Günther [Anders] marches in the vanguard, and Heidegger, who simply can't miss out on any popular movement, has also already neatly fallen in line.[23]

Arendt offers no further specification of what she means that Heidegger has "fallen in line," but it is striking that she mentions Heidegger and Anders together. When Arendt writes to Anders himself that she has heard "by word of mouth" that Heidegger has joined the movement, and that it "does not surprise her in the least,"[24] Anders responds curtly that "Your remark, *Heidegger's joining the anti atom movement does not surprise you*, remains incomprehensible to me in its naked facticity."[25] In contrast to Arendt's lack of surprise, the very thought is so unthinkable to Anders that he cannot even imagine what she might mean that Heidegger has attached himself to the movement. If Heidegger had any involvement, then, none of it overlapped with Anders's networks, and no news of it had reached him.

Nevertheless, Arendt was not the only one hearing rumors of Heidegger's participation in the movement that summer. On June 24, 1958, six-thousand protestors gathered in Munich's Königsplatz to protest the nuclear armament of the Bundeswehr. Among the writers, academics, and political and public figures who appeared during the week-long vigil that followed was Wolfgang Hildesheimer, a member of the Gruppe 47 and the Komitee gegen Atomrüstung ("Committee against Atomic Armament"), which Hans Werner Richter had established in March of that year. In May, while he was planning the vigil, Hildesheimer wrote to Günther Neske (the publisher he shared with Heidegger) that he (Hildesheimer) was going to be meeting with Richter and was "anxious" to know whether "[Richter] had succeeded in winning over Heidegger."[26] Heidegger did not appear at the rally (based on his correspondence, he was most likely in Darmstadt at the time); nevertheless, the fact that Hildesheimer thought he *might*

speaks to the perception of Heidegger as, at least, a fellow-traveler of the movement.

Both these pieces of epistolary evidence are second-hand, and they speak primarily to perceptions about Heidegger's involvement or about his feelings towards nuclear weapons and German nuclear armament. Of course, it would be odd if the author biography in *Hebeldank* had been published without Heidegger's approval or knowledge, given how involved he was in the preparation of his writings for publication.

The only other link I have been able to find between Heidegger and the movement is indirect but tantalizing. The biography in the Hebel volume refers to Heidegger as belonging to the "Working Committee Against Atomic Death." There were several such committees across West Germany at the time, and though they were loosely coordinated as part of the movement, they were not strictly organized. Nevertheless, one of the largest and most consequential, the Berliner Arbeitsausschuss gegen den Atomtod ("Berlin Committee against Atomic Death") was run by Heidegger's former student, Margherita von Brentano.

Brentano studied with Heidegger in the 1940s, writing a dissertation on the concept of ἕν in Aristotle's metaphysics, before moving to Berlin in 1956 to serve as an assistant to Wilhelm Weischedel at the Freie Universität Berlin. Heidegger described her as "extraordinarily gifted" and, because he didn't think much of Weischedel (who had also studied with Heidegger), told her friend Hertha Sturm that he was going to try to find her something more suited to her talents and philosophical promise in Freiburg.[27]

At first glance, it would be strange if Brentano were Heidegger's connection to the movement. She was an avowed socialist and feminist who was lovingly referred to as "red Maggie,"[28] and she published in the leftist journal *Das Argument*. Moreover, according to interviews gathered in a volume to commemorate her, she shied away from talking about Heidegger's politics even with friends.[29] Nevertheless, it is striking that she was an organizing and active member of the Berlin "Working Committee Against Atomic Death," appearing on the masthead of the

organization's stationery and several times on the program of the student congress they organized in January 1959.[30]

The author biography, the correspondence and meetings with Weizsäcker, the letters from Arendt and Hildesheimer, and the connection to Margherita von Brentano, even when taken together, are inconclusive, and the question of Heidegger's involvement remains an open question. Even the connection to Brentano does not guarantee that the Berlin committee is the committee referred to in the author biography. A plethora of such committees existed in the 1950s, and they were not organized under a single national umbrella committee or organization.[31] *Kampf dem Atomtod* was a movement,[32] and it consisted primarily of declarations, rallies, vigils, "committees," and working groups.

That being said, my aim is not to settle definitively the extent of Heidegger's involvement in the movement but rather to re-open the question of the philosophical importance of nuclear weapons and the "atomic age" for Heidegger. If Heidegger's participation in the anti-nuclear movement remains *fragwürdig* in the sense of "questionable," it also remains *fragwürdig* in the sense of "worthy of questioning." The evidence does show that our received picture of Heidegger's relationship to the bomb is, at best, oversimplified; the letters of Arendt and Hildesheimer alone are enough to demonstrate that his contemporaries did not all judge Heidegger's attitude towards the danger of the bomb as simplistically as Anders (and later Rorty) did. Let the open historical question, then, open a philosophical and interpretive one: what about the atomic age – and the atomic bomb in particular – calls for thinking?

ATOMTOD UND ATOMLEBEN

Let's begin by returning to Heidegger's earliest public comments on the bomb, which are to be found in the lecture "The Thing" (and which are the occasion of Anders and Rorty's indignation).[33] Delivered in 1949 as the first lecture of the Bremen lectures (*Insight into that Which Is*), "The Thing" was Heidegger's first public lecture after the war,[34] and it was later published in *Vorträge und Aufsätze* [*Lectures and Essays*] in

1954. Heidegger, however, also worked on a version in May 1950 which he never delivered. According to a marginal note in the manuscript, the 1950 version was meant to be more "didactic" (GA 80.2: 949). One telling deviation from the other two versions comes just after the passage about the bomb that outraged Anders and Rorty. The passage common to all three drafts begins,

> The human today stares only at that which could come with the explosion of the atomic bomb. The human does not think what has long since arrived but which conceals itself in what is presencing.[35] The explosion of the atomic bomb is only the latest emission which the rule of the distance-less expels from itself, to say nothing of the hydrogen bomb, whose initial ignition, theoretically thought in its broadest possibility, could be enough to extinguish all life upon Earth. (GA 80.2: 952; GA 7: 168/PLT 164; GA 79: 4/4)

In the first two sentences, Heidegger puts forth a highly condensed argument he will make often about the relationship between the bomb and the history of being, namely that the bomb is not the *cause* of the atomic age but merely its "most obtrusive identifying sign" (GA 16: 522). Thought in terms of the history of being rather than the historiography of technoscience, the development of atomic technology became possible only because it had already become possible to view matter itself as nothing but a stock or "standing reserve" (*Bestand*) of energy (GA 79: 88/84; GA 11: 134). The third sentence brings this argument to a head in one of Heidegger's more direct engagements with the specter of nuclear omnicide.

At this point, the other two versions go on to speak of the terrifying, the *Ent-setzende*, as the dislocation of things from their essence. In the unpublished 1950 version, however, Heidegger inserts a jarring comparison:

> Uncannier than this vaporization of everything could ever be is the already looming violence of the addiction

> to television. The television is the most extreme ruin [*Zerstörung*] of nearness. This ruin is for us the most annihilating [*vernichtendste*] thinkable because this ruin essences and *is*, whereas the extinguishing of all life decomposes [*verwest*] everything into a void nothing [*nichtige Nichts*] so that this annihilation snatches away even annihilation itself into the void. (GA 80.2: 952–53)

The comparison seems flippant, to say the least. For Heidegger, however, the connection between the atomic bomb and the technologies of the public sphere or perhaps "publicity" (*Öffentlichkeit*) is as serious as the grave, and it will help us clarify the philosophical center of the passage, namely the distinction between "ruin" and "annihilation."

A few years earlier, in two entries from *Anmerkungen II*,[36] Heidegger elaborates the distinction between the destructive power of the bomb and that of journalism and publicity:

> The greatest power of ruination [*Zerstörungskraft*] today belongs to publicity. For it ruins by constructing the semblance that, within and through it, a world is built. The atomic bomb, on the other hand, just lets everything molder into dust [*in Staub zerfallen*], into which [dust] it [the atom bomb] itself enters into annihilation….
>
> More devastating than the heatwave of the atomic bomb is "spirit" in the form of world-journalism. The former annihilates [*vernichtet*] by merely obliterating [*auslöscht*]; the latter annihilates by constructing the illusion [*Schein*] of being upon the illusory ground [*Scheingrund*] of unconditional rootlessness. (GA 97: 154)

The comparison is, as Peter Trawny puts it, "exorbitant," but "the inordinateness of the comparison is meant to emphasize a problem that cannot be denied," namely the problem that, "Publicity is not open [*Die*

Öffentlichkeit ist nicht offen]. It only lets appear what obeys and serves its conditions."[37] "Publicity" (or "the public sphere") and journalism are above all concerned with *information*, which, as Walter Benjamin perspicaciously observes, serves the ends of "explanation" or "clarification," "lays claim to prompt verifiability," takes "plausibility" as its ultimate truth condition, and "lives" only in the instant of its being "new."[38] These conditions are, for Heidegger, anathema to thinking: "absolute journalism numbs the fear of thinking that has today become the style and thus ensures the most thorough extermination of thinking" (GA 97: 155). Thus, the "world" of "world journalism" is an "unworld" in which only what can be transmitted as "information" is actually real, circulating around the globe at tremendous speed, seamlessly translatable between languages, instantly understandable. It "ruins" or "destroys" the world not by blasting away the beings who dwell in the world *as* world but rather by offering the illusion that everything – or at least, knowledge of everything – is seamlessly and readily available, and that this alone is what is really real.

The scandalous comparison between mass media and the bomb, in other words, points up the distinction between these two forms of "annihilation" – the *ontic* annihilation of the bomb and the *ontological* ruin that *Gestell* inflicts upon thing and world. Heidegger argues that the latter, for which he usually reserves the term *Zerstörung*, is uncannier and far more insidious because it is not the mere absence or material destruction of beings but rather *a mode of their appearance* – worse, it is the way in which they appear as "really real," as part of a shared world of "facts" established by "information." The annihilation of the bomb is, seemingly, that of mere absence in a familiar sense: at one point there were human beings present on earth, but, after the nuclear war, they are gone.[39] Technological ruin, on the other hand, is that of the no-thing, of the absence of things in the full sense of Heidegger's use of the term after World War Two. The devastated "unworld" or "misworld" of publicity is one of no-things rather than simply a planet on which nothing remains.

The comparison between nuclear war and global publicity, however, is mostly confined to the earliest period of Heidegger's reflections on the bomb – the 1950 draft of the "Thing" lecture is, to my knowledge, the last time it appears. Heidegger will retain the distinction between physical and ontological annihilation, but, by the early 1950s, he will re-inscribe it *within* the ambit of atomic energy itself and will come to take more seriously the problematic of the "atomic age," even as he continues to downplay the bomb and to insist that the moniker "atomic age" itself is misleading if we take it to mean that nuclear technology is a *cause* rather than a "reflection (*Widerschein*)" of the technological age (GA 100: 153). As Heidegger puts it in the early 1960s, "The names 'atomic age,' 'rocket age,' and others like them each time name products of technology, but not [technology] itself" (GA 102: 174). In doing so, the name "atomic age" "affirms the rule of *Gestell* without really offering insight into it" (GA 100: 134).

Nevertheless, it becomes clear in this period that Heidegger thinks the atomic age is somehow exemplary of *Gestell*'s extremity such that the availability of nuclear energy cannot be understood as simply one example of *Gestell* among others. In a 1953 outline for "The Question Concerning Technology," Heidegger concludes by asking, "What is the productive unveiling of modern technology leading to? This is what the name of its newest and most recent phase tells us. It is called atomic technology" (GA 80.2: 1110). In the 1955 lecture course *Der Satz vom Grund*, Heidegger writes, "Today the withdrawal of the essence of being seems to consummate itself. We say 'today,' and we mean the dawning atomic age, through which modernity presumably consummates itself, insofar as the fundamental feature of this epoch, in its inception, unfolds without limit into its utmost" (GA 10: 83/56).

In what sense is the atomic age a consummation or a paradigmatic example of *Gestell*? First, it reduces all matter to a "standing reserve" of energy, or, as Heidegger provocatively puts it in the 1955 "Gelassenheit" address, "Nature becomes one enormous gas station, a source of energy for modern technology and industry" (GA 16: 523/DT 50). In the first lecture of the Freiburg cycle *Fundamental Principles of Thinking* (held

the same month as the Göttingen Declaration, April 1957), Heidegger writes that the "ultimate triumph" of *Ge-stell* "consists in the fact that this thinking has compelled nature into relinquishing atomic energy" (GA 79: 88/84). This applies not only to the actual release of atomic energy in fission and fusion technologies but to the very shift in modern physics towards viewing matter and energy as quantitatively convertible. As Andrew Mitchell explains, "The energy that is drawn out of everything is likewise the same energy – there is no qualitative distinction to be had here. The homogeneity of energy renders it without assignable location, place, or home."[40] The "energy" that is the object of modern nuclear physics accelerates the drive towards "unconditional rootlessness" while shoring up the appearance that this alone is what is "actually real."

Beyond this theoretical shift in physics, Heidegger sees the technological applications of nuclear energy as equally insidious: "The requisitionability [*Bestellbarkeit*] of nuclear energy – be it 'peaceful' or bellicose – is only the reflection of reigning *Gestell*" (GA 100: 153). Particularly insidious for Heidegger is the fact that atomic energy may well come to appear as the "provision for securing technical and industrial progress," that is, as the unlimited source of energy that would "free" humanity from the limits on productivity imposed by the finite character of other fuel sources (GA 100: 184). In this case, nuclear energy would appear "in the form of far-sighted concern for the standard of living of mankind – as the most tangible and therefore convincing form of humanity." Indeed, he worries that "modern nuclear technology ingratiates itself to humanity by offering the assurance that food supplies will be secured many times over and that the supply of raw materials of industry will be secured: *it can go on like this*" (GA 100: 182).[41]

Taken together, these two aspects of atomic energy – its revelation of nature as a *Bestand* of energy and its mobilization of this standing reserve in the service of securing the material conditions of human life and economic production – present, for Heidegger, a reality whose devastation will be far more uncanny and even more difficult to catch sight of than the "unworld" of mass media publicity: "in the dawning of the

atomic age lurks a far greater danger – precisely if and when the danger of a third world war is eliminated" (GA 16: 528/DT 56). Heidegger will repeat this admittedly "strange claim" continually throughout this period, arguing that the physical destruction of the bomb offers far less for thought than the horrifying realization that "*it can go on like this*," that humanity, instead of asking after the grounds of the atomic age, will simply affirm it unconditionally, breathlessly exclaiming that "we will live through atoms!"

In an unpublished note from 1953 with the heading "das Gestell und die Atomenergie," Heidegger ties these different forms of destruction into the question of humanity's relation to history. Under the heading of "Atomenergie," he lists out "annihilation [*Vernichtung*]," "ruination [*Zerstörung*]," and "desertification [*Verwüstung*]," while drawing a line from "Gestell" to the following thoughts:

> The ontic end of the planet and its inhabitants / comes near. The human has nothing *more before it* / most already behind it / or? *on the contrary!* / and *before* it? – but *no longer* future and history – but rather?[42]

Mulling over the question of futurity in the atomic age, Heidegger here differentiates between two senses of futurelessness. The first part of the passage rehearses an ontic understanding of nuclear weapons as threatening humanity with the loss of its future. Haunted by the "ontic destruction of the planet and its inhabitants," the atomic age is "futureless" because humanity now has fewer years left to live than it had up to this point.

Heidegger's "on the contrary!" entertains that the opposite may just as well come true, that the nuclear optimists may be right after all, as we saw in the passage above from the *Black Notebooks*. In this case, the human species may well live on for many more years subsequent to the discovery of nuclear energy than it did prior to it, but our relation to what lies before us may no longer be worthy of the name "future"; indeed, we may lose contact with *history* in Heidegger's strict sense. In this case, the ontological "ruin" (*Zerstörung*) becomes "devastation"

(*Verwüstung*), or, more literally, "desertification." Heidegger's cryptic comment seems to imply that, in this final intensification of destruction, the horizon of the possibility of a world beyond this desert-world of the friendly atom is lost. If the possibility of transformation – that is to say, the possibility of possibility itself – can be lost, then what is left? Whatever it is, it certainly isn't "history" in any robust sense of the word. So what do we call it?

In the "Gelassenheit" address, Heidegger brings this argument to an almost unbearably fine point: "precisely if the hydrogen bombs *do not* explode and human life remains preserved upon the earth, there looms with the atomic age an uncanny alteration of the world" (GA 16: 525/DT 52). This is no one-off rhetorical flourish; it echoes a passage from the *Black Notebooks* that reflects on the occasion of the first hydrogen bomb test:

> What is most uncanny is not the extreme threat to "human stock [*menschlichen Bestandes*]" but the beclouding of every possibility of a future within the world of *Gestell*. Not annihilation but *the desert of the future-less*, which buries every arrival and calling, driving the mortals into the unrestrained activity of activeness for its own sake. (GA 100: 131, em)

Heidegger's nightmare, in other words, is not that human life will be wiped out in the deafening blasts of warheads but rather that we will become deaf to the call of being beneath the benevolent hum of nuclear reactors, that we will be reduced, as he puts it in the 1956 *Hebeltag* address, to "mere life" (GA 16: 545). It would seem that Heidegger's true fear is not *Atomtod* but rather *Atomleben* – a life whose material preservation comes at the cost of any future beyond a bad infinity of the present. If we take Heidegger at his word in the most despairing of these passages, then what is threatened in the consummation of *Gestell* in nuclear technology is not only the ontic survival of the human species but the very possibility of stepping back from the circular drive of technological life.

WENN ICH STERBE?

What will you do, God, if I die?
I am your jug (if I shatter?)
I am your drink (if I spoil?)
[. . .]
After me you have no house, in which
Words, near and warm, greet you.[43]

Here, however, we must bear in mind a crucial feature of Heidegger's thinking which is captured pithily in his oft-cited citation of Hölderlin, "Where however danger is, grows / what rescues also."[44] The key here lies in the relationship between the human being and the truth of being, that is to say, in the question of what it means to *think* the atomic age. At the close of the "Gelassenheit" address, just after his admittedly "strange assertion" that a far greater danger lurks in the atomic age, precisely if a third (presumably nuclear) world war is avoided, Heidegger clarifies that his assertion "holds insofar as the revolution of technology, rolling along in the atomic age, could shackle, bewitch, blind, and blindfold the human, that one day calculative thinking might remain *the only one* in validity and practice" (GA 16: 528/DT 56, tm). This would be the desert of the futureless, and it would mean that "the human would have disowned and discarded what is most proper to it, namely that it is a being [*Wesen*] that thinks contemplatively [*nachdenkt*]" (GA 16: 529/DT 56, tm).

It is thinking itself, the contemplative essence of the human, that is under threat in the atomic age, but this dire threat may be precisely the condition for understanding thinking in its essence. What calls for thinking, what might still draw thinking onto its path even in the din of the atomic age, is being itself in its withdrawal (GA 10: 83/56, tm). Or, to be more specific, what calls for thinking is the fact that technology is not something that befalls being from without but is rather "a wholly determinate manner of being's manifestness, a destiny of beyng through which the contemporary human must pass" (GA 15: 433). That technology has become the name of being itself is neither the product of human action nor the effect of any given invention (nor even of the

sum total of technological inventions, artifacts, processes, etc.). In a letter to Elisabeth Blochmann from 1946, he makes this clear with regard to the bomb itself:

> Technology, in the broadest sense, is itself nothing "technical," but rather "spirit" – and this means a manner in which beings as a whole are revealed and hold sway as the revealed. More simply, one could also say: we do not yet know what the technical is – it does not consist in the mechanism of the atomic bomb, nor in the fact that humans produce this mechanism and wrest it from nature. Rather, the technical conceals itself in the fact that nature allows such things and that humans engage with this possible "mastery" of natural forces and, through it, arrange the world.[45]

Technology is *given to thought* as that which makes things like the harnessing of nuclear energy possible, not vice versa. "The meaning of the technological world conceals itself," Heidegger writes in "Gelassenheit," and only the comportment which remains "open to this mystery," that is to say, which does not treat it as something calculable and directable, can be adequate to the challenge it poses (GA 16: 527–29/DT 55–56, tm). This comportment is thinking, or more specifically, contemplative thinking (*Nachdenken*).

A correlate of this realization is that technology cannot be addressed through regulation, asceticism, or luddism. Just as *Gestell* was not brought about by any particular invention, no human "action" directed at those particular inventions can address it. Hence why, in the "Gelassenheit" address, Heidegger declares quite clearly, "it would be foolish to blindly rush against the technological world," even while he cautions against allowing technological artifacts to "exclusively lay claim to us and thus bend our essence out of shape, confuse it, and ultimately desolate it" (GA 16: 526/53–54, tm). Thinking allows this "step back," this minimal displacement through which the human might inhabit the world of technological artifacts without losing sight of the

fact that its ground is not itself something manipulable, measurable, indeed "actual" by technology's own measure. Thinking – precisely that "contemplative" thinking that is scorned as an *inaction* – holds open the space in which one can come to see the danger Heidegger is outlining *as a danger*; that is, seeing in nuclear energy the renewed need for the thinking of being. The ontological futurelessness that Heidegger fears in the peaceful application of nuclear technology does not answer or obviate the question of the meaning of being but rather harbors the possibility of making this question legible in a new way: how is it possible that the earth could come to appear as – *to be* – one single gas station? How did such a view of nature become *thinkable*?

Heidegger wagers that this question might reveal to us that being has a history – a history that we do not "make" but rather which addresses itself or "sends" itself (*shickt sich*) to us and is thus experienced as "destiny" (*Geschick*). This in turn, might perhaps help us situate ourselves within that history as the beings tasked with thinking the history of being, those beings who "shepherd" or "shelter" the truth of being by taking up its call. In *Vigilae II*, Heidegger writes,

> The destinal provenance of Europe might harbor within itself a path of meditative reflection that could even outstrip the planetary character of the atomic age and open realms into which what has not yet been ventured might stream. Such reflection is no historical prognosis – but rather only an intimation into a possibility reserved for the dwelling of humans on this earth. (GA 100: 215)

Precisely because it drives the forgetting of being to its extreme, the atomic age presents an opportunity to reflect upon being, on its history and its truth, though Heidegger is clear that this is merely a possibility, one that may never be taken up – "such reflection is no historical prognosis."

We arrive here at the complicated intersection of the ontic and ontological in the history of being, of the relationship between the

ontological possibility of transformation in the history of being and the ontic conditions for its uptake. If the task of thinking is merely to "prepare" for such a transformation, what happens if beings who are tasked with thinking abandon or are rendered incapable of this task? Does this possibility of a hint *remain* necessarily possible? Or is it possible that humans subsist so long in the desert of the futureless that they lose contact with this possibility, that their essence is so deformed over the course of ontic, measurable time that it becomes essentially transformed? To what extent do the ontological possibilities of human thinking and language – that is, the capacity of human thought to shelter being in its truth – depend upon the ontic conditions of that thinking's practice, inscription, and transmission?

These questions are raised even more brutally by the bomb, that is, by the threat to the material survival of the human species. What is the relationship between the being-historical task of human, the mortal, or Dasein and the material life of the human animal? As we have seen, Heidegger's dismissiveness about the bomb and suspicion towards atomic age optimism are meant to warn against trading the material life of the species for the being-historical task of the mortal, against securing "mere life" at the expense of "dwelling" (GA 16: 545). And yet, surely the material, animal life of the human species is in some sense a condition for the mortal's shepherdship of being?

Heidegger might answer that this framing neglects precisely the possibility of a turn in thinking that the atomic age holds out, even with regard to nuclear omnicide: "We could, however, also even see the threat to the survival of human stock [*menschliches Bestand*] as a hint which calls into the transformation of the *essence* of the human" (GA 100: 134). In other words, Heidegger suggests that what calls for thinking in the threat to "human stock" is the strange fact that we not only understand humanity in terms of *Bestand*, i.e., as a stockpile of life that can be reduced, increased, or even eliminated, but, further, that we take this to be *what is really real* about human life, as opposed to the "abstractness" of Dasein. The power of thought is the power to see in

the threat to "human stock" an occasion to reflect on the strangeness and poverty of this conception of human life.

Indeed – but only so long as this threat remains just that. My questions are really about what happens if the threat is realized, and what this says about the relationship of the ontic and the ontological in this period more generally – do all ontic causes and intra-historical events presuppose the ontological grounds of being's destiny? Or does nuclear omnicide reveal that ontic events can recoil onto their ontological grounds?

In "Fundamental Principles of Thinking," Heidegger comes, to my knowledge, the closest to addressing these questions directly. Against the appearance that thinking is defenseless in the face of nuclear energy, Heidegger argues that a meditation on the fundamental principles of thinking may help us "feel, while there is yet time, the force [*Gewalt*] of thinking, which infinitely, i.e., according to its essence, surpasses every possible quantum of atomic energy" (GA 79: 89/84, tm). This is the argument we have seen above – thinking is concerned with being itself and thus with something that is not "the object of calculation and control which is directed by a scientific technology which calls itself nuclear physics." Indeed, it is only because, in some concealed and unthematized way, thinking had already begun to take up nature technologically that nature could come to appear as a "stock of energy." The development of physics into nuclear physics constitutes "a meta-physical occurrence [*meta-physischer Vorfall*]," that is to say, something that belongs squarely within the realm of *thinking*.

Here, Heidegger entertains the question raised above:

> But if it now were to come to the point that the thinking beings [*Wesen*] are extinguished [*ausgelöscht*] by atomic energy, where would thinking then remain? What is then more powerful, natural energy in its technological-machinic form or thinking? Or does neither of the two, which belong together in this case, have primacy [*Vorrang*]? *Is there still anything at all when all mortal essencing of the human on the earth "is" extinguished*? (GA 79: 89/84, tm, em; cf. GA 11: 134).

Heidegger does not answer the last question directly but rather takes up the reframing suggested in the third, seemingly rhetorical question. It is not a question of the primacy of thinking over atomic energy – the task before us is to think the grounds of nature appearing as energy, and to understand that both thinking and science are responding to "the thought" (*der Gedanke*) that "that thinking followed in pursuing nature into atomic energy…It is not we, the humans, who come upon these thoughts; the thoughts come to us mortals whose essence is set upon thinking as its ground" (GA 79: 89/84, tm). In insisting that thoughts come *to us* rather than *from us*, Heidegger here not only fends off the collapse of his thinking into an idealism that would say that thought has its origin *in* the mind; he also raises the question, "are we so sure we know who 'we' are?" as a way of fending off the question that we "immediately ask," namely, "but who thinks these thoughts which visit us?" (GA 79: 89/85, tm). That is, Heidegger dismisses the ontological question of nuclear omnicide – which is to say, the question of the relationship of being to the human's material existence – by dismissing it as ill-formed, or at least, posed before we are ready to even ask it, much less answer it.

Here we can see more clearly why Heidegger's meditations on thinking in the atomic age are so rich and strange: they cut to the very heart of the problem of ontological difference, the history of being, and the essence of the human. Heidegger thinks back into the grounds of the problem, and in doing so, pries apart what *Gestell* can only collapse: the mortal and the human animal; cause and ground; the nothingness of physical absence and the nothingness of ontological devastation; the futurelessness of a sudden end and the futurelessness of a bad infinity. And yet, in doing so, he "thinks past the issue" (*denkt an der Sache vorbei*), to employ a phrase he directs at the discourse of the atomic age (GA 100: 154). In order to take seriously the threat of nuclear omnicide, we needn't collapse these distinctions, but, as I have been trying to show, we cannot avoid the question of their *entanglement*. The mortal may not be coterminous with "mere life," but there is no mortality, no thinking, no shepherdship of the truth of being without it. Being and

its truth are not products of subjectivity or the human mind – they come to it from without, as a "gift" or a "destiny" – but they require that someone be there to receive them, to shelter them, in short, *to think them*. Just as Heidegger can both insist that we do not yet know the essence of technology while insisting that we *do* know, at least, that it is itself nothing "technical," the problem of thinking the atomic age – of thinking the task of thinking in the age of nuclear omnicide – reveals the strange and aporetic way that thinking itself is both bound to and irreducible to the "mere life" of the human animal, that being's history and truth are irreducible to and yet exposed to the ontic conditions of their inscription, reception, and transmission. The grounded recoils upon the ground.

This is perhaps why, in another unpublished note from 1953 on the relationship between nuclear physics and philosophy, Heidegger writes, "the relationship of ontic and ontology no longer essentially sufficient."[46] Here, he seems to be repeating a claim made elsewhere that the distinction between physics as an ontic discourse and philosophy as an ontological one no longer suffices since nuclear and quantum physics now are increasingly taken as the measure of claims about being (GA 97: 484; GA 101: 79). But we might also sense here the more general hesitation that I have been trying to sketch, namely, that the atomic age (above all, the threat of nuclear omnicide) makes the ontic/ontological distinction tremble. For, the bomb is not simply one threat among others: it is the only product of *Gestell* that contains the possibility of eliminating – irreversibly – all those beings capable of experiencing the distinction between a thing – in its full sense of what gathers the fourfold – and a product of *Gestell*. Heidegger may be right that technology experiences the emptiness of the jug as nothing but a "hollow cavity [*Hohlraum*] filled with air" (GA 79: 10/9, tm; GA 7: 173/169, tm), and he may be right that, in this way, technology makes the "jug-thing" into an un-thing, a non-thing, "something negligible" (GA 79: 9/8). He may even be right that thought retains the power to see this making-negligible as such and thus to catch sight of the irreducibility of the ontological to the ontic, of being as what gives beings into

presence but is not itself something present at all. This may all well be true; and yet, in the *Hohlraum*[47] of the fusion bomb lurks a danger where no saving power grows.

The evidence of Heidegger's participation in the *Kampf dem Atomtod*, inconclusive as it is, might suggest that perhaps some part of Heidegger was aware of this, or, to put it another way, that perhaps there was something of disavowal rather than intellectual bravado in his apparent "Gelassenheit" towards the possibility of nuclear war. By way of conclusion, then, let me cite two final pieces of evidence that Heidegger took the nuclear threat more seriously than his most famous remarks about it would seem to imply. In a letter to Richard Mehring from 1990, Gadamer writes that Heidegger "reckoned in centuries" the time that would need to elapse before his thinking "could support a new beginning." "Accordingly," Gadamer continues, "the reason for housing his *Nachlass* at Marbach was not least because of its uncommonly bomb-proof warehouses, which could perhaps even survive a nuclear war."[48] Around the same time he was making decisions about storing his *Nachlass* at fortress Marbach, Heidegger was hesitating about the idea of authorizing a *Gesamtausgabe* of his works (a discomfort testified to in the GA's "motto," which admonishes readers to treat the writings as "ways – not works"). In April 1972, he told Vittorio Klostermann that he could not agree to the project of a *Gesamtausgabe*: "It would not correspond to the style of my thinking."[49] As we know, however, Heidegger eventually changed his mind. According to Hermann Heidegger, what changed it was "the possibility of a total loss of manuscripts in a nuclear war."[50]

NOTES

1 "The world is going to end; the only reason it could last is that it exists. How weak is this reason compared to all those which announce the contrary…For, supposing that it continued to exist materially, would it be an existence worthy of this name?"

2 Heidegger cites it directly in "Der Satz vom Grund," which was also delivered in May 1956 (GA 10: 178/122, tm). The title translates to "We Will Live Through Atoms!"

3 Both Günther Anders and Richard Rorty have written polemically about Heidegger's comments on the bomb (see below). More recently, Andrew Mitchell and Peter Trawny have each written about Heidegger's comments exegetically (see Mitchell, *The Fourfold* [Northwestern UP, 2015] and Trawny, *Heidegger-Fragmente* [Fischer, 2018]). Jan Völker has taken Heidegger's comments on nuclear omnicide as the basis for a reflection on the anthropocene (Jan Völker, "The End of Life Is Not the Worst: On Heidegger's Notion of the World," *Filozofski Vestnik* 42, no. 2 [December 31, 2021]: 113–32).

4 Though the term's coinage is usually attributed to philosopher John Somerville in the 1980s (when he defined it as "the annihilation of all human beings by some human beings"), Kenneth Tynan used it as early as 1959 in *The New Yorker*, when he wrote "we have always had the ability to commit suicide and the skill to commit homicide; after many a chiliad, we mastered the art of genocide; and we are now equipped for a new crime, as yet untitled, though a good name for it would be omnicide—the murder of everyone." Citations from Émile P. Torres, *Human Extinction: A History of the Science and Ethics of Annihilation* (Routledge, 2024), 88–89.

5 Günther Anders, *Frömmigkeitsphilosophie*, in *Über Heidegger*, ed. Gerhard Oberschlick (C. H. Beck, 2001), 365–66. Emphasis in original.

6 Richard Rorty, "Heidegger and the Atomic Bomb," in *Making Things Public: Atmospheres of Democracy*, ed. Bruno Latour and Peter Weibel (MIT Press, 2005), 274–75.

7 "Martin Heidegger," in *Hebeldank*, ed. Hanns Uhl (Verlag Rombach, 1964), 65.

8 https://www.spiegel.de/politik/zeitgenoesische-berichte-und-dokumente-ueber-konrad-adenauer-und-seine-politik-a-55178 15d-0002-0001-0000-000046172288

9 "Erklärung der achtzehn Atomwissenschaftler vom 12. April 1957," in Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker, *Der Bedrohte Friede – heute* (Carl Hanser, 1994), 25–26.

10 Mark Walker, *Hitler's Atomic Bomb: History, Legend, and the Twin Legacies of Auschwitz and Hiroshima* (Cambridge University Press, 2024), 231. Walker argues that the Göttingen declaration must also be read, in part, in the context of efforts by members of the Nazi Uran-Projekt to rehabilitate their images in the post-War period. This is perhaps especially true of Weizsäcker, "who after the war was associated much more closely with National Socialism than either Hahn or Heisenberg" (Walker 239). This is not only because Weizsäcker's father was an undersecretary in the Foreign Ministry during the Third Reich (a fact which Einstein mentions in his famous letter of August 1939, in which he pleads with Roosevelt to begin development of an atomic bomb), but also because of his participation in drafting a number of declarations issued during the Third Reich—most notoriously the "Seefeld" declaration, which struck a compromise with the representatives of "Aryan physics" by insisting on the importance of the theory of special relativity but downplaying Einstein's genius and casting doubt on the theory of general relativity. The question of Weizsäcker's personal belief in National Socialist ideology is a matter of contention. Heisenberg, who defended Weizsäcker after the war, nevertheless wrote a letter to his wife in October 1943 describing Weizsäcker as "unbearable" in his constant musing that perhaps the utter destruction wrought by the Allied bombing campaign would help bring about the "final decision" in favor of "another way of thinking" (i.e. National Socialism) (Letter to Elisabeth Heisenberg from October 14, 1943, in *»Meine Liebe Li!« Der Briefwechsel 1937–1946*, ed. Anna Maria Hirsch-Heisenberg, ebook [Residenz Verlag, 2011]).

Wolf Schäfer has argued that Heidegger and Weizsäcker shared the hope for a National Socialism better than "really existing" National Socialism ("Der 'utopische' Nationalsozialismus – Ein gemeinsamer Fluchtpunkt im Denken von Martin Heidegger und Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker?" in *Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker: Physik, Philosophie, Friedensforschung*, ed. Klaus Hentschel und Dieter Hoffmann [Wissenschaftliche Verlagsgesellschaft, 2014], 503–24). See also, Klaus Hentschel, "Introduction," in *Physics and National Socialism*, ed. Klaus Hentschel (Birkhäuser Basel, 1996), xxviii.

11 See Robert Lorenz, *Protest der Physiker: die "Göttinger Erklärung" von 1957* (Transcript Verlag, 2011).

12 When he was rector, for instance, Heidegger invited Viktor von Weizsäcker to give a lecture at the university, which Georg Picht describes as a puzzling choice, since "everyone knew" that (Viktor) von Weizsäcker was not a Nazi. Indeed, according to Picht's account, when a student opened the event with a "programmatic speech about the National-Socialist revolution," Heidegger interrupted him after a few minutes by stamping his feet and yelling sharply, "This gibberish ends right now!" (Georg Picht, "Die Macht des Denkens," in *Erinnerung an Martin Heidegger*, ed. Günter Neske, [Neske, 1977], 198–99).

13 Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker, "Begegnungen in vier Jahrzehnten," in *Erinnerung an Martin Heidegger*, 239.

14 For a report on these seminars by one of the participants, see Ewald Richter, "Heideggers Seminar in Wellingsbüttel," *Heidegger Studies* 16: 221–45.

15 This meeting is also important for questions about the post-war rehabilitation of Heidegger's image, since the most notable attendee was not Weizsäcker but Martin Buber. For more on this aspect of the encounter, see Paul Mendes-Flohr, "Martin Buber and Martin Heidegger in Dialogue," *The Journal of Religion* 94, no. 1 (January 2014): 2–25. The conference which the four men were meeting to plan took place in 1959. There, Heidegger delivered the lecture "Language," while Weizsäcker spoke on "Language

as Information," an examination of the relationship between formal languages and natural languages that Heidegger cites three years later in "Traditional Language and Technical Language."

16 Martin Heidegger to C.F. von Weizsäcker, May 6, 1957, Abteilung III, repository 111 (Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker Nachlass [CFWN]), Max-Planck-Gesellschaft Archiv, (MPGA) Berlin

17 Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker to Martin Heidegger, June 14, 1957, CFWN, MPGA.

18 Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker to Max Born, February 26, 1958, Abt. III, Repository 14 (Nachlass Otto Hahn [NOH]), number 2879, MPGA.

19 Mark Walker, *Hitler's Bomb*, 237.

20 Hedwig Born (wife of fellow Göttingen signatory Max Born) seems to have taken the articles as an absolute betrayal of the spirit of the Göttingen Declaration (Walker, *Hitler's Bomb*, 237), and Günther Anders, upon hearing of them, described the title as "appallingly ambiguous" (Anders, *Tagebuch aus Hiroshima und Nagasaki*, in *Hiroshima ist überall* [C. H. Beck, 1995], 25).

21 At its peak in 1958, a survey by the Bielefelder Emnid-Institutes found 83% of West Germans were against the nuclear armament of the *Bundeswehr* and 53% approved of the use of strikes to prevent it ("Kampf Dem Atomtod," *Sendungen und Podcasts* [Deutschlandfunk Kultur, March 5, 2008]).

22 Daniel Morat and Dieter Thomä have each written about this letter, though they both mention it only in passing. Morat uses the letter to underline the difference between Anders's activism and Heidegger's quietism; Thomä mentions it to underline the proximity of Heidegger's and Anders's understanding of technology in spite of Anders's criticisms of Heidegger. Daniel Morat, "Mit Heidegger gegen Heidegger: Intellektuelles Engagement und praktische Philosophie nach 1945," in *Bürgersinn mit Weltgefühl: politische Moral und solidarischer Protest in den sechziger und siebziger Jahren*, ed. Habbo Knoch, Veröffentlichungen des Zeitgeschichtlichen Arbeitskreises Niedersachsen, Band 23

(Wallstein Verlag, 2007), 71. Dieter Thomä, "Günther Anders," in *Heidegger-Handbuch: Leben – Werk – Wirkung*, ed. Dieter Thomä, 2nd ed (J. B. Metzler, 2013), 407.

23 Hannah Arendt and Heinrich Blücher, *Briefe 1936–1968*, ed. Lotte Köhler (Piper, 1996), 560. I am grateful to Ian Alexander Moore for drawing my attention to this letter when I first reached out to him for help tracking down information on Heidegger and the *Atomtod* movement. On the rupture between Heidegger and Arendt during this time, see Antonia Grunenberg, *Hannah Arendt and Martin Heidegger: History of a Love,* trans. Peg Birmingham, Kristina Lebedeva, and Elizabeth von Witzke Birmingham (Indiana UP, 2006), 247–81.

24 Hannah Arendt to Günther Anders, May 31, 1958, in *Schrieb doch mal hard facts über dich: Briefe 1937 bis 1975*, ed. Kerstin Putz (Piper, 2016), 74. It is worth noting that both these letters date from the five-year gap in Heidegger and Arendt's correspondence from October 1954 to December 1959, which was itself part of a general rift that opened between them from the early 1950s until Heidegger sent her an "autumn letter" on the occasion of her 60th birthday in 1966. The only attested written correspondence during this gap is a birthday telegram Arendt sent Heidegger on his 70th birthday in 1959. Accordingly, Heidegger's "involvement" cannot simply have been a position he expressed to her in correspondence or conversation but must have reached her, as she says to Anders, *mündlich*, by word of mouth.

25 Günther Anders to Hannah Arendt, June 3, 1958, *Schreib doch mal*, 75. The italicized phrase appears in English in Anders's letter.

26 Wolfgang Hildesheimer to Günther Neske, May 24, 1958. Cited in Walter Kühn, *Vermischte Zustände: Heidegger im literarisch-Philosophischen Leben der fünfziger Jahre des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts*, (Königshausen & Neumann, 2015), 196.

27 Letter from Hertha Sturm to Margherita von Brentano, May 1, 1955, in *Das Politische und das Persönliche: eine Collage*, ed.

Iris Nachum and Susan Neiman (Wallstein-Verlag, 2010), 65–67. Interestingly, the letter also mentions the broadcast of a "Hebel lecture" by Heidegger. Given the dates, however, this is not the Hebel lecture that was later published in *Hebeldank* but almost certainly the lecture simply titled "Johann Peter Hebel," which Heidegger first delivered in Zähringen on September 5, 1954 (GA 16: 491–515). The letter dates from the end of Brentano's time as the director of the educational programming of the Südwestfunk (which Sturm took over from her when she moved to Berlin). Melanie Fritscher-Fehr, *Demokratie im Ohr: Das Radio als geschichtskultureller Akteur in Westdeutschland*, 1945–1963 (Transcript, 2019), 158.

28 "Philosophin mit Schnauze," *Frankfurter Rundschau*, January 24, 2019. https://www.fr.de/kultur/literatur/philosophin-schnauze-11470089.html.

29 *Das Politische und das Persönliche*, 47.

30 Abteilung III, Repository 93, Nachlass Werner Heisenberg (NWH), nr. 340, AMPG.

31 In addition to the largest committee, which was based in Berlin, there was one based in Hamburg which sprang up around the time that Weizsäcker assumed a chair of philosophy there. Again, I have so far been unable to figure out which committee is referenced in the author biography.

32 It was associated with the political parties such as the SPD and the FDP, as well as extra-party institutions like the labor unions and the Catholic church, but it was never consolidated into an official party or institutional organ. See Holger Nehring, *Politics of Security: British and West German Protest Movements and the Early Cold War, 1945–1970*, (Oxford UP), 206.

33 He also discusses the bomb in a letter to Elisabeth Blochmann from March 3, 1947 and in several entries in the *Black Notebooks* before 1949.

34 Interestingly, in November 1949 American writer Eugene Jolas published a report about Bremen lectures based on the reports

of attendees, which he titled "Heidegger in the Atomic Age" (in *Eugene Jolas: Critical Writings 1924–51*, ed. Klaus H. Kefer and Rainer Rumold [Northwestern University Press, 2009], 473–74.

35 This sentence is the only deviation in this passage from the other versions, which have "The human does not see what long since *has* arrived and indeed *has* occurred [*angekommen* ist *und zwar geschehen* ist]."

36 Peter Trawny dates them to fall 1945, but the first page of *Anmerkungen II* bears the parenthetical date "1946" (GA 97: 107). See Trawny, *Heidegger-Fragmente*, 57.

37 Trawny, *Heidegger-Fragmente*, 58.

38 Walter Benjamin, "Der Erzähler," in *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann and Hermann Schweppenhäuser, vol. 2 (Suhrkamp, 1991), 444–45. Benjamin's definition of information (from 1936) predates the technical definitions of information in terms of entropy that emerge a decade later in Claude Shannon and Norbert Wiener. Heidegger, for his part, seems to have begun studying the cybernetic definition of information in the early 1950s, and his papers contain several convolutes of notes which include long passages copied out by hand from Gotthard Günther's *Die Bewußtsein der Maschine: Eine Metaphysik der Kybernetik*. See also Erich Hörl, "Die Offene Maschine. Heidegger, Günther und Simondon über die Technologische Bedingung," *MLN* 123, no. 3 (2008): 632–55.

39 I do not mean here to dismiss the considerable difficulties that attend such an imagination or thought experiment, as thinkers of nuclear war from Anders to Jonathan Schell to Jacques Derrida have observed. To address these, however, would mean taking up directly the debate about correlationism as it was posed by Quentin Meillassoux, a task which exceeds the purview of this paper.

40 Mitchell, *The Fourfold*, 67.

41 Heidegger's fear of attempts at "ingratiating" nuclear technology to the public were not delusional – they were not even confined to nuclear power generation. In the 1950s, the United

States government had an initiative called "Project Plowshare" which sought peaceful applications for nuclear explosions in an attempt to reintroduce the public to the "friendly atom." The name "plowshare" is a reference to Micah 4:3: "and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks" (the verse also appears at Isaiah 2:4). The Soviet Union had a similar project called "Nuclear Explosions for the National Economy." Kazakhstan's Lake Chagan, for instance, was formed as part of this project when the Soviets detonated a 140-kiloton bomb underground on January 15, 1965.

42 Reproduced at Helga Raulff, *Strahlungen: Atom und Literatur* (Deutsche Schillergesellschaft, 2008), 74–75.

43 Rainer Maria Rilke, *Das Buch vom mönchischen Leben,* in *Das Stunden-Buch*, in vol. 2 of *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. Manfred Engel, Ulrich Fülleborn, Horst Nalewski, August Stahl (Frankfurt am Main: Insel Verlag, 2003), 32.

44 Friedrich Hölderlin, "Patmos," in *Sämtliche Werke, vol. 2: Gedichte nach 1800,* ed. Friedrich Beissner (Kohlhammer, 1953), 173. C.f. GA 79: 72/68, tm.

45 Martin Heidegger to Elisabeth Blochmann, March 3, 1946, in *Briefwechsel 1918–1969*, ed. Joachim W. Storck (Deutsche Literaturarchiv, 1989), 93. This argument is perhaps the most consistent thread of Heidegger's engagement with the atomic age. See also, for instance, GA 79: 89/84; GA 11: 134; GA 8: 207–8/204–5, 238/234 etc.

46 Cited at Helga Raulff, *Strahlungen*, 78.

47 In English, the German word "Hohlraum" is used as a technical term in radiation thermodynamics, and, in the Teller-Ulam hydrogen fusion bomb, it designates the radiation casing that contains the energy released by the first fission explosion, which then powers the larger, fusion explosion. See "4.4 Elements of Thermonuclear Weapon Design," *Nuclear Weapon Archive*, last modified March 13, 2019, https://nuclearweaponarchive.org/Nwfaq/Nfaq4-4.html.

48 Cited in Richard Mehring, *Heideggers "Große Politik": die semantische Revolution der* Gesamtausgabe (Siebeck, 2016), 241fn41.

49 Letter to Vittorio Klostermann from April 11, 1972, quoted at Peter Trawny, *Heidegger-Fragmente: eine philosophische Biographie* (Fischer, 2018), 25.

50 Arnulf Heidegger, "Zur Entstehungsgeschichte der Gesamtausgabe von Martin Heidegger," *Seefahrten des Denkens*, ed. Alina Noveanu, Julia Pfefferkorn, Antonio Spinelli (Narr Francke Attempto, 2017), 149. See also Trawny, *Heidegger-Fragmente*, 25.

On the Body in Heidegger's Being-Historical Writings

Daniela Vallega-Neu

ABSTRACT: This paper explores the question of the body in Heidegger's (non-public) being-historical writings. After developing the question of the body along Heidegger's thinking first in the horizon of *Contributions*, and then in the horizon of *The Event*, I show how the body plays a fundamental role in maintaining a relation to the withdrawal of beyng and the beingless. This will put into question Heidegger's claim in the *Zollikon Seminars* that the understanding of being exceeds the body (*Leib*), or, in words relating to his beyng-historical writings, that beyng is somehow more originary than beings and the body.

KEYWORDS: Heidegger; body; sheltering; time-space; beingless

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INTRODUCTION

In his "non-public" being-historical writings that span from *Contributions to Philosophy (Of the Event)* (GA 65) to *The Event* (GA 71), Heidegger writes close to nothing about the human body.[1] Indeed, his explicit attempt in these writings is to not write *about* anything, i.e., not to think in a representational and objectifying way, but to let a historical sense of being eventuate and resonate in his thinking and saying. Hence, I call these writings also Heidegger's "poietic" writings (in reminiscence of the Greek word *poiesis*, "to bring forth.")[2] Accordingly, to raise the question of the body in the context of these writings encounters at least a double difficulty. First, since we think of the body first and foremost as an entity or a thing, what Heidegger attempts to think, and the very way Heidegger attempts to think and write in his poietic writings, seems to run counter to thematizing the body. This is tied to a second difficulty, which is that we very rarely encounter the word body (be it *Leib* or *Körper*)[3] in these being-historical writings, and that raising this question thus must go beyond what Heidegger explicitly writes.

To think the body in a way that remains faithful to Heidegger's way of thinking, we need to refrain from thinking it in an objectifying way. Neither should we approach the body in a subject-centered way, i.e., in how we experience "our" body, since Heidegger attempts to think a historical sense of being that first determines how we come to understand ourselves and things in the world. This means that we cannot presuppose, at the outset, what the body is, and that we need to resist our tendency to represent the body as a thing. And yet, insofar as the body may be, in fact, objectified, and may appear as a phenomenon one may describe, the body is (at least *also*) "thingly." It is a being, an entity (*Seiendes*), and not be-ing (*Sein*) as such.

The difficulty of speaking of the human body is, then, tied to the difficulty of speaking of things (beings) in light of Heidegger's continued efforts to precisely not speak about beings (which occurs in metaphysics) but of being (or beyng)[4] as such as a disclosive and concealing event (i.e., as "the truth of beyng.") The effort is to evoke a sense of the "is" (of the arising or clearing of an "is") in its coming to pass in light

of the fact that in our age, at the end of metaphysics, such a disclosive event is precisely precluded. In our age, under the dominance of what he calls "machination" and "lived experience,"[5] the *being* of beings, that things *are*, is not truly experienced. As he puts it, beings (things and events) remain "abandoned by being" (*Seinsverlassenheit*) and this abandonment, the void underneath the frenzy of productivity and consumption, is not experienced.

As Heidegger sees it, in order to open up a sense of how being occurs in our age, this abandonment needs to be experienced. Sustaining this abandonment leads to an experience of how being occurs not as a presencing but as refusal (*Entzug*, *Versagung*). For Heidegger, this experience carries with it the possibility of another beginning in which an originary sense of being (the "is" of all that is) may permeate a world. He understands his own thinking and saying as preparing such a possibility through what he calls "the grounding of the truth of beyng in Da-sein,"[6] i.e., the grounding of a concrete open site where truth happens through, in this case, Heidegger's own thinking and writing. This requires a turn in thought to the refusal of being, to non-being, to silence. This implies turning away from questioning beings or things as present entities. But at the same time, Heidegger stresses that finding an open site, a "there" (*Da*) of this truth of beyng in its refusal, requires beings. There *is no beyng without beings*, without words, works, and deeds. In *Contributions*, Heidegger tries to address this in the notion of the "simultaneity of beyng and beings."[7] With respect to Heidegger's own thinking and saying, this implies that there is no appropriate(d) saying *of* being without words (beings) that say of it. Yet, one may ask, does this not also imply that such thinking and saying happens with and through a being, a bodily being, the bodily being of the thinker? What, then, is the role of the body in the thinking and saying of beyng? A body not represented as a thingly object but addressed in how it partakes in poietic thinking?

While we do find various reflections by Heidegger on an appropriate saying,[8] we find none on the body of the thinker. And while this question takes us beyond what Heidegger explicitly writes, we can take clues as to how this question may be developed by thinking through the

role of beings in the grounding of the truth of beyng. In *Contributions*, Heidegger speaks of the *sheltering* (*Bergung*) of truth in beings, and he attempts to develop this thought especially in the contemporaneous essay "On the Origin of the Work of Art" (GA 5).[9] In the later work *The Event*, however, he lets go of this notion of sheltering, and instead addresses the relation between beings and being in terms of the "rising into being of beings," which (as we will see) brings into play the difficult notion of "the beingless" (*das Seinlose*) such that in the rising into being, the relation to the beingless is maintained. In what follows, I will develop the question of the body along Heidegger's thinking first in relation to *Contributions*, and then in relation to *The Event*. This requires that, in each case, I first introduce how Heidegger thinks in the respective works. I will propose that the body plays a fundamental role in maintaining a relation to the refusal of beyng and the beingless. This will put into question Heidegger's claim in the *Zollikon Seminars*[10] that the understanding of being exceeds the body (*Leib*), or, in words relating to his beyng-historical writings, that beyng is somehow more originary than beings and the body.

THE QUESTION OF THE BODY IN THE HORIZON OF *CONTRIBUTIONS TO PHILOSOPHY*

A. ON THE NOTIONS OF ATTUNEMENT, DECISION, AND ABYSSAL TIME-SPACE IN HEIDEGGER'S *CONTRIBUTIONS TO PHILOSOPHY*

To think the human body in the context of Heidegger's *Contributions* requires that one think it out of *Da-sein*, out of how one finds oneself to be (*sein*) there (*da*) in a disclosure of a sense of beyng as it occurs in our age. Such disclosure happens through fundamental attunements, and for Heidegger in *Contributions* most prominently through what he calls *Verhaltenheit*, restraint. As he develops it in section 5 of *Contributions*, an experience of the truth of beyng requires that one be unsettled in shock from the customary relation to things and events such that beyng as it occurs historically (written with a "y" to distinguish it from the being of this or that entity) is experienced *as* self-refusal. Through restraint, this self-refusal of beyng is held in hesitation and sustained such that

it does not slip away but endures at least for a while. What opens up in restraint is a sense of being (I want to add: a *bodily* sense of being) as a coming to pass, with the emphasis on the passing, i.e., on withdrawal and concealment; one may also say, with emphasis on a certain sense of lack.

One may approximate the sense of beyng revealed in shock and restraint by thinking of moments when the news hit us that a loved one is about to pass away and when one decides to accept that passing and stay with it. For Heidegger, however, the notion of restraint and the truth that opens up have historical dimensions and relate to the abandonment of beings by being in our age. For Heidegger, in our age, beyng occurs without ground. This experience of beyng is removed from things: truth happens in an abyssal way. It is this abyssal truth of the hesitating self-refusal of beyng that needs to be sustained in restraint. At the same time, in sustaining this refusal, i.e., the abyssal happening of truth, Heidegger experiences a gifting, a call: he experiences the opening up of the *possibility* of another history of beyng, another beginning, in which things (or whatever *is*) are no longer abandoned by being but *are* more fully and at the same time in such a way that a sense of concealment is preserved.[11]

Heidegger speaks of the way truth happens transitionally as a time-space of decision. His thinking happens in the midst of what he experiences as an historical transition. We may approximate this experience by thinking of fundamental decisions that may happen in our lives. For example, all of a sudden we come to the realization that a relationship or a phase of our life has ended and we accept this ending; we find ourselves in the midst of a fundamental transformation of our lives, but at the same time, we do not know yet what will come, even if we intimate new possibilities. Similarly, Heidegger finds himself in the realization of the end of "the first beginning" (i.e., the history of metaphysics that is initiated in ancient Greek thought) and the intimation of an "other beginning."

Heidegger's thinking in his beyng-historical writings attempts to hold itself (attuned by restraint) in a strange in-between, an abyssal time-space (that of the hesitating refusal of beyng), removed from things and in the intimation of a world to come in which truth would be sheltered in the "is" of all that is and permeate a world. Yet, already in

this transitional time-space, truth happens. Said differently, the abyssal time-space of which Heidegger speaks is the way truth is inceptually there (*da*) in Heidegger's thinking, in transition to the other beginning.

In Section 242 of *Contributions*, titled "Time-Space as the Abyssal Ground," Heidegger meditates on the inceptive abyssal opening of truth. By hyphenating the German word *Ab-grund* (translated by Rojcewicz and Vallega-Neu as "abyssal ground"), Heidegger highlights that to the abyss belongs ground: "Abyssal ground is [. . .] the originary essence of the ground, of its grounding, *of the essence of truth*" (GA 65: 378/299). "Ground" here does not mean something like a solid foundation; we may think of it more dynamically as a determining event that implies constancy. What is grounded in the ground is not this or that thing or occurrence, but "the essence of truth," i.e., how truth happens essentially in an epoch. In the case of the ancient Greeks, Heidegger thinks this happening of truth is *a-letheia* as the unconcealment in the coming to presence of things. In our epoch, in the yet to be decided other beginning of a people, the grounding of truth would imply that not only unconcealment but also concealment is preserved (grounded) in the appearing of things. The transitional "time-space as abyss," however, is not yet a grounding, but the staying away of ground, its refusal. No truth permeates the world here. Heidegger writes that insofar as in the abyssal ground "the ground still grounds and yet not properly grounds, it [the ground] stands in hesitation" (GA 65: 380/300; translation altered). Hence "the abyssal ground occurs as the hesitating refusal of ground" (GA 65: 380/300; tm). Through the hesitation, the possibility of a grounding (of another beginning) is held open.

Later in the section, Heidegger elucidates this hesitating refusal as a temporalizing and spatializing. The temporalizing aspect of the abyssal ground lies in the emptiness that is opened up in the refusal of ground in the abandonment of beings by being. This emptiness, Heidegger writes, is "in itself transporting, i.e., transporting in the 'to-come' and thereby simultaneously bursting open the has-been that, in meeting the to-come, constitutes presence as a moving into the abandonment that remembers and expects" (GA 65: 383/303; translation altered). We

may approximate this sense of time by thinking again of the example I gave above concerning fundamental decisions in our lives: We come to the realization that a phase in our life has ended. In the emptiness of that ending we are transported in the to-come that at the same time opens up (and transforms) what has-been. Indeed, Heidegger speaks of the emptiness as a domain of decision (a decision that is yet to occur) concerning the grounding of beyng (GA 65: 382/302).

The spatializing aspect of the abyssal ground lies in the hesitation. It is by virtue of the hesitation that the possibility of a gifting and appropriating is held open. Hesitation implies a certain spacing, a making room for what is possible; in this case, for the possibility of the grounding event of beyng. Insofar as it is held in hesitation, the self-refusal of beyng is held in "*captivation*" (*Berückung*), with which Heidegger indicates how the spacing of abyssal truth is held open: "By virtue of captivation, the abandonment is one that is to be with*stood*" (GA 65: 384/303). The abandonment of beings, the lack of ground, is withstood by human *being* (i.e., how a human "is" there in this experience of abyssal truth) in the disposition of restraint.

Time-space, as it is elaborated in the transitional thinking of *Contributions*, precedes a grounding of truth in which truth would permeate the openness of a world. And yet, in the transitional abyssal time-space, *Da-sein* takes place: there "is" (*sein*) a "there" (*da*) of truth. In the saying of the thinker, attuned by restraint, beyng is sustained and brought forth (transitionally) as hesitating refusal, as a coming to pass that bears the possibility of a world to come. This saying, in turn, can be such only if it is responsive to how beyng gives itself to the thinker, namely, as a telling refusal.[12]

B. ON THE NOTION OF SHELTERING IN *CONTRIBUTIONS* AND "THE ORIGIN OF THE WORK OF ART"

The saying of the thinker is one way in which truth may be sheltered. As Heidegger points out, the sheltering of truth may occur in a variety of modes of creating or preserving.[13] In "The Origin of the Work of Art," for instance, he thinks ahead into how truth may be sheltered

in a work of art. In what follows, I turn to this essay to get more clues as to how one may think the role of the body in this sheltering, and then, more specifically, in Heidegger's saying in his poietic writings.

In "The Origin of the Work of Art," Heidegger thinks how the work of art shelters truth by "setting up a world" and "setting forth the earth" such that earth and world are essentially in a strife. He writes of the work of art not as a thing but in terms of what it does. Through the artwork, truth happens such that a world and the earth come into appearing in an originary way. Truth, as the unconcealing-concealing of world and earth, finds a site (and thereby some constancy) though a particular being, in this case, a work of art. As we will see, it is the "earthly" character of the work of art that plays a particular role in the sheltering of truth in a being (e.g., work of art, word, deed).

To show how earth occurs as sheltering, in "The Origin of the Work of Art" Heidegger invokes the Greek notion of *physis* as a coming into the open and emerging. In his example of the Greek temple, he invokes how, in resting on the rocky ground, the temple first brings forth the darkness of the rock's bearing: standing there, the Greek temple withstands the raging storm and thus first lets the storm's force appear; tree, grass, eagle, snake, etc., first emerge as such as what they are. In this coming forth, the earth is what shelters: "The earth is that into which the emerging shelters all that emerges, and indeed as such. In the emerging the earth essentially occurs [*west*] as the sheltering" (GA 5: 28/BW 168, tm). To earth belongs also that which traditionally is understood as the "thing-quality" of a being. Concerning the latter, Heidegger writes:

> But what looks like the thingly element, in the sense of our usual thing-concepts, in the work taken as object, is, seen from the perspective of the work, its earthly character. The earth juts up within the work because the work essentially unfolds as something in which truth is at work and because truth essentially unfolds only by installing itself within a particular being. In the earth, however, as essentially self-secluding, the openness of the open region finds that which most intensely resists it; it

> thereby finds the site of its constant stand, into which the figure [*Gestalt*] must be fastened (*festgestellt*). (GA 5: 57/BW 194, tm)

In the earth lies a resistance to the unfolding of truth by virtue of which truth finds "a site of its constant stand [*die Stätte eines ständigen Standes*]." Earth, in turn, comes forth and shelters only insofar as it is in strife with the world that Heidegger characterizes as "the paths and relations in which birth and death, disaster and blessing, victory and disgrace, endurance and decline acquire the shape of destiny for human being" (GA 5: 28/BW 168). In the strife of world and earth, held fast in the earthliness of a sheltering being, truth happens. At the same time, Heidegger writes, truth understood as the unconcealing-concealing of being is more originary than the strife of world and earth. They are, then, at least in one sense not the same: "World, however, is not simply the openness that corresponds to the clearing; earth is not what is closed that corresponds to concealment" (GA 5: 42/BW 180, tm). Heidegger calls the unconcealing-concealing of truth "*Urstreit*," "primordial strife." In it, "that open center is won within which beings stand and from which they set themselves back into themselves" (GA 5: 42/BW 180). Only because there is the emerging of an openness that happens with and against what remains closed off in that openness do world and earth emerge for us, and do things come to appear as such. In *Contributions*, we also find a passage that suggests that truth somehow precedes the strife of earth and world: "The occurrence is transformed and maintained (Why?) into the strife of *earth and world*" (GA 65: 391/308). That truth is "transformed" suggests, again, that it precedes the strife of world and earth. As to "why" this transformation happens, Heidegger does not answer that question, but it is interesting that he poses it.

And yet, while truth is more originary than the strife of earth and world, it only permeates a world if it is sheltered in a being, which implies, again, an earthly resistance by virtue of which a concrete site for the truth of being can be held open. There are various places in which Heidegger emphasizes that there is not a truth by itself that then would be sheltered in a being. Indeed, in section 243 of *Contributions*, he even

notes that the very notion of "the sheltering of truth in beings is misleading, as if truth could ever already in advance be for itself 'truth.'" And then he adds: "Truth essentially occurs only and always already as Da-sein and thus as the playing out of the strife" (GA 65: 390/308). What appears here as a logical contradiction (on the one hand, truth happens only in the sheltering, but on the other hand truth is said to be more originary than the beings that shelter it) could be taken as a foundational structure indicative of Heidegger's attempt to think not on the basis of present entities or things, but *from* the happening of the truth of beyng. He attempts to think from the emerging of a sense of being, prior to any self-awareness we may have as so called "subjects" who are having an experience. If the truth of beyng (with a "y") happens, beyng does not bespeak my being or the being of a thing. It bespeaks, rather, a temporal-spatial event in which emerges a sense of being characterized as hesitating refusal or a clearing and concealing in the appearing of what comes to appear. In the appropriating (or "enowning") event (*Ereignis*) that Heidegger attempts to prepare and think (to a certain extent) in the "Origin of the Work of Art," whatever *is* first comes to emerge *as such* and thus comes to its "own" or "proper" being in the midst of the strife of world and earth (that also emerge as such), i.e., in the happening of truth in a world.

What distinguishes the event of the other beginning from what Heidegger calls the first, Greek beginning, is that while the Greeks experienced being primarily as a coming into presence, in the other beginning concealment would be preserved. The emphasis is, then, on concealment and on the sheltering earth. Hence, in section 244 of *Contributions*, Heidegger asks whence sheltering has its plight and necessity and answers: "From self-concealing. The sheltering of this *occurrence* is needed to preserve the self-concealing rather than do away with it. The occurrence is transformed and maintained (Why?) into the strife of *earth and world*" (GA 65: 391/308), and this strife is sheltered in the earth: "Sheltering of truth as growing back into the closedness of the earth" (GA 65: 391/309).

C. ON THE ROLE OF THE BODY IN THE SHELTERING OF TRUTH

But what about the body in this happening of truth that (though it is not only human) occurs only in relation to humans? The body belongs to the earth. Heidegger is explicit about this in various places.[14] We certainly may also take the human body as a being, just like the eagle and snake, that, in their appearing, Heidegger takes as examples (among others) of *physis* in "The Origin of the Work of Art." We may take the body as phenomenon in its *phainesthai*, i.e., in how it shows itself. We may also address the body in how it is at play in the spatiality of our being-in-the-world, as Heidegger does in the *Zollikon Seminars*. The aspect of the body I wish to stress here, in the context of Heidegger's being-historical writings, is, however, the body in its earthliness and seclusion.

In his being-historical writings, Heidegger, disposed by restraint, experiences the hesitant-self-refusal of beyng and attempts to bring forth the abyssal happening of truth in his thinking and saying. It is above all the abyssal time-space (in which the possibility of an event of truth in a world announces itself) that Heidegger's thinking attempts to hold open. But even if there is no historical world of a people emerging here, in Heidegger's transitional thinking, in this thinking, too, the opening of truth needs to be sheltered in a being, needs the resistance of earth, in order to be held open. The sheltering being here is certainly the word (or, rather, words), but, as I indicated already, I intend to argue that it is also and foremost the body, the body in its (non-objective) self-secluding sheltering aspect, and in how it offers a resistance in relation to which an opening of truth and of a world may occur. Let me quote again the pertinent passage from "The Origin of the Work of Art," such that we may hear, as belonging to earth, also the body: "In the earth, however, as essentially self-secluding, the openness of the open region finds that which most intensely resists it; it thereby finds the site of its constant stand, into which the figure [*Gestalt*] must be fastened [*festgestellt*]" (GA 5: 57/BW 194, tm). Together with whatever else shelters truth (words, a work of art, a deed), the attuned body co-constitutes a site for the happening of truth, holds the "*da*" (the "there") of truth open such that Heidegger may think and speak of this happening.

The body, as we may think it out of attuned *Da-sein*, out of "there-being," is not an object or a mass. It is closer to how Jean-Luc Nancy thinks it, namely, as a site of openness, as "the open."[15] The body also delimits the openness of a world or of a happening of truth through the resistance it offers. It occurs, one may say, as a threshold in that it allows for, shelters, and delimits the opening of a site of being (*Da-sein*). In its earthly resistance, the body co-constitutes a temporal-spatial opening: it is constitutive of time-space. The question, here, is certainly: Time-space in what sense? There is the abyssal time-space of Heidegger's being-historical writings, but there also is the time-space of a world, as Heidegger thinks it later, for instance in terms of the fourfold of earth and sky, divinities and mortals.[16] If we go back to *Being and Time*, we may also think of the spatiality of *Dasein* (of human being) in its everyday being in the world as bodily.

In fact, in the few writings in which Heidegger attempts to say something about the body, as in the *Zollikon Seminars* (held between 1959 and 1972), he takes recourse to the language of *Being and Time* (1927) and thinks the body in the context of the everyday being-in-the-world and particularly in how it occurs spatially beyond what we see as the limit of our body when we represent it as a thing.[17] Heidegger thinks of the body in terms of *Leiben*, "bodying-forth," and such bodying-forth as transversing spaces (or, rather, as co-constituting space in how we experience it). He often repeats how bodying-forth co-determines being-in-the-world. One of the examples he gives is hearing: "To hear something in itself involves the relation of bodying-forth to what is heard. Bodying-forth [*Leiben*] always belongs to being-in-the-world. It always codetermines being-in-the-world, openness, and the having of a world" (ZS: 126/97). Hearing, then, does not happen "inside" a body but in a bodying-forth that exceeds our body understood as a corporeal thing. Our body is out there with what is heard. Furthermore, as Heidegger emphasized, our bodying-forth is determined by our understanding of being: "The limit of bodying-forth [. . .] is the horizon of being within which I sojourn [*aufhalten*]" (ZS: 113/87). Thus, when, for example, making present the train station, we are oriented bodily and spatially toward that train station.

In "Building, Dwelling, Thinking" we find a similar thought:

> Only because mortals pervade, persist through, spaces by their very essence are they able to go through spaces [....] [W]e always go through spaces in such a way that we already sustain them by staying constantly with near and remote locales and things [....] I am never here only, as this encapsulated body; rather, I am there, that is, I already pervade the space of the room, and only thus can I go through it. (GA 7:159/BW 395)[18]

The examples of bodying-forth we get from the later Heidegger, then, all relate to our everyday being with things in relation to our spatial-temporal existing. At the same time, Heidegger claims that the understanding of being – which is, in the language of *Contributions*, the disclosure of beyng in Da-sein – exceeds bodily being. With respect to Heidegger's being-historical thinking in *Contributions* and *The Event*, what I am claiming is that the very disclosure of beyng as self-refusal happens only by virtue of the opening and resistance of the body, which puts into question the primacy of beyng over beings and the body, which Heidegger appears to maintain throughout his writings. I will now develop this thought a little further.

The abyssal time-space occurs through the body that shelters and thus holds open a relation to the concealment of beyng. Heidegger thinks this concealment also in relation to death, for instance, in section 202 of *Contributions*, where he says that the original concealment of beyng is mirrored in death (GA 65: 325/257).[19] There is, then, an intimate relation between the possibility of death and a relation to the concealment belonging to historical beyng (that occurs as refusal). In both cases (death or original concealment) it is our earthly, mortal bodies that shelter death and the concealment of beyng as such. We may reiterate here that if the originary concealment of beyng finds an open site, it finds it through the strife of earth (to which our bodies belong) and a historical world. Even if in "The Origin of the Work of Art" Heidegger writes that we should not conflate the strife of unconcealing-concealing and the strife of world and

earth, they are not separate events. It is *in* the strife of world and earth that truth (self-concealment) emerges and finds a site in *Da-sein* (that truth "is" (*sein*) "t/here" (*da*)). Through the earth and (with the earth) through our bodies, concealment is brought into the open. At the same time, "the earth is not simply what is closed off, but rather that which emerges as self-secluding" (GA 5: 42/BW 180). Thought from the event of beyng, prior to any self-awareness or representation of our bodies as things, our bodies emerge, temporalize and spatialize, as self-secluding.

There is one more thing we need to take into account in this context, namely, that concealment, as Heidegger thinks it already in "On the Essence of Truth," and as he highlights also in "The Origin of the Work of Art," is always *double* concealment. Concealment has the sense of an originary refusal and the sense of a *Verstellen*, a dissembling or obstructing as when one thing or event disguises or obfuscates another (GA 5: 40–42/BW 179–80). Originary refusal and disguising always happen together. It is the originary refusal (the possibility of not being at all, but now thought not only in relation to human existence) that is mirrored in death. The originary refusal is, I add, held open and delimited through our earthly (and mortal) bodies. But one could also develop more (I am not developing it here) how truth in the sense of disguising or obstructing happens with and through "our" earthly bodies. One may think of the many ways bodies are closed off to experiencing being, or simply things; how we don't hear or feel something while we are absorbed in a "lived experience" (perhaps in the movie theater) or go about making plans and responding to the urge to be "productive" in our jobs.

Thinking along with (but also *beyond*) Heidegger, one may develop further how what we call "our" bodies are not simply "ours" but are part of the spatial and temporal (worldly-earthly) configuration into which we find ourselves thrown, bodies through which we find ourselves being-there before we look at ourselves in the mirror. These bodies, in their resistance and openness, are thresholds between being and not-being. They also delimit and hold open (or not) our spatial orientation and the ways we find ourselves being in relation to things and events or in relation to nothing – and this in more or less disclosive or obfuscating ways.

As I see it (and can here only indicate), the earthly body determines fundamentally the mode, degree, and quality of our relation to things, to being, or to no-thing and non-being. On the other hand, in their openness and relationality, bodies are very much determined as well. They are historically determined in their finitude and in relation to things and events and the very world in which they take place dynamically and in shifting ways.

Bodies are also determined by attunements. This may be experienced precisely and emphatically in relation to what Heidegger calls "grounding attunements" that displace us from our orientation toward things and events we relate to in everydayness, grounding attunements that expose us to finite being. But one can also think of how fear and anger or a specific desire can, so to speak, blind our bodies, such that we cannot hear, feel, or see things that are happening in proximity, right there. One may, perhaps, develop the thought of how attunements determine our bodies and bodily orientation also in terms of what can be experienced as tonus, tension, constriction, relaxation, or effusion that qualify bodies, and how these in turn determine ways of seeing and feeling or not-seeing and not-feeling. I am only indicating all this here to show how thinking with and beyond Heidegger opens ways to rethinking the body in different ways.

I noted in my introduction that a shift happens in Heidegger's thinking between *Contributions to Philosophy* and *The Event*. As I see it, this is a shift in attunement and in the bodily being and disposition of the thinker. It is a letting go of a resistance that marked Heidegger's thinking in the 30s, and a bodily reorientation toward abyssal being determined by what he calls the pain of departure (*Schmerz des Abschieds*). In the following section, I turn to how one may rethink the role of the body in the horizon of *The Event*.

THE ROLE OF THE BODY IN THE CONTEXT OF *THE EVENT*

A. ON THE NOTIONS OF "THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BEYNG AND THE BEINGLESS" AND "THE RISING INTO BEING OF BEINGS"

In *The Event* (GA 71) and the volume preceding it, titled *On Inception* (GA 70),[20] Heidegger rethinks the truth of beyng as an inceptual event. The attunement of restraint that marked *Contributions*, as a withstanding of the hesitating self-refusal of being, gives way to a certain releasement into the inceptual happening of the truth of beyng. If we try to approach Heidegger's thinking, here, again in analogy with fundamental decisions happening in our lives, perhaps we can think of this releasing as a further acceptance of a fundamental change that is happening, a change in which we let go of our previous life without us knowing yet what is about to come. We are departing from what has been, and wedded to the "to come," finding ourselves at a moment of inception that is groundless, abyssal. Analogously, in *The Event*, Heidegger articulates his thinking in terms of a "departure into the abyss" and an indwelling in and carrying out of the inceptual difference (*Unterschied*): the difference between beyng and the beingless (*das Seinlose*).

One may initially take this difference between beyng and the beingless as rethinking the difference between being and nothingness, a difference that marks the surging of a sense of being of what *is*. The difference between being and nothingness is not an opposition or separation between being and nothingness. Indeed, already *Being and Time* is guided by the insight that it is in relation to the possibility of not being (being toward death) that being discloses as such. In "What is Metaphysics?," Heidegger also elaborates on nothingness as that which makes possible the disclosedness of beings as such for humans.[21] The experience of an "is" (i.e., of being as being) surges and discloses in relation to not being. (This is why often in relation to moments of departure or in recovering from serious illness, a sense of being intensifies for us.) In *Contributions*, the notion of beyng as hesitating refusal bespeaks again the relation of being and nothingness but with a stronger emphasis on nothingness, such that nothingness can be found in the refusal that is

experienced as such in the attunement of restraint. Nothingness is here not that from which being differentiates itself, but is rather "part" of beyng itself, beyng as a coming to pass.

The situation is different in Heidegger's (new) thinking (in *On Inception* and *The Event*) of the originary difference between beyng and the beingless, as the notion of "the beingless" is a term relating not to being as such but to beings (entities) before or after they rise into being, before or after we may experience something as being or being this or that. Hence, one cannot properly say that "the beingless" "is."

Insofar as "the beingless" (which bespeaks "nothing" and hence is a term we may want to cross out as we use it) precedes the rising into being of what is (precedes the surging of a sense of being of things or events), it needs to be differentiated from beings in so far as they are abandoned by being. In the latter case, beings (things and events) still *are*, albeit they are not experienced *as being*: rather, they disclose for us (under the dominance of machination) as calculable, usable, as a means for production and personal enjoyment. In beinglessness, on the other hand, beings remain "disappropriated" (*enteignet*; one may also translate this as "disowned"), which is, again, different from saying that they are abandoned by being, since they have not yet become what they would be, either insofar as we experience them as being or insofar as they have become mere means of calculation, production, and enjoyment (GA 70: 122/99).

Whereas the nothingness that belongs to being or beyng discloses for us through attunements (e.g., angst, deep boredom, shock, and restraint), "the beingless" does not. We may think of the beingless as sheer soundless, non-attuning no-thingness. There is no withdrawal here, no sense of lack that attunes thinking. Hence, Heidegger speaks of the beingless also as "the nothingless" (*das Nichtslose*): "The appropriative event is the incipience of inception, in as much as this incipience, as the inceptually nothingless, detaches itself over against beings, and in such 'against' lets beings arise into the 'there' [*Da*]" (GA 70: 16/8, tm). The incipience of inception is the event of the difference of beyng and the beingless: "The difference sets apart [*scheidet*] being and the beingless [. . .] Beyng differentiates itself from the beingless and this is the incipient event" (GA 71: 132/112, tm).

With the difference between beyng and the beingless, Heidegger is thinking the very first surging of a sense of being (the first dawning of an "is," one may say) in the other beginning (as he experiences it in his thinking), such that now he thinks this surging also right away in relation to beings (or rather "the beingless"), i.e., in relation to what then rises into being as a word, thing, work, or deed. Indeed, as Heidegger thinks it in *The Event*, out of this originary difference occurs what he calls "the differentiation [*Unterscheidung*]" of being and beings or the rising into being of beings. As announced in my introduction, this notion of the "rising into being of beings" replaces the earlier notion of a sheltering of being into beings. This means that, while on the one hand the event of being is articulated inceptively right away in relation to beings (things, events), albeit as "the beingless," on the other hand, when beings rise into being, the emphasis is less on this or that thing as what harbors (shelters) a sense of being, but rather on the sense of being that arises with beings, a sense of being that inceptively (in Heidegger's thinking) remains tied to "the beingless."

B. THE ATTUNEMENT OF HEIDEGGER'S THINKING IN *THE EVENT*

Before addressing how Heidegger's rearticulation of the incipient event of beyng changes the way one may think of the role of the body in his poietic thinking, we need to get a sense of how Heidegger rearticulates his own thinking and how it is attuned (*gestimmt*) and determined (*bestimmt*).

Heidegger now understands his thinking as a "carrying out" [*Austrag*] of the difference of beyng and the beingless such that "being comes in between the beingless"[22] (i.e., an "is," a "there" begins to dawn) and things rise into being. Thinking carries the difference out, attuned by "the pain of departure [*Schmerz des Abschieds*]." Pain and not restraint characterizes the grounding attunement that attunes thinking. It seems to me that this marks a deeper insertion or "indwelling" in the incipient event of beyng in departure from beings. Whereas "restraint" involves some kind of resistance against the withdrawal of beyng such that the withdrawal is held in hesitation, "pain" clears and sustains the inceptual difference.

Like all fundamental attunements, in Heidegger's understanding, pain is nothing subjective but rather overcomes and attunes thinking. He speaks of it as a "beyng-historical pain" and as belonging to the clearing of the difference itself, such that in a note he even writes: "pain as the clearing of the difference—the difference itself" (GA 71: 218/187). This pain is nothing negative for Heidegger; it gathers in itself both the horror (*Schrecken*) of the abyss and the bliss [*Wonne*] of the departure (GA 71: 68/55).[23] In parting, thinking lets go of beings, from being primarily involved with things and events: it lets go also of machinationally deployed things.

How does Heidegger's thinking find itself determined to go under, to depart from beings and dwell (attuned by pain) in the originary difference? The German word for "determined," "*bestimmt*" (*stimmen* means to tune, as in when one tunes an instrument), contains the decisive hint: Thinking finds itself attuned and thus determined by "the voice" (*Stimme*) of beyng.

In Section 247 of *The Event*, Heidegger writes: "Attunement is the name for what is attuning/disposing of the voice [*Stimme*] of beyng. This voice is so called because it is audible for a hearing as the hearkening (*Horchen)* of the obeying (*Gehorchen*) of an inceptual obedience, the pliancy (*Fügsamkeit*) that is itself uniquely historical and as such is also already uniquely determined" (GA 71: 222/191, tm). Heidegger's thinking finds itself in hearkening obedience, pliant to the attuning voice of beyng that differentiates itself from (and in this difference remains tied to) the beingless. In pliant obedience to the voice of beyng, the attunement of thinking turns into a "thanking" (*Danken*). Thanking usually bespeaks a having received and an accepting of a gift, but at the end of Section 306 of *The Event*, Heidegger also relates it to renouncing something, renouncing understood in a positive sense. We may think of this renouncing as a releasing, a letting go or releasing of an attachment to beings, a "letting pass by" the abandonment of beings by being.[24] Thanking occurs together with the pain of carrying out the inceptual difference.

Heidegger calls the (i.e., "his") thinking and saying of the inceptual event "imageless" also in contrast to the poetic saying that is imagistic. In his understanding, this imageless thinking is a thinking ahead (*Vordenken*) that grounds *Da-sein*. Just as in *Contributions*, the task is to prepare another beginning or inception of the history of being, where beings would "be" more fully and in such a way that concealment is preserved. Heidegger finds this inception—i.e., the opening up of a world he later articulates as the fourfold of earth and sky, divinities and mortals—poetized (and thus "founded") in Hölderlin. Heidegger understands his imageless thinking of the inceptual difference as a thinking ahead that grounds *Da-sein* (an opening of truth) such that Hölderlin's poetry may be heard.[25] I mention this relation of Heidegger's thinking to Hölderlin's poetry here (a relation that would need to be developed further elsewhere) in order to highlight again how Heidegger's imageless and abyssal thinking happens prior the disclosure of a world ("founded" in Hölderlin's poetry), and not in relation to any thing (thing understood in the widest sense).

C. ON THE ROLE OF THE BODY IN HEIDEGGER'S THINKING OF *THE EVENT*: THE BODY AND THE BEINGLESS

Heidegger's imageless thinking and saying in *The Event* occurs in departure into the abyss and carries out the inceptual difference, i.e., the differencing of beyng from the beingless. The "there" (the *Da*) that discloses in imageless saying out of the thankful dwelling in this difference is not a world, not the world poetized by the poet, and yet related to this world yet to come.

How are we to understand the role of the body here? In the context of *Contributions,* I developed it in relation to the earthly resistance and seclusion of the sheltering earth. In *The Event*, we may rethink the body in relation to the beingless.

As said above, the beingless ~~is~~ ("is" needs to be crossed out because there "is" no "is" in the beingless) beings (words, things, works, deeds) before or after they rise into being. No-thing resonates in the beingless. There is no appropriating event (*Er-eignis*) happening here, nothing

surges into its "own" or "proper" being. What resonates without sound is rather what Heidegger calls *Enteignis*, dis-appropriation.[26] The beingless is not part of the history of being. With reference to "The Origin of the Work of Art," one may think of the beingless as the aspect of the earth that remains completely secluded.

Bodies, like any thing or event, ~~are~~ (again "are" needs to be crossed out) before or after they rise into being, the beingless. But I would like to contend that even when we experience ("our") bodies as being, a relation to the beingless is maintained. We find this relation to the beingless not in how we experience or feel our bodies but rather in the strange "thing-character" in which our own bodies remain alien to us. Our bodies carry a relation to the beingless insofar as they remain closed off to a clearing, to the experience of an "is," to our understanding, and to a world.[27] In reminiscence of Charles Scott's work on indifference,[28] I would want to say that bodies are open to and carry not only senses of being, attunements, but also utter indifference. Or, in reminiscence of Charles Scott's work on silence:[29] they carry sheer silence.

This indifference and sheer silence of what we call "our" bodies accompanies our bodily being always. The beingless that accompanies our bodily being is not a source but co-determines attuned senses of being. The experience of an "is," the experience of a rising into being, of a coming into the word, originates, as Heidegger thinks it in *The Event*, not from the beingless (since the beingless is not origin), but rather in the difference of beyng and the beingless, i.e., in how a sense of being differentiates itself and surges in relation to the beingless, in relation to the seclusion of the earth (one may add) that also sustains how we may experience a world and things in the world. This difference of being and the beingless is an originary happening, a "middle voice"[30] event in which the thinker finds himself sustaining that event, which, I add, requires the body of the thinker that carries in or with itself the beingless or the seclusion of earth.

Heidegger's imageless poietic thinking happens in corporeal openness to the beingless, to non-being. In differentiating itself from the beingless that the body "is" or sustains at the same time, the body opens

itself to a relation to being. Given that there are aspects of the body that rise into being (in attunements) while others remain in the beingless, one may say that the inceptual difference is carried out bodily. In the surging of the experience of a "there is," the body differentiates itself from itself and sustains an abyssal opening for the "is" to arise. We may think here again of the experience of how a word may come to us as if from nowhere. With respect to Heidegger's thinking of the abyssal inception of a clearing of being (of the surging of the experience of an "is"), this means that the body opens itself to the attuning silent call through which the word comes to the thinker while the body remains and sustains, also, the beingless.

CONCLUSION: RETHINKING THE BODY WITH AND BEYOND HEIDEGGER

The task I set for myself in this paper is to articulate the role of the body in Heidegger's poietic or being-historical writings and, more specifically, in relation to his thinking of the abyssal inceptual disclosure of the truth of being that occurs "hither" the disclosedness of things and events. In the context of these writings, Heidegger hints at how the body belongs to the earth, but he does not develop this thought further. Instead, in the few places where he engages the question of the body more, as in the *Zollikon Seminars*, he takes recourse to the conceptuality of *Being and Time* and speaks of the body in terms of a *Leiben*, a "bodying-forth" (at play in what we call "sensing") that is co-constitutive of our everyday being-in-the-world. Heidegger's thinking of the abyssal disclosure of truth, however, is removed from the world (i.e., it does not speak about anything in the world, nor of the world in how it is opened up in our existence) and attempts to prepare a more originary experience of a world to come for a people. Heidegger's thinking is, no doubt, strange, and his hope for a "new world" for a people (and he was thinking above all of the German people here) must appear utopic in our contemporary Western capitalist world-order. And yet, we can approximate Heidegger's thinking of the abyssal disclosure of beyng, or the surging of a sense of being in relation to the beingless, if we think, for example, of practices of creative writing,

in which we attempt to attune ourselves to the surging of a word or an image, and where there is, at first (and perhaps also in the end), no-thing to say. Heidegger's attempt at thinking abyssal being is like staying close to that experience of no-thing and right at that turning point where something begins to dawn.

The question of the body in Heidegger's thinking implicates the question of the relation between the inceptual truth of beyng and beings. I pointed out how there is a certain tension (and apparent contradiction) in Heidegger's thinking insofar as, on the one hand, he tries to speak of the truth of beyng as it dawns inceptually, prior to the presencing of things, but on the other hand speaks of the simultaneity of beyng and beings already in *Contributions* and denies that there could be any "beyng" prior to beings. The truth of beyng takes place only insofar as it is sheltered in words, works, or deeds. I noted how, in *The Event*, Heidegger drops the notion of "sheltering" and instead speaks of the rising into being of beings. One may say that here he radicalizes the "simultaneity" of beyng and beings insofar as the inceptual difference of beyng and the beingless bespeaks inception right away in relation to "beings," although in relation to ~~beings~~ insofar as they are not yet or no longer (and hence ~~are~~ "the beingless"). On the other hand, also here, in the context of *The Event*, there remains a certain foundational structure, insofar as Heidegger thinks the rising into being of beings to occur in the (more) originary difference of beyng and the beingless.

When Heidegger speaks of the body in the *Zollikon Seminars*, there also appears to be a prioritizing of being over the body when he writes that our understanding of being (hence the disclosure of being) exceeds and determines our bodying-forth. Similarly, in the context of *Contributions*, where we need to think the body in relation to the earth, Heidegger understands the strife of the truth of beyng (the "primordial strife") to be more originary than the strife of world and earth.

The way I developed the question and role of the body in Heidegger's thinking of the inceptual and abyssal truth in his poietic writings (which I did both with and beyond Heidegger) leads to a radicalization of the "simultaneity" of beyng and beings, since I am arguing that even this

first dawning of beyng in its withdrawal, this first dawning of an "is" that carries a sense of concealment with it, requires the sheltering body. In its earthly resistance, the body delimits and co-constitutes the abyssal inceptual disclosure of truth, the "there" of *Da-sein* in Heidegger's inceptual thinking and saying. Finally, I argued that the body, insofar as it does not altogether come into appearance or "rise into being," the body in its earthly finitude, should also be understood (in the horizon of *The Event*) as the beingless, i.e., as escaping or resisting, to a large extent, a disclosure. Thinking the body in terms of the beingless addresses the body not in how I experience it, not as a phenomenon, not as "my" body, but rather as that strange, silent, non-attuning "thing" that accompanies my existence, soundlessly; that grows, ages, and disintegrates in its being part of the earth, whether there is an experience of being or not.

Finding the body co-constitutive of what Heidegger calls the truth of beyng, has consequences with respect to Heidegger's thinking, as it implies that the inceptual disclosure of beyng (in abyssal truth or in the difference of beyng and the beingless) is unhinged from the priority or primordiality of this inceptual disclosure with respect to beings (words, works, deeds, bodies that *are*). It unhinges the question of how a world discloses from the primacy of the history of beyng Heidegger constructs. It also radicalizes Heidegger's notion that to truth always belongs errancy such that there never is a disclosure of "being as such" but always a disclosure of being with beings, and such that the body both holds open and conceals senses of being, the way we experience the world and relate to others, to living organisms, to things and events.

NOTES

1 One should add that Heidegger says very little about the body in his work in general, which has generated various criticisms that are summarized by Kevin Aho in the introduction to his book *Heidegger's Neglect of the Body* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2009).

2 Daniela Vallega-Neu, *Heidegger's Poietic Writings: From* Contributions to Philosophy *to* The Event (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2018). This book traces the development of Heidegger's thinking in these writings.

3 Heidegger adheres to the phenomenological distinction between *Körper*, which (akin to corpus) would be the "objectified" body, and *Leib*, which is the "lived body" as it is experienced prior to an objectification.

4 Beyng (*Seyn*) written with a "y" indicates that Heidegger thinks beyng historically and with emphasis on its occurrence as refusal. When Heidegger writes being (*Sein*) with an "i," this usually addresses the being of a particular being or entity, or being as it questioned in metaphysics.

5 "Machination" (*Machenschaft*; later Heidegger addresses this as technology) is for Heidegger a mode of revealing beings such that we encounter them as makeable and calculable. "Lived experience" (*Erlebnis*) is a mode of experiencing things and events on the basis of machination, such that it incorporates things into how we subjectively experience them.

6 In *Contributions*, the notion of *Da-sein* (now written with a hyphen) no longer designates primarily human being, as in *Being and Time*, but an open site (the "*da*", the "there") of truth that is sustained ("is") by human steadfastness or indwelling in the openness of truth (*Inständigkeit)*. See GA 65, sections 290 and 191 that speak of *Dasein* as the in-between of the event of the truth of beyng.

7 "Yet beyng is not something 'earlier'—existing in itself, for itself. Instead, the event is the temporal-spatial simultaneity for beyng and beings" (GA 65: 13/13).

8 See, for instance, Section 41 of *Contributions* (GA 65: 83–4/66f).

9 English translation by Albert Hofstadter, in: *Basic Writings* (San Francisco, CA: Harper San Francisco, 1992), 143–203. Cited as BW, followed by the page number.

10 Martin Heidegger, *Zollikoner Seminare, Protokolle—Gespräche—Briefe*, ed. by Medard Boss (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann GmbH, 1987). Henceforth cites as ZS, followed by the page number. Translated by Franz Mayr and Richard Askay as *Zollikon Seminars* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2001). The *Zollikon Seminars* were reprinted in 2017, together with supplementary material, in Gesamtausgabe, vol. 89, with the slightly modified title *Zollikoner Seminare: (Abteilung: Hinweise und Aufzeichnungen) 1959-1969*. This volume has not yet been translated.

11 That concealment is preserved would distinguish the "other beginning" in contrast to the first, Greek beginning, in which being was experienced primarily as a coming to presence.

12 Concerning this turning relation between the truth of beyng and *Da-sein*, see Section 122 of *Contributions*.

13 Truth "essentially occurs only if *sheltered* in art, thinking, poetry, deed" (GA 65: 256/201).

14 See GA 65: 399/316. In the lecture series "The Essence of Language," where he emphasizes the bodily aspect of language, he writes: "Lived body [*Leib*] and mouth belong into the streaming and growth of the earth" (Martin Heidegger, *Unterwegs zur Sprache*. Gesamtausgabe, vol. 12, ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann,1985), 194. Translated by Peter D. Hertz as *On the Way to Language* (New York: HarperCollins, 1971), 98. Translation altered.

15 Jean-Luc Nancy, *Corpus*, translated by Richard A. Rand (New York, NY: Fordham University Press, 2008), 122.

16 For example, in "On the Essence of Language" of 1958, Heidegger rethinks the time-space of the fourfold as it emerges in the poetic saying of Hölderlin (GA 12, especially 200-202).

17 See in this context, Kevin Aho's discussion of the body also in relation to Merleau-Ponty. Aho, *Heidegger's Neglect to the Body*, 33–51.

18 English translation from Martin Heidegger, *Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Krell (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1992). Cited as BW.

19 See Daniela Vallega-Neu *The Bodily Dimension in Thinking* (Albany, NY: SUNY, 2005), 96.

20 All translations are mine.

21 Martin Heidegger, "Was ist Metaphysik" in *Wegmarken* GA 9: 115. Translated as "What is Metaphysics" in *Pathmarks*, edited by William McNeill (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 91.

22 Inception happens in "the coming in between of being into the beingless" (GA 70: 121/98; translation altered).

23 In section 242 of *The Event*, Heidegger speaks of pain as sheltering the unity of the joy of intimacy (*Freude der Innigkeit*) and the sadness of apartness (*Trauer der Abgeschiedenheit*) (GA 71: 219/188; translation altered).

24 In *The Event*, Heidegger writes: "The demise and the transition pass each other by; according to the law of the releasing [*Loslassung*] of being into its extreme distorted essence (i.e., into the will to willing), beyng lets the distorted essence go on. Beyng overcomes the dominance of the distorted essence not by 'engaging' with it and overpowering it but, rather, by releasing the distorted essence into its demise. The abyssal sort of overcoming is the releasing of that which is to be overcome into the fanaticism of its distorted essence" (GA 71: 84/70f).

25 "*Thinking ahead* (downgoing recollection) *as preparation of beyng-historical poetry in the moment of transition (Hölderlin)* Or *Thinking ahead as thoughtful, imageless saying of the event* in the sense of the thoughtful grounding of Da-sein out of the attunement of the attuning of Da-sein, an attuning that attunes it [this can refer either to Da-sein or to thinking-ahead] toward

thanking and so first lets it essentially occur pliantly and enjoins it to its essence" (GA 71: 286/248; translation altered).

26 "The beinglessness (of beings) is the inceptual event of the dispropriation; the inceptual dispropriation in the sense of *withholding*. This dispropriation is the inceptual, not yet twisting out, essencing back [*noch unentwundedes Rückwesen*] into the groundless inception" (GA 71: 132/112; translation altered).

27 If we rethink Heidegger's notion of earth in relation to the beingless or as the beingless as part of the earth, one would have to say that there is a non-historical aspect to earth. This brings me close to a main thesis that Michel Haar puts forward in *The Song of the Earth*, namely, that the earth is not historical. See Michel Haar, *Le Chant de la Terre: Heidegger et les assises de l'hisoire de l'être* (Éditions de l'Herne, Paris, 1987), 22–24. Translated by Reginald Lilly as *The Song of the Earth*: *Heidegger and the Grounds of Historical Being* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1992), 12–13.

28 Charles Scott, *Living With Indifference* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2007). See especially 81.

29 Charles Scott, *Telling Silence: Thresholds to No Where in Ordinary Experiences* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2023).

30 The middle-voice is a grammatical voice that exists in ancient Greek language but not in English or German. It is neither active nor passive and escapes thinking in terms of a subject acting on an object or vice versa. It is often rendered reflexively as in "a battle plays itself out." Heidegger thinks essentially in the middle voice.

Between Emergence and Submergence:

On Beyng-Historical Tragedy[1]

Rylie Johnson

ABSTRACT: This essay investigates the tragic kernel of Heidegger's history of beyng. Arguing that his 1930s view of tragedy is centered around the confrontation between *Aufgang* and *Untergang*, or emergence and submergence, which characterizes the difference between the first and other beginnings, I demonstrate that Heidegger radically affirms submergence for the sake of another beginning. Rendering submergence synonymous with the truth of beyng, its self-concealment, Heidegger claims that the emergence of beings in the first beginning required submergence, which is appropriated in the other beginning. Hence, this tragic play of emergence and submergence unfolds the history of beyng. I further argue that Heidegger develops this idea through a critical confrontation with Oswald Spengler's *Decline of the West*. Heidegger explicitly subverts Spengler's position by arguing that while the West is fundamentally tethered to *Untergang*, this does not mean decline or decay, but rather the submergence that intimates another beginning.

KEYWORDS: Spengler; submergence; emergence; tragedy; the West

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Heidegger's thought in the 1930s and early 1940s marked a change in his historical project. In the 1920s, he was concerned with pursuing a "destruction of the history of ontology," attempting to re-raise the question of being by dismantling ontological assumptions (SZ: 23/22). In the mid-1930s, Heidegger expanded this historical project, adding the task of inaugurating a new philosophical history as such: another beginning. In what Daniela Vallega-Neu calls Heidegger's "poietic writings,"[2] he stages a "confrontation [*Auseinandersetzung*]," or "interplay [*Zuspiel*]," between two philosophical beginnings: the first beginning (*des ersten Anfang*) and the other beginning (*des anderen Anfang*) (GA 65: 169/133). The first beginning refers to the inceptual emergence of the truth of beyng for the Pre-Socratics and the historical transformation of this originary experience into metaphysics. The other is the coming history that takes shape through recollecting and appropriating the first beginning. Hence, he writes in *The Event*: "The first beginning and the inceptuality [*die Anfängnis*] itself are experienced for the first time in the other beginning" (GA 71: 27/20). In brief, the inception of the other beginning consists in unconcealing what was concealed and forgotten in the first beginning.

Heidegger's account of the confrontation between the first and other beginning of philosophy provides a specific world-historical narrative, which he calls "the history of beyng [*die Geschichte des Seyns*]": i.e., the history of the various occurrences of beyng (e.g., nature, substance, God, will to power, etc.).[3] But what kind of narrative is this history of beyng? What genre? According to Peter Trawny, it is a tragedy: "The truth of being is onto-tragic. This is connected with the first of all inceptions, the inception of the history of being [. . .] A narrative element thereby flows into the history of being."[4] This narrative tells the tragic concealment and forgetting of beyng by the different manifestations of beings as a whole, which ultimately results in the present state of technological nihilism.

While much has been written on the influence of Greek tragedy in Heidegger's history of beyng, little has been written on the particular influence of Oswald Spengler's *Der Untergang des Abendlandes*. In this

essay, I demonstrate that Heidegger constructs the tragic confrontation between the first and other beginnings in terms of *Untergang*: the "decline" or, as I will translate, the "submergence" of beyng, which is contrasted with the *Aufgang*, or "emergence," of beings as a whole. In this way, Heidegger critically takes up elements of Spengler's declinist historical narrative. However, unlike Spengler's account of the West, Heidegger's sense of submergence is rendered into a positive event that allows for another beginning to occur. The principal argument of this essay is that Heidegger affirms the tragic submergence of beyng, and the West, as the condition for another beginning of history: "The West [*Abendland*] is the land of the other beginning, a land that takes its first delimitation out of such an advent [....] The West is the future of history, provided the essence of history is grounded in the event of the truth of beyng" (GA 71: 96/81). As such, the tragic history of beyng reaffirms the narrative centrality of the West but in a way that subverts Spengler's account of historical decline.

Before proceeding to the argument, it is necessary to justify my translation of *Untergang* and *Aufgang* into "submergence" and "emergence," respectively. Conventionally translated, *Aufgang* means "rise," "rising," "arising," "ascent," or "dawn." As an antonym for *Aufgang*, *Untergang* can be translated as "sinking" or "setting," e.g., *Sonnenaufgang* (sunrise) and *Sonnenuntergang* (sunset). However, *Untergang* has more affectively negative connotations, like "doom," "demise," "decay," downfall," or, as in the instance of Spengler's use, "decline." My aim is to maintain both the connotations of spatial movement, like "rising" and "sinking," and positive/negative affective resonance, "dawn" and "decay." I believe that "emergence" and "submergence" capture both of these connotations, while also faithfully conveying Heidegger's use of the terms. As developed in this essay, Heidegger uses *Aufgang* to mean the phenomenological sense of something coming into appearance. Unlike "rising" or "arising," which have a specific object in view, "emergence" connotes coming to appear out of something, like a flower from out of the ground. This translation has precedent as well. For example, Richard Rojcewicz uses

"emergence" for *Aufgang* (GA 71) while Julia Goesser Assaiante and S. Montgomery Ewegen make use of "emerging" for *Aufgehen* (GA 55). Rojcewicz translates *Untergang* into "downgoing," which maintains the motion of the term, but loses some of its affective resonance and conceals that it is an antonym to *Aufgang* qua emergence. For this reason, similar to Goesser Assaiante and Ewegen, I chose "submergence" for *Untergang*.[5] It expresses the oppositional interplay between *Aufgang* and *Untergang*, a sense of motion, and negative affectivity, e.g., "the building was submerged by the rising tide." More importantly, this translation resonates with the phenomenological counter to appearance: disappearance or concealment. Hence, "the city of Atlantis disappeared, submerged by the raging sea."

GRAECO-GERMANIC TRAGEDY

Although Heidegger's poietic writings properly begin with *Contributions to Philosophy (Of The Event)* (GA 65), Heidegger notes that this project first took shape in spring of 1932 (GA 66: 424). In his lecture course, *The Beginning of Western Philosophy: Interpretation of Anaximander and Parmenides*, Heidegger articulates the basic character of beyng-historical thinking. In order to bring about the "end of metaphysics" by means of grasping the truth of beyng, one must also "seek out the beginning of Western philosophy" in ancient Greek thought, specifically in the writings of Anaximander, Parmenides, and Heraclitus (GA 35: 1/1). According to Peter Trawny, this text marks the first formulation of a "narrative" – the history of beyng – that "revolutionized his thinking" by creating a world-historical picture from which to criticize the present. In this narrative, philosophy qua metaphysics seemed to have exhausted itself, ending in nihilism. Properly responding to the end requires seeking out its beginning.[6]

As mentioned above, Trawny argues that this narrative is tragic, set in the West, and it contains two primary actors: Greeks and Germans.[7] This latter aspect is especially important to highlight. According to Charles Bambach, Heidegger perpetuates the myth of "Graeco-German affinity," which posits that there is an essential linguistic and cultural

accord between the ancient Greeks and modern Germans.[8] In regard to the history of beyng, the first beginning occurs with the Greeks, the other with the Germans. Rhetorically asking when the first beginning occurred, Heidegger responds: "At the point when the *Greek people*, whose ethnicity [*deren Stammesart*] and language have the same provenance as ours, set about creating through its great poets and thinkers a unique way of Dasein for a human people" (GA 36/37: 6/5). This posited affinity would also correspond with Heidegger's explicit commitment to Nazism in the early 1930s. For example, in 1933, Heidegger claimed that a return to the Greek beginning was necessary to "form" a world in which the "spirit" of the "National Socialist revolution" could be realized (GA 36/37: 6–7/6).

Heidegger's appeal to tragic narrative is also consistent with this Graeco-Germanic affinity. Due to this proclaimed cultural affinity, Greek tragedy was enormously impactful in German philosophy and aesthetics, especially during the 19th century. In his celebrated work on tragedy, literary theorist Péter Szondi claims that "the philosophy of the tragic is proper to German philosophy."[9] He distinguished the poetics of tragedy, i.e., its literary form, which was theorized by Aristotle, from the philosophy of tragedy, which is taken up by various German philosophers. Unlike the poetics of tragedy, which focused on the cathartic emotional effect on the audience, Szondi argues that the philosophy of tragedy attends to the idea of tragedy, or what tragedy conveys about human existence. Specifically, beginning with Schelling, German philosophers presented Greek tragedy as the attempt to reconcile the contradiction between freedom and necessity (or fate).[10]

For example, in Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*, it is told to the King and Queen of Thebes that their son will murder his father and marry his mother. Attempting to escape fate, or necessity, each member of the family ends up unwittingly producing the very conditions that will result in its actualization. The tragic situation is such that the downfall has always already virtually occurred. Indeed, its virtual occurrence is precisely what results in its actualization. However, the genius of tragedy is that it attempts to reconcile free will with necessity through

suffering. Hence, Oedipus is free because he suffers for his crime. Although it was his fate and he did so in error, he nevertheless chose to murder his father and marry his mother. Thus, Oedipus suffering necessity is the very sign of his freedom.

The contradiction between freedom and necessity, evident in Greek tragedy, becomes a recurring theme in German philosophy, even if the terms of that contradiction might shift. Hence, for Hegel, it is the contradiction between natural/divine law and human customs; for Hölderlin, it is between human time and divine destiny; for Nietzsche, it is between the Apollonian and the Dionysian. According to Dennis Schmidt, the "common denominator" for each of these philosophers of tragedy is that they apply these contradictions and forces to history itself. Consequently, history becomes thought primarily in terms of tragic fate; freedom has to be thought from within historical necessity. To this lineage of philosophers, Schmidt adds a figure who is absent from Szondi's work, namely, Heidegger, who is viewed as presenting an historical account of tragedy with the "greatest force."[11]

However, Schmidt's brilliant discussion of Greek tragedy in Heidegger's thought is limited given that it does not discuss the poietic writings. These texts reveal that Heidegger viewed the history of beyng as explicitly tragic: "We see the essence of the 'tragic [*des Tragischen*]' in that the beginning [*der Anfang]* is the ground of submergence [*des Untergang*], which is not the 'end [*Ende*],' rather it is the rounding [*das Rund*] of the beginning. In that case the tragic belongs to the essence of beyng" (GA 66: 223)."[12] As rounding or circular, the tragic beginning is already the end, and the end is the beginning. In terms of the history of beyng, then, the submergence of beyng is already contained in the first beginning. Heidegger reiterates this point in his 1942 lecture course on Hölderlin: "This is why in Greek tragedy virtually nothing happens. It commences [*fängt*] with the submergence [*dem Untergang*] (GA 53: 128/103, tm)."[13] Hence, Oedipus' fate is such that he already virtually killed his father and married his mother before the act itself. Tautologically, his downfall is precisely *what* constitutes his downfall and, for this reason, it is inescapable. The tragedy of the history of

beyng is that this submergence is also inescapable, a fate that the history of the first beginning (i.e., metaphysics) is working out. Indeed, in *Contributions*, Heidegger implies that the decision regarding the transition to the other beginning has already been "decided [*entscheiden*]," the task is now to determine "whither [*wohin*]," "when [*wann*]" and "whence [*von wo*]" this beyng historical event will take place (GA 65: 177/139). Already decided, we are left with parsing out the shape of this transition, attending to the submergence of beyng that the event of appropriation will grasp. With this basic structure in mind, I turn to an in-depth examination of the meaning of emergence and its tragic interplay with submergence.

THE FIRST BEGINNING: THE EMERGENCE OF THE TRUTH OF BEYNG

How did beyng first appear to the Greeks? The answer is simple: it appeared as that which *is*. In this context, appearance refers to the emergence of beings themselves, i.e., how they appear: "Appearance [*Erscheinung*] is emergence [*das Auftauchen*]: not the becoming seen and apprehended of something, but a character of the happening of beings as such" (GA 35: 7/6). "Emergence," in this case *Auftauchen*, therefore signifies the happening of beings. But to the extent that happening is still separable from specific beings, emergence indirectly refers to beyng as such. There is a distinction to be made between that which emerges and the act of emergence itself, or the distinction between *what* something is and the fact *that* it is. Thatness was felt by the Greeks with the disposition of "wonder" (θαυμάζειν), i.e., wondering why there are beings rather than nothing. In wonder, humans and beings are brought into relation: "Wonder displaces man into and before beings as such" (GA 45:170/147). As such, wonder marks the origin of philosophy.[14] In the Greek experience, this dynamic coming-to-appearance of beings will ultimately be designated by the word φύσις. In his 1935 lecture course *Introduction to Metaphysics*, Heidegger writes, "In the age of the first and definitive unfolding of Western philosophy among the Greeks, when questioning about beings as such and as a whole received its true inception, beings were called φύσις" (GA 40: 15/14). Thus, the first

beginning begins with the experience of wonder towards φύσις: the emergence of beings as a whole. In this text we also see the appearance of "emergence" as *Aufgang*, and its variations, e.g., *Aufgehen*, as a key conceptual term for Heidegger, one that will come to be synonymous with φύσις itself (GA 40: 16/15; GA 71: 302/262).

What is Heidegger's justification for speaking of, and even translating, φύσις in terms of *Aufgang* (emergence), rather than the more conventional "*Natur*" (nature)? Φύσις is rooted in the word φύειν, which means "to bring forth," "to produce," or "to grow." In its noun form, φύσις ambiguously names that which is brought forth and bringing forth as such, or what emerges and emergence: "It says what emerges [*Aufgehende*] from itself (for example, the emergence, the blossoming, of a rose), the unfolding that opens itself up, the coming-into-appearance in such unfolding, and holding itself and persisting in appearance – in short, the emerging-abiding sway [*das aufgehend-verweilende Walten*]" (GA 40: 16/15). For Heidegger, φύσις designates both beings as a whole and being as such for the Greeks: what *is*, emerges. This sense of the word is lost with its subsequent Latin transliteration into *natura*, which more narrowly means "to be born." It loses its ontological sense (coming-into-being), gaining a biological sense (coming-into-life). In English, this connection of nature and life leads the former to be rendered distinct from those things produced by human activity, i.e., artificiality. In referring to a distinct group of beings, "nature" does not refer to beyng as such. Hence, the transformation of φύσις into nature is one of the marks of the forgetting of beyng that motivates Heidegger's thought.[15]

Connecting emergence and appearance, Heidegger is further able to connect the fundamental relationship between emergence and unconcealment (truth), φύσις and ἀλήθεια, since that which emerges and appears is also unconcealed. He writes: "For the Greek essence of truth is possible only together with the Greek essence of Being as φύσις. On the grounds of the unique essential relation between φύσις and ἀλήθεια, the Greeks could say: beings as beings are true. The true as such is in being" (GA 40: 109/107). More specifically, as Heidegger

claims in his 1943 lecture course on Heraclitus, ἀλήθεια is the very essence of φύσις (GA 55: 173/130). In other words, emergence is the unconcealment of what is previously concealed. But it is important to note that concealment is also the "counter-essence" of unconcealment. The former preserves what is most proper to the latter. This follows from the fact that unconcealment as ἀλήθεια is a privation of concealment as λανθάνειν.[16] With this in mind, it follows that concealment is also the counter-essence of φύσις: emergence requires and presupposes concealment (GA 54: 176/118).

Heidegger demonstrates this relationship between concealment and unconcealment through a reading of Heraclitus' fragment 123: φύσις κρύπτεσθαι φιλεῖ, which is usually translated into English as "nature loves to hide." Heidegger translates the passage as such: "Das Aufgehen dem Sichverbergen schenkt's die Gunst," which Goesser Assaiante and Ewegen render into English as "Emerging to self-concealing gives favor" (GA 55: 110/84).[17] In this translation of Heraclitus, Heidegger suggests that self-concealment (*dem Sichverbergen*) belongs to emergence (*Das Aufgehen*) or to any instance of emergence there is accompanying concealment. This complements Heidegger's account of the truth of beyng as the clearing for self-concealing. According to Heidegger, the "essence of truth" is the "clearing for self-concealing," which is identified with the truth of beyng (GA 65: 348/275). This has important ramifications for understanding beyng. Because beyng is not an entity or a thing, it cannot be fully unconcealed as though it were an object of thought. As Heidegger asserts in his *Basic Questions of Philosophy*, "the attempt to grasp this Being as if it were a being yields emptiness" (GA 45: 210/178). At best, its truth can be indirectly cleared or intimated *as* self-concealing or even withdrawing.

Specifically, beyng can be indirectly cleared through grasping its role in constituting phenomenal experience. Beyng distinguishes beings from non-beings, i.e., they are rather than are not, yet beyng itself is not a being. Its clearing, yet not cleared, nature can be intimated by means of analogies and metaphors. As Katherine Withy usefully analogizes: "It (being) lacks ontic determinacy, in the same way that

the background lacks the crispness of the foreground, light lacks the visibility of visible objects, the pervasive lacks the distinctiveness of the clear or the unfamiliar."[18] The appearance of beings qua foregrounded, visible, and distinctive presuppose beyng qua background, light and pervasive. Thus, the truth of beyng still says something about beyng, i.e., its self-concealment, and its relationship to ontic beings without thereby rendering it unconcealed, which would violate its very essence as self-concealing.

Returning to fragment 123, φύσις, as giving favor to self-concealing, refers to the concealment of beyng as such. Accordingly, Heidegger maintains that Heraclitus intimated the truth of beyng. But this truth was subsequently lost or forgotten over the course of history, i.e., the history of beyng. Specifically, metaphysical thinking obscured concealment by transforming φύσις into something present, or always already unconcealed. So how exactly does this transformation take place?

As discussed above, the first beginning occurs with the wonder *that* "Being *is* – (because its essence is unconcealment [*Entbergung*]," which then transforms into an account of *what* and *why* being is, which is the purview of metaphysics. This mode of questioning conceals the truth of beyng because it renders it into a kind of being, i.e., a *what*. For this reason, Heidegger claims that metaphysics primarily consists of the tautological proposition, "beings (*ens entium*) 'are' being" (GA 70: 53/40). In other words, being is something present or already emerged. This formulation obscures the dynamic sense of φύσις, the emergence of what *is* from out of concealment (beyng as such).

Heidegger presents a helpful description of this transformation in *The Event*: "The character of clearing is transformed into *presence* [*die Anwesung*]. And presence steps back behind the things that are present; being becomes ἰδέα [. . .] *Emergence*, on account of what is astonishing about it, immediately becomes *presence*, from which are distinguished coming to be and passing away" (GA 71: 25/18). Heidegger is referring here to the Platonic dialogues as the origin of metaphysics. For Plato, the being of something is its form or idea. For example, while a chair may change in time (e.g., its color fades), its idea remains the same.

This manner of conceiving being alters the referent for ἀλήθεια into ἰδέα: "Beingness as ἰδέα thereby is of itself what truly (ἀληθῶς) is, ὄν" (GA 65: 220/172). Hence, if we want to know the truth of something, we have to grasp its idea. Furthermore, this also accounts for the transformation of ἀλήθεια into correctness; truth is the correct correspondence of the perceptible thing with its idea, and later its correspondence with a proposition.

Ultimately, according to Heidegger, metaphysics achieves its proper formulation with Aristotle. While his text φυσικὴ ἀκρόασις (*Physics*) concerns the behavior of beings as a whole (φύσις), his τὰ μετὰ τὰ φυσικά (*Metaphysics*), or what comes after *Physics*, concerns the meaning and principles of being. As such, the emergence of beings becomes distinguished from their principles or reasons for being, or that which constitutes the beingness (οὐσία) of beings. Heidegger explains:

> But when τί τὸ ὄν (what is being) is asked, the question is not aimed at the particular being, but rather beyond it (μετὰ), "over" it towards the being of beings. The question τί τὸ ὄν does not think τὰ φυσικά but rather μετὰ τὰ φυσικά. The thinking that thinks οὐσία – i.e., beingness – moves beyond the particular being and over toward being. It is a thinking μετὰ τὰ φυσικά – that is, "metaphysics." From Plato and Aristotle up to the current day, western thinking is "metaphysics." (GA 55: 57/46)

Aristotle defines metaphysics, establishing it as a tradition that exists to the present day. As such, Aristotle plays a more significant role in the forgetting of beyng. He delimits the study of φύσις to the apparent motion/change of beings, separating it from the study of being as such. Being as such no longer refers to emergence from out of concealment, but rather pure presence.

Paradoxically, over the course of history, this determination of being as presence results in nihilism: "Only beings are and being remains empty smoke, an error [*ein leerer Rauch und ein Irrtum*]" (GA 70: 53/40).

Beyng as such is nothing, since beyng cannot be understood except by making it into another present being. For example, defined as necessarily existing, God is both the metaphysical source of beings and is itself a being. Such thinking renders the truth of beyng, its self-concealment, incomprehensible. This apparent lack at the heart of metaphysics is indirectly experienced as an "abandonment by being [*Die Seinsverlassenheit*]," which Heidegger diagnoses as nihilism (GA 65: 119/95).

In terms of Heidegger's narrative, the transition of φύσις into nihilism is the fate that belongs to the history of beyng. In accord with the tragic sense of fate, however, nihilism only *seems* to be the end of metaphysics. In reality, nihilism belongs to the very beginning of metaphysics. Heidegger writes, "Beyng is already abandoning beings when ἀλήθεια becomes the withdrawing basic character of beings and thereby prepares the determination of beingness as ἰδέα" (GA 65: 111/88). Yet, it is crucial to understand that nihilism is not a mere fault of metaphysics. Rather, it preserves the truth of beyng: "the abandonment of beings by being means that beyng *conceals itself* in the manifestness of beingness. And beyng itself is essentially determined as this self-withdrawing concealment" (GA 65: 111/88). Nihilism therefore tacitly names the truth of beyng as self-concealing. Accordingly, grasping the truth of beyng and thereby inaugurating the other beginning actually requires taking up and working through the nihilistic kernel of metaphysics. Subverting the emergence of beings in the first beginning, the other beginning takes shape through the "submergence," which means the forgetting, yet preserving, of beyng that occurs as concealment (GA 70: 54/40, tm).[19]

THE OTHER BEGINNING: THE TRAGEDY OF SUBMERGENCE

In *The Event*, Heidegger summarizes the relationship between emergence and submergence as such: "The beginning is unique. The word of the inceptuality [*der Anfängis*] is multiple. Hence there are many ways to say the beginnings. We know the first beginning as the emergent [*den aufgehenden*] (φύσις); we know the other beginning as the submergent [*den untergehenden*] (event [*Ereignis*])" (GA 71: 302/262, tm).[20] While the first beginning took shape in wonder before the emergence

and unconcealment of beings as a whole, the coming other beginning occurs in the event whereby the submergence of beyng is recollected and appropriated. The emergence of beings as a whole was coextensive with the submergence of beyng, or, in other words, the unconcealment of beings required the concealment of beyng. Thus, the abandonment by beyng that marks the transformation of metaphysics into nihilism already occurred in the first beginning. The truth of beyng – its self-concealment – was submerged.

For Heidegger, the other beginning consists in recollecting this very submergence that determined the fate of the history of beyng, allowing the truth of beyng to be disclosed. This will account for the tragic construction of the history of beyng: the submergence of beyng that is revealed at the end of that history already occurred at the beginning. The identification of metaphysics with nihilism, and nihilism with beyng itself, is the tragic moment, i.e., the event. However, rather than lamenting this fate, Heidegger ultimately affirms the tragedy of beyng as the condition for another historical beginning, a beginning that affirms the West as the source of salvation from the various ills associated with modern nihilism.

In order to properly understand and frame Heidegger's tragic narrative, it is necessary to clarify the terms introduced so far and to address a few questions. What exactly is meant by submergence, or *Untergang*? Why is submergence identified with self-concealment on the part of beyng? Why does the other beginning take shape through the recollection of the truth of beyng? Does this act of recollection relate to the forgetting of beyng? Lastly, how does this relate to Spengler's account of *Untergang*, which is negatively interpreted as decline or downfall?

One of the difficulties in reading Heidegger consists in working through the sheer entanglement of his concepts. Hence, submergence and self-concealment are almost interchangeable. What is submerged is concealed, and the act of submergence is self-concealing. Granted that the other beginning consists in appropriating the truth of beyng, and that beyng is fundamentally self-concealing, then the other beginning is the event by which the submergence of beyng that underlies the

history of beyng is appropriated. Hence, Heidegger writes, "The other beginning is the appropriating event (unconcealing concealment). The event is submergence – recollection [*Erinnerung*]" (GA 71: 303/263, tm). The event of appropriation consists in the recollection of the submergence of beyng, its self-concealment.

With regard to the history of beyng, there are two specific senses of submergence. First, submergence names the truth of beyng that is intimated, yet concealed, in the first beginning. Second, it names the historical *Übergang*, "the transition" or "crossing," between the first and other beginnings (GA 65: 66/53; GA 70: 103/81). The history of beyng, then, accounts for the submergence of beyng that is coextensive with the history of metaphysics. The other beginning occurs when metaphysics is exhausted, making possible the recollection of the truth of beyng. But what exactly does Heidegger mean by recollection? Why is the submergence/self-concealment of beyng grasped by means of recollection?

Being and Time opens with the claim that the question of being has been forgotten (GA 2: 3/SZ 2). With the *Kehre*, Heidegger further argues that this forgetting of being is symptomatic of its truth. Not being an entity capable of unconcealment, the truth of beyng is that it is self-concealing, which Heidegger etymologically connects to forgetting. Indeed, the Greek word for concealment, λανθάνειν, can be translated as forgetting. Hence, what is concealed is also forgotten. For this reason, the unconcealment of beyng as self-concealing means also recollecting or remembering what was forgotten. The event that appropriates the history of beyng, i.e., the submergence of beyng as such, which brings forth the other beginning of history, is an act of recollection. As Heidegger claims in his Nietzsche lectures, "recollection in the history of being thinks history as the arrival, always remote, of the perdurance of truth's essence" (GA 6.2: 439/EP 75). Thus, recollecting not only locates an origin, the self-concealment of beyng, but it also designates a future, a history to arrive. Not unlike his earlier account of historical repetition, recollection is a return to the past that bestows a future. Indeed, in his poietic writings, Heidegger links anticipation

and recollection: "Every thinking-ahead [*Jedes Vordenken*] is a giving to recollection" (GA 70: 98/77). The coming other beginning takes shape through a recollection of the first beginning, thereby unconcealing the submergence of beyng as such. In this way, recollection is not just simply remembering: it is a fundamentally creative act.

Although the history of beyng surveys the entire of history of metaphysics, Heidegger primarily recollects the truth of beyng through critical readings of the Pre-Socratics. In this case, I return to Heidegger's reading of Heraclitus, whose fragment 123 reveals the co-belonging of emergence and self-concealment. Φύσις does not just emerge from concealment, but also submerges back into it, just as a flower emerges and dies. Moreover, any instance of emergence is always relative to beings – what *is* – which conceals beyng as such. Rendering concealing synonymous with submerging, Heidegger thereby points to the identity of emergence and submergence, *Aufgang* and *Untergang*: "Emerging and self-concealing (i.e., submerging) are the same" (GA 55: 153/116).

However, in other texts, Heidegger argues for a certain priority to submergence. While necessarily entangled, submergence is the condition for emergence:

> The emergence [*Der Aufgang*] begins with the abyss [*dem Ab-grund*] and this means with the *submergence* [*dem Untergang*] [....] The first being [*Das erstmalige Sein*] is emergence and thus already submergence because the clearing that comes down over it is ungrounded [*ungegründet*] and no longer promising. What emergence was and remains before the entire history of beyng, as its submergence, must become experienced as *the event of the appropriation of the abyss* [*Ereignis des Abgrundes*]. (GA 66: 96)

This passage requires much unpacking. I have already talked about the event of appropriating beyng, but what of abyss? Is there something abyssal regarding the truth of beyng? If abyss is more primordial than emergence, then why would this be the case for submergence as well?

In his poietic text *On Inception*, Heidegger claims that the first beginning is the abyss, or the "ungrounded [*das Ungegründete*]," of the truth of beyng (GA 70: 13/7). Emergence is ungrounding insofar as the wonder before beings as a whole conceals beyng as such, since understanding *what* beings are presupposes, but also obscures, an understanding *that* they are. Beings thereby emerge from self-concealment, which is then forgotten. Without beyng, then, beings appear to hover over an abyss. As such, the abyss is another descriptor of beyng: "Beyng occurs as abyss" (GA 66: 100). However, by placing a hyphen between "Ab-" and "grund," Heidegger emphasizes that the abyss is still a ground, albeit one that is "self-concealing" *as* ground (GA 65: 379/300). The abyss is simultaneously "nothing [*Nichts*]" and a "ground" (GA 66: 99). How does Heidegger account for this apparent contradiction? Rather than being an abyss in the sense of an empty space, the abyss actually designates the "fullness [*die Fülle*] of what is still undecided [*des Nochunentschiedenen*] and is to be decided [*zu Entscheidenden*]" (GA 65: 382/302). The abyss is therefore not a lack, but a site of possibilities. And these possibilities include not only possible emergent beings but also the possible ground upon which the self-concealment of beyng can be indirectly cleared. This helps better explain the meaning of Da-sein in Heidegger's middle period. Rather than a human being, Da-sein names the "there" that grounds the abyss (GA 65: 386/305). As such, the event of appropriation means that humans become Da-sein, grounding and experiencing the truth of beyng as abyss.

That beyng qua abyss precedes emergence accounts for the priority of submergence. Returning to the quote mentioned above: "The emergence begins with the abyss [*Ab-grund*] and this means with the submergence" (GA 66: 96). Beings emerge from the abyss, or that which is submerged. Connecting the abyss with submergence, Heidegger renders submergence into another name for the self-concealment of beyng. Self-concealment is submerged relative to the unconcealment of emergence. But emergence is also "submergence into the abyss [*Untergang in den Abgrund*]" (GA 71: 147/127, tm). This is empirically shown through the experience of beings as they decay and die, e.g., a flower that emerges and submerges into the ground.[21] Hence, submergence stands between

both ends of emergence: beings emerge from and return to the submergent abyss of beyng. This is to say also that the truth of beyng is not exhausted by emergence, the latter of which metaphysics attempts to eternalize into something present. The submergence of beyng from metaphysics means that the appropriation of the former is not foreclosed by the latter.

By articulating the cohesion between beyng, abyss, and submergence, we can better understand the historical character of submergence. The other beginnings occur when the abyss is appropriated from submergence (GA 70: 13/6). For Heidegger, submergence is identical with the *Übergang* between the first and other beginnings, or the history of beyng. This is further demonstrated by the fact that the end of metaphysics is coextensive with submergence (GA 70: 103/81). Thus, beyng-historical thinking is consonant with thinking the submergence of beyng that underlies the various formulations of metaphysics. Hence, Heidegger calls beyng-historical thinking "submergent thinking [*das untergängliche Denken*]" (GA 70: 94/74, tm).[22] By attending to submergence, beyng-historical thinking stages the confrontation between the first and other beginnings, i.e., demonstrating the submergence of beyng that the emergence of beings as a whole concealed. The first beginning (metaphysics) results in nihilism precisely because it showed that beyng was not an emergent entity; rather, it is submergence itself.[23] Submergent thinking recognizes this as the truth of beyng and proceeds to critically reflect upon the history of metaphysics.

While identifying beyng-historical thinking and submergent thinking, or thinking of the *Untergang*, Heidegger is insistent that submergence is not a negative term. Moreover, the history of beyng is not a negative account of history: "This [submergent thinking] cannot be compared to any historiographical ambiance of decline, which clings only to perishing and ceasing, to impotence and collapse, reckoning this up merely as ending" (GA 70: 94/74, tm). Submergence is neither the decay nor decline into a determinate end, since its recollection is a creative event that marks the occurrence of the other beginning. The end is simply another beginning. It is on this very point that the confrontation between Heidegger and Spengler stands. While critically appropriating

certain elements of Spengler's historical narrative of decline, Heidegger subverts it through an appeal to another beginning for the history of philosophy.

SPENGLER AND THE BEYNG-HISTORICAL WEST

Although not a primary figure in his thought, like Hölderlin or Heraclitus, Heidegger's oeuvre contains a few important references to Spengler, where the latter is rendered into a foil for the former's historical project.[24] It is certainly the case that Heidegger views Spengler's thought as fundamentally shallow, calling him a superficial reader of Nietzsche and even a "pen pusher [*den Schriftsteller*]" (GA 95: 140/108; GA 96: 274/217). Nevertheless, in his poietic texts, alongside Ernst Jünger, Spengler is rendered into one of the culminating figures in the history of metaphysics. In brief, Spengler's "historical metaphysics of Caesarism" consummates modernity and the end of western metaphysics, describing in ontic terms Nietzsche's account of the will to power (GA 66: 27). This point is reiterated in *The Event*, where Heidegger asserts that Spengler's *Der Untergang des Abendlandes*, along with Jünger's *Der Arbeiter* and *Über den Schmerz*, "indicated, mediately" how the "essence of beingness" occurs, "since it provokes and determines the consistent interpretation of Nietzsche's metaphysics in various respects" (GA 71: 116/99). In what follows, I argue that Spengler's declinist narrative intimates and helps explain, negatively and by way of contrast, Heidegger's unique reading of submergence, where the former thinks in terms of metaphysics and the latter in terms of the truth of beyng. Nevertheless, insofar as Spengler grasps, albeit unconsciously, the end of the first beginning, a confrontation with Spengler is necessary to appropriate the truth of beyng, ushering in another beginning. How, then, does Spengler understand the essence of beingness? How does this connect to the tragic character of the history of beyng?

Published in 1918, Spengler's *Der Untergang des Abendlandes* reflected the Zeitgeist of Europe immediately following World War One. The 19th century promise of technological innovation was betrayed by the total mobilization and experience of mass death in the early 20th

century. Linear progress was replaced with inevitable decline. Spengler presents a "morphological" (*morphologischen*) account of history, which claims that each historical culture is a unique organism that is born and dies. He writes, "I see in world history the picture [*Bild*] of an eternal formation and reorganization, a wonderful becoming and passing away [*Vergehens*] of organic forms [*organischer Formen*]."[25] The text documents the specific history of the West, disclosing its inevitable decline, decay, and death, i.e., its *Untergang*. However, what is unique to the West is its historical consciousness that allows it to see its fate and take part in it: "for the first time, a culture is able to foresee [*voraussehen*] which path fate has chosen for it."[26]

Specifically, Spengler predicts the transformation of culture into civilization, which is accompanied by the decline of democracy into authoritarianism, or "Caesarism." Presenting this as inevitable, Spengler does not criticize or approve this new Caesar; rather, he warns that we can either accept this fate and work through it or resist and be destroyed. Hence, he concludes the second volume of *Untergang*: "We do not have the freedom to achieve [*zu erreichen*] this or that, but to do what is necessary [*Notwendigkeit*] or nothing at all. And a task, which the necessity of history has set, will be resolved [*gelöst*], with or without him [i.e., the historical individual]. The fates lead the willing and drag the unwilling [*Ducunt fata volentem, nolentem trahunt*]."[27] Thus, Spengler's history led him to a kind of Nietzschean *amor fati*. But, given his morphological model of decline (verified by the transition from Greek culture to Roman civilization), his account coincided with his radically conservative support for authoritarianism, i.e., "Prussian Socialism," which would serve as an important influence on Nazism.[28]

Thus, both Spengler and Heidegger possess a tragic picture of history, one that is developed by and results in *Untergang*, "decline" for the former and "submergence" for the latter. Heidegger also takes up Spengler's unique vision of what this *Untergang* looks like in practice. As is well known, in his poietic texts, Heidegger argues that the culmination of beingness is machination. Abandoned by beyng, beings are only conceivable as instrumentalized objects. According to Heidegger, this

nihilistic situation is anticipated by Spengler's work, whereby "'beings in the whole' are thought machinationally [*machenschaftlich*] and the human being, as executor [*Vollstrecker*] of machination, is determined from out of this essential entanglement" (GA 66: 28). Accordingly, in his 1931 text, *Man and Technics*, Spengler writes that "civilization has itself become a machine that does, or tries to do, everything in mechanical fashion [....] Whether it has meaning or not, our technical thinking must have its actualization."[29] While Spengler bemoans this result, he nonetheless thinks it as inevitable. He concludes that "our duty is to hold on to the lost position, without hope, without rescue."[30] However, for Heidegger this conclusion is untenable. While admitting a degree of validity to Spengler's interpretation of history, and even accepting elements of its fatalism, Heidegger nonetheless believes that the end of the history of metaphysics is only the preparation for another beginning. His account of the history of beyng leads him to affirm the submergence of beyng not in principle, but as a condition for something other.

Heidegger's unique formulation of *Untergang* and its fundamental entanglement with Spengler is further reflected in his account of the West. Against the latter, the former's history of beyng centers around denying the decline of the West, arguing instead that it is the "future of history, provided the essence of history is grounded in the event of the truth of beyng" (GA 71: 96/81). The West is not in decline, since its proper history has not yet begun. Nevertheless, Heidegger also affirms *Untergang* qua submergence, which he identifies with the West itself, calling the West "the land of the submergence [*das Land des Untergangs*] i.e., inceptuality of the beginning [*der Anfängnis des Anfangs*]" (GA 71: 272/235, tm). The West therefore names both the submergence and also the transition into another historical beginning.

Heidegger accounts for the co-belonging of these two determinations by etymologically breaking down the term "The West," which in German is *das Abendland*. *Abend* translates into "evening." The West is the evening land, or the land where the sun sets. But given that the setting of the sun and the onset of night prepare the way for morning, then the West also intimates another historical beginning. This is the beyng-historical meaning of the West: "The 'West,' experienced

in terms of the history of beyng, is the land of the evening, and the evening prepares the night out of which the day of the more inceptual beginning [*des anfänglicheren Anfangs*] already eventuates [*sich ereignet*]" (GA 71: 95/80). For Heidegger, the West signifies the general transition from the first to the other beginning of history. This transition is also the submergence of beyng. As the sun sets, it submerges below the horizon, preparing the way for morning. Consequently, in terms of the history of beyng, the West is the name for the self-concealment of the truth of beyng, but also the possibility of its recollection and appropriation, i.e., the accompanying dawn of another beginning. Hence, Spengler is certainly right to speak of the *Untergang* of the West, but wrong to render it negatively into decline.

Thus, Heidegger's beyng-historical thinking appropriates Spengler's declinist reading of the West in order flesh out its concealed truth: the submergence of the West and the submergence of the truth of beyng are identical, both pointing to another beginning. As tragic, the history of beyng names the necessary and fatalistic submergence of the West. But rather than resulting in sheer death and decay, or even Oedipal blindness, Heidegger anticipates that this submergence will result in a new beginning for philosophy, the West, and even history as such. Hence, Heidegger argues that the history of beyng, its submergence, has to be radically affirmed. Regarding the West and the other beginning, Heidegger writes:

> The ending in its demise [*in seiner Verendung*] should not be resisted. Yet we must also not abandon to it anything that is preparation for the beginning. We should not impede the demise. We must not claim that the withdrawal into 'fatalism [*den Fatalismus*]' is an 'attitude [eine *Haltung*].' We cannot hope for anything from progression [*einem Fortgang*] or regression [*einem Rückgang*]. The beginning is everything. (GA 71: 97/82)

Standing on the side of the other beginning, Heidegger argues against anything that might impede the exhaustion of the first beginning.

Viewing the West as the beginning and end of the history of metaphysics, Heidegger displaces its spatial sense, rendering it something intimately temporal. Specifically, with submergence, it designates what is to come, i.e., the future. Hence, the West is the "future of history" (GA 71: 96/81). It is not to be identified with a geographic space. In order to make this distinction, Heidegger poses a curious comparison between the idea of the West and that of Europe:

> The West, as a concept of the history of beyng, has nothing to do with 'Europe [*Europa*],' as a concept of modernity [*dem neuzeitlichen*]. What is European is the preliminary form of the planetary [*des Planetarischen*]. The new order [*Die Neuordnung*] that is Europe constitutes an anticipation of planetary dominance [*der Planetarischen Herrschaft*], which of course can no longer be an imperialism [*Imperialismus*], since emperors are impossible in the essential domain of machination [*der Machenschaft*]. What is European and planetary is the ending and completion. The West is the beginning [*der Anfang*]. (GA 71: 95/80)

Within this complicated construction we can glean some insight into what Heidegger means by "Europe." "Europe" obviously refers to the continent of Europe and its inhabitants. But insofar as the people of this continent (German, French, English, etc.) have sought to expand their power through colonialism and imperialism, the idea of "Europe," its modern values and products, has become planetary in scale. Hence, Heidegger will add that "Europe" dominates "Asia," "the Western hemisphere," and even the "the East of Russian Bolshevism" (GA 71: 95/80). In other words, according to the Heideggerian construction of "Europe," we could replace the notion of "westernization" with "Europeanization." Thus, at the end of modern history, Europe is identified with the planet as a whole. Heidegger appears to want an alternative to what Emmanuel Wallerstein calls "European universalism," or the universal spread of the particular values and preferences of Europe.[31] For Heidegger, that the

future belongs to the West is not to say that it reflects European goals or values, but rather that it relates to something new, i.e., another beginning. Therefore, it undermines any unified appeal to European superiority as a spatial and geographic region.

Because Spengler focuses on the spatial conception of the West, Heidegger identifies him as a European thinker: "'Europe' is the actualization of the *Decline of the West*" (GA 96: 274/217). Insofar as the *decline of the West* accounts for the total domination of machination over life, Spengler is unable to think beyond the confines of metaphysics, failing to see that the West represents an opening to an event that is constitutive of another beginning. Despite attempting to think provincially about Europe, i.e., about its specific decline, Spengler ends up being another force in the Europeanization of the entire planet.

Nevertheless, whatever counter Heidegger may present to European universalism, it is important to question whether or not this insight is limited by his commitment to another component of his beyng-historical narrative: the fundamental relationship between the Greeks and Germans. In other words, while it is true that Heidegger beyng-historically conceives the West futurally, displaced from the ontic and spatial characterization of Europe and its globalization, there are certain ways that his narrative re-stages conventional Western-centrism, especially due to his Graeco-Germanic affinity.

As Robert Bernasconi notes, although Heidegger is critical of standard narratives underlying the history of philosophy, "he not only vigorously upheld the thesis of the Greek origins of philosophy, he also presented the history of being against the backdrop of a narrative account of the history of philosophy that at least on the surface resembles the standard account."[32] Indeed, Heidegger does more than re-center the West in the history of philosophy: he renders philosophy *identical* with the West. He writes in his 1943 lecture course on Heraclitus:

> There is no philosophy other than western philosophy. 'Philosophy,' in its essence, is so primordially western that it bears the ground of the history of the west.

> From out of this ground alone, technology has arisen. There is only a western technology. It is the consequence of 'philosophy' and nothing else. (GA 55: 3/3)

Taking it for granted that philosophy is a Greek concept, Heidegger draws the conclusion that philosophy is and can only be a western phenomenon. Heidegger then makes the stronger claim that philosophy is the "ground" of the history of the West. Consistent with the history of beyng, philosophy is the causal engine operating behind Western history. The most important appearance of philosophy is technology, or technological rationality. Consequently, the global spread of technology (globalization) is a form of Westernization. In this we can interpret a form of conventional Western-centrism present in Heidegger's thought. Indeed, in his previous lecture course, he not only affirms that there is a "destiny of the West [*des abendländischen Geschicks*]," but that this destiny "conceals a world-destiny [*ein Weltschicksal*]" (GA 54: 114/77). Of course, it can be objected that this is just another version of Heidegger's tragic, beyng-historical account of Europe and the West, i.e., beneath the spread of European technological thinking lies the concealed or submerged the truth of beyng. Thus, the destiny of the West qua Europe is the path towards the appropriation of the truth of beyng from out of submergence. This is certainly a consistent reading of Heidegger; yet, it is important to qualify this claim due to the unique beyng-historical role of the German people.

Although Heidegger was interested in other cultures and philosophical approaches, like Japanese Buddhism, he consistently centered the world-historical experiences of the German people, especially during the poietic phase of his work. For example, he concludes his 1943 lecture course on Heraclitus with an appeal to the historical task of the Germans:

> In whatever way the fate of the Occident may be conjoined, the greatest and truest trial of the Germans is yet come; namely, that trial in which they are tested by the ignorant against their will regarding whether the Germans are in harmony with the truth of beyng, and

> whether they are strong enough in their readiness for death to save the inceptual in its inconspicuous adornment from the spiritual poverty of the modern world. (GA 55: 180–181/135)

The Germans must save the West from the spiritual poverty that characterizes modernity. It is the Germans who must grasp the submergence of beyng in order to bring about another beginning. Thus, the tragic fate of the West is necessarily tied to the German people.

For Heidegger, this situation is primarily for two reasons. First, it is due to the Germans being an essentially indeterminate people, i.e., their essence is *to determine* their essence, or more specifically to "struggle [*den Kampf*]" over their essence (GA 95: 31/24). Hence, they are rendered fundamentally futural, given that this struggle is based on the anticipation of an arriving determination. They are also, for this reason, fundamentally historical, since the meaning of history is derived from the anticipation of the future. Second, they carried out the consummation of the first beginning, i.e., modernity. Narrowly defining modernity in terms of the reduction of the emergence of beings as a whole to consciousness, which is dialectically sublimated into absolute knowing, Heidegger identifies modernity with the results of German Idealism, and Hegel specifically (GA 95: 29/23). Because Germans brought about the culmination of the first beginning, then they are also tasked with realizing another beginning. For Heidegger, the event of the other beginning requires grappling with German philosophy. In particular, confrontations with Hegel and Nietzsche are needed, the consummate thinkers of modernity and the history of the first beginning. To this list, we can also add the ontic descriptions of modern nihilism characteristic of Spengler's and Jünger's work as well.

It can reasonably be countered that this is the beyng-historical account of the Greeks and Germans, which are separable from the ontic account of peoples who exist in a specific geographical region and time in history. After all, the ideas that Germans are indeterminate as a people and that German philosophy, having consummated modernity, is planetary in scope, seem to be far removed from the specific geography

of Germany and those who live there. Nevertheless, it should also not be dismissed that this reliance on the more conventional historical narrative of Graeco-Germanic affinity does indicate Heidegger's lingering commitments to the generic historical reading of the West. At the very least, I argue that the reliance on the terms "Germans" and "Greeks" potentially reaffirms a form of conventional Western-centrism that hinders the radicality of Heidegger's beyng-historical thinking, especially for readers of his work.

CONCLUSION: THE TRAGEDY OF BEYNG?

As should be clear from the preceding, Heidegger's account of *Untergang*, or submergence, is one of the key aspects of his beyng-historical project. Indeed, beyng-historical thinking is thinking submergence (GA 70: 94/74). Insofar as Heidegger, in his poietic texts, defines tragedy in terms of submergence, i.e., that it precedes and conditions the emergence of beings in the first beginning, then it is clear that the narrative of the history of beyng is fundamentally tragic. The submergence, or self-concealment of beyng, is the condition for the first beginning, and the other beginning will take shape through its recollection and appropriation. Accordingly, we can pose that the event of appropriation is tragic.

This insight was then applied to Heidegger's confrontation with Spengler's *Decline of the West*. The West is the "land of the submergence," where the sun sets and makes possible another beginning (GA 71: 272/235, tm). However, in tragic circularity, this other beginning, while creative, is nonetheless a return to the first beginning as such. Hence, the first beginning itself is experienced and appropriated in the other beginning (GA 71: 27/20). It appropriates the self-concealment of beyng, which lay submerged in the first beginning, i.e., with the development of metaphysics. Heidegger recognized that Spengler had certain insights regarding the history of metaphysics, describing how the end of metaphysics results in nihilism, understood as the totalitarianism of machination. However, while admitting the accuracy of this tragic fate, Heidegger nonetheless argues that the submergence of the

West would not result in death, but in another beginning. For the sake of beginning, Heidegger claims that this fate cannot be resisted: "The beginning is everything" (GA 71: 97/82). With this tragic narrative in mind, Heidegger displaces the geographic idea of Europe in favor of the West as temporal event. Nevertheless, by doing so, Heidegger continued to think in terms of conventional history of philosophy, at least in terms of beginning with the Greeks and ending/re-beginning with the Germans. Consequently, from Heidegger's perspective, while Spengler appears to see the world-historical task of the Germans, those who are able to see their own tragic fate and affirm it, he did not do justice to their creative task of saving the West. Thus, Spengler remains European, all-too European.

This examination opens up a horizon of inquiry that is beyond the purview of this essay. First, is there a way to displace Heidegger's German-centrism? This is another way of asking whether or not Heidegger's temporal account of the West can be used to genuinely counter the problem of European universalism. Despite himself, does Heidegger ultimately end up affirming the conventional narrative of the West? As Sean Meighoo criticizes: "In Heidegger's argument on the end of philosophy, the history of the West thus continues to bear a special mission for all humanity, a mission that is made only more poignant by its negative charge. The universal import of the history of the West is affirmed for Heidegger by the global dominance of scientific technology."[33] Is there a non-western or even decolonizing Heideggerian response? Second, given Heidegger's claim that the tragic end of the first beginning should not be resisted, it should be asked how far this urgency goes. In his *Black Notebooks*, Heidegger writes that the "great doom [*Das große Verhängnis*]" for modern humans is that submergence will be "denied [*versagt*]" (GA 96: 251/199). Furthermore, he claims that the decision facing human beings is between carrying out the "destruction [*Zerstörung*]" that intimates the "concealed beginning" or being left with sheer "devastation [*Verwüstung*]" (GA 95: 366/287; GA 96: 3/3). Thinking tragically, Heidegger's beyng-historical narrative presents an either/or which offers some form of suffering or pain. If

nihilism, and its manifestations in machinational thinking and even political violence, preserve the submergent truth of beyng, then how far do we affirm these tragic ontic consequences? Is destruction really necessary? What does this mean for the possibility of political critique in Heidegger's thought? These questions must be addressed in order to more fully explicate the task of beyng-historical thinking.

NOTES

1 This is a revised version of the second chapter from my dissertation, "Between Emergence and Submergence: On Heidegger's History of Beyng," entitled *The Tragedy of The Political: Heidegger and The German Conservative Revolution*. I want to thank the reviewers for their extensive criticisms, which greatly improved the quality of this article and my overall project. I would also like to thank my dissertation advisor, Andrew J. Mitchell, for his guidance on this project, it would not have been possible without his insight and support.

2 The "poietic" writings refer to Heidegger's non-public writings from 1936–1944: *Beiträge zur Philosophy* (*Vom Ereignis*) (GA 65), *Besinnung* (GA 66), *Die Geschichte des Seins* (GA 69), *Über den Anfang* (GA 70), *Das Ereignis* (GA 71), *Die Stege des Anfangs* (GA 72). Although in Germany these texts are usually called the "*seynsgeschichtliche Abhandlungen*," or treatises on the history of beyng, Daniela Vallega-Neu adopts the term "poietic"—Greek for "bringing forth"—to emphasize that these writings serve to bring about "the other beginning" of philosophy. See Daniela Vallega-Neu, *Heidegger's Poietic Writings: From Contributions to Philosophy to The Event* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2018), ix.

3 Heidegger appropriates the archaic spelling *Seyn* in order to distinguish it from his earlier ontological project of determining the meaning of being, *Sein*. Concerned that "being" could be rendered into a representational object (i.e., beingness), Heidegger uses "beyng" to designate a sense of the word that is tethered to the play of unconcealment and concealment and is also evental. In other words, unlike being qua beingness, beyng is something that happens, i.e., the event of appropriation. For example, Heidegger writes: "But beyng 'is' not at all; instead, it essentially occurs" (GA 65: 255/201).

4 Peter Trawny, *Freedom to Fail: Heidegger's Anarchy*, Trans. Ian Alexander Moore and Christopher Turner (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2015), 39.

5 Specifically, Goesser Assaiante and Ewegen use "submerging" for *Untergehen*.

6 Peter Trawny, *Heidegger & The Myth of a Jewish World Conspiracy*, Trans. Andrew J. Mitchell (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2015), 9.

7 Ibid., 14.

8 Heidegger is not the first to posit a linguistic-cultural affinity between the Germans and the Greeks. Fichte, for example, had claimed that the German and Greek languages had comparable "inner values" and that that both peoples were "original." Furthermore, this "myth of Greaco-Germanic affinity" was a consistent theme of 19th and early 20th century German thought, reaching its height in the Nazi identification of the Greeks as Aryans. See Johnann Gottlieb Fichte, *Addresses to The German Nation*, Trans. Isaac Nakhimosky, Béla Kapossy, and Keith Tribe (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2013), 55, 106; Charles Bambach, *Heidegger's Roots: Nietzsche, National Socialism, and The Greeks* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), 116–117; Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy, "The Nazi Myth," *Critical Inquiry* 16, No. 2 (1990), 309.

9 Péter Szondi, *An Essay on the Tragic*, Trans. Paul Fleming (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 2.

10 Ibid., 7.

11 Dennis J. Schmidt, *On Germans and Other Greeks: Tragedy and Ethical Life* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 282.

12 Quotes from *Besinnung* (GA 66) are my translations.

13 William McNeill and Julia Davis translate "Untergang" as "downgoing." I substitute this translation with "submergence."

14 This is famously stated by Aristotle in his *Metaphysics*: "It is through wonder that men now begin and originally began to philosophize." See: Aristotle, *The Metaphysics*, Trans. Hugh Tredennick (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977), 982b.

15 However, "nature" also has two other senses, which more closely relate to φύσις. First, nature means that which defines a specific being (e.g., "human nature," "the nature of a chemical," etc.). Second, the behavior of beings as a whole, the subject of physics (e.g., laws of nature). The first indirectly refers to the being of a specific being, that which makes something what it is. The second, indirectly refers to the Greek determination of φύσις as being as a whole, which would even include the behavior of artificial objects, e.g., both a hammer and a planet are subject to gravity.

16 Λανθάνειν can be translated as "forgetting." Accordingly, ἀλήθεια is the unconcealment of that which is concealed or forgotten.

17 The word κρύπτεσθαι comes from the verb κρύπτεύω, which can mean "to conceal, hide." See *A Greek-English Lexicon*, ed. Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, 8th edition (New York: American Book Company, 1901), s.v. κρύπτεύω.

18 Katherine Withey, *Heidegger on Being Self-Concealing* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022), 148.

19 Peter Hanley translates "Untergang" as "receding." I substitute this translation with "submergence."

20 I use the word "submergence" for "*Untergang*," rather than Rojcewicz's "downgoing."

21 Heidegger specifically connects submergence to death: "Death [. . .] has the character of submergence" (GA 70: 138/114, tm).

22 Peter Hanly translates "das untergängliche Denken" into "receding thinking."

23 Heidegger indicates the entanglement of submergence and nihilism in *The Event*. Here, "Abandonment by being [*Seinsverlassenheit*]" (another name for nihilism) is identical with submergence (GA 71: 78/65, tm).

24 For example, in a 1925 ad for a public lecture on Wilhelm Dilthey, Heidegger frames the need for an account of the essence of history as a response to the nihilistic and culturally relativistic approach of Spengler (GA 16: 50). Furthermore, in his 1929–1930 lecture

course, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, Heidegger diagnosed contemporary social malaise through an approving reference to Spengler: "Reduced to a formula, it [*Decline of the West*] is this: the decline of life in and through spirit. What spirit, in particular as reason, has formed and created for itself in technology, economy, in world trade, and in the entire reorganization of existence symbolized by the city, is now turning against the soul, against life, overwhelming it and forcing culture into decline and decay" (GA 29/30: 106 /70).

25 Oswald Spengler, *Der Untergang des Abendlandes: Umrisse einer Morphologie der Weltgeschichte (Vol. 1): Gestalt und Wirklichkeit* (München: C. H. Beck, 1920), 29.

26 Ibid., 218.

27 Oswald Spengler, *Der Untergang des Abendlandes: Umrisse einer Morphologie der Weltgeschichte (Vol. 2): Welthistorische Perspektiven* (München: C. H. Beck, 1922), 635.

28 Spengler's relationship with Nazism is complicated. His influence on the far-right in Germany was broad and expansive, influencing many of those involved in the Nazi party. In his 1933 text *The Hour of Decision*, Spengler explicitly mentions that he "welcomed" the "national revolution" and sought counsel with Hitler himself. However, the text also criticized National Socialism for its appeal to the mass politics and its investment in biological racism. For this reason, Alfred Rosenberg, the primary architect of Nazi ideology, came to officially reject Spengler's work. See Roger Woods, *The Conservative Revolution in the Weimar Republic* (New York: St. Martin's Press, Inc., 1996), 128–129.

29 Oswald Spengler, *Man and Technics: A Contribution to a Philosophy of Life*, trans. Charles Francis Atkinson and Michael Putman (London: Arktos, 2015), 72.

30 Ibid., 77.

31 Immanuel Wallerstein, *European Universalism: The Rhetoric of Power* (New York: New York Press, 2006).

32 Robert Bernasconi, "Heidegger and The Invention of The Western Philosophical Tradition," *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology*, Vol. 26, No. 3 (1995), 240.

33 Sean Meighoo, *The End of the West and Other Cautionary Tales* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), 68.

Heidegger's Concept of Truth: The Phenomenological Core of the Ontological Turn

Joshua Fahmy-Hooke

ABSTRACT: Despite Heidegger's efforts to distance himself from Husserl's phenomenology, the extent of his success in *Being and Time* is not immediately evident. Attentive readers not only recognize passages and concepts borrowed from the *Logical Investigations* but also notice the conspicuous absence of Husserl's name in connection with them. This article demonstrates the pervasive yet hidden influence of the *Logical Investigations* in §44 of *Being and Time*. I argue that the truncated pronouncements on truth in §44 (a) and (b) find their methodological and systematic framework from Husserl's *Fifth* and *Sixth Logical Investigations*. At the same time, Husserl's phenomenology is ontologically limited, prompting Heidegger's return to Aristotle and his unconventional reading of *Metaphysics* Θ.

KEYWORDS: Truth; unconcealment; Husserl; *Logical Investigations*; *Metaphysics* Theta.

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INTRODUCTION

The implicit and explicit belief that Edmund Husserl is Martin Heidegger's primary adversary remains a pervasive theme in the scholarly literature.[1] There are justified reasons for viewing the two thinkers as being at odds, yet their differences should not forfeit their similarities. Initially, phenomenology, as conceived in the *Logical Investigations,* provides a careful description of acts of consciousness and their correlated objects. In the 1920s, Heidegger endorses this methodology, albeit with some refinements, as indispensable for understanding the "comportment" of the "natural attitude," "historical ego," or the "ego of the situation" (GA 2: 312/SZ 362; GA 20: 131/95; GA 19: 12–14/9; GA 56/57: 205–7/179). With the discovery of intentionality and categorical intuition, Heidegger contends that Husserl disentangled the *a priori* from cognition as something purely internal and immanent to the subject (*res cogitans*); the genuine *a priori* is not merely a formalization of consciousness but is substantiated and intuited through the "consciousness of…" lived experience (GA 20: 46–47/36; GA 24: 224–5/158). For Heidegger, Husserl thus presents the operative grounding for the universal structures of *Erlebnis* without succumbing to the temptations of rationalism, psychologism, or *Lebensphilosophie.* In Heidegger's eyes, "scientific ontology is nothing but phenomenology" (GA 20: 98–99/72–73).

With the publication of *Ideas I,* Husserl insists that conscious acts uncovered through the phenomenological reduction must be considered in their purity and "stripped of everything empirical and every reference to factual existence."[2] To Heidegger's frustration, phenomenology underwent a significant shift from descriptive lived experience to a "pure science" of essences called "a new eidetics."[3] Dermot Moran suggests that "transcendental science […] requires, as Husserl insists in his Introduction to *Ideas,* '*a new way of looking at things,* far removed from the natural standpoint.'"[4] Husserl's thinking radically departs from the hallmarks that brought early success and, with it, the endorsement from Heidegger and his other students.[5] The publication of *Ideas I* and its primary focus on the transcendental ego thus marks a definite break and foregoes the possibility, at least in Heidegger's eyes, of constituting

phenomenology on the basis of lived experience (GA 20: 165/119). This shift creates a justified lacuna between the two thinkers but also leads to pernicious caricatures of their views that are retroactively projected onto their early work.

Despite Heidegger's efforts to suppress Husserl's influence, attentive readers of *Being and Time* not only recognize concepts borrowed from the *Logical Investigations* but also notice the omission of Husserl's name in connection with those concepts, many of which Heidegger had openly endorsed and attributed to Husserl in his lecture courses just a few years earlier.[6] One of the clearest examples of this occurrence is in Heidegger's lecture course *History of the Concept of Time: Prolegomena* from the Summer Semester of 1925 (GA 20). Heidegger offers an extensive account of Husserl's "decisive discoveries" of intentionality, categorial intuition, and the original sense of the *a priori*. For Heidegger, these concepts are indispensable "in their content and the way they are considered" for "time to be brought into view phenomenologically" (GA 20: 34/27). For this reason, Theodore Kisiel notes that the main part of this lecture course is considered "a phenomenological draft" of the First Division of *Being and Time* (GA 20: xvii). For our purposes here, the *Prolegomena Lectures* offer an extended treatment of Heidegger's conception of truth in relation to being (*Seiendes*) by revealing the phenomenological methodology that underlies the conclusions presented in §44 of *Being and Time*. Heidegger determines that the scholastic notion *adaequatio intellectus et rei* can be reinterpreted and thus "primordially appropriated" through the intentional and intuitive structure that unifies what is meant with what is given (i.e., phenomenon or being) (GA 2: 287–291/SZ 217–19; GA 20: 69/51).

Husserl's descriptive analysis of intentional acts in the *Fifth Investigation* determines that consciousness is always directed toward something, whether that something is real, imagined, or abstract. The general act character of any given act consists in an inseparable unity of act-quality (noesis) and act-matter (noema), determining (1) how the act is directed toward an object (e.g., perceived, imagined, remembered), and (2) what content is presented (HUA XIX/1: 425–6/119–20).[7] Through a careful

refinement of Franz Brentano's account of intentionality, Husserl offers an alternative to representational theories of knowledge that rely on a division between psychic phenomena and physical objects.[8] For Husserl, intuitions are not internal representations that mediate our access to the world but are direct experiences of transcendent objects (HUA XIX/1: 439/127; GA 2: 268–9/SZ 202–3).[9] In the *Sixth Investigation*, Husserl makes a series of important distinctions that round out the purely formal characteristics of "objectifying acts" presented in the *Fifth Investigation*. Chief among these are the notions of *empty* and *intuitive* (or *filled*) intentions (HUA XIX/2: 586/218). All intentional acts have a *telos* (τέλος) or a "tendency toward fulfillment."[10] Here, *telos* is not merely any endpoint but one essential to the identity of the specific type of act in question. When an intentional act is fulfilled, we experience how an object that was "merely thought of" (i.e., an empty intention) "shows itself" and is "intuited as being precisely the same determinate so-and-so" (HUA XIX/2: 583/216–7). In other words, the object appears in its immediate presence, given in the flesh, just as it is meant or intended, and with intuitive clarity (HUA XIX/2: 591, 604, 678–9/221–1, 232, 284–55).

It is important to note that Heidegger's endorsement of Husserl's phenomenology in the *Prolegomena Lectures* is more pronounced than in his other lecture courses. There are lecture courses given on the way to *Being and Time* in which Heidegger unequivocally intended, in many respects, to distance himself from Husserl.[11] Nevertheless, Heidegger retains two essential Husserlian insights in §44 of *Being and Time*. In §44 (a), Heidegger describes the notion of "Being-true" by employing the principled insights and the structural moments from Husserl's characterization of empty and filled intentions (GA 2: 284/SZ 214). In an interlocutory relationship, the communicability of meaning aims for the listener's empty intention to be fulfilled through the evidence (i.e., *Seiendes*) presented by the speaker. This sets the stage for Heidegger, in §44 (b), to revisit what was "pre-phenomenologically" understood in Ancient Greek thought as presence and absence (GA 2: 290/SZ 219). Heidegger introduces the concept of ἀληθεύειν, where the "truth-relation" between utterances (λόγος) and perceptual intuition brings entities out of their hiddenness (λήθη), allowing them to be seen or unconcealed

in their unhiddenness (GA 2: 290/SZ 219).[12] Heidegger's strategic reading allows for an endorsement of a phenomenological conception of truth, while also emphasizing its ontological dependency as articulated in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. In Heidegger's estimation, the phenomenon has "already" revealed itself as what it "is" (εἶδος) such that "there is truth" for λόγος to unconceal (GA 2: 298–9/SZ 226).

I: SEEING HUSSERL IN §44 *BEING AND TIME*

In §44 (a), to begin the investigation, Heidegger asks: "Let us suppose that someone with his back turned to the wall makes the true assertion that 'the picture on the wall is hanging askew'" (GA 2: 285, 288/SZ 215, 217–18). In the *Phenomenological Draft* written just a few years earlier, Heidegger, using more Husserlian language, similarly states: "I can in an empty way now think of my desk at home simply in order to talk about it" (GA 20: 66/49). Recall that, for Husserl, the object (in this case, the picture and the desk) denoted by the utterance, or the "meaning-intention," is intended but not given; it lacks "the intuitive content of a sensory perception" (HUA XIX/2: 611/236). The empty intention lacks a "fulfilling intuition" and, as such, cannot be said to exhibit a "coincidence of agreement or disagreement" between what the signitive intention expresses (or claims to express) and the object it indicates (HUA XIX/2: 566, 716f/206–8, 225f). The utterance is not *authentically* carried out but is nevertheless preserved as meaningful. Heidegger then asks the reader to consider what happens when you turn around and the picture is now present in perception (GA 2: 285/SZ 215). When your back was turned, you held an empty intention; now, facing it, that same object is perceptually given. The picture is bodily present (*leibhaftig*) and given *in propria persona,* as Husserl says (HUA XIX/1: 365/86). In this case, you observe what the statement indicates, and the object attains "full-bodied presence and intuitive fulfillment" (HUA XIX/1: 458/137).

Heidegger continues by asking, "What does one's perceiving of [the picture] demonstrate? Nothing else than that this Thing [is] the very entity which one has in mind in one's assertion" (GA 2: 288/SZ 218, em; GA 21: 101/84). Here, Heidegger is speaking in the first person and

suggesting that the perception is fulfilling what "one had in mind," that is, the meaning that was sustained by the intention in the absence of the categorial or perceptual intuition. Likewise, in Husserl's gloss, the object is 'present' or 'given', as what we intended, while nevertheless preserved when absent from our perception (HUA XIX/2: 647/260). Heidegger continues: "What comes up for confirmation is that this entity is *pointed out* by [. . .] what is put forward in the assertion; thus, what is to be confirmed is that such Being, uncovering the entity which it is" (GA 2: 289/SZ: 218). Heidegger's use of "pointing out" suggests that assertion functions as a way of revealing or uncovering the content that gives fulfillment. The *confirmation* implies the coincidence between the assertion and the "reality" of the entity. The entity is "pointed out" by the person engaging in the assertion: the act of asserting brings the entity into view or highlights its presence within the context of the state of affairs. In Husserlian terms, perception is related to our statements' sense (*Sinn*), and "the statement expresses the percept and brings out what is perceptually given" (HUA XIX/2: 551/196). The same "percept" may serve as the foundation for several statements, and while their senses may vary, they all refer to the phenomenal content of perception (HUA XIX/2: 551/196).

Heidegger states that the utterance about the picture demonstrates the "Real thing" as opposed to "mere representations" or "images" of "the thing in itself" (GA 2: 289/SZ 218). Put differently, "Representations do not get compared, either among themselves or in *relation* to the Real Thing" (GA 2: 289/SZ 218). Here, Heidegger reiterates Husserl's critique of Brentano without mentioning either by name, suggesting: "What is to be demonstrated is not an agreement of knowing [between] the psychical and the physical" nor is it an "agreement between [the] content of consciousness among themselves" (GA 2: 289/SZ 218, tm).[13] On the contrary, "in carrying out such a demonstration, the knowing remains related solely to the entity itself" (GA 2: 289/SZ 218). Heidegger ultimately superimposes this insight onto Aristotle. The basic structure of making assertions (ἀποφαίνεσθαι; λέγειν) in Greek thought indicates that the being it addresses is meaningful even when it is "not bodily present but only intended" (GA 21: 165/137). In the absence of that being, the "very same sense" of the statement entails that the being itself is intended and not

"some representation or image" that "corresponds to the absent being" (GA 21: 165/137). Heidegger provides a series of examples in *Logic* that were omitted in *Being and Time* to illustrate this point: The window, the walls, the chalkboard, the bench, and the lamp are what "my cognitive self-directedness intends" (GA 21: 100/83). When I look at the bench over there, "I do not first look first at the content of consciousness" then make a judgment or attribute value (GA 21: 100/83). When I see this lamp, "I do not apprehend sense impressions, the lamp, and the light it gives off" (GA 21: 100/83). Heidegger states, instead, "I apprehend the lamp itself" (GA 21: 100/83). Even less, Heidegger contends, do I see something like "an image in my consciousness" which I then relate to the object itself "in order thereby to slip out of my consciousness, in which I am allegedly imprisoned" (GA 21: 100/83).

When Heidegger speaks of knowing an object itself, he uses "straightforward" and "simple" examples to illustrate his endorsement of Husserl's broader conception of intentionality and intuitive fulfillment (GA 21: 124–5/103). Heidegger states: "Apprehending and having the thing itself in its bodiliness is the phenomenological definition of intuition" (GA 21: 102–3/85). When we make statements about these occurrences, we "render present the very thing intended" and "the thing intended is itself to be apprehended and understood in what it is" (GA 21: 85). For this reason, "we designate perception, where we have the thing not only 'itself' but also 'bodily,' as proper knowledge in the strict sense [….] [K]nowledge is apprehending and having the thing itself in its bodiliness" (GA 21: 102–3/85). In Heidegger's reformulation in *Being and Time*, λόγος takes part in the presentation of the being-itself so that "what is demonstrated is solely the Being-uncovered [*Entdecktsein*] of the entity itself – *that entity* in the "how" of its uncoveredness" (GA 2: 289/SZ 218). In Husserl's gloss, we could alternatively say "that the object of intuition is the same as the object of the thought which fulfills itself in itself and, where the fit is exact, that the object is seen as being exactly the same as it is thought of or (what always says the same in this context) meant" (HUA XIX/2: 567/207). Here, Husserl, like Heidegger, suggests that the same object that is thought is what is presented; there is not a likening of a representation in the subject,

which then matches the thing itself. The real object is no other object than the intentional object in the mode of givenness of intuition. Both Heidegger and Husserl are consequently trying to avoid operating within a representationalist theory of knowledge, while simultaneously attempting to "hold out" against "the separation between the real and the ideal" (GA 2: 287/SZ 217).[14] However, perhaps the most substantial insight Heidegger derives from Husserl is the identification of the thing itself as that which fulfills our intention or utterance.

II: HEIDEGGER'S PHENOMENOLOGICAL READING OF ARISTOTLE'S CONCEPTION OF Λόγος

In §44 (b), Heidegger evaluates the Greek conception of λόγος phenomenologically to assert that language "lets something be seen in discourse" (GA 2: 290/SZ 220; GA 2: 32–34/SZ: 43–46). Heidegger states: "If a λόγος [word, discourse, speech, statement] as ἀπόφανσις [statement, proposition] is to be true, its Being-true *is* ἀλήθευειν [unconcealment] in the manner of ἀποφαίνεσθαι [showing forth, making manifest]" (GA 2: 290/SZ 219).[15] Recall Heidegger's critique of Hermann Lotze: the appraisal of truth's 'actuality' (*Wirklichkeit*) said nothing about what makes the proposition true other than declaring it is valid (GA 21: 62–89).[16] Now, Heidegger states that if λόγος as a statement (ἀπόφανσις) is 'to be' true (ἀπόφανσις), that which makes it true is the revealing function it possesses (its being-true; ἀποφαίνεσθαι). The overdetermined nature of the Greek words λόγος and ἀπόφανσις makes Heidegger's conception of both terms appear to overlap. The Greek word ἀπόφανσις is derived from the verb ἀποφαίνω, meaning a "statement" or "proposition" that "reveals" or "makes manifest."[17] Λόγος is conceived by Heidegger as speech, discourse, language, which communicates meaning. However, far from a misstep, Heidegger argues that when Aristotle connects λόγος (proposition, assertion; statement) with truth, he does so by determining an assertion's "ability to be true" based on the underlying phenomenon or being (*Seiende*) it addresses (GA 21: 129/108).[18] Thus, λόγος and ἀπόφανσις are not merely synonyms for proposition or judgment, but the "showing forth," "bringing to light," or "unconcealment" of phenomena (GA 2: 298–9/SZ 226; GA 20: 110–2/81).

Heidegger interprets Aristotle's conception of truth as ἀληθεύειν, understood as bringing entities out of hiddenness. The term derives from the privative prefix ἀ-, meaning "not" or "without," and the verbal stem -λαθ-, meaning "to escape notice" or "to be concealed," related to λήθη. The entity revealed in its unhiddenness (uncoveredness) is equated with "πράγμα and φαινόμενα" (GA 2: 290/SZ 219). Here, πράγμα, Heidegger suggests, is the "thing in itself," but πράγμα also translates to "thing," "matter," or "object." Φαινόμενα means "phenomena," namely, a straightforward understanding of things that are observable and appear in the world around us. As an important qualification, Heidegger states that the "entity shows itself from itself [*von ihm selbst her*] (GA 2: 38/SZ 28). The phrase "von ihm selbst her" is translated as "from itself" or "from its own being" and conveys the idea that something originates or is determined by "what-it-is" (τί ἦν εἶναι). Heidegger expands on this notion in the *Logic* Lectures through an unconventional reading of *Metaphysics* Θ, 10 (GA 21: 170–82/143–54). [19] In the *Prolegomena* Lectures, and for our purposes here, however, Heidegger emphasizes the self-referential or self-disclosing nature of Being, where understanding or truth arises directly from the thing itself. Against this backdrop, we are in a better position to understand Heidegger's full declaration that "ἀληθεύειν "signifies [. . .] things themselves [. . .] and "*how*" they are uncovered. Λόγος as spoken truth in *relatum* to the entity is λόγος φρόζων όπως εχει (GA 2: 290–1/SZ 219). Φρόνων is the participle form of *phroneo,* which means "having an understanding" ὅπως "as," "how," or "in the manner that," ἔχει (*echei*), "it is," "it holds," or "it stands." [20] Without the constraints of English grammar: Utterances are language in the sense of having an understanding of how the being stands as it is in speech or discourse, expressing things as they are in experience.

One of the primary takeaways from this analysis is that ἀληθεύειν is not a static bivalence of truth and falsity but, for the time being, a linguistic interplay between hiddenness (λήθη) and unconcealment (ἀλήθεια).[21] Importantly, the negative dimension of concealment is not simply falsity or negation but a necessary condition for fulfillment.[22] Notice that this interplay of empty/filled, concealment/unconcealment

implies an interlocuter relationship. Intuition, in general, allows the speaker to enjoy the "indicated meaning" immediately: "It makes no difference whether they utter the words," since they are directly experiencing the perceptual intuition and recognizing it as such (HUA XIX/2: 591f/222f).[23] However, Heidegger, like Husserl, emphasizes in the 'pointing out,' 'predication,' or 'communicability' of meaning through λόγος, the empty intention (λήθη) of the listener becomes fulfilled (ἀλήθεια) by the evidence presented through the speaker (GA 2: 205–6/SZ 154). In other words, the perceived object, as it is given in intuition or perception, is signified through the use of λόγος, such that I let something be seen in discourse. When this occurs, the recognition of the object as this intuited object "directly fuses an expressive experience with the corresponding percept" (HUA XIX/2: 591/222).

Despite otherwise suggesting that the Greeks understood truth in a "pre-phenomenological manner," Heidegger interprets Aristotle more phenomenologically than he is willing to admit (GA 2: 290–1/SZ 219; GA 21: 115–6/84). To recall the previous example of the assertion "the picture on the wall is hanging askew," the speaker singles out one particular feature of the state of affairs, which could otherwise be the basis for an indefinite number of utterances. Yet, the meaning of my intentional expression does not uncover, indicate, or let the surplus of intentions come into view. On the contrary, the object of my intention, with which my utterance is meant to find coincidence and fulfillment, comes to view and nothing else (*telos*). In more Heideggerian language, we could say that the utterance uncovers a specific feature of the phenomenon in perceptual givenness by becoming aware of what was previously and unreflectively concealed. I did not notice, for example, that the picture was hanging askew, despite walking past it several times. When the speaker utters the sentence, the "empty intention is demonstrated [or fulfilled] in the state of affairs given in intuition; the original perception [had by the speaker] gives the demonstration" (GA 20: 66/49). The original perception here belongs to the speaker, and after the listener understands the sentence and turns to look at what the speaker has in mind, "what is at first only

emptily presumed in it demonstrates itself as grounded in the matter," that is, the entity is present in its intuitive content (GA 20: 67/49).

Heidegger claims that through the structure of intentionality, we speak truthfully about phenomenal objects but do not claim to know the objects apart from our experience of them. For now, the question of whether or not objects exist apart from our experience is methodologically suspended. For Husserl, the difference between a veridical perception and proof that the thing exists apart from our experience is irrelevant to phenomenology (HUA XIX/1: 460/138). In judgment, we may modify the objectifying act to assert that something is not a mere illusion, hallucination, or fiction; however, the perceptual act remains the same regardless of whether or not the object can be proven to 'truly exist' (HUA XIX/1: 321/59; HUA XIX/2: 701–2/300). For this reason, when concluding the section in the *Prolegomena* lectures on Husserl's decisive discoveries, Heidegger claims that despite the major achievements contained in the analysis of intentionality, which provides the proper field of subject matter, and in intuition, which constitutes its mode of apprehension, this approach has not brought us to a "happy ending" (GA 20: 109–110/79). Instead, by following the directive "to the matters themselves," we are led back to the task of philosophy since Plato, that is, to return to "its true ground, inasmuch as it now makes it possible to carry out research into the categories [i.e., being]" (GA 20: 109–110/79).

III: THE BEING PRESUPPOSED BY Λόγος

In the preceding analysis, Heidegger argues that Being-true (ἀλήθεια) occurs when λόγος gives expression to immanent intentional acts by "pointing out," thereby revealing, uncovering, or bringing to presence what was previously concealed or unthematic (GA 2: 290/SZ 219). The empty intention, or the "entity itself which one has in mind," is intuitively given (fulfilled) *in propria persona*, or gets uncovered "in its self-sameness," successfully or adequately (GA 2: 289/SZ 218; HUA XIX/1: 365/86). The phenomenon "itself" plays an indispensable role in this achievement because it illuminates or fulfills the intention (GA 20: 78/58, 91/67; HUA XIX/2: 590/22). Where the phenomenon is lacking, adequate

fulfillment cannot occur, and the presumed *x* may fail to coincide with the intuited *x*. For Heidegger, the merit of Husserl's account, therefore, lies in its methodological conception of consciousness as a "directedness-toward-something," characterized by a "tendency toward fulfillment" (GA 21: 107–108/88–89).

Although Husserl's phenomenological descriptions serve as the primary point of contact in the development of Heidegger's conception of truth, his approach remains limited by its relative silence on the ontological nature of objects or phenomena. Husserl does not conceive of being beyond the taxonomic rank of objects and their corresponding degrees of evidence (e.g., ideal, real, or categorial) (HUA XIX/2: §38f). At best, the object exhibits "ideal fullness" (*wahrmachender*) for an intention, making it true.[24] This limitation is precisely what Daniel Dahlstrom identifies as the "double-edged character of Heidegger's remarks about Husserl's thinking."[25] On the one hand, Heidegger credits Husserl with explaining "how propositional truth as the correctness of a judgment presupposes truth in the sense of the perceived identity of what is meant with what is intuited."[26] On the other hand, Husserl's account is vulnerable to the same critique that Heidegger leveled against Lotze (GA 2: 206–7, 286/SZ 156; GA 20: 45–6/35; GA 21: 101/84).[27] Husserl shares Lotze's error of assuming that the static identity of phenomena constitutes the primary meaning of being.[28] Charitably, this assumption maintains that objects or states of affairs are *Vorhandensein*, awaiting cognition. Husserl's phenomenology, therefore, ultimately only "brushes up against the question of being" and fails to take the necessary steps to reflect on the consequences of its ontological presuppositions (GA 15: 373–8). As a result, Heidegger's inquiry into truth shifts from "transcendence in immanence" to genuine transcendence, that is, from phenomenology to ontology.[29]

Against the backdrop of *Metaphysics* Θ, Heidegger turns to the "authentic Greek notion of οὐσία," understood as presencing (*Anwesen*, *Gegenwärtigen*), to address the ontological questions left unanswered in Husserl's phenomenology (GA 21: 170–1/143). In Heidegger's eyes, Aristotle's dynamic understanding of *presencing*, rooted in ἀλήθεια, challenges and modifies Husserl's assumption of self-evident givenness

(*Selbstverständlichkeit*). From *Metaphysics*, Heidegger identifies two interconnected claims that mark "the pinnacle of the investigation" and allow ἀληθές (truth) to reach its "full and proper determination" (GA 21: 179/152). First, when considered ontologically, unconcealment is the self-showing of essence. Every being (*Seiendes*) has a constitution of its own Being (*Sein*) that determines "what-it-is" (τί ἦν εἶναι). In other words, a being's Being has a "what" (*Was*), from which everything it is derives its origin (GA 21: 179/152). Second, Heidegger explains that our access to Being occurs through θιγεῖν (touch) and simple νοεῖν (recognition). Λόγος is always directed toward (αἴσθησις) the immediate grasp (θιγεῖν) of Being or essence (εἶδος). Even propositional falsity, or "being deceived," presupposes an *a priori* understanding of the Being possessed by the entity in question (GA 21: 183/154). This means that unconcealment, or the *presencing* of being, is "already" operative in every intentional act and in every instance of addressing something *as something* (GA 21: 176/149).[30]

For Aristotle, composite beings are constituted by form (μορφή or εἶδος) and matter (ὕλη): their essence (οὐσία) is unified through actuality (form) and potentiality (matter).[31] The form provides identity, while the matter offers the potential for that form to be realized. Composite beings are subject to change and can undergo διαίρεσις (division) or σύνθεσις (synthesis).[32] As a result, "the same opinion or the same statement can be true at one time and false at another."[33] For composite beings, falsity is characterized as non-being, either through privation (the absence of a quality or state that a thing could possess), potentiality (the unrealized potential of something), or negation (the logical absence or contradiction of a proposition).[34] Conversely, incomposite beings are ontologically simple, fully actualized, and incapable of change; therefore, "opinions" concerning them do not admit temporal variability in their truth-value.[35] If the object exists, it exists (being) in a particular way. If it does not exist (non-being) in this way, it does not exist at all. Non-being, in this case, means pure non-existence (absolute absence of being). Falsity, therefore, is never the counterpart to an incomposite being, nor is error. Instead, Heidegger claims that non-being is characterized by Aristotle

as a total absence of thinking and "being in contact with…" (GA 21: 177/149).[36] In short, incomposite beings cannot be otherwise (ἀδύνατα ἄλλως ἔχειν), and that which always exists (ἀεί ὄν) cannot be false; it can only be apprehended or non-apprehended.[37]

Heidegger argues that when Aristotle speaks of ἀλήθεια as unconcealment, he retains the kind of access used to apprehend *incomposite beings* (ἀσύνθετα) (GA 21: 181–2/153). Heidegger is quick to note that Aristotle's "flexible expression" θιγγάνων (touching) is used to capture several ways the intellect functions (GA 21: 181/153). To be sure, θιγγάνων is not an "actual touching or seeing" but the act of intellectual apprehension, whereby "knowledge in activity" is the same as its object.[38] To substantiate his interpretation, Heidegger cites *Metaphysics* IX 1052a1, where Aristotle classifies apprehension as akin to νοεῖν (thinking), or the act of intellectual apprehension of the νοητικόν (knowable). Further, in *Metaphysics* XII 1072b21, Heidegger finds that θιγγάνειν (touching) is καὶ νοεῖν (knowing). Its counterpart, in *Metaphysics* XII 1051b25, is μὴ θιγγάνειν (not touching), which, as ἀγνοεῖν (not knowing), denotes ἄγνοια (ignorance as the total absence of thinking). In *De Anima* II.2, Aristotle also uses the words ἁφή (touch) and αἴσθησις (sense perception) to indicate the same kind of receptivity, whereby "the faculty of sense receives the sensible forms without the matter."[39]

For Heidegger, the decisive mark in these citations is that beings which are unconcealed in seeing and touching are "had directly in and of themselves" (GA 21: 181/153). Heidegger reads Aristotle as suggesting that "being in and of itself" means essence, and that essence is incomposite: therefore, Being = essence = the truth of beings cannot be composite.[40] Heidegger states that "[Unconcelament] of a being that in and of itself is not composed therefore offers no possibility of seeing anything else in the being other than that being's Being" (GA 21: 180/152, tm). Unconcealment offers no possibility of focusing on something else in the being or of showing the being in terms of something else (i.e., its predicates). Rather, the form of Being is manifest in and of itself. What follows from this kind of seeing and touching is speaking (φάναι), making something which is "already had" apparent (δηλοῦν). For Heidegger, therefore, despite

Aristotle typically reserving θιγγάνων for incomposite beings, if truth is understood through essence (the form of an object), then θιγγάνων, in its "most primary and authentic sense," transcends its exclusivity to incomposite beings and methodologically points toward the essence of truth in all phenomena, including composite beings (GA 21: 181/153).

While we may speculate about Heidegger's motivations for presenting Aristotle in this unconventional way, it is only in the final pages of Part 1 of the *Logic* lectures that his philosophical ambitions become clear (GA 21: 191–5/161–6). Heidegger finds in Aristotle the same distortion he creates when reading Husserl's four senses of truth in Chapter 5 of the *Sixth Investigation*, titled "The Ideal of Adequation: Evidence and Truth" (GA 2: 289/SZ 218; GA 20: 69f/51f; HUA XIX/2: §36–9/259f).[41] Heidegger claims that Husserl's first sense of being-true is *experienced* as evidence (*Evidenz*) (HUA XIX/2: 651–2/264). Consequently, what Heidegger calls "being-in-touch-with-the-subject-matter" (*Bei-der-Sache-sein*) constitutes the unthematic performance of intentionality and intuition, wherein what is immediately and transparently experienced is identified as true (GA 20: 70/52). [42] Heidegger then reads Husserl's fourth concept of truth (the correctness of an assertion) as an intentional act that takes the "operative a priori" and makes truth a thematic object (GA 20: 70/52).[43] Likewise, when reading Aristotle, Heidegger asserts that the essence of a being is unconcealed and continues to be present and tacitly retained, allowing it to be pointed out and determined through λόγος when needed. In other words, we can bring an object, attribute, or interpretation into relief only if we continue to have it present in an unthematic way. For example, we assert that "the book is open" only on the basis of the continuous and unreflective possession of its "what-it-is" (τί ἦν εἶναι) – which, importantly, cannot be attained simply by nominalization or abstraction but instead involves "a straightforward having" (θιγγάνειν) (GA 21: 189–90/159–60; GA 2: 44f, 298–9/SZ 33f, 266).[44]

Heidegger's strategic reading of both thinkers allows for a phenomenological interpretation of the Ancient Greek concept of λόγος, while also addressing Husserl's ontological limitations by returning to Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. From the analysis developed in this article, we are better

positioned to understand Heidegger's conclusion about "the double possibility of λόγος" in the final paragraphs of §44 (b). Here, Heidegger adheres to the phenomenological characterization of λόγος outlined in Section I of this article, suggesting that "the Being-true of the λόγος is that way of comporting oneself to uncover or cover over entities" (GA 2: 298–9/SZ 266). Heidegger further incorporates insights from the *Logic* lectures on *Metaphysics*, claiming that since "Aristotle never upheld the [conventional] thesis" of truth at the level of the assertion, we can "broaden the conception of truth in λόγος to include pure νοεῖν" (GA 2: 298–9/SZ 266). Heidegger argues that λόγος stems from "the truth of seeing [αἰσθήσεις; θιγγάνειν] of ideas [εἶδος] as the primordial kind of unconcealment" (GA 2: 298–9/SZ 266, tm). Only because νοεῖν primarily unconceals can λόγος also have unconcealing as its function. From this analysis, Heidegger concludes that the occurrence of truth is neither "an arbitrary or private invention" based on judgment, nor exclusively something present-at-hand (*Vorhandenheit*). Instead, the inquiry into truth is brought back to "the ontological condition for the possibility that assertions can be either true or false, that they may uncover or cover things up" (GA 2: 299/SZ 226).[45]

NOTES

1 The contrast between these thinkers often exemplifies a core theme in contemporary phenomenology: the difference between embodied, lived-world experience and reflective self-consciousness. For the sake of space, an exhaustive list of sources cannot be provided here. To name a few, see Dan Zahavi's *Subjectivity and Selfhood* (MIT Press, 2008); Nancy J. Holland's *Heidegger and the Problem of Consciousness* (Indiana University Press, 2018); Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann's *Hermeneutics and Reflection*, trans. Kenneth Maly (University of Toronto Press, 2013); Carl Friedrich Gethmann, "Zu Heideggers Wahrheitsbegriff," *Kant-Studien* 65, no. 2 (1974): 186–200. I showed the limitations of "Heidegger's pragmatism" in Joshua Fahmy-Hooke, "Martin Heidegger's Concept of Understanding (*Verstehen*)," *Analecta Hermeneutica* 15 (2023).

2 Edmund Husserl, *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie. Erstes Buch: Allgemeine Einführung in die reine Phänomenologie*, ed. Karl Schuhmann, *Husserliana: Edmund Husserl – Gesammelte Werke*, vol. III/1 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1977), §34 / 61, tm

3 Dermot Moran, foreword to *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*, by Edmund Husserl, trans. W. R. Boyce Gibson (London: Routledge, 2012), xvi.

4 Dermot Moran, "Edith Stein's Encounter with Edmund Husserl and Her Phenomenology of the Person," in *Empathy, Sociality, and Personhood: Essays on Edith Stein's Phenomenological Investigations*, ed. Dermot Moran and Elisa Magri (Cham: Springer, 2017), 34.

5 Especially noteworthy are members of the so-called "Munich and Göttingen circles." Edith Stein often refers to the "ominous sentence" in §49 of *Ideas I*: "Streichen wir das Bewußtsein, so streichen wir die Welt." Edith Stein, *Freiheit und Gnade und weitere Beiträge zur Phänomenologie und Ontologie (1917–1937)*, ed. Beate Beckmann-Zöller and Hans Rainer Sepp, *Edith Stein Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 9 (Freiburg: Herder, 2014), 89. Roman

Ingarden recalls that Husserl frequently intoned this dictum in his Göttingen lectures. Roman Ingarden, *On the Motives Which Led Edmund Husserl to Transcendental Idealism*, trans. Arnór Hannibalsson (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1975), 21.

6 For example, GA 20, GA 21, GA 24, and after *Being and Time*, in GA 26 and GA 29/30.

7 Edmund Husserl, *Logische Untersuchungen. Zweiter Band: Erster Teil. Untersuchungen zur Phänomenologie und Theorie der Erkenntnis*, hrsg. von Ursula Panzer, Husserliana XIX/1 (Dordrecht: Springer, 1984); *Zweiter Band: Zweiter Teil. Texte für die Neufassung der VI. Untersuchung: Zur Phänomenologie des Ausdrucks und der Erkenntnis (1893/94–1921)*, hrsg. von Ullrich Melle, Husserliana XIX/2 (Dordrecht: Springer, 2005).; *Logical Investigations*, vol. 2, trans. J. N. Findlay, ed. with a new introduction by Dermot Moran (London and New York: Routledge, 2001). Hereafter, HUA XIX/1 or XIX/2 with German / English pagination, or paragraph numbers where applicable.

8 See, Heinrich Rickert, "Die Methode der Philosophie und das Unmittelbare. Eine Problemstellung," *Logos* 12 (1923/24): 242, quoted in Martin Heidegger, *History of the Concept of Time* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009), 28.

9 See, Yuichi Tomiyama, "On the Transcendence and Reality of Husserlian Objects," in *New Phenomenological Studies in Japan*, ed. Nicolas de Warren and Saulius Taguchi, Contributions to Phenomenology, vol. 101 (Cham: Springer, 2019) 45–56. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-11893-8_4; John Drummond and Dan Zahavi, "Husserl's Legacy: Phenomenology, Metaphysics, and Transcendental Philosophy," *Husserl Studies* 35 (2019): 265–273, https://doi.org/10.1007/s10743-019-09241-x.

10 Rudolf Bernet, "Perception, Categorial Intuition and Truth in Husserl's Sixth 'Logical Investigation'" in *The Collegium Phaenomenologicum: The First Ten Years* (Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 1988), 34.

11 Most notably, GA 17: Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Phenomenological Research*, trans. Daniel O. Dahlstrom, (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2005).

12 For a note on the phraseology I am using here and the three meanings of ἀλήθεια, see Thomas Sheehan, *Making Sense of Heidegger: A Paradigm Shift* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), 71f. I am addressing *Entdecktheit / Unverborgenheit* (the discoveredness of things). Ἀλήθεια encompasses at least both meanings, but it is helpful, drawing on an indication from *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, to use ἀληθεύειν instead of ἀλήθεια to refer to the human act of apprehension (*Vernehmen*) (GA 24: 102/72, 266–9/188–9, 305–7/215, 309/217). Ἀληθεύειν is the verb form of ἀλήθεια, meaning "to speak the truth" or "to disclose." It refers to the act or process of revealing or unconcealing.

13 Like Brentano, Heidegger states that the 'epistemological' problematic for Lotze is to "regard the subject-object relation as restrictive to the "interpreting the 'immanent consciousness of truth,' and thus remain 'within the sphere' of the subject (GA 2: 286/SZ 216). Lotze was forced to "distinguish between the judging as a *Real* psychical process, and that which is judged, as an *ideal* content (GA 2: 207, 286/SZ 156, 216). For Lotze, "it will be said of the latter that it is "true" (GA 2: 286/SZ 216).

14 The theory of objective validity in Marburg's Neo-Kantian epistemology of the nineteenth-century thus aimed to address the "methodologically naïve realism" of *adaequatio rei et intellectus* (GA 21: 285/SZ 215). Neo-Kantianism and all prevalent philosophy in Germany continued their inquiry into truth along these lines. Philosophy came to orient itself toward the validity of theoretical knowing as that which constitutes the truth of the theoretical proposition, namely, the assertion. This was a result of the solution to the *Psychologismus-Streit* presented by Hermann Lotze.

15 Aristotle. *De Interpretatione*. In *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, vol. 1, edited by Jonathan Barnes, translated by J.L. Ackrill, Princeton University Press, 1984, 17a1–5.

16 See, Joshua Fahmy-Hooke, "Heidegger's Critical Confrontation with the Concept of Truth as Validity," *Open Philosophy* 7, no. 1 (2024): 20240054. https://doi.org/10.1515/opphil-2024-0054https://doi.org/10.1515/opphil-2024-0054

17 Thomas Sheehan, "Hermeneia and Apophansis: The Early Heidegger on Aristotle," in *Heidegger et idée de la phénoménologie*, ed. Franco Volpi et al. (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1988), 67-80.

18 Aristotle, *De Interpretatione,* §13f.

19 Anticipating Section III, this conceptualization of Being closely aligned with the "authentic Greek notion of οὐσία," or presencing (*Anwesen; Gegenwärtigen*), and answers the primordial questions of how a "being is uncoverable," how "something is encountered at all," and what it means for something to be in general (GA 21: 170–1f/143f; GA 15: 76–77/43). See Daniel Dahlstrom, *Heidegger's Concept of Truth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 177.

20 Heidegger states: If by "that which shows itself" we understand those entities which are accessible through the empirical "intuition" in, let us say, Kant's sense, then the formal conception of "phenomenon" will indeed be legitimately employed. In this usage "phenomenon" has the signification of the *ordinary* conception of phenomenon [. . .] If, however, the phenomenological conception of phenomenon is to be understood at all, regardless of how much closer we may come to determining the nature of that which shows itself, this presupposes inevitably that we must have an insight into the meaning of the formal conception of phenomenon and its legitimate employment in an ordinary signification (GA 2: 41/SZ 34).

21 The analogy of light—*relucence*—is frequently employed by Heidegger. The middle voice φαίνεσθαι (to appear) is derived from φαίνω (to bring to light, to make visible in itself, to place in a bright light). Φαίνω has the stem φα—φῶς (light, brightness), that in which something can become manifest or visible in itself. We shall adhere to this meaning of *phenomenon*: φαινόμενον (that which shows itself). The φαινόμενα (things that show

themselves) constitute the totality of what is manifest, what the Greeks also simply identified with τὰ ὄντα (beings, entities) (GA 20: 110-112/81).

22 See, GA 20: 110-115/81–3.

23 Heidegger takes this up hermeneutically in his analysis of interpretation, stating what is carried out primordially is not a theoretical statement but in an action of circumspective concern—laying aside the unsuitable tool, or exchanging it, "without wasting words [...] From the fact that words are absent, it may not be concluded that interpretation is absent" (GA 2: 208/SZ 157–9).

24 Notice the term *wahrmachender*, as "more truthful" is akin to Lotze's conclusion that an assertion is valid when it is 'actually true.' Lotze's conception here renders to how we colloquially speak, e.g., "I believe that's actually true."

25 Dahlstrom, *Heidegger's Concept of Truth*, 176

26 Dahlstrom, *Heidegger's Concept of Truth*, 176

27 I explain this critique in full in Joshua Fahmy-Hooke, "Heidegger's Critical Confrontation with the Concept of Truth as Validity" *Open Philosophy* 7, no. 1 (2024): 20240054. https://doi.org/10.1515/opphil-2024-0054https://doi.org/10.1515/opphil-2024-0054

28 Fahmy-Hooke, "Heidegger's Critical Confrontation with the Concept of Truth as Validity," 6–8.

29 Steven G. Crowell, *Husserl, Heidegger, and the Space of Meaning: Paths Toward Transcendental Phenomenology* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2001), 41, fn 14.

30 In the *Logic Lectures*, Heidegger's use of unconcealment, for the most part, refers to the apprehension of essence (εἶδος), but at times also means the sheer manifestation of phenomena. Nevertheless, Heidegger maintains that without unconcealment in either sense, the σύνθεσις (synthesis) or διαίρεσις (division) of form and matter, expressed as subject and predicate in λόγος, cannot occur.

31 Aristotle, *Metaphysics* IX, 8, 1050a10-12; 7.4, 1032a28-30; 7.17, 1035b25-28; *Physics* 2.3, 194a14-18.

32 Aristotle, *De Interpretatione*, 1of. For example, "This chalkboard is black" is a synthetic proposition that is true. "Black," or "is-black," is synthesized with "chalkboard," and because the proposition synthesizes the two, the assertion is itself true. Conversely, "This chalkboard is not black" is a divided or separated proposition (διῃρημένος). The word "not" separates the predicate "blackness" from the subject "chalkboard," and this separation results in the assertion being false.

33 Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, IX, 10, 15, tm.

34 Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Book IV, 1005b19–1006a12; Book IX, 1046a29–1046b5, 1049b5–1050a3.

35 Given Heidegger's strategic reading, he has little to say about incorporeal substances (e.g., the unmoved mover, the soul, or mathematical objects). Aristotle, *Metaphysics* IX 8, 1050a10-12; 7.4, 1032a28-30; 7.17, 1035b25-28; *Physics* 2.3, 194a14-18. Also make notice that Heidegger is retaining Aristotle's repeated use of "opinions" in *Metaphysics* with strategic rhetoric to downplay the role of language and prioritize the concept of being. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, IX, 10, 15.

36 Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, IX, 1052a1.

37 Heidegger occasionally cites *De Anima* to make this claim (for example, *De Anima* III, 430a26–430b5). To be charitable to Heidegger, despite his unconventional reading of Aristotle, he is merely asserting that the truth about beings is conditionally a priori.

38 Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, XII.7, 1072a25-30.

39 *De Anima* III.2, 425b25-426a1.

40 Following this seemingly unjustified pronouncement, Heidegger recalls his early critique of the conventional reading, which maintains propositions as the essence of truth. If truth as unconcealment is incomposite because it reveals essence or form (i.e., is not synthesized), then propositional truth, which is always synthesized through the copula, cannot be the essence of truth. Heidegger concedes that the idea of being as a synthesis is useful

for speaking about beings, yet he argues that it is inadequate for determining their essence or their truth.

41 In his reformulation of *adaequatio rei et intellectus*, ideal adequacy is an intentional experience that gives the object or state of affairs in 'complete fullness' The *intellectus* is the intention of meaning, and *adaequatio* occurs when the object is given exactly as it is meant and named (HUA XIX/2: 653–4/265; SZ 217–19 / 260–63).

42 See Chad Kidd, "Husserl's Phenomenological Theory of Intuition," in *Rational Intuition: Philosophical Roots, Scientific Investigations*, ed. Lisa M. Osbeck, Barbara S. Held (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 142. This is a primary point of contact I use in my response to Tugendhat's critique of Heidegger.

43 This intelligibility is not yet the truth of correspondence. Something is taken as *meaning something*; This is patent of intentionality (GA 20: 37–9/30).

44 Dahlstrom, *Heidegger's Concept of Truth*, 217.

45 A related but separate article, "Husserl's Logical Investigations and the Problem of Truth: A Response to Tugendhat's Critique of Heidegger," is currently in development. While there is some overlap in the treatment of §44 of *Being and Time* and its relation to Husserl, that article develops a defense of Heidegger's theory of truth through Husserl's concept of evidence. The present article examines the historical-philosophical relationship between Heidegger, Husserl, and Aristotle, focusing on the influence and limitations of the *Logical Investigations*. Although both studies address phenomenological conceptions of truth in *Being and Time*, they differ in scope and intended audience.

BOOK FORUM

Dialogue on the Threshold: Heidegger and Trakl

by Ian Alexander Moore

COMMENTERS:
Katherine Davies
Alberto Moreiras
John Rose

Gatherings: The Heidegger Circle Annual 15 (2025): 201–54

A Question (Un)Concerned with the Feminine

Katherine Davies

In a "first of its kind"[1] volume in "English, French or German,"[2] Ian Alexander Moore's *Dialogue on the Threshold: Heidegger and Trakl* stages a variety of scenes in which philosophy and poetry are locked in a struggle for dominance – over the meanings of words, over religion, and over politics, to name some of these agonistic domains. Moore names such combat "dialogue," and the theoretical and spiritual warfare it composes animates nearly every page of his monograph. Across seven chapters, Moore first offers historiographical context depicting the opulent sociality that motivated Heidegger's initial public engagement with the poet and then opens philosophical sites of various "productive and problematic tensions that pervade Heidegger's reading of Trakl."[3] Despite their localizations within Heidegger's engagements with the poet, the *topoi* Moore motivates in his book will provoke every Heidegger scholar to reconsider the stakes of Heidegger's sense of philosophy, of poetry, and (especially) of politics.

Beyond the monograph proper, Moore includes four appendices (constituting nearly one hundred pages) that provide unprecedented access to a variety of sources, including Heidegger's annotated copies of the Zurich and Salzburg editions of Trakl's *Die Dichtungen* among other scholarly boons. These appendices offer an overview of "Heidegger's Trakl Marginalia,"[4] a collection of "Heidegger's Occasional References to Trakl"[5] between 1950 and 1972, a mapping of Heidegger's often uncited "References to Trakl's Works in 'Language in the Poem',"[6] and finally a selection of eighteen particularly relevant and newly translated "Poems by Georg Trakl." This compendium offers a veritable treasure-trove for probing Heidegger's relation to Trakl further. But even more significant is the rich philosophical and poetic analyses

Moore provides in his pathbreaking book, including developments in Heidegger's thinking of "sexual difference, pain, and madness, … [and the blurred] boundaries between the animal and the human"[7] among many other topics.

With his titular invocation of "dialogue," Moore seems to invite us to consider whether – and on what terms – any meaningful exchange between these two figures unfolds. On a cursory reading, one might conclude that Moore shows just how *little* of Trakl Heidegger seems to have understood. Instancing a dynamic perhaps all too familiar to readers of Heidegger's readings of other significant intellectual figures, Moore may be demonstrating yet again how the philosopher offers a painfully "selective reading"[8] that seems to compel this poet to speak against himself whenever Trakl is made to speak in Heidegger's voice. Moore illustrates many moments in which it seems Heidegger forcefully recasts Trakl – for instance, the Christian redemptive thrust of "A Winter Evening," elisions of incest in "Springtime of the Soul," and a Hölderlin-izing of "Gródek." And yet this "violent"[9] mediation of Trakl's "saying," which Heidegger "sounds," is called by Moore "dialogue."

In the *Country Path Conversations*, Heidegger takes great pains to distinguish between dialogue (*Dialog*) and conversation (*Gespräch*): *Dialog* is "about something and between speakers" – wedded to a metaphysical object by subjects – where a *Gespräch* waits for that of which the speakers would speak to emerge and thereby to transform *who* they are so that they could begin to speak of *what* it may be beyond the strict confines of metaphysics (GA 77: 57/37). In his readings, Heidegger certainly seems to set out an "object" for us through his reductive portrayal of Trakl's poetizing and speaks *about* it in "dialogue" with a tailored version of Trakl Heidegger produces as his subjective interlocutor. Indeed, it appears that Heidegger may still rather be caught up in thinking with Hölderlin – holding on to the dream of the western land of evening (*Abend-Land*) of a secret Germany yet to come – not bothering to notice that the author of the works to which he now turns is someone else entirely.

I wonder if Moore is suggesting, at least in some sense, that Heidegger is still reading (his) Hölderlin, even though he quotes lines from Trakl. If so, might this further suggest a (political) *ethos* underlying Heidegger's poetic reading practices? Heidegger may claim that Trakl only writes "one poem," but may it rather be that Heidegger is pursuing "one thought" by any and all (poetic) means?[10] Is Heidegger – at least in his readings of poetry, if not in his thinking of poetizing as such – on the hunt for a particular political argument that he finds ways to contort his subject(s) into (un)saying?

On Heidegger's own account, dialogue forecloses the possibility of conversation – of a speaking *of* that which is already both arriving and departing with others who are always not yet who they may become. Yet while he makes the case that Heidegger set the stage for a thoroughly metaphysical dialogue with Trakl, Moore nevertheless sets out to rescue this poet from the elision he suffers in Heidegger's work, perhaps to rehabilitate the possibility of a genuine conversation between these figures. *Dialogue on the Threshold* offers its readers a plethora of invitations to continue – or simply to begin – a conversation between Heidegger and Trakl on a wide variety of topics. I regret that I will only be able to raise several of them here.

One of the elements Moore touches upon at several points in his book is the question of gender for Heidegger at this time, specifically configured by femininity, sorority, and maternity.[11] In his chapter six – devoted to the topic of *Geschlecht* in the Trakl writings – Moore highlights the possible meanings of this multifaceted German term. For his part, Heidegger reads Trakl's use of *Geschlecht* as naming the "decaying shape" of the human, which nevertheless offers the "promise" of a "unification of 'the *Geschlechter*. . .'."[12] Moore comments, "*Geschlecht* as race or *Geschlecht* as sex? Even Heidegger, it appears, cannot decide on a focal meaning or core-dependent homonymy."[13] Carefully tracing "edits" Heidegger made to Trakl's work in his marginalia, Moore shows that Heidegger privileges its masculine dimensions: "in Heidegger's reading, it is *he,* the masculine singular one, who leads the way. The sister, the feminine as such, remains secondary – when, that is, she is

not silenced altogether."[14] Though the sister is a significant and frequent figure for Trakl, as Moore demonstrates throughout his book, Heidegger largely ignores her. Moore notes that in a form of "stereotypical subordination,"[15] Heidegger marks the sister as the Beauvoirian "second" or (in German translation) the "other sex."[16]

Yet, this is not the first time that Heidegger has (not) written about sisters. In the *Ister* lectures, Heidegger develops a greatly expanded reading[17] of Sophocles' *Antigone*. Distinguishing this later reading from his brief engagement in *Introduction to Metaphysics,* Heidegger writes that he wants to hear properly "a word from Antigone herself" (GA 53: 116/93) and he endeavors to hear this word in the context of the introductory exchange (*Zwiesprache*) between the sisters Antigone and Ismene. Though he will later call Antigone "the purest poem" (GA 53: 149/119), his attempt to listen to the feminine word she speaks to her sister seems only legible to Heidegger through the larger rubric of the *Zwiesprache* between Hölderlin and Sophocles that structures the larger lecture course. His Trakl readings are not the first time Heidegger effectively abandons the sister to (poetic) silence to bolster such a (masculine) exchange. As Moore also demonstrates, Heidegger repeatedly connects the feminine *Geschlecht* with twilight, the lunar, and nocturnality, following Trakl's lead.[18] This too has earlier precedent in Heidegger's work. At the ending of the 1945 "Triadic Conversation," the characters conclude by collaboratively poetizing[19] the "night" as the "seamstress [*Näherin*] who brings near [*nähert*], so that one star next to the other gleams in silent light" (GA 77: 156/102). If poetizing and non-metaphysical thinking find their affinities in nocturnal silence, it seems that for Heidegger the "threshold" of this gathering may very well be the erasure of the question of the feminine.

This elision of feminized forms of relationality extends beyond Heidegger's marginalia and "Language in the Poem." It is also found in "Language" ("*Die Sprache*"), perhaps Heidegger's most well-known essay that may (or may not) be construed as "on" Trakl's work. Moore devotes several chapters to unfolding the significance of this lecture in its multiple versions. In his chapter two entitled "Language of Bread

and Wine," in the wake of Heidegger's own insistent affirmation, Moore asks, "if…it is not Trakl but language itself that speaks in the poem 'Ein Winterabend' ('A Winter Evening'), what, precisely, does it say, and particularly what does it say about bread and wine?"[20] Moore flags the "maternal language"[21] of the lecture in its reference to child bearing, gestation, and delivery. However, Moore's scholarly contribution centers his Derridean-oriented interrogation of Heidegger's essay for its blatant erasure of Trakl's poetic Christian influences and aspirations – including the "figure of the sister" who, Moore writes, "is not merely a symbol for Christ, but actually seems to merge with him."[22] In the wake of offering a criticism of Heidegger's insistence that "being" directs Trakl's poetry rather than "faith,"[23] Moore writes, "*Wozu Gedichte?* What are poems for? Trakl's answer, which comes in the form of a rare programmatic statement, written in Trakl's own hand, situates – I use this word intentionally – it *situates* Trakl's own poetic activity in the religious context of iniquity and redemption."[24] This merits Moore's own masterful and distinct re-reading of Trakl's poem away from Heidegger's, which emphasizes "the Bible as its point of departure" rather than "Heidegger's interpretation."[25] Such a decision on Moore's part to declare a Heideggerian independence of sorts may underscore the "dialogical" dimensions of this pairing, elucidating how Heidegger seems to construct what this poem is "about" in advance of his interpretation. Moore's decision to move outside of the Heideggerian orbit here seems also to suggest Moore may find that if Heidegger had intended to set out to engage in a thinking "conversation" with Trakl's poetizing, such a venture was without substantial yield.

For Moore, the "threshold" of this deficient "dialogue" appears to be the question of faith in general and Christianity in particular. This divides Heidegger and Trakl and demarcates the "pain" Moore uncovers that may attend both to Heidegger's violent appropriation of this poet's work and his concomitant disavowal of religion for thinking and poetizing being. And yet, I wonder if there isn't another threshold Moore is pointing us toward here, one related to femininity in its various configurations. In his third chapter, Moore raises the question of

love (and the failure to love) in Heidegger's thinking of detachment as essential to Trakl's poetizing. If Heidegger's love of this poet remains "metaphysical"[26] as Moore suggests, might we expect to find variations of his ostensibly monogamous ontological love of being formally indicated in his polyamorous ontic relationships with women?

Some of his personal letters may demonstrate just this. In writing to Arendt in 1925, Heidegger attempts to dissuade this future major intellectual figure from engaging in philosophy because of her femininity, or rather, the effect her femininity has on *him*. He urges her to eschew "the terrible solitude of academic research, which only man can endure" so that she can "be happy" and as such "become a woman who can give happiness, and around whom all is happiness…." As Heidegger underscores "I cannot and do not want to separate your loyal eyes and dear figure from your pure trust, the honor and goodness of your girlish essence."[27] For Heidegger, the 'threshold' that solidified his sustained refusal to read and engage with Arendt's work may be this "girlish essence" that instead should be proffered to him to make the terrible burden of male intellectual life a little easier. Similarly, in a letter to his wife written on the occasion that Elfride discovered his affair with Arendt in 1950, Heidegger describes the "painful happiness" of their marriage and her "inner belonging to my path" (but not the reverse), aligning her with "Hera and Eros" and "the Mother," who bring him "home safely…where I fail too easily & then either stray into pure sensuality or try to force the unforceable through sheer work."[28] In both of these instances, Heidegger plays on different stereotypes of femininity, subordinating both to the masculine project of thinking.

Yet, a careful reading of his corpus reveals many feminine and feminized aspects, which are often aligned with poetizing and the poetic. In chapter six, Moore returns to "*Die Sprache*" and highlights the maternal elements of much of the language Heidegger himself relies on to let language speak of its own accord. Moore asks, "Might *die Sprache* (the feminine noun for language) be speaking *herself* in Heidegger's emplacement?"[29] In raising this question, Moore follows Shane Ewegen's earlier consideration of this issue. In "Gestures of the

Feminine in Heidegger's 'Die Sprache,'" Ewegen writes of the proliferating "natal nuances"[30] that engender language "made *not by Heidegger but by language itself*. Language speaks here, through the processes of homophony and etymology."[31] Was Heidegger prepared to listen and enter into conversation with this (feminized) speaking of language? The threshold of which Moore writes – *die Schwelle* – which pain has turned to stone, may not (only) be the "tranquilizing"[32] of pain Moore decries in his chapter four, but also the distinct pain of a stillbirth – a pain that rends the "child" from the "womb" and the "mother" from the "woman."

To render Heidegger's "dialogue" with Trakl as a still birth may put the matter too starkly – and too tragically. Perhaps such a drama belongs only to a certain masculine form of the struggle for dominance with which I began. Moore closes his book by refusing a simple attribution of tragedy to Heidegger's dialogical interpretation of Trakl. He writes,

> Despite all the twists and turns of his path of thinking, Heidegger never gave up on the idea that he was headed toward a Secret Germany, as promulgated by the very 'voice of beyng,' Friedrich Hölderlin…Whatever the merit of this Germano-nationalist mythos about Hölderlin – and there is much in it to be wary of, even as a matter of exegesis – it is more astounding that Heidegger would also hear the promise of the *geheimes Deutschland*, or its coded *noch verborgenes Abend-Land*, in the poetry of Trakl. (211–2)

In tracking both the centripetal and centrifugal forces of this gesture – or gestation – Moore raises the question of Heidegger's delineation of the "tragic condition"[33] of the West. Is Heidegger's political version of this dialogical "quarrel" more akin to a "comedy,"[34] after all? This is the point to which Moore endeavors to draw our attention. There are many sites of elision and evasion on Heidegger's part regarding the meaning of Trakl's work, but the enduring contribution of Moore's

edifying monograph is to invite us to reconsider what Heidegger *doesn't* say in his "dialogue" with this poet, and at whose expense such silencing as its "threshold" is maintained.

NOTES

1 Though it is indeed the first full-length scholarly treatment of this particular topic, Moore's book continues to attain and sustain the high bar of scholarly rigor set in his previous monograph on Heidegger – Ian Alexander Moore, *Eckhart, Heidegger, and the Imperative of Releasement*, SUNY Series in Contemporary Continental Philosophy (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2019) – suggesting that, in a different respect, it is not the "first" of its kind.

2 Ian Alexander Moore, *Dialogue on the Threshold: Heidegger and Trakl*, SUNY Series in Contemporary Continental Philosophy (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2022), 3.

3 Moore, *Dialogue on the Threshold*, 2–3.

4 Including an overview of the more extensive marginalia, likely from 1958, to "Into an Old Family Album" found in Heidegger's Salzburg edition, which is housed in the Literaturmuseum in Marbach (Moore, *Dialogue on the Threshold*, 232–37).

5 These exclude material from his two explicit lectures on the poet but include references to unpublished epistolary correspondence that may be of particular scholarly interest.

6 These include fifty-five poems in total (Moore, *Dialogue on the Threshold*, 271).

7 Moore, *Dialogue on the Threshold*, 2.

8 Moore, *Dialogue on the Threshold*, 95.

9 Moore, *Dialogue on the Threshold*, 213.

10 Moore, *Dialogue on the Threshold*, 108–9. If Moore agrees that Heidegger is (in some significant sense) still reading Hölderlin even though he is apparently engaging Trakl, I wonder further if this evident replaceability of poetic figures and poems might indicate a more troubling relation between Heidegger's thinking and poetizing in general. Is Heidegger "reading" any of the poets he elevates in his work? Or are these invocations simply sites where Heidegger can exercise a virtuosity of his own thinking of

being in sufficiently veiled political directions? And what might be the terms by which such an assessment could be adjudicated?

11 Moore points to how Derrida reads *Geschlecht* in Heidegger in such a way as to prompt consideration of "a host of questions about other underrepresented matters such as maternity and sorority, eros and androgyny" (Moore, *Dialogue on the Threshold*, 175).

12 Moore, *Dialogue on the Threshold*, 173.

13 Moore, *Dialogue on the Threshold*, 174.

14 Moore, *Dialogue on the Threshold*, 179.

15 Moore, *Dialogue on the Threshold*, 182.

16 Moore, *Dialogue on the Threshold*, 182.

17 This reading builds upon his treatment from 1935 in *Introduction to Metaphysics*. In that earlier text, Heidegger never let Antigone herself speak, but only explored the "Ode to Man" within the *Antigone* tragedy. In the context of the Hölderlin lectures, however, he reproduces and engages her *Gespräch* with her sister for the first time. See my essay, Katherine Davies, "Antigone's (Poetic, Queer) Death: Heidegger, Butler, and Mortality," in *Heidegger, Dasein, and Gender: Thinking the Unthought*, ed. Patricia Glazebrook and Susanne Claxton (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2024), 37–66.

18 Moore, *Dialogue on the Threshold*, 172–88.

19 Katherine Davies, "The Resistant Interlocutor: Plato, Heidegger, and the End of Dialogue," *Epoché: A Journal for the History of Philosophy* 23.1 (2018): 165–90, 182–3.

20 Moore, *Dialogue on the Threshold*, 47.

21 Moore, *Dialogue on the Threshold*, 56.

22 Moore, *Dialogue on the Threshold*, 65.

23 Moore, *Dialogue on the Threshold*, 69.

24 Moore, *Dialogue on the Threshold*, 70.

25 Moore, *Dialogue on the Threshold*, 71.

26 Moore, *Dialogue on the Threshold*, 107.

27 Hannah Arendt/Martin Heidegger, *Letters, 1925–1975* (Orlando: Harcourt, 2004), 3–4.

28 Martin Heidegger, *Letters to His Wife, 1915–1970* (Cambridge: Polity, 2008), 212–3.
29 Moore, *Dialogue on the Threshold*, 186.
30 S. Montgomery Ewegen, "Gestures of the Feminine in Heidegger's 'Die Sprache,'" *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 30.4 (2016): 486–98, 493.
31 Ewegen, "Gestures of the Feminine," 492.
32 Moore, *Dialogue on the Threshold*, 134.
33 Moore, *Dialogue on the Threshold*, 214.
34 Moore, *Dialogue on the Threshold*, 202.

The Pain of the Other Beginning: Notes on Ian Alexander Moore's *Dialogue on the Threshold: Heidegger and Trakl*

Alberto Moreiras

> *Die Geschichte ist in ihrem verborgenen Gang nicht Fortgang von einem Anfang zu einem Ende, sondern sie ist Rückkehr des Einstigen in den Beginn.* (History, in its hidden course, is not progress from an inception to an end, but is rather the return of what is always already there in advance into the beginning). (Heidegger, *Heraklit.* GA 55: 288/217)

> *Das eigentliche Denken ist das wahre Lieben und das Heimischwerden im Wesensgrund aller Bezüge: Rück-kehr. Erst wenn das Denken sein Tiefstes gedacht hat und d. h. zu denken beginnt und fortan denkt, nämlich das eigentlich und einzig Zu-denkende, erst dann kommt die dem Denken eigene Rückkehr zu sich selbst, die ursprüngliche Reflexion, ursprünglich ins Spiel.* (Authentic thinking is true loving and the coming-to-be at home in the essential ground of all relations: re-turn. Only when thinking has thought what is deepest – that is, only when it has begun to think and continues to think the essential and singular to-be-thought – does the re-turn proper to thinking, i.e., the originary reflection, come to itself and come into play originarily). (Heidegger, GA 55*:* 221/167)

As Ian Moore himself tells us, his book started off as two papers for conferences motivated by the so-called "discovery" of Jacques Derrida's seminar sessions on Martin Heidegger's reading of Georg Trakl: one in Princeton, organized by Katie Chenoweth and Rodrigo Therezo, and one at Texas A&M organized by Adam Rosenthal, both in 2018. Moore's book can then be read from a certain obvious perspective as a response, or a supplement, in the precise Derridean sense of this latter word, to Derrida's text. But not only that: Moore's reflections on the notion of

pain in Heidegger are new and not already rehearsed or prepared in Derrida's text. I will concentrate my remarks on its central section, which is the section devoted to a consideration of pain. This is an understudied perspective on Heidegger, which makes it worthy of proper attention. I think these remarks involve Moore's fundamental position.

There is of course more in Moore's splendid book, and I hope others will comment on it. My intention is to indicate a constellation of motifs around problems of our time, for which I think *Dialogue on the Threshold* gives us precious indications: the problem of the exhaustion of metaphysics in the crisis time of the Anthropocene, which Heidegger anticipated in his thought of the *Ge-stell;* the problem of the perhaps impossible and at the same time necessary "other beginning" of thought after the end of metaphysics; and consequently the decisive problem of our affective, existential confrontation with all of it, which exceeds the "mournful distress" for the departure of the gods that Heidegger placed at the center of his first lecture course on Friedrich Hölderlin.[1] Even though Heidegger's meditations on Hölderlin evolved with time, and to a certain extent they abandoned an understanding of the historical task in the sense of a refoundation of an organic, sacrificial community, quite present in the 1934 lecture course but presumably no longer in the 1959 text on Hölderlin's "Earth and Heaven," it is, I think, fair to say that the theme of a return to a salvational, secret *Heimat* was never left properly behind even if the tropology used for it became more subdued or less sacrificial.[2] The question is then how the Heideggerian reflections on pain contribute to it, and consequently how we are to think of them in the context of moving toward an other beginning of thought. As a marker of the importance of this theme for our present let me refer to Jean Vioulac's *Apocalypse of Truth*, which insists on the contemporary end of the time of *aletheia* and the dawn of apocalyptic time; and to Bernard Stiegler's words in *The Neganthropocene*:

> The Anthropocene, which everyone currently understands in terms of the challenge of climate change, amounts to *an unprecedented and incommensurable putting in question* that suspends and breaks all those

> circuits of transindividuation established through the millennia from the Neolithic to the Great Empires, and through the various theologico-political civilizations, and finally secular civilizations.[3]

Both thinkers proceed existentially, not just theoretically. We are caught, in a certain untimeliness, looking at an illegible horizon. That the Anthropocene, which is their point of departure, involves a loss that exceeds both the absence of the old gods and the very notion of the *Heimat*, placing us all irretrievably in the dimension of a radical *Heimatlosigkeit*, is no secret.[4] Mournful distress is, however, not commensurate to the loss. Moore's meditations on Heidegger's understanding or elaboration of pain might bring us closer to an attuned relation to it. The question then must remain open: what can we do with the pain? What is the pain to us?

The context Moore provides for Heidegger's two lectures on Trakl to the Bühlerhöhe Society – a context that involves Heidegger's determination to claim Georg Trakl as the poet of his (Heidegger's) generation – is instructive, and of course Moore's careful textual analyses contain many noteworthy reflections, some of them critical variations on Derridean motifs, and some of them original and absent from Derrida's text, such as the excellent excursus into Pindar's poetry. What is crucial to Moore's reading is the thematization of the horizon of pain, which plays no ostensible role in Derrida's reading. Already on page 58, at the beginning of his textual exegesis, Moore brings up pain in his commentary on Trakl's "A Winter Evening," and says: "Pain has not just hardened the threshold . . . pain is still present and active, hardening the threshold, making it the reliable and enduring center of support for the differential inter-section of thing and world" (58–59). Pain is the great novelty in Moore's book and in Moore's Heidegger interpretation. The importance of a thematization of pain goes beyond the engagement with Trakl. Derrida's 1984–85 seminar might provide some insufficient context for this.

What about *Geschlecht III: Sex, Race, Nation, Humanity*, then? In the Preface to the English edition Rodrigo Therezo explains that the text

had seemed "lost forever."[5] We had "*Geschlecht* I: Sexual Difference, Ontological Difference," and "Heidegger's Hand (*Geschlecht II)*," both of which appeared in *Psyché: Inventions of the Other*, volume 2, and we had *"Geschlecht IV,"* which had appeared as an appendix to *Politics of Friendship* in French, but we were missing the "Geschlecht III" essay, which Derrida himself had announced several times as the very center, the magnetizing piece of the whole *Geschlecht* series. But he never brought himself to publishing it.[6] We do not know the reasons why it was not published within Derrida's lifetime, since after all he gave a lecture extracted from the seminar notes in Chicago in 1985 where he announced he had another hundred pages or so at least prepared if not ready to go on the same topic. So at least a draft already existed in that year. Therezo, as one of the editors of the text, claims that it is possible that, had the seminar sessions been published in some form, they would "have stuck very close to the seminar."[7] But this is of course a hypothesis, unconfirmed as such, or even belied at the limit, by the very fact of Derrida's withholding of the publication. One of the things we may never know is whether Derrida withheld publication of his central or magnetizing piece in the *Geschlecht* series because he was unsatisfied with it. It needed more. Derrida may have normally written his seminar notes with care, but the fact that these particular notes were unpublished by him keeps us from assuming that Derrida considered them ready enough. This fact has an intrinsic relation to Moore's book: Derrida's text has been published, but Derrida's signature of it is to a certain extent undecidable. This undecidability must have born some weight on Moore's writing process. Something serious was missing in the Derridean approach, and a consideration of pain might be part of it.

If we accept Therezo's own claim, in the second footnote in his Preface, that "the entirety of the four *Geschlechter* indeed constitute Derrida's most sustained confrontation (*Auseinandersetzung)* with Heidegger," a claim that scholars like David Farrell Krell and Françoise Dastur might have endorsed, and if we add to it the thought that *Geschlecht III* is in fact the magnetizing center of the series, then it turns out that *Geschlecht III* might constitute a privileged place to

examine Derrida's career-long confrontation with Heidegger.[8] *Dialogue on the Threshold*, which will have turned out to be both a book on Heidegger's confrontation with Trakl's poetry and at the same time a book about Derrida's confrontation with Heidegger, ciphers more than just a commentary on Heidegger's two essays on Trakl's poetry from the early 1950s. It is an exposition of Moore's own general relation both to Heideggerian thought and to the legacy of Heideggerian thought in Derrida's work, and in deconstruction more generally, even if this latter aspect of it is internally at least partially questioned by what is undecidable regarding Derrida's withholding of the publication of his final essay in the *Geschlecht* series.

What was it that Derrida found so magnetizing in Heidegger's Trakl text, specifically in the second of the Trakl essays, from 1953, titled "Language in the Poem: A Discussion on Georg Trakl's Poetic Work" (GA 12: 31–78)? The core of Derrida's engagement with Heidegger's Trakl texts has to do with the vexing question of Heidegger's notion of the "other beginnning." It is vexing because, while it could be considered the dead center of Heidegger's entire oeuvre, Heidegger never gave that "other beginning" to us, and he only spoke of his work and of the work of his generation, perhaps also of ours, as merely preparatory, preparatory to an other beginning whose need, while grounded in the history of being as Heidegger understood it, could only produce contingent, unforeseen, and always singular results. Derrida is engaged in reading the Heideggerian text, certainly also in the *Geschlecht* series but by no means only there, through the desire not just to understand but also to critique Heidegger's hints regarding what the preparation, that is, the preparation in thought of the other beginning, which is also a preparation for an other beginning of thought, might consist or have consisted of. If we may be allowed to think of deconstruction as a transitional gesture of thought, already in itself pointing to something else, merely glimpsed or imagined, Derrida himself wanted to prepare the other beginning, if there is to be one, taking Heidegger at his word, but in his own way, following his own tropology, in order to produce the possibility of alternative contingent, unforeseen, and singular results.

Stiegler would have called all of this the possibility of a "bifurcation."[9] Does this possible bifurcation go through pain or is it to remain a primarily theoretical endeavor?

Early in the seminar, in the pages that were later presented in Chicago, Derrida says: "We might say that 'before' Being and Nothingness there is Place, that which gives rise and makes it so that there is Being and Nothingness gathered together. If place is regularly, typically defined by gathering (*Versammlung*), our entire approach to the Heideggerian gesture will have to question this privilege of gathering and all that it entails."[10] A few pages later Derrida, referring to a specific poem and its function in the Heideggerian reading of Trakl, indicates the precise place where Heidegger will find the gathering: "In his *Gespräch* with Trakl, Heidegger lets himself be oriented by the hearing or the precursory listening of this '*Ein*' in 'E i n *Geschlecht*.' Such will have been the place."[11] As such, it would be the proximate place of the *Gedicht*, the silent vortex of Trakl's work that the poems convey without saying it. The wandering Stranger seeks it in *Abgeschiedenheit*, a word difficult to translate but that has to do with departure, farewell, separation. And with the pain of it. What will be left behind by the Stranger who departs and separates himself is the corrupted or decomposed form of the human for the sake of a return to something other: and this "return," that Derrida engages early on, is a return to a gentler and more peaceful form of *Geschlecht*, a *Geschlecht* without discord, a unifying or gathering *Geschlecht:* a return to an un-polemical One, perhaps even a pain-less one.[12]

Gathering and return, then: *Versammlung* and *Rückkehr*. Both of them struggle with pain. These are the notions Derrida interrogates most forcefully, not with the primary intention of indicating a disagreement, although disagreement there is and there may well further be, rather with the intention of questioning Heidegger's reading strategy in terms of its own contingency, its own options never determined by necessity. A case in point has to do with Heidegger's interpretative decision concerning the issue of whether Trakl should be understood as a primarily Christian poet. Heidegger insists – and Derrida gives us

contrarian considerations against Heidegger's insistence, that is, showing its contingency, perhaps its arbitrariness – that Trakl speaks about something "more originary" than Christianity or indeed Platonism, even if it will have made both Platonism and Christianity possible. By the same token, and in spite of the German idiomaticity that Heidegger pursues, of which he will make a considerable deal, the return, understood as return to a home, a *Heimat*, is not simply the return to Germany, but also to something more originary than Germany even if Germany only becomes possible in its wake: it is the land of evening, the *Abenland*, the land of the (possible, desired, perhaps not quite promised [or was it in fact promised by Trakl, Heidegger, or Derrida?]) other beginning. Heidegger speaks, and says that Trakl speaks, of a gathering that exceeds both Germany and Platonic Christianity, even if Germany and Platonic Christianity could or would only repeat such a gathering, but already necessarily in a corrupted or decomposed way. There is the gathering of a return and the return of a gathering, and those are the fundamental motifs of a passage, an *Überschritt*, or step-beyond, an *Übergang* into the evening land, which is also the passage toward a new dawn. "The *Abendland* named by Trakl . . . is at once more originary, more matutinal, and consequently more portentous of the future, richer with promise than the European or Platonico-Christian . . . Occident," Derrida says.[13] The *Abendland* thus becomes the site or the place for the removal of the bad and discording, corrupt or decomposed *Geschlecht* in favor of a new unifying duplicity, a new difference, which is a difference between the sexes and the lineages of the human that will be gentler and more peaceful, a unity in difference, not an indifferent unity. This is intriguing, perhaps even beyond Heidegger's habitual tone, hence all the more thought-worthy.

In the last session of the Trakl seminar, the Thirteenth Session, Derrida turns to *Geschichte*, certainly as opposed to *Historie*. There is a reference in the poem "*Abendland*" to the "ancient legend of the forest," which signals for Derrida "the buried history" of Germany, or of the *Heimat* that would have become Germany.[14] What is *geschichtlich* in Trakl's poem is the fact that, rather than providing information, "it

makes history and destiny happen, it is in itself the event."[15] Trakl's poetry will have named the destinal sending that, Heidegger says, "saves," *rettet*. Derrida continues: "This salvation is at once arche-originary – because it is a question of the strike that gives humanity its proper stamp and makes it come into itself, into its essence, saving it from what is not or must not be – at once arche-originary and to come." And this is the proper "return," but with a twist. "The movement toward the future is a return toward the arche-origin." "The return is not an accidental or supplementary predicate of dwelling or the homeland (*Heimat*), it is the essential movement that originarily constitutes or institutes the homeland or country as a promise of dwelling;" "the country (*Land* or *Heimat*) appears as such only from out of the promise of return, even if, de facto, one has never left it, and even if, de facto, one never has to get back to it. It is in this way that the originary country announces itself, as it were: in the return as promise, the promised return which is also necessarily and irreducibly the return of the promise."[16] With it, "death or mourning" are transfigured "into promise and salvation of the future."[17] Derrida's interpretation concludes there, somewhat frustratingly. We should not take this cut as necessarily an indication of a perspectival agreement. Clearly, Derrida was interested in the messianic promise, but he theorized it as a promise that would find no resolution into any form of presencing, but would remain structurally to-come.[18] We may not know how Derrida would have ultimately passed judgment on the Heideggerian understanding of a futural salvation, given all of its nuances.

Before I finally address Moore's commentary on pain in Heidegger I want to mention two additional features of Derrida's consideration of the Heideggerian essay on Trakl regarding both *Versammlung* and the specific manner of the constituting *Rückkehr;* the return that saves. One imagines that Derrida would have stuck to his guns in terms of denouncing what he had in some previous essay rather irreverently called the "closed autism" of the Heideggerian gathering and also that he would denounce the circular self-gathering return to the promise of dwelling in the proper. But I find it significant that, in two short

comments, Derrida dismantles his own strategy. As much as he dislikes the frank idiomaticity of the Heideggerian text, its overwrought Germanness, he admits that the Heideggerian *Geschlecht* must after all be "bound to an idiom, a place, a land" and not to a "humanity in its abstract universality of a species, namely, in its ahistoricity."[19] In the same or similar way Derrida says much earlier in the seminar:

> If there were only gathering, sameness, oneness, place without path, that would be death without phrases. And this is not what Heidegger wants to say, since he also insists on movement, the path of the stranger, the path toward others, and so on. . . . To say that there is divisibility does not come down to saying that there is only divisibility or division either (that, too, would be death). Death lies in wait on both sides, on the side of the phantasm of the integrity of the proper place and the innocence of a sexual difference without war, and, on the opposite side, that of a radical impropriety or expropriation, or even a war of *Geschlecht* as sexual discord.[20]

Two possibilities open up, in radical reciprocal tension. What is properly messianic in Trakl or Heidegger but also in Derrida dwells between the two extremes, notwithstanding the different emphases, which are themselves a matter of interpretation.

But, if the Derridean critique does not finally hold, or not completely, if he himself relativizes it and perhaps even dismisses it, then what is essential in the Derridean reading? Is there anything essential in the Derridean reading, beyond its general interpretative quality? It seems to me the importance of the Derridean *Geschlecht* series, of his engagement with Heidegger through it, must be referred to the clarification concerning under which circumstances Derrida himself would be or would have been willing to go along with the Heideggerian notion of the other beginning, which, through his Trakl interpretation, acquires messianic overtones, even if not Christian. The epigraphs I have used come from sections in Heidegger's 1944 seminar on the

Heraclitean *logos*, where Heidegger is struggling to extract from the elusive Heraclitean fragments an understanding of what *logos* could mean before the Platonic and Aristotelian metaphysical hijacking of it for their understanding of logic, of *episteme logike*. Those are remarks that involve very fundamentally the tropes of gathering, foregathering, collecting, and harvesting as a preparation for a fundamental historical return to the arche-originary, that is, to the premetaphysical. They make Derrida uncomfortable as signs and portents of what is to come, of the to-come, which is also the *Zu-Denkende*, the to-be-thought. So – what does all of this have to do with Moore's fundamental position in his book *Dialogue on the Threshold*?

Is pain in Heidegger to be reduced to the pain of return, *nostalgia* (*nostos-algos*)? Is pain in Heidegger more than just a necessary announcement and forerunner of history in an essential sense, of the *historical* event, hence the true preparation for the other beginning, which can only be a historical one, always to be understood as an adventure into the originary, as a return to the originary or arche-originary for the sake of an other beginning?[21] Pain must be undergone, but is pain still waiting for us beyond the *nostos*? And, if it is, is it the same pain? In order to prepare to answer this question, Moore discusses a "selection of notes published in a limited German edition" with the title *Über den Schmerz*, On Pain, certainly not available to the general public. There, he tells us, "Heidegger goes so far as to claim that pain is being itself . . . pain belongs to the very structure of being" (111). He adds: "Heidegger does, to be sure, highlight the importance of pain in his lectures on Trakl. For instance, we read that pain separates, but . . . it also intimately holds together what it has separated; searing pain leads some to storm heaven . . . but pain can also become gentle and let all things shine in their essence; pain produces not gloomy isolation but gleaming community; pain sustains the difference between things and world; pain is the source of life" (112). "We must learn to stop thinking about pain, thus from a perspective outside of it. We must instead learn to start 'thinking painfully' – from the side of pain as the assertion of beyng, . . . which ad-sertion is the appropriative event as the truth of

beyng itself" (118). These are fighting words, major words, but they are not enough. "Indeed," Moore tells us, "in *On Pain* we learn, remarkably, that pain is the *sine qua non* of Heidegger's longstanding project to think otherwise: 'The human being and pain otherwise, and only therein is the Other Thinking determined" (126). Pain essentially holds sway, therefore, provided an appropriation of it is enacted, as beyng itself in its truth. "In Heidegger's reading," Moore tells us, "pain not only furnishes us with a new way – perhaps the only way – to experience truth itself and understand beyng itself. Pain also furnishes our dwelling with delight and serenity. Or better: pain, properly experienced, is this dwelling. Heidegger has moved from the truth of pain as the self-showing sheltering of thing and world to pain as our proper abode" (129). If so, then pain is the site of *Versammlung* and *Rückkehr,* and not just the path to it. But then a transformation of pain must be conceived. I will come back to this in reference to *Country Path Conversations.*

We now understand better, I think, both the double possibility of *Geschlecht*, as discord and insurrection, and as gentle releasement. We might even understand better the need for a gathering that is also a return, now to be conceived as a localization (*Erörterung*) of pain. Granted that the other beginning comes to us once we establish a proper relation to pain, "we must learn to heed the pain of beyng, beyond or before all programs and praxis" (129). But what does this mean? What is this localization of pain other than the word, or the call, for an existential and corporeal embodiment? We will no longer think about pain, we will simply think painfully, on the way to a transfiguration of pain, a releasement. Trakl himself "would have twisted free from the culmination of metaphysics in the will to power as the will to will, from active nihilism and the eternal return, precisely because he would have been attuned to the fundamental, non-metaphysical, gentle gathering of pain" (135). This is the ultimate reason why Trakl is the poet of his generation and, as such, "a precursor of Paul Celan" (168). A poet with an eye too many, Moore says, like Oedipus and Hölderlin himself. Perhaps even like Heidegger himself.

We could find further confirmation of this in texts where Heidegger thematizes the need for an "overcoming" of metaphysics. In "The Overcoming of Metaphysics," a text from 1938–39, the references to "wrenching," to "dis-turbance," acquire a deeply existential character, which Heideggger points out explicitly: "The *over-coming* of metaphysics is existential [*da*-sein*shaft*]. It cannot be accomplished by writing a 'book' about it. Anything seeming like such a 'book' has literally a different essence" (GA 67: 39/34).[22] This *over-coming*, a wrenching transformation, implies a displacement for or even from philosophy:

> The only task that remains for human beings, and that too only when they are wrenched into the transformation of their essence, is to be prepared for the transition into the overcoming. . . . In the instant that *metaphysics is overcome through beyng*, things get serious with philosophy because a decisive moment in the history of beyng arrives; philosophy cannot wish to console itself with its knowledge, cannot wish to seek solace, cannot wish to traffic in such solace. (GA 67: 11–12/10–11)

The wrenching of the essence is pain – conflict and discord that aim toward releasement. In 1938–39 Heidegger calls it dis-turbance (*Entsetzen*) as fundamental attunement. "This *dis-turbance* pulls human beings out of the manipulation of beings and displaces them into the ungroundedness of the truth of being, such that they 'know' not yet what is 'happening' to them and how" (GA 67: 18/16). Pain is in other words the reminder that something is wrong, and it holds as such. In "The Evening Conversation: In a Prisoner of War Camp in Russia, between a Younger and an Older Man," a text written in 1945, the dis-turbance is uncannily connected to the messianic waiting, which is a waiting without awaiting, a "pure waiting," a "waiting for the coming" that can only be described as "an enigmatic commemorating (*Andenken)*" (GA 19: 218/141), outside of time, or at least within "a still-concealed dimension of time" (GA 19: 218/141), and which can only be named a "burning pain" in wait of "what is healing" (GA 19:

219/142). This is "the pain that arises when the human is barred from thinking" (GA 19: 221/143). Pain commemorates, it even commemorates the silent impossibility of commemorating, and, by so doing, embodies a *Rückkher*, which, in "The Evening Conversation" but also in "The Triadic Conversation," connects to the unprethinkable (*das Unvordenkliche*). Pain is therefore the impossible memory of the unprethinkable – and it is pain because it is an impossible memory.[23] Is the unprethinkable the only possible horizon of both *Versammlung* and *Rückkehr*? But unprethinkability, which points to the placeless place – is that not the region of the *khora*, the messianic *Gegnet* of deconstruction, the locality of Heidegger's beyng, and the site of the poetic word?

It is tempting to develop this through a clarification of the relation John of the Cross's "spiritual song" and "dark knight of the soul" or the transverberative extases of Teresa of Avila among other references may have to do with the arche-originary experience of place and the destining of history. It would also be important to look at other moments in Moore's writing, for instance his work on Reiner Schürmann's reading of the *Beiträge* in the final part of *Broken Hegemonies*.[24] But I must leave that for another time. My interest was only to indicate how Moore's book definitely supplements the Derridean reading and opens another eye in each of us regarding the experience of the other beginning, the pain that accompanies any possible or impossible new birth, and the preparation for it, but also its outcome. There is an existential import to Moore's interpretation of Heidegger on Trakl that was missing in Derrida. The existential (*da*-seinshaft!) is Moore's supplement. That is, I think, all I wanted to point to, recognizing it as a significant, necessary critical accomplishment that must continue to be thought.

NOTES

1 In the eighth lecture of *Hölderlin's Hymns "Germania" and "The Rhine*" Heidegger will determine the "fundamental attunement" regarding "the necessary renunciation of the calling of the gods of old" as "holy mourning" (GA 39: 87/79). In Lecture Nine an additional determination is presented: "holy mourning in readied distress" (GA 39: 107/97). The "readiness" involved concerns "the historical mission of a people" (GA 39: 104/95). In Lecture Seven Heidegger had already indicated that the "originary community" is of a sacrificial character: "Precisely death—which each individual human being must die for him- or herself, and which individuates each individual upon themselves to the most extreme degree—precisely death and the readiness for its sacrifice first of all creates in advance the space of that community out of which comradeship emerges" (GA 39: 73/66). Needless to say, this holy mourning in distressed anticipation of the return of the sacrificial community is not precisely the fundamental attunement that might enable a thinking relationship to the Anthropocene. At best it could be said that a "holy mourning for the Earth is a modification of Heidegger's notion of holy mourning for the gods of old in Hölderlin, but the Anthropocene will not let itself be reconciled to any particular provenance of historical Dasein, as it encompasses them all. See Bambach, *Of an Alien Homecoming. Reading Heidegger's "Hölderlin"* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2022), for a sustained and thoughtful analysis of Heidegger's Hölderlin writings.

2 There is no emphasis on the sacrificial in "Hölderlin's 'Earth and Heaven,'" which is a text that thematizes the infinite relation of world and earth, mortals and gods. The anticipation of an other beginning is here expressed under a different light: "Does the occidental still exist? It has become Europe. Europe's technological-industrial domination has already covered the entire earth. On the other hand, the earth, as a planet, has already been included in the interstellar-cosmic space which is placed at man's disposal by

the planned projects of man. The earth and heaven of the poem have vanished. Who would dare to say whither? The in-finite relation of earth and heaven, man and God, seems to have been destroyed. Or has it never yet appeared within our history *as* this in-finite relation, purely joined together by the gathering of the voices of destiny, never yet become present, never yet been founded as a whole within what is highest in art? Then it could not have been destroyed; rather, in the worst case, it could only have been displaced and denied its appearing. Then it would be up to us to think about this denial of the in-finite relation" (GA 4: 176/200).

3 See Vioulac, *Apocalypse of Truth. Heideggerian Meditations* (with a Foreword by Jean-Luc Marion, translated by Matthew J. Peterson, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2021) and Stiegler, *The Neganthropocene* (edited and translated by Daniel Ross, London: Open Humanities Press, 2018), 233.

4 The unpublished essay by Rafael Fernández López, "Thinking the Pain of Being, or Life's Entanglement with Planetary Death" is a fascinating reflection on "planetary death" in the wake of Heidegger's meditation on the pain of death in *The Event* and additional reflections by Jean-Luc Nancy, Werner Hamacher, Claude Romano, and Parvis Emad. I suppose Fernández' essay is one of the first attempts to link pain in the Heideggerian vein and the more extreme (but certainly imaginable) consequence of the Anthropocene: "My aim is to envisage pain in terms of the unfelt symptom of a ubiquitous and impersonal loss, a loss that is always to come, occurring as the very unexperienceable limit with which existence is always entangled. I call this loss planetary death" (1). And: "Thinking of the pain of planetary death responds to the need to think of death as an unfelt other that engulfs us all in the current epoch of climate change" (2). The essay ends in a rejection of the notion that mourning, whether in disquiet or otherwise, is an adequate *Stimmung* in the face of the pain of planetary death (a consequence of intensified *Ge-stell*): "Thinking in this manner does not entail thinking as an act of anticipatory mourning; mourning is only possible over a specific,

determinable loss. The loss of the planet is indeterminable and cannot be confined within an expected form, that is, it defies any horizon of expectation. Thinking is thus awakening to that which is always already *other* than any definable loss: an unfelt *other* that haunts us all, in Nancy's words, as 'the Real (or the Nothing)' that 'neither precedes nor follow the world' but is instead the world in which life is entangled" (12).

5 Therezo, "Preface," in Jacques Derrida, *Geschlecht III. Sex, Race, Nation, Humanity,* (translated by Katie Chenoweth and Rodrigo Therezo, edited by Geoffrey Bennington, Chenoweth, and Therezo, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2020), 3.

6 For a study of the *Geschlecht* series I must refer to David Farrell Krell, *Phantoms of the Other: Four Generations of Derrida's Geschlecht* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2015) and to Herman Rapaport, *Derrida on Exile and Nation. Reading Fantom of the Other* (London: Bloomsbury, 2022). But see also *Política común* 14 (2020) for nine careful essays on *Geschlecht III*. See Derrida, "*Geschlecht* 1: Sexual Difference, Ontological Difference" and "Heidegger's Hand (*Geschlecht* II)" in *Psyché. Inventions of the Other*, Volume 2 (edited by Peggy Kamuf and Elizabeth Rottenberg, Stanford: Stanford Univesity Press, 2008), 7–26 and 27–62. For the fourth *Geschlecht* essay see Derrida, "Heidegger's Ear. Philopolemology," translated by John Leavey, in John Sallis editor, *Reading Heidegger: Commemorations* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 163–218.

7 Therezo, "Preface," 6.

8 Therezo, "Preface," 3, note 2. See Krell, *Phantoms of the Other* and Dastur ,"Heidegger and Derrida on Trakl" (in Daniel O. Dalstrom ed., *Interpreting Heidegger. Critical Essays*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011. 43–57). But there are textual sites, such as the recently published 1991–92 seminar *Répondre – du secret. Séminaire (1991–1992)* (Paris: Seuil, 2024) or the older *Donner le temps II* (1978–79) (edited by Laura Odello, Peter Szendy and Rodrigo Therezo. Paris: Seuil, 2021), that might lay claim to the same title.

9 For an extended treatment of "bifurcation" versus "disruption," see Bernard Stiegler, *The Age of Disruption. Technology and Madness in Computational Capitalism* (London: Polity, 2019) and also Stiegler, *Neganthropocene*. If for Stiegler the Anthropocene is the name of the epochless epoch of disruption and catastrophe, marked by a generalized functional stupidity and hyperproletarianization under the powers of algorithmic governmentality, all that is left is the possibility of a neganthropic bifurcation that will open a new horizon and would restitute the capacities of knowing how to do, how to live, and how to think. This bifurcation, which is a departure from the crisis point of *Ge-stell*, is repeatedly described as necessary but unlikely, almost impossible, never granted. It would however mark a transformation of the essence of pain.

10 Derrida, *Geschlecht III*, 10.

11 Derrida, *Geschlecht III*, 27.

12 See Derrida, *Geschlecht III*, 34.

13 Derrida, *Geschlecht III*, 114. See also 105, 115.

14 Derrida, *Geschlecht III*, 147. See also 146.

15 Derrida, *Geschlecht III, 150.*

16 Derrida, *Geschlecht III*, 153. For "*rettet*" see 152.

17 Derrida, *Geschlecht III*, 156.

18 Derrida clarifies in a discussion with Vincenzo Vitiello his understanding of messianicity, already explained in *Specters of Marx*. See "Christianity and Secularization," translated by David Newheiser, *Critical Inquiry* 47 (Autumn 2020): 138–48. He tells Vitiello, repeating some motifs that were already expressed by Heidegger in *Country Path Conversations*: "One cannot await without waiting wihin a horizon, whereas what I call messianicity is this paradox of an awaiting that does not know what it awaits and which does not even include anticipation. It could come or it could not come. *Perhaps* . . . In the radical *perhaps* of which Nietzsche speaks I await someone, something, but I do not know if it will be somone or something, I await that which comes without waiting. That which comes, if it comes, should surprise

me absolutely, surprising my awaiting and coming where I do not wait for it. If one waited only for that which one awaits, there would be no coming, no surprise, there would truly be no waiting for the future as such" ("Christianity" 142–43). The question then emerges as to whether such a structure is already the "secularization of a religious tradition of which we are still the heirs and of which we keep the memory" (143). And then Derrida says something that does not appear in other parts of his texts, an interesting *hapax legomenon* that might in fact define the reach of Derrida's messianicity and its necessary implication in the "other beginning" of thought: "But on the other hand . . . there is also the possibility of desecularizing—that is to say, of emancipating this discourse not only from every determinate religion but even from secularization insofar as it remains a doublet of religion. I have often said . . . that the word, messianicity, I am ready to abandon it at any time, as soon as I will have been understood" (143). But Derrida remains skeptical, or uncertain, regarding whether or not his position aligns with the Heideggerian one. He moves on to a discussion of the *khora,* the messianic *khora,* and says: "In the *Contributions to Philosophy*, when Heidegger speaks of the God who comes, I do not know whether he is holding a discourse that has an affinity with what I was trying to say about *khora*—I'm not sure. . . . It would be necessary to look closely at Heidegger's text, and to see if what he says about the God who comes would agree with what I have attempted to suggest here about messianicity" (147). Without piety, it can be said that Derrida's desecularization is a path to or a condition of postmetaphysical thought.

19 Derrida, *Geschlecth III*, 153.

20 Derrida, *Geschlecht III*, 81–82.

21 This is a question that cannot be fully answered without a sustained interrogation of one of Heidegger's most cryptic texts, namely, *The Event*, written in 1941–42, and centrally concerned with the issues of "the first beginning," "the other beginning" and the transition between the two. Of course, as we will see,

Moore pioneers this question (but see also Emad, "Heidegger on Pain: Focusing on a Recurring Theme of His Thought," in *Zeitschrift für philosophische Forschung* 36.3 [1982]: 345–60), but he does not dwell at great length on the 1941–42 text. Section VII, "The Event and the Human Being" (GA 71: 189–204/161–71), and the A Subsection of Section X, "Directives to the Event," namely, "The Enduring of the Difference (Distinction). Experience as the Pain 'of' the Departure" (GA 71: 233–245/201–11), are only among the parts of the book that merit attention in our respect. The book ends with reflections on Hölderlin s poetry that have not yet been incorporated into the secondary bibliography on Heidegger's interest in Hölderlin and poetry in general. A companion volume is *On Inception* (GA 70), written right before *The Event* in 1941. This is work that I cannot do at present—but I will someday.

22 The word "*da*-sein*shaft*" is not very frequently used in Heidegger, but see for instance"'*Transzendenz' zugleich Da-seinshaft. Da-sein* heißt: Hineingehaltenheit in das Nichts (S. 19), d. h. *er-eignet in die Wahrheit des Seyns*" in GA 82: 426/333. The English translator, Scott M. Campbell, avoids a direct translation of it (as a noun, not an adjective) and renders that passage as "'*Transcendence*' *likewise that is of the nature of Da-sein. Da-sein* means: being held out into the nothing (p. 19), i.e., *appropriated into the truth of beying*." To be distinguished, of course, from Heidegger's notion of the *existentiell*. The meaning of "*da*-sein*shaft*" as existential remains to be further interpreted. We are no longer in *Being and Time*, and we might add that "*da*-sein*shaft*" refers neither to the ontic nor to the ontological as understood in that work, or not without several mediations: "Philosophical psychology, anthropology, ethics, 'politics,' poetry, biography, and historiography pursue in different ways and to varying extents the behavior, faculties, powers, possibilities, and destinies of Da-sein. But the question remains whether these interpretations were carried out in as original an existential manner as their existentiell originality perhaps merited. . . . Existentiell interpretation can require existential analysis . . . Only when the fundamental structures

of Da-sein are adequately worked out with explicit orientation toward the problem of being will the previous results of the interpretation of Da-sein receive their existential justification" (GA 2: 16/SZ 14). The term for "existential" is *existenzial*, and it refers to the existential analytic as fundamental ontology. *Da*-sein*shaft*, with its strange partial italicization, no longer does. It points to something else that even the quote from *On My Own Publications* (GA 82) does not clarify—the usage in "Overcoming" is more suggestive. I thank Laurence Hemming for mentioning the GA 82 passage to me.

23 In "Evening Conversation:" "The coming is presumably that before which nothing can be thought: the unprethinkable" (GA 77: 231/150). In "*Ankhibasie:* A Triadic Conversation" "It is . . . in the unprethinkable that the essence of the human is released into the open-region (*Gegnet*)" where "the open-region appropriates (*ereignet*) the essence of the human to its own (eigenen) region" (GA 77: 146/95). Towards the end of the volume Heidegger adds: "the burning pain that we are unable to be there for the unnecessary and are enslaved only to the useful, which by itself is the nothing and so null that it drives forth the deepest degradation of the human-being" (GA 77: 241/158).

24 See Moore and Guercio, "Heidegger, Our Monstrous Site. On Reiner Schürmann's Reading of the *Beiträge*," *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal* 41.2 (2021): 4. Schürmann's is a diagnostic reading of Heidegger as a monstrous site that is pulled by both centripetal and centrifugal forces, that imagines it can re-root itself in the very soil that its own critique of metaphysics had scattered to the winds, and that would seek to found a new Germanic homeland even after it had painfully demonstrated that the only home we will ever have is *nomadic*—a home in homelessness on whatever 'narrow strip of terrain upon which it is given to us to advance'" (113).

Comments on *Dialogue on the Threshold* by Ian Moore

John M. Rose

It has been a pleasure to read Ian's brilliant book on Heidegger's appropriation of Georg Trakl's poetic voice. I certainly recommend it as required reading, for I feel I have discovered through Ian's work a secret Heidegger about which I have been unaware. As Kate has so deftly pointed out, there are a great number of fruitful themes that Ian has uncovered, such "as madness and maternity, pain and Christianity, and sexual difference and color theory (213). But these are not exactly couplets in this ascending tricolon, but seemingly random points of thematic focus. I wonder if these are in dialogue with each other, or might they be nodes of various on-going dialogues. In his *Postscript*, Ian even admits: "Although, in the end, Heidegger shrank back from the implications of his encounter with Trakl's poetry, although he supposed the work for the sake of the secret Germany, Heidegger, to his credit…for a time, was touched by a pained, perverse, particularly Christian author whom Heidegger would, remarkably, come to call the poet of his generation" (213). There is a lot of dynamic movement in the dialogues that Ian elicits between Heidegger and Trakl, not to mention that dialogue Ian himself has with both the thinker and the poet. To get a sense of the expansiveness of his work, and the full breadth of the encounter between Heidegger and this tortured poet, you must read Ian's book for yourself.

Which leads me to wonder about the threshold of this dialogue, and thus my first question for Ian. Are we on the threshold of dialogue here, a dialogue that Heidegger never quite attained? Or is the threshold between the interlocutors of the dialogue, Heidegger, Trakl, and Moore? And are we invited into the dialogue? I can't help but think that Ian references all of the above, but I would like some clarification on "the threshold" as we step across it into Ian's work.

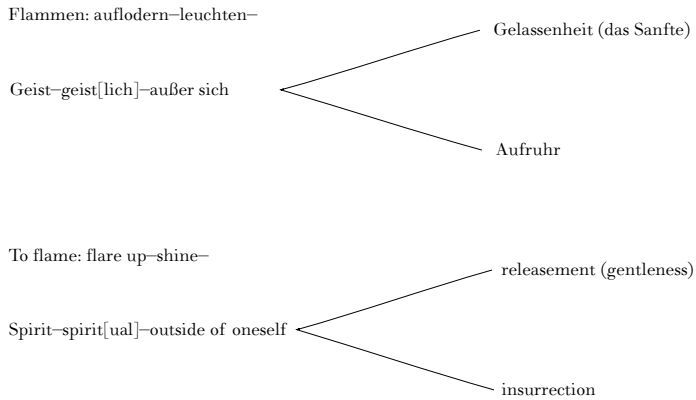
Second, I would invite Ian to address further the topic of "the secret Germany," perhaps with reference to the silence on this secret that pervades the dialogue when focusing on other topics. How central to the various themes of the book is the secret Germany? I would like to know more about this secret. It seems to be a well-kept secret, for every time I ask our scholarly friends about the secret Germany, they briefly bring up Stefan George and say no more.

Third, I invite Ian to say more about the last two sentences of the Postscript that, while referencing the late Reiner Schürmann's *Broken Hegemonies*, states categorically "Heidegger's reading of Trakl marks at once the most extreme flight from the confines of his philosophy theretofore and the most extreme search for confinement to centralized authority. Heidegger's reading of Trakl is an exemplary site for thinking today" (214). I would like to hear more of what Ian has in mind about Heidegger's reading of Trakl "for thinking today." Ian's comment is a such a teaser, and I would like to know what Ian really thinks calls for thinking today. There is a lot here that suggests itself, and I would like to know Ian's excellent and generous mind.

Thresholds: Of Pain, Dialogue, and the Secret Germany in Heidegger's Engagement with Trakl and Beyond

Ian Alexander Moore

I would like to begin my reply to the thoughtful commentaries of Katherine Davies, Alberto Moreiras, and John Rose by filling out the sketch of the genesis of *Dialogue on the Threshold* that Moreiras provides in his text. Although I didn't know it at the time, I can now trace the book's origins back to a discovery I made in 2016. As I was sifting through the unprocessed archives in the castle of Heidegger's hometown of Meßkirch, I came across an old copy of Georg Trakl's poems with some marginalia in what appeared to be Heidegger's hand. A typewritten note by Heidegger's nephew, folded into quarters and inserted in the volume, soon confirmed my suspicion about the author of these annotations, one of which I couldn't help but find astounding given my work on Meister Eckhart at the time. To the right of Trakl's distressing poem "Gródek,"[1] in which "the hot flame of spirit" is said to be "nourished today by a mighty pain, / The unborn grandchildren" (*Die heiße Flamme des Geistes nährt heute ein gewaltiger Schmerz, / Die ungebornen Enkel*), Heidegger had written:[2]



What was striking about this marginalium was not just its suggestion that *Geist*, in being outside of itself (that is, as Gothic *gheis*), can move in radically opposed directions. Even more striking was Heidegger's characterization of one of these poles as *Gelassenheit*, a term coined by Eckhart in the thirteenth century as a synonym of another one of his neologisms, *Abgeschiedenheit* ("detachment," "departedness," or, as Peter Hertz renders *Abgeschiedenheit* in *On the Way to Language*, "apartness"). In his two lectures on Trakl – "Language," from 1950, and "Language in the Poem," from 1952 – Heidegger never uses the word *Gelassenheit*. Nor does he trace the origins of *Abgeschiedenheit*, despite frequent recourse to etymology for other key terms, and despite claiming that *Abgeschiedenheit* is the very site around which all of Trakl's poetry is centered. This was, to be sure, worth investigating. But I wasn't yet prepared to face the enigma of Heidegger's "Trakl." For, as David Krell had written in the 1990s:

> Heidegger's own discussion of Trakl's poetry remains startling, bewildering, so that it is no exaggeration to say that the extended essay on Trakl ["Language in the Poem"] is of an order of difficulty that is unmatched by any of Heidegger's other essays. Compared to it, "Time and Being" (1962) and the *Beiträge* (1936–38) are child's play.[3]

When, however, I had completed my dissertation, and the opportunity presented itself to comment on Derrida's newly discovered seminar sessions on Heidegger's reading of Trakl,[4] I decided to revisit Heidegger's work on the poet. Initially, I concentrated on the role of *Abgeschiedenheit* in "Language in the Poem." In dialogue with Derrida, who did little with *Abgeschiedenheit* in his seminar, I argued that this term was not only the most deconstructible term in Heidegger's text, indeed even more so than the polysemic *Geschlecht* ('gender,' 'species,' 'race,' 'generation,' etc.), but also opened onto a form of love and letting-be that Heidegger seemed to want to foreclose in his essay on Trakl. I soon realized that a monograph would be necessary even to begin to do justice to the place of Trakl in Heidegger's thinking. Whether or not my book ended up doing so, I, for one, gained far more insight into Heidegger's lifework than I had expected.

One of the most important things I learned was that, after his failed Nazi rectorate, Heidegger's politics went underground, becoming almost entirely absorbed by the myth of the Secret Germany as announced by the "voice of beyng," Friedrich Hölderlin (or rather, by the idiosyncratic interpretation of the poet by George-Circle members Norbert von Hellingrath and Max Kommerell), and subsequently by the "poet of the yet concealed evening land," Georg Trakl (or rather, by Heidegger's idiosyncratic interpretation of the poet) (GA 70: 167/138; GA 12: 77/197).[5] Heidegger's interpretation of Trakl, for all its brilliance, again and again privileges a specific language (that is, German), a particular people (that is, those who can authentically hear that language), their specific leaders (Germans), and a specific place (Germany or rather its coded *Abend-Land*, not the Latinate "Occident" but "Land of Evening"). Detachment, in Heidegger's reading of Trakl, is not a call away from place, time, multiplicity, and language, let alone the way in which the Son is born in the soul and all things become sheer God to you, as it was for Eckhart – and I say this despite Trakl's avowed Christianity and love for all humans, as Heidegger was well aware, and despite the evidence linking Trakl to Eckhart. It is, rather, detachment *from* the corrupt Occident and from any sense of sympathy for

the demise of its decadent denizens – a demise over which, Heidegger claims scandalously, Trakl could only jubilate – and it is detachment *toward* a coming land inhabitable only by those with ears to hear not Jesus but the German language of "beyng," whose song Trakl learns and adapts from (Heidegger's) Hölderlin. Heidegger maintains that Trakl (1887–1914), who was born just two years before him, is "the poet of our generation."[6]

Regarding the Secret Germany (*das Geheime Deutschland*) and its connection to the other beginning (*der andere Anfang*), on which both Rose and Moreiras comment, I would note first that from at least 1932 on (GA 35: 270–71/206), Heidegger's thinking can as a whole be oriented around the notion of the other (or "second," GA 94: 209/153) beginning, which is not a repetition of the initial Greek beginning but a retrieval of possibilities which that first beginning left undeveloped, did not catch sight of, or covered over – above all the possibilities of considering being ("beyng") on its own terms (not in relation to entities) and of heeding the transformative event of appropriation (GA 65: 5–6/7, 171/135). Even if the phrase "other beginning" appears less frequently after World War II (see, however, GA 102), the idea continues to play a role in Heidegger's later corpus, whether it be a matter of becoming mortals as one fold among others, of thinking rather than philosophizing, of corresponding to "beyng," of letting be, of openness to the mystery, of saying yes and no to technology, or even of a god saving us. Indeed, I suspect it may be one of the best ways to describe the aim of Heidegger's later thought as a whole, since it covers not only the periods of Heidegger's enthusiasm for National Socialism and his subsequent retreat toward the Secret Germany, but also the more voluntaristic language of the 1930s and the more serene language from the 1940s onward. *Heidegger, after the "turn," was always in search of the other beginning . . .*

However, two key questions are whether the other beginning as outlined here can, for Heidegger (which is not, of course, to say, for us or in itself), be separated from the conservative-revolutionary myth of the Secret Germany, and, if so, what this would look like. In order to answer these questions, I will develop one of the possibilities that

Moreiras highlights at the end of his commentary and that I touch on in the book's epilogue. I am referring to Reiner Schürmann's *Broken Hegemonies*, particularly his notions of the tragic double bind and of the possibility of a *dessaisie* (an "unclenching" from hegemony) that has been afforded to us in late modernity thanks to Nietzsche, Heidegger, Wittgenstein, and a few others.[7] Pain will play an important role here, although the way I want to develop it differs from the emphasis I placed on it in the fourth chapter of *Dialogue on the Threshold*.

First, regarding the myth of the Secret Germany: Derrida was, to be sure, suspicious of the acute Germanocentrism of Heidegger's reading of Trakl. This is one of the reasons why, to the irritation of some of his students, he devoted so much time to it in his multi-year seminar-series on "Philosophical Nationality and Nationalism."[8] Derrida observes that Heidegger hears in Trakl's poetry the call of "a certain Germany – not the *de facto* national Germany [...] – " to become the place of the Land of Evening.[9] However, Derrida does not focus on the historical background of the myth in the George-Kreis, nor, in any detail, on Heidegger's enduring commitment to it – a commitment that Lacoue-Labarthe summarized well when he wrote that "the concern for the *single* Germany will have never left Heidegger."[10]

There is much to say about this theme of the Secret Germany, which not only lent itself to appropriation by the Third Reich but was also, in Claus von Stauffenberg's attempt on Hitler's life in July 1944, the battle cry for its overthrow. However, in reply to a question by Rose about this, I will just offer the following remarks.[11] The Secret Germany refers to the belief that the fate of the West and indeed of the entire globe depends on a select group of German thinkers (if not just one thinker) in dialogue with a select group of German poets (Hölderlin, above all, who is, in Hellingrath's words, "the most German poet"[12] and, in Heidegger's, "the poet of the Germans" [GA 39: 214/195, 220/201] and even "the most German of the Germans" [GA 16: 333]). For those with ears to hear (that is to say, for the true Germans or even, in one of Heidegger's tellings, the true Swabians), Hölderlin fundamentally speaks not of the Germany of party politics, administration,

and international diplomacy, nor of the Germany of newspapers, radio, and the university, but of the hidden Germany that is the Germany to come. As for its territory, the Secret Germany supposedly transcends, or better subtends, geographic and political borders, yet it cannot so easily be separated from such borders either, however tied to language or spirit it may be.

The Secret Germany is perhaps best encapsulated in a quotation from Hellingrath. In his 1915 lecture "Hölderlin and the Germans," Hellingrath attempts to make Hölderlin, not the cosmopolitan Goethe, the true voice of the Germans:

> We call ourselves the "people [*Volk*] of Goethe" because we see him as the highest that our tribe [*Stamm*] can achieve, as the highest thing that has grown on our trunk [*Stamm*], with his rich, well-rounded humanity, which compels even distant people who may not understand what is deepest about him to respect him. I call us the "people of Hölderlin" because it lies deep within the German essence that its innermost glowing core, which is infinitely far below the slag crust that is its surface, comes to light only in a *secret* Germany [*in einem* geheimen *Deutschland*], expresses itself in human beings who must at least be long dead before they can resonate and be seen, and in works that only ever confide their secret to a very few, indeed are completely silent to most, and are in all likelihood [*wohl*] never accessible to non-Germans; because this secret Germany is so certain of its intrinsic value or so innocently unfamiliar with its own significance that it makes no effort at all to be heard or seen. And because, if Goethe, despite his greatness and his true glow, was allowed to expand to such a breadth of existence that even those who lived with him, even his countryfolk, could not overlook him, Hölderlin is at the same time the greatest example of that concealed fire, that secret

> realm [*Reich*], that quiet, unnoticed configuration [*Bildwerdung*] of the divine glowing core.[13]

It would also take me too far astray to tell the story of Hellingrath's lecture, whose reach extends from Rilke and George through Heidegger and Carl Schmitt all the way to Goebbels and Hitler.[14] Instead, I will just note Heidegger's most glaring adaptation of Hellingrath's line of interpretation, which can be found in the 1934–1935 lecture course *Hölderlin's Hymns: "Germania" and "The Rhine"*: "The fatherland, our fatherland Germania – most forbidden, withdrawn from the haste of everyday life and the bustle of activity. The highest and therefore the most difficult, that which comes last, because fundamentally first – the origin withheld in silence [*der verschwiegene Ursprung*]" (GA 39: 4/4).[15]

To return to the first of the questions with which I began: can the other beginning be dissociated from the chauvinistic connotations of the myth of the Secret Germany? My answer, which begins a response to another one of Rose's questions, is yes, indeed even, on some level, in Heidegger's own thought. The oft-touted claim that Heidegger's philosophy and politics are *as such* inextricable strikes me, if meant literally, as narrow-minded, sensationalist, and empirically falsifiable. But this separation requires critical vigilance. I believe it requires us to see conflicting tendencies not only in Heidegger the man but in the place Heidegger inhabited, a place or *topos* that we have by no means left and that, according to Schürmann, we cannot as such leave. In his topology of the broken hegemony of modernity, Schürmann argues that the problem with the site occupied by Heidegger is not so much that there are both centripetal and centrifugal forces at work, but that Heidegger maximized the move to the center.[16] To shift metaphors, he allowed his vision to become monofocal, rather than heeding the double legislation at the base of reality – a *tragic* double bind from which there is no way out, but paying attention to which can help prevent the worst of tragedies. Heidegger's failure, on this reading, would consist in his disregard for the double bind, in tragically maximizing certain phenomena at the expense of all others and in blinding himself to their always imminent collapse. Schürmann believes Heidegger learned his

lesson in the 1930s, becoming like Oedipus at Colonus, but this cannot be right in view of the Trakl-material from the 1950s, in which I see an even more stubborn insistence on centralization.

How does this relate to the second question I posed above, namely: what would it mean to preserve the other beginning without the Secret Germany? What, in other words, would it mean to redeem the promise of the other beginning without succumbing to the nationalistic temptations of the Secret Germany (and here I mean more than Heidegger's misadventure with National Socialism). It would not mean centrifugality, singularity alone. It would not mean, as Schürmann often accused Derrida of doing, "consigning [...] the *archai* to the philosophical tools henceforth obsolete and then going off to settle happily in a place deprived of principles."[17] It would not mean unclenching from universals altogether. Rather, preserving the other beginning without the Secret Germany would mean recognizing the impossibility of simple legislation, of normative simplicity. It would mean a different sort of an-archy than the "without why" that Heidegger and the early Schürmann saw in Meister Eckhart and considered to be the highest form of life – a sort of an-archy that, while not entirely without metaphysics, nonetheless resists the pull toward hegemonic maximization.[18] It would mean recognizing both gathering and scattering, *Versammlung* and *dissémination*, as simultaneously legislative. In Schürmann's words:

> The transition toward the other beginning means the possible assent to conflictual being [*l'être conflictuel*]. The only salvation [*salut*] is to recognize unclenching [from hegemony] as legislating. [...] The other beginning indicates the awakening to the tragic condition [...]. It is an other, discordant time; an other, concealing-revealing truth; an other being-there, deferred by the possible; an other thinking, contentious because responsible for [non-sublatable] differing [*responsable du différend*]; an other being, turned against itself; an other originary speaking, where the No holds itself up against the Yes – these are so many figures of the

> double bind [*double prescription*] becoming, with the other beginning, the sole phenomenological issue.[19]

Yet, as Moreiras points out, Derrida also espouses something of a double bind in this remarkable passage of *Geschlecht III*:

> If there were only gathering, sameness, oneness, place without path, that would be death without further ado [*mort sans phrases*]. [. . .] To say that there is divisibility does not come down to saying that there is only divisibility or division either (that, too, would be death). Death lies in wait on both sides, on the side of the phantasm of the integrity of the proper place and the innocence of a sexual difference without war, and, on the opposite side, that of a radical impropriety or expropriation, or even a war of *Geschlecht* as sexual dissension.[20]

I will return to the issue of sexual difference momentarily. Here I just want to note that, whether or not Derrida would, in the end, go as far as to espouse the tragic double bind as Schürmann understands it, he is closer to Schürmann than the latter typically lets on.[21]

Coming now to the matter of pain, on which Moreiras focuses: preserving the other beginning without the Secret Germany would mean interpreting one of the Greek words for pain, *algos*, not only, with Heidegger, as a force of super-gathering (*alpha intensivum* + *legein*) (GA 9: 404/304–305), but also, and at the same time, as a counterforce of un-gathering (*alpha privativum* + *legein*). I admit I did not see this in my book, where I was concerned less with the tragic double bind than with stressing, against Heidegger, the ungathering at work in the traumatic life and poetry of Trakl. Heidegger's conception of pain, though partial, is thus not simply an analgesic, as I had contended.[22] The partiality of the pain that it safeguards nevertheless, and despite itself, feeds the fire of insurrectionary spirit.

I would say, then, that "pain is beyng itself" because it is a figure of the tragic double bind. Existentially, we become who we are in according with this double bind. Such accordance would, in my view, mark

the other beginning of thinking and being: "The human and pain otherwise, and only therein is the Other Thinking determined [*Mensch und Schmerz anders und nur darin beschlossen das Andere Denken*]."[23] Pain both gathers and scatters, indeed in such a way that we cannot take recourse to some *tertium*, to some higher court of appeal, that would resolve the tension for us. This is accordingly not a contradiction (*Widerspruch*) that could be resolved through logical clarification or dialectical sublation, but rather what Schürmann (after Wittgenstein and Lyotard) calls an irresolvable differing or "differend" (*Widerstreit*, *différend*). What, then, calls for thinking today? To think this painful differing not only at the level of our being, but at the level of being itself. Heidegger, less as a man or authority than as a symptom or discursive regularity of our "monstrous site,"[24] is exemplary to this end.

What I am suggesting in the epilogue of *Dialogue on the Threshold* is that we have much to learn not just from the Heidegger of the 1930s (on whom Schürmann focuses in *Broken Hegemonies*), but also from the postwar Heidegger, especially his lectures on Trakl from the early 1950s, despite the violence and combat – or rather, in some respects, given what I just said, *because* of the violence and combat.

Davies is right to ask "whether – and on what terms – any meaningful exchange between these two figures unfolds," especially in view of the German-nationalist agenda that, his protestations to the contrary notwithstanding,[25] Heidegger nevertheless paradoxically foists on Trakl – that is, on the drug-addled, Austrian poet in love with decay and obsessed with his sister, the poet who fantasized about leaving his homeland for Russia and once expressed the wish that all Germans would die by the executioner's axe, the self-avowed Protestant from Catholic Salzburg who was driven into a psychiatric ward and then to suicide by his extreme compassion for his wounded comrades at the battle of Gródek, the favorite poet of socialist writer Franz Fühmann and a privileged poet for serialist and atonal settings (including by Adorno), the poet whom Wittgenstein supported financially and of whom he once wrote: "Today [Ludwig von] Ficker sent me poems of poor Trakl,

which I find brilliant but do not understand. They did me good. God with me."[26] Can we really speak of a *Gespräch* here?

By "dialogue" in the book's title, I did mean, in part, to signal something closer to the combat that Davies outlines, namely, the "old quarrel between philosophy and poetry."[27] I would, however, hesitate to relegate this dialogue to metaphysics simply speaking (in Heidegger's pejorative sense of the word) and hence to conflate it with German *Dialog* (in Heidegger's restricted understanding of the word). For, in this quarrel between Heidegger's philosophy and Trakl's poetry, there are moments of *Gespräch*, moments in which Heidegger not only helps to open the poetic word to thinking (here I have in mind his stress on global perdition [*Unheil*] and on the holy [*das Heilige*] and the possibility of healing [*Heilung*] and salvation [*Heil*] in Trakl's poetry) but also lets himself be claimed by the language of the poetic word. Heidegger, the sexagenarian philosopher from Meßkirch, is confronted with the need to deal, more or less directly, with Trakl's themes of sexual difference, incest, decay, pain, animality, color theory, salvation, and eschatology, themes often kept outside the domicile and domain of legitimate philosophical discourse and inquiry. Even if he polices the threshold, Heidegger, to his credit, is not entirely inhospitable to the *poète maudit*.[28] Or, to shift directions, even if he does not venture as far as Trakl invites, and even if he turns back in, Heidegger, to his credit, crosses the threshold. To reply directly to Davies and Rose: I see my book not only as "rehabilitat[ing] the possibility of a genuine conversation," as Davies writes, but, additionally, as taking Heidegger further, even as I am also trying to bring myself and my readers to, as Mikhail Bakhtin puts it, the "*threshold[s]* of final decision."[29]

One such threshold, to recall my earlier remarks, concerns the scope of our concern: do we privilege the particular or the universal? Do we grant validity only to one, or do we attempt to hold them together and, if so, as sublatable or as an insuperable double bind? Another threshold of final decision, to which I return frequently in the book, is between Christ and "beyng." A third, related threshold, and with this I take up Davies's later remarks, is whether gender, and in particular

the feminine, matters for philosophy or "thinking." In a few places throughout his oeuvre, Heidegger answers in the affirmative.

Perhaps the most noteworthy place in which Heidegger crosses this last threshold (if only momentarily) is in his second Trakl-lecture, "Language in the Poem." Heidegger recognizes the importance of the figure of the sister for Trakl, in whose poetry she often appears as a symbol for security or transfiguration, but also for guilt or agony. Heidegger also recognizes the possibility of a gentle, primal sexual difference at the very origin of being and language, prior to its calamitous lapse into discord. Further, recent research at the Germany Literary Archive also turned up a thoroughgoing preoccupation with the figure of the sister in notes Heidegger presumably wrote in preparation for "Language in the Poem." One note resembles an indexical entry, in which Heidegger jots down page numbers for over a dozen references to the "sister" in his copy of the Salzburg edition of Trakl's collected works.[30] It is but one of nearly one thousand pages of notes on Trakl in Heidegger's literary remains and should give us a sense for the immense labor he put into what would become just two lectures on the poet, lectures in which Heidegger was also, by the way, trying to come to terms with the past and ingratiate himself with the conservative postwar elite.[31]

Nevertheless, despite his recognition of and research into the figure of the sister, Heidegger severs her ties to body and blood, particularly that of *Blutschuld*, which literally means "blood guilt" or "blood crime" but also refers to incest in Trakl. (It should also be remembered that Trakl considered his poetry to be partial expiation for sin, which incest epitomized for him.) Heidegger then systematically subordinates the sister – along with Trakl's "wild blue game," with which she is often linked – to the figure of the masculine stranger, whom she – and we in her wake – are called on to follow beyond or beneath the degenerate cast of the contemporary *Geschlecht* into a purified *Abend-Land. This*, in spite of her leadership in many of Trakl's poems, and in spite of her strange amalgamation with Christ as a promise of a gentler sexual difference and an androgynous *O N E Geschlecht*.[32]

What is going on here? A double reading, it seems to me, is called for. The feminine is indeed subordinated to and, if not exactly erased, at least obscured by the masculine. As Davies shows, this is not the first time we see such subordination or erasure in Heidegger's life and thought. Yet, for all the evasion and suppression, where else does Heidegger, with such intensity and risk, lend an ear to, in Trakl's words from the poem "Geistliche Dämmerung" ("Spiritual Twilight"), "the lunar voice of the sister that ever sounds through the spiritual night" (*Immer tönt der Schwester mondene Stimme / Durch die geistliche Nacht*)? Where else does the twofoldness of being itself (and not simply of a region of beings) so closely overlap with sexual difference?[33] Where else, Derrida asks, can we find anything like this engagement of thinker and poet that is not in turn indebted to Heidegger? Derrida continues, and here I echo him: "if anyone among you can provide a counterexample, from another culture or another language, the example of an analogous attempt that is not tied to the German language and that does not suppose Heidegger's path-breaking [endeavor], this would be of the utmost interest."[34]

Davies wonders whether Heidegger's "*Dialog*" with Trakl is a stillbirth. Perhaps it was a stillbirth *for Heidegger*, insofar as he recoiled from and, especially in the case of animality, subsequently disowned that to which his encounter with Trakl had given birth. However, *for us*, the texts survive. The children live on. And, I hope to have shown, they have much to teach us.

NOTES

1 One of Trakl's most important and well-known compositions, and "perhaps the most iconic World War One poem in the German language" (Rüdiger Görner, "Georg Trakl," in *A History of World War One Poetry*, ed. Jane Potter [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press], 424–40 [429]), "Gródek" takes its title from the battle that eventually drove Trakl to the point of suicide. I am no longer satisfied with the translation of Trakl's poem that I offered in my book (*Dialogue on the Threshold: Heidegger and Trakl* [Albany: SUNY Press, 2022), 140–41, 222–23, 289–91). Here is how I would instead render "Gródek" today:

> In the evening the autumn woods resound
> With deadly weapons, the golden plains
> And blue lakes, over which the sun
> More gloomily rolls on; the night envelops
> Dying warriors, the wild lamentation
> Of their shattered mouths.
> Yet calmly in the willow vale red clouds,
> Indwelt by a raging god, take shape,
> The blood that was shed, lunar coolness;
> All roads open onto black decay.
> Under golden boughs of night and stars
> The shadow of the sister sways through the silent grove
> To greet the spirits of the heroes, the bleeding heads;
> And softly the dark flutes of autumn resound in the reeds.
> Oh, prouder grief! you brazen alters,
> The hot flame of spirit is nourished today by a mighty pain,
> The unborn grandchildren.
>
> *Am Abend tönen die herbstlichen Wälder*
> *Von tödlichen Waffen, die goldnen Ebenen*
> *Und blauen Seen, darüber die Sonne*
> *Düstrer hinrollt; umfängt die Nacht*
> *Sterbende Krieger, die wilde Klage*

Ihrer zerbrochenen Münder.
Doch stille sammelt im Weidengrund
Rotes Gewölk, darin ein zürnender Gott wohnt,
Das vergossne Blut sich, mondne Kühle;
Alle Straßen münden in schwarze Verwesung.
Unter goldnem Gezweig der Nacht und Sternen
Es schwankt der Schwester Schatten durch den schweigenden Hain,
Zu grüßen die Geister der Helden, die blutenden Häupter;
Und leise tönen im Rohr die dunkeln Flöten des Herbstes.
O stolzere Trauer! ihr ehernen Altäre,
Die heiße Flamme des Geistes nährt heute ein gewaltiger Schmerz,
Die ungebornen Enkel.

2 Heidegger's personal copy of Georg Trakl, *Die Dichtungen: Gesamtausgabe, mit einem Anhang Zeugnisse und Erinnerungen*, ed. Kurt Horwitz (Zurich: Die Arche, 1946), located in the Martin-Heidegger-Archiv der Stadt Meßkirch (as cited, with a photograph of Heidegger's annotation, in Moore, *Dialogue on the Threshold*, 97, 223).

3 David Farrell Krell, *Lunar Voices: Of Tragedy, Poetry, Fiction, and Thought* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 61.

4 Jacques Derrida, *Geschlecht III: Sexe, race, nation, humanité*, ed. Geoffrey Bennington, Katie Chenoweth, and Rodrigo Therezo (Paris: Seuil, 2018) / *Geschlecht III: Sex, Race, Nation, Humanity*, trans. Chenoweth and Therezo (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2020).

5 I was also fortunate to be able to read a draft of Charles Bambach's *Of an Alien Homecoming: Reading Heidegger's "Hölderlin"* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2022) during this time. See especially chapter 1, sections II–III, as well as the forum on his book published in *Gatherings* volume 14. For Heidegger's direct references to the Secret Germany, see GA 16: 290; GA 94: 154–55/114.

6 As reported in a letter from Gerhard Stroomann to Ludwig von Ficker, August 25, 1952, in Nachlass Ludwig von Ficker, call number 041-048-025-001, http://edition.ficker-gesamtbriefwechsel.

net/#/briefe/nach-partnerinnen/eb9e7a4c-d896-4b88-a6d3-0885d1960072. Here and below, translations for which I do not cite an English edition are my own.

7 Reiner Schürmann, *Des hégémonies brisées*, 2nd edition (Zurich: Diaphanes, 2017) / *Broken Hegemonies*, trans. Reginald Lilly (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003). See also the précis in Reiner Schürmann, "'Only Proteus Can Save Us Now': On Anarchy and Broken Hegemonies," ed. Francesco Guercio and Ian Alexander Moore, *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal* 42, no. 1 (2021): 53–90 (70–81).

8 On the larger context of the series (especially the 1984–1985 seminar, from which the sessions on Trakl have been extracted), see Herman Rapaport, *Derrida on Exile and the Nation: Reading Fantom of the Other* (London: Bloomsbury, 2021). The first session of the 1984–1985 seminar is available under the title "Onto-Theology of National Humanism (Prolegomena to a Hypothesis)," *Oxford Literary Review* 14, no. 1 (1992): 3–23. On *Geschlecht III* in the context of Derrida's other three texts on *Geschlecht* in Heidegger, see David Farrell Krell, *Phantoms of the Other: Four Generations of Derrida's* Geschlecht (Albany: SUNY Press, 2015).

9 Derrida, *Geschlecht III*, 156/137.

10 Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, "Présentation," in Martin Heidegger, *La pauvreté (die Armut)* (Strasbourg: Presses universitaires de Strasbourg, 2004), 21.

11 These remarks build on a lecture I gave at Brown University in April 2024. The lecture will be published under the title "Von Hellingrath's Hölderlin, Heidegger's Poetics, and the Myth of the Secret Germany" in a volume edited by Ioannis Dimopulos and Kristina Mendicino (De Gruyter).

12 Norbert von Hellingrath, *Zwei Vorträge: Hölderlin und die Deutschen, Hölderlins Wahnsinn*, 2nd edition (Munich: Bruckmann, 1922), 22.

13 Ibid., 16–17.

14 See Wolfgang Martynkewicz, *Salon Deutschland: Geist und Macht 1900–1945* (Berlin: Aufbau, 2009), 257–306, and *Norbert von Hellingrath und die Ästhetik der europäischen Moderne*, ed. Jürgen Brokoff, Joachim Jacob, and Marcel Lepper (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2014).

15 Heidegger is referring more directly to a Hölderlin-fragment in the fourth volume of Hellingrath's edition of the poet: "Concerning what is highest, I will be silent [*schweigen*]. / Forbidden fruit, like the laurel, is, however, / Above all the fatherland. Such, however, each / Shall taste last" (cited in GA 39: 4/4). But notice how the first part of the lecture course begins: "We shall now read and listen to the poem 'Germania.' The authoritative edition from which I cite is the six-volume edition of Norbert von Hellingrath and his friends. [...] Perhaps the German youth will one day come to remember the creator of their Hölderlin edition, Norbert von Hellingrath, who, at the age of twenty-eight, was killed in action at Verdun in 1916—or perhaps they will not" (GA 39: 9/9).

16 See the final four chapters of Schürmann, *Des hégémonies brisées / Broken Hegemonies*.

17 Schürmann, *Des hégémonies brisées*, 724 / *Broken Hegemonies*, 630.

18 Contrast, on the one hand, GA 10: 57–58/37 and Schürmann's *Maître Eckhart ou la joie errante: Sermons allemands* (Paris: Payot & Rivages, 2005; first published in 1972), 197 / *Wandering Joy: Meister Eckhart's Mystical Philosophy* (Great Barrington, MA: Lindisfarne, 2001), 116–17 with, on the other, *Des hégémonies brisées*, 722 / *Broken Hegemonies*, 629. On the "without why" in Eckhart (*âne/sunder warumbe* in Middle High German, *sine principio* in Latin), see, for example, Meister Eckhart, *Die deutschen und lateinischen Werke*, herausgegeben im Auftrag der Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft, 11 vols. (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1936–), DW 1: 90,11–91,2; LW 3: 16, §19.

19 Schürmann, *Des hégémonies brisées*, 648, 659, 661 / *Broken Hegemonies* 562, 571, 573 (modified).

20 Derrida, *Geschlecht III*, 106–107/81–82 (modified).

21 On several occasions, Schürmann quotes, out of context, the following passage from Derrida's early work in order to situate him on the side of transgression and hence to distinguish him from Schürmann's own position of double legislation or legislation-*sive*-transgression: "[one can] decide to change terrain, in a discontinuous and irruptive fashion, by brutally placing oneself outside, and by affirming an absolute break." Jacques Derrida, *Marges de la philosophie* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1972), 162 / *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 135. Yet this is a caricature of Derrida. For a more nuanced reading, see Schürmann's lecture course *Systems and Breaks: On Foucault and Derrida*, ed. David McCullough and Ian Alexander Moore (Zurich: Diaphanes, forthcoming).

22 Moore, *Dialogue on the Threshold*, 134.

23 Martin Heidegger, *Über den Schmerz*, ed. Dietmar Koch and Klaus Neugebauer, *Jahresgabe der Martin-Heidegger-Gesellschaft* (2017–2018), 50–51. (I have emended the editors' transcription of *anderes* to *anders* based on the facsimile of Heidegger's manuscript on page 26.) Contrast this conception of pain as an irresolvable double bind with Heidegger's pacification of the phenomenon: "it [the essence of pain] is beyng itself! Because this is, inceptively, grace and the gentle—the never-urging—but rather always only serene, consensual in beings, what speaks assuringly, hence the gathering of releasement: indwelling is not 'work' and action, but rather the wholly Other—namely, the *determinative attuning* of the human to his inceptive essence [*es das Seyn selbst! Denn dieses anfänglich die Huld und das Sanfte—die Nie-drängende—sondern stets nur still, einvernehmlich im Seienden, Zu-sprechende deshalb die Ge-lassenheit: die Inständigkeit ist nicht 'Arbeit' und Aktion, sondern das ganz Andere—nämlich die* Be-stimmtheit *des Menschen in sein anfängliches Wesen*]." Ibid., 50.

24 Schürmann, *Des hégémonies brisées*, 593 / *Broken Hegemonies*, 515. See also Francesco Guercio and Ian Alexander Moore,

"Heidegger, Our Monstrous Site: On Reiner Schürmann's Reading of the *Beiträge*," *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal* 42, no. 1 (2021): 93–114.

25 See, for example, GA 9: 338/257, 341–42/260, as well as the eleventh session of Derrida, *Geschlecht III*.

26 Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Geheime Tagebücher 1914–1916*, ed. Wilhelm Baum (Vienna: Turia & Kant, 1991), 45–46.

27 *Plato's Republic: The Greek Text*, vol. 1, ed. B. Jowett and Lewis Campbell (Oxford: Clarendon, 1894), 607b6.

28 Benjamin Brewer takes up the "problem of *hospitality*" as "the dilemma of the threshold par excellence" in his review of *Dialogue on the Threshold*. See Brewer, "Difficult Conversations," *Research in Phenomenology* 54 (2024): 123–30 (125). Other reviews of the book have since appeared in *Symposium* (2024), https://www.c-scp.org/2024/11/15/ian-alexander-moore-dialogue-on-the-threshold-heidegger-and-trakl (by Harris B. Bechtol); *Gatherings: The Heidegger Circle Annual* 14 (2024): 227–235 (by David Farrell Krell); and *Filosofický časopis* 3 (2024): 534–536 (by Aleš Nóvak).

29 Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, ed. and trans. Caryl Emerson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 61.

30 "Konvolut: Notizen zu Georg Trakl," Deutsches Literaturarchiv Marbach, call number 75.7372,3, page 40. Pages 39–55 are devoted to the theme of the sister.

31 On the setting and social-political context of Heidegger's Trakl-lectures, see chapter 1 of *Dialogue on the Threshold* and especially the booklet that resulted from the research I conducted with Tobias Keiling after preparing my monograph for publication: Keiling and Moore, *Heidegger (und Trakl) auf der Bühlerhöhe* (Marbach am Neckar: Deutsche Schillergesellschaft, 2023). The latter has been published in English with revisions under the title "Spoiling the Party? Heidegger's Lectures on Trakl at Spa Bühlerhöhe," *b2o Review* (December 15, 2023), https://www.boundary2.org/2023/12/tobias-keiling-and-ian-alexander-moore-

spoiling-the-party-heideggers-lectures-on-trakl-at-spa-buhler-hohe/.

32 See Trakl's poems "Passion" (first version) and "Abendländisches Lied" ("Song of the Occident"), as well as Richard Detsch, *Georg Trakl's Poetry: Toward a Union of Opposites* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1983), part I. Cf. GA 12: 74–75/195.

33 For more on the productive potentials and limitations of sexual difference in "Language in the Poem," see, for example, Ellen T. Armour's essay "'Through Flame or Ashes': Traces of Difference on *Geist*'s Return," in *Feminist Interpretations of Martin Heidegger*, ed. Nancy J. Holland and Patricia Huntington (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001), 316–33, which draws on the work of Derrida and Irigaray. Irigaray, for her part, comments briefly on Heidegger's curious consignment of the possibility of a new dawn to Trakl's figure of the dead boy in *L'Oubli de l'air chez Martin Heidegger* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1983), 108–109 / *The Forgetting of Air in Martin Heidegger*, trans. Mary Beth Mader (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1999), 119–20. See also Irigaray's edited volume, *Challenging a Fictitious Neutrality: Heidegger in Question* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022).

34 Derrida, *Geschlecht III*, 161/141.

BOOK REVIEW

Marilyn Stendera and Emily Hughes's *Heidegger's Alternative History of Time*

Shawn Loht

Marilyn Stendera and Emily Hughes. *Heidegger's Alternative History of Time*. New York: Routledge, 2024. 231 pages.

This book aims to reassess Heidegger's philosophy of time in light of leading views in the scholarship that Heidegger's treatment of time is fragmentary and incomplete, if not generally incoherent. Stendera and Hughes (hereafter referred to as "the authors") propose that, although the fragmentary nature of Heidegger's philosophy of temporality cannot be overcome, it is nonetheless possible to stitch together a coherent picture of this philosophy that avoids the incompleteness charge (1, 4). The authors' primary approach in tackling this challenging subject is to identify and dissect the encounters between Heidegger and the historically decisive philosophers that figure into his work. Analyzing these various encounters (with Aristotle, Kant, Bergson, and numerous others) provides a behind-the-scenes look at what motivates Heidegger's philosophy of time, what his work adds to the Western canon on this topic, and unexplored routes Heidegger either fails to address or else does not adequately develop. The book covers seven core figures in their own dedicated chapters, in addition to several minor figures that are taken up in three "Preamble" chapters.

The book opens with a survey of current scholarly positions on Heidegger's accounts of time and temporality, followed by an overview of Heidegger's core framework. A key distinction that the authors

Gatherings: The Heidegger Circle Annual 15 (2025): 255–66

draw on repeatedly in the subsequent body chapters of the book is the "four-dimensionality" of Heidegger's overall account of time. By this term, the authors mean, on one hand, the threefold ecstatic structure of temporality that Heidegger describes in Division II of *Being and Time*. On the other hand, by the "fourth dimension" the authors mean the later Heidegger's conception of the "Time of Being," or "horizonal Temporality," whereby temporality is read in terms of *Es gibt*, "It gives" or "There is" time, in the guise of appropriation or *aletheia*.

The first Preamble, devoted to Heidegger's engagement with the Presocratics and related ancients, marks out a vision of time read as a primordial givenness from without, not reducible to subjectivity or objectivity (25). The treatment here is brief, but the themes are echoed in subsequent chapters. The book's first major chapter studies Aristotle's account of time in the *Physics*. A number of themes at work in this chapter foreground the remainder of the book. The authors observe that while Aristotle represents for Heidegger the basic starting- and end-point for all philosophical grappling with time in the history of Western thought (52–53), Heidegger also finds Aristotle's philosophy of time to be narrow in a manner that ignores the time of lived experience. The authors highlight a number of instances in which Heidegger observes in Aristotle the seeds of a more originary temporality, but which Aristotle himself does not develop as he focuses on treating time from the side of nature. The main Heidegger text cited here is *Basic Problems of Phenomenology* (GA 24). As is well-known, Aristotle defines time in *Physics* IV.11 as "a number belonging to change with respect to the before and after" (49). The basic element of time for Aristotle is the "now," the instant that divides before from after and which is constantly changing, like a point moving on a never-ending line. While Heidegger gives credence to Aristotle's account of time as definitive for describing the everyday experience of it, particularly, the derivation of time from the present (54), Heidegger also finds that this account neglects the lived, ecstatic temporality in which the now contains within itself both past and future. Because Aristotle's account of time limits its

basic unit to the now (reading time solely in terms of present things), the subjectivity of temporal experience is not thematized (49).

Aristotle's emphasis on time as countable likewise expresses for Heidegger an orientation geared toward beings conceived as abstracted, quantifiable presence (56). However, Heidegger also observes that viewing time as inherently countable again requires the presence of a subject. This is not to say that time is a subjective phenomenon, but it suggests a notion of time as an ecstasis of the soul (57). Finally, a last decisive element the authors cite in Heidegger's encounter with Aristotle is Heidegger's recasting of the "before" and "after" in Aristotle's definition of time with "earlier" and "later," considering these in terms of horizonal structures informing the number of changes with respect to before and after. This move has the phenomenological benefit of recontextualizing the basic element of the "now" within a larger ecstatic "stretch." In other words, the "now" is no longer simply the basic unit of time, but referred out to the expansive, lived context in which it occurs (58). This move also affords Heidegger the benefit of transcending the view in which the temporal is grounded solely in change and magnitude (58), rendering its origins non-temporal. The authors round out this discussion with a look at how scholars have criticized Heidegger's recasting of Aristotle on time. Most notably, according to John Protevi, Heidegger's replacement of before and after with earlier and later risks removing the phenomenon of space from time. According to this view, Heidegger's move to redefine Aristotelian time in terms of ecstatic temporality ignores that time is essentially referred to space, as opposed simply to an interior ecstatic state of Dasein (59). The authors conclude from this and other sources of tension in Heidegger's account of Aristotle that Heidegger understands the contradictions overall, and that there is a dynamism of revealing and concealing at work in the phenomena in question. In other words, the contradictions are not resolvable, but fundamental to the phenomenon of time and to the difficulty in describing it in univocal terms (59–60).

The next chapter takes up the philosophy of time in Plotinus, a figure who, the authors admit, has only a scant presence in Heidegger's

work. Although the selection of Plotinus for this application is hermeneutically fraught, the approach is best understood as outlining the philosophical kinship between Plotinus and Heidegger on the issue of time. The authors do not make a case that Plotinus is significantly influential upon Heidegger in any meaningful way. The majority of this chapter dissects Plotinus's account of time particularly as this concept is derivative from Soul, and distinct from eternity. As the authors describe, time for Plotinus is the movement of Soul (68). Time is not the measure of motion, but rather inherent to Soul insofar as Soul represents the motion of the cosmos. While eternity refers to the a-temporal aspects of the One and the Intellect, time comprises a derivative, lesser emanation of being. The relevance the authors find in these themes vis-à-vis Heidegger's philosophy include the following. Plotinus clearly recognizes that prior philosophical accounts overlook the question of what time itself is when they refer time to phenomena such as motion. Yet, when Plotinus assigns eternity to an a-temporal dimension of being, he overlooks the neglected question of why being connects to time at all (74–75). On a more positive note, the authors point out, in characterizing time as derivative from yet concomitant with Soul, Plotinus effectively previews Heidegger's later account of temporality conceived as an ecstasis of Dasein. Indeed, the authors note that Plotinus is the first philosopher to say that time "temporalizes" itself – he is the first to render the word *chronos* into a verb (75). Finally, the authors persuasively suggest that the vision of finitude emerging out of Plotinus's vision of time aligns with Heidegger's characterization of fallenness. Because Plotinus describes time as essentially belonging to all things, set over against the concept of eternity, this drives the fact that all things, including Soul, exist in a state of decay and decomposition (73–77). A (minor) point of criticism I note here is that this chapter's inclusion seems questionable, given that Heidegger's own philosophy of time is not strongly indebted to Plotinus. From a principle of charity, it seems as if the authors are most motivated to sketch a moment in the history of the philosophy of time that aligns with themes Heidegger takes up in his own work.

The next chapters cover Augustine through Kant, highlighting moments in which Heidegger thematizes the contrast of time read as a subjective experience versus an objective phenomenon. Augustine's philosophy of time in *Confessions* XI is well-known for its characterization of time as a subjective experience, originating in the soul's ecstatic, three-fold present. The authors note that in the main, Heidegger (in *Being and Time*; *Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*; and *The Phenomenology of Religious Life*) criticizes Augustine on the grounds that he both privileges the "now" as the fundamental temporal mode and nonetheless reads time in terms of subjective experience (84). Augustine ends up repeating the Aristotelian model without adding anything new (86). Whereas, as Heidegger writes in *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, to describe time phenomenologically requires transcending the subjective/objective paradigm (86). However, the authors also note that other, less-read texts not yet translated into English suggest that Heidegger finds some favorable elements in Augustine as well. These are the 1930–31 Freiburg seminar entitled "Augustine, *Confessions* XI (*De tempore*)" (GA 83) and the 1930 lecture given at Beuron monastery, entitled "Saint Augustine's Meditation on Time" (GA 80). As the authors summarize, in these texts Heidegger reads Augustine's account of the ecstatic nature of time as an "out-stretchedness" of the human being, a holding of oneself. On this ground, Augustine's account of time becomes a precursor to Heidegger's description of the temporality of Dasein (86–87). Heidegger reads Augustine here to acknowledge that time is the essence of human existence (87). Another significant element the authors observe in these same writings is that Heidegger finds his own concept of attunement (*Befindlichkeit*) to have an analogue in Augustine's notion of affect (*affectio*), by virtue of Augustine's observation that affect can impact one's disclosure of time (87). Insofar as (for Heidegger) certain fundamental attunements can reveal the entirety of temporality, Heidegger likewise suggests that Augustine's appreciation of this role of affect reveals an appreciation on Augustine's part that time is both constitutive of human existence and an event or

happening that unconceals itself, thus previewing Heidegger's notion of the Time of Being (87–88).

Following the chapter on Augustine, the second Preamble treats Heidegger's encounters with Descartes, Newton, and Leibniz. The coverage of each figure is quite brief, more or less presenting sound bites that are not essential for the book's argumentative course. Most noteworthy here is the authors' analysis of the relevance of Descartes for Heidegger. The authors focus on Descartes's way of characterizing time as, at once, the duration of interior experience that can be applied to things external to oneself, whereby time straddles mind-body dualism. This overview nicely reinforces the general position at work in the book, that, from a Heideggerian perspective, the history of the philosophy of time coheres around attempts at reconciling time's subjectivity with time conceived as an objective property of things (and, that the pervasiveness of this paradigm has decisive philosophical implications) (100–101). In Descartes's case, the casting of time within mind-body dualism ends up removing the temporality of being-in-the-world from human existence (101–102). This brief analysis of Descartes leads nicely into the much longer engagement with Heidegger's encounter with Kant.

Taking up Heidegger's encounter with Kant, the authors highlight that Kant encapsulates all of the key tensions regarding the philosophy of time covered in the preceding chapters (110). In addition, the authors remark that given Kant's claim in the first *Critique* that time is both empirically real and transcendentally ideal, this claim offers an historical inflection point (for Heidegger) by virtue of identifying time as both structuring experience and shaping cognition (110). The authors do an impressive job of summarizing both Kant, and Heidegger on Kant, in a short space. Although, given that his writings on Kant are where Heidegger most thoroughly engages another philosopher in advancing own his account of temporality, more space devoted to this very challenging and provocative material would be welcome. The account the authors provide here is confined primarily to the essential points. The authors highlight Heidegger's focus on imagination in Kant, which Heidegger interprets as

an unspoken dimension of temporality Kant either fails to comprehend or else shrinks away from pursuing. Heidegger for his part holds that implicit in Kant is temporality read as originating from Dasein's future-directed faculty of imagination, and affecting Dasein from without, by virtue of providing the horizon within which Dasein's experience of world moves (115–16). Vis-à-vis the historically influential arguments regarding time as subjective or objective, Heidegger's insight on Kant is that time is both of these: "Heidegger claims that Kant invites us to reconceptualize what each of these terms might mean: in order to adequately understand what it is for time to be 'objective,' we need to stop equating this with the status of present-at-hand or extant objects" (116). And similarly, "the subjectivity that is actually at issue here, the self that is wrapped up in time, must instead be characterized in terms of finitude and time's *self-affection*" (116). Somewhat distracting in this chapter is the authors' devotion of a good bit of space to positions in the scholarship regarding how faithful Heidegger's reading of Kant is, viz., whether Heidegger gets Kant right, and if not, what the impact is. The authors initially say they are not going to go down this road (115), before raising the topic again later, as if it is obligatory (120). While I grant that Heidegger's reading of Kant is inventive and provocative, all one really needs to say for this book's purview is that Heidegger purports to discover in Kant something that Kant himself missed, and that Heidegger runs with this discovery in his own account of temporality. Precisely what takeaway the authors want the reader to draw remains unclear. It is quite informative already to restrict the focus to how this text motivates Heidegger's conception of the Time of Being.

Chapter 5, on Hegel, does not leverage a major position regarding Hegel's influence upon Heidegger. But the authors do formulate a key point about the former's importance for the latter. The authors summarize Heidegger's criticism of how Hegel understands time, with some remarks at the chapter's end regarding the alignment between the two figures on the notion of negation. Heidegger's principal criticism hinges on Hegel's claim that when Spirit becomes objective, time becomes sublated into the Absolute concept. Whereas prior to subjective

Spirit becoming objective, time expresses the moments of negation by which the subject unifies itself with the world. Once subjective Spirit has become objective Spirit, this negation no longer takes place. This means that, with history now at an end, time becomes absorbed into the Absolute, the world now becomes an eternal present (133–34). The authors highlight that, while for Hegel negation has a productive function in subordinating time to being, Heidegger importantly reads the role of negation in reverse: being is subordinate to time. Citing GA 68, the authors write that for Heidegger, "at the crossroads of finitude and infinity, the strife of the abyssal nothing must be endured, precisely because it constitutes the negativity – the nothing, absence, non-presence, withdrawal, difference, deferral, or *trace* – *through which* the question of the Time of Being might be disclosively unconcealed" (135). In sum, the authors suggest that Heidegger's extensive studies of Hegel inform a dimension of negativity Heidegger employs in his own work to adduce the hidden origin of the Time of Being.

The chapter devoted to Hegel is followed by the third Preamble. Here the authors devote some informative though brief space to the concept of time as treated by Albert Einstein, William James, Franz Brentano, Søren Kierkegaard, and Friedrich Nietzsche, highlighting the relevance of these figures to Heidegger. Of Heidegger's sparse engagements with Einstein, the authors observe that his main position emphasizes that Einstein's standpoint never transcends physics. Einstein's purported recasting of the concept of time through relativity only speaks to the measurement of time, rather than time itself considered from a metaphysical standpoint (148–49). With the analysis of James and Brentano, a richer picture of the seeds for Heidegger's own account of temporality comes into focus. The authors highlight that although Heidegger never directly engages with these two figures on the issue of time, both nonetheless lay critical groundwork for thinking about time in ecstatic terms and transcending the empty abstraction of the Aristotelian notion of time as a series of instants. Both James and Brentano advance accounts of time suggesting that the human experience of the present is always backward-stretching

and forward-looking, such that the present is never merely the present (149–52). This analysis is helpful given that James and Brentano are not often cited alongside Heidegger on the topic of time. Of most note in the sections that remain on Kierkegaard and Nietzsche is Heidegger's critique of the former; the authors question whether Heidegger's critique of Kierkegaard passes muster. Leveraging some positions in the scholarship, the authors highlight that, while Kierkegaard's conception of the "moment" and its role in achieving authentic temporality align strongly with Heidegger's own account of these in *Being and Time*, Heidegger (perhaps unduly) dismisses Kierkegaard on the ground that the latter's account never transcends the existentiell-ontic aspect of subjectivity, and thus, that it remains at the level of the ordinary view of time (154). Heidegger is unwilling to grant that Kierkegaard uncovers horizonal temporality as such. While I do not find it controversial here to claim that Heidegger's critique of Kierkegaard is dismissive, as with the treatment of Heidegger's encounter with Kant, the authors do not give a persuasive reason here for why the correctness or incorrectness of Heidegger's position matters in the scope of the book.

The last two main chapters are devoted to Henri Bergson and Edmund Husserl, respectively. The authors note that with these figures, the true precursors to Heidegger's account of temporality become visible, particularly as both Bergson and Husserl advance the views according to which time is fundamentally constitutive of experience (174, 181). These two chapters cover much more ground than I can summarize here. Perhaps most informative across both analyses is the authors' treatment of where Bergson and Husserl come up short relative to Heidegger's position. As the authors note in the case of Bergson, it is not perfectly clear why Heidegger seeks to distance himself from Bergson, when Bergson's notion of duration (*durée*) comes so close to the position Heidegger develops in *Being and Time*. And similarly, given the overlaps of Heidegger's ecstatic conception of temporality and Husserl's groundbreaking work on inner time-consciousness, one can raise the question of whether Heidegger's work accomplishes anything new. The authors address these questions by noting that Bergson and Husserl both seem to err, perhaps unwittingly,

on emphasizing the present in their accounts of time. This means that they fail to comprehend the critical dimension of temporality's temporalizing from the futural mode (176, 185–86). Both Bergson and Husserl remain trapped in reading time from the perspective of subjectivity (174, 186), such that they overlook the Time of Being and the latter's role in transcendence (176, 187–88).

In the final chapter, the authors address Heidegger's threefold, ecstatic account of temporality alongside his post-*Being and Time* positions regarding the Time of Being. As noted above, together these four pieces constitute what the authors term Heidegger's "four-dimensional" account of time. Rather than devoting significant space here to the origin and motivations of Heidegger's own philosophy of time, the authors primarily address the issue of unity across Heidegger's early-career and later accounts, in order to justify viewing Heidegger's philosophy of time overall as both complete and fragmented ("we argue that Heidegger's conception of time can and should be read as a fractured whole" (193); and similarly, "we argue that a coherent and compelling existential-ontological interpretation of originary time can be found in Heidegger's work" (195)). While the authors do not aim to overturn the reading of Blattner and others, according to which the *Being and Time* project fails to demonstrate how ordinary time derives from originary temporality (194), the authors' interest is to make a stronger case for how originary temporality and the Time of Being are complementary, in such a way that together they make a complete picture. The authors argue that this completeness is borne out in Heidegger's various attempts in the later works to describe the Time of Being on the basis of unconcealment and an "abyssal confrontation with nothingness" (195). Citing Heidegger's referring of the reader to *An Introduction to Metaphysics* in the preface to the seventh edition of *Being and Time*, the authors advocate reading the *Introduction*'s emphasis on the ontological difference; its theme of a confrontation with nothing, where being is described as the groundless ground; and its equation of *logos* as both gathering and gatheredness, all as expressive of the interplay of originary temporality and the Time of Being. In other words, the authors maintain that the *Introduction to*

Metaphysics provides a connecting link unifying Heidegger's earlier and later views. Several brief sections follow in which the authors adduce this position by citing various texts in the later Heidegger. The authors suggest that in these later treatments, where the Time of Being comes into focus, Heidegger's approach is formally indicative rather than seated in arguments: "We suggest that each repetition of Heidegger's interpretation of time can be interpreted as a disintegrated yet enduring attempt to unconceal rather than explain originary time" (195). Finally, the last sections of this chapter return to the accounts of the historical chapters, with the goal of highlighting how the key historical moments exemplified in Aristotle, Augustine, *et al.* each bear traces of Heidegger's vision of the alignment of originary temporality with the Time of Being. In other words, the authors hold that (as analyzed in the historical chapters) Heidegger's encounters with seminal philosophers of time are of a piece with Heidegger's own complete, yet fragmented philosophy of time. It is here that the appropriateness of the book's title, *Heidegger's Alternative History of Time*, becomes visible. Heidegger's alternative history of time is ontological rather than chronological.

This book, while rather short at just over 200 pages, is both very sprawling and very focused. A text twice as long would certainly be justifiable; however, the authors do an excellent job of covering much historical territory while keeping it manageable. The thematic argument regarding time's manifestation in the history of philosophy (and in Heidegger's version of this history) in alternate guises of objectivity and subjectivity is persuasive. The core argument regarding the completeness of Heidegger's philosophy of time is also persuasive, if a bit formal and tidy. Overall, the scope of the work is inventive and provocative, and the authors' findings will be important for Heidegger scholars to study.

The main points of criticism I offer regard the execution of the book's total project rather than specific arguments the book advances. First, given that the historical narrative conveyed across the book's main chapters does not correspond to the genesis of Heidegger's own philosophy of time, the presentation risks entailing a false chronology. Only with the concluding chapter does it become clear that the authors intend for

the historical moments analyzed in the main chapters to represent simply genetic components of Heidegger's philosophy of time rather than a chronology. It might have been more effective for the main chapters to proceed thematically rather than upon a chronology of historical moments. The approach adopted by the authors potentially obscures the book's broader claims that Heidegger's philosophy of time is both fragmentary and complete, as the historically-inflected dimension of the authors' account suggests a linear development on Heidegger's part. In effect, once one completes the final chapter, the direction of the book has shifted rather starkly. Secondly and on a related note, because the authors want to adduce a progressive view of how each historical figure anticipates or contains seeds of Heidegger's own philosophy of time, the authors put themselves in an awkward position from the start by assuming the reader has a full understanding of Heidegger's philosophy of time and the ambiguities contained in it. The book's introductory chapter, while setting some of the stage regarding Heidegger's philosophy of time, probably should give a much fuller treatment of this material before transitioning to the historical chapters, where a rather complete understanding of Heidegger's philosophy of time is presupposed. I found this aspect particularly challenging in context of what the authors refer to throughout as the "four-dimensionality of time," as well as "the Time of Being." Because these concepts and their genesis are not sufficiently worked out at the beginning of the text, it is not always clear why they are relevant when the historical chapters refer to them. To my mind, the larger issue here (probably unrealistic to expect the authors to tackle), is that it is difficult to treat either Heidegger's philosophy of time, or the historical seeds of its development, in isolation from one another.

BOOK REVIEW

Erik Kuravsky's *Transcendence in Heidegger's Early Thought: Toward Being as Event*

Miles Groth

Erik Kuravsky. *Transcendence in Heidegger's Early Thought: Toward Being as Event*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023. 330 pages.

The epigraph of the present volume is a quotation from lectures on ancient philosophy by Merab Mamardashvili (1930–1990), a little known Georgian philosopher for whom the author has a strong affinity: "What acts in us is that which does not depend on us, and the positing of something in the world by us is, in fact, the manifestation of the actions of this 'something' in us: transcendence."[1] Impetus for the volume is found in an interview with William J. Richardson from May 2015, in Messkirch, in which the much revered scholar expressed concern (in the author's paraphrase) about "a lack of transcendence and an understanding of Dasein as transcending," which Richardson took to be a flaw in the so-called "new paradigm" of Heidegger scholarship in Europe and the States that has led to the need to remedy what he perceived to be an absence in the "contemporary discourse" on Heidegger. The reference to Richardson is contained in the opening lines of Kuravsky's study. The author makes plain that "this book is a conscious effort to address Richardson's identified need comprehensively. It aims to demonstrate that by interpreting Heidegger's early thinking through the lens of transcendence, we can access his later thought, particularly

the notion of Beyng [*Seyn*] as Event.[2] … the primary focus is on interpreting Heidegger's early and middle thought through the lens of transcendence … In essence, this book challenges the prevailing trend in Heidegger scholarship, which tends to downplay the radical differences between Heidegger's early thinking and the transcendental philosophy of his predecessors by emphasizing their similarities" (xi–xii). Judging the success of Kuravsky's venture will likely be based on the extent to which his echo of Richardson's challenge evokes a response from mainstream Heidegger scholars and clarifies the extent to which Richardson's concern was justified.

Following a conference in Messkirch which he attended, Richardson had expressed an interest in saying something about transcendence (*Transzendenz*) (and other matters) in Heidegger's thought, and this led to the interview referenced. The first topic he spoke about was *transcending* in Heidegger and the centrality of understanding the notion to understanding Heidegger. It is to this that Kuravsky's study responds.

> What has happened to *Dasein* as transcend*ing* and to therefore even being itself being described in *Sein und Zeit* already as a *Transzendenz*? You know, that is really unspeakable. And that becomes a task. How does one avoid that kind of language and at the same time retain what to me is the initial phenomenon of a transcend*ing,* an *Übersteigen* as he calls it in *Vom Wesen des Grundes*, as I recall, and *Dasein* as simply open to the open. And that includes the entire problem, it seems to me, of not only the so-called being question but the relationship between *Dasein* as *Lichtung* and *Sein* itself as *Lichtung*. And that's where the hard problem is, as I am familiar with it, as it is posed actually at the moment in the question about what does the *Lichtung* mean and what is the relationship of the human aspect of or the human dimension of the *Lichtung* and the *Lichtung* as such. That seems

> to me to be fogged up by a disregard of the notion of transcend*ing*, of *Dasein* as transcend*ing*, as the *sein,* the *to* be, *sein*, of *das Dasein zu sein*.[3]

The volume consists of three parts. Part I, "Problematizing Transcendental Subjectivity: The Genesis of Heidegger's 'Transcendence,'" consists of the revision of an article originally published by the author in this journal in 2022, on "The Early Neo-Kantian Origins and the Problem of Encounter," which "delves in Heidegger's critical assimilation of Neo-Kantian concepts," and a chapter on "The Transcendence of Life as an Event of Experience," which "illustrates the outcomes of Heidegger's evolution beyond Neo-Kantianism" (xv). In this part, the author explains, he has "outlined the foundational elements of Heidegger's decentering of subjectivity as they are articulated in the initial stages of his exploration towards an explicit embrace of a new understanding of transcendence" (47). Part II, on "Heidegger's Transcendental Phenomenology as the Philosophy of Transcendence," considers "The Transcendental Logic of Dasein" (that is, the "transcendental framework" of Heidegger's fundamental ontology in *Being and Time*), "Transcendence as Being-in-the-World" (which works out the "logic of enactment" of Heidegger's fundamental ontology), "The Transcendental Performativity of Existence" (in which "Dasein's existence is interpreted as a model of Being itself, necessitating a de-anthropomorphizing of human essence"), and "The Temporal Structure of Transcendence" (in which the author examines "the role of temporality in facilitating the circular and performative nature of transcendence") (xvii). Although it begins Part II, on "Transcendental Freedom and Beyng as Event," Chapter 7, "The Metontological Side of Transcendence," may also be considered as concluding the first two parts which, in Chapters 2–7, consider Heidegger's early texts in chronological order. In the chapter, metontology "is shown as the key to Heidegger's overcoming of ontotheology" and transcendence "is explored in its new subtle senses as holding onto the Nothing, as the grounding nature of Being, and as freedom." Chapter 8, "Authenticity as Explicit Transcendence," begins the author's examination of the "later

Heidegger" and consists of chapters on "Transcendence as the Quasi-Agency of Beyng" and "Transcendence as the Task of Philosophy." The author tells us that this section of the volume (i.e., chapters 8–10) "will place the idea of becoming authentic in the interpretational context I have been developing so far. That is, the current and the following chapters will not follow the chronological development of Heidegger's notion of transcendence in the way it was done hitherto but will suggest that Heidegger's central philosophical motivation (i.e., human transformation) becomes clearer if viewed through the prism of transcendence as anticipating the idea of Beyng as Event. … Accordingly, in the current and following chapters I will move between *Being and Time* and the later works and gather some of the things Heidegger says regarding human transformation and its relation to transcendence" (214). More specifically, Chapter 8 "elucidates the transformation of Dasein from inauthenticity to authenticity as a shift of transcendence into its explicit mode." Here we are reminded that the middle Heidegger defined "transcendence as 'standing in the truth of Beyng.'" The final two chapters of *Transcendence in Heidegger's Early Thought* "present the trajectory by which transcendence, particularly its performatively active nature leading to the transformation of Dasein, establishes the significance of Beyng as Event." The final chapter also "investigates the specific role of philosophy in the transformative process of Being and existence" (xviii). It is in these pages that the promise of the title of the volume is to be fulfilled, and here we find what is perhaps of most interest in the volume.

This is an ambitious work, directing its searchlight over the entire corpus of Heidegger's *oeuvre*. For Kuravsky, an authentic and full-blooded engagement with Heidegger's thought from its beginnings must lead above all to "human transformation." We are therefore led in the final section of the concluding chapter to the need for "examining the performative function of Heidegger's early thought in its capacity to initiate transcendence through its articulation" (295–296). Kuravsky argues that this function set its course toward the radical call to a personal involvement on the part of the reader of Heidegger's texts and not

merely to accompanying Heidegger in a rehashing of ancient, medieval and modern philosophy.

In the concluding three chapters of *Transcendence in Heidegger's Early Thought,* Kuravsky reprises in part many of the basic investigations and conclusions presented earlier his book. The final few pages again remind the reader of the influence on the author of Mamardashvili, who asserted that "to human phenomenology pertains an essential element of experiencing the world as if it began with my existence and will end with it" (297).[4] Philosophizing as phenomenology is thus seen to be, as it was for Heidegger, a deeply personal matter and not primarily a "field" or "profession" in academe. Hearkening back to "On the Essence of Ground" (*Vom Wesen des Grundes*) (to which Richardson had referred), this leads Kuravsky to observe that, for Heidegger, "there is a difference – an ontological one – between what we take to be the present-at-hand objective human self and the origin of the absolute sense of selfhood, common to all human beings and surpassing … the manifold of factical existences" (298). Thus, "to understand Heidegger is not just to be able to speak of his ideas but to become mortal …" (299).

An appreciation of this study requires a thorough familiarity with Heidegger's works (and ways) and will be valued most by Heidegger scholars already working at an advanced level. On the other hand, its theme should be of interest to a wider audience of philosophers and theologians, in particular those who continue to try to understand the meaning of the spiritual life in our time, which Heidegger had early on identified as one from which "the gods" have "fled," whose sojourners increasingly experience something missing at the heart of everyday life. It is, of course, important to recall that, for Heidegger, what was missing was not the Christian God, although he believed that much could be learned from medieval mystics such as Meister Eckhart. And yet the reader will not easily forget that the impulse to write this book was explicitly traced back to the words of a Jesuit priest (and Lacanian psychoanalyst) who effectively introduced Heidegger to the English-speaking world in a comprehensive way in his *Heidegger: Through Phenomenology to Thought*, first published in 1963. Apart from its other

accomplishments, then, the publication sixty years later of Kuravsky's book is a tribute to Richardson, but more important, it is a call to contemporary Heideggerians to respond to his expressed concern about the direction contemporary Heidegger scholarship has taken.

By way of conclusion, it bears repeating Richardson's caution that, with respect to our understanding of *Dasein*, the usage of the word "transcendence [*Transzendenz*]" is "unspeakable," and what Heidegger actually pointed to as what is at stake was a surmounting, an exceeding – literally, a hauling up and over (*Übersteigen*) – accomplished by Dasein. In Chapter 8, Kuravsky refers to the critical passage from "On the Essence of Ground" (*Vom Wesen des Grundes*) Richardson references: "Only in this surpassing [*Überstieg*], Heidegger says, Dasein comes towards 'that being that it *is*' *as* itself; transcendence constitutes selfhood" (217). Rendered somewhat differently, Heidegger's text runs: "*In* having surmounted, Dasein first comes toward that very being that *it* is, toward it *as* it 'itself.' Transcendence constitutes selfhood."[5] Richardson had understood the surmounting (*Übersteigen*) as an effort to be carried out and Kuravsky has set out to trace the lineage of this calling in the early Heidegger. In the passage cited, we note, Heidegger speaks of both the effort (*Übersteigen*) and the act itself as accomplished, that is, the having surmounted (*Überstieg*) Dasein has accomplished in coming into its own. This allows Kuravsky to conclude: "Transcendental freedom and Dasein's selfhood are essentially the same – *to be a self is to be bound by the unconcealed and open for the unconcealed*" (217). Reference to "the unconcealed" also resonates with what Richardson says in the interview about the open and about Dasein's access to other, human and non-human, things that come to light. For Kuravsky, what the new paradigm misses is, in Richardson's words, an "insistence on *Dasein* as a transcend*ing* to what became for [Heidegger] simply the open and therefore an understanding of what is encountered in the open, namely, other things lit up, so to speak, from the inside by the very openness in terms of which they were encountered, which openness then became more formalized in what we can understand now as the later Heidegger."[6]

The volume would have benefitted from consistent reference to citations from the original German texts of Heidegger that are quoted, that is, to volumes of Heidegger's Collected Edition (*Gesamtausgabe*), and to corresponding page references in available English translations. This would make it more readily possible to decide, for example, on the aptness of translations of key terms. In some cases, available translations have not been named. Finally, some citations are incomplete in the References sections of respective chapters.

NOTES

1 A full citation is not given but the text seems to be a reference to a volume in Russian containing Mamardashvili's "Lectures on Ancient Philosophy." The lecture does not appear in Alisa Slaughter and Julia Sushytska (eds.), *A Spy from an Unknown. Essays and Lectures by Merab Mamardashvili* (Stuttgart: Ibidem, 2020), the only collection of his works currently in English. On the relation between Heidegger and Mamardashvili, see Andrew Padgett, "Dasein and the Philosopher: Responsibility in Heidegger and Mamardashvili," in *Philosophy, Sociology and Psychology* 6.1 (2007): 1–21.

2 The subtitle of the book under review, however, is "Toward Being [*Sein*] as Event."

3 William J. Richardson, "An Interview with William J. Richardson part 1/3," The European Centre for Heidegger Studies, YouTube video, 22:16, June 11, 2022, 22:16. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QpeE-A1CMKA&t=750s. The second and third parts of the interview can be found at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nnTbsBS21HM.

4 The reference is to Mamardashvili's 1981–1982 lectures on Proust, *Psyhologisheskaya Totologuya Puti* [*Psychological Topology of the Path*], published first in 1997.

5 "*Im* Überstieg kommt das Dasein allererst auf solches Seiendes zu, das *es* ist, auf es *als* es 'selbst.' Die Transzendenz konstitutiert die Selbstheit" (GA 9: 138/108).

6 Richardson, "An Interview with William J. Richardson."

BOOK REVIEW

Filippo Casati's *Heidegger and the Contradiction of Being: An Analytic Interpretation of the Late Heidegger*

Marco Cavazza

Filippo Casati. *Heidegger and the Contradiction of Being: An Analytic Interpretation of the Late Heidegger*. New York: Taylor & Francis, 2022. 186 pages.

Needless to go round and round: Casati's text clearly has a provocative intent, and if it has already provoked discussion, it will continue to be a talking point. In fact, the main thesis is that dialetheism, the view that certain contradictions are true, allows one to understand Heidegger's thought (93). Not only that: Heidegger himself is said to have been a dialetheist (100), insofar as he questions classical logic (103–7). Although it is not enough to "question logic" (104) in order to be a dialetheist – a criterion that is perhaps too generous, and what does that mean? – Casati makes it clear that here it is not a question of defending dialetheism as such (97), and is rather cautious in circumstantiating Heidegger's dialetheism, ascribing it only to the thought of "the turn" (108–9), where Being is precisely conceived in contradictory terms.

Yet the juxtaposition of Heidegger with analytic philosophy generates an immediate perplexity, which is not entirely dispelled. By "analytical interpretation" Casati means dialetheism, but there is a lack

Gatherings: The Heidegger Circle Annual 15 (2025): 275–84

of explicit reflection both on this reductive reading and what it means, first and foremost, to interpret Heidegger analytically. This implies that where Casati rightly distinguishes between philosophical and exegetical arguments (27–8), whereby the point is not always to understand what is true, but rather what Heidegger said, he seems to take it for granted that, beyond Heidegger (and thus, on a properly philosophical level), the interlocutor is analytical philosophy, which ascertains what is true or false. That is to say, the dialetheic approach makes sense of Heidegger's discourse, while, from an exegetical point of view, the question is whether Heidegger was a dialetheist or not. However, that dialetheism makes Heidegger's thought comprehensible is valid as long as one assumes that one's interlocutors are analytical philosophers – not all of them, by the way, since not all analytical philosophers are dialetheist. Related to this is the fact that, on the exegetical side, the scholarly literature mentioned is exclusively (with few exceptions) American, yet with a continental background that is not questioned (see 101, where the extensive debate on Heidegger's "turn" (*Kehre*) is very condensed).

To whom, therefore, is Casati's text addressed? To continental readers who want to explain Heidegger to the analytics, who will eventually defer their criticism to dialetheism as such. If Casati's study poses a legitimate doubt to continental readers – in order to reason with the analytics, must we present Heidegger as a dialetheist? – the latter must nevertheless ask themselves to what extent dialetheism improves their understanding of Heidegger. Similarly, the question remains whether dialetheism is sufficient to rehabilitate Heidegger in the eyes of the analytics, i.e., whether we must necessarily assume this superficiality of analytical readers, who need to translate Heidegger into dialetheic terms in order to appreciate him. Ultimately, Casati does well to draw (or make explicit) the connection between Heidegger and analytic philosophy, but it is evident how this attempt requires reflection within a more general context, and it will be seen how this lack invalidates some specific passages in the text under examination.

Turning to the analysis of Casati's book, the first three chapters serve as a premise for the following ones. With a great deal of clarity and order, Casati reconstructs the main lines of the most recent American

reception of Heidegger; these are, therefore, very useful pages not only for those trying to disentangle themselves in this area, but also for analytics approaching Heidegger for the first time. Simplifying further, Casati identifies a metaphysical interpretation (38), divided into analytic (Priest, McDaniel) and continental (Gadamer, Richardson). According to this interpretation, Being is what makes an entity that specific entity, or what makes all entities be (8–13). Furthermore, there is an epistemological interpretation (Dreyfus, Carman, Haugeland), which makes Being the ground for understanding entities (39). Another crucial point is that entities are for Heidegger the object of an assertion (22, 25–7), as is also the case for Priest (11), as well as being identical to oneself (27).

Although the exegetical intent is driving here, it is regrettable that Casati does not take a position on the plausibility of certain interpretative proposals. As we shall see, this is not part of his strategy, for the point is rather to show how all these variants agree on the paradoxicality of Heidegger's Being, which therefore forces one to embrace dialetheism. However, the discourse would change if these assumptions were recused rather than admitted. For instance, Casati knows that Pöggeler criticises the metaphysical interpretation of Heidegger's thought (9, 13), yet he prefers this to Pöggeler as his own interlocutor. Or, in the case of Priest's reading, of little help is the reference to the enigmatic concept of "outside-being" (*Aussersein*) (11), as well as saying that entity is that which has the property of being an entity. Heidegger's analysis of the meaning of entity is vast; just think of the courses on the meaning of entity for modern thought (i.e., objectivity) or entity as *alethes*, or entity as a work of art, or the exhaustive yet elliptical definitions of *Contributions*, such as "beingness as constant presence" (*Seiendheit als beständige Anwesenheit*). Then, to define entity on the basis of the identity principle is to deliberately subvert the priority Heidegger accords to ontology over logic (103). Which, of course, is not in itself wrong, but it must be discussed: is Heidegger getting it wrong? Or is he unwittingly subordinating ontology to logic? It almost seems to be Casati's prejudice (perhaps because of how he conceives of his interlocutors) that the logical level comes before the ontological one, at least from a philosophical rather than an exegetical point of view. Moreover, understanding the meaning of entity seems

more a difficulty of the literature Casati chooses to deal with than a shortcoming of Heidegger. This also explains the considerable simplification of the relationship between entity and assertion (is language reduced to assertions?), or of the meaning of "grounding" in the principle of reason. It is a considerable simplification to read Being as the ground of entities on the basis of epistemological interpretation (39), if only for the fact that, in Heidegger's texts, one always has to distinguish between what Heidegger asserts of his own and what Heidegger attributes to other thinkers – just consider the case of Kant. Unfortunately, without these due distinctions, the declared exegetical intent loses bite.

Nevertheless, many of the perplexities that emerged from the exegetical choices begin to be framed within Casati's strategy between the second and third chapters. Here, in fact, it is recognized that it is the discourse on Being itself that is paradoxical (65), hence contradictory (93). This is given by the ontological difference. Against Katherine Withy (44), Casati identifies two arguments for considering the ontological difference not simply a historical thesis (43), but a philosophical one, namely, the problem of regress to infinity (45–50) and the role of Being as *explanans* for entities (54–9). However, if in the discussion of these arguments it emerges that Being is not an entity, nevertheless there are just as many reasons to recognize that it is. For if Being is the reason for all entities, then it must be something (82, 125); the mere fact that it is the object of assertions alone would be enough to make it an entity (70, 75). The ambiguity also extends to the level of apophantic assertions: Being cannot be shown (86), and it eludes our attempt at understanding (69); yet Being is the object of the vast majority of Heidegger's assertions (88).

The fourth chapter then opens with the proclaimed contradictory nature of Being. This is the most important and most successful chapter of Casati's book; here the dialetheic reading is proposed, whereby it is true that Being is and at the same time is not an entity, just as it is true that it is and is not an object of assertion (93–5). Moreover, the dialetheic reading applies as much to metaphysical interpretation as to epistemological interpretation precisely because it is on the basis of the

admission of the contradiction of Being that the Being/entities relation becomes intelligible (99–100).

A commendable and interesting aspect is the exegetical proposal to identify in the late Heidegger, and specifically in *Contributions*, the solution to the problems inherent in the thought of Being that emerged during the 1920s. In fact, with respect to many common readings of Heidegger's turn, which insist on the complementarity of the two Heideggers, Casati argues that without *Contributions* it is not possible to appreciate Heidegger, since until the 1930s his thought is stuck in the contradictions summarised in chapter 3, while from the turn onwards Heidegger understands that contradictions constitute the very truth of Being (102). In Casati's reading, the event (*Ereignis*) itself is nothing other than Being revealing its own contradiction (154), and thus, in other words, pointing to dialetheism as the way to think Being (113–5).

Probably many scholars of *Contributions* will be dissatisfied with some inaccuracies in dealing with this difficult work by Heidegger, which is always very uneasy to handle in just a few pages. For instance, *Contributions* is not the other beginning itself, but a preparation to it (just as Nietzsche's *Zarathustra* does not expound the doctrine of the "overman" (*Übermensch*)), nor is the decision on Being and Non-being something that is up to the human being. Not to mention even more complex points: is it really permissible to understand the *Ereignis* as an event? Are we certain that the ontological difference of *Contributions* is the same as that of the 1920s? That Being is not an entity is given by the ontological difference, but is it sufficient to say that "Being is an entity too" is given by the fact that Being is the object of an assertion? Does not being an entity on the part of Being, which is at the center of the history of Being, have another meaning in Heidegger's thought?

Yet, if one keeps in mind what has been said above about Casati's intent, it is possible to overlook some inaccuracies in order to appreciate the strength and originality of this study: it is true, indeed, that Heidegger's Being is shot through with contradictions, and it is equally true that the challenge posed by *Contributions* concerns how to think about this contradictory situation. Those who interpret *Contributions* as

an irrational text, i.e., in Casati's terms, devoted to inconsistency, diminish its value precisely by believing they do the opposite. Of course, one can debate whether Casati's dialetheism is really the appropriate way to speak of the late Heidegger to the analytics and, in general, to speak of *Contributions*, just as one can disagree that the contradictions that emerged before the turn are precisely those reconstructed in the first three chapters; the fact remains, however, that Casati gets the point. In other words, we can fleece many details, or we can focus on what is Heidegger's problem, the contradiction of Being, which Casati identifies very clearly. From this point of view, then, it is a truly courageous and disorienting move to move out of the disputes over Heideggerian orthodoxy and into the direction of the analytics, precisely with the text most steeped in Heidegger's thought.

Let us now try to reconstruct the main lines of the argument used to think the contradiction of Being, presented in chapter 5. Heidegger's Being behaves like Priest's Nothing; namely, it is a complement of totality (136). For Priest, Nothing is the totality of everything that is not identical with itself. In this case, a paradoxical situation arises. The complement of this particular set should be that which has nothing in common with its contents; hence, it is the set of that which is identical with itself. But Nothing, although it is the starting set, is at the same time its complement. Indeed, Nothing is still identical to itself. Things are further complicated by considering that what is identical to itself is an entity, so Nothing is and at the same time is not (129–30). It is curious that, in making this argument, Casati states that Being is a transcendental (132), thus taking up the thought of *Being and Time* rather than that of *Contributions*, where we read the opposite. Moreover, again in this text, we do not find that an entity is that which is identical with itself, but rather that it is that which is connoted by "stable presence."

With mereology it is then possible to address Heidegger's Being (128), but it remains entirely open what this contradiction means. That is, Casati's efforts are aimed at showing that the Being of which Heidegger speaks is contradictory, but in making this option acceptable to the analytic, he glosses over its meaning. Consider the fact that Being and

Nothing are the same: what is the meaning of this "same"? A contradictory identity? Casati states that with Priest's mereological model we can represent the traits of Being (139), but the meaning of this representation remains entirely vague, unless one means a formal representation, i.e., in logical terms. Which is doubly strange, considering that *Contributions* wants to be a text against representational thinking.

The last chapter of Casati's study concerns the relationship between Being and entities, which is conceived as an inconsistent dependency (156). The main theme is Heidegger's double reading of the principle of reason, which is interpreted here as a true contradiction (159). Indeed, Being both has and does not have a reason (163). However, one struggles to go beyond reaffirming the contradictory nature of Being: one is silent as to what the foundation relation means (albeit at the center of one of the main chapters of *Contributions*), in order to privilege only its paradoxical nature – which at this point can be taken for granted. Heidegger's "para-foundationalism" (168–70) thus appears to be an interpretative category that is more functional to the structure of Casati's book than useful for deepening the meaning of the Being/entities relation; this is indicated, for example, by the fact that the question is presented in terms of "having": Being has and at the same time does not have ground, when it would be better to say that it is Being itself that is ground. That the dialetheic approach has become too reductive at this point can also be seen in the discourse on the last God, who is understood as a metaphor for Being (173), taking a couple of studies on the subject at face value – although Heidegger always tends to emphasise how the sphere of the divine is devoid of Being, which would otherwise be onto-theology. Heidegger's discourse on the last God goes far beyond whether or not it is an entity. Here, strategic intent prevails over both exegetical and philosophical intent.

Moreover, that Being is ground (of entities) is the hallmark of the metaphysical interpretation of Being. And here we come to another problematic juncture, namely, the consideration of the historical dimension of Being. Indeed, in Casati's study this dimension does not emerge, which is strange, given that it is one of the emblematic features of the late

Heidegger. There is a lack of attention to Heidegger's historical sense, who would never have said that for the Greeks the reason for a thing is what enables its reference (58), as well as to the always difficult distinction between what Heidegger says about metaphysics and what he makes it say. Thus, when Heidegger speaks of the metaphysical interpretation of the principle of reason (159–60), he is certainly not subscribing to it, just as when he makes the Greeks say that the meaning of Being is presence.

Generally speaking, it is not true that Heidegger rejects the history of metaphysics because it is onto-theology (40). This is due to several exegetical reasons. One is that Being was not simply misunderstood as an entity: it is an entity. This is not because Being is identical with itself or the object of assertion, but because it has allowed itself to be understood in these terms. To say that Being is an entity is an assertion that lies beyond the exegesis/philosophy distinction, because it rather requires a historical understanding (whereas it seems that the philosophical level is taken for granted to be the logical level, i.e., dialetheic and supra-historical). That the "event of appropriation" (*Ereignis*) is "ex-propriation" (*Enteignis*), that the "concealment" (*Verbergung*) of Being consists in its "custody" (*Bergung*) among entities, that the other beginning is in fact the same first beginning thought differently: all this only reaffirms, yes, the contradiction of Being, but this must be understood on a more historical than logical level. Yet, this is not grasped, and when one reads that ontological difference – which for Heidegger is the space of metaphysics (rather than being what metaphysics did not grasp) – is presented as a thesis more related to the history of philosophy than philosophical (43), Casati actually exchanges history for historiography (i.e., the historiographical narrative of philosophy), excluding that the historical dimension can have philosophical significance in itself. And from history we must move on to time, the other great absentee in Casati's text, so when we read that Heidegger does not answer the question of the meaning of Being (8) we are immediately surprised, since this answer is in fact known, as it is time, or rather presence, that defines the meaning of Being. Indeed, does not the fact that Being both is and is not an entity imply some temporal dimension? Sure, a logical

approach to the principle of non-contradiction dispenses with time: but what about Heidegger's ontological approach? And isn't this diachrony/synchrony the same as that which operates when it is said that Being and Nothing are the same?

If we emphasise this, it is because we believe that these gaps are not simply detriments to Casati's text, but cues to explore the theme of the contradiction of Being, or to point the analytics to a Heidegger that does not necessarily have to be reduced to dialetheism in order to be made comprehensible. Casati, always with great clarity, points Heidegger scholars to one of the most interesting avenues of investigation to follow, beyond many prejudices and disputes over which one tends instead to idle. Therefore, understanding this work as something pioneering and initial – which for Heidegger is always what is decisive and important – it is possible to fully appreciate Casati's study, using it as a starting point for new paths.

TEXTS OF HEIDEGGER CITED AND ABBREVIATIONS USED

References to the works of Martin Heidegger are provided parenthetically in the text by the volume of *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1975–, abbreviated "GA"), followed by the German pagination, a slash, and the English pagination of published translations where extant. The relevant translations are listed following the information for the corresponding GA volume. There is one exception to this practice. No references to the pages of English translations are provided in the case of *Being and Time* (GA 2); instead the GA pagination is followed by "SZ," referring to the single edition, re-issued several times: *Sein und Zeit*, 11th ed. (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1967), since the pagination of SZ is contained in all three of the English translations of *Sein und Zeit*. Modifications to published translations are noted by "tm"; modifications to emphasis by "em."

FROM THE *GESAMTAUSGABE*

GA 2 — *Sein und Zeit*. Ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann. 1977. English translation: *Being and Time*. Trans. Joan Stambaugh, rev. Dennis J. Schmidt. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2010; trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson. New York: Harper & Row, 1962.

GA 3 — *Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik*. Ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann. 1991. English translation: *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*. 5th ed. Trans. Richard Taft. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009.

GA 4 — *Erläuterungen zu Hölderlins Dichtung*. 2nd ed. Ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann. 1991. English translation: *Elucidations of Hölderlin's Poetry*. Trans. Keith Hoeller. Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 2000.

GA 5 — *Holzwege*. 7th ed. Ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann. 1994. English translation: *Off the Beaten Track*. Ed. and trans. Julian Young and Kenneth Haynes. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

GA 6.2 *Nietzsche II*. Ed. Brigitte Schillbach. 1997.

GA 7 *Vorträge und Aufsätze*. Ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann. 2000.

GA 8 *Was heißt Denken?* Ed. Paolo-Ludovika Coriando. 2002. English translation: *What Is Called Thinking?* Trans. Fred D. Wieck and J. Glenn Gray. New York: Harper & Row, 1968.

GA 9 *Wegmarken*. 3rd ed. Ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann. 1996. English translation: *Pathmarks*. Ed. William McNeill. Various trans. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

GA 10 *Der Satz vom Grund*. Ed. Petra Jaeger. 1997. English translation: *The Principle of Reason*. Trans. Reginald Lilly. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991

GA 11 *Identität und Differenz*. Ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann. 2006. English translation: *Identity and Difference*. Trans. Joan Stambaugh. New York: Harper & Row, 1969.

GA 12 *Unterwegs zur Sprache*. Ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann. 1985.

GA 13 *Aus der Erfahrung des Denkens*. Ed. Hermann Heidegger. 1983.

GA 15 *Seminare*. Ed. Curd Ochwadt. 1986.

GA 16 *Reden und andere Zeugnisse eines Lebensweges* Ed. Herrmann Heidegger. 2000.

GA 17 *Einführung in die phänomenologische Forschung*. 2nd ed. Ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann. 1994. English *Translation: Introduction to Phenomenological Research*. Trans. Daniel O Dahlstrom. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005.

GA 19 *Platon: Sophistes*. Ed. Ingeborg Schüßler. 1992. English translation: *"Plato's "Sophist."* Trans. Richard Rojcewicz and André Schuwer. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997.

GA 20 *Prolegomena zur Geschichte des Zeitbegriffs.* Ed. Petra Jaeger. 1979. English translation: *History of the Concept of Time: Prolegomena.* Trans. Theodore Kisiel. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985.

GA 21 *Logik. Die Frage nach der Wahrheit.* Ed. Walter Biemel. 1976. English translation: *Logic: The Question of Truth.* Trans. Thomas Sheehan. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010.

GA 24 *Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie.* 2nd ed. Ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann. 1989. English translation: *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology.* Revised ed. Trans. Albert Hofstadter. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982.

GA 26 *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Logik im Ausgang von Leibniz.* 3rd ed. Ed. Klaus Held. 1978. English translation: *Metaphysical Foundations of Logic.* Trans. Michael Heim. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984.

GA 29/30 *Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik: Welt – Endlichkeit – Einsamkeit.* 2nd ed. Ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann. 1992. English translation: *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude.* Trans. William McNeill and Nicholas Walker. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995.

GA 35 *Der Anfang der abendländischen Philosophie (Anaximander und Parmenides).* Ed. Peter Trawny. 2012. English Translation: The Beginning of Western Philospohy: Interpretation of Anaximander and Parmenides. Trans. Richard Rojcewicz . Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015.

GA 36/37 *Sein und Wahrheit.* Ed. Hartmut Tietjen. 2001. English translation: *Being and Truth.* Trans. Gregory Fried and Richard Polt. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010.

GA 39 *Hölderlins Hymnen "Germanien" und "Der Rhein."* 2nd ed. Ed. Susanne Ziegler. 1989. English Translation:

Hölderlin's Hymns "Germania" and "The Rhine." Trans. William McNeill and Julia Ireland. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014.

GA 40 *Einführung in die Metaphysik*. Ed. Petra Jaeger. 1983. English translation: *Introduction to Metaphysics*. 2nd ed. Trans. Gregory Fried and Richard Polt. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014.

GA 45 *Grundfragen der Philosophie: Ausgewählte "Probleme" der "Logik."* 1992. English translation: *Basic Questions of Philosophy: Selected "Problems" of "Logic."* Trans. Richard Rojcewicz and André Schuwer. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994.

GA 50 *Nietzsches Metaphysik. Einleitung in die Philosophie – Denken und Dichten*. 2nd ed. Ed. Petra Jaeger. 2007.

GA 53 *Hölderlins Hymne "Der Ister."* 2nd ed. Ed. Walter Biemel. 1993. English translation: *Hölderlin's Hymn "The Ister."* Trans. Will McNeill and Julia Davis. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996.

GA 54 *Parmenides*. 3rd ed. Ed. Manfred S. Frings. 2018. English translation: *Parmenides*. 2nd ed. Trans. André Schuwer and Richard Rojcewiz. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998.

GA 55 *Heraklit*. 3rd ed. Ed. Manfred S. Frings. 1994. English translation: *Heraclitus*. Trans. Julia Goesser Assaiante and S. Montgomery Ewegen. London: Bloomsbury, 2018.

GA 56/57 *Zur Bestimmung der Philosophie*. 2nd ed. Ed. Bernd Heimbüchel. 1999. English translation: *Towards the Definition of Philosophy*. Trans. Ted Sadler. New York: Continuum, 2008.

GA 65 *Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis)*. 2nd ed. Ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann. 1994. English translation: *Contributions to Philosophy (Of the Event)*. Trans. Richard Rojcewicz and Daniela Vallega-Neu. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012.

GA 66 *Besinnung*. Ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann. 1997. English translation: *Mindfulness*. Trans. Parvis Emad and Thomas Kalary. New York: Continuum, 2006.

GA 67 *Metaphysik und Nihilismus*. 2nd ed. Ed. Hans-Joachim Friedrich. 2018. English translation: *Metaphysics and Nihilism*. Trans. Arun Iyer. Cambridge: Polity, 2022.

GA 68 *Hegel*. Ed. Ingrid Schüßler. 2nd ed. 2009. English translation: *Hegel*. Trans. Joseph Arel and Niels Feuerhahn. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015.

GA 69 *Die Geschichte des Seyns*. Ed. Peter Trawny. 1998. English translation: *The History of Beyng*. Trans. William McNeill and Jeffrey Powell. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015.

GA 70 *Über den Anfang*. Ed. Paola-Ludovika Coriando. 2005. English translation: *On Inception*. Trans. Peter Hanly. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2023.

GA 71 *Das Ereignis*. Ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann. 2009. English translation: *The Event*. Trans. Richard Rojcewicz. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013.

GA 77 *Feldweg-Gespräche*. Ed. Ingrid Schüßler. 2nd ed. 2007. English translation: *Country Path Conversations*. Trans. Bret W. Davis. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010.

GA 78 *Der Spruch des Anaximanders*. Ed. Ingrid Schüssler. 2010.

GA 79 *Bremer und Freiburger Vorträge*. 2nd ed. Ed. Petra Jaeger. 2005. English translation: *Bremen and Freiburg Lectures*. Trans. Andrew J. Mitchell. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012.

GA 80.1 *Vorträge*. Ed. Günther Neumann. 2016.

GA 80.2 *Vorträge*. Ed. Günther Neumann. 2020.

GA 81 *Gedachtes*. Ed. Paola-Ludovika Coriando. 2007. English translation: *Thought Poems*. Trans. Eoghan Walls. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 2021.

GA 83 *Seminare: Platon – Aristotles – Augustinus*. Ed. Mark Michalski. 2012.

GA 91 *Ergänzungen und Denksplitter*. Ed. Mark Michalski. 2022.

GA 94 *Überlegungen II–VI (Schwarze Hefte 1931–1938)*. Ed. Peter Trawny. 2014. English translation: *Ponderings II–VI*. Trans. Richard Rojcewicz. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2016.

GA 95 *Überlegungen VII–XI (Schwarze Hefte 1938–1939)*. Ed. Peter Trawny. 2014. English translation: *Ponderings VII–XI*. Trans. Richard Rojcewicz. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2017.

GA 96 *Überlegungen XII–XV (Schwarze Hefte 1939–1941)*. Ed. Peter Trawny. 2014. English translation: *Ponderings XII–XV: Black Notebooks 1939–1941*. Trans. Richard Rojcewicz. Blooming: Indiana University Press, 2017.

GA 97 *Anmerkungen I–V (Schwarze Hefte 1942–1948)*. Ed. Peter Trawny. 2015. English translation: *Remarks I–IV: Black Notebooks 1942–1948*. Trans. Adam Knowles. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2025.

GA 100 *Vigiliae und Notturno (1952/53–1957)*. Ed. Peter Trawny. 2020. English translation: *Vigils and Nocturne: Black Notebooks 1952/53–1957*. Trans. David C. Abergel and Scott M. Campbell. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2025.

GA 101 *Winke I und II (1957–1959)*. Ed. Peter Trawny. 2020.

GA 102 *Vorläufiges I–IV (1963–1970)*. Ed. Peter Trawny. 2020.

FROM OTHER ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

BW *Basic Writings: Essential Martin Heidegger*. 2nd ed. Ed. David Farrell Krell. New York: HarperCollins, 2008.

DT *Discourse on Thinking*. John M. Anderson and E. Hans Freund. New York: Harper & Row, 1966.

EP	*The End of Philosophy*. Ed. and trans. Joan Stambaugh. New York: Harper & Row, 1973.
OWL	*On the Way to Language*. Trans. Peter D. Hertz. New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1971.
PLT	*Poetry, Language, Thought*. Ed. and trans. Albert Hofstadter. New York: Harper & Row, 2001.