



Asian Perspectives
on Heidegger

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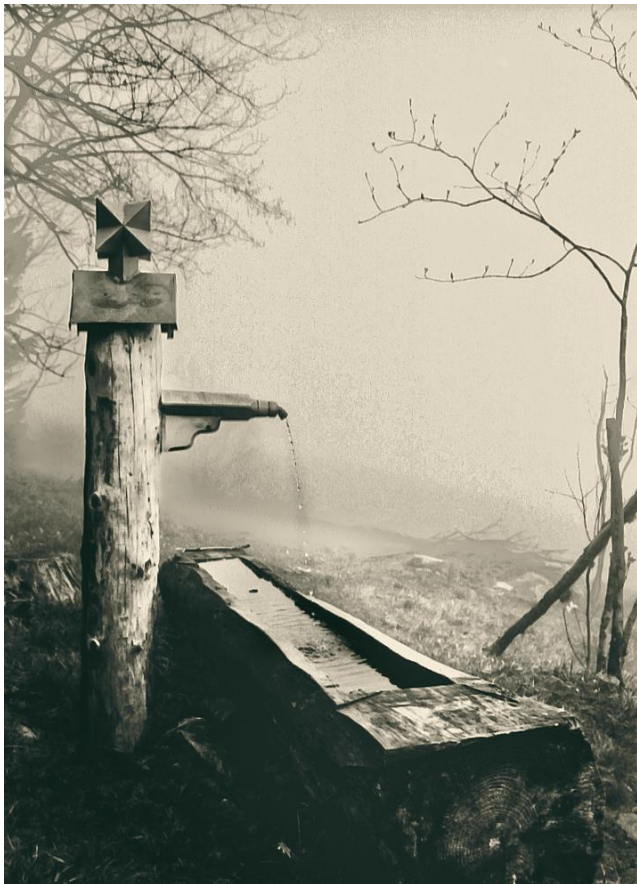
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ABOUT THE COVER



“The Fountain Outside Heidegger’s Hut, Black Forest”

Sometime in May 2000, three “*Doktoranden*”—Karin Hutflötz, Rainer Hohmann, and Remmon Barbaza—who were working on their dissertations on Heidegger at the Hochschule für Philosophie-München (Munich School of Philosophy) under the supervision of the late Prof. Dr. Gerd Haeffner, SJ, decided to go on what they lightheartedly called a *Heidegger-Wallfahrt* (pilgrimage) and visit the famous hut nestled in the Black Forest, in a little town called Todtnauberg. And so, along with Remmon’s spouse, Arlene Florendo, they hopped on a small car and drove westward, to Freiburg im Breisgau. There were no markers that would point to the direction of the hut, and after hours of hiking and despite having a guide with them, the “pilgrims” almost gave up, unable to find what quite possibly could be the most famous cabin in the history of philosophy, what with thick fog concealing much of what was around them, as if in accordance with one of the central themes in Heidegger’s thought. Finally, Karin raised her arm to point towards the hut that was now gradually being revealed. There, just outside the very hut where Heidegger produced many of his works, notably *Sein und Zeit* (Being and Time), they spent an hour or two resting and having lunch. Remmon took this photo of the fountain, from where water was still flowing, presumably up till today—a silent witness to the thinking that took place there, surely one that belongs to the past but continues to point towards what is yet to come.

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- **Filipino Philosophy**
- **Oriental Thought and East-West Comparative Philosophy**
- **Continental European Philosophy**
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The journal primarily caters to works by professional philosophers and graduate students of philosophy, but welcomes contributions from other fields (literature, cultural studies, gender studies, political science, sociology, history, anthropology, economics, inter alia) with strong philosophical content.

The word "kritike" is Greek from the verb "krinein," which means to discern. Hence, kritike means the art of discerning or the art of critical analysis. Any form of philosophizing is, in one way or another, a "critique" of something. Being critical, therefore, is an attitude common to all philosophical traditions. Indeed, the meaning of philosophy is critique and to be philosophical is to be critical.

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Introduction to the *Kritike* Special Issue: Asian Perspectives on Heidegger

Remmon E. Barbaza

On November 22, 2018, a round table discussion on the theme, “Heidegger and Asia,” was held at the 24th World Congress of Philosophy in Beijing. Right after the discussion, some of the participants, led by Wei-Ding Tsai (National Chengchi University, Taiwan) and Choong-Su Han (Ewha Womans University, South Korea), gathered for a meeting to organize a Heidegger association in Asia. Thus was born the Heidegger Circle in Asia. Also present at the meeting were Ka-wing Leung (Tongji University, China), Asuka Suehisa (Seijo University, Japan), Chon-Ip Ng (National Tsing Hua University, Taiwan), and myself (Ateneo de Manila University, Philippines).

A year after its founding, in 2019, the Heidegger Circle in Asia (HCIA) held its first international conference at National Chengchi University, Taiwan, organized by Wei-Ding Tsai. For two days, on November 22-23, Heidegger scholars from different parts of Asia presented papers and exchanged ideas in a lively and collegial atmosphere.

In the wake of the pandemic that broke out in early 2020, the HCIA, just like much of the rest of the world, ground to a halt. After two years, however, on December 2-4, 2022, the HCIA sprang back to life and managed to hold its 2nd international conference, albeit online, organized by Choong-Su Han from Seoul. The present special issue of *Kritike* features fourteen essays from that conference, selected from a total of twenty-three through a peer-reviewed process as well as deliberations by the scientific committee.

The essays are grouped according to five themes. First, under the theme “The Self and the Individual,” Hyun Jung Park (South Korea), Asuka Suehisa and Masataka Furusho (both Japan) examine the being of human beings from the perspective of the individual not only as a self, but also as the individual Dasein that confronts other Daseins. Hyun Jung Park maintains

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that “[o]nly by adequately considering the spontaneous self can we establish an ontology of the individual that has hitherto been disregarded for universality.” Complementing Heidegger’s thought with Tellenbach’s, Suehisa opens up a new perspective of the self’s “world-with-others” through the experience of hearing and smelling that makes up an “atmospheric integral,” and thus “contributes to a more precise understanding of the phenomenon of the ‘world-with others’ and allows us to uncover its more fundamental or more instinctive layer.” For his part, in examining Heidegger’s “metontological thinking” and in dialogue mainly with Nishida, Furusho tackles the “irrationality” of the being of Dasein, showing us that while “[t]he emergence of Dasein is always the emergence of a plurality of Daseins” ... “[w]e should remain on this borderline [of transcendental philosophy] and preserve the mystery of plurality inherent in the concealed nature of Dasein’s emergence in order to protect philosophy from any political interventions.”

With the theme, “Between the Human and the Animal,” Peter Ha (South Korea) and I (Philippines) reflect on that seemingly intractable question of the place of animality in our being human. Ha examines the opposition between the age-old definition of the human being as *homo animalis* (on which the *homo rationalis* is based) to Heidegger’s concept of the *homo humanus*. Such an opposition is inextricably linked to the “strife between earth and world” that Heidegger presented in “The Origin of the Work of Art” and deserves further inquiry. For my part, I posit a forgetting of the animal in Heidegger, and, through Derrida and Kierkegaard, point a direction towards a phenomenology of the animal in human beings that at once transcends Heidegger and leads phenomenology forward to further possibilities.

Falling under the theme of “Modernity and Technology,” Federico José Lagdameo and Marc Oliver Pasco (both Philippines) and Yohei Kageyama (Japan) take up the challenges of modernity and its technologies, and strive to uncover new possibilities of being human. Lagdameo challenges the predominantly instrumentalist approach of much of contemporary philosophy of technology, and invites us to an “affordance construal” of technology that allows us to confront the dangers that are “immune from technological design modifications.” For his part, Pasco “explores the possibility of re-imagining the relationship between death and authenticity in the age of information technologies,” as he draws insights from Heidegger and Baudrillard. Kageyama looks into the young Heidegger’s confrontation with modern secular world and identity, focusing on the writer Oscar Wilde and the poet Johannes Jørgensen, and sees an “opportunity for the subjection of the Question of Being in the context of secularization.”

The next essays by Mathias Obert and Wei-Ding Tsai (both Taiwan), and Ahmad Rajabi (Iran), are grouped under the theme, "Ontology, Phenomenology and Ethics." We remember that Heidegger himself said in *Being and Time* that "ontology is possible only as phenomenology." Obert shows us that "the inconspicuous is at work within appearing itself, thus leaving behind the metaphysical opposition between manifestation and concealment." He proposes that this opposition "should be seen as a kind of tension which is indispensable for something to appear at all. This tension makes any phenomenal appearance turn from a simple aspect viewed into an 'ad-spect' (*An-blick*), which requests the genuine 'passibility' of our gaze and engages our responsiveness." Rajabi undertakes a fascinating attempt to "bridge between Heidegger's criticism of metaphysics as Ontotheology, his search for overcoming it in his later thinking about the hiddenness of Being itself, and Ibn 'Arabi's mystical doctrine of unity of Being," and thus paves the way for a fruitful intercultural dialogue between Heidegger and the long tradition of Islamic philosophy and mysticism. For his part, Tsai was not deterred by the fact that Heidegger did not write anything that belonged to the discipline of ethics, and argued nonetheless that Heidegger's early ontological work "contains some axiological element, upon which a possible ethics can be founded."

In the final essays, the authors carry out textual interpretations, beginning with Motoki Saito (Japan), who examines the *Black Notebooks* and shows us how, "[i]n his transformation from hermeneutics of self-criticism to hermeneutics of mask and to hermeneutics of transition, Heidegger finds in the question of Being hermeneutical insights that respond to the event of Being," and thereby "opens various possibilities of a future time-space in which we will re-live." Meditating on a line from Hölderlin's poem, "The Journey," in Heidegger's essay, "The Origin of the Work of Art," Choong-Su Han (South Korea) shows us "why it is difficult to leave art as an origin." As the origin of truth itself, art is that than which nothing better can stand as the site of dwelling. And who indeed could abandon such a place? Finally, in revisiting Heidegger's own meditation on Hölderlin's poem, "The Rhine," Suh-Hyun Park (South Korea) invites us to hear the language of the ineffable, which gives rise to poetry and sustains its saying, at once finite and yet remaining endless in its possibilities.

My heartfelt thanks to my colleague and friend Federico José Lagdameo who generously offered to help me as co-editor. My gratitude also goes to the *Kritike* editorial team who have been most helpful and supportive all throughout this project. And finally, to all the authors who share their work with us—*Danke vielmals!*

4 INTRODUCTION

With these essays, it is our hope in the Heidegger Circle of Asia that the “conversation that we have been” (to borrow from Hölderlin) can keep us attuned to the many possibilities of being that lie before us, and those that are yet to come.

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Being Self in Heidegger's Ontology: A Heideggerian Contribution to the Ontology of Individuality

Hyun Jung Park

Abstract: In contemporary ontology, the relationalist perspective succeeding Deleuze prevails regarding Difference itself as a self-generating and self-organizing dynamic against the old ontology of Being as infinitude. Focusing on the Difference itself that penetrates all becoming, this perspective fails to savor the differences between beings and the peculiarity of human existence. Thus, this new ontology is not for the individual as it seems. In this paper, I argue that the characteristic distinguishing Heidegger's thought from contemporary relationalism and presenting it as a new insight lies in contemplating the 'self' as temporal in its ecstatic and horizontal existence and, in this way, spontaneous, making possible an ontology of the individual that has hitherto been disregarded for universality. First, I outline that Heidegger's Being is not like the traditional one, and his deliberation of human existence. Next, I demonstrate that by demand of this Being, an individual exists as a self in the world, distinguished from the traditional subject arrested with self-identity. Then, I argue that the existence of a self in the world is temporal, and an individual's temporality implies 'spontaneity.' Finally, I explain how a self's temporal existence cannot be reduced to the work of Being itself.

Keywords: Heidegger, ontology, individuality, self

Liberalism' or meritocracy takes for granted a distribution proportional to the ability of each. Each of us must take responsibility for one's exercise of free choice. This distribution system, which presupposes 'free' choice, is based on a modern understanding of the 'individual.' The modern individual is originally the subject subordinated to the universal essence and defined by the 'autonomy' operating this universality. However, these days we interpret autonomy as

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mere 'independence' released from the pressure of universality and isolation of individuals. This misconception is no coincidence. It is based on the 'individualism' that sought to dismiss traditional universality and yet lacked the ontology for the individual.

Indeed, we witness these days a new ontology called "New Materialism."¹ It is opposed to Cartesian essentialism and substantivism, which presupposes the universal essence among separate individuals. Furthermore, it refuses the understanding of Being as the absolute that guarantees universal essences. Instead, it assumes Being that penetrates all beings as a self-generating 'dynamic'. Consequently, it saves the individual from fixed isolation and allows for changes in the generation of the all-traversing dynamic.

Nevertheless, I suspect this ontology as a kind of "relationalism"² takes another radical way of thoroughly neutralizing and scattering the individual to stand against modern understanding. In this ontology, the main issue is not the differences between beings but the dynamic itself crossing them. They pay attention only to the 'self-organizing matter,'³ the monistic "not-one"⁴ that pierces all beings. They have more interest in the relationship than the relatum, deboundary than a boundary, and continuity than discontinuity.

Moreover, it is stingy in approving the peculiarity of 'human' beings. Since it is human thinking that has invented the traditional philosophy, this new ontology abandons the long-standing 'anthropocentrism' from ancient to modern times. Instead, it advocates a 'flat ontology' that does not grant privileged status to any beings. Perceptions and practices of the posthuman era reject all the discrimination between humans and non-humans. Indeed, a self can never exist separate from what it is not. However, it must remain irreducible to the relations. No human being can live without asking what 'I

¹ New Materialism generally refers to the thoughts of Manuel DeLanda, Jane Bennett, Rosie Bridotti, and Karen Barad.

² "Relationalism" is Graham Harman's notion for criticizing the contemporary ontology that suggests the internal correlation of all the beings and reduces the beings into the relations. From Harman's point of view, the (pseudo) causal relationship of New Materialism stops short of paying attention to the vertical causal relationship between the depth (Difference itself) and surface (the field of beings) and avoids the problem of the "horizontal interrelationships" between things. See Graham Harman, "Realism without Materialism," in *SubStance* 40, no. 2 (2011), 63. However, this paper does not rely much on his thought. While standing against the relationalistic line, Harman takes himself the flat ontology and makes all the beings as objects retreating from the relationship to their unconnected selves. In this way, he cannot consider the self that this paper aims to elucidate. Self in this paper is, on the one hand related, and on the other hand, does not cease to be itself in its related being.

³ Rosi Braidotti, *The Posthuman* (Cambridge, MA: Polity Press, 2013), 147.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 100.

should do. Can we not still ask, 'how is the self?' or 'who am I?' even in the era of anti-anthropocentrism?

As a Heideggerian, I am sure that a critical task for contemporary ontology is secure of ontological position distinct from relationalism as well as traditional philosophy. We need an ontology that goes one step further from ascribing the Difference itself. In other words, not to reduce individuality to simply the effect of the antecedent relations that produce it, we must approve that individuality implies 'spontaneity' to choose and enact something from its side. Only then can we not end up destroying and dismantling the traditional understanding of existence but arrive at a new positive ontology. Therefore, in this paper, I will show that Heidegger's thought considers the spontaneity of the individual, contrary to the relationalist line of contemporary ontology. Heidegger, like relationalists, regards Being as generating beings. However, at the same time, he claims that human 'thinking' is required to belong together with Being for the manifestation of Being. Moreover, for this, human beings should be a 'self.' Therefore, the theme of 'self' is core to Heidegger's thought.

The present analysis will proceed as follows: First, I will outline that Heidegger's Being is not like the traditional one, and his deliberation of human existence only corresponds to the nature of this Being. Second, I will show that by demand of Being, an individual exists as a self in the world, distinguished from the traditional subject locked up by self-identity. Third, I will argue that the existence of a self in the world is temporal, and an individual's temporality implies a 'spontaneous' being. Finally, I will show that the temporal existence of self cannot be reduced to the work of Being itself.

Thinking

The Finitude of Being

Traditional philosophy positions Being as the most 'universal' concept. However, Heidegger declares that the universality of Being is not that of the genus. Since all the differences between beings are in Being, the idea of Being must include all the differences. Therefore, Being cannot be the abstract inclusivity that obliterates all the distinctions of beings. Rather, we must rethink Being as the farthest from the highest emptiness (or fullness).

In Heidegger's question of Being, what is asked about [*das Gefragte*] is Being, and what comes to light by the asking [*das Erfragte*] is the 'meaning of Being.' Moreover, the full-fledged discussion begins after setting human

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existence as what is scrutinized [*das Befragte*].⁵ However, why does Heidegger prioritize the human Dasein in uncovering the meaning of Being? That is because to human beings alone belongs the possibility of 'questioning' that corresponds to the meaning of Being itself.

Because Heidegger consistently contemplates the Being as 'finitude [*Endlichkeit*],' he defines the history of traditional metaphysics as the oblivion of Being, making it clear that what we have forgotten about Being is its 'finitude.'⁶ Being's finitude means that it belongs together with nothingness [*Nichtigkeit*]. Because it belongs together with nothingness, Being becomes 'dynamic' rather than eternally immutable. When he criticizes the traditional understanding of Being, Heidegger maintains that it does not contemplate the 'ontological difference' of Being from beings and interprets Being just as a 'persistent presence [*ständige Anwesenheit*].'⁷ However, we must consider Being as a dynamic 'Time.' Furthermore, the dynamic of Being as Time cannot but occur in the way of giving rise to beings. Therefore, Being is always the being of beings. While infinitude, as the elimination of nothingness,⁸ is beyond all divisions, finite Being is the production of differences, bringing various beings into Being. That is, Being is finite to guarantee the richness of being to beings.

Finally, finite Being requires 'belonging together with thinking'⁹ each time. Being opens a field where Being sends itself in and arrives as beings. Being cannot appear as beings without this 'In-between' of the ontological difference. Questioning is the only way for human thinking to be a 'being there [*Dasein*],' and "Dasein" indicates the relationship of the human being with Being itself,¹⁰ that is, the belonging together of thinking with Being. Heidegger scrutinizes Dasein's existence because Being always belongs together with thinking. Therefore, consideration of thinking is the path to elucidate the "meaning of Being." Even when focusing on human thinking, Heidegger still aims to enlighten the finitude of Being.

⁵ Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1976), 5.

⁶ Martin Heidegger, *Beiträge zur Philosophy* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1989), 118.

⁷ Martin Heidegger, *Einführung in die Metaphysik* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1976), 154.

⁸ Martin Heidegger, *Hegels Phänomenologie des Geistes* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1980), 209.

⁹ Martin Heidegger, *Identität und Differenz* (Tübingen: Neske, 1978), 19.

¹⁰ See Heidegger, *Einführung in die Metaphysik*, 31.

The Role of Fundamental Ontology

Metaphysics contemplating Being is itself a question and an answer concerning the 'relationship between Being and thinking.'¹¹ Therefore, for metaphysics, thinking matters. Indeed, traditional metaphysics has so far forgotten Being in its understanding of the thinking that enables such an oblivious interpretation of Being. Instead, for metaphysics, "the essential link between Being itself (that differs from beings) and the finitude in human being must become clear."¹² So, when Heidegger criticized the traditional ontology in *Being and Time*, he pointed out that Kant failed to ask about the 'temporality of Being' correctly and to develop the ontology of 'Dasein.'¹³

The new ontology of finite Being thus is only possible by reconsidering our thinking. To overcome the 'oblivion of Being' and remember the finitude of Being, we have to clarify by priority the metaphysics that happens as Dasein or "the metaphysics in Dasein [*Metaphysik im Dasein selbst*]."¹⁴ In this way, the first step for metaphysics is 'fundamental' ontology. Even though we know that the early Heidegger thought on human finiteness, we usually fail to connect it with the finitude of Being itself. However, the fundamental ontology first reconsiders thinking and its finiteness to clarify the belonging together of thinking with Being, which is itself finite.

Only when we acknowledge its deep purpose can we recognize the profound reason why the early Heidegger's fundamental ontology defines the structure of human existence in 'temporality.' The being of finite thinking is 'temporal.' And the 'temporality' is the "meaning of being of Dasein,"¹⁵ where "meaning" refers to the dynamic way of letting Being come to beings. That is, due to its relationship with Dasein, Being itself can be temporal, and its meaning can be "Temporality."¹⁶ Since the Being that belongs together with thinking to manifest itself is bound to be finite as "Time,"¹⁷ in *Being and Time* instantly after concluding that Dasein exists finitely, Heidegger could claim that time [*Zeit*] is finite.¹⁸

¹¹ Martin Heidegger, *Vorträge und Aufsätze* (Tübingen: Neske, 1978), 213.

¹² Martin Heidegger, *Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1973), 223.

¹³ See, Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 6.

¹⁴ Martin Heidegger, *Kant*, 224.

¹⁵ Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 438.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 26.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 432.

¹⁸ See *Ibid.*, 438.

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Self

Care

In Heidegger's entire ontology, 'self' is a leitmotif. As it will be clear from the coming discussion, the 'self' who "takes into question its existence"¹⁹ performs or enacts temporality. Therefore, as much as temporality is crucial, we need to elucidate the "selfness [*Selbstheit*]"²⁰ more than anything else. Thus, taking stock of the 'self' while reading Heidegger's ontology cannot be an arbitrary interpretation but is the most proper one.

However, before fully elucidating the temporality of self, I will first stand against the most common misconception about Heidegger's concept of "self." This process is needed because this misconception distorts and hinders our inquiry into the self. The self is often regarded as a solipsistic subject. However, the self is bound to exist in the world, and only in its being-in-the-world does it earn selfhood.

Heidegger describes the existence of Dasein as a unified phenomenon called "being-in-the-world."²¹ To clarify the moments of this unified phenomenon, Heidegger analyzes the worldhood and the self who is in the world. Furthermore, he defines the who with 'care [*Sorge*].' Dasein only exists in the way of caring about other beings encountered in the world and for other human beings who co-build its world. The self relates to all the beings that are "not" it.²² Therefore, we cannot insist that the existent self is solipsistic.

Even more, Dasein can never escape being-in-the-world because it is the nature of Dasein that exists as the place of appearance of Being as beings. "Without or before being-in-the-world, it does not 'exist' in any way. Because this being-in-the-world constitutes the very being of Dasein."²³ As long as we overlook this point, the emphasis on the individual self becomes the repetition of the old subjectivism, and cannot contribute to the new ontology, so we must dispel this misconception.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 4.

²⁰ Martin Heidegger, *Wegmarken* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1976), 157.

²¹ Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 71.

²² Heidegger, *Wegmarken*, 138.

²³ Heidegger, *Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1975), 241.

Authentic Self

However, an immediate objection follows. The second half of *Being and Time* seems to exclude caring about beings and caring for others from the primordial existence. After setting the conclusion of Part 1 of *Being and Time* as “the existence of Dasein is the care,”²⁴ in Part 2, Heidegger interprets this Dasein’s existence in its ‘primordial,’ that is, “authentic”²⁵ mode.

While Heidegger had already pointed out in Part 1, verse 25, that the ‘who’ of Dasein is “the self,” it was still not distinguished from the “they” who have lost themselves in everyday lives. However, now in its primordial mode, the self is clearly ‘separated’ from “they.” And since he describes the authentic self in contrast with the “they” who stay among beings with shared interpretations of them in the common world, here, selfhood looks to exclude caring about beings and caring for others.

To disprove this misunderstanding, let us follow Heidegger’s deliberation further. When I exist as ‘being toward death,’ the whole of my being matters. When I can take death as a radical possibility that I may no longer exist, that I may not be in the world, all the ownmost possibilities within the unsurpassable possibility of death reveal themselves as ‘mine.’ I myself will enact one of the possibilities and, in that way, be myself. Therefore, in front of death, the self becomes a significant concern.

Furthermore, to this self who stands before death, its existence becomes ‘non-relational.’ In other words, besides death highlighting me and my possibilities as a problem, it demands that I be an “individual.” Neither the person whom I love the most nor the person who loves me the most can die nor live for me, let alone others who treat me as a mere number and all the beings around me that define my obtained identity. So, being toward death, Dasein “retracts” from the associations with other beings and other humans in everyday life – this is the tricky part.

However, the key to non-relational existence is not the ‘dissolution’ of relationships. Heidegger is willing to admit that the primordial existence of Dasein cannot cease to be ‘being-in-the-world.’ Because even in its ‘primordial, authentic mode, Dasein can never stop being a Dasein; rather, it does remain to be Dasein. Therefore, the authentic self should also be a being-in-the-world more than the inauthentic one.²⁶

²⁴ Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 309.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 311.

²⁶ See *Ibid.*, 363.

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Care of the Authentic Self

However, how can the authentic self and caring be merged? In the authentic mode of caring, Dasein faces its thrown self in the world, who cares about beings and cares for others. Only to this thrown self in the world are possibilities “based on” its world²⁷ exposed as an individual’s own. Only among its possibilities does the self choose one to be enacted. The voice of the conscience that drives me into anxiety²⁸ makes me confront that I am thrown to take on the responsibility of ‘choosing’ a possibility for myself and realize it. The authentic self must understand, endure, and complete its own choice.²⁹

In this way, Dasein brings ‘notness’ into its own existence and becomes “a ground of this notness [*Grundsein einer Nichtigkeit*].”³⁰ Heidegger explains that the being of Dasein includes ‘not [*nichtig*]’ in the sense that Dasein cannot deny the facticity into which it was thrown as itself. I have no choice but to be amid beings in my world, in a specific situation, and with an attitude toward it. Moreover, I always have to choose whom to be. And I have to bear the notness that when I choose my possibility to bring to me, I can ‘not’ select other possibilities.³¹

It is crucial that as layers of notness, Dasein stands farthest from isolation and enters most deeply into relationships in-its-own-world. Any interpretation that cuts the self off beings within the world or the others constituting the world together will be entirely untenable. Only in this related-relating way does a self form its own uniqueness and stay ‘finite’ enough. While investigating authentic existence, we do not face a ‘pure’ ego defined merely by a universal essence and immune from its finiteness. Instead, the authentic self is the most concretely related-relating, that is, the caring ‘impure’ one.

²⁷ Heidegger, *Wegmarken*, 157.

²⁸ Whereas obeying the shared values of the communal world without its own evaluation is familiar and comfortable, breaking away from it to build its own world is an unfamiliar and anxious task. Dasein who exists inauthentically lives only fleeing from this anxiety. However, a person who stood up called by his conscience, for example, against the black segregation policy, has firmly deviated from such an inauthentic way of existence. And the presence of these people makes it clear that a sense of defeat is not our only option. In the face of the rare experience of the collapse of the world that seemed safe and comfortable, I face the terrifying fact that the public interpretation I have followed has supported the world, but such interpretation can no longer support my life. The fact that a world that seemed so firm depends only on the choice of the one who throws it and keeps it for solidarity, puts us in incomparable anxiety.

²⁹ See Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 347.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 406.

³¹ See *Ibid.*, 376-9.

Being Self

Temporal Phenomena

Dasein can exist as a self since it differs wholly from a substance or subject. "The constancy of a self [*Selbstständigkeit*]"³² is not like the sameness [*Selbigkeit*] or persistence [*Beständigkeit*] that is relevant to a substance or subject present to us. Instead, being self seems to include one's performative 'attitude' toward its possibility. Far from substance or subject, "Dasein is itself only by existing."³³

To interpret this sentence clearly, we must understand the 'temporality' of a self. Because the title of the second volume of *Being and Time* is already "Dasein and Temporality," we can reckon that the primordial meaning of existence is related to temporality. Heidegger does present the meaning of existence as 'temporality.' The profound interpretation of existence is achieved only by repeatedly explaining the previously introduced authentic existence in 'temporality.'

The caring Dasein is already thrown into a world and usually immersed in beings. However, the self does not simply remain in the obtained reality. Instead, it is already "ahead of itself" when foreseeing its possibilities. Just because Dasein is already out of it to reach its possibility, it can question how to live or exist forward. Then, the primary phenomenon of existence is the coming future, and the future makes it possible for Dasein to exist in the way of question. Therefore, Dasein has the 'meaning' of existence first in the "future [*Zukunft*]."³⁴

And this coming towards returns to itself that has been. A decided possibility cannot be mine if I do not return to myself that has been. Therefore, the foreseeing determination interjoins with the phenomenon of the "past." Furthermore, wherever Dasein brings its own possibility to the self that has been, there opens a situation in which the beings appear as beings. Therefore, the phenomenon of the "present" emerges with the future and the past. Due to the present presence, Dasein can also immerse itself into the inner world beings.

Thus, even if the future takes the lead of temporality, it is clear that this future cannot exist independently of the past and present. Therefore, being self means unfolding a unified phenomenon of the future, past, and present.

³² *Ibid.*, 427.

³³ *Ibid.*, 156.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 437.

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Temporalization of Time

However, this unified phenomenon of time flows. In forming a unified phenomenon, the future, past, and present are not atomic components. Instead, the future, past, and present, as the “ekstases [Ekstasen],” and extend into each other at each moment. That is because they are existential [existenzial] that cannot be categorized as beings but can be performed through the existence of Dasein. Dasein performs the split and unity of ekstases through its own existence. The temporality, that is, the temporalization of time performed by Dasein, is itself “outside-of-itself [Außer-sich],”³⁵ and a “transition [Übergang]”³⁶ of self and its world each time.

Heidegger calls this temporalization “transcendence.” Transcendence is horizontal in forming the world, ecstatic in exceeding oneself, and temporal in these double and simultaneous senses. Thus, transcendence is the simultaneous ‘occurrence [Geschehen]’³⁷ of the self and the world³⁸ at each moment. Temporally transcending, a Dasein becomes a self in its world. Whereas people “overlook the finiteness of temporality”³⁹ in the ordinary conception of time, time flows only through a transcendence.

However, how is Dasein temporality or how can Dasein temporalize time? Heidegger’s answer is that Being itself that belongs together with thinking is Time. Dasein, who belongs together with Being that is itself Time, therefore cannot but be temporal through and through.

Spontaneous Source

Now, it is the time that we must ascertain how a self that temporalizes time is spontaneous. However, the concept of “spontaneous” seems still obscure. When we say an individual is spontaneous, it usually means that the cause of its action or state is internal rather than external. However, it is impossible to divide my existence into what is caused by external influences and what is not because the transcendent Dasein is “in the middle between the subject and the object.”⁴⁰ The appropriating self provides the world mineness [Meinigkeit], and in my world, I become myself.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 435.

³⁶ Heidegger, *Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie*, 352.

³⁷ Martin Heidegger, *Einführung in die Philosophie* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1996), 316.

³⁸ Heidegger, *Wegmarken*, 164, 175.

³⁹ Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 437.

⁴⁰ Martin Heidegger, *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Logik im Ausgang von Leibniz* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1978), 261.

Here, transcendence is the ‘occurrence of ground [*Grundgeschehen*].’⁴¹ Dasein lets the simultaneous event of itself and its world occur through being ground. What does this ‘ground’ mean? It is not supposed to mean keeping Being infinite. The middle Heidegger reads Schelling critically, who presented God as the unity of Ground and Existence. God exists as the intellectual unity of all the various beings. It is also the Ground as the unintelligent will to unfold all beings simultaneously. The unifying ‘system’ and the grounding ‘becoming’ cannot be one in nature because the former is eternal and immutable. Traditional philosophy did choose to assign the ‘system’ to God, who is infinite.

However, Being is different from God and remains as the becoming Ground of all beings. To be Ground far from the system Being embarks on ‘Dasein’ as its ground for manifestation and comes into truth only through it. Dasein exists grounding Being because “Being cannot speak in the truth of the Absolute, but the essence [*Wesen*] of Being is finitude.”⁴²

Heidegger calls this Being-grounding existence of Dasein “source [*Ursprung*].” By calling it a “source,” Heidegger emphasizes its temporality. It needs to be a new beginning of itself each time. As a welling spring, the source of spring water spouts water unceasingly. Only in this way, the source keeps the Ground as Ground only when it plunges itself into grounding.

Moreover, as a caring self, transcendent Dasein is a source of the presence of Being. Ontologically the source does not precede Being, but the presence of Being does not occur until the source grounds the Being. Only through the Dasein holding itself in ‘truth’ [*Sich-in-der-Wahrheit-halten*] as a source for the truth event does Being arrive as beings.

Existing as a source, a new ground of Being each moment in its temporality, Dasein is ‘spontaneous.’⁴³ Dasein is thoroughly finite to preserve Being finite. The self is not bound to the subject-object dichotomy, so the interpretation of thinking connected to the dichotomy and the infinite Being as its Existent Ground cannot discern the self. The self is spontaneous,⁴⁴

⁴¹ Martin Heidegger, *Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1983), 509.

⁴² Martin Heidegger, *Schelling: Vom Wesen der Menschlichen Freiheit (1809)* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1987), 280.

⁴³ Characterizing the authentic existence of Dasein as ‘spontaneous’ is not entirely arbitrary. Heidegger, in *Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik*, speaks of the understanding of Dasein, which understands Being as Time, as “spontaneous and self-understanding [*spontane und selbstverständliche*].” See Heidegger, *Kant*, 234.

⁴⁴ We expect freedom from the word “spontaneity,” too. Being spontaneous, the self cannot be caught thoroughly in the causal links. Heidegger points out that Schelling saw the ‘source of evil’ in this temporality of Dasein. Unlike God, human beings are not the unity of Existence and Ground but temporally divided, and such a division produces ‘evil.’ However,

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transcending itself in its world through its belonging together with finite Being.

Self and Being Itself

Belonging Together

Before its actualization, the primordial material of relationalists has an obscure yet distinct structure as its internal force. Even though we need to separate the dimension of 'potentiality' from actuality, we can use the analogy of an embryo to comprehend this potential structure. The development of an embryo can be defined by a set of pre-individual, non-personal, and non-conceptual singularities that will guide the development,⁴⁵ whereas it is 'slightly open' because it contains the materials independent of the structure.⁴⁶ Following merely its pre-structure in its unfolding, the primordial matter generates and organizes itself without any transcendental beings.

Here, this innovative ontology gives the individual nothing but the freedom to be an 'accidental' effect of the interrelationship provided by the pre-existing structure. Here, the accidentality means the slight variations allowed for its actualization. Suppose that, in this ontology, we cannot call the individual 'spontaneous' because they are mere resulting arrangements. Then, how could we insist that the individual is spontaneous in Heidegger's ontology when considering its relation to Being?

Being-in-the-world of Dasein can only be elucidated from the presence of Being itself⁴⁷ which is an event of the truth. In short, for defining the self as spontaneous, the real difficulty for us may be in resolving doubts that Dasein is the work of the Difference itself (or Being) and that the self is simply an expression of the dynamic of Being. To keep our distance from relationalism, at least indirectly, we must clarify that we cannot reduce our existence to the work of 'Being.'

In Heidegger's ontology, the self can never be reduced to anything other than itself, not even to Being. Of course, as it became apparent since the "turn [*Kehre*]," Dasein must be understood as being-there [Da-sein] of Being itself. Nevertheless, even when we focus on Being itself and its being-there, the 'self' as Dasein is still an indispensable element of the manifestation of

without the free domain, one can never be evil. Therefore, we can declare that Dasein has its freedom (to be 'evil') through its temporal existence. See Heidegger, *Schelling*, 215.

⁴⁵ Manuel DeLanda, *Intensive Science and Virtual Philosophy* (London; New York: Continuum, 2002), 72.

⁴⁶ See *Ibid.*, 43.

⁴⁷ See Heidegger, *Wegmarken*, 159, 1929 footnote.

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Being. Even in late Heidegger, the manifestation or appropriation [*Ereignis*]⁴⁸ of Being does not occur without its ‘belonging together’ with thinking, and belonging together is possible only between those that are “different” from each other.⁴⁹

Surely Dasein is asked to speak after the Words of Being and ‘responds’ to them. However, to respond, Dasein must interpret. Moreover, because interpretation is performed by a self who is being-in-the-world, to be able to interpret as a perspective, Dasein must be spontaneous enough to choose itself and its world.

“Only the being that exists finite can have the privilege or pain that experiences the true things as beings.”⁵⁰ So, as a temporal ground of Being, thus finite ‘being’ itself, Dasein has to be able to laugh and cry in its world. It must be able to devote itself to what it holds precious and, on the contrary, abandon itself due to meaninglessness. It should be happy with the warmth of others and lonely to be alone. Since Dasein is the self that does all these, it can be a ground of Being that is simultaneously presence and absence, truth and untruth, appropriation, and disappropriation [*Ereignis und Enteignis*].

Bearing Destiny

Finally, let us consider the ‘oblivion of Being [*Seinsvergessenheit*],’ which has become our destiny according to the misleading nature of Being itself. We are ‘destined’ to forget Being itself and our freedom. We live our lives captivated by all the splendid beings that appear and disappear. Thus, the more he deepens his thought, Heidegger emphasizes belonging together of thinking with Being and the inevitability of oblivion.

The occurrence of thinking responding to the request of Being as truth is a “history [*Geschichte*],”⁵¹ and the beings within the world are “historical/world-historical [*geschichtlich/weltgeschichtlich*].”⁵² In history, something new has its root in what has been. At least the authentic existence opens “its ownmost possibility from the inherited heritage [*Erbe*].”⁵³ So, when Dasein is thoroughly the ground of notness, its ‘fate [*Schicksal*]’ is offered.

Moreover, Heidegger indicates that the fateful Dasein, who exists with others, experiences a communal historizing as “destiny [*Geschick*].”⁵⁴ The historizing of a self is also that of community and folks [*das Geschehen der*

⁴⁸ Martin Heidegger, *Zur Sache des Denkens* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1976), 24.

⁴⁹ Heidegger, *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, 233.

⁵⁰ Heidegger, *Schelling*, 280.

⁵¹ Heidegger, *Wegmarken*, 191.

⁵² Heidegger, *Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie*, 241.

⁵³ Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 507.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 508.

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Gemeinschaft, des Volkes]. Individual fate and social destiny are as closely linked as lived tradition and forwarding determination.⁵⁵ And for Heidegger, the ‘oblivion of Being’ is the collective destiny of our era.

However, the fact that we are doomed to forget Being also does not require the absence of the ‘self.’ Bearing destiny differs from being predestined and determined, which does not allow a spontaneous ‘self.’ Someone has to go through the destiny of oblivion. When the history of metaphysics demands resignation, endurance, and waiting, in these attitudes that seem to do nothing, we are as selves, always bearing our destiny.

It seems unavoidable that the ‘selves’ suffer destiny. However, we can bear our destiny, and we can prepare to revise it. When we remain as selves who suffer, the crisis could go to the extreme and be transformed. Of course, we do not have the power to change this massive flow with a single decision. Still, someday a changeover might happen somehow. It must eventually happen by the accumulation of small decisions of ourselves since the path of Being is paved only through the self of Dasein that clears its way ahead [*be-wägen*].⁵⁶

Conclusion

The characteristic distinguishing Heidegger’s thought from relationalism and presenting it as a new insight lies in deliberating the ‘self.’ The self is temporal in its ecstatic and horizontal existence and, in this way, spontaneous. By adequately considering this self, we can establish an ontology of the individual that the tradition has hitherto disregarded aiming for universality.

At the end of this paper, I should emphasize that the ‘self’ is not the same as the ‘genuine me’ related to the myth of ‘authenticity’ allied with individualism. It attempts to eliminate the self by pushing the ‘genuine I’ to turn against the actual world. In this attempt, paradoxically people maintain the domination of the public world without selves. Because here, searching for one’s ‘genuine’ self becomes ultimately the effort to gain an edge compared to others by escaping from the way of life everyone else enjoys and achieving differentiation.

However, separating a self in its being-in-the-world from all the communal interpretations or traditions is inappropriate. That I make choices as myself does not mean that I have to let go of all the expectations and pressures my family places on me, nor that I have to forget my civic duties

⁵⁵ See *Ibid.*, 384.

⁵⁶ Martin Heidegger, *Unterwegs zur Sprache* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1985), 186, 202.

and responsibilities or ignore the ethics we share as human beings. Instead, when we choose ourselves, we have to see relationships woven through us with a brighter eye and be ourselves holding on to their meanings.

I fully sense my possibilities and limitations when I honestly admit this: None of us can remain entirely inauthentic, just as we are not our pure selves. My ordinary daily life may not differ much from my primordial existence as myself. As much as the worlds of each can never be completely identical to each other, no one can live only as one of them, completely ignoring who it is. So, holding on to the possibility of being oneself is not only possible for a few heroes.

We should keep the question of 'Who am I?' even in the era of posthumanism. Only when we can ask the question is a new recognition and practice possible that breaks us off from the era that reduces the individual to an expression of the universal or absolute. As the one who still thinks in this era, I insist we must revitalize the old and new concept of "self."

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Hearing and Smelling— Heidegger and Tellenbach¹

Asuka Suehisa

Abstract: This article considers the concept of the “world-with others” (*Mitwelt mit den Anderen*) by Martin Heidegger and Hubertus Tellenbach. Tellenbach’s analysis of “atmosphere” was significantly influenced by Heidegger’s take on disposition or attunement. Both thinkers considered these phenomena to be related to coexistence with others. Heidegger maintained that Dasein as “being-with” (*Mitsein*) is always open to the communal world and considered this world and “being-with” as prerequisites for every possibility of human encounters. For Heidegger, the “world-with others” is a world that always already exists, and Dasein shares this world with others through communication and hearing. Tellenbach partly agreed with Heidegger’s thought but did not regard the “world-with others” and “being-with” as self-evident phenomena; instead, he examined how they are constructed through smell and “atmosphere”. In addition to comprehensively exploring the phenomenon of the “world-with others,” this article aims to closely analyze the similarities and differences between Tellenbach’s theory of “world-with others” based on the sense of smell and Heidegger’s theory founded on the auditory model.

Keywords: world-with others, sense of smell, atmosphere, hearing

In the tradition of philosophy, the senses of “sight” and “hearing” are the main models of cognition, and they are considered to elucidate the workings of the spirit. By contrast, the sense of “smell” has been characterized as a lower sensitivity and has mostly been ignored in philosophy.² According to German psychiatrist Hubertus Tellenbach, the

¹ This work was supported by JSPS KAKENHI Grant Number JP19K00487.

² Chantal Jaquet, *Philosophie de l’odorat*, (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2010), 2f. Jaquet cites Plato as a philosopher who focused on sight, and Spinoza, Malebranche, and Leibniz

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sense of smell has also been disregarded in the field of psychiatry. However, he thought that the appearance of endogenous psychoses is predominantly determined by “abnormal experiences of oral sense.”³ The oral sense, or the oral sensorium, refers to “the unity of smell, taste and oral skin-mucosal feeling.”⁴ Tellenbach considered the possibility of the sense of smell to be strongly connected not only to the body but also to the spirit. In *Geschmack und Atmosphäre* (1968), he developed the phenomenology of the oral sense.⁵

It is not difficult to find a resemblance between the thought of Martin Heidegger and that of Tellenbach because the latter once studied under Heidegger in Freiburg. For Heidegger, phenomenology means letting the phenomenon be seen, which usually remains hidden and unobtrusive but makes all concrete phenomena possible. Based on this understanding of phenomenon, “being” (*Sein*) becomes the main theme of Heidegger’s phenomenology. The “Dasein” that somehow understands this “being” is not the encapsulated being but rather “being-in-the-world” and “being-with others.” In *Geschmack und Atmosphäre*, Tellenbach considered the “atmosphere,” which is inconspicuous and, like Heidegger’s “disposition” (*Befindlichkeit*) and “attunement” (*Stimmung*), has the power to determine existence, being-with, and the world. Therefore, he believed the “atmosphere” to constitute the ground of the “world-with others” (*Mitwelt mit den Anderen*).

However, Tellenbach saw the origin of the “atmosphere” in the “oral sense” —that is, in the unity of smell and taste—and found a commonality between the “atmosphere” and the phenomenon of smell. On this point, Tellenbach differs from Heidegger, who focused his attention on sight and hearing in examining the “world-with others.” In this article, I will interpret Tellenbach’s thought as a complement to or enrichment of Heidegger’s phenomenology that allows us to understand the “world-with others” more precisely.

as philosophers who considered hearing, and argues that no philosophical work has been found that emphasizes the power of the sense of smell and appreciates it.

³ Hubertus Tellenbach, *Geschmack und Atmosphäre: Medien menschlichen Elementarkontaktes* (Salzburg: Otto Müller, 1968), 15. As this book has not been translated into English, I translated the quotations into English myself.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁵ In 1981, Tellenbach published an article in English (“Tasting and Smelling”), which summarized Chapters I and II of *Geschmack und Atmosphäre*. I also consulted this article.

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Tellenbach on Smelling and “World-with Others”

Characteristics of the Sense of Smell

In this section, I examine how Tellenbach characterizes the oral sense, particularly the sense of smell.⁶ First, he asserts that “nowhere is and remains the relatedness of perception and movement so primordial as in the oral sphere” and that “smelling is breathing.”⁷ The sense of smell cannot perceive anything without being accompanied by the physical movements of breathing, which is necessary for the maintenance of life. For example, we can close our eyes or ears to something we do not want to see or hear. However, if we close our noses, we can no longer breathe. There, as long as we are alive, we must always smell something. In fact, we start smelling something as soon as we are born. Therefore, the first lasting encounter with the world is made possible through smell.⁸

Second, what is perceived through smelling always flows into the subject “as a stream of the world presented in smell,”⁹ whereas what is perceived through sight or hearing is separable from the subject. The principle of separability cannot be applied to the sense of smell; thus, smelling always causes “an instantaneous homogenization of the human condition.”¹⁰ Tellenbach called this homogenization “tuning” (*Einstimmung*).¹¹ By means of this tuning, we merge with the smell of the world and others, which allows Tellenbach to claim that we are, “before all criticism, in a state of prelogical prejudice, we like to be close to the fragrant beings.”¹² There is no logical reason for reacting in this way. Instead, a bad smell makes one despicable. So, one is compelled to have prejudice (rejection or affection) regarding something as soon as one smells it.

Third, one not only smells something transitively but also intransitively through one’s own skin glands. In other words, in addition to smelling other people and things, one emanates one’s own smell. This emanative odor is modified by one’s health, sexual maturity, age, diet, and so

⁶ Following Tellenbach’s English article published in 1981, Tedeschini listed the following four ways in which the oral sense attunes the self with the environment: “prejudice,” “proximity,” “repetition” and “protective and cautionary.” I will adopt some of these features while also considering others. See Marco Tedeschini, “Atmosphere and Taste, Individual and Environment,” in *Atmosphere and Aesthetics*, ed. by Tonino Griffero and Marco Tedeschini (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 280 <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-24942-7_4>.

⁷ Tellenbach, *Geschmack und Atmosphäre*, 14.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 22.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 20.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 17.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 17.

¹² *Ibid.*, 27.

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on, all of which make it “individual-specific”¹³ and important for interpersonal relations. Tellenbach considered that “this fragrance of the skin can be a determining factor for the success or the lack of success in human encounters.”¹⁴ He mentioned the role of perfume, which possesses the power of attraction and extends the odor of the skin.¹⁵ Normally, we smell the odor of others quite naturally and, in doing so, direct our attention to that odor as something sensory. According to Tellenbach, we turn our attention to this odor itself, and “we do not *intend what* is expressed in it—although this may be implied.”¹⁶ In this context, we can understand why, in the literature, it has been argued that odor can function as a mask.¹⁷

The “Atmosphere” and the “World-with Others”

In this section, I would like to discuss how Tellenbach characterized the “atmosphere” and related it to smell. He designated the “More” (*Mehr*)—that is, the “surplus” that lies beyond the factual while still being perceptible—as the “atmosphere” or the “atmospheric” (*das Atmosphärische*).¹⁸ He used hearing as an example: “We not only hear *what* a voice says: we also hear the *How*, the timbre that attracts or repels us in a voice.”¹⁹ In this case, the timbre counts as the “More,” and one can find this surplus in almost every experience. However, Tellenbach saw the world of the oral sense as the genetically primary and phenomenally dominant locus of the “atmosphere” because, as mentioned earlier, the physical movement of breathing is necessary for life and smelling is related to breathing.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 23.

¹⁴ Hubertus Tellenbach, Tasting and Smelling – Taste and Atmosphere – Atmosphere and Trust,” in *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology*, 12, no. 2 (1981), 222.

¹⁵ Tellenbach, *Geschmack und Atmosphäre*, 23. See also *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Tellenbach, *Geschmack und Atmosphäre*, 31.

¹⁷ One example is Patrick Süskind’s novel *Perfume, Das Parfum, Die Geschichte eines Mörders* (Zürich: Diogenes, 1985). Bähme also referred to this novel when discussing Tellenbach’s olfactory theory, stating the following: “Smells can be separated from their source—this is their atmospherical character: they tinge the space. Süskind enforces this trait by his hero Grenouille, killing young maidens in order to usurp their smell with the help of his perfume-technical practices. Using their skin, he produces an essence, the attractive and love-making effect of which nobody can resist.” See Gernot Böhme, “Smell and Atmosphere,” “Smell and Atmosphere,” in *Atmosphere and Aesthetics*, ed. by Tonino Griffero and Marco Tedeschini (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 262, <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-24942-7_4>.

¹⁸ Tellenbach, *Geschmack und Atmosphäre*, 47. See also Tellenbach, “Tasting and Smelling,” 227. In *Geschmack und Atmosphäre*, Tellenbach often uses the term “das Atmosphärische.” However, in his English article, he does not translate this term as “the atmospheric” but as “atmosphere.” Therefore, I also translate this term as “atmosphere” instead of “the atmospheric” in this article.

¹⁹ Tellenbach, *Geschmack und Atmosphäre*, 47.

Following Johannes Rudert, he had compared the “atmosphere” with “tinted breath” (*irgendwie getönter Hauch*).²⁰ One exudes the “atmosphere” through one’s mouth, nose, and skin when one breathes while feeling the breath of others. By means of respiration, we present ourselves to one another. He called the ability to receive this atmospheric self-presentation of others “a sensitivity to the atmosphere” (*ein Gespür für Atmosphärisches*).²¹ This sensitivity to the “atmosphere” is originally located in the oral sense. As I have already argued, it establishes a prelogical and preverbal prejudice about what is perceived. Therefore, sensitivity to the “atmosphere” introduces prejudices into human encounters, such as spontaneous rejections (“not-being-able-to-stand-the-smell of a person”), affection and acceptance (“his being to one’s taste”).²²

But what does one actually experience when one feels the “atmosphere” of the other? According to Tellenbach, smell conveys the qualities of the other’s immediacy formed by the power of nature (age, habit, diet, etc.) and life history.²³ Through sensitivity to the “atmosphere,” these qualities directly attest “to the origin of my attunement”²⁴ because, as discussed earlier, the principle of the separability of the subject and the object does not apply to the sense of smell. Based on Jean Nogué’s argument, Tellenbach said that “the most immediate resonances” are awakened through this attunement.²⁵ These resonances radiate back to the other, and the other feels rejected or accepted. The interplay of resonances constitutes atmospheric aura “as a medium in which Dasein and its world communicate each other”²⁶ and in which an “atmospheric tuning” (*atmosphärische Einstimmung*) occurs.²⁷

For Tellenbach, the “world-with others” is an elementary condition of existence—that is, if one exists, one necessarily participates in it. However, the “world-with others” is not always already there but is atmospherically constituted in the resonant encounter between one and the other. Then, this

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 48.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 49. In Tellenbach’s English article, the expression “sensitivity for atmosphere” is used only once. It would be a direct translation from German to English. However, the expression “a sensitivity to the atmosphere” would be better. This expression would not distort his thinking. Because he himself also uses the expression “sensitivity towards atmosphere.” See Tellenbach, “Tasting and Smelling” 227.

²² Tellenbach, “Tasting and Smelling,” 227. With the expression “his being to one’s taste,” Tellenbach means “his being is to one’s taste.” Oral sense is the unity of smell and taste, so he also refers to taste here. See also Tellenbach, *Geschmack und Atmosphäre*, 49.

²³ Tellenbach, *Geschmack und Atmosphäre*, 54.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 52.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 53.

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encounter can be experienced by others and further developed as a sympathetic vibration of the relationship, which Tellenbach called the “atmospheric integral.”²⁸ By means of the sensitivity to the “atmosphere,” we grasp “what characterizes the environment and the world-with others directly and uniformly.”²⁹ In other words, through sensitivity to the resonance emitted toward us by others, we experience whether our claim to belong to the “world-with others” is accepted or denied. Tellenbach indicated that we never experience the atmospheric emanation of our own being by ourselves; instead, we always understand and regain ourselves only in the resonances of others responding to our atmospheric radiation.³⁰ He called this self-awareness “referral” (*Rückverweis*) or “reassurance” (*Rückversicherung*)³¹ and considered that the weaker the self was, the more it depended on others.³²

Heidegger on Hearing and “World-with Others”

Communication and Hearing

For Tellenbach, the “world-with” is atmospherically constituted and further developed in the resonant encounter between one and the other. In Heidegger’s phenomenology, through “disclosedness” (*Erschlossenheit*), Dasein is always open to others as “Dasein-with” (*Mitdasein*), and “Dasein-with is essentially already manifest in disposition-with [*Mitbefindlichkeit*] and in understanding-with [*Mitverstehen*].”³³ What Heidegger called “disposition” or “attunement” “first makes possible directing oneself toward something”;³⁴ thus, understanding in a “disposition-with” has the power to determine the opinions and modes of behavior of every existence as Dasein-with. In this way, Dasein is always “being-with others” (*Mitsein mit Anderen*) in a “world-with others.” The “world-with” is “always that which I share with others.”³⁵ This “being-with others” is “‘explicitly’ *shared* in discourse.”³⁶

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 55. He also called this atmospheric relationship the “pneumatic-atmospheric in-between” (*das pneumatisch-atmosphärische Zwischen*). See Hubertus Tellenbach, “Das Zwischen und die Rolle. Zur Konditionsanalyse endogener Psychosen,” in *Pathos, Affekt, Gefühl*, ed. by Ingrid Craemer-Ruegenber (Baden-Baden: Alber, 1981), 297.

²⁹ Tellenbach, *Geschmack und Atmosphäre*, 49.

³⁰ Tellenbach, “Tasting and Smelling,” 227.

³¹ Tellenbach, *Geschmack und Atmosphäre*, 55.

³² *Ibid.*, 55. See also Tellenbach, “Tasting and Smelling,” 227.

³³ Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 17. Aufl. (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1993), 162. I also consulted the English translations by Stambaugh but partially modified them.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 137.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 118.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 162.

This explicit sharing through discourse refers to the articulation of understanding in a “disposition-with”. Heidegger called this articulation “communication” (*Mitteilung*)³⁷ and thought that hearing plays an essential role in this process. “Hearing . . . is the existential openness of Dasein as being-with to the other.”³⁸ This openness was also referred to as the basis of “hearkening.”³⁹ Heidegger attached great importance to hearing when discussing the “world-with others” because in discourse, he found a power for articulating attuned understanding. What is expressed in communication is not purely acoustic sound but also “the actual mode of disposition (of attunement),”⁴⁰ which determines the behavior and opinions of every Dasein in a shared world. The actual mode of disposition manifests itself “by intonation, modulation, in the tempo of talk, and “in the way of speaking.”⁴¹ In other words, disposition is expressed not in the “what” but in the “how” of one’s speech. Here, as in Tellenbach’s phenomenology, we encounter the “surplus,” or the “atmosphere,” and hearing can be interpreted as something similar to the sensitivity to the “atmosphere,” except using the auditory rather than the olfactory model.

Publicness and Shared Disposition

“Being-with” develops by means of “hearing each other” (*Aufeinander-hören*), which means that Dasein is “submissive” (*hörig*) and “belongs” (*zugehörig*) to others.⁴² At first glance, this assertion looks like a play on words. However, it also has a phenomenal basis. Heidegger believed that hearing constitutes “the primary and authentic openness of Dasein to its own most possibility of being, as in hearing the voice of the friend whom every Dasein carries with it.”⁴³ The friend’s voice is the “call of conscience” that announces to Dasein its finitude and nothingness. Insofar as Dasein always exists as “being-toward-death” (*Sein zum Tode*) in its finiteness, it is “essentially anxiety.”⁴⁴ In this meaning, Heidegger regards anxiety as the “fundamental attunement of Dasein.”⁴⁵ Dasein is always, although latently,

³⁷ Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 162. The German preposition *mit* corresponds to the English “with,” and the German verb *teilen* to the English “share.” The German noun *Mitteilung* can therefore be translated as “sharing-with.”

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 163.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 162.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*, 163.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 266.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 251.

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determined by this disposition.⁴⁶ The friend, that is, the caller of the “call of conscience” is Dasein itself, which is thrown into nothingness and is anxious about its potentiality of being.⁴⁷ In *Angst*, one has an uncanny feeling. This uncanniness enables the flight “into the being-at-home of publicness.”⁴⁸ This means that Dasein escapes from itself and closes its ears to itself, thus remaining “submissive” (*hörig*) to others and, in this dependence, “belonging” (*zugehörig*) to them.

In this sense, Dasein stands “as everyday being-with-one-another” “in *subservience* to others. It itself *is* not, the others have taken its being away from it.”⁴⁹ Heidegger argued that one calls people “the others” “in order to cover over one’s own essential belonging to them.”⁵⁰ The flight into the being-at-home of publicness is, therefore, the falling pray of Dasein to the “they” (*Man*), who are, in fact, nobody.⁵¹ “They” have always already decided the “possibilities of being attuned”—that is, the “basic way” “in which Dasein lets itself be concerned by the world.”⁵² Put otherwise, “they” prescribe the disposition that always already determines “how” and “the way” in which every Dasein should behave. Heidegger stated that “we enjoy ourselves and have fun the way *they* enjoy themselves; we read, see and judge literature and art the way *they* see and judge.”⁵³ The aforementioned “disposition-with” (*Mitbefindlichkeit*) refers to the “basic way” that is decided by “them” and determines the behaviors and opinions of every Dasein.

Because of this subservience to others, in everyday life, Dasein must always “hear” the “communication” (*Mitteilung*) with others and share the disposition as the “basic way” of behavior. In communication, Dasein somehow feels the “surplus” and constantly cares about its differences from others. Heidegger called this phenomenon “distantiality” (*Abständigkeit*).⁵⁴ This concern with the difference is based on the fact that “being-with-one-another as such creates *averageness*.”⁵⁵ “They” watch so that no exception arises. At the same time, “they” aim at the “*leveling down* of all possibilities of

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 189.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 277.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 189.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 126.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ Espinet also noted Heidegger’s description of the auditory model, arguing that the call of conscience is usually “not heard” and that Heidegger saw a relationship between this fact and the falling pray of Dasein to the “they.” See David Espinet, *Phänomenologie des Hörens: Eine Untersuchung im Ausgang von Martin Heidegger*, 2nd ed. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016), 172f.

⁵² Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 169f.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 126f.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 126.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 127.

being.”⁵⁶ These three phenomena (i.e., “distantiality,” “averageness,” and “leveling down”) constitute “publicness,” which controls how the world and Dasein are interpreted. Heidegger claimed that this control is “always right,” because the “publicness” “does not get to ‘the heart of the matter,’ because it is insensitive to every difference of level and genuineness.”⁵⁷

“World-with Others” as a Unity of Hearing and Smelling

Finally, I will examine how Tellenbach’s phenomenology complements and enriches Heidegger’s considerations regarding the “world-with others”. On the one hand, Tellenbach appreciated Heidegger’s ideas about “understanding” (*Verstehen*) and said, “We have absolutely no doubt that the coherence of atmospheric feeling and atmospheric emanation is at the heart of the world of *understanding*.”⁵⁸ On the other hand, he adopted not the auditory but the olfactory model and saw the world of the “oral sense” as the primary and dominant locus of the “atmosphere.” Therefore, in what respect can his thought contribute to a more precise understanding of the phenomenon of the “world-with others”?

Heidegger inquired about the meaning of being, and his intention to discuss the “world-with others” clearly differed from Tellenbach’s psychiatric phenomenology. Heidegger was concerned not only with the structure of the “world-with others” but also with the forgetfulness of being in the “self-lostness” of Dasein in everyday life. Using the auditory model, he convincingly showed how this condition develops. Dasein does not want to hear its own call as a “call of conscience,” which constantly and uncannily announces Dasein’s finitude, and calms itself down by fleeing from itself, becoming obedient to the voice of others and thus belonging to them. This interpretation of Heidegger may be related to Tellenbach’s psychiatric theory of “referral” or “reassurance,” whereby the weaker the self, the more it depends on resonances from others. However, to escape from oneself, one needs a certain distance from oneself. I consider the auditory model to explain this mechanism better than the olfactory model because in smell, we always emanate our own odor, which is inseparable from us.

However, certain points cannot be sufficiently explained using the auditory model. First, there is the exclusive character of “averageness.” Usually, one feels shame when one is below average, and one can be proud when one is above average. However, Heidegger’s meaning is different here. He maintained that in public, one is not allowed to be either above or below

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ Tellenbach, *Geschmack und Atmosphäre*, 62f.

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average. No exceptions are allowed. This is a matter of “leveling” and of the disempowerment of all the possibilities of being. It seems to me that Heidegger’s auditory model cannot explain why this “leveling” occurs and why “averageness” is so exclusive.

Perhaps we can find the reasons for the “leveling” in Tellenbach’s “homogenization” and “atmospheric tuning.” In smelling, as mentioned above, one is inseparably merged with the flow of the world and others without distance and is forced to develop prelogical prejudices (rejection or affection). Nevertheless, we never experience the atmospheric emanation of our own being through ourselves, and our self-awareness is only possible through resonances from others. Given that belonging to the “world-with others” is one’s elementary condition of existence, one strives not to be rejected by others and to attune oneself to them. Therefore, “distantiality” — that is, caring about differences with others—is also grounded in “homogenization” because being too different from others means deviating from the homogenized world-with. This “distantiality” is easier to understand if we consider it in relation to the olfactory model. For example, one reason people take baths every day is they do not want to stand out from others due to offensive odors. Therefore, the daily customs of taking a bath and changing clothes show that one is concerned about differences from others by being concerned about smell.

Second, in publicness, Dasein is interested in how one behaves and not in one’s uniqueness. I believe that the auditory model makes it difficult to explain how this so-called “superficiality,” which “does not get to the heart of the matter,” is possible. At the same time, the olfactory model provides an indication. As discussed earlier, when smelling others, we focus our attention on odor as something sensory and not on what is really expressed by this odor. We can interpret this to mean that odor and the “atmosphere” work like a mask. Tellenbach claimed, “In smelling and tasting I can also perceive and define substance, when I leave an attitude of aesthetic pleasure and adopt an unmasking, theoretical attitude.”⁵⁹ We usually rarely meet each other with such a theoretical attitude at the beginning of the encounter. Instead, we normally encounter one another while wearing masks. Moreover, we can even mask our own odors to some extent with the scent of perfumes or soaps. Using the olfactory model, we can see that the “superficiality” of human relationships is natural and instinctive.

⁵⁹ Tellenbach, “Tasting and Smelling,” 224.

Conclusion

In this article, I attempted to interpret Tellenbach's thoughts as a complement to or enrichment of Heidegger's phenomenology that allows us to understand the "world-with others" more precisely. Heidegger considered the world of Dasein as the "world-with" that Dasein shares with others; he presupposed that this "world-with" is always already there with Dasein as being-with others. Tellenbach, meanwhile, addressed Heidegger's presupposition.⁶⁰ According to Tellenbach's argument, the "world-with" is first atmospherically constituted in the resonant encounter between one and the other and is then transformed into the "atmospheric integral." In this atmospheric resonance and its homogenization, we can see the ground for the disempowerment of all the possibilities of being and the superficiality of human relationships, which Heidegger could only describe insufficiently. Therefore, Tellenbach's investigation contributes to a more precise understanding of the phenomenon of the "world-with others" and allows us to uncover its more fundamental or more instinctive layer.

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⁶⁰ In his German article published in 1990, Tellenbach clearly agreed with Heidegger's assertion that being-with is a prerequisite for every possibility of human encounters. However, he posed his own question about what must be given for being-with to release us into an encounter. See Hubertus Tellenbach, "Phänomenologische Analyse der Mitmenschlichen Begegnung im Gesunden und im Psychotischen Dasein," in *Heidelberger Jahrbücher*, 34 (1990), 101.

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On the Limits of Transcendental Philosophy in Heidegger's Thinking: Thrown Projection, Metontology, and Emergence of Dasein

Masataka Furusho

Abstract: In *Being and Time*, Heidegger developed his ideas in accordance with transcendental philosophy. However, it is crucial to understand his concept of “thrown projection” precisely as an expression of distancing from the preceding theory of the transcendental constitution of the world. This paper aims to reexamine Heidegger's path of thinking, which leads to the problem of the ontical foundation of ontology and the consideration of metontology, which seeks to access the fundamental concealment behind the emergence of Dasein. Heidegger's metontological thinking about this concealment is a bold attempt to break through the limits of transcendental philosophy, but it also carries the risk of falling into the sphere of political violence. How can we protect philosophy from such violence?

Keywords: transcendental philosophy, thrown projection, metontology, emergence of Dasein

Wherein lies the significance of Heidegger's departure from the idea of transcendental constitution and his repeated attempts to elaborate metaphysical thinking about the “entities as a whole [*das Seiende im Ganzen*]”?¹ This paper attempts to reexamine this classic problem

¹ In this paper, I translate Heidegger's term “*das Seiende im Ganzen*” as “entities as a whole” and not as “beings as a whole.” Recent English translations of Heidegger writings have often adopted the latter, but I prefer the former because the former is better suited to emphasize phonetically the ontological difference between Being (*Sein*) and entity (*Seiendes*). The issue of the emergence of Dasein, which is closely related to this difference, will be an essential point in this paper.

of Heidegger studies. This problem is, of course, important in interpreting the internal connection between Heidegger's fundamental ontology of Dasein and the question about the meaning of Being in general. However, it should also be discussed to elucidate the meaning of his political failure. His ontological inquiries about the entities as a whole may share borders with his political call to the German people [*Volk*] to find their own leadership from the "power of a great and fundamentally concealed vocation."² This kind of political call, as well as the seemingly humble speculation about the "historical Beyng [*Seyn*] of the people"³ could be subject to some biopolitical intervention, if we forget that this "Beyng" is "essentially and forever sealed in a mystery."⁴ However, we can ask ourselves how it is also possible to resist such an intervention on the borderline of an attempted departure from transcendental philosophy. From this ambivalent perspective, we will conclude this paper with a brief look at Nishida's thought in 1932.

Transcendental Constitution in Heidegger and Other Typical Theories

In *Being and Time*, Heidegger claims:

All the modes of Being of entities within-the-world are founded ontologically upon the worldhood of the world, and accordingly upon the phenomenon of Being-in-the-world.⁵

This is one of the most typical sentences in *Being and Time* expressing Heidegger's view of *transcendental constitution* in this period of his thinking. It would be fair to say that Heidegger is following the Kantian conception here and grasping "the phenomenon of Being-in-the-world" as the transcendental condition of possibility for entities to be understood as entities within the world. According to Heidegger, "the entity which is essentially constituted through Being-in-the-world is itself in every case its 'there [*da*]'"⁶

² Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Wahrheit*, ed. by Hartmut Tietjen, in Martin Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe*, Bd. 36/37 (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 2001), 3; Martin Heidegger, *Being and Truth*, trans. by Gregory Fried and Richard Polt (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2010), 3.

³ Martin Heidegger, *Hölderlin's Hymns "Germania" and "The Rhine,"* trans. by William McNeill and Julia Ireland (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2014), 108.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1993), 211. This original page numbering is also printed in the English translation by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (Oxford: Blackwell, 1962), on which my translation is based.

⁶ Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 132.

and the Being its “there” in this emphatic sense signifies the phenomenon of *disclosedness* [*Erschlossenheit*]. The latter determines how the world opens itself and how each one of us understands one’s own Being along with this opening of the world. As Kant explores the “transcendental truth, which precedes all empirical truth and makes it possible,”⁷ Heidegger refers to this “Dasein’s disclosedness,” which is at the same time the *world’s* disclosedness, as “the most primordial phenomenon of truth”,⁸ in which “the uncoveredness of entities within-the-world is grounded.”⁹

Readers of *Being and Time* know how far Heidegger goes in radicalizing this transcendentalist conception on the one hand. He argues that since the above-mentioned disclosedness is “a kind of Being which is essential to Dasein,” “‘there is’ truth only in so far as Dasein *is* and so long as Dasein *is*.”¹⁰ According to Heidegger, we can say that “before there was any Dasein, there was no truth; nor will there be any truth after Dasein is no more.”¹¹ Not only the laws of natural science such as Newton’s laws of motion and gravitation, but also logical laws such as the principle of contradiction, usually regarded as “eternal truth,” are true “only as long as Dasein *is*.”¹² To put it more ontologically, “only if the understanding of Being *is*, do entities as entities become accessible,” in other words, “only as long as Dasein *is*... ‘is there’ Being.”¹³ The “understanding of Being” is not merely a natural event that occurs inside the world, but the singular place of *the transcendental* which discloses the world itself. The Being of Dasein makes it possible that “there is” Being, based on which an entity can be understood as an entity and everything within the world can be conceived as what it is.

The ontological status of this Dasein seems to be quite analogous to the status of transcendental subjectivity based on which the world is constituted. Husserl argues that “the original motif” which “through Descartes confers meaning upon all modern philosophies” is the transcendental motif of “inquiring back into the ultimate source of all the formations of knowledge,”¹⁴ and he called this ultimate source “transcendental subjectivity.” Husserl’s philosophy as transcendental was an

⁷ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. by Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), A146/B185.

⁸ Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 220-221.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 220.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 226.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*, 212.

¹⁴ Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology: An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy*, trans. by David Carr (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970), 97.

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endless striving to inquire back into the primal subjective functioning from which “everything that is of the world derives its meaning.”¹⁵

However, in response to these philosophical efforts, the following awkward question must be posed: What kind of entity is subjectivity itself that constitutes entities as entities in the first place? As is well known, a straightforward answer to this question is that the constituting subject is *not* something that exists inside the world. One typical answer of this kind can be found in Wittgenstein’s argument in the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, which reads as follows:

5.631 The thinking, presenting subject; there is no such thing.

If I wrote a book “The world as I found it,” I should also have therein to report on my body and say which members obey my will and which do not, etc. This then would be a method of isolating the subject or rather of showing that in an important sense there is no subject: that is to say, of it alone in this book mention could *not* be made.¹⁶

As we can see, if I were to report on myself in order to complete the description of the book “The world as I found it,” I would have to report on myself reporting on myself, which would, in principle, entail an even more complicated task of reporting on myself reporting on myself reporting on myself, and so on ad infinitum. The act of presenting a world picture in which my own image must be depicted generates additional images of my *self-forgotten* self, which are yet to be depicted in this world picture. This is why Wittgenstein writes: “5.632 The subject does not belong to the world, but it is a limit of the world,”¹⁷ and further “6.4311 Death is not an event of life,” and he “who lives in the present ... lives eternally.”¹⁸ It is essentially based on the same logic that Husserl argues: “it is ‘unthinkable’ that I cease transcendently;”¹⁹ and “it is evident, that the concrete cessation, natural

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 82.

¹⁶ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, trans. by C. K. Ogden (New York: Dover Publications, 1999), 85.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 85.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 104.

¹⁹ Edmund Husserl, *Späte Texte über Zeitkonstitution (1929-1934): Die C-Manuskripte* (Dordrecht; Springer, 2006), 97.

cessation of the living flowing presence, is not conceivable as a fact, not as a being, as an experienceable.”²⁰

This type of idea of transcendental subjectivity that does not belong to the world is, in fact, not unique to modern Western philosophy, but an ancient idea that has been with us since we first discovered ourselves as beings who perceive and think. The *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, estimated to have been composed around the 7th-6th century BC, describes the following insights.

You could not see the seer of seeing. You could not hear the hearer of hearing. You could not think the thinker of thinking. You could not understand the understander of understanding. He is your soul, which is in all things. Aught else than Him [or, than this] is wretched.²¹

That Soul (*Ātman*) is not this, it is not that (*neti, neti*). It is unseizable, for it is not seized. It is indestructible, for it is not destroyed. It is unattached, for it does not attach itself. It is unbound. It does not tremble. It is not injured.²²

This soul, or *Ātman*, which can only be indicated by the endless series of negations, “*neti, neti* (not this, not that),” is said to be Brahman, the ultimate reality of the universe. Kitarō Nishida, a modern Japanese thinker, arrived at the thought of absolute nothingness as a result of his search for the true self or true ego based on a similar idea of negation. Although these ideas may seem mysterious at first glance, it is safe to say that they are fundamentally straightforward as they remain loyal to the fact that each of us cannot step outside of our own first-person perspective.

Heidegger’s Departure from the Transcendentalist Theory, and the Meaning of His Metontology

However, it must be said that Heidegger has already carefully distanced himself from this one-sided thinking of the transcendental constitution in the period of *Being and Time*. In an appendix to his famous

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 96. Certainly, Husserl also pointed out a “paradox of human subjectivity” which is “a subject for the world and at the same time [...] an object in the world”. Yet, he insisted on finally, that this paradox can be resolved through transcendental reduction and turns out to be merely a misunderstanding derived from self-objectification. See Husserl, *Crisis of European Sciences*, 178.

²¹ *The Thirteen Principal Upanishads*, trans. by Robert Ernest Hume (London: Oxford University Press, 1921), 112.

²² *Ibid.*, 125.

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letter to Husserl, dated October 22, 1927, he writes that “entities in the sense of what you call ‘world’ cannot be explained in their transcendental constitution by returning to an entity of the same mode of being . . . [but] that does *not* mean that what makes up the place of the transcendental is *not* an entity at all.”²³ According to Heidegger, “that which constitutes is not nothing; hence it is something, and it is in being [*seiend*] – although not in the sense of positive.” The question about this “mode of being of the entity in which ‘world’ is constituted” is “*Being and Time*’s central problem – namely, a fundamental ontology of Dasein.” As is well known, “thrown projection [*geworfener Entwurf*]” is the term Heidegger coined to describe this singular mode of Being of Dasein, an extraordinary entity, who always finds itself as something already thrown into the midst of entities, and yet is the very condition of possibility for an entity to be constituted as an entity at all.

What does this puzzling nature of Heidegger’s idea of “thrown projection” truly mean? Can we say, for example, that it is decisive that Heidegger, unlike Husserl, approves that Dasein, as a constituting subject, also dies? This answer would not be sufficient yet, because Heidegger’s concept of “dying” in *Being and Time* does *not* mean the actual cessation of the transcendental subjective itself, which Husserl would consider unthinkable, but only the certain *possibility* of impossibility of existence, which Dasein understands as its own possibility. What is decisive is probably that the concept of “thrown projection” refers to the problem of *ontical emergence* of the understanding of Being. To support this interpretation, we would like to follow the path of Heidegger’s thought that reaches through the idea of “ontical foundation of ontology” to the idea of “metontology.”

As we have seen, Heidegger asserts in *Being and Time* that “only if the understanding of Being *is*, do entities as entities become accessible,” that is, “only as long as Dasein *is*, ‘is there’ Being.”²⁴ What Heidegger will claim here, is not merely another version of transcendental idealism, but that the disclosedness of Being presupposes the factual thrown existence of the “ontical possibility of an understanding of Being.”²⁵ As Heidegger states in the lecture of the summer semester in 1927, “ontology *cannot* be established in a *purely ontological* manner.”²⁶ Ontology needs to be “referred back to

²³ Martin Heidegger, “APPENDIX I: *Difficulties With Issues*,” in Edmund Husserl *Psychological and Transcendental Phenomenology and the Confrontation with Heidegger (1927-1931)*, ed. and trans. by Thomas Sheehan and Richard E. Palmer (Dordrecht: Springer, 1997), 138 (emphasis added).

²⁴ Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 212.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Martin Heidegger, *Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie*, ed. by Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann, in Martin Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe*, Bd. 24 (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1989), 26; Martin Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, trans. by Albert Hofstadter (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988), 19. Emphasis added.

Dasein," which is something ontical. Therefore, "ontology has an ontical foundation."²⁷ According to Heidegger, such formulated problem indicates the metontology as a "turnover" of ontology. After reemphasizing the insight into the dependence of Being on the factual existence of Dasein in the next year's summer semester, he adds as follows:

... and this [the factual existence of Dasein], in turn, presupposes the factual occurrentness of nature [*das faktische Vorhandensein der Natur*] ... As a result, we need a special problematic which has for its proper theme entities as a whole [*das Seiende im Ganzen*]. This new investigation resides in the essence of ontology itself and is the result of its turnover [*Umschlag*], its 'μεταβολή'. I designate this set of questions *metontology*.²⁸

Why does the factual existence of Dasein presuppose the factual occurrentness of nature or the entities as a whole? Because the factual existence of Dasein must imply its thrownness into the midst of entities. This thrown facticity motivates us to a new investigation on the ontical-ontological connection between thrownness of Dasein and the entities as a whole. However, as existing, even as an ontological inquirer, "Dasein never comes back behind its thrownness."²⁹ We can only say that in the midst of entities as a whole *emerges* our understanding of Being. However, we should not undermine the self-concealing nature of this emergence by coming around behind it, let alone giving it a causal explanation.

Then, what could we still talk about this ontical emergence in the entities as a whole? In the winter-semester's lecture of 1929/30, Heidegger speaks of "φύσις" as "the self-forming prevailing of entities as a whole."³⁰ There, he seems to enumerate from every side what we may assume in terms of the totality of entities that factual existence of Dasein presupposes: This "whole prevailing ... [of] φύσις ... prevails through and around man." Man,

²⁷ Heidegger, *Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie*, 26; Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, 19.

²⁸ Martin Heidegger, *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Logik im Ausgang von Leibniz*, ed. by Klaus Held, in Martin Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe*, Bd. 26 (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1978), 199; Martin Heidegger, *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, trans. by Michael Heim (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1992), 156-157.

²⁹ Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 284.

³⁰ Martin Heidegger, *Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik: Welt – Endlichkeit – Einsamkeit*, ed. by Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann, in Martin Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe*, Bd. 29/30 (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1983), 38; Martin Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude*, trans. by William McNeill and Nicholas Walker (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995), 25.

“who has always already spoken out about this ... does not have power over” this prevailing of φύσις.³¹ Specifically, nature as φύσις signifies the “growth” of plants and animals “in the midst of, and permeated by, the changing of the seasons, in the midst of the alternation of day and night, in the midst of wandering of the stars, of storms and weather and the raging of the elements.”³² And lastly “the events which man experiences in himself” such as “procreation, birth, childhood, maturing, aging, death” belong to this general prevailing of entities, “which comprehends within itself human fate and its history.”³³

The “entities as a whole” mean such a primordial place from which we are born and into which we die. But of course, no matter how much detail is accumulated in such descriptions, the crucial question of why our understanding of Being has emerged amid entities as a whole will remain a mystery. All the above descriptions of the “entities as a whole” are merely our retrospective descriptions from a post-emergence perspective. Everything that is older than this emergence hides itself. In his essay “On the Essence of Truth,” originally derived from a 1930 lecture, Heidegger calls the “concealment of entities as a whole” “un-truth proper [*eigentliche Unwahrheit*]” and claims that this un-truth is “older than every openedness of this or that entity. It is older even than letting-be itself.”³⁴ Since we may interpret this “letting-be” as what was called “understanding of Being” in *Being and Time*,³⁵ this “un-truth proper” can signify the essence of the place where our understanding of Being has emerged.

The problem is, however, whether Heidegger could properly preserve the essence of the “un-truth proper” as “concealment”? As suggested above, this “un-truth proper” shares borders with various narratives of “procreation, birth, childhood, maturing, aging, death” or

³¹ Heidegger, *Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik*, 39; Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, 26.

³² Heidegger, *Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik*, 38; Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, 25.

³³ Heidegger, *Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik*, 39; Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, 26.

³⁴ Martin Heidegger, *Wegmarken*, ed. by Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann, in Martin Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe*, Bd. 9 (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1976), 193-194; Martin Heidegger, *Pathmarks*, trans. and ed. by William McNeill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 148.

³⁵ In “On the Essence of truth,” Heidegger defines “letting-be” or “letting entities be (*Sein-lassen des Seienden*)” as the “freedom” that determines human beings and is “the fulfillment and consummation of the essence of truth in the sense of the disclosure of entities” (GA9, 190; ENG146). This concept is related to the same dimension of the “understanding of Being” in *Being and Time* that discloses the world. Careful readers of *Being and Time* will recognize that Heidegger discusses this “letting be” as “letting something be involved (*Bewendenlassen*)” (SZ 85-86), which is necessary for something ready-to-hand to be encountered in the environment.

“human fate and its history.”³⁶ Forgetting the fundamental concealing nature of these phenomena can easily invite diverse self-deceptive narratives or various biopolitical interventions. Heidegger, albeit in the storm of his time, gradually began to misapprehend the problem of emergence of our understanding of Being through the romantic notion of the rise of the German people [*Volk*], calling his students to the “power of a great and fundamentally *concealed* vocation” of the people.

Conclusion

In order to find a way to resist this misconception, we would like to conclude with a passing reference to another possible departure from transcendental philosophy in Nishida’s thought in 1932. In the following passages, the counterpart of the Heideggerian concealment is expressed as “Thou,” as something fundamentally irrational.

When one truly sees the world within oneself, when the world is considered to be absorbed within oneself, then what is against oneself is no longer a thing but must be Thou. ... The opposition between place and place must be Thou and I.³⁷

What is opposed to me as merely objective, is still in me, and what is opposed to reason as merely irrational is still rational. It is something that is to be rationalized, otherwise it cannot be said to stand against reason. That which truly stands outside of me, that which is truly irrational to reason, must be Thou to me. When the objective is considered to be totally absorbed in me, it must be Thou who stands against me.³⁸

These two simple quotes emanate from Nishida, who occupies a position on the borderline of transcendental philosophy. Nishida views the purely predicative place of “absolute nothingness” as transcendental, rather than a subjective act of thinking, but this is of lost importance at present. The crux of the matter is that encountering the Thou is a fact that can never be rationally reduced to a transcendental constitution. In Nishida’s philosophy,

³⁶ Heidegger, *Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik*, 39; Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, 26.

³⁷ Nishida Kitarō, *Mu no Jikaku-teki Gentei, Complete Works of Nishida Kitarō, Vol.6* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1979), 210.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 235-36.

the problem of Heideggerian thrownness does not merely involve the emergence of transcendental place, but also concerns the mystery of the multiple emergences of transcendental place in the I-Thou relationship. It is well known that a number of philosophers, such as Karl Löwith, Emmanuel Levinas in Europe, or Shūzō Kuki, Tetsurō Watsuji in Asia, have confronted Heidegger's philosophy and criticized his neglect of the problem of "others." However, these criticisms do not necessarily strike at the heart of Heidegger's thinking, which recognizes that "the world of Dasein is a *with-world* [Mitwelt]" and that Being-in-the-world is always already "*Being-with Others*."³⁹ It is necessary to see the truly *irrational* aspect of this factual Being-with Others, as Nishida has done. What is irrational is that Dasein, as an understanding entity, always already has emerged in plurality. The emergence of Dasein is always the emergence of a plurality of Daseins, which indeed establishes the people as a "Volk," but this is always already one of the peoples. The world of Dasein is always one of the worlds, and the language of Dasein is always one of the languages. Such irrationality appears as irrational because the attitude of transcendental philosophy is not easily abandoned, but rather a thorough execution of its thinking is attempted. The irrational in Nishida and the un-truth proper in Heidegger appear on the borderline of transcendental philosophy, rather than beyond it. We should remain on this borderline and preserve the mystery of plurality inherent in the concealed nature of Dasein's emergence in order to protect philosophy from any political interventions.

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³⁹ Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 118.

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***Homo Humanus* as the New Essence of a Human Being in Heidegger's Philosophy**

Peter Ha

Abstract: In fundamental ontology, Heidegger indeed rejects the traditional concept of a human being defined as *homo animalis* and *homo rationalis*. In contrast to this concept, he introduces the new essence of a human being, namely, *homo humanus*. However, the meaning of *homo humanus* that is opposed to *homo animalis* still remains ambiguous. In this paper, I show the distinctive meaning of *homo humanus* by indicating the fact that whereas *homo humanus* defined as “man of cultivated land” primarily dwells in the social world, *homo animalis* proximally live in the natural world.

Keywords: anti-humanism, individual person, *homo humanus*, care

Since Charles Darwin's theory of evolution, the concept of a human being has remained problematic in the Western world. Before Darwin, people had a clear idea about what constitutes the essence of a human being. Whether from the Christian background or a philosophical perspective, they firmly believed that a human being is absolutely distinguished from animals. This belief, however, was shattered by Darwin's theory of evolution. Since then, there exists now a conflict view on the understanding of a human being.

At the beginning of the 20th century, Max Scheler, aware of this conflicting view, states in *Man's Place in Nature*, that there is no unitary understanding of man: “Thus we have a scientific, a philosophical and a philosophical and a theological anthropology in separation from each other. We do not have a unified idea of man.”¹ Even though there is a vast

¹ Max Scheler, *Man's Place in Nature*, trans. by H. Meyerhoff (New York: Beacon Press, 1981), 5-6.

accumulation of knowledge attained by biologists, medical researchers, and psychologists, the essence of a human being remains hidden. Hence, to overcome the irreconcilable view of a human being, Scheler seeks to offer a new understanding of a human being. In his philosophical anthropology, a human being is defined as a spirit by which the antagonism of life and reason is finally overcome. Similar to Scheler, Heidegger is also concerned with establishing a new concept of man in the analytic of Dasein. Nevertheless, his approach is quite different from the philosophical anthropology of Scheler.

While Scheler's philosophical anthropology begins with criticism of the Darwinian theory on the origin of man that is founded in biology, Heidegger's account of man delves into the more primordial ground that precedes biology. For Heidegger, the theory of evolution established in biology does not actually present a radical view of man in relation to metaphysics, for metaphysics already makes the same assertion that man is defined as '*homo animalis*': "In principle we are still thinking of *homo animalis*-even when *anima* is posited as *animus sive mens* (spirit or mind), and this in turn is later posited as subject, person, or spirit. Such positing is the manner of metaphysics."² With the term *homo animalis*, we can ascertain that Darwin's naturalistic view of man is traced back to traditional metaphysics. Regarding this point, Heidegger states: "Metaphysics thinks of the human being on the basis of *animalitas* and does not think in the direction of his *humanitas*."³ With this claim, we can also understand why Heidegger rejects the traditional definition of man as '*animal rationale*.'⁴ In this definition, the foundation of man lies in *animalitas*.

But in contrast to the concept of a human being in traditional metaphysics, Heidegger attempts to introduce a new foundation of a human being defined as '*homo humanus*': "The descent leads to the poverty of the existence of *homo humanus*. In ex-sistence the region of *homo animalis*, of metaphysics is abandoned."⁵ As shown here, the new essence of man is defined as *homo humanus* that is fundamentally distinguished from *homo animalis* and *animal rationales*.

However, in dealing with Heidegger's thoughts, this new essence of man as *homo humanus* has been completely neglected, for Heidegger explicitly stated that the analytic of Dasein is not to be identified with philosophical anthropology.⁶ Moreover, Heidegger's discourse on a new essence of man

² Martin Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism," in *Pathmarks*, ed. by W. McNeill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 246.

³ *Ibid.*, 246-47.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 245-46.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 268.

⁶ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. by J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1962), 71-77.

has been overlooked because the analytic of Dasein has been tangled up with the controversy on subjectivity and anti-subjectivity or on humanism and anti-humanism. The concept of Dasein, on the one hand, has been defined as human subjectivity due to the influence of Sartre's existential humanism. On the other hand, it has been claimed by post-modern thinkers, for instance, Derrida, that the concept of Dasein has absolutely nothing to do with human subjectivity at all. Moreover, since Derrida's interpretation has been accepted as the standard interpretation, it has become almost taboo to understand Dasein with respect to a human being. Consequently, the meaning of Dasein with respect to *homo humanus* remains obscure.

In this paper, however, I intend to untangle this confusion over the meaning of Dasein by showing that although Heidegger rejects the traditional concept of man in terms of *homo animalis*, he acknowledges at the same time a new concept of man founded in *homo humanus*. Therefore, as we will see later, although Heidegger emphasizes *homo humanus* as the new essence of a human being, his philosophy lies beyond the opposition of "humanism" and "anti-humanism." But how are we to understand the meaning of *homo humanus* in the philosophy of Heidegger? Before explicating the meaning of *homo humanus*, it is first necessary to free ourselves of the interpretation of Dasein by post-modern philosophers, notably that of Derrida's, which advocates that Heidegger's analysis of Dasein has essentially nothing to do with the essence of man.

Derrida's Interpretation of Dasein as Anti-Subjectivity

Although in *Being and Time*, Heidegger is concerned with the question of Being, what he actually seeks to present is the analysis of Dasein that has an understanding of Being: "Understanding of Being is itself a definite characteristic of Dasein's Being."⁷ Hence, to understand Heidegger's concept of Being, we need to first grasp the meaning of Dasein. But in dealing with Heidegger's account of Dasein, we are confronted with two opposing philosophical views, namely, Sartre's existential humanism and Derrida's anti-humanism. In contrast to the philosophy of Sartre, which is based on the self-centered man who chooses what he has to be, Derrida maintains in his deconstructive philosophy that a human subject is no longer conceived of as the unshakable ground of thinking and action.⁸ He furthermore tries to justify the philosophy of anti-subjectivity by providing a new interpretation of Dasein.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 32.

⁸ Jacques Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. by A. Bass (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982), 134.

In his influential article “The Ends of Man,” Derrida criticizes the anthropological or humanistic understanding of Heidegger’s concept of Dasein. According to him, this anthropological understanding of Dasein is derived from a “monstrous translation”⁹ of Dasein as “human reality” authorized by Sartre. Dasein does not signify “human reality,” and consequently, Derrida contends that in order to understand correctly the meaning of “Dasein,” one has to overcome “the anthropologicistic deformations in the reading of *Sein und Zeit*, notably in France.”¹⁰ With the analysis of Heidegger’s criticism of humanism in *Letter on Humanism*, Derrida defends his arguments against the anthropological understanding of Dasein.

According to Derrida’s interpretation, the central argument of *Letter on Humanism* consists in Heidegger’s statement that “every humanism is either grounded in metaphysics or is itself made to be the ground of one.”¹¹ Here, it should be noted that by the term “metaphysics,” Heidegger means “metaphysical subjectivism.”¹² From this view, metaphysical subjectivism is the foundation of humanism, which regards human beings as the center of all beings. Nevertheless, how does metaphysical subjectivism become the foundation of humanism?

In ancient philosophy, metaphysics was concerned with establishing the ground of beings, and this ground of beings is found in God. However, in modern philosophy, a new ground of beings is revealed. Descartes, a founder of modern philosophy, successfully establishes the ground of beings on man’s thinking ego (cogito). Here one sees a defining characteristic of modern metaphysics. It consists of—at least according to Heidegger’s interpretation¹³— the fact that the ultimate ground of beings is sought no longer in God but in the subjectivity of a human being. And when a human being is defined as a subject, things are experienced as represented objects. In addition, in this subject-object relation, a human being defined as a representing subject can seize objects and have absolute control over them. Hence by this absolute control over objects, a human subject becomes the master and center of beings. Here we see why Heidegger says that every kind of humanism presupposes metaphysical subjectivism.

However, Heidegger, who rejects the modern philosophical concept of a human subject, argues that “the human being is not the lord of beings

⁹ *Ibid.*, 115.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 127. In a similar manner, von Herrmann also makes a claim that the existential analysis of Dasein has nothing to do with the subjectivity-bound philosophy. Cf. F-W. von Herrmann, *Subjekt und Dasein* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1974), 9-10.

¹¹ Heidegger, “Letter on Humanism,” 245.

¹² *Ibid.*, 263.

¹³ Martin Heidegger, “Die Zeit des Weltbildes,” in *Holzwege* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1980), 96-98.

[*Der Mensch ist nicht der Herr des Seienden*].”¹⁴ In opposition to the determination of man in metaphysical subjectivism, Heidegger defines the essence of the human being as “the shepherd of being [*der Hirt des Seins*].”¹⁵ As the shepherd of Being, the human being can no longer dominate beings. Consequently, since the human being is no longer conceived of as a center of beings, it is impossible to maintain the stance of humanism based on metaphysical subjectivism. Moreover, man is the shepherd of Being because, among other entities, only he has understanding of Being. Hence for Heidegger, “there” (Da) of Dasein refers to a place where the disclosure of Being occurs. Agreeing with this, Derrida also maintains that Dasein should be understood with respect to Being.

Referring to these statements of Heidegger, Derrida interprets the term “Da-sein” as signifying the place of Being. If this interpretation is correct, then what Heidegger wants to establish by the term “Dasein” is not a new ground of the human being but the new meaning of Being. Regarding this sense, Derrida also argues that Heidegger’s concept of Dasein must be understood from the ontological perspective rather than from the anthropological perspective. By interpreting the meaning of “Dasein” as a place of Being, he further contends that any attempt to understand Heidegger’s Dasein as the human subject is a mistake. Moreover, he believes that contrary to the subject-bound philosophy, the objective of Heidegger’s analysis of Dasein is found in anti-subjectivity philosophy. Consequently, since Derrida’s interpretation, people believe that the philosophy of Heidegger has absolutely nothing to do with founding a new essence of a human being.

But is it really the case that by “Dasein,” Heidegger wants ultimately to abolish, as Derrida argues, the concept of a human being or a human subject? Is a translation of Dasein as “human reality” truly a monstrous translation?

When we carefully examine the existential analytic of Dasein in *Being and Time*, the translation of Dasein as “human reality” is not a monstrous translation. For Heidegger himself explains “Dasein” in reference to a human being: “As ways in which man behaves, sciences have the manner of Being which this entity—man himself—possesses. This entity [Mensch] we denote by the term ‘Dasein’.”¹⁶ As shown clearly here, “Dasein” refers to a human being. However, it is important to note that when Heidegger speaks of a human being in terms of “Dasein,” he does not mean *homo rationalis* nor *homo animalis* in the traditional sense. Thus, when “Dasein” is understood as

¹⁴ Heidegger, “Letter on Humanism,” 260.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 32.

“human reality” in the traditional sense, this understanding would be monstrous, as Derrida suggests. However, if we break away from the traditional determination and understand “human reality” in Heidegger’s own definition, then the identification of “Dasein” with “human reality” is not an incorrect understanding. In fact, Heidegger himself also insists that what he intends to abandon is not the concept of a human being or subjectivity itself at all but only the modern philosophical concept of a subject based on a “thinking ego” that is derived from a traditional understanding of man as “rational animal.” Thus, instead of a modern subject, Heidegger seeks to set up a new essence of man in terms of *homo humanus* whose meaning is completely neglected in Derrida’s interpretation of Dasein. The meaning of *homo humanus* is first explicated along with the individual person of Dasein.

***Homo Humanus* and the Individual Person of Dasein**

In this section, I discuss Heidegger’s account of *homo humanus* with respect to the individual person of Dasein. As shown earlier, in fundamental ontology, Heidegger seeks to deconstruct not only the traditional concept of Being but also the traditional concept of man. At the end of *Being and Time*, Heidegger explicitly states why he repudiates the concept of man in traditional ontology. This concept of man is rejected because there is “a danger of ‘reifying consciousness.’”¹⁷ There is a danger of “reifying consciousness” because in overlooking a fundamental difference between the essence of man and the essence of thing, traditional ontology treats man in the same manner as things. This is shown by the fact that in traditional ontology, the essence of man and the essence of things are indiscriminately interrogated with just one mode of question, namely, “what is the thing? (*quid est res?*).”¹⁸

For Heidegger, by contrast, the essence of man (Dasein) is fundamentally distinguished from the essence of things, and consequently, man cannot be interrogated as such by the question “What is the thing?” An inquiry into the essence of Dasein requires a new mode of question, which Heidegger formulates as “Who is it?” He then maintains that it is in the question of “whoness,” not in the question of “whatness,” in which the essence of man is understood. “The Dasein is not constituted by whatness but—if we may coin the expression—by *whoness*.”¹⁹ Furthermore, in the

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 487.

¹⁸ Martin Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, trans. by A. Hofstadter (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), 120.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 120.

question of “Whoness,” the essence of man is determined quite differently from the traditional conception of man.

In the traditional inquiry of “whatness,” the essence of man is sought in the realm of universal. In contrast to this, the essence of man revealed in the question of “whoness” is defined as an individual person. Interrogating Dasein (man) by the question of “whoness,” Heidegger, however, does not mention the term “individual.” Instead of this, he uses his own term “mineness” (*Jemeinigkeit*): “Furthermore, Dasein is an entity which in each case I myself am. Mineness belongs to any existent Dasein.”²⁰ For Heidegger, the “mineness” of Dasein implies an individual person, and this is shown by the fact that a personal pronoun must be used in order to describe Dasein’s mode of Being: “Because Dasein has in each case mineness, one must always use a personal pronoun when one addresses it: ‘I am’, ‘you are.’”²¹ Hence from the perspective of the question of “whoness,” what Heidegger means by the term *Jemeinigkeit* is that Dasein is constituted in an individual person.

With an individual person, we can first discover a meaning of *homo humanus* distinguished from *homo animalis* and *homo rationalis* whose essence is determined in terms of universality. However, it should be noted that for Heidegger, the ground of an individual person lies not in the practical reason, as in the case of Kant’s philosophy, but in “existence.” Concerning this point, Heidegger states: “The ‘essence’ of Dasein lies in its existence.”²² And since *homo humanus* defined as a person is founded in “existence,” in order to understand *homo humanus* we should first clarify what “existence” means in Heidegger’s thoughts.

For the definition of “existence,” Heidegger states: “What does ‘existence’ mean in *Being and Time*? The word names a way of Being; specifically, the Being of that being which stands open for the openness of Being in which it stands in withstanding it ... Withstanding (*Ausstehen*), experienced in this manner, is the essence of the ecstasis that is to be thought here.”²³ Here it should be noted that “existence” is defined as “withstanding,” and this “withstanding” also implies “standing out” (*Hinausstehen*).

Generally, the analysis of Dasein proceeds with a distinction between “existence” and “thinking ego” in consciousness. Whereas the “thinking ego” in modern philosophy is regarded as an isolated subject separated from the world, the term “existence” refers to man that finds himself in the world. Thus, an encapsulated subject is replaced with the existence of Dasein in fundamental ontology.

²⁰ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 78

²¹ *Ibid.*, 68.

²² *Ibid.*, 67.

²³ Martin Heidegger, “Introduction to ‘What is Metaphysics?’” in *Pathmarks* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 283-84.

Yet Heidegger claims that the “ecstatic essence of existence is therefore still understood inadequately as long as one thinks of it as merely a ‘standing out’ while interpreting the ‘out [*hinaus*] as meaning ‘away from’ the interior of an immanence of consciousness or spirit.”²⁴ Actually, animals also escape from inner consciousness, and consequently, they exist in the world. In this sense, if the meaning of “existence” is exclusively understood as a replacement of an isolated subject, one cannot see the difference between *homo animalis* and *homo humanus*. Hence, to understand the peculiar feature of *homo humanus* founded on the existence of an individual person, the meaning of existence as “standing out” must be sought in a more primordial sense. In a primordial sense, the existence as “standing out” signifies that Dasein is away from the natural world. And this meaning of existence is ascertained in the fact that by existence, Heidegger means the dwelling of Dasein in the social world.

In fundamental ontology, the Cartesian statement “I think therefore I am” is inverted. Concerning this matter, Heidegger states: “If the ‘*cogito sum*’ is to serve as the point of departure for the existential analytic of Dasein, then it needs to be turned around ... The ‘*sum*’ is then asserted first and indeed in the sense that ‘I am in a world.’”²⁵ However, it should be noted that when Heidegger speaks of a world in which Dasein exists, he does not mean a natural world. Regarding this point, he states: “Nevertheless—the world is not nature, and it is certainly not the extant.”²⁶ In fact, a world of animals is a natural world, and in this sense, only animals are in a natural world. But in contrast to animals, Heidegger insists that “*sum*,” namely, the “existence” of man signifies “dwelling” in a social world.

Heidegger asks, “What then does ‘I am’ mean? The old word building (*bauen*), to which the am (*bin*) belongs, answers: I am (*ich sein*), you are (*du bist*) mean: I dwell, you dwell. The way in which you are, and I am, the manner in which we human beings are on the earth is dwelling (*Buan*).”²⁷ As indicated here, Dasein dwells in the social world, for this world is based on ‘building.’ Furthermore, Heidegger identifies “building” with “culture”: “Here building (*Bauen*) means a construction (*Errichten*). The two modes of building are bound up with ‘*colere*’ or ‘*cultura*’ in Latin.”²⁸ In this quotation, Heidegger explicitly relates a world of “building” with “culture.” From this, we can see that when Heidegger speaks of the existence of Dasein in a world, he means that Dasein dwells in a constructed building that is only found in a

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 284.

²⁵ Heidegger, *Being and Time*: 254.

²⁶ Heidegger, *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, 165.

²⁷ Martin Heidegger, “Bauen Wohnen Denken” in *Vorträge und Aufsätze*. Korean trans. by K. Lee and S. Sin. (Seoul: Lee Hak Sa Publisher, 2008), 187.

²⁸ Heidegger, “Bauen Wohnen Denken,” 187.

social and cultural world. Moreover, since the “existence” of Dasein means dwelling in a social world, one can also say that the individual person of Dasein is constituted in the social world. In other words, only the essence of Dasein founded in “existence” is defined as an individual person because the mode of Being of “I am” and “you are” is possible in dwelling in the social world with others.

In fundamental ontology, Heidegger, who objects to the traditional concept of man that falls into a danger of reifying consciousness, seeks to establish a new essence of man, which he calls *homo humanus*. For him, man’s new essence consists of an individual person founded in “existence.” Furthermore, with the existence of Dasein, which refers to the fact that Dasein is no longer in the immanent consciousness but in the world, Heidegger successfully overcomes an encapsulated subject in modern philosophy. However, although it has been neglected in previous studies, there is a more primordial meaning in the existence of Dasein. By the existence of Dasein, Heidegger wants to show that whereas animals live in the natural world, only human beings dwell in the social and cultural world. Here we can see that *homo humanus* is fundamentally distinguished from *homo animalis*, for only *homo humanus* exists in the social world based on construction (*Bauen*). The “existence” of *homo humanus* entailing the dwelling in the social and cultural world can be further ascertained in the phenomenon of care (*Sorge*).

***Homo Humanus* and Care (*Sorge*)**

As indicated in the preceding section, in *Letter on Humanism*, Heidegger proposes a new essence of man concerning *homo humanus* distinguished from *homo animalis* and *homo rationalis*. Therefore, to understand *homo humanus*, we need to first grasp the meaning of *humanus*. Actually, *humanus* is derived from the root word *humus*. Hence unless the meaning of *humus* is explained, it is difficult to understand the term *homo humanus*. Yet in the *Letter on Humanism*, Heidegger hardly discusses *humus*.

In contrast, in *Being and Time*, he offers a specific meaning of it in an analysis of care (*Sorge*). He states that since care creates a human being from clay, *humus* is called “earth”: “But since ‘Care’ first shaped this creature, she shall possess it as long as it lives. And because there is now a dispute among you as to its name, let it be called ‘*homo*,’ for it is made out of *humus* (earth).”²⁹ Hence, we can understand *homo humanus* as “earthly human.” But what does

²⁹ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 242. Moreover, in the discussion of “Care,” which constitutes the essence of Dasein, Heidegger explicitly equates “lived body” with “earth.” “... but also because this priority of ‘care’ emerges in connection with the familiar way of taking man as compounded of body (earth) and spirit.” Cf. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 243.

“earth” mean in Heidegger’s fundamental ontology? Hitherto the meaning of “earth” remains obscure in the philosophy of Heidegger.

It is well-known that the analytic of Dasein is difficult to understand because in defining Dasein, Heidegger uses unfamiliar concepts in the context of modern philosophy. For instance, Heidegger claims that the Being of Dasein lies in care. “Dasein’s Being reveals itself as care,”³⁰ In modern philosophy, philosophers never used the term “care” to define a human being. In contrast to modern philosophers, Heidegger maintains that the essence of a human being is revealed in care, insofar as care creates man from earth. In this sense, one can say that earth is the foundation of a human being. But it is important to see that by the term “earth” Heidegger does not mean a mass of matter that is investigated in geology: “At the same time *phusis* lights up that on which man bases his dwelling. We call this the earth. What this word means here is far removed from the idea of a mass of matter and from the merely astronomical idea of a planet.”³¹ If the earth is understood as a mass of matter in a natural world, there is no distinction between *homo humanus* and animals, for animals also dwell on the earth. This definition given by Heidegger, however, is inadequate because it only presents a negative meaning of earth rather than a positive meaning.

Although in the *Letter on Humanism* Heidegger introduces a new concept of man defined as *homo humanus*, the meaning of *homo humanus* remains ambiguous because the Latin term *homo humanus* has been used without a translation. Even in the English translation of the *Letter on Humanism*, the term “*homo humanus*” is untranslated. If we want to understand the term *homo humanus*, this term has to be first translated. Roughly, *homo humanus* can be translated into English as “humanly human” or “earthly human.” Nevertheless, a formal translation is inadequate, for it only indicates a tautological meaning. And even in the latter translation, unless a meaning of earth is clarified, we are unable to grasp what Heidegger means by *humanus* distinguished from *animalis*. In order to understand *homo humanus*, we need to have a positive meaning of “earth.” While Heidegger’s writings hardly provide a positive meaning of earth, we can nonetheless discern this positive meaning from an etymological analysis of *humanus*.

It is indeed correct to translate the term *humus* into “earth.” However, in the philosophy of Heidegger, the term “earth,” which does not signify a mass of matter but a dwelling place of Dasein, has a specific meaning. Since Dasein dwells in a constructed building in the social world, in Heidegger’s thought, the “earth” denotes a “cultivated land.” The Latin term “*humus*” has

³⁰ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 227.

³¹ Martin Heidegger, “The Origin of the Work of Art,” in *Off the Beaten Track*, ed. by J. Young and K. Haynes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 21.

two meanings. On the one hand, it refers to “earth,” but on the other hand, it signifies a “cultivated land.”³² It is with a “cultivated land” that we can finally ascertain a positive meaning of “earth” in the philosophy of Heidegger. By the term “earth,” in which the essence of man disclosed in care is founded, Heidegger means a “cultivated land.” Hence when it is literally translated, the term *homo humanus* means “man of cultivated land.”

In dealing with Heidegger’s new essence of man concerning *homo humanus*, it is crucial to see that the earth signifies a “cultivated land.” Moreover, it should be noted that a “cultivated land” is closely bound up with a social world insofar as it is not equated with natural soil. Therefore, when Heidegger argues that the essence of man is defined as *homo humanus*, he wants to show that a human being proximally dwells not in the natural world but in the social world. Besides this etymological analysis of the term “*humus*,” we can also indicate a connection between the “earth” and a “cultivated land” in Heidegger’s identification of the “earth” with “homeland (*Landschaft*)” in his conception of language.

According to Heidegger, only a human being has language, and a human being dwells in language: “Language is the house of Being. In its home human beings dwell.”³³ Also, contrary to the general opinion, he argues that language is primarily founded not on written words but on vocal sounds: “Language is represented in terms of speech in the sense of vocal sound.”³⁴ Furthermore, he insists that these vocal sounds are constituted as language in dialect (*Mundarten*) whose origin is found not in reason (*logos*) but in the earth, namely, “*Landschaft*.”

For this point, Heidegger states:

Even the simple fact that we Germans call the different manners of speaking in different sections of the country *Mundarten*, mode of the mouth, hardly ever receives a thought. Those differences do not solely nor primarily grow out of different movement patterns of the organs of speech. The landscape (*Landschaft*), and that means the earth speaks in them.³⁵

³² Cf. *Langenscheidts Großes Schulwörterbuch: Lateinisch-Deutsch*, s.v. “*humus*.” In this dictionary, we can ascertain that the word *humus* is translated as on the one hand *Erdboden* (earth) and on the other hand *Ackerland* (cultivated land).

³³ Heidegger, “Letter on Humanism,” 239.

³⁴ Martin Heidegger, “The Nature of Language,” in *On the Way to Language*, trans. by P. Hertz (San Francisco, Harper Collins Publishers, 1982), 97.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 98.

In this quotation, Heidegger explicitly says that *Mundarten*, where Dasein dwells, derives from the earth. But this concept of earth denotes not a mass of matter, but the *Landschaft* that presupposes a “man of cultivated land”. Therefore, when *Mundarten* is highlighted in the philosophy of Heidegger, we can clearly see that by the “earth,” Heidegger means a “cultivated land.”

In the *Letter on Humanism*, Heidegger introduces a new essence of man with respect to *homo humanus* rooted in the earth, but this earth refers to the native soil. And since human beings are rooted in native soil, they receive their life-giving nourishments not from natural soil but from the native soil:

‘We are plants which—whether we like to admit it to ourselves or not—must with our roots rise out of the earth in order to bloom in the ether and to bear fruit.’ The poem means to say: For a truly joyous and salutary human work to flourish, man must be able to mount from the depth of his home ground up into the ether.³⁶

In other words, human beings are like plants, but unlike natural plants, the foundation of human beings is a native soil.

Dasein, whose essence is revealed in care, is grounded in the earth. In this sense, we can see why the essence of Dasein (man) is defined as *homo humanus*. However, it should be noted that since the earth is understood as the “cultivated land,” we now have to say that *homo humanus* signifies “man of cultivated land.” And when this identification of “*humanus*” and the “cultivated land” is highlighted, we can finally understand why *homo humanus* is essentially distinguished from a traditional conception of man as *homo animalis*. Whereas *homo animalis* lives in the natural world, *homo humanus* founded in the “cultivated land” dwells in the social world. Thus with this emphasis of the “cultivated land,” we can finally understand the meaning of *homo humanus* in the philosophy of Heidegger. With *homo humanus* Heidegger seeks to establish a new essence of man that is founded in a social world.

In summary, we have attempted to argue that Heidegger never abandons the concept of man in fundamental ontology. He only rejects the naturalistic view of man defined as *homo animalis* and the universal ego of *homo rationalis*. Although *homo animalis* and *homo rationalis* are opposed to each other, they presuppose a common ground. They both originate in the natural world, and their essences are defined with respect to universality. Nevertheless, contrary to these concepts of man, *homo humanus* is defined as

³⁶ Martin Heidegger, *Discourse on Thinking*, trans. by M. Anderson and E. Freund (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1966), 47.

an individual person who dwells in the “cultivated land” in which the social world is founded. Hence with this new concept of man as *homo humanus* that provides a ground for a social world, we finally understand that although Dasein signifies a human being, Heidegger can break away from the naturalistic concept of man as well as the modern philosophical concept of man as a thinking subject.

Conclusion

The essence of man is defined as “rational animal (*zoon logon echon*)” in ancient philosophy, and in this definition, “rational” is highlighted. However, when closely examined, “rational” is only a derivative of animality (*zoon*). Thus, Heidegger argues that since the time of ancient philosophy, man is understood as *homo animalis* and this concept of man has become further strengthened in Darwin’s theory of evolution. In philosophical anthropology, Scheler seeks to overcome this naturalistic view of man in his very inclusive concept of free spirit. Nevertheless, Scheler’s account of free spirit that is still thought to be separated from the world remains inadequate, for it is not completely detached from the encapsulated subject in modern philosophy. It is only with Heidegger’s concept of *homo humanus* founded in a “cultivated land” of a social world that the encapsulated thinking subject is finally overcome.

The modern philosophical concept of subject is indeed deconstructed by Heidegger in the existential analytic of Dasein. While the deconstruction of the modern subject is well known, it is not quite clear whether Heidegger introduces a new essence of man or not. There is certainly a new essence of man in the philosophy of Heidegger. What comes after the deconstructed modern subject is *homo humanus*, who escapes from inner consciousness and dwells on the earth, namely, the “cultivated land.”

Heidegger claims that “being-in-world” refers to “dwelling on the earth”: “This dwelling is the essence of ‘being-in-the-world.’ The reference in *Being and Time* to ‘being-in’ as ‘dwelling’ is not some etymological play. The same reference in the 1936 essay on Hölderin’s word ‘Full of merit, yet poetically, man dwells upon the earth,’ is not the adornment of a thinking that rescues itself from science by means of poetry.”³⁷ But people could object to our interpretation on *homo humanus* in which the world of Dasein is identified with the earth, for in the philosophy of Heidegger, the world is indeed distinguished from the earth.

In *The Origin of the Work of Art*, Heidegger states that world is in strife with earth: “Truth establishes itself in the work. Truth is present only as the

³⁷ Heidegger, “Letter on Humanism,” 272.

strife between clearing and concealing in the opposition between world and earth.”³⁸ As shown clearly here, world is opposed to earth. However, we can overcome this dilemma by highlighting the fact that for Heidegger, the concept of “earth” has two meanings. On the one hand, earth denotes the world of Dasein, but on the other hand, as the term *Landschaft* indicates, it refers to the spatiality of the world. In this sense, the concept of earth shown in the expression “the strife between world and earth” should be understood as the spatiality of the world that is opposed to the temporality of the world. While in *Being and Time*, Heidegger emphasizes the temporality of the world over the spatiality of the world, in his later thoughts on language and the work of art he advocates that the spatiality of the world (earth) is as important as the temporality of world. This is the reason why he speaks of the strife between world and earth. In dealing with research in the philosophy of Heidegger, it remains our future task to reconcile the strife between world and earth.

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³⁸ Heidegger, “The Origin of the Work of Art,” 37.

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Birds of the Air, Lilies of the Field: Revisiting Animality in Heidegger through Derrida and Kierkegaard

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Abstract: Although the place of the animal in Heidegger's thought has been the subject of investigation in numerous books and journal articles coming from the most diverse perspectives, a Heideggerian phenomenology of the animal remains to be carried out to the fullest extent possible, as we saw in questions more widely discussed by both Heidegger and Heidegger scholars, such as those concerning language, dwelling, and technology. In this essay, we revisit the question of animality in Heidegger, and recognize how Derrida and Kierkegaard can help us in sensing the possible directions of such a renewed commitment to phenomenology, this time focusing on the question of the animal. This new phenomenological path of inquiry itself might shed new light on those enduring questions in a way that goes beyond Heidegger, even as we remain indebted to him for the initial clearing that he undertook for meditative thinking.

Keywords: Heidegger, Derrida, Kierkegaard, animal

This essay seeks to revisit Heidegger's thinking of animality within his phenomenology of the human being, what in *Being and Time* he calls *Daseinsanalytik* (analysis of Dasein).¹ While it is true that Heidegger did devote considerable energy in thinking through animality, notably in the *Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* (from the lectures held in the Winter Semester 1929-1930 but published for the first time in 1983 as Volume 29/30 of Heidegger's *Gesamtausgabe*, titled *Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik: Welt – Endlichkeit – Einsamkeit*, and that scholars continue to engage it from the most

¹ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. by Joan Stambaugh, rev. with a foreword by Dennis J. Schmidt (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2010).

various perspectives,² still it would seem that a huge gap remains to be filled when we consider how far and deep Heidegger went with his thinking of language, dwelling, and technology.³ We can even go as far as saying that the thinking of animality might shed new light precisely on these three fundamental questions. If we are to carry out the task of phenomenology as Heidegger so eloquently formulated – “to let what shows itself be seen from itself, just as it shows itself from itself” – then we must let the phenomenon of the animal that also belongs to our being human be seen as fully as we can.⁴

Can we say that there is a forgetting of the animal in Heidegger? It is very easy to claim that this or that philosopher forgot to think about this or that, and that it might even seem to have become almost like a fad to do so (like a clickbait, to use the language of today’s social media). It is often far more difficult to show what in fact a philosopher did say. It hardly occurs to us that no philosopher can ever think of every possible topic or question, to begin with. And so, when we make even only such a suggestion here as Heidegger forgetting the animality of human beings, we do so not so much to imply negligence or oversight, as to indicate the possibility of extending what has been thought to what remains to be thought. As Heidegger himself says in *Being and Time*, “Higher than actuality stands *possibility*. We can understand phenomenology solely by seizing upon it as a possibility.”⁵ This essay is merely one of the many attempts in seizing upon phenomenology as a possibility, particularly the phenomenon of animality in human beings.

In *Being and Time*, we know that Heidegger considers temporality as the horizon within which being is to be understood.⁶ That is why its title is *Being and Time* rather than *Being and Space*. And while indeed, despite the priority of time over space in the interpretation of the meaning of being and the analysis of Dasein, Heidegger does devote some space for the discussion of Dasein’s de-distancing as well as directionality (both of which connote spatiality rather than temporality), the focus of his analysis remains to be temporality—notably in the concepts of “anticipatory existence” and our “coming to an end.”

A couple of years after the publication of *Sein und Zeit*, Heidegger held a series of lectures in the Winter Semester of 1929-30, which now comes

² See, for example, Beth Cykowski, *Heidegger’s Metaphysical Abyss: Between the Human and the Animal* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2021). Frank Schalow, *The Incarnality of Being: The Earth, Animals, and the Body in Heidegger’s Thought* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2006).

³ Martin Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude*, trans. by William McNeill and Nicholas Walker (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995).

⁴ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 32.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 36.

⁶ “Our provisional aim is the interpretation of time as the possible horizon for any understanding whatsoever of being.” – Heidegger, *Being and Time*, xix.

to us as the book, *Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*. It is here that Heidegger famously posits the thesis that the animal is “world-poor” (*Weltarm*), which could all too easily appear to be a concession to an earlier pronouncement (in *Being and Time*, that is) that only Dasein has world.

Heidegger’s thesis (which he considers provisional given the unavoidable circularity of the inquiry into the essence of life and world in general and animality in particular) that the animal is world-poor is not borne out of naiveté or of the outright dismissal of what the natural sciences—zoology and biology in particular—have discovered throughout their history concerning animals, and especially in comparison with human beings.

Heidegger is not blind to the profound philosophical import of the question of animality, as we read from the following passage:

Then again, we can only determine the animality of the animal if we are clear about what constitutes the living character of a living being, as distinct from the non-living being which does not even have the possibility of dying. A stone cannot be dead because it is never alive.⁷

We know of course that Heidegger was not only not averse to such circularity of thinking—he even tells us to persist in it, to “circle within the circle,” not to solve a puzzle, but to tarry in it. Circling within the same circle, tarrying in a puzzle rather than attempting to do away with by “solving” it—these all belonged to the method (the way of thinking) of Heidegger’s phenomenology.⁸

Yet the difficulty here is not merely one of *content* with respect to *what* life as such is but is equally and almost more emphatically a *methodological* one: *by what path* can and should we gain access to the living character of the living being in its essence? In what way should life, the animality of the animal, and the plant-character of the plant be made accessible to us?⁹

Thus, Heidegger does persist in tarrying in the circle of thinking concerning animality in the *Fundamental Concepts*, and in doing so gives rise to further and even more intractable questions:

⁷ Heidegger, *Fundamental Concepts*, 179.

⁸ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 7.

⁹ Heidegger, *Fundamental Concepts*, 179.

We are thus confronted by two fundamental difficulties: [1.] *What* are we to *determine* the essence of life in general *as*? [2.] *How* are living beings as such—the animality of the animal and the plant-character of the plant—originally *accessible*? Or is there no possibility of any original access here at all?¹⁰

In the same work, Heidegger clearly says that “the animal has world,” but that its world is poor or impoverished.¹¹ We must immediately clarify that the claim of world-poverty (or any poverty for that matter) is not to be thought of in terms of hierarchy, within which one can identify higher or lower forms (e.g., of animality). In vulgar language, we speak, for example, of “low life forms” even as an expression of insult directed to certain types of human beings. But we will never describe wood or stone as “low life” simply because we do not consider them as living beings. That is to say, “fully alive,” “lacking in life,” “lifeless,” and the like—none of these makes sense in describing beings like stones or pieces of wood.

Thus, we need to understand “poverty” according to the way Heidegger uses the term:

What is poor here by no means represents merely what is ‘less’ or ‘lesser’ with respect to what is ‘more’ or ‘greater’. Being poor does not simply mean possessing nothing, or little, or less than another. Rather being poor means being deprived [*Entbehren*]. Such deprivation in turn is possible in different ways depending on how whatever is poor is deprived and comports itself in its deprivation, how it responds to the deprivation, how it takes this deprivation. [...]

This is meant to indicate that poverty is not merely a characteristic property, but the very way in which man comports and bears himself. Poverty in this proper sense of human existence is also a kind of deprivation and necessarily so. Yet from such deprivation we can draw our own peculiar power of procuring transparency and inner freedom for *Dasein*. Poverty in the sense of being in a mood of poverty [*Armmütigkeit*] does not simply imply indifference with respect to what we possess. On

¹⁰ Heidegger, *Fundamental Concepts*, 179.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 199.

the contrary, it represents that preeminent kind of having in which we seem not to have. 'Poverty' as a noun in its weaker usage implies both these senses, including the 'poor' flow of water in the river, even though in this case the river in its being deprived cannot be in any kind of mood.¹²

Following from such a conception of "poverty," it does not make sense, therefore, to say that a stone is world-poor, simply because it does not have a world, any more than to say that an animal is "mortal," simply because the yearning or even the thought of immortality belongs to human beings but not animals. One does not have to do philosophy to realize that the term "mortal" is reserved only for human beings, as Heidegger himself sees, because as Dasein, only human beings can die, only human beings are capable of death as death.

Thus, the ambivalence: we can say, at the same time, that the animal has no world and that it has a world. Heidegger expresses such an ambiguity as follows:

If by world we understand beings in their accessibility in each case, if such accessibility of beings is a fundamental character of the concept of world, and if being a living being means having access to other beings, then the animal stands on the side of man. Man and animals alike have world. On the other hand, if the intermediate thesis concerning the animal's poverty in world is justified and poverty represents deprivation and deprivation in turn means not having something, then the animal stands on the side of the stone. The animal thus reveals itself as a being which both has and does not have world. This is contradictory and thus logically impossible. But metaphysics and everything essential has a logic quite different from that of sound common understanding. If these propositions concerning the having and not-having of world in relation to the animal are legitimate, then we must be employing the ideas of world and accessibility of beings in a different sense in each case.¹³

¹² *Ibid.*, 195.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 199.

The ambivalence of our relationship with animality—that we humans are animals and not animals (or not just animals)—in turn is tied to the difficulty of the determination of life, that is, what it is that constitutes a living being, as we saw in the crucial passage from the *Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* above.

It is in this recognition of our ambivalent relationship with our animality where we find the forgetting of our animality in Heidegger. For it is on this side of the ambivalence—*where animals are on the side of human beings*—where we find that Heidegger leaves much to be desired in carrying out a phenomenology of our animality. For what Heidegger has mostly focused on is one side of the ambivalence, namely, that of the animal being on the side of the human being. What we need to reconsider—and follow through its fullest possibilities—is that of *the human being being on the side of the animal*. That is why his thesis on animals proceeds from our perspective as human beings—we who are always already in the world—and concedes that animals, too, have something like a world, thought in a very limited way. Hence deprivation, hence poverty.

But if we turn the tables around, might we not see that from the “perspective” of animals (admittedly even if such a perspective, if access to it were to be possible at all, is coursed through human interpretation, as we saw above), we humans also share in their animality in many ways? Seen from such a “perspective,” it is us human beings who are now deprived of our earthliness—that is, *we humans are earth-poor, or have become earth-poor, and increasingly so*—insofar as in our formation of the world and through our modern technology we veer farther and farther away from the earth, that is to say, from nature. The geographer Yi-Fu Tuan offers an insightful approach to understanding the city in terms of our distance from nature.¹⁴ Heidegger himself, whether he realized it or not, in effect refers to our animality by deciding against what otherwise was an attractive career in Berlin and instead remaining in the province, as we read in the famous little piece, “Schöpferische Landschaft: Warum bleiben wir in der Provinz?” (Creative Landscape: Why Do We Remain in the Province?).¹⁵

We see and we understand that we share so many things with animals. We get hungry and so we search for food. We get thirsty, and so we look for water or something else to drink. We move about with our limbs and try to reach for objects we need or want with our hands. But a phenomenological reconsideration of our animality does not consist mainly

¹⁴ Yi-Fu Tuan, “The City: Its Distance from Nature,” in *Geographical Review*, 68, no. 1 (January 1978), 1-12.

¹⁵ Martin Heidegger, “Schöpferische Landschaft: Warum bleiben wir in der Provinz? (1933),” in *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 13: *Aus der Erfahrung des Denkens* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1983).

or solely in a description of our animal nature, as Heidegger himself correctly indicated above, for this is already being carried out for a long time now by various disciplines in the social as well as the natural sciences. One only needs to think of E.O. Wilson or Richard Dawkins, among others.

What we need, however, is a properly philosophical (more specifically, phenomenological) reflection on our animality. For this, Derrida's encounter with a cat as he stepped out of the shower room may have served as an excellent starting point and exemplar of what we aim to accomplish.¹⁶ In that encounter, where we see Derrida gazing at the cat as it gazes at him (it was the cat that first gazed at the human that was Derrida), unused to seeing him without his usual clothed self, led Derrida to think of the double nudity (the cat is not naked because it is naked), and in so doing was brought before his own nakedness, not just the nakedness of the body, but the nakedness of his being, partly embarrassed and feeling insecure about himself, that is, insecure about his knowledge and understanding of the self. It took the gazing of a cat at Derrida's naked self, and Derrida gazing back at the gazing cat, for a whole path of thinking to open itself up. I am convinced that, when thought through properly and given the patience it deserves, that moment of encounter between Derrida and his cat signals the possibility of a radically new path for thinking that can shape the world that is yet to come.

Such a phenomenological project will have serious implications for the way we human beings, for example, build and inhabit the city, and what role animals (domesticated or otherwise) play in such an endeavor. In the same way, it will help us rethink the city's relationship with what lies outside the city, namely, suburbs and rural or provincial areas.

Where have we come in our inquiry? What have we achieved? What this essay has sought to show is that we need to take this path of phenomenological inquiry into animality and the animal in us, and to offer indications of what promises such a path holds for us, humans and non-humans alike. To that end, a lot of work surely awaits us, and we cannot but seize this possibility that belongs precisely to phenomenology.

Ultimately, which means more fundamentally, we will be confronted once again with the question of what it means to be human. That staggeringly radical and incalculably momentous character of that encounter between Derrida and his cat lies in the possibility that, perhaps, for once—finally—we humans can turn our gaze back to the animals. For did not the Teacher Himself bid us to do so? "Look at the birds of the air," we hear from the Sermon on the Mount. "Consider the lilies of the field ..." (Matthew 6: 24-34). And here, it is to Kierkegaard that we must turn: "[T]he ability to keep silent

¹⁶ Jacques Derrida, *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, ed. by Marie-Luise Mallet, trans. by David Wills (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008).

is something you can learn out there in the company of the lily and the bird, where there is silence and also something of divinity in that silence.”¹⁷

Perhaps here we begin to sense mystery and one irony after another. Since the dawn of humanity, the human being’s supposed superiority over animals has often been asserted based on language. Unlike animals, so the self-assertion goes, human beings are capable of language. Now, humans are being invited to learn to enter into and dwell in silence from the animals themselves. Standing between animals and the divinities, human beings have always directed their gaze, away from the animals, and towards the gods. Now the divine itself is inviting us to look at the birds of the air, and to sense that “there is also something of divinity in that silence.” The mystery here perhaps consists in this, namely, that the only way to behold the divine is for us humans to look at the birds of the air and consider the lilies of the field. In doing so we humans just might be able to begin finding our way back home, precisely at this juncture in history when we face the extreme danger of losing it.

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¹⁷ Søren Kierkegaard, *The Lily of the Field and the Bird of the Air: Three Godly Discourses*, trans. by and with an introduction by Bruce H. Kirmmse (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2016), 23.

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Beyond Instrumentalism: Exploring the Affordance Construal of Technology in Heidegger

Federico José T. Lagdameo

Abstract: Current philosophies of technology derived from and inspired by Heidegger’s—exemplified by Postphenomenology and Critical Constructivism—have favored a focus on technological design issues, succumbing consequently, to an instrumental view of technology. This favored focus had contributed to an obliviousness to technology’s inherent dangers which are precisely immune from technological design modifications. Exploring the construal of technology as affordances, this paper offers a contrasting reading of Heidegger’s technology as embedded and embodied dispositions for specific possibilities for being and doing. Consequently, it argues for a more viable alternative to the often-implicit instrumentalist and artefactual view of technologies that frequently undergird prevalent empirical inquiries on how to design technologies and on how to improve our use of technology. Specifically, the paper argues for the employment of an affordance construal to explain technological phenomena. Opposed to instrumentalism, the affordance construal of technology has the advantage of adopting Heidegger’s relational ontology in viewing technology, hereby eschewing the prevalent reductionist view of technologies as artefacts and instruments. In addition, such an account objects to the uncritical and triumphalist reception of any and all technological innovation and invention, typified by many transhumanist/posthumanist positions.

Keywords: affordance, instrumentalism, postphenomenology, critical constructivism

The so-called “empirical turn” in the philosophy of technology has led to great strides in revealing the intricate complexity of the technoscientific condition we are embedded in. The emergence of this

“turn” in philosophy of technology during the 1970s was chronicled in the *American Philosophy of Technology: the Empirical Turn*, a book edited and partly written by the Dutch Hans Achterhuis in 1997. There, he introduced the division between “empirical” and “classical” philosophy of technology.¹

Directed towards examining particular *technologies*, as opposed to technology in general, “empirical” philosophies of technology have provided detailed, layered, and specific analyses that proved to be deeply insightful. And at the forefront of this empirical turn are arguably these two main strands: Postphenomenology which was initiated by Don Ihde, and Critical Constructivism, founded by Andrew Feenberg.²

In this paper, I argue that the above prevailing philosophies of technology which avowedly have taken the so-called “empirical turn” subscribed to—unwittingly, by all respects—a version of the instrumentalist view of technology. Moreover, I indicate that this instrumentalism resulted from the dismissal and discredit of the insight provided by Heideggerian phenomenology on the essence of technology. Thereafter, I assert that the above Heideggerian insight is crucial in understanding the affordance-construal of technology and avoiding the pitfalls of technological instrumentalism. I conclude with an exploration of the analytical rubric offered by an affordance-construal of technology derived from Heidegger’s thought.

Following the above argument structure, my paper has three sections, the first of which is a discussion of both Postphenomenology and Critical Constructivism as empirical philosophies of technology critical of classical philosophy of technology, particularly of Heidegger’s. The second section is a rehearsal of Heidegger’s phenomenology of technology drawn from his reflection on the equipment (*das Zeug*) found in *Being and Time*, and from *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, as well as the works constitutive of the text “The Question Concerning Technology.” There, I tease out also the affordance-construal of technology. The last section contains the exploration of the fecundity such a construal in an increasingly technologized world.

¹ Hans Achterhuis, “Introduction: American Philosophers of Technology,” in *American Philosophy of Technology: The Empirical Turn*, ed. by Hans Achterhuis, trans. Robert P. Crease (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 1-9.

² Lars Botin, Bas de Boer, and Tom Børsen, “Technology in Between the Individual and the Political: Postphenomenology and Critical Constructivism,” in *Techné: Research in Philosophy and Technology*, 24, no. 1 & 2 (2020), 2.

The Instrumentalism of Postphenomenology and Critical Constructivism

Initiated by the American philosopher Don Ihde, Postphenomenology directs itself to “a critical dialogue with the phenomenological tradition on the one hand and research in the empirical field of Science and Technology Studies on the other.”³ As its name suggests, it employs phenomenology in undertaking its investigations; however, these investigations are also very empirical and are of specific and concrete technologies.

Two features are characteristic of the postphenomenological approach: the starting point of human-technology relations, and the combination of “philosophical analysis with empirical investigation.”⁴ With regard to the first, it maintains the mediating character of technologies with our experience of and practices in the world. Ihde calls “inter-relational ontology” this mediation that shapes human subjectivities and world objectivity. This ontology is derived from notions found in “Husserl’s ‘intentionality’ and Heidegger’s ‘being-in-the-world,’”⁵ that is, the essential givenness and relatedness of both the subject and object together.

Notwithstanding its roots in Husserl and Heidegger, Postphenomenology opposes itself to what Achterhuis called the tradition of “first-generation or classical philosophies of technology”⁶ from which Heidegger’s insight arose: it contends that the said tradition inaccurately viewed technology as a monolithic whole, when in fact, what exists are *technologies*. Postphenomenology’s adherence to an empirical approach commits it to the materiality of technologies as the target of its analyses. It treats as illusory and chimerical the notion of a homologous “technology.”

Unsurprisingly, Postphenomenology is unsympathetic to what it perceives as Heidegger’s romanticism. Ihde, in particular, views Heidegger’s reference to the Pre-Socratics and the evocation of the simplicity and profundity of rural life in Todtnauberg as impractical anachronisms in the face of ongoing—and inevitable—technological developments, on the one hand; and as blindness to the politics of technologies, on the other.⁷

³ Robert Rosenberger and Peter-Paul Verbeek, “A Field Guide to Postphenomenology,” in *Postphenomenological Investigations: Essays on Human–Technology Relations*, ed. by Robert Rosenberger and Peter-Paul Verbeek (Maryland: Lexington Books, 2015), 10.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁵ Don Ihde, “Preface: Positioning Postphenomenology” in *Postphenomenological Investigation*, xii.

⁶ Achterhuis, “Introduction,” 3.

⁷ See Don Ihde, *Heidegger’s Technologies: Postphenomenological Perspectives* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010), 74-85.

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In a similar fashion, Postphenomenology is critical of the supposed remoteness of Heideggerian analysis to our actual experience of technologies.⁸ Postphenomenology argues that Heidegger's analysis is reductionist since the latter purportedly only indicates the effect of alienation obtaining in our relation with technologies. Put baldly, Postphenomenology—and in particular, Don Ihde—charges Heidegger of reducing everything to *Bestand* in the analysis of technology's essence, a "one size fits all" approach.⁹

Nonetheless, while Postphenomenology bemoans the abstractness of the Heideggerian phenomenology of the essence of technology, it also recognizes the inadequacy of the so-called empirical approach of Science and Technology Studies in providing a coherently philosophical answer to "how the role of technology in human existence and experience can be understood."¹⁰ As a result, Postphenomenology undertakes to analyze technologies using empirical data (à la Science and Technology Studies), but from the perspective of how these technologies mediate and constitute the world (instead of how technology discloses a scientific and less meaningful world).

Briefly, there are four mediations or human-technology relations, according to Ihde: embodiment, hermeneutic, alterity, and background relations. "With the notion of 'embodiment relations', Ihde points to the mediation of those technologies which transform a user's actional and perceptual engagement with the world. When a technology is 'embodied', a user's experience is reshaped through the device, with the device itself in some ways taken into the user's bodily awareness."¹¹ Eyeglasses are the emblematic example of a technological artefact for this type of relation.

In *hermeneutic relations*, the subject perceives and interprets a technological device's readout to understand the world. "Rather than experience the world through the device as in an embodiment relation, in a hermeneutic relation the user experiences a transformed encounter with the world via the direct experience and interpretation of the technology itself."¹² This relation is typified in our experience of time through the use of a wristwatch.

The third refers to the mediated relation enacted by interfaces of technological devices through which "we relate in a manner somewhat similar to how we interact with other human beings." Resembling human interactions, *alterity relations* between the subject and the device are enacted

⁸ Rosenberger and Verbeek, "A Field Guide to Postphenomenology," 10.

⁹ Ihde, *Heidegger's Technologies*, 118-120.

¹⁰ Rosenberger and Verbeek, "A Field Guide to Postphenomenology," 10.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 14.

¹² *Ibid.*, 17.

in “computer interfaces, ATMs, smartphones, robots, artificial pets, smart homes and cars.”¹³

Finally, there are *background relations* wherein technologies constitute the environmental context of the human subject and other technological artefacts. For Ihde, certain technologies set up sites through which the subject’s very experience of the world is shaped by them, despite the lack of direct interaction with them. These technologies are exemplified by electricity, running water in our pipes, and ubiquitously nowadays, the internet.¹⁴

Postphenomenology adopts phenomenology’s ontology (in particular, Heidegger’s) of the “co-giveness” of the experiencing person and the world; as well as the mediative and constitutive functions of technology in the experience of the world. The Postphenomenological approach, however, does not construe technological artefacts and systems as belonging to the totality of the “coming to presence of the real” by *technology*, as Heidegger did. More importantly, Postphenomenology’s descriptive approach to technologies—that is, its focus on how technologies mediate human-world relations without proffering a clear normative stance—relegates technologies ultimately to being instruments or tools.¹⁵ This is because its lack of normativity treats technologies to be wholly determined by human subjectivity and use.

In the meantime, Feenberg’s Critical Constructivism is another philosophy of technology that many find cogent and compelling. It provides an account of the current technological condition; an assessment of the problems that emerge from and within it; and a proposal to resolve these, namely, the democratization of technology.

While Feenberg’s thought had undergone modifications, his essential project remains.¹⁶ The most recent comprehensive iteration of his project can

¹³ *Ibid.*, 18.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 18-19.

¹⁵ “While technologies are always multistable, every stability affects the human-world relation. Postphenomenology’s task is to find out how.” See Jesper Aagaard, Jan Kyrre Berg Friis, Jessica Sorenson, Oliver Tafdrup, and Cathrine Hasse, “An Introduction to Postphenomenological Methodologies” in *Postphenomenological Methodologies: New Ways in Mediating Techno-Human Relationships*, ed. by Jesper Aagaard, Jan Kyrre Berg Friis, Jessica Sorenson, Oliver Tafdrup, and Cathrine Hasse (Maryland: Lexington Books, 2018), xvi. The descriptive task that Postphenomenology takes upon itself, however, leads to that very position it is supposedly opposing, instrumentalism.

¹⁶ See Hans Achterhuis, “Andrew Feenberg: Farewell to Dystopia,” in *American Philosophy of Technology: The Empirical Turn*, ed. by Hans Achterhuis, trans. by Robert P. Crease (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2001), 65-93; also, Larry Hickman, “From Critical Theory to Pragmatism: Feenberg’s Progress,” in *Democratizing Technology: Andrew Feenberg’s Critical Theory of Technology*, ed. by Tyler Veak (New York: SUNY Press, 2006), 71-81.

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be found in his *Transforming Technology: A Critical Theory Revisited* in 2002.¹⁷ Nonetheless, shorter versions of his “critical theory of technology” are rehearsed in Feenberg’s responses to his interlocutors whose critical essays on his work abound.¹⁸

Feenberg acknowledges the immense influence Heidegger has had on his thought. His “Critical Constructivism” (erstwhile termed “Critical Theory of Technology”) draws on Heidegger’s phenomenological analysis of how technology discloses the world of objects and later of resources. Feenberg turns polemical with Heidegger, however, for what he believes to be the latter’s essentialist, that is, substantivist, ahistorical, and unidimensional construal of technology.¹⁹ He thus parts ways with Heidegger and employs other thinkers and traditions (notably Marx, Marcuse, Foucault, and Critical Social Theory) in hewing his own response to the problem of technology.²⁰

Feenberg’s work finds its origin in the Frankfurt School Critical Theory, which for its part, is greatly indebted to Weberian theory of modernity. From Marcuse who was his teacher (who in turn was a student of Heidegger), Feenberg received the notion that technology is shaped by social forces, even as it shapes those same forces also. In such a context, technology is construed as “environment,” and one whose form is the result of political choice.²¹

Feenberg echoes Marcuse’s (and to a certain extent, Habermas’s) concern over how technology, pervasive as it is as environment or context, is not only an instrument of control and domination, but *is* control and

¹⁷ Andrew Feenberg, *Transforming Technology: A Critical Theory Revisited* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002). See also Andrew Feenberg, *Critical Theory of Technology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

¹⁸ See Andrew Feenberg, “Critical Constructivism, Postphenomenology, and the Politics of Technology” in *Techné: Research in Philosophy and Technology*, 24, no. 1 & 2 (2020), 27-40; also, Andrew Feenberg, “Replies to Critics: Epistemology, Ontology, Methodology” in *Critical Theory and the Thought of Andrew Feenberg*, ed. by Darrel P. Arnold and Andreas Michel (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 285-318; also Andrew Feenberg, “Replies to Critics” in *Democratizing Technology*, 175-210.

¹⁹ See Iain Thomson, *Heidegger on Ontotheology: Technology and the Politics of Education* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 44-77. In the same pages, Thomson rebuts these charges of Feenberg. See also Iain Thomson, “What’s Wrong with Being a Technological Essentialist? A Response to Feenberg,” in *Democratizing Technology*, 53-70.

²⁰ “Critical theory of technology draws on insights from Heidegger, Foucault, the Frankfurt School, and constructivist sociology of technology. Each source contributes elements toward a better understanding of the relation between reason and experience.” See Andrew Feenberg, *Between Reason and Experience: Essays in Technology and Modernity* (Cambridge, MA.: MIT Press, 2010), xxiii.

²¹ Andrew Feenberg, “Critical Theory of Technology” in *A Companion to the Philosophy of Technology*, ed. by Jan Kyrre Berg Olsen et al. (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2009), 148.

domination. He says that “[m]odern societies are characterized by the ever expanding effectiveness of strategic control ... [in which there is] the freedom of management to make independent decisions about how to carry on the activities of the organization it supervises regardless of the views or interests of subordinate actors and the surrounding community.”²²

For Feenberg, this ongoing rationalization of modern societies is a technologization, that is, the constitution, governance, and permeation of the life-world by the technical codes embedded in our devices. He frames this condition along the lines of the intensification of control over the development of human capacities by technocratic authorities of society, instead of being left to individual human actors themselves.

Feenberg’s call to radically transform technical design towards more democratic ends comprises his project of democratizing technology through his distinct version of critical theory. Democratizing technology entails analysis afforded by Feenberg’s “instrumentalization theory” which recognizes a dual instrumentalization process taking place in technical activity. *Primary instrumentalization* pertains to “the ability to perceive the world in terms of functions and affordances,” i.e., the decontextualization of objects as tools.²³ *Secondary instrumentalization* refers to the social determination of technical objects or tools, or the enculturation of tools by their social contexts; meanwhile, two subsidiary processes constitute secondary instrumentalization, namely “systematizations” and “mediations.”²⁴

Feenberg advances that specific “technical codes” characterize this dual instrumentalization process, and the key to transforming the technological lifeworld is to tweak or reform these codes by designing them towards democratic goals. “In such a technical democracy, technical work would take on a different character. Design would be consciously oriented toward politically legitimated human values rather than subject to the whims of profit-making organizations and military bureaucracies.”²⁵

In particular, Critical Constructivism functions similarly as ideology critique wherein biases embedded in the technical codes by their designers (dominant actors who themselves carry their class, race, gender biases) are uncovered and subjected to critique. This critical juncture is a political moment through which all societal actors are welcome to participate in order to ensure democratic decision-making. More specifically, in neo-liberal societies governed by the technocapitalist rationality, this critique of technical

²² Feenberg, *Transforming Technology*, 16.

²³ Feenberg, “Critical Theory of Technology,” 150.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 149.

design uncovers from the veil of the value-neutrality of technical objects, the bias towards hegemony of centralized control in these societies. Thus, Feenberg gestures towards public review and participation in the designing of technical objects. “Identifying and changing formally biased technical codes,” he says, “is essential to democratic advance in modern societies.”²⁶

Succinctly therefore, what Feenberg’s Critical Constructivism espouses entails subjecting to public scrutiny and debate the instrumentalization process that goes into the production of technical objects, which in turn, constitute and govern the lifeworld. Through this critique, the redesigning of said objects can be undertaken towards more overtly democratic ideals. Through it, Feenberg hopes, the democratization of technology begins to be achieved in modern societies.

In retrospect, both Postphenomenology and Critical Constructivism as empirical approaches are highly alert to the contextual (historical) constitution of technologies. While they are painstaking with their detailed accounts of specific technologies, they eschew the subscription to a general notion of “technology.” This disinterest in examining technology as such, leaves it relatively unproblematic.

Joseph C. Pitt observes as much in signaling the priority of understanding the uses and functions of technologies in much of empirically-minded philosophies of technology:

[T]he empirical turn pushed us to know the technologies we were talking about, leaving abstract discussions of why Technology (with the capitol T) is evil, for instance, less and less interesting and irrelevant. Technologies have real world effects and knowing how that all works is crucial to knowing *what to do with our technologies* By taking the empirical turn we were forced to look at the things *we can do with our technologies*.²⁷

We can infer from the above that empirical approaches to the philosophy of technology which focus on “real world effects and knowing how that all works” are actually trained on a practical end, that of the *use* of technologies. With such an end in view, these approaches—implicitly at the very least—are committed to a construal of technologies *as* instruments.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 152.

²⁷ Joseph C. Pitt, “The Future of Philosophy: A Manifesto,” in *Philosophy of Technology after the Empirical Turn*, ed. by Maarten Franssen, Pieter E. Vermaas, Peter Kroes, and Anthonie W.M. Meijers (Cham, Switzerland: Springer Nature, 2016), 86. Emphasis is mine.

Hence, their focal aim of discerning “what to do with our technologies,” and consequently, that of *correctly designing* technologies.

This disinterest in “abstract discussions” of technology, in granting a general characterization to what *it is* they are examining, fosters further an instrumentalist view of technology. To explain, empirical philosophies of technology concern themselves with the questions of correct usage and correct design of technologies according to human ends. The absence of consideration for the possibility that technologies exhibit autonomy, i.e., a logic of operation or function that is independent of the user’s or designer’s purpose, implies the said instrumentalist view of technologies.

Specifically, the above lack of a normative stance on “technology as such” abets an instrumentalism that is admittedly more sophisticated than the view “technology-as-tool” that characterized initial (and uncritical) approaches to the study of technology. Nevertheless, it is one that falls prey to the same problems of the latter, namely, those precisely raised by Heidegger’s critical analysis, e.g., the obfuscation of technology’s autonomy.

Arguably, philosophies of technology (or technologies) which are intent *primarily* on determining its (their) usage and design, but remiss in providing an adequate understanding of technology itself, run the risk of tripping from the jutting edge of an unacknowledged instrumentalism, and inevitably falling into the pit of the neutrality thesis which Heidegger has warned causes “blindness to the essence of technology.”²⁸

The crucial insight afforded by Heidegger’s phenomenological analysis of technology, however, does not consist in the caveat above. Rather, it lies in the ontological implication of his phenomenology: technology is a particular way of being, a specific mode of world disclosure through which entities show up.

Technological Mediation as Affordance

I now draw on the disclosive character of technology by Heidegger for the theoretical wherewithal by which an affordance construal of technology is elaborated. In particular, the theory of technological essence as the manner through which the world is given, when unpacked, presents an ontology of relations between us and *everything* else. In the endeavor to account for our technological condition, what this amounts to is the view that technology does not pertain primarily to artefacts per se, but instead to an

²⁸ Martin Heidegger, “The Question Concerning Technology,” in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, trans. and with an Introduction by William Lovitt (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1977), 4.

affordance that not only discloses the real, but structures subjectivities and agency as well.

In *Being and Time*, we find Heidegger's famous phenomenology of equipment (*das Zeug*), or tool-analysis, particularly of the hammer.²⁹ There Heidegger peels for us the supposed immediacy of encountering "a hammer" and instead illumines its transparency as a medium for achieving the "in-order-to" of the task solicited by the context. He then goes on to develop the concept of what has been translated in English as *readiness-to-hand* (*Zuhandenheit*). This analysis of Heidegger has been considered momentous for several reasons by varying commentators.³⁰ My interest here, however, is drawing from it the idea of "equipmental mediation" that can be carried over to technological mediation, and ultimately to affordance.

Toward this end, I call attention to Heidegger's claim that the hammer disappears, as it were, when it is most itself in mediating our experience of the world:

The peculiarity of what is proximally ready-to-hand is that, in its readiness-to-hand, it must, as it were, withdraw [*sich zurückziehen*] in order to be ready-to-hand quite authentically. That with which our everyday dealings proximally dwell is not the tools themselves [*die Werkzeuge selbst*]. On the contrary, that with which we concern ourselves primarily is the work—that which is to be produced at the time; and this is accordingly ready-to-hand too. The work bears with it that referential totality within which the equipment is encountered.³¹

Here, Heidegger alerts us to any equipment's (in the above case, a hammer) reality as given towards *our end*. He explains that the experience of

²⁹ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 2001), 98-99.

³⁰ Perhaps none more so than by Graham Harman who provides an idiosyncratic reading in his *Tool-Being: Heidegger and the Metaphysics of Objects*. There, he argues that Heidegger, through the aforementioned analysis, initiated an object-centered ontology instead of a hermeneutical one in which reality is always a reality-for *Dasein*. See Graham Harman, *Tool-Being: Heidegger and the Metaphysics of Objects* (Chicago: Open Court Publishing Co., 2002).

Later, Harman will identify himself with Speculative Realism, a philosophical movement aimed against what it calls *correlationism*, the philosophy ushered in by Kant and developed by Post-Kantianism. Incidentally, Quentin Meillassoux joins Harman in this camp (albeit as a speculative *materialist*), and launches a strident attack specifically against Heidegger's phenomenology. See Quentin Meillassoux, *After Finitude: An Essay on the Necessity of Contingency*, trans. by Ray Brassier (New York: Bloomsbury, 2008), 17-19.

³¹ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 99.

“being-in”³² in any given context is through the equipment that has nonetheless vanished *as* equipment. He thus points to how equipment is a means of experiencing the world, e.g., the world of carpentry, and not merely a tool to be used according to one’s practical purpose.

In the later essay that is “The Question Concerning Technology,” Heidegger rehearses this analysis but along the lines of an ontological dispensation. He writes of how the prevailing disclosure of the world is a challenging forth and that “[this] has already claimed man and has done so, so decisively that he *can only be* man at any given time as the one so claimed”³³ [emphasis mine]. This mode of disclosure that is the essence of modern technology, namely, *Ge-stell*, conditions man’s experience of the world so that “when man, investigating, observing, ensnares nature as an area of his own conceiving, he has already been claimed by a way of revealing that challenges him to approach nature as an object of research, until even the object disappears into the objectlessness of standing-reserve.”³⁴

To understand further the idea of technological mediation that arises out of Heidegger’s phenomenology, it bears considering again that for the German thinker the human being as *Dasein* is directly opposed to the disembodied, and hence, de-contextualized Cartesian ego. The fundamental character of *Dasein* is to be “caught up” or to be situated concretely, that is to say, to be radically finite. More precisely, the fundamental character of *Dasein* is to be constituted by its relations *to* and *in* the world. The epochal view afforded by Heidegger’s phenomenology discloses an interrelational reality where there are no ego-world or interior-exterior dualisms, problems which plague Cartesians. Heidegger’s phenomenological ontology, as was asserted earlier, is a relational one.³⁵

In Heidegger therefore, technology are no mere tools that we use according to our purpose; rather technology mediates our relation with the world. It mediates our experience of the world; it mediates the worlding of the world.

From this account of technological mediation present in Heidegger, I draw the construal of the technological as *affordance*. This construal coheres well with the relational ontology undergirding the thinker’s critique: an affordance is brought about by the fundamentally relational character of reality. In addition, the view that the technological is a type of affordance includes necessarily the understanding that technology has a mediating

³² Cf. *Ibid.*, 79-90.

³³ Heidegger, “The Question Concerning Technology,” 18.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 19.

³⁵ This is plausibly also the reason why his analysis of technology remains at the ontological level, since focusing on technologies or technological artefacts/devices, has the effect—at least for him—of missing the forest for the trees.

function, one which affords a specific being in a situation or “being-in.” That is to say, technology affords to the world a certain meaningfulness.

An affordance-construal of technology presents it as a *disposition or causal propensity towards particular possibilities of being and doing* owing to a distinct ontological dispensation, and to an ontical structuring in a relational field. In this sense, the technological are to be understood as disclosures towards possibilities in the ontological and ontic levels: in the former where it orders the possibility of a particular manner of coming to presence through its simultaneous unconcealment and concealment; and in the ontic, where it structures possibilities of action—some enabling, some constraining—without determining a specific set of actions. In this two-fold disposition, moreover, the technological *affords* inherent dangers.

In Heidegger, this idea of affordance is precisely captured in his analysis of equipment as *ready-to-hand*. To wit, our specific coping with and comportment to (*Verhalten*) a context is afforded by our very embeddedness in that context. As described in the tool-analysis, the tool *is* a tool precisely because the context in which one *is*, affords it to *be*, to come to presence as such.

Every entity that we uncover as equipment has with it a specific functionality, *Bewandtnis* [an in-order-to-ness, a way of being functionally deployed]. The contexture of the what-for or in-order-to is a whole of functionality relations. This functionality which each entity carries with it within the whole functionality complex is not a property adhering to the thing, and it is also not a relation which the thing has only on account of the extant presence of another entity. **Rather, the functionality that goes with chair, blackboard, window is exactly that which makes the thing what it is** [emphasis mine]. The functionality contexture is not a relational whole in the sense of a product that emerges only from the conjoint occurrence of a number of things. The functionality whole, narrower or broader—room, house, neighborhood, town, city—is the prius, within which specific beings, as beings of this or that character, are as they are and exhibit themselves correspondingly.³⁶

³⁶ Martin Heidegger, *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, trans. by Albert Hofstadter (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1988), 164.

Dreyfus's gloss is helpful in indicating this affordance character: "At his best, Heidegger would, I think, deny that a hammer in a drawer has readiness-to-hand as its way of being. Rather, he sees that, *for the user*, equipment is a solicitation to act, not an entity with a function feature."³⁷

On the other hand, that modern technology as affordance is dispositional in the ontological level is evinced in Heidegger's reflection on the essence of technology. The essay "The Question Concerning Technology" is replete with characterizations of modern technology's ontological dispensation which affords the coming to presence of the real as object, and then finally, as standing reserve or resource:

What kind of unconcealment is it, then, that is peculiar to that which comes to stand forth through this setting-upon that challenges? Everywhere everything is ordered to stand by, to be immediately at hand, indeed to stand there just so that it may be on call for a further ordering.³⁸ Enframing [Positionality] means the gathering together of that setting-upon which sets upon man, i.e., challenges him forth, to reveal the real, in the mode of ordering, as standing-reserve. Enframing [Positionality] means that way of revealing which holds sway in the essence of modern technology and which is itself nothing technological.³⁹

It remains true, nonetheless, that man in the technological age is, in a particularly striking way, challenged forth into revealing. That revealing concerns nature, above all, as the chief storehouse of the standing energy reserve.⁴⁰

An Affordance Theory of Technology

I argue that against competing "*as* notions" of the technological, an affordance construal offers more explanatory power by providing an account of the dangers we intuit in technology and technologies even as their improvement of our capacities are taken on board. Precisely, the notion of

³⁷ Hubert Dreyfus, "Why Heideggerian AI Failed and How Fixing it Would Require Making it More Heideggerian," in *Philosophy of Technology: The Technological Condition – An Anthology* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 600.

³⁸ Heidegger, "The Question Concerning Technology," 17.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 20.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 21.

affordance is a way of explaining how technology and technological artefacts, systems, practices, structure, respectively, the coming to presence of the real and action possibilities towards our transformation into resource.

For with this account of the technological as affordance, technology's problematic character is far from being ignored or dismissed; instead, it is an account mindful of the dangers technology holds for human subjectivity and agency. This account avoids the uncritical reception of any and all technological innovation and invention, typified by many transhumanist/posthumanist positions. At the same time, it avoids the Luddism that frequently accompanies dystopian views of technology. Neither does it lapse into an obdurate and seductive instrumentalist view that is nevertheless pernicious to any serious reckoning with technology.

The insight afforded by Heidegger, namely that *Ge-stell* is a specific mode of world disclosure through which entities show up, is crucial in this regard. For as *Ge-stell* discloses the world as *Bestand* (standing-reserve) or a reservoir of resources for exploitation, understanding the technological affordances of that mode of disclosure is both necessary and paramount.

Meanwhile, it is interesting to note that Diane Michelfelder remarks on how this insight of Heidegger, shunned by Postphenomenologists such as Ihde and Verbeek, is in fact a significant blind spot for Postphenomenology. Michelfelder indicated how this empirical philosophy of technology has failed to treat satisfactorily the third panel of its triptych of *I-technology-world* analytical matrix, and has largely confined itself to the first two, that is, *I-technology*. Taking aim precisely at Verbeek, Michelfelder notes how the latter "develop[s] the concept of mediating as co-shaping [between the individual and technology] ... [but] has not focused extensively on how technology discloses the world as a whole."⁴¹

Thus while she credits Postphenomenology in its current form and thrusts for being successful in showing how "technologies disclose patterns of behavior or practices of daily life," Michelfelder, nonetheless, stresses that is not enough given that "[this] is not the same as to say they disclose the world as a whole."⁴² She draws attention to emerging technologies whose operations are "hidden from the realm of the everyday phenomenal experience of the user ... [hence] 'off the grid' from the user experience ... [and thus] not directly the focus of a postphenomenological investigation."⁴³ Emerging technologies, such as tracking bio-sensors used to collect different

⁴¹ Diane P. Michelfelder, "Postphenomenology with an Eye to the Future," in *Postphenomenological Investigations*, 241.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 242.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 243.

types of personal data of (read: spy on) specific targets, are notably resistant to Postphenomenological analysis.

For Michelfelder, the importance of the Heideggerian insight on “world” to the critical inquiry of technology is that it allows for an examination of such emerging technologies that precisely slip through the Postphenomenological mesh. Informed by this insight, an affordance construal of technology can reveal how technologies “could have the effect of making the lived connection between our experience and the world as a whole more fragile if not to some degree shattered.”⁴⁴

Meanwhile, Ihde’s analytic based on the “multistability” of technologies misses this finding. Claiming that “no technology is ‘one thing’ nor is it incapable of belonging to multiple contexts,” Ihde attacks Heidegger’s supposed essentialism which takes technology to be a “one-size-fits-all” affair.⁴⁵ In exploring perceptual cognition phenomenologically, Ihde uses “the term multistability to refer to perceptual variations that exceed the usually noted bivariational ambiguities.” When transferred to the study of technologies, the concept is useful in delineating the variational instantiations of appearance for human cognition a technology has owing to the context it is in.

Artifacts are understood to potentially support multiple embodiment relations or hermeneutic relations (or other relations). A technology that supports multiple stable embodiment relations is one which could offer multiple potential transformations of a user’s bodily-perceptual encounter with the world.

The concept of multistability, however, is silent when asked for a normative, moral stance towards the technological. “Which variation, which stability, is paramount, or should be given paramount concern by us?” is a question to which the theory of multistability in Postphenomenology stands mute. This is, in fact, Borgmann’s worry with Postphenomenology’s lack of stability in its multistability concept: “Without some stable and identifiable thing at the center, variants would be different independent entities, and the multistability of interpretations would turn into a multiplicity of objects.”⁴⁶ For Borgmann, this translates to a heterogeneity that disables focus in the social and moral realms, and perhaps, even ethical agency in the face of problems of “global warming and global justice—and one nebulously technological and cultural—cyberspace.”⁴⁷

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ Ihde, *Heidegger’s Technologies*, 118.

⁴⁶ Albert Borgmann, “Stability, Instability, and Phenomenology,” in *Postphenomenological Investigations*, 249.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 250.

How does an affordance-construal of technology fare with such matters?

Offering an analysis similar to the one from a multistability-perspective, an affordance construal of technology takes into account the varying possibilities for being and doing that the technological carries within itself. An affordance perspective will notice possible capacities and obtaining constraints in a given technological system or artefact (which, of course, are systems in themselves). More importantly, however, it will direct itself to uncovering the possibilities for subjectivation towards *Bestand*. In this, the affordance construal of technology has a clear thrust in its inquiry.

For its part, Feenberg's Critical Constructivism does not lack such a thrust or normative bias. The direction of his version of critical theory is unequivocal: the democratization of technology through the widespread participation of the public in technological design and installation. The theory's resort to the analysis of dual instrumentalization processes of technological artefacts and systems directs our gaze towards the occurrence of the embedding of non-democratic biases in the technical codes of said artefacts and systems. Simultaneously, the same analysis indicates points wherein democratization interventions can be effected. Feenberg writes:

In a technical democracy, technical work would take on a different character. Design would be consciously oriented toward politically legitimated human values rather than subject to the whims of profit-making organizations and military bureaucracies. These values would be installed in the technical disciplines themselves, much as the value of healing presides over biological knowledge of the human body in medicine.⁴⁸

There is a troubling blind spot to Feenberg's project, however. It leaves aside the concern of whether the thrust and commitment towards democratization, towards democracy, are themselves effects and embodiments of a particular *technological structuring* of politics. In a manner of speaking, therefore, Feenberg's Critical Theory of Technology is *uncritical* of its advocacy of democratic ends.

In contrast, the affordance theory of technology espoused here instills alertness to such biases, democratic or otherwise. It looks upon these technologies as affording, on the one hand, forms and modes of political freedom (as opposed to, say, overt authoritarian and fascist political regimes);

⁴⁸ Andrew Feenberg, *Between Reason and Experience: Essays in Technology and Modernity* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2010), 81.

but at the same time, it will not be blind to how techno-democracies harbor in themselves the ordering of human subjects as *citizens* who fuel and man the institutions and systems which comprise such “democracies.”

Finally, and crucially perhaps, the advantage of an affordance construal of technology is that it can provide directions towards an ethical comportment to technology. For with this construal, one is enabled to critical engage the technological condition by instilling mindfulness to the dangers attendant to it, and more importantly, to inquire what sort of life in such a condition is more or less worth living.

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Heidegger and Baudrillard on Death, Posthumanity, and the Challenge of Authenticity

Marc Oliver D. Pasco

Abstract: Using insights from Jean Baudrillard and Martin Heidegger, this work explores the possibility of re-imagining the relationship between death and authenticity in the age of information technologies. It begins by discussing how Baudrillard argues that we have entered the posthuman age where the self identifies itself as data in the hyperreal world of cyberspace. Next, Heidegger's insights on angst, death, and authenticity, while providing an ontological purview for examining the ontical permutation of being human, will be re-imagined and re-interpreted, and then used as a lens with which to understand how posthuman subjectivity possibly experiences inauthenticity, angst, and mortality in the present context. This posthuman scenario reduces the self into an amalgam of virtual personas that try to conform itself to the demands of the hyperreal. When this happens, the self becomes ontically fractured and its experience of finitude, its call to wholeness is substituted by the appeal of further segmentation and dispersion. It will finally be argued that it is in this very condition that Dasein can once again recover its essential sense of self as the obscenity of cyberspace only heightens Dasein's sense of anguish as it tries to navigate a place that is both nowhere and everywhere.

Keywords: death, authenticity, posthuman, hyperreality

Being-towards-Death and the Nothing

In Heidegger's philosophy, Dasein's awareness of its existence as being-towards-death grounds the very possibility of its wholeness. In temporalizing its existence in accordance with the demands of the genuine moment, Dasein begins anew, as it were, retrieving and creatively

repeating its historical destiny to find its authentic place within the thrownness of a historical tradition that calls for genuine care (*Sorge*) and solicitude (*Fürsorge*). The work of authenticity takes as its point of departure the anxious confrontation with one's ineluctable mortality. Awareness of one's finitude is tantamount to grasping one's existence as a whole. This also brings about Dasein's awareness of time not simply as an external entity, but of time as the very element which makes up its own existence as both temporal and historical. Without this understanding, Dasein exists oblivious of its own essential meaning as being-in-the-world-with-others. To recognize temporality in oneself and in others simultaneously concretizes the individual and communal reality of human existence. Therefore, death, in all its glorious and tragic reality, is not to be evaded, but embraced resolutely by Dasein if it wants to understand its own existence in the world. Anticipatory resolve in the face of one's death brings Dasein face to face with the Nothing—the concealed unraveling of beings in time; the most fundamental truth of existence, no less. As Werner Marx expounds:

Out of all the various kinds of concealment, there is one that gathers the utmost concealedness of Being within itself. This is death, and it is for this very reason that Heidegger conceives of it by means of the image of a "shrine" in the lecture "The Thing." This means that death is as such *lēthē*; but it is not only as such *lēthē*. As the "shrine of Nothing," it is also the *lēthē* of Nothing. Nothing is therefore *lēthē*, the mystery, only because and insofar as it is a form of death. Death is the form in which Nothing confronts man. It confronts him specifically in the anxiety arising in the face of death, a conviction that Heidegger already held in *Being and Time* and also, though no longer explicitly, in "What Is Metaphysics?" At that point, Heidegger was convinced that man can uncover the essence of Nothing, which confronts man in anxiety as what is other than all beings, as the veil of Being.¹

Nothingness, *the Nothing*, is fundamental in Heidegger's understanding of what it means to be Dasein. In "What is Metaphysics?," Heidegger says that "The essence of the originally nihilating nothing lies in this, that it brings

¹ Werner Marx, *Is There a Measure on Earth? Foundations for a Nonmetaphysical Ethics*, trans. by Thomas J. Nelson and Reginald Lilly (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987), 107.

Dasein for the first time before beings as such.”² The Nothing is the very movement of nihilation, the slipping-away of Being itself as experienced in existential dread or *Angst*. In anxiety, and also in other so-called fundamental moods like boredom, Heidegger claims that Dasein is able to experience the wonder of Being in its bare *is-ness* simultaneously with its own undeniable *there-ness* in the world. One can even say that it is in such fundamental moods that death shows itself happening in the world as such, including to oneself. It is in the very experience of the finitude of Being that Dasein comes to grips with the manifest reality of its existence as a being entrusted with its own completion. In other words, the experience of nothingness (the virtual annihilation of self and Being) paves the path for Dasein’s resolute understanding of itself as such.

Hyperreality, Posthumanity, and the Negation of the Nothing

Situated, however, in the current epoch of Jean Baudrillard’s world of hyperreality, the totally positively-charged world (all is appearance, all is seen) granted by the obscene operations of the hyperreal, it may be argued that nothingness itself is obliterated, disallowed to bear the truth of existence as such as finite. In a world where no one is allowed to be bored anymore (due to the unmitigated and cancerous growth of things to see and do whether here or in cyberspace), the total illumination of Being ironically results in Dasein’s blindness from that which reveals itself not to the eyes, but to one’s being-towards-death. In this context, Robert Mugerauer correctly says that, “Overnight, everything primordial is flattened down as something long since known. Everything gained by a struggle becomes something to be manipulated. Every mystery loses its power. The care of averageness reveals, in turn, an essential tendency of Da-sein, which we call the leveling down of all possibilities of being.”³ Inauthenticity manifests itself in the age of the hyperreal as a leveling down of possibilities by way of ironically actualizing all imaginable possibilities. When all mysteries are exposed to the blinding light of information technologies and every unknown is configured to be part of the known through the model, boredom by excitement becomes the primary comportment of Dasein. As Leslie Thiele elucidates:

Abandoning the present for the future and the near for
the far—killing time and conquering space—we

² Martin Heidegger, “What is Metaphysics?,” in *Pathmarks*, ed. by William McNeill, trans. by David Farrell Krell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 90.

³ Robert Mugerauer, *Heidegger and Homecoming: The Leitmotif in the Late Writings* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 34.

embrace technology as a means of escaping boredom. Lives chiefly consumed by technological diversions become immune to the philosophical wonder at Being itself. Overstimulated by technological wizardry and deafened by the noise of the media (which, Heidegger observes, its “almost take[n] for the voice of God”), contemporary humanity becomes bored with “the simple.” The enigma of our earthly being ceases to merit reflection. The task of seeking a home in this mystery is abandoned.⁴

The Nothing, the concealment of Being itself as such, revealing itself to Dasein in Angst snatches Dasein away from the thoughtlessness of inauthenticity back to its essential place in relation to Being. As being-towards-death, Dasein has access to the reality of the mystery of existence—to the question of why there is something rather than nothing. Without a sense of mortality, Dasein’s existence would be no different from animals or other beings who are in the world, but are not *really in the world*. It is therefore existentially necessary that this sense of one’s finitude be preserved in Dasein because it is what gathers Dasein; it is what keeps Dasein from going astray from itself.

Cyberspace, as originally coined by William Gibson in his novel, *Neuromancer*, points to a nowhere space, a space between two existing realities traversed by way of digital informational networks and virtual reality. Cyberspace, or the internet as we know it, is a deterritorialized virtual place that ironically holds the world of the real in place, or hostage even, essentially keeping it from falling apart. In other words, now, more than ever, it is the hyperreal, i.e., the world of ICT, simulacra, and cybernetics that provides vital structural support for what we perceive to be real politics, real economics, real culture, etc.

According to the renowned posthuman thinker N. Katherine Hayles, “The posthuman subject is an amalgam, a collection of heterogeneous components, a material-informational entity whose boundaries undergo continuous construction and reconstruction.”⁵ While it is a phenomenological given that the human person is always already considered to be an existential nexus of various biological, social, cultural, and historical events that essentially form the foundation of his identity, posthuman thinkers like

⁴ Leslie Paul Thiele, “Postmodernity and the Routinization of Novelty: Heidegger on Boredom and Technology,” in *Polity*, 29, no. 4 (1997), 508.

⁵ N. Katherine Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature and Informatics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 3.

Hayles bring to our attention a noticeably different way of being in the world of man in the digital age. With the uninterrupted flow of information in real time coursing through smartphones, for instance, are we not also physically and neurologically evolving our thought patterns and decision-making processes to keep up with the perpetual deluge of information that essentially keeps our eyes glued to small two-dimensional images that appear on 6-inch screens we carry around everywhere we go?

Posthuman subjectivity has been so dependent on its existence in cyberspace that its real counterpart becomes a mere function of its virtual existence as a social media profile, a recorded voicemail, a website, etc. In other words, it is in harnessing the deterritorialised terrain of cyberspace that individuals gain social, political, and economic traction in the real world. This is why multi-billion dollar companies spend millions of dollars in cybersecurity to protect themselves from hackers, because essentially, their business would not survive without the support of a cyber-apparatus. One can therefore say that Dasein, in the current age of hyperreality, is a networked self.

A networked self, as Manuel Castells would call it, is a self that is constantly plugged in to data streams and information flows. It is a self that thrives in what Castells calls a world of “timeless time,” where time is experienced as a series of instants, lacking any real coherence in terms of narrative or history. A Twitter or Facebook feed is an example of how timeless time manifests itself in the perception of subjectivity. It is an endless train of information that chugs on and on even while one is offline. David Bell explains Castells’ notion of timeless time:

So instantaneity is one form of timeless time. Another is called by Castells desequencing: as a result of living in a multimedia age with limitless access to streams of live and archived material, as well as ever more wondrous ways to predict or imagine the future, we are exposed to a montage of instants wrenched from temporal context: past, present and future are disassembled and reassembled for us. Without the anchoring temporality, we live, as some postmodern commentators argue in a perpetual present: the future arrives almost before we’ve thought of it, the past comes back at us in soundbites: we live in the encyclopedia of historical experience, all our

tenses at the same time, being able to reorder them in a composite created by our own fantasy or our interests.⁶

In timeless time, subjectivity loses its sense of temporality and lives within a matrix of an undifferentiated series of now's. The prevalence of the word "update" in tech and social media parlance perhaps reflects this experience of the contemporary subject—updated software, updated Facebook status, updated live streams, etc. As David Berry observes, "Today, we live and work among a multitude of data streams of varying lengths, modulations, qualities, quantities and granularities. The new streams constitute a new kind of public, one that is ephemeral and constantly changing, but which modulates and represents a kind of reflexive aggregate of what we might think of as a stream-based publicness which we might call riparian-publicity. Here, I use riparian to refer to the act of watching the flow of the stream go by."⁷

The montage perfectly exemplifies the obscene devastation of temporality by timeless time. In a montage, various images and scenes are juxtaposed and lumped together without any necessary logical sequence, thereby undermining the ordinary rules of narrativity. It compresses time and tries to deliver a series of messages in bursts and condenses information into miniature glimpses of things. What if reality is now experienced as a montage by posthuman subjectivity? What then becomes of its relationship with authenticity, which is primarily grounded in resolve that is grounded upon temporal coherence?

When the self is simultaneously everywhere and nowhere, temporal and trapped in the present, finite and death-defying, all at the same time, it becomes obscene. Obscenity is the loss of scene, the pornographic eclipse of the distance between subjectivity and the object, the implosion of the real and the virtual. The posthuman cybernetic self, with all its technological connections to cyberspace and its growing number of replicants in social media is on the verge of losing itself completely at the hands of the hyperreal (or hasn't it already?). Subjectivity is reduced to a model in a series, seemingly helpless at the hands of the demands of its own virtual projections. As Baudrillard had claimed, subjectivity in the age of hyperreality is schizophrenic:

⁶ David Bell, "Castell's Key Ideas," in *Routledge Critical Thinkers: Cyberculture Theorists Manuel Castells and Donna Haraway* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 75-76.

⁷ David M. Berry, *The Philosophy of Software: Code and Mediation in the Digital Age* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 144.

The schizophrenic is not, as generally claimed, characterized by his loss of touch with reality, but by the absolute proximity to and total instantaneousness with things, this overexposure to the transparency of the world. Stripped of a stage and crossed over without the least obstacle, the schizophrenic cannot produce the limits of his very being, he can no longer produce himself as a mirror. He becomes a pure screen, a pure absorption and resorption surface of the influent networks.⁸

The posthuman subject is both itself and not itself all the time, plunging it into an abyss of manic confusion and paranoia. This current trend essentially espouses self-cloning. Cloning oneself through the digital matrix of cyberspace estranges oneself more and more from the tempo-historical conditions of one's selfhood. Mirrors at least don't exactly show one one's double because it inverts the real and projects the image as an Other that looks back at the spectator. Virtually cloning oneself in cyberspace, on the other hand, abolishes subjectivity by reducing it into a code, totally transparent to itself, manipulable, reproducible, viral, hackable, lacking history in being completely identical with itself in real time.

Death in the posthuman epoch happens as the disintegration of subjectivity by its constant disentanglement from itself as its multiple virtual counterparts are absorbed by the event horizon of cyberspace. The screen is a black mirror. It does not reflect, but deflects the gaze of the self towards the world of the hyperreal, where death does not occur. Having been alienated from its reflection, subjectivity loses itself as it loses its memory in a perpetual present, continuously refreshed in real time.

In *Being and Time*, Heidegger says, "When in everyday being with one another, we encounter things that are accessible to everybody and about which everybody can say everything, we can soon no longer decide what is disclosed in genuine understanding and what is not. This ambiguity extends not only to the world, but likewise to being-with-one-another as such, even to the being of Dasein toward itself."⁹ He adds, "In their ambiguity, curiosity and idle talk make sure that what is done in a genuine and new way is outdated as soon as it emerges before the public."¹⁰ Heidegger's intimations concerning the element of ambiguity involved in Dasein's falling-prey are

⁸ Jean Baudrillard, "The Ecstasy of Communication," in *The Ecstasy of Communication*, trans. Bernard Schütze and Caroline Schütze (South Pasadena: Semiotext(e), 2012), 30.

⁹ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. by Joan Stambaugh (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), 162.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 163.

reflected in Baudrillard's ideas concerning the schizophrenia of contemporary subjectivity. As early as the 1920s, Heidegger already saw how Dasein is susceptible to the appeal of novelty and volume. Both the "new" and the "more" attract and distract Dasein from what is nearest and what is worthiest of his concern—its own inescapable mortality in relation to Being itself. Ambiguity mixes and confuses the temporal order and prioritizes the novelty of what is common and the value of what makes most sense to everyone. The posthuman is essentially the product of ambiguity; the reduction of the self to neural feedback and its constant immersion in the data streams of cyberspace makes it perfectly adept to the uninterrupted flow of real-time. Uncertainty appears to be diminished by the constant flow of information which passes from the screen to consciousness, providing Dasein with the sensation of stability in the midst of an otherwise chaotic cycle of substitutions between the new and the old. In other words, in its fallenness, Dasein recognizes ambiguity as clarity because it understands itself to be the main server, so to speak, that essentially creates, relays, processes, and understands information as it happens in real time. But in reality, inside the eye of this tornado of information, contemporary subjectivity becomes a mere relay, an access point through which information stays for a split-second and then patched and shot to another relay point in the next.

The Possibility of Authenticity in the Wasteland of Hyperreality

It is, to my mind, precisely in the midst of this vortex of information that Dasein gains the possibility of experiencing genuine Angst. Heidegger says that it is in Angst that "the nothing and the nowhere become manifest."¹¹ Cyberspace is nowhere. It is neither here, nor there. It is a concrete symbolic manifestation of the place-lessness and rootlessness of the nomadic character of Dasein's current condition in the epoch of the hyperreal. The more Dasein finds itself immersed in this nowhere place, the greater the possibility that Dasein becomes aware of its fragmented condition. To be completely immersed in an electronic screen is to be present and absent at the same time in the world. It is to be held hostage by the staggering presence of beings that exist in a realm where their relevance is extinguished by their very presencing. As Heidegger says, "The nothingness of the world in the face of which Angst is anxious does not mean that an absence of innerworldly things objectively present is experienced in Angst. They must be encountered in such a way that they are of no relevance at all, but can show themselves in a barren mercilessness."¹² Cyberspace is the virtual crypt of Dasein where its

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 175.

¹² *Ibid.*, 315.

capacity to be aware of its essence as being-towards-death is entombed and therefore also the place where it can be resurrected. To be completely held hostage in cyberspace is essentially to be buried alive. Seen in this light, the obscene self of cybernetics holds within itself the possibility of encountering this barren wasteland of simulation along the data streams of information.

The schizophrenia of the contemporary subject, its seemingly forlorn wanderings in a cybernetic sojourn, may very well be a sign of a collective anguish brewing within humanity today. Relentlessly assaulted by the merciless avalanche of information, it has no other choice but to retreat towards itself, while maintaining its social existence through a cyber-apparatus that slowly annihilates its being. However, it is in this bleak and miserable condition that Angst itself may remind Dasein of its mortal nature. The very non-mortality of one's screen avatars is the new locus of Angst. It is precisely because one cannot die that one may once again recall the reality of mortality as well as the necessity of restoring the scene of death in the obscenely effervescent world of the hyperreal.

Posthuman existence, with its fixation with controlling the mechanisms of biological existence through cybernetics, consequently reducing subjectivity to an amalgam of organs and nerve impulses, raises the very possibility of reflexively asking the question why we are running away from death in the first place. It is perhaps precisely in avoiding death that we are closest to it than we think. Maybe it is this very obsession with multiplying and curating one's identities that signals the posthuman experience of the Nothing; the desolation that accompanies the feeling of losing one's way and being alienated from oneself within the vortex of possibilities opened not only in the real world, but in the virtual world as well. Perhaps the anguish of posthuman subjectivity is manifested precisely in its ever-growing yearning for something *more* real than the real. The fractalization of identity, its reduction to a self-repeating code seeking refuge in real time within virtual worlds is a possible ontical symptom of the current form of inauthenticity. Instead of trying to hide from oneself in the tranquilized company of the public, the obscene self virtually assimilates the public by becoming more public than the public. It subverts the dictatorship of the they by answering to a dictatorship paradoxically orchestrated by itself and imposed upon itself as a virtual brand that seeks no other thing than its recognition as unique. Maybe alienation in the obscene epoch no longer takes place as a distancing of oneself from oneself, but as an absolute proximity of oneself to oneself. When one swallows one's mirrors, one essentially becomes alien to oneself.

One may argue that the so-called Nietzschean wasteland has never been as vast than it is today. It is not a wasteland because there is nothing in it, but because there is too much of everything in it. The world as we know it

has become unbearably positive with information and communication. The world has become obscenely unconcealed. But it is precisely this pornographic hyper-exposure that simultaneously reveals the radical emptiness and desolation of the imploded world of the virtual—the emptiness that reveals itself in the fullness of one’s virtual existence which brings the possibility of experiencing the anguish of being too immediately present to oneself brokered by the contiguity of screens with one’s identity. As Baudrillard intimates, “Nothing (not even God) now disappears by coming to an end, by dying. Instead, things disappear through proliferation or contamination, by becoming saturated or transparent, because of extenuation or extermination, or as a result of the epidemic of simulation, as a result of their transfer into the secondary existence of simulation. Rather than a mortal mode of disappearance, then, a fractal mode of dispersal.”¹³

What, then, have we gained from initiating a dialogue between Heidegger and Baudrillard about the meaning of personhood in the epoch of the obscene? On the one hand, Baudrillard was able to show that we may have indeed entered the posthuman age where the self identifies itself as data to be uploaded in cyberspace. Heidegger’s insights, on the other hand, while providing an ontological purview for examining the ontical permutation of being human in the age of obscenity was also re-interpreted and re-applied as a lens with which to understand how posthuman subjectivity possibly experiences inauthenticity, angst, and mortality in the present context. It was shown that one’s sense of self in the epoch of the hyperreal is actually designed and crafted by the apparatus of networks and data streams, forging a self that fits within the matrix of codes and algorithms. This so-called posthuman scenario reduces the self into an amalgam of virtual personas that try to conform itself to the demands of the network. When this happens, the self becomes ontically fractured and its experience of its finitude, its call to wholeness, is substituted by the appeal of further segmentation and dispersion. It is in this very condition that Dasein can once again recover its essential sense of self as the obscenity of cyberspace only heightens Dasein’s anguish as it tries to navigate a place that is both nowhere and everywhere.

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¹³ Jean Baudrillard, *The Transparency of Evil: Essays on Extreme Phenomena*, trans. by James Benedict (London: Verso, 1999), 4.

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The Subjection of the Question of Being in a Secular Age: The Young Heidegger's Confrontation with Modern Constitution and Identity

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Abstract: In Heidegger's philosophy, a human being is defined by his or her relation to Being in general. And given this relation, the human being is further characterized as dialogue and especially as a questioner in his later philosophy of language. This poses a problem about how human being as the questioner was subjected in the development of Heidegger's philosophy that was always standing in dialogue with its spiritual-historical circumstance. In this paper, I will examine how such a questioner of Being was formed in the context of secularization and identity politics in the young Heidegger's lifeworld when he was a theology student around 1910. In the first section, I will consider Messkirch's local newspaper and make clear Heidegger's attitude toward the tension between the state and the church whose uncertainty motivated the question of Being. In the second section, I will overview the writers around 1900, especially Wilde, with whom the young Heidegger confronted as regards the problem of the modern identity, and explain the role of the poet Jørgensen for him to overcome the rootlessness of modernity. This project of overcoming was destined to remain incomplete, the uncertainty of which was the motivational environment to the question of Being.

Keywords: Heidegger, ontology, secularization, subjection

In a fictional dialogue with a Japanese Germanist in 1955, Heidegger wrote:

So läge alles daran, in ein entsprechendes Sagen von der Sprache zu gelangen.

Ein solches sagendes Entsprechen könnte nur ein
Gespräch sein.¹

The first quotation takes out human speech that corresponds to and makes visible “Sprache” as the house of Being. As Heidegger characterized his later concept of language by pointing out its function of “Versammlung,” the language at stake here is *not* ordinary natural language such as German or Japanese, but the fundamental dimension of the relation between Being and human beings *within which the understanding of the beings as beings is related to the factum of this understanding*. For Heraclitus, ἔν πάντα is not a matter of assertion, but the way how Λόγος manifests itself.² And it is this ἔν that “assembles (*versammelt*)” and lets beings be “as such and as a whole (*als solches und im Ganzen*).”³ For Kant, the synthetic unity of apperception is the “Λόγος in the primordial sense” that “unites and assembles (*versammelnd*).”⁴ Apperception as Λόγος is “the place (Ort)” within which “the logic” could first guide us “in determining the concepts (categories) of being of beings.”⁵ Language in Heidegger’s sense is accordingly the place into which human understanding of beings as such (*als solches*) is related, i.e., “assembled,” while this understanding is always facing and confronting beings as a whole (*im Ganzen*).

The second quotation states that an “Entsprechen” to “Sprache” could only be in “Gespräch.” The later Heidegger related human speech to the concept of “Λόγος” in *Being and Time*,⁶ where “Λόγος” is defined as “making visible” by “the speakers that mutually speak to each other (*die miteinander Redenden*).” Given this, we could assume that an “Entsprechen” could only be in “Gespräch” because “the assembly (*Versammlung*)” of the relation between Being and human beings could show itself (*sich zeigen*) in its *middle voice* only through a mutual and verbal exchange that transcends each other’s perspective.

These two passages have significant consequences for today’s philosophical inquiry of human beings. As was suggested in *Letter on Humanism*, Heidegger criticized the metaphysical concept of humans and tried to capture the essence of human beings concerning Being.⁷ Given that the fundamental relation of human beings to Being is accomplished through

¹ Martin Heidegger, *Unterwegs zur Sprache*, 14. Aufl. (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 2007), 151.

² Martin Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 7 (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2000), 225.

³ Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 7, *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, 225.

⁴ Martin Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 9, *Wegmarken* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1976), 462.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 462.

⁶ Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 7, 218f.

⁷ Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 9, 336.

the Question of Being,⁸ it can be said that the ability to question Being is the most important aspect of human beings and that the human nature of questioning Being is accomplished only through dialogue.⁹

Now, the motif of the “human beings as questioner” accomplished through dialogue needs to be considered against the background of the later Foucault’s concept of “subjection,” so that we could estimate the reach of Heidegger’s idea of humanity in the time when even the project of “post-humanity” is being discussed. As is well known, Foucault stated that the moral self-reflexivity of consciousness necessarily involves “styles of subjection,” that is, “the various systems of rules and values at work in the society or group in question, and the institutions and devices with a coercive force that embody these systems.”¹⁰ In other words, the self-identity of the subject is always established simultaneously with a particular order of communal norms. A similar idea is found in the later assertion that the subject is constituted through “practices of subjection” as “practices of freedom” in “a certain number of rules, forms, and conventions found in the cultural environment.”¹¹

Foucault was considering ancient philosophies such as Stoicism. Now, in what kind of “cultural environment” of “dialogue” is Heidegger’s human beings “questioning Being” *subjected*? In this paper, as one such environment of “dialogue,” we examine Heidegger’s texts written before and after he gave up his theology major around 1910 and examine how Heidegger, who was brought up as a very conservative Catholic, constituted himself and showed up as *questioner in the conflict of a secular age*. In the dialogue mentioned above, he expected his Japanese interlocutor to stand in a different house of Being that could enable them to withhold from being absorbed into the era of technology and Western metaphysics. However, this could be Heidegger’s Orientalism, and the uncritical acceptance of this by the non-Western world could be an internalization of Orientalism. Instead, it would be more significant to examine Heidegger’s own “cultural” or academic-political environment, as this would provide a more helpful basis for questioning Being in the Asian context.

⁸ Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 18. Aufl. (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 2001), 14f.

⁹ I discussed this notion of humanity and its consequences for basic questions of philosophy such as general metaphysics and categories, reality and world, and human existence in the following monograph: Yohei Kageyama, *Introduction to Philosophy beginning from Questions* (Tokyo: Kobun-sha, 2021) [in Japanese]. Korean translation, *질문으로 시작하는 철학 입문*. 2022.

¹⁰ Michel Foucault, *L’usage des Plaisirs* (Paris: Gallimard, 1984). Quote is from the Japanese translation by Tamura Hajime (Tokyo: Shinyo-sha, 1986), 470f.

¹¹ Michel Foucault, “The Use of Pleasure and the Techniques of the Self,” quoted from the Japanese translation, *Michel Foucault Collected Thoughts vol. IX* (Tokyo: Chikuma-shobo, 2001), 250f.

In this paper, we reconsider the interpretive frame of the standard Heidegger studies on his youth. Various studies, such as Otto's *Heidegger – Unterwegs zu seiner Biografie* (1988), Safranski's *Ein Meister aus Deutschland* (1994), and *Heidegger Jahrbuch, Volume I* (2004) have examined Heidegger in his early years. The results include historical accounts of Heidegger's dependence on Catholic scholarship and his struggle for a faculty position in Catholic theology, but above all, the "*Kulturkampf*" and Catholic "Antimodernismus" in the Grand Duchy of Baden in the early 20th century. In this paper, we agree with their focus on the *Kulturkampf* in Baden. However, we reject the political slogan of "Antimodernismus" as an interpretive frame for Heidegger's thought. The term "anti-modern" is just an index of some conflict, which can be "pre-modern," "non-modern," or "hyper-modern." It can scarcely clarify the matter. In contrast, we will consider the "origin (*Herkunft*)" of Heidegger's Question of Being against the background of "secularization," since it gives a more comprehensive frame to analyze the tension between religion and modernity. In recent years, the authors such as Habermas and Taylor have discussed secularization. This resonates with the tension between Islam and right-wing Christian beliefs in the public sphere in Europe and the U.S. In Japan, a religious cult also exerts influence on the ruling party. Given this situation, "secularization" is useful to interpret Heidegger and provides an effective clue to the place of the Question of Being in our historical context.

The first section below examines texts on the relationship between the modern constitution and the church around 1910. In the second section, we examine texts on human identity in the literature of the *Jahrhundertwende*. Overall, we argue that the "cultural environment" in which humans who question Being are subjected is a situation in which the relationship with God becomes indeterminate, typically a situation of secularization.

The Conflict between the Modern Constitution and the Church: Heidegger in Messkirch's Local Newspaper

There is evidence that Heidegger's first "Question of Being" was when he was still almost a theology student. In an article he contributed to the *Akademiker*, the journal of the conservative "Catholic Students' Union," in May 1911, Heidegger wrote:

Und bei diesem Hin- und Herflattern, bei dem allmählich zum Sport gewordenen Feinschmeckertum in philosophischen Fragen bricht doch ... das Verlangen hervor nach abgeschlossen, abschliessenden Antworten auf *die Entfragen des Seins*, die zuweilen so jäh

aufblitzen, und die dann manchen Tag ungelöst wie Bleilast auf der gequälten, ziel- und wegarmen Seele liegen.¹²

Heidegger was only 21 years old. This “Question of Being” is, of course, not directly connected to *Being and Time*. He speaks here of the subject matter of the Catholic faith, God as the ground of all beings. This itself is more a classical question of metaphysics or theology than the “Question of Being” posed in *Being and Time*. Still, the young Heidegger was not simply discussing the metaphysical ground of beings, but he situated himself in the uncertainty of such ground that is revealed in the tension of secularization. In this situation, the facticity of the coming-into-existence of all beings is experienced as the subject matter of question. As “Hin- und Herflattern” suggests, and as previous researchers have pointed out, this “Question” derived from faith is situated in the political conflict of the *Kulturkampf* in Baden.

As one aspect of this conflict, Heidegger wrote an article in a local newspaper in Messkirch about the conflict between the modern constitution and the church. The Grand Duchy of Baden, originally established during the Napoleonic Wars, was liberal in its secular power, such as parliament. However, because of its geographical proximity to the Vatican, it had a large Catholic population, and the secular power and the church were at odds over such issues as the right to ordain clergy. This conflict was also seen in the local newspapers in Messkirch, where the liberals launched the “Oberbadische Grenzboten” and the Catholic conservatives the “Heuberger Volksblatt” and engaged in a debate. On April 5, 1911, a liberal commentator of the “Grenzboten” criticized the Catholic conservatives and the Zentrum party for “denying freedom of conscience, freedom of worship, and freedom of academic research.” To this, Heidegger, under the pseudonym “g.g.,” replied in the “Volksblatt” (April 7) as follows:

[Just as the state restricts the freedom of action of its citizens in times of existential crisis], noch mehr hat die Kirche das Recht und die Pflicht, die Gläubigen zu schützen [...] und kann deshalb verlangen, daß die höchsten Güter des Menschen nicht von jedermann in Reden und Schriften frei und ungehindert entwürdigt, verspottet und verhöhnt werden können.¹³

¹² Martin Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 16, *Reden und andere Zeugnisse eines Lebensweges* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2000), 11 (emphasis added).

¹³ Martin Heidegger, “Dem Grenzbot-Philosophen zur Antwort,” *Heuberger Volksblatt*. 1911.4.7, zitiert nach Elisabeth Büchin, Alfred Denker, *Martin Heidegger und seine Heimat* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 2005), 65.

dagegen kann die *bürgerliche politische Toleranz*, wonach Andersgläubigen die Ausübung ihrer Religion zugelassen oder Religionsfreiheit gewährt wird, im Interesse des öffentlichen Friedens und zur Vermeidung größerer Übel gestattet und selbst *pflichtmäßig* sein, zumal wenn dieselbe durch öffentlichen Verträge und völkerrechtliche Akte sanktioniert wurde.¹⁴

The first quotation indicates the position that freedom of speech in the public sphere may be restricted for the sake of the dignity of faith. What is in mind would not be general religious criticism, but the kind of insulting speech that today would depict Muhammad in the way a French satirical magazine portrayed him, demeaning to the faithful. The second quote is the position that freedom of religion, a principle of the modern constitution, should be recognized to avoid religious wars. For a person of faith, his faith is unique and cannot be paralleled with others, but neither can he intervene in the faith of others.

These two points can be seen as public aspects of the *uncertainty* imposed on faith in a secular age. As Hegel summarized in his *Philosophy of Law*, the basic principle of the modern constitution is that religion, which is an inner matter, does not interfere with the objective legal regime of the state, and conversely, the state does not interfere with the inner faith of its citizens.¹⁵ Heidegger never disagreed with this most important principle of the modern constitution. However, the institutionalization of religious freedom means, for the faithful, to live in a community in which the only thing that is, for him, the meaning of life and the Ground of his whole world, becomes essentially a one-of-them, juxtaposed with the beliefs of those who do not share it. This brings us to the third meaning of secularization, which Taylor says is “a move from a society where belief in God is unchallenged [...] to one in which it is understood to be one option among others.”¹⁶ In this public life, faith is suspended, neither affirmed nor denied and in this sense, the very commitment to the ground of all beings begins to exist as an indeterminate “Question.”

¹⁴ Heidegger, “Dem Grenzboten-Philosophen zur Antwort,” 66f.

¹⁵ G. W. F. Hegel, *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1970 [1821]), 418f.

¹⁶ Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge: Belknap Harvard, 2007), 3.

Identity in Literature at the *Jahrhundertwende*, Catholicism as Overcoming of Modernity, and its Limits

In “Per mortem ad vitae,” which he contributed to *Akademiker* in May 1910, Heidegger wrote as follows:

In unseren Tagen spricht man viel von »Persönlichkeit«. ... Die Person des Künstlers rückt in den Vordergrund. So hört man denn viel von interessanten Menschen. O. Wilde, der Dandy, P. Verlaine, der »geniale Säufer«, M. Gorky, der grosse Vagabund der Uebermensch Nietzsche – interessante Menschen.¹⁷

Safranski interprets this passage as a resentment against urban personalities, and Takada sees it as a reaction against liberal individualism.¹⁸ However, their claims are not well-founded, because they do not provide a grounded interpretation of Heidegger’s specific confrontation with the modern identity that is represented in the *Jahrhundertwende* literature of Wilde, Verlaine, and Gorky. In what follows, we will examine Heidegger’s confrontation with the late modern identity, with a particular focus on Wilde, and review the ideas of Jorgensen, the Danish Catholic poet in whom Heidegger saw overcoming of modernity. We will then examine Heidegger’s position.

In Wilde’s classic novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, “personality” and “dandy” are described as follows:

a complex personality took the place and assumed the office of art, was indeed, in its way, a real work of art, Life having its elaborate masterpieces, just as poetry has, or sculpture, or painting.¹⁹

To him [Dorian] Life itself was the first, the greatest, of the arts, Fashion, by which what is really fantastic becomes for a moment universal, and *Dandyism*, which,

¹⁷ Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 16, 3.

¹⁸ Rüdiger Safranski, *Ein Meister aus Deutschland*, quoted from the Japanese trans. by Yamamoto Yu (Hosei University Press, 1996), 37. Cf. Tamaki Takada, *Heidegger: The History of Being* (Tokyo: Kodan-sha, 2014), 49f.

¹⁹ Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (London: Penguin Books, 1985 [1891]), 57.

in its own way, is an attempt to assert *the absolute modernity of beauty*²⁰

The first quote shows that “personality” is not just individualism, but has a specific meaning in the 19th-century notion of aesthetic self-creation. The second citation shows that “dandyism” represents the modern identity of aesthetic self-creation. To review the spiritual history, “dandyism,” which was used negatively in the early 19th century as “a lack of manners,” became in the middle of the century, as Barbey said, “the ability to be oneself” by attracting others’ attention through fashion.²¹ Baudelaire further states that a dandy “has no other occupation than to cultivate in himself the idea of beauty, to gratify his passions, to feel and think.”²² “The absolute modernity of beauty” in the quote is the consequence of this modern secular identity that sustains its existence through aesthetic self-creation, not God.

This self-creation is inseparable from social exclusion over identity issues. As is well known, Wilde was a homosexual and was imprisoned for two years in England, where homosexuality was illegal at the time. As Wilde argued in court, homosexuality itself is a person’s innate sexual orientation and cannot be “against nature.” However, in a society that forbade homosexuality at the time, practicing homosexuality and actively deviating from the majority norm became the basis for confirming Wilde’s own existence. A century before Judith Butler discussed physical performances that “subvert” gender identity, Wilde was practicing it. This kind of social exclusion, in which *deviance itself becomes an identity*, can be said of both Verlaine and Gorky. For Verlaine, a life of “Säufer” and “decadence” would have represented the poet’s “technique of dying beautifully” in an attempt to deviate from existing artistic norms.²³ Stéphane Mallarmé, his close ally in symbolism, praised therefore Verlaine’s lifestyle as that of a poet being “outlaw (hors la loi).”²⁴ For Gorky, a wanderer himself in his youth, the “vagabond” represented in his early novel “Chelkash” is the image of a person who has lost his home and finds freedom in drifting.²⁵ In other words, a “vagabond” finds his identity in rejection of belonging to home and exile.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 125.

²¹ Jules Barbey d’Aureville, *Du Dandysme et de George Brummell* (Paris: Édition Payot, 1997); Jules Barbey d’Aureville, *Œuvres romanesques complètes t.2* (Paris: Gallimards, 1966), 669.

²² Charles-Pierre Baudelaire, *Œuvres complètes II* (Paris: Gallimard, 1976), 709f.

²³ Ernest Raynaud, *La mêlée symboliste: portraits et souvenirs* (Paris: La naissance du livre, 1920), 64f. quoted from the following database: gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France.

²⁴ Jules Huret, *Enquête sur l’évolution littéraire* (Paris: Bibliothèque Charpentier, 1891), 62. quoted from the following database: gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France.

²⁵ Maxim Gorky, *Gorky’s Short Stories* (Tokyo: Iwanami, 1966), 133. (In Japanese.)

What alternative, then, does Heidegger's Jorgensen offer to this identity? In conclusion, it is a state in which the modern self-created identity is so internally radicalized that the grace of the transhuman Absolute is manifested, thus affirming all identities equally, regardless of whether they are majorities or minorities. Jorgensen, one of the representative modern Danish poets, was an atheist in his youth, influenced by the naturalist Georg Brandes. Later, however, he defected from Brandes and became devoted to Verlaine's symbolism. According to Jorgensen, Verlaine originally believed the modern human "principle of the flesh" thoroughly, but after his conversion to Catholicism (*Saggese* (1880), Verlaine became "a turning point in the spiritual history of the 19th century" in which the "principle of the flesh" was inverted into insight into the divine.²⁶ Such inversion is depicted in "De profundis," a poem dedicated to the death of Verlaine. On one hand, Jorgensen described Verlaine's decadence as an eternal drifting in which he loses forever his possessions. On the other hand, when he lost everything and even his life, his drifting als vanishes with a slight expectation of God.

Night and day, pleasure and pain,
they vanish like misty fog,
when a soul stands in front of death, God's servant²⁷

It is this inversion that made Jorgensen also break away from symbolism and turned to Christianity, becoming Europe's leading Catholic writer. The character of Catholic identity that *transcends* modern identity is expressed in his *St. Francis of Assisi*.

For *all things*, to live is unquestionably happiness, and to
thank the Father for life is a simple and innocent duty.²⁸

As Verlaine described the "technique of dying beautifully," the essence of self-creation is self-denial, which incessantly overcomes the current existing identity. Jorgensen believes that at the extreme of this self-denial, the grace of the Absolute, which transcends the human self, manifests itself. And, taking on the idea of St. Francis that all things become brothers as gifts of God in the poverty of non-possession, the Grace of the Absolute gifts happiness to all identities.

²⁶ Henrik Johnson, "The Route to Catholicism: Symbolism and Idealism in the Works of Johannes Jørgensen," in *Scandinavian Studies*, 93, no. 1 (2021), 52f.

²⁷ Johannes Jørgensen, *The Poems of Jorgensen*, Japanese trans. by Yamamuro Shizuka (Tokyo: Yayoi-shobo, 1973), 55.

²⁸ Johannes Jørgensen, *St. Francis of Assisi*, Japanese trans. by Nagano Fujio (Tokyo: Heibon-sha, 1997), 329.

Now, in “*Per mortem ad vitae*,” Heidegger almost literally introduced Jorgensen’s assertion that with the *death* of the lower life, supernatural grace appears,²⁹ Heidegger at this point saw Catholicism as overcoming the attainments of the modern identity. While previous researchers such as Safranski understood Heidegger’s attitude toward modernity as the resentment and reaction to urban and personalistic identity, Heidegger himself aims at an immanent overcoming of modernity as the consequence of radicalizing the modern identity. Heidegger’s anti-modernism is, exactly speaking, hyper-modernism.

However, Heidegger could not rest on his laurels with Catholicism for epistemological reasons, as he clearly stated in the late 1910s in his defection from the Catholic system.³⁰ I prefer to think that it was a philosophical issue, not an external circumstance such as a scholarship or a faculty post. This is because the argument of inversion from self-denial to grace is incomplete. There is no epistemological guarantee of the reality of Grace since it is impossible to say when the negation is completed from the point of view of the self-denying human being. As with the “possibility of the impossibility of existence in general” in *Being and Time*, the completion of self-denial remains a pure possibility for the person concerned.

But for my part, I see in this incompleteness an internal opportunity for the subjection of the Question of Being in the context of secularization. For the theology student Heidegger, God as the basis of the whole beings is first of all accessed in faith, just as his “*Endfragen des Seins*” was discussed in the Catholic journal. But as long as faith in the secular age is explained with the logic of self-denial, then, as just noted, human’s orientation toward God becomes simply uncertain, a pure “Question” that cannot itself be answered by faith. Faith itself in secularization is a pre-philosophical matter, a matter within Plato’s cave, so to speak, but I would like to see here one of the “cultural environments” in which humans who question Being are subjected.

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²⁹ Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 16, 5.

³⁰ *Brief an Engelbert Krebs / 9. Jan. 1919*, in Alfred Denker, Hans-Helmuth Gander, Holger Zaborowski (eds.), *Heidegger Jahrbuch 1* (Munich: Alber, 2004), 67.

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Martin Heidegger's Phenomenology of the Inconspicuous

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Abstract: This paper is concerned with a fundamental problem of phenomenological research, namely the question *how* phenomena appear. Well-known is Martin Heidegger's talking about truth as "unconcealment," coupling appearing with "concealment" or "saving." Yet besides this important stance the later Heidegger developed a quite different approach regarding the relation between Being and appearing, now centered on what he termed "the inconspicuous" (das Unscheinbare). Recently phenomenology has, based on this idea, inaugurated a new movement termed "phenomenology of the inconspicuous." While referring to the anonymous endeavor of preparing "the other beginning," Heidegger's notion of the inconspicuous also formulates an important critique, with respect to phenomenology. As can be shown, the inconspicuous is at work *within* appearing itself, thus leaving behind the metaphysical opposition between manifestation and concealment. It rather should be seen as a kind of tension which is indispensable for something to appear at all. This tension makes any phenomenal appearance turn from a simple aspect viewed into an "ad-spect" (An-blick), which requests the genuine "passibility" of our gaze and engages our responsiveness.

Keywords: Heidegger, the inconspicuous, viewing, passibility

I
Phenomenology is not only concerned with what appears, the so called phenomena themselves, but with *how* phenomena appear, with how the phenomenal *comes into appearing*, too. Due to this general orientation, Martin Heidegger conceived his early "hermeneutical phenomenology of Dasein" as an inquiry into the essential relation between Being and appearing. For him, any thought has to take intuition of what

appears and gives itself in actual presence, as its starting point. Thus any phenomenal content consists in a twofold structure, firstly referring to our bodily self and our senses, and, second, being endowed with meaning. Within “the How of philosophical experience” (*das Wie der philosophischen Erfahrung*), philosophical explication is intimately connected with motives and tendencies of embodied experience.¹ It is corresponding to this general framework that, soon after publishing *Being and Time*, Heidegger commences unfolding his reflections about “the inconspicuous” (*das Unscheinbare*), which exhibits significant similarities with Edmund Husserl’s “horizons of co-givenness.” However, Heidegger’s discourse also shows marked differences, with respect to the Husserlian concern. Therefore, it is worthwhile taking a closer look at this topic.

Besides examining concrete phenomenal contents and the conditions of its being given, Husserl began early to pay attention to the non-intentional, indeterminate “horizons” surrounding and bearing each phenomenal content, to what he termed “inadequacy” and “co-givenness.”² In this respect, he once lucidly states that immanent temporality requires the structure of phenomenal horizons which, as such, do not appear. These horizons encompass “ungrasped” objects, objects that are “noticeable, though not noticed” (*merklich, aber nicht gemerkt*). Such objects of possible consciousness remain on the threshold of appearing and “may be noticed” (*merkbar*), may “pass over into being grasped” (*ins Erfassen übergehen*), at any time.³

As to Heidegger’s variously mentioning the inconspicuous, he largely uses the term in a quite ordinary meaning. Often it may just refer to public anonymousness or lack of general recognition.⁴ Yet it has to be emphasized, right from the start, that this vein of thought eventually neither remains restricted to lamenting on the public obscurity of the genius, nor do merely methodological questions, regarding phenomenal appearing, represent its main concern. Heidegger rather engages in the quest for an altogether fundamental attitude towards our own existence, the world, and

¹ Martin Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 59: *Phänomenologie der Anschauung und des Ausdrucks. Theorie der philosophischen Begriffsbildung* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1993), 171.

² Edmund Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and a Phenomenological Philosophy. First Book: General Introduction to a Pure Phenomenology*, trans. by F. Kersten (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1983), 94 (Husserliana III/ 1, [§ 44] 91).

³ Edmund Husserl, *Die Bernauer Manuskripte Über das Zeitbewusstsein* (1917/ 18), ed. by Rudolf Bernet/ Dieter Lohman [Husserliana XXXIII] (Dortrecht: Kluwer, 2001), [Nr. 15, § 2] 284.

⁴ Cf. Martin Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 65: *Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis)* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1989), p. 19/ 400; Martin Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 95: *Überlegungen VII-XI (Schwarze Hefte 1938/39)* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 2014), 142-145 and 159-161.

innerworldly things, the quest for a “style” that should pave the way for the notorious “other beginning” of thinking.⁵

This major *ethical* connotation seems to be intrinsically connected with the philosophical purport of the notion of the inconspicuous, where Heidegger, for example, jumps from the “atmosphere of the inconspicuous” proper to “hand-craft,” to the inconspicuous as “the unspoken, the silence of language.”⁶ The inconspicuous is also characterized as “saying-off” (*Entsagen*).⁷ Thinking is called “the most silent dwelling within the inconspicuous of the appropriative event of freedom,”⁸ and there is “the inconspicuous of sparing thinking” (*das Unscheinbare des schonenden Denkens*).⁹ “The inconspicuousness of another history” relies on a peculiar “force of decision” (*Entscheidungskraft*), as well as on the “ability to wait” (*Warten-können*), for the inconspicuous is equaled to an “appearing in the ‘hints’” (*Erscheinen in den ‘Winken’*).¹⁰ Dismissing more crude instances¹¹ for the later Heidegger’s engaging in his peculiar way of doing critical phenomenology, here only some of the implications of the notion of the inconspicuous shall be examined in more detail.

II

At first glance, expressions such as “not looking out” (*Nicht-hervorschauen*), and “not-appearing” (*Nicht-Erscheinen*),¹² seem to suggest that the inconspicuous stands for the concealed or the unapparent. Nonetheless, it cannot be *totally* unappearing. Quite the contrary, the inconspicuous, in fact, is deeply *involved with appearing*. For it is said to “shine from the shining back” (*scheint aus dem Zurückscheinen*) where the “distant arrival of the holding-towards is glowing” (*die ferne Ankunft des Ver-Haltenden leuchtet*).¹³ Thus “the not-appearing in the sense of not-stepping-forth-into-the-appearance,

⁵ Cf. Martin Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 100: *Vigiliae und Notturmo* (*Schwarze Hefte 1952/53–1957*) (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 2020), 16.

⁶ Martin Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 97: *Anmerkungen I–IV* (*Schwarze Hefte 1942–1948*) (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 2015), 284.

⁷ Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 100, 163.

⁸ Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 97, 65: *das stillste Wohnen im Unscheinbaren des Ereignisses der Freyheit*.

⁹ Martin Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 98: *Anmerkungen VI–IX* (*Schwarze Hefte 1948/49–1951*) (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 2018), 256.

¹⁰ Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 95, 144.

¹¹ Cf. Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 97, 68: *das unscheinbare Scheinen des Da, das die Freyheit des Ereignens freyend seint* (the inconspicuous shining of the There which freely be-eth the freedom of the appropriative event).

¹² Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 97, 65.

¹³ Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 100, 71.

nonetheless and authentically, is the pure shining as glowing of the clearing of freedom."¹⁴

As a matter of fact, Heidegger's inconspicuous enhances appearing, although, for sure, it never becomes anything like Husserl's "intentional object." Neither is it mere "co-giveness" or a "horizon" for phenomenal appearing. The inconspicuous reveals to be quite subversive, with respect to phenomenology. Instead of just signifying the opposite to phenomenal appearing, that is "not-appearing," this term rather points to another twofold structure, implied in phenomenal appearing as such, namely the correlation between what appears, and the *ground of its appearing*. What originally had come into focus as the interrelatedness between "truth," understood as ἀλήθεια (*aletheia*) or "unconcealment" (*Entbergen*), and "being concealed" (*Verborgenheit*), by now has turned into the problem of phenomenal appearing as being *founded* in the inconspicuous. This inconspicuous is no more some possible, yet "concealed" appearance. It has nothing to do anymore with the basic phenomenological status of "being given as a phenomenon" or "becoming unconcealed."

According to this changed orientation, the later Heidegger claims that phenomenology has to become a "phenomenology of the inconspicuous."¹⁵ By now, he even may call Being itself the inconspicuous.¹⁶ This conviction has led others to a couple of important methodological endeavors, reaching out far beyond Heidegger.¹⁷ For instance, Dominique Janicaud's program of a phenomenology of the inconspicuous not only opposes to the metaphysical or romanticist idea of a transcendent "ineffable ground" of Being and appearing, it also runs contrary to the Husserlian conception of a "horizon." It rather intends to be a *phenomenology of proximity*, teaching us how to "dwell" (*habiter*) in this world.¹⁸ Françoise Dastur even considers this new orientation to be the fundamental question of philosophy, as she asks: "Thinking to come up in the future: a phenomenology of the

¹⁴ Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 97, 65: *Das Nicht-Erscheinen im Sinne von Nicht-in-die-Erscheinung-(hervor-) treten ist gleichwohl und eigentlich das reine Scheinen als Leuchten der Lichtung der Freyheit*.

¹⁵ Martin Heidegger, "Seminar in Zähringen 1973," in *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 15: *Seminare (1951-1973)* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 2005), 399.

¹⁶ Martin Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 54: *Parmenides* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1982), 150.

¹⁷ Bernhard Waldenfels, *Bruchlinien der Erfahrung. Phänomenologie, Psychoanalyse, Phänomenotechnik* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2002); B. Waldenfels, *Hyperphänomene. Modi hyperbolischer Erfahrung* (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2012); Jean-Luc Marion, *De surcroît. Études sur les phénomènes saturés* (Paris: PUF, 2001); J.-L. Marion, *Le Visible et le révélé* (Paris: Cerf, 2005); J.-L. Marion, *Certitudes négatives* (Paris: Grasset & Fasquelle), 2010; Günter Figal, *Unscheinbarkeit. Der Raum der Phänomenologie* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016); Françoise Dastur, *Figures du néant et de la négation entre orient et occident* (Paris: encre marine, 2018).

¹⁸ Dominique Janicaud, *La phénoménologie éclaté* (Paris: éditions de l'éclat, 1998), 109.

inconspicuous?"¹⁹ Now the problem can be put like this: if to be essentially means to appear, then how does the inconspicuous contribute to our access to Being?

III

According to Heidegger's well-known stance, it is due to an "oblivion of Being" that it became possible for metaphysical thought to reduce Being to the sphere of what plainly appears and gives itself. Yet Dasein in its very being "is related to its being," thus always being "concerned about Being."²⁰ Dasein as such involves an "understanding of Being."²¹ By way of this "transcendence" inherent in Dasein, it surpasses its "being in the world" and becomes "being towards the world,"²² so as to encounter the realm of the phenomenal.²³ It is Dasein's "giving free" which lets beings be, and "be encountered" (*begegnen*) as what appears.²⁴ As Günter Figal resumes: the phenomenal finds its foundation in Dasein's "leaping over" (*überspringen*), that is its "opening" and "being free for"²⁵

However, this "positive" description of appearing also has got a "negative" counter-part: Dasein's "being a self" is pervaded by a "groundless ground" (*Ab-grund*).²⁶ Phenomenal beings and appearing itself both depend on an event of "nihilitating" (*nichten*). With respect to this aspect, Renaud Barbaras states that Dasein's understanding of Being signifies a "desire" for the phenomenal,²⁷ originating from a "failure of the ontological coincidence" (*échec de la coïncidence ontologique*).²⁸ Phenomenal appearance just cannot be derived from, or be based on, any such thing as a presumably full possession of essences.

¹⁹ Françoise Dastur, *Heidegger et la pensée à venir* (Paris : Vrin, 2011), 11; cf. 225.

²⁰ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. Joan Stambaugh, New York: State University of New York Press, 1996, 40; Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 16. Aufl. (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1986), (§ 9) 41-42.

²¹ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 62-67; Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* (§15), 66-72.

²² Especially Maurice Merleau-Ponty attributes this signification to the Heideggerian "être au monde."

²³ Martin Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 26: *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Logik im Ausgang von Leibniz*, 3., durchges. Aufl. (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 2007), 211-213 and 233-236.

²⁴ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 76-81; Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* (§85), 83-86.

²⁵ Günter Figal, *Martin Heidegger: Phänomenologie der Freiheit* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013); cf. Françoise Dastur, *Heidegger. La question du logos* (Paris: Vrin, 2007).

²⁶ Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 26, 233-234.

²⁷ Renaud Barbaras, *Le désir de la distance. Introduction à une phénoménologie de la perception*, 2ième éd. revue (Paris: Vrin, 2006).

²⁸ Renaud Barbaras, *Dynamique de la manifestation* (Paris: Vrin, 2013), 128 and 143.

Due to the “nihilating” inherent in the very structure of appearing, the so called phenomenal does not at all consist in simple “appearances” which plainly yield themselves, just as they are. There are no “phenomena,” properly speaking. Appearing or the “clearing” (*Lichtung*) not only results from but is tantamount to, a fundamental “struggle” between “emerging” or “unconcealment,” and “concealment,” considered as “saving” (*Bergung*).²⁹ Phenomena determined by ontology as “being present” (*anwesend sein*) of what appears, in fact, involve a “twofold concealment” or “denial” (*Versagen*). Firstly, any unconcealed appearance implies other appearances remaining concealed. Second, “concealment” as the source of appearing, though remaining obscure, still may reveal itself, in a way, *together with* what actually appears. For within appearing, the concealed becomes “saved” (*bewahrt*),³⁰ that means *positively hidden*.

IV

In order to overcome the Platonic, and Hegelian, metaphysical doctrine that an “appearance” is no more than a futile envelope of Being, Heidegger’s notion of the inconspicuous may help us understand the paradoxical structure of appearing. The relation between Being and appearing cannot be adequately grasped in the field of “contemplation” (*θεωρία* [*theoria*]), by hierarchically reducing what appears, to an essence which gets manifest through it. The question relates to Dasein’s mode of existence, to its practice of being a self in freedom.³¹ The “revealability” (*Enthüllbarkeit*)³² of Being correlates with Dasein’s “temporizing time.”³³ Thus the problem of the inconspicuous ultimately refers to Dasein’s deploying its existence. Nevertheless, in some way or another, this issue still must relate to

²⁹ Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 54; Martin Heidegger, “ALETHEIA (HERAKLIT, FRAGMENT 16),” in *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 7: *Vorträge und Aufsätze* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 2000), 263-288; Martin Heidegger, “Vom Wesen der Wahrheit” and “Platons Lehre von der Wahrheit.” Martin Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 9: *Wegmarken*, 2., durchges. Aufl. (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1996), 177-202/203-238; Martin Heidegger, “Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes,” in *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 5: *Holzwege* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1977), 1-74; Martin Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 21: *Logik: Die Frage nach der Wahrheit* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1995); Martin Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 40: *Einführung in die Metaphysik* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1983), 105-123; Martin Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 35: *Der Anfang der abendländischen Philosophie. Auslegung des Anaximander und Parmenides* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 2012), 22-31 and 185-195; Martin Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 78: *Der Spruch des Anaximander* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 2010), 76-101.

³⁰ Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 5, 33.

³¹ Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 26, 234-236.

³² *Ibid.*, 249.

³³ *Ibid.*, 26, 249-252; cf. Françoise Dastur, *Heidegger et la question du temps* (Paris: PUF, 2011).

phenomenal appearing, visibility, and intuition. It concerns the question of Dasein's *being embodied*, and being *endowed with senses*, as well as the status of *images and pictures*.

If concepts of phenomenality have been shaped more or less according to the model of vision, identifying the inconspicuous with the "invisible" might lead to the conviction that the inconspicuous designates something that can be spoken of, yet without falling in the domain of intuition. Heidegger himself sometimes seems to foster this opinion. For instance, he esteems that "what pertains to the image" (*das Bildhafte*) originates from "the without-image" (*das Bildlose*).³⁴ Thus he clearly tends to subdue "figurative saying" (*bildhaftes Sagen*) to a more fundamental "poetic and thinking saying" (*dichtendes und denkendes Sage*).³⁵ When "showing" (*zeigen*) becomes merged with "saying" (*sagen*), image and appearance are reduced to the spoken word or the myth.³⁶ Also, the "thing itself [is] without gaze" (*das selbst blicklose Ding*).³⁷

On the other hand, while exhibiting a certain predilection for speech,³⁸ Heidegger does not entirely dismiss the imaginative, for the sake of some more fundamental "poetic and thinking saying."³⁹ Despite of his rejecting the mistaken ideal of plain "intuitiveness" or "clarity" (*Anschaulichkeit*), he still tries to access the problem of the inconspicuous by none other than the intermediary of vision. He just pleads for the "non-intuitive" (*das Unanschauliche*) which ought not to be confounded with what is altogether "non-beholdable" (*das Unerblickbare*). For by means of our having an "eye for the non-intuitive" (*Blick für das Unanschauliche*) we eventually "have [Being] 'in the eye'" (*'im Auge' haben*).⁴⁰

Besides language, there still must be a place for the gaze, with respect to the "unconcealment" of Being. The reason for this may be sought in Dasein's *being embodied*. Disclosure of the phenomenal ultimately cannot but rely on the *bodily self* which accomplishes Dasein's mode of existence in a "surrounding world." Well-known is Heidegger's analysis of Dasein's everyday understanding of the world: Embodied Dasein stands in close "association with," or is "going by" (*Umgang mit*), "things at hand." Only due to its *being embodied* Dasein is able to move about amidst "useful things"

³⁴ Martin Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 55: *Heraklit. Der Anfang des abendländischen Denkens: Logik. Heraklits Lehre vom Logos*, 2., durchges. Auflage (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1987), 301: *daß alles Bildhafte und jedes Bild nur erscheint und zum Scheinen kommt aus dem Bildlosen, das nach dem Bild ruft.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 55, 302.

³⁶ Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 54, 164-165 and 169-171.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 158.

³⁸ This is criticized by Dastur in *Heidegger: La question du logos*, 247.

³⁹ Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 55, 302.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 138.

(*Zeug*), so as to “take care of” and “handle” them. Yet it is Dasein’s actually *dealing* with “things at hand” that makes them appear in their proper “relevance” (*Bewandtnis*). This “practical” way of “unconcealing” not only implies a disclosure of meaning. As Dasein’s relation to the world relies on “reference” (*Verweisung*), this in turn requests a specific kind of “sight,” namely “circumspection” (*Umsicht*).⁴¹ Being disclosed has actually to be *looked at*, too. As “appearing,” after all, represents Dasein’s unique access to Being, Heidegger necessarily must conceive of both “looking” (*Blicken*) and “saying” (*Sagen*) as the two “originary ways of appearing” (*Grundweisen des Erscheinen*).⁴²

Now, if the inconspicuous is immanent in, and essential to, Dasein’s disclosure of Being, the inconspicuous itself is by no means reducible to the “unapparent.” It can be and has to be *looked at*, too; ultimately it must even relate to Dasein’s being embodied. As thinking has to “be-hold, out of the interstice of its shining, the insight of the inconspicuous,”⁴³ as it has to “show” (*zeigen*) in a “viewing-listening” (*sehend-hörend*) manner,⁴⁴ how could such thinking ever divest itself of the senses, that means of the bodily self of the thinker? ⁴⁵ Yet, what precisely is assumed by Heidegger’s speaking of showing, viewing, and listening? Can this be explained, as Janicaud thinks, by the phenomenological gaze just “returning to the very emergence of appearing” (*revenir au surgissement même de l’apparaître*)? If this implies that we should “hold ourselves next to ...” (*se tenir auprès de ...*) and “listen, look with a different gaze” (*écouter, regarder d’un autre regard*), which “requires time, patience, endurance” (*réclame temps, patience, endurance*),⁴⁶ the question of the inconspicuous actually requests a broader perspective, encompassing ethics. Thus the inconspicuous may eventually, according to Janicaud’s own suggestion, make the phenomenological endeavor itself “break up” (*éclater*).

What makes beings “unconcealedly be present” (*unverborger anwesen*) for us, is their “aspect” or “appearance” (*Aussehen, Anblick, ἰδέα [idea], εἶδος [eidos]*) which becomes grasped by our “gaze” (*Blick, θεά [thea]*). Yet, at the same time, the “appearance” of beings somehow “disturbs” and “doubles” our gaze which, for its part, happens to be seized, too, by the

⁴¹ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 62-83; Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* (§§ 15-18), 66-88.

⁴² Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 54, 169.

⁴³ Martin Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 101: *Winke I und II (Schwarze Hefte 1957-1959)* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 2020), 166: *den Einblick des Unscheinbaren aus der Fuge seines Scheinens er-blicken*.

⁴⁴ Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 101, 166.

⁴⁵ Cf. Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s reflections on “there is” (*il y a*) which is deeply rooted in appearing and viewing: M. Merleau-Ponty, *Le visible et l’invisible* (Paris: Gallimard, 1964), 190 footnote.

⁴⁶ Janicaud, *La phénoménologie éclatée*, 107-108.

“appearance” of beings.⁴⁷ As soon as Dasein’s eye becomes *exposed* to the “opening of Being,” the light of appearing turns into “the manner, by which the human beholds the appearance of beings encountered, as an aspect in which beings unconceal themselves.”⁴⁸ Such “beholding” (*erblicken*), in a peculiar way, exceeds mere perception, as it marks the event of beings “catching the eye.”⁴⁹

For this intriguing problem, the Levinassian “visage” of the Other whom I encounter and whose “visage” in turn strikes my eye by *envisaging* me, yields a more adequate paradigm than the metaphysical concept of manifestation. Where I become both *looked at*, and *made looking*, just *by* what appears to my sight, the “aspect” transforms into an “ad-spect” (*An-blick*): appearances *look at me* and, by doing so, *claim my gaze*, first of all; only then may I actually *begin to look*.

This issue can be further elucidated recurring to art and aesthetics. Bernhard Waldenfels considers vision in general to be a “double event” (*Doppelereignis*).⁵⁰ What he calls the “event of viewing” (*Sehereignis*)⁵¹ cannot be reduced to mere receptivity. For our looking at appearances is “initiated by the things” (*von den Dingen initiiert*).⁵² This pattern is enhanced by art, producing an “arousing image” (*Erregungsbild*)⁵³ which, through its very “ad-spect,” sets forth “incarnate affects” (*inkarnierte Affekte*).⁵⁴ Georges Didi-Huberman equally uncovers this fundamental “convertibility” (*convertibilité*) inherent in our sight. There is always “that which regards us” (*ce qui nous regarde*)—in the twofold sense of “that which looks at us” and “that which concerns us”—at work within “what we view” (*ce que nous voyons*).⁵⁵ Dieter Mersch follows Waldenfels in vehemently opposing theories of sense perception and appearing, based on mere “reception.” He claims that aesthetic experience originates in a “befalling” (*Widerfahrnis*) we cannot but experience in a “responsive” way.⁵⁶ For prior to “showing something”

⁴⁷ Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 54, 153-154, 158, and 184.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 217: *die Weise, wie der Mensch das Aussehen des begegnenden Seienden als einen Anblick erblickt, in dem sich Seiendes entbirgt.*

⁴⁹ Heidegger uses “erblicken” not just in the sense of “to get sight of,” but rather in the stronger, as well as more passive, connotation of “to receive the sight from what catches the eye,” that is as “er-blicken” or “von...her blicken” (*Ibid.*, 158).

⁵⁰ Bernhard Waldenfels, *Sinne und Künste im Wechselspiel: Modi ästhetischer Erfahrung* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2010), 110.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 153.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 143.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 122.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 143.

⁵⁵ Georges Didi-Huberman, *Ce que nous voyons, ce qui nous regarde* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1992), 19.

⁵⁶ Dieter Mersch, *Ereignis und Aura: Untersuchungen zu einer Ästhetik des Performativen* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2002), 27 and 185.

(*Etwas-Zeigen*) any appearance performs a “showing itself” (*Sichzeigen*).⁵⁷ In every manifestation there is an “exceeding part” (*Überschuß*),⁵⁸ with respect to what becomes manifest, marking a peculiar “unavailability” (*Unverfügbarkeit*)⁵⁹ inherent in phenomena. Due to a genuine “alterity,”⁶⁰ the “ad-spect” appearing not only “gives to view”;⁶¹ it appeals to our responsiveness and thus makes us responsible for appearing.

V

As to conclude, Heidegger’s inconspicuous should be considered as a sort of *tension* operating *in-between* manifestation and sense perception. Instead of designating some mysterious “hidden” or “ineffable” dimension *behind* the phenomenal, instead of referring to something which essentially must remain “concealed,” the inconspicuous rather points at a *fundamental passivity*—or rather “passibility.”⁶² Such passibility means an “opening” which is intrinsic to the double-sided “ad-spect” of appearances. As an “ad-spect,” the appearance of things refers to the temporal inversion of our “being looked at,” occurring *prior to vision*. “Passibility” represents our indispensable *openness towards* the “ad-spect,” our *ability to be appealed to*, by the “ad-spect.” Ultimately it is this “passibility” which seems more adequately to come up for the inconspicuous inherent in appearing. Heidegger’s recognition of the inconspicuous amounts to acknowledging and reevaluating our *gaze*—the gaze of those humans “*Beyng*” (*Seyn*) both “makes use of,” and “is in need for” (*brauchen*).⁶³ Only due to an originary “passibility” residing at the core of appearing, the “appropriative event” (*Ereignis*) of Being can be called a “catching in the eye” (*Eräugnis*).

As *Beyng* is in need for that very inconspicuous “passibility” which pervades *Dasein*, it can be finally concluded that the inconspicuous may not be reduced to the metaphysical dialectics between concealment and

⁵⁷ Dieter Mersch, *Was sich zeigt: Materialität, Präsenz, Ereignis* (München: Fink, 2002), 65 and 277.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 133 and 244-245.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 12-13.

⁶⁰ Mersch, *Ereignis und Aura*, 10, 106, 150, 240, and 295.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 49.

⁶² This term has been introduced by Paul Ricœur and Jan Patočka and has become decisive for thinkers such as Henri Maldiney (H. M., *Ouvrir le rien: L’art nu* [Paris: Encre Marine, 2000], 72 and 458) and Marc Richir (M. R., *Méditations phénoménologiques. Phénoménologie et phénoménologie du langage* [Grenoble: Millon, 1993], 48-52).

⁶³ Martin Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 5 “Der Spruch des Anaximander,” 367-373; Martin Heidegger, “Die Frage nach der Technik,” in *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 7: *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, 33; Martin Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 79: *Bremer und Freiburger Vorträge*, 2., durchges. Aufl. (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 2005), 69-70.

appearing. The issue of the inconspicuous not only sheds considerable doubt on phenomenology, it even should be conceived of as pertaining to an *ethical attitude*. The notion of the inconspicuous in fact relates to what the later Heidegger tried to think through the twofold structure of "*Gelassenheit*."⁶⁴ For both, appearing *and* the inconspicuous, originate in Dasein's "being let-in" by Beyng, as well as Dasein's "getting involved with" Being. And only due to its inconspicuous "passibility" Dasein may "let" Being come forth and "let beings be."

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 _____, *Sein und Zeit*, 16. Aufl. (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1986).

⁶⁴ Martin Heidegger, "Zur Erörterung der Gelassenheit," Martin Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 13: *Aus der Erfahrung des Denkens*, 2. durchges. Aufl. (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 2002), 37-74; Martin Heidegger, "Ἀγχιβασιή. Ein Gespräch selbstdritt auf einem Feldweg zwischen einem Gelehrten, einem Forscher und einem Weisen"/ „Abendgespräch in einem Kriegsgefangenenlager in Rußland zwischen einem Jüngeren und einem Älteren," M. Heidegger, in *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 77: *Feldweg-Gespräche* (1944/45), 2. durchges. Aufl. (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 2007), 1-159 and 203-245.

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Absolute Hiddenness in Ibn 'Arabi's Mystical School and Withdrawal of Being in Heidegger's Thought: A Comparison through the Platonic Agathon

Ahmad Rajabi

Abstract: This intercultural study attempts to find a bridge between Heidegger's criticism of metaphysics as Ontotheology, his search for overcoming it in his later thinking about the hiddenness of Being itself, and Ibn 'Arabi's mystical doctrine of unity of Being – which is likewise characterized as the absolute hiddenness—through a return to their common ground in Platonic negative theology. Heidegger's interpretation of Plato's allegory of the Sun and the role of the Good beyond Being, and the unsaid correspondence between Heidegger's "Being itself" and the Neoplatonic "One" build the bridge to the analysis of absoluteness as absolute hiddenness in Islamic mysticism. Through this interpretation, the Islamic philosophical tradition could be faced with Heidegger's accusation of Ontotheology, potentially discovering possibilities for a philosophically relevant dialogue with Heidegger's thought.

Keywords: hiddenness, agathon, mysticism, ontotheology

Comparative studies on Heidegger's thought and Islamic mysticism, especially the school of Ibn 'Arabi and his doctrine of "unity of Being" (*wahdat al-wujūd*) have already a tradition of research, especially in Heidegger-studies in the Islamic world. The interpretation of Heidegger's thought in terms of Islamic Mysticism is specifically common in Iranian Heidegger-studies since the French philosopher and orientalist Henry Corbin conducted his comparative studies.¹ In my opinion, this way of interpreting

¹ See Felix Herkert, "Heidegger und Corbin. Ansätze zu einer Verhältnisbestimmung," in *Heidegger Studien*, 36 (2020), 215-252. Herkert specifically investigates here—among other

Heidegger has to be critically confronted with the fact that Heidegger's radical criticism of metaphysics deliberately avoids all elements of the metaphysical and theological tradition which he characterizes as Ontotheology. Heidegger himself did not pay attention to the tradition of Islamic philosophy and mysticism, despite his familiarity with Corbin's works and despite his expertise in medieval philosophy which contains a deep relation to Islamic philosophy. Heidegger's philosophical dialogue with the Far East and in contrast, his avoidance and ignorance of the philosophical tradition of the Middle East should be connected to his criticism of metaphysics as Ontotheology, because the philosophical thought in the Middle East has the same roots in ancient Greek philosophy and Abrahamic monotheism. Therefore, we can say that in Heidegger's view, Islamic philosophy belongs to the same occidental "History of Being" and has its historical position in medieval philosophy; thus it cannot be considered as a possibility for a fruitful philosophical dialogue in order to "overcome" metaphysics.

Therefore, and in my view, every intercultural study about Heidegger and Middle Eastern philosophical thought must face the task of explaining how the accusation of Ontotheology concerning Islamic philosophy could be overcome. Only in this case, the tradition of philosophical thought in the Middle East could disclose possibilities for a philosophically relevant, and not merely a historical-philological, discussion with Heidegger's thought.

I attempt to open the way for this philosophical dialogue by returning to Plato's *agathon* (ἀγαθόν, the Good) as ground for the totality of beings, but which itself is "beyond Being" (ἐπέκεινα τῆς οὐσίας)² and moreover, is considered as the "yoke"³ which bonds together Being and Thinking. Heidegger's earlier interpretation of Plato's allegory of the Sun and the correspondence between this allegory and Heidegger's later thinking

approaches – the influence of Heidegger's criticism of metaphysics on Corbin's critical thought about the essence of monotheism with regard to Corbin's text "The Paradox of Monotheism." According to this text of Corbin, Herkert explains the necessity of the "esoteric," i.e., the mystical tradition of Platonic negative theology for the ontological conception of the one God in all monotheistic religions in order to overcome the self-destructive, naive and "exoteric" understanding of God as the highest being, which necessarily results in the self-negating form of monotheism as pantheism. The distinction between these two conceptions of the monotheistic God in Corbin's thought refers to Heidegger's theory of the ontological difference and his critique of metaphysics as Ontotheology.

² Platon, *Der Staat*, Platon. *Werke in Acht Bänden. Griechisch und Deutsch*, vierter Band, arr. by Dietrich Kurz, trans. by Friedrich Schleiermacher, ed. by Gunther Eigler (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2019), 509B.

³ *Ibid.*, 508A.

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about “the Clearing” (*Lichtung*) and its “hiddenness” (*Verbergung*, λήθη)⁴ could be regarded as a horizon for an interpretation of “absolute hiddenness” (*al-ghayb al-mutlaq*) in Islamic mysticism, which likewise corresponds in its own way with Plato’s agathon and his allegory of the Sun. The mystical school of Ibn ‘Arabi is fundamentally influenced by the Platonic light-metaphor and Neoplatonic metaphysics of the One as the absolute transcendent divine principle and its manifestation in the totality of beings. In order to discover the possibility of a philosophical discussion between this mystical school and Heidegger’s conception of “hiddenness” and “withdrawal” (*Entzug*) of “Being itself” (*das Sein selbst*) we attempt to explain Heidegger’s criticism of Ontotheology and his later conception of “the Clearing” (*Lichtung*) in the light of the Neoplatonic Interpretation of Plato’s allegory of the Sun as the absolute One, interpreted in terms of the Platonic “beyond Being.” Subsequently, we approach the fundamental significance of the conceptual analysis of “the Absolute” as “the absolute Hiddenness” in the mystical school of Ibn ‘Arabi. This interpretation embraces Heidegger’s criticism of Ontotheology as well as the mysticism of Ibn ‘Arabi in the common ground of a radical Platonic negative theology which is expressed in both theories of absolute hiddenness in Ibn ‘Arabi’s mysticism and the withdrawal of Being in Heidegger’s philosophy

Ontotheology and Withdrawal of Being itself beyond the Being of beings

In Heidegger’s view, Ontotheology reveals the “constitution” of metaphysics as such in its whole history. “Western metaphysics, however, since its beginning with the Greeks has eminently been both ontology and theology, ... The wholeness of this whole is the unity of all beings that unifies as the generative ground. ... Metaphysics is onto-theo-logy.”⁵ The “ontotheological constitution of metaphysics” can be defined briefly as reduction of the Being of beings to a highest being which is the ground of all beings. The highest being – as Heidegger calls it “the being-est” (*das Seiendste*,

⁴ See among others for example chapter 4 in Mark A. Ralkowski, *Heidegger’s Platonism* (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2009), 62-94. See also Robert J. Dostal, “Beyond Being: Heidegger’s Plato,” in *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 23, no. 1 (1985), 71-98; and chapter 2 in Cathrine H. Zuckert, *Postmodern Platos, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Gadamer, Strauss, Derrida* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), 33-69.

⁵ Martin Heidegger, “Die onto-theo-logische Verfassung der Metaphysik” (1956/57) in *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 11: *Identität und Differenz*, ed. by Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2006), 63. In the English translation: Martin Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, trans. and with an introduction by Joan Stambough (New York: Harper and Row, 1969), 54.

όντως ὄν)—is understood as the ground from where the Being of beings is explained as their presence. “Metaphysics thinks the Being of beings as such, as a whole. Metaphysics thinks the Being of beings both in the ground-giving unity of what is most general, what is indifferently valid everywhere, and also in the unity of the all that accounts for the ground, that is, of the All-Highest.”⁶

The ground as “the All-Highest” posits the Being of beings in different forms, but in all forms of its position, the main conception of a positing ground for the Being remains in metaphysics. The positing act of the ground should ground the Parmenidean “sameness” (το αὐτό, *Selbigkeit*) of Thinking (νοεῖν) and Being (εἶναι) as their identity through the reduction of Being to the grounding-act of Thinking, articulated as Self-thinking (νόησις νοήσεως) from Aristotle to Hegel. The self-relating or self-unifying act of self-thinking grounds the pure activity (*actus purus*) as Being and is identical with it, or to be precise, the act of self-thinking as self-presence grounds—or is already—the identity of Thinking and Being.⁷

In other words, according to Heidegger’s own thoughts about this identity, the event of “belonging together” (*Zusammengehören*) and “sameness” between Thinking and Being goes beyond both of them and is prior to them,⁸ i.e., prior to presence; but in the ontotheological conception, this priority is denied in its transcendence and is referred again to Thinking itself as the ground. In his later thought, Heidegger calls this process “Rescendence.”⁹

Consequently, in Heidegger’s conception of Ontotheology, the “unity of Being” has two meanings of “the unifying One” (*das einende Eine*): first, the universality of the Being in general which embraces the totality of beings; secondly, the ground as the first and highest being, i.e., “the being-est” which grounds this unity in its thinkableness qua its positedness by Thinking. “Being becomes present as logos in the sense of ground The same logos, as the gathering of what unifies, is the εἶν (the One). This εἶν, however, is twofold. For one thing, it is the unifying One in the sense of what is everywhere primal and thus most universal; and at the same time it is the unifying One in the sense of the All-Highest (Zeus).”¹⁰

⁶ Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, 76. In the English translation, 58.

⁷ See Heidegger’s interpretation of this fragment of Parmenides: Martin Heidegger, “Moirai,” in *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 7: *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, ed. by Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2000), 235-261.

⁸ See Heidegger’s essay “Der Satz der Identität (1957)” in *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 11: *Identität und Differenz*, 33-50.

⁹ See Heidegger’s essay “Zur Seinsfrage,” in *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 9: *Wegmarken*, ed. by Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2004), 398.

¹⁰ Heidegger, “Die onto-theo-logische Verfassung der Metaphysik,” in *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 11, 75. In the English translation, 69.

We can say that Heidegger's criticism of Ontotheology targets exactly the very reduction of the unity of Being to the unifying and grounding act of the One in the sense of the highest being as God. Thus, in Heidegger's view, metaphysics as ontology is identical with theology, since the understanding of the Being of beings is reduced to the grounding-act of the highest being as the "first cause." Heidegger writes: "Being shows itself in the nature of the ground. Accordingly, the matter of thinking, Being as the ground, is thought out fully only when the ground is represented as the first ground. The original matter of thinking presents itself as the first cause, the *causa prima* that corresponds to the reason-giving path back to the *ultima ratio*, the final accounting. The Being of beings is represented fundamentally, in the sense of the ground, only as *causa sui*. This is the metaphysical concept of God."¹¹

Regarding Plato and the whole metaphysics as Platonism, Heidegger expresses his critique emphatically at the end of his essay *Plato's Doctrine of Truth*: "This highest and first cause is named by Plato and correspondingly by Aristotle το θεϊον, the divine. ... Metaphysic has been theological. In this case theology means the interpretation of the 'cause' of beings as God and the transferring of being onto this cause, which contains being in itself and dispenses being from out of itself, because it is the being-est of beings."¹² Heidegger continues more explicitly and critically: "No attempt to ground the essence of unhiddenness in "reason," "spirit," "thinking," "logos" or in any kind of "subjectivity" can ever rescue the essence of unhiddenness. In all such attempts what is to be grounded—the essence of unhiddenness itself—is not yet adequately sought out. What always get "clarified" is merely some essential consequence of the uncomprehended essence of unhiddenness."¹³

Heidegger's "overcoming" of metaphysics could be understood as the attempt to search for a *third One* regarding the unity and sameness of Thinking and Being in a prior horizon which is neither the One as the highest being as Thinking nor the One as Being of beings in the sense of unhiddenness itself, but rather "the essence of unhiddenness," which will be characterized as hiddenness. Heidegger asks for the essence and origin of the Being of beings as their unhiddenness and their presence. We can say that Heidegger seeks beyond the two metaphysical conceptions of the Being as the twofold meaning of the One, a prior horizon that lets Being be differed from beings in their appearance and unhiddenness. Metaphysics "represents beings in

¹¹ Heidegger, "Die onto-theo-logische Verfassung der Metaphysik," 77. In the English translation, 59-60.

¹² Heidegger, "Platons Lehre von der Wahrheit," in *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 9: *Wegmarken*, 235-236. In the English translation: Martin Heidegger, "Plato's Doctrine of Truth," trans. by Thomas Sheehan, in *Pathmarks*, ed. by William McNeill, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 180-181.

¹³ Heidegger, "Platons Lehre von der Wahrheit," 182.

respect of what differs in the difference, and without heeding the difference as difference. What differs shows itself as the Being of beings in general, and as the Being of beings in the Highest.”¹⁴

According to Heidegger’s thought after his so-called turn, the event of difference as such is “the Being itself” (*das Sein selbst, das Seyn*) which is prior to the Being of beings (as Beingness, *Seiendheit*) in general. Regarding the Being of beings as presence and unhiddenness (*ἀλήθεια*), “Being itself” is the hiddenness (*Verbergung*) in the sense of “harboring” (*Bergen*) of the origin of truth in itself. The Hiddenness can only be characterized in a negative and privative way as the withdrawal of Being itself. If we try to comprehend the hiddenness positively, we can merely find Heidegger’s metaphorical speaking about “the Clearing” (*Lichtung*) which reveals the brightness and light of the unhiddenness as the Being of beings and simultaneously withdraws itself in its priority to each kind of appearance and presence. “What is first required is an appreciation of the “positive” in the “privative” essence of *ἀλήθεια*. The positive must first be experienced as the fundamental trait of Being itself. First of all, what must break in upon us is that exigency whereby we are compelled to question not just beings in their Being but first of all Being itself (that is, the difference).”¹⁵

Hence, Heidegger’s later basic concepts like the Clearing, the event, the difference as such and the Being itself as the origin of the light of unhiddenness clearly refer to Plato’s *agathon* in the allegory of the Sun in *Republic*—the *agathon* which goes “beyond Being” and makes both knowledge (Thinking) and Being possible. Despite Heidegger’s later identification of Plato’s *agathon* with the highest being and the Aristotelian “*to theion*” in the essay *Plato’s Doctrine of Truth*, in his lectures before his so-called “turn” (until the lecture in 1932).¹⁶ Heidegger explicitly refers several times to Plato’s metaphor of the sun in order to explain his own questioning about the meaning of Being and the origin of truth as unhiddenness. For example, in the lecture *Basic Problems of Phenomenology* (1927) Heidegger begins his interpretation of Plato’s allegory of the Sun as follows: “In our attempt to get beyond Being to the light from which and in which it itself comes into the brightness of an understanding, we are moving within one of Plato’s fundamental problems.”¹⁷ Heidegger uses even the Platonic term

¹⁴ Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 11, 76. In the English translation, 70.

¹⁵ Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 9, 238. In the English translation, 182.

¹⁶ Martin Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 34: *Vom Wesen der Wahrheit: Zu Platons Höhlengleichnis und Theätet*. WS 1931/32, ed. by Hermann Mörchen (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1988). See Heidegger’s interpretation of the idea of the Good in the second chapter of this lecture, 95-116.

¹⁷ Martin Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 24: *Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie*, ed. by Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1989), 399-400. The

“*epekeina*” (beyond) in his lectures to characterize the horizon of meaning of the Being in his own sense.¹⁸

In the lecture “The Essence of Truth. On Plato’s Cave Allegory and Theaetetus” (1931/32), Heidegger clearly interprets Plato’s *agathon* and its *epekeina* as his own questioning concerning the origin of unhiddenness and Being in a way that it is characteristic for his later thought after his turn.¹⁹ He emphasizes here that *agathon* as “*epekeina*” must be likewise “beyond unhiddenness” (*Unverborgenheit*).²⁰ He says:

The Good, the *agathon*, is therefore the enablement of Being as such and of unhiddenness as such. Or better, what Plato calls the Good is that which empowers Being and unhiddenness to their own essence, i.e. what is prior to everything else The *agathon* can only be understood in this sense. *Empowerment* of Being; not an existing good (a value), but what is *prior to* and *for* all Being and every truth. ... It is just what we are interrogating in our questioning concerning Being and unhiddenness.”²¹ Heidegger refers to Plato’s sentence that *agathon* is the “master, in that it grants (*gewährt*) unhiddenness and nous,²²

and then says about *agathon*:

This is all that Plato says concerning the highest idea. But it is enough, indeed more than enough, for whoever understands. To understand the little that Plato does say

English translation: Martin Heidegger, *The basic problems of phenomenology*, trans. by Albert Hofstadter (Indiana University Press, 1982), 282-283.

¹⁸ See for example the lecture: Martin Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 26: *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Logik. Im Ausgang von Leibnitz*, ed. by Klaus Held (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1978), 237, 246.

¹⁹ In the lectures *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 24 and *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 26, Heidegger appropriates Plato’s *agathon* and its *epekeina* in his interpretation as his own fundamental ontological understanding of the timeliness of Dasein which projects the world. Referring to this earlier interpretation and to the later essay *Plato’s Doctrine of Truth*, Werner Beierwaltes criticizes Heidegger’s understanding of the Platonic *epekeina*, but Beierwaltes never refers to Heidegger’s most detailed interpretation of Plato’s *agathon* in the lecture 1931/32. In my view, this lecture makes a revision of Beierwaltes’ critical approach necessary. See Werner Beierwaltes, “EPEKEINA, Eine Anmerkung zu Heideggers Platon-Rezeption”, in *Fussnoten zu Plato* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2011), 371-388.

²⁰ Heidegger, *Vom Wesen der Wahrheit*, 108.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 109. In the English translation, 79.

²² *Ibid.*, 109. In the English translation, 79.

is nothing less than to really *ask* the question concerning the essence of Being and truth.²³

What is sought “beyond Being” can be neither one of the beings, not even the highest one, nor the Being of beings in general; it transcends both of them in its absolute transcendence and priority. In Heidegger’s later thought after his turn, the horizon of “beyond Being” absolutely transcends conceptual and positive thinkableness, for it is beyond presence and appearance and therefore, ineffable. As Heidegger emphasizes, philosophy arrives here at its borders and for this reason, Plato speaks about *agathon* exclusively in a metaphoric way²⁴; a way of speaking that Heidegger would later adopt himself in his “Thinking” in distinction from “philosophy.” Heidegger warns us about the “danger that we may hypostatize it (the essence of unhiddenness) into a fantastical world-essence (*Weltwesen*).”²⁵ Beyond Being cannot be a being in the world or as the highest being prior to world, as Heidegger says in his *Letter on Humanism*: “What is Being? It “is” It itself. The thinking that is to come must learn to experience that and to say it. “Being”—that is not God and not a cosmic ground (*ein Weltgrund*). Being is essentially farther than all beings and is yet nearer to the human being than every being.”²⁶

The absolute transcendence of Plato’s *agathon*, i.e., the culmination of the Platonic metaphysics in the absolute priority of *agathon* beyond Being, is interpreted by Plotinus and in Neoplatonism as a new and additional level of the One which transcends the Parmenidean One as Being in general and the Aristotelian One as the highest being in the sense of Self-thinking. Plotinus relates Plato’s *agathon* and its transcendence “beyond Being” to Plato’s absolute simple One (the One itself: τὸ αὐτὸ ἓν) in the dialogue *Parmenides*.²⁷ The absolute unity of the simple “One” is characterized there as an exclusively negative concept which avoids every positive determination, because every determination means a limitation and thus is conditioned by a kind of plurality. The Neoplatonic One is called “τὸ ἐπέκεινα,” “the Beyond”

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 24, 402.ne

²⁵ Martin Heidegger, “Hegel und die Griechen,” in *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 9: *Wegmarken*, 442. In the English translation, 334.

²⁶ Martin Heidegger, „Brief über den Humanismus,” in *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 9: *Wegmarken*, 331. In the English translation, 252. Werner Beierwaltes cites these sentences and characterizes them as a preparing negative theology. See Werner Beierwaltes, “Heideggers Gelassenheit,” in: *Fussnoten zu Plato*, 392.

²⁷ See the chapter “Plotins Interpretation der Prinzipientheorie Platons” in: Jens Halfwassen, *Auf den Spuren des Einen* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015), 149-164; and his detailed study: Jens Halfwassen, *Der Aufstieg zum Einen. Untersuchungen zu Platon und Plotin* (München: K. G. Saur, 2006), 183-219.

as such.²⁸ As the absolute “Beyond,” i.e., transcendence, it is the origin of the unity and sameness of νοεῖν (Thinking) and εἶναι (Being), which is in Neoplatonism the first “emanation” of the absolute One. The identity of *nous* and *einai* is the self-unifying One as self-differentiation and self-mediation.²⁹ There is no positive and conceptual way to determine the absolute One, because it is prior to every thinkableness, which always requires a form of unity in plurality, and because it is beyond every thinkable determination. The radical negative theology and its tradition in both western and Islamic Neoplatonic philosophy, and specifically mysticism, is based on this additional conception of the One, which we may call *the third One*, with regard to Heidegger’s conception of Ontotheology and the twofold meaning of Being as the One. The Neoplatonic absolute transcendence and absolute unity in its absolute negativity and unavailability could be expressed in Heideggerian terminology as “the abyss” (*Abgrund*).³⁰ The similarity to Heidegger’s way of expressing the event of Being itself could be easily observed since Plotinus says about the absolute One that it “is originally It itself and beyond Being It itself.”³¹

We can see that Heidegger’s attempt to overcome Ontotheology discovers a deep relation to the Neoplatonic interpretation of Plato’s *agathon* (the Good) and hen (the One), in contrast to the Aristotelian interpretation of the One and its tradition of positive theology as Ontotheology which seeks the origin of the unity of Being in the absolute presence of self-thinking as the absolute divine intellect, which results—in Heidegger’s conception of the History of Being—in Hegel’s absolute subjectivity as absolute spirit. Heidegger himself nowhere refers positively to Neoplatonism in his own thought³² and even tries to incorporate the Platonic *agathon* into his later

²⁸ See the detailed references to the Enneads of Plotinus in Halfwassen, *Der Aufstieg zum Einen. Untersuchungen zu Platon und Plotin*, 63.

²⁹ See the chapter “IIV.1. Der Geist als Identität von Denken und Sein,” in Jens Halfwassen, *Plotin und der Neuplatonismus* (München: C.H. Beck 2004), 59-64.

³⁰ See for example Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 11, 41.

³¹ Plotin, *Schriften in deutscher Übersetzung*, trans. by Richard Harder, ed. by Richard Harder, Rudolf Beutler und Willy Theiler, Teilband 2 (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 2020), VI 8, 14, 42.

³² See in this connection among others the critical essay of Klaus Kremer, “Zur ontologischen Differenz. Plotin und Heidegger,” in *Zeitschrift für philosophische Forschung* (1989) Bd. 43, 673-694. See also Werner Beierwaltes, *Das wahre Selbst* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2001), 120-122; and the detailed essay of Beierwaltes about Heidegger and Neoplatonism: “EPEKEINA, Eine Anmerkung zu Heideggers Platon-Rezeption,” in *Fussnoten zu Plato*, 371-388. Beierwaltes shows the indirect reception of the Neoplatonistic thought by Heidegger through Meister Eckhart and German mysticism. See Werner Beierwaltes, “Heideggers Gelassenheit,” in *Fussnoten zu Plato*, 403-423. Even Heidegger’s famous distinction between “the God of Philosophy” and “the divine God” (*der göttliche Gott*) in his essay “Die ontotheo-logische Verfassung der Metaphysik” (see Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 11, 77) could be

schematic conception of the “History of Being” as Ontotheology; this leads to his peculiar attempt to completely ignore the Platonic “beyond Being” in his later interpretation of Plato’s agathon in the essay *Plato’s Doctrine of Truth* and his other works despite his earlier detailed interpretations concerning the central role of the concept “epekeina” in Plato’s *Republic*.³³ Nevertheless, in his whole thinking, Heidegger already uses the main Neoplatonic concept regarding each relation to the Platonic One beyond Being, that is “Ekstasis,” and his term “Ek-sistence,” for human being. For Heidegger, Thinking must remain “ecstatic” to Being itself, if it shall not become ontotheological in the nihilistic “Rescendence” of a self-relating Thinking which posits the Being of beings for itself.

Absolute Hiddenness in Ibn Arabi’s Mystical School

In contrast to the Peripatetic philosophy in Islamic tradition, Islamic mysticism is primarily characterized by the doctrine of the “Unity of Being” (*wahdat al-wujūd*).³⁴ Islamic monotheism is thereby radically interpreted and experienced as the unity of Being as such. This unity is not the Parmenidean One, because it doesn’t deny absolutely the plurality of beings, but rather it includes in itself the plurality of beings as its internal relations and manifestations; it is not even the Hegelian totality of all determinations, but rather the Platonic One which is beyond Being and beings, and simultaneously not distinct from them. The mystical One is thus with regard to all beings at the same time absolutely immanent and transcendent, i.e. distinct and indistinct from beings. In order not to misunderstand this doctrine as an absurd contradiction we must approach the analysis of the concept of “absolute” and absoluteness of the unity of Being in the school of Ibn ‘Arabi. The great mystic, disciple and stepson of Ibn ‘Arabi, Sadr ad-Dīn Qūnawī attempted to explain the intellectual meaning and necessity of Ibn

referred to Eckhart’s distinction between the God as the highest being which is the Trinitarian unity and the “Godhood” (*Gottheit*) which is the simple One as Being itself (*esse*) beyond God in its Neoplatonic sense. Eckhart calls this level of absolute unity “the divine God” (*der göttliche Gott*). See John D. Caputo, *The Mystical Element in Heidegger’s Thought* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1986), 106.

³³ Robert Dostal emphasizes in his insightful essay about Heidegger’s interpretation of the Platonic “beyond Being” that Heidegger’s ignorance of the “epekeina tes ousias” in *Plato’s Doctrine of Truth* “frustrates any reader of the *Republic*.” See Robert J. Dostal, “Beyond Being: Heidegger’s Plato,” in *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 23, no. 1(1985), 82.

³⁴ In this paper, I cannot present a detailed introduction to Islamic mysticism and philosophy. Among others, see the following general investigation of William Chittick concerning the school of Ibn ‘Arabi and its relation with the tradition of Islamic philosophy in general: William C. Chittick, “Ibn ‘Arabi” and “The School of Ibn ‘Arabi”, in *History of Islamic Philosophy*, ed. by S. H. Nasr and O. Leaman (London: Routledge 1996), 497–523.

‘Arabi’s doctrine of the unity of Being through a philosophical and conceptual analysis of absoluteness as such which could express the intellectual necessity of the basic mystical experience of unity as such.³⁵

The concept of the “absolute” (Latin: *absolutum*, Arabic: *muṭlaq*) dates back to the Platonic agathon in *Republic*³⁶ as the “unconditioned origin” (ἀνυπόθετος ἀρχή) and to Anaximander’s ἄπειρον which is also a negative concept.³⁷ We can say that Qūnawī and the following mystics belonging to this school attempt to disclose the very meaning of this negativity of absoluteness. They explain that we can think the essence of the unity of Being as the essence of the Absolute or Godhood at different levels. Before we discuss the levels of the Absolute, we can compare them with the different levels of the unity as such. According to Platonic metaphysics, four levels of unity can be distinguished from each other: 1. The numeric unity of every individual being in the sense of material beings as the appearances of their ideas (ἐν καὶ πολλά); 2. The general or essential unity of the ideas (ἐν ὄν); 3. The all-embracing and self-expanding unity of the whole as the totality of all ideas (ἐν πάντα); and 4. The absolute unity which goes beyond each kind of plurality, even the internal plurality of the totality (ἐν αὐτό).³⁸

In accordance with these four levels of unity (ἐν) we can find in the school of Ibn ‘Arabi these four levels of the absolute Being as different aspects of the one Being. The Absolute as the absolute One in its Platonic and Neoplatonic sense is expressed in this mystical school (like the speculative mystical school of Meister Eckhart in Christian medieval philosophy, which is formulated in the famous sentence of Eckhart “Esse est Deus”³⁹) as the Being itself. The Being (al-wujūd) is understood here as the absolute indifference which has no determination and at the same time can have all determinations in itself. It is necessary to notice that this meaning of Being corresponds with the Neoplatonic “beyond Being,” because the Being in the Neoplatonic sense (οὐσία or εἶναι) is identical with nous as the second hypostasis which includes the determination of self-reflection and self-mediation. Thus, the Neoplatonic Being corresponds with the other meaning of Being in the school of Ibn ‘Arabi which is identical with the manifestation

³⁵ In order to understand the basic role of Qūnawī in the mystical school of Ibn ‘Arabi, especially in order to follow the origins of the doctrine of unity of Being see William C. Chittick, “The Central Point: Qūnawī’s Role in the School of Ibn ‘Arabi,” in *Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn ‘Arabi Society*, 35 (2004), 25–45. See also William C. Chittick, “Sadr Al-Din Qūnawī on the Oneness of Being,” in *International Philosophical Quarterly*, 21, no. 2 (1981), 171–184.

³⁶ Plato, *Der Staat*, 511B6

³⁷ See the chapter “Platons Metaphysik des Einen” in Halfwassen, *Auf den Spuren des Einen*, 94–96.

³⁸ See Jens Halfwassen, *Der Aufstieg zum Einen*, 187–192.

³⁹ See the chapter “Being is God” in the following book John D. Caputo, *The Mystical Element in Heidegger’s Thought* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1986), 103–108.

as such. Considering Plato's allegory of the Sun, we can say that the Sun itself refers to the Neoplatonic One and to the Being in the school of Ibn 'Arabi, but the light of the Sun is interpreted as the nous or Being in Neoplatonism and as the manifestation of the Being in Islamic mysticism. The different applications of the concept of Being in Neoplatonism and Islamic mysticism is important, though they share the same monistic view. The difference is based on different understandings of the relation between the Being and determination. Like Plato, Plotinus conceives the Being only as the determination of ideas or as the totality of all ideas as a whole. The Being as such without any determination is unthinkable for him. Because of this, according to him the absolute—and also unthinkable—unity as the simple One—which has no determinations—is beyond Being.⁴⁰ This absolute and simple One is called in Islamic mysticism the Being itself or "the Being as Being" (*wujūd bimā huwa wujūd*) and it is different from the metaphysical Being as "the Being of beings," which goes back to determined Being in the sense of *ousia* or Being in Neoplatonism. For the mystics, *ousia*, i.e., the determined Being of beings is identical with the manifestation of the Being itself.

In this sense, Sā'in ud-Dīn Turkah, the famous mystic and commentator of Ibn 'Arabi writes about the absolute unity of the Being:⁴¹

The Being is obviously the true One, and it exists by itself; it is the One that except it everything is pure nothingness. But this One has modes ... that it manifests itself in them and in accordance with them. Every kind of understanding (of the one Being) obtains only these modes (of manifestations); because that One as such cannot be thought and understood.⁴²

Now we can consider the four aspects or levels of the absolute one Being. At the first level, we conceive this unity of the Absolute as the one Being which embraces in itself each determination in the sense that it is reflected in itself and thereby it manifests itself to itself. We can say that this level of absoluteness has the meaning of the Aristotelian *noesis* in its Neoplatonic interpretation of the nous.⁴³ The Absolute is here understood as the absolute intellect which includes in its self-reflection, self-mediation and

⁴⁰ See Halfwassen, *Der Aufstieg zum Einen*, 394-396.

⁴¹ All citations from texts of Islamic mystics in this paper are translated from the original Arabic into English by the author.

⁴² Sā'in ud-Dīn Turkah, *tahdīd ul-qawā'id*, ed. by Jalāloddīn Aštīānī (Tehran: wezārat e farhang, 1981), 302.

⁴³ See Halfwassen, *Plotin und der Neuplatonismus*, 64-84.

self-manifestation every internal aspect or determination of itself. The absolute reflects itself for example as the absolute power or science. Regarding each self-manifestation, it relates itself in its absoluteness to a self-determination. This kind of internal relation of the Absolute to each mode or determination of itself is the meaning of the divine “name” (*ism*) in the mystical school of Ibn ‘Arabi.⁴⁴ In the school of Ibn ‘Arabi this level and meaning of absoluteness is called—regarding the philosophical terminology of Ibn Sinā⁴⁵—the unity of Being “conditioned by thing” (*bišart šay’*)⁴⁶; thereby it means the unity of the Absolute which relates itself to each determination of itself. “Thing” means here the divine “name.” The Absolute is obviously in this sense still conditioned, although the condition is not understood as an external limitation, but as self-determination. The unity of Being at this level is called in the school of Ibn ‘Arabi the “oneness” (*wāḥidiyyah*).⁴⁷ The level of oneness determines itself with each “name” or mode of the Absolute.

The second level of unity negates the very self-determination and self-manifestation of the Absolute. This level is called in the school of Ibn ‘Arabi the Being “conditioned by negation” (*bišart lā*) and conceives the Absolute in its “uniqueness” (*aḥadiyyah*),⁴⁸ which means that the unity or absoluteness of the Absolute must be regarded as the negation of all determinations and limitations. Now we can conceive the divine unity accordingly first as its immanent presence in each determination (conditioned by thing) and second, in its transcendence beyond beings as the All-Highest (conditioned by negation); but these two levels are obviously “conditioned” and still not absolutely absolute. Therefore, they cannot disclose the true and ultimate absolute unity of Being in itself.

Absoluteness is thought at the next level of unity as “the unconditioned” (*lā bišart*),⁴⁹ which means beyond both conditions that unity is either conditioned by singularity of each name and determination or is detached from it as uniqueness. The “unconditioned” unity in this sense

⁴⁴ The mystic Dawūd Qeīṣarī defines the mystical concept of the divine name in his classic *commentary* on Ibn ‘Arabi’s magnum opus *fuṣūṣ ul-ḥikam* as follows: “The essence (of God) in relation with a certain attribute and a manifestation of his manifestations is called the name”. Dawūd Qeīṣarī, *ṣarḥ fuṣūṣ ul-ḥikam*, edited by Jalāloddīn Aṣṭiānī (Tehran: ‘elmī va farhangī, 1996), 44.

⁴⁵ Ibn Sina explains the aspects of the universal (the essence) in its unconditionedness and absoluteness in the first chapter of the fifth investigation in his work *Aṣ-ṣifā’, al-ilāhiyyāt*: Ibn Sīnā, *aṣ-ṣifā’, al-ilāhiyyāt*, edited by Sa’id Zāyid, (Qum: maktaba Ayatullah al-Mar’asī, 1984), 199-208. The meaning of unconditionedness refers here to the universality of essence as such. Qūnawī applies it to the unity of Being as the essence of God.

⁴⁶ See Dawūd Qeīṣarī, *ṣarḥ fuṣūṣ ul-ḥikam*, 22.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 34.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 23.

embraces therefore singularity of each determination and universality at the same time. In the mystical school of Ibn 'Arabi, this level of unity of the Being as totality is called "the universal and expanding Being" (*al-wujūd al-'ām al-munbasit*) which reveals the all-embracing manifestation of the Absolute with regard to all beings.⁵⁰ The Absolute as "the expanding Being" means the manifestation of the absolute Being in all beings.

This manifestation refers to the specific universality of the Being in distinction to all ontic universals; in Heidegger's terminology we can call it "the ontological universality."⁵¹ For the mystics, the Absolute as totality means the manifestation or appearance as such, therefore it expands itself and, in this way, embraces all beings as beings as their Beingness in the sense of their presence and appearance. However, this level of unity of Being is not yet the intended One in Ibn 'Arabi's doctrine of unity of Being, because he essentially distinguishes "the expanding Being" (the Being of beings or Beingness) from the Being in its absolute unity (Being itself). The expanding Being is just the appearance and manifestation of the Being itself.

Qūnawī argues that the level of unconditioned unity is still conditioned and not absolute in its true sense, because the unconditioned unity is itself a positive determination against limitation. This very contrast to limitation is again a condition. In other words, the unconditioned unity is conditioned to be expanded to all beings as their totality and is not yet absolute and free from this condition. Hence, the ultimate absoluteness must transcend the contrast between limitation and totality, i.e., it must be even unbounded and unconditioned from the condition of unconditionedness as such. This is the absolute transcendence from every condition and positive determination. It is the absoluteness in its true sense and thus, the ultimate level of absolute unity which is called "the unconditioned in terms of the origin of division" (*lā bišarṭ maqṣamī*) in the mystical school of Ibn 'Arabi; "division" refers here to the duality of limitation and absoluteness. This unity is neither ontic nor ontological in the sense of the unity of Being as totality or universality of Beingness; it goes rather "beyond Being" and can be characterized therefore only in a negative way. Qūnawī was the first thinker in the Islamic tradition who analyzed the mystical doctrine of the unity of Being in this conceptual argumentation about the true meaning of absoluteness. Qūnawī explains how we can think the true absoluteness of the one Being as follows:

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁵¹ See Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 2001), 264. Also, Martin Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 3: *Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik*, ed. by Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1991), 111.

Thinking about the absoluteness of the True (*al-ḥaqq*, i.e. the essence of Godhood) requires that the absoluteness is thought in the sense of a negative attribute, not in the sense that it is an absoluteness that its opposite is limitation, but it is the absoluteness from both of the known unity and plurality, and also absoluteness from being restricted in absoluteness and limitation, and from being restricted in the way that it must either gather these attributes or be separated from them. Therefore, it is correct that the Absolute has all these attributes, and simultaneously it is also correct that it doesn't have them. The relation of all those attributes and other attributes to it, and the negation of this relation to it, is equal.⁵²

The core of the mystical doctrine of unity of Being is this understanding of "the Absolute" as absolute indifference that is totally transcendent to, and at the same time immanent in, all beings, which are its appearance and manifestation. Ibn 'Arabi and his followers call it "the Being as Being" and distinguish it from the Being of beings as their manifestation and appearance, which belongs to the level of the expanding Being. They emphasize that the true Absolute has, *stricto sensu*, no name and the concept "Being" has solely a didactical role in order to indicate the absolute level which has no determination. Qūnawī explains in which sense the Absolute is called "the Being":

It is the Being because it is the True (*al-ḥaqq*) and it has in this aspect ... no plurality in itself, no combination, no attribute, no name, no definition and no proposition, but rather it is simple Being; and if we say He is Being, then it is in order to make it understandable, not in the sense that the Being is a true name for it.⁵³

Like Plato in the dialogue *Parmenides* and like Plotinus, Qūnawī negates even the unity as a determination for the Absolute. The absolute One cannot be determined even as something that is determined to be one. It includes again a limitation and thus, plurality, because it must be

⁵² Sadr ad-Dīn Qūnawī, *risalah an-nuṣūṣ*, ed. by Jalāloddīn Aṣṭiānī (Tehran: naṣr e dānešgāhī, 1992), 7.

⁵³ Sadr ad-Dīn Qūnawī, *miftāḥ ul-ghayb*, ed. by 'Aṣim Ibrāhīm Al-Kiālī (Beirut: dār ul-kutub al-'ilmiyya, 2010) 22.

“something” that has the unity as its attribute.⁵⁴ Qūnawī writes: “The True is the pure Being, so that no conflict (plurality) is in it, and it is the One, as the true unity, so that no plurality can be thought against it”;⁵⁵ and then he negates the unity as a determination for the Absolute as following: “If we say the unity, that is because of its veneration, incomparability and in order to make it understandable, and not because of the indication of the concept of unity in a way that it is represented by veiled minds.”⁵⁶

The ultimate Absolute which is unconditioned by manifestation and appearance, and which is the origin of them, can only be characterized as “hiddenness” (*ghayb*)—as the unknowable, unthinkable and ineffable truth of the essence of Godhood. As Qūnawī writes: “The True regarding its absoluteness and encompassment is not called by any name.”⁵⁷ He reasons the impossibility of any knowledge about the Absolute: “The lack of knowledge about this essence means the lack of knowledge on it, (if we think it) separated from its manifestations, steps and determinations; because such a knowledge is impossible and because in this aspect there is absolutely no relation between God and any other thing.”⁵⁸

Thus, the meaning of absolute hiddenness is based on the priority of the Absolute to every manifestation as self-determination of the Absolute. The negation of all relations means here that the absolute constitutes by itself all relations and therefore is prior to them. We can compare the mystical conception of hiddenness through the Platonic allegory of the Sun with Heidegger’s “withdrawal” of the Being itself. “The Being itself” must withdraw and hide itself, in order to make the unhiddenness and disclosedness of “the Being of beings” possible. The Being itself makes the unhiddenness and appearance possible by differing between beings and the Being of beings as their appearance. The origin of this differing or the event of the difference as such indicates the horizon of the priority of the hiddenness which constitutes unhiddenness. Heidegger calls it “the Clearing” (*Lichtung*).⁵⁹ For him, the hiddenness or the Clearing has the central role of the ultimate origin for the most original and the last event as the facticity of the initial fact and “thatness”: “That” beings appear.

In the mystical sense—which is based on the Platonic and Neoplatonic negative theology—unhiddenness and appearance require

⁵⁴ See Halfwassen, *Der Aufstieg zum Einen*, 396-399.

⁵⁵ Sadr ad-Din Qunawi, *risalah an-nuṣūṣ*, 69.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁵⁸ Sadr ad-Din Qūnawī, *miftāḥ ul-ghayb*, 36.

⁵⁹ See Heidegger’s essay “Das Ende der Philosophie und die Aufgabe des Denkens,” in *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 14Z; Also, Martin Heidegger, *Zur Sache des Denkens*, ed. by Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2007), 79-90.

plurality and determination, and in contrast, unity as such is hidden, that means that it is prior to appearance as such and prior to the Being of beings and consequently, it is *nothingness* in the sense of “beyond Being.”

Qūnawī characterizes the absolute hiddenness in the following words: “The first step of mystical steps is the hiddenness which lets all determinations fall; the pure absoluteness, absolute from being limited and absolute, and from each kind of being included in a positive or negative character. ... There is no expression for this level.”⁶⁰

Conclusion

Ibn ‘Arabi’s doctrine of unity of Being and its absolute hiddenness keeps the horizon of transcendence regarding the Godhood in its essential withdrawal and avoids its transformation into the positive determination of the highest being or its identification with the totality of beings. In the light of Heidegger’s criticism of metaphysics as Ontotheology, in the “History of Being” this transformation has led to the nihilistic “Rescendence.” We can say that the absolute hiddenness in its mystical sense remains beyond Being and Thinking and is the origin of them and their belonging together; therefore, it keeps Thinking *open* and *ecstatic* to the horizon of Being, which remains unavailable for the self-positing and domination of any kind of subjectivity. The mystical unity of Being is the origin of appearance as such and constitutes a specific relation to human being which could be interpreted in a further study in the light of the phenomenological correlation. The radical negative theology could be the common ground and the necessary bridge for such intercultural studies between Heidegger and the Islamic philosophical and mystical tradition.

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⁶⁰ Sadr ad-Dīn Qūnawī, *I’jāz ul-bayān fi tafsīr umm ul-qur’an*, ed. Jalāloddīn Aštīānī (Qum: daftar e tablīghāt e eslāmī, 2002), 116.

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The Ownmost Potentiality-for-Being as Ought-to-Be¹

Wei-Ding Tsai

Abstract: This article attempts to ponder a kind of ethics which could be developed from early Heidegger's thought. I use the subjunctive "could" here because Heidegger never put forward an ethical theory and explicitly rejected to do so in his later thought. Even though Heidegger's later philosophy is indeed incompatible with normative ethics in its prevalent sense, this article argues that his early work at least contains some axiological element, upon which a possible ethics can be founded. Even if we don't know exactly what such a possible ethics might eventually look like, we can at least thereby know what conditions it needs to satisfy.

Keywords: Heidegger, ethics, potentiality-for-Being, primordially, existential solipsism

The axiological element in early Heidegger's ontological thinking

In *Being and Time*, Heidegger defines human Dasein as "potentiality-for-Being" (*Seinkönnen*) and means by this term that Dasein can transcend its facticity (*Faktizität*) and *be* towards different ontical-existential potentialities. He divides those potentialities further into authenticity (*Eigentlichkeit*) and inauthenticity (*Uneigentlichkeit*) and provides an ontological-existential description of them. He emphasizes repeatedly that the existentialia (*Existenzialien*) of inauthentic Dasein do not signify any "lower degree of Being."² He means namely that authentic Dasein is not

¹ Several parts in this article have been presented in Chinese on some academic occasions previously, and I would like to express my special thanks to those colleagues who gave me critical comments and suggestions which made me able to revise the earlier version of the present article and to articulate it in a better way.

² Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 17. Aufl. (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1993), 43, 167.

“higher” than inauthentic Dasein, although the former is *more primordial* concerning its mode of Being.

According to Heidegger’s hermeneutics of Dasein—or fundamental ontology –, we should understand his terminology of authenticity and inauthenticity as devoid of any value judgment, that is, as neutral. But we can also recognize that those terms somehow do carry a certain kind of valuation when Heidegger uses them in *Being and Time*. This recognition can be founded on the main goal of Heidegger’s philosophy: to grasp the meaning of Being. For the early Heidegger, the *most primordial* mode of Dasein (authenticity) as the ownmost potentiality of his Being is the only way to approach the long-forgotten Being appropriately. For his intention to grasp the meaning of Being, Dasein’s authentic mode of Being is what should be sought and thus be considered as ontologically *better* than its inauthentic mode, even though Heidegger claims that the former cannot properly be called *higher* than the latter. As long as Heidegger’s thought is guided by this intention, he must *ontologically* value authenticity over inauthenticity.

Furthermore, this value-laden difference between authenticity and inauthenticity is based on a general idea, namely: The more primordial a mode of Being is, the better it *is*. For example, the entity that is ready-to-hand (*zuhanden*) is more primordial than the entity that is present-at-hand (*vorhanden*) and is therefore better in the sense that it is ontologically nearer to the true Being of a thing. Therefore, it is also better for Dasein to treat the entity within-the-world (*das innerweltliche Seiende*) as ready-to-hand but not as present-at-hand, if Dasein wants to avoid misunderstanding the true Being of the thing. Simply put, *what is ontologically primordial is good*. This is the axiological view which is consistently held in Heidegger’s thought. And it has a further implication: *What is ontologically derived is not good enough and not wished-for*. Since inauthenticity as Dasein’s derived mode of Being is not good enough to understand the meaning of Being, Dasein ought to strive for authenticity and seek to leave inauthenticity behind, even though inauthenticity might be unavoidable in the end.

From the foregoing, we can conclude that Being and value in Heidegger’s thought cannot be definitively separated from each other, and that the criterion for judging whether the value of Being of an entity is good or not lies in the degree of primordality of its mode of Being. But the ontological distinction between the so-called good and not-good—or good and bad—must still not be confused with the ethical distinction between good and evil or between right and wrong. In other words, “bad” here actually means only a lack of primordial Being, and concerns neither the good or evil of an attitude, nor the right or wrong of a behavior. There is no moral normativity in Heidegger’s analysis of Dasein. Therefore, it is true that there is no ethics in *Being and Time*.

To what extent can we talk about an ethics developed from hermeneutics of Dasein?

Indeed, Heidegger's hermeneutics of Dasein is not concerned with ethical issues. But does this mean that the axiological element hidden in the hermeneutics of Dasein could not, nevertheless, form a basis for any ethical theory? To ponder this question, we need at first to realize how Heidegger understands the concept of "ethics." Taking a closer look at later Heidegger's comments on ethics may be helpful for us to undertake this task appropriately.

In the *Letter on "Humanism"* in 1947, Heidegger writes: "Soon after *Being and Time* appeared, a young friend asked me, 'When are you going to write an ethics?'"³ Heidegger's reply to this question is strangely circuitous. He does not want to say outright *when*, if at all, he will write an ethical theory. Instead, he proceeds only to "deconstruct" the concept of ethics in order to clarify the relationship between "ontology" and "ethics." Heidegger acknowledges that human beings have a longing for binding instruction and for rules about how they ought to live cleverly and happily while their helplessness "soars to immeasurable heights."⁴ But he is not interested in finding out those binding rules. He regards "ethics" simply as a collection of such binding rules of life and claims that people's "desire for an ethics" amounts to a desire for "gathering and ordering all their plans and activities as a whole in a way that corresponds to technology" so as to afford those, who are already delivered over to the masses, namely to the *They (das Man)*, "a reliable constancy."⁵ It is no wonder, then, that Heidegger regards ethics as a product of Platonic academy, i.e., as a product of metaphysics.⁶ If we consider the relationship between "ontology" and "ethics" limited to this context, then we will, according to Heidegger, remain within the purview of Platonic metaphysics.

A more in-depth explanation can be found in his *Introduction to Metaphysics*, published in 1953. Heidegger's account of the conceptual separation between Being and Ought (*Sollen*) in *Introduction to Metaphysics* makes his viewpoint about ethics clearer. He explains that the concept of Being has undergone a distorted restriction during its divorce from four concepts in the history of philosophy. After "Being" had experienced its opposition to the concepts of Becoming (*Werden*), Seeming (*Schein*), and

³ Martin Heidegger, *Wegmarken*, 2. Aufl. (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1978), 349.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*, 350.

Thinking (*Denken*), it was finally separated from Ought completely at the end of the eighteenth century and namely by Kant. Kant regarded nature as a special kind of entity and contrasted it with the categorical imperative (*kategorischer Imperativ*) which is equal to the Ought. In order to lay a foundation for itself, this Ought requires to have a value (*Wert*) in itself.⁷ For Heidegger, such value is nothing but what he said in *Being and Time*: "the present-at-hand determinants of a thing."⁸

So far, Heidegger does indeed consistently regard ethics as a theory of present-at-hand norms for human beings, where the Ought is completely separated from Being and thus is not ontologically primordial. Furthermore, he believes that the primordial thought of Being might still be encountered in the period before Plato. So, he writes in *Letter on "Humanism"*: "Thinkers prior to this period knew neither a 'logic' nor an 'ethics' nor 'physics.' Yet their thinking was neither illogical nor immoral."⁹ Those tinkers didn't need ethics in the modern sense for them to live a happy life. Such a kind of ethics as a philosophical discipline which attempts to justify moral norms is eventually a product derived metaphysically. The reason why Heidegger did not write an ethics after *Being and Time* now becomes clear. It is because he regards ethics as a system of valued norms controlled by "metaphysical" thinking and argues that "every valuing, even where it values positively, is a subjectivizing"; "it does not let the being *be* but rather lets the being solely *be considered to be* the object of its doing."¹⁰ Just like sciences (*ἐπιστήμη*) such as logic, epistemology, aesthetics etc., ethics for Heidegger also belongs to the metaphysics of subject-object and thus should be left behind by the primordial thinking. For the same reason, the later Heidegger turns away from his earlier analysis of the authentic Dasein and towards a more radical "authenticity" where no more ethics exists.

Nevertheless, the later Heidegger's rejection of ethics is quite disputable because he seems to restrict, already at the outset, the meaning of the word "ethics" to *normative ethics* and thus denies any ethics on the ground that normative ethics is a product of metaphysics. By doing so, Heidegger would rule out in advance all possible ethical theories which eventually do not belong to normative ethics in this sense. It is just like some theologians who define "theology" strictly as the study of Christian God and therefore exclude all other studies of supernatural or sacred beings from "theology." Even if Heidegger indeed intends to limit his critique of ethics to normative ethics, his critique still cannot generally apply to all theories of normative

⁷ Martin Heidegger, *Einführung in die Metaphysik*, 2. Aufl. (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1958), 151.

⁸ Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 99.

⁹ Heidegger, *Wegmarken*, 350.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 345.

ethics. The reason behind Heidegger's critique of normative ethics might apply to utilitarianism and deontology; it is hard to apply to virtue ethics, since the latter doesn't provide a set of present-at-hand principles to determine human moral behaviors clearly. Furthermore, while he regards every moral norm for binding human behavior as general rules of the They, he also overlooks the potentiality of an individual to control his own situated behavior autonomously.

Despite the above-mentioned disputation, Heidegger's rejection of ethics, however, does not hinder us from identifying His standpoint: Although he opposes all normative ethics because of their metaphysical form, he does not therefore claim that human beings must be amoral in their primordial existence. In other words, he still concedes the possibility that the primordial Being of Dasein can *be* in a moral condition—whatever it actually could be.

Insofar as we have now inspected the late Heidegger's standpoint about ethics together with his axiological viewpoint in *Being and Time*, we have already prepared a horizon for developing a possible Heideggerian ethics—albeit on the condition that we do not grasp the word “ethics” completely in accordance with Heidegger's own definition. To talk reasonably about a possible theory of ethics within the system of early Heidegger's philosophy, we must understand “ethics” in its broader sense. After all, the late Heidegger's argument against ethics is directed only against normative ethics in its prevalent sense; in other words, it is not necessary for Heidegger's thinking to reject all kinds of ethics. Besides, since Heidegger recognizes that Dasein can be moral in its primordial existence, a study of such a moral state should be called ethics too. In short, a Heideggerian ethics must explain how the primordial Being of Dasein could be moral and what characteristics such a moral state might have. For this purpose, we shall now make a brief description of the ontological structure of Dasein's primordial Being.

The condition of the possibility of the primordial Being of Dasein

Heidegger asserts that an entity is primordial only when it is at the same time a whole (*ganz*) and authentic (*eigentlich*).¹¹ Accordingly, the existential analysis of everyday Dasein cannot grasp the wholeness and authenticity of Dasein. His reasons can be shortly formulated as follows. First, Dasein as existence is transcendent—i.e., it always “stands out of itself”—so that there can always be another potentiality for it, and as a result Dasein is always in a state of incompleteness. Although the formal analysis of the

¹¹ Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 233.

structure of care (*Sorge*) in the first division of *Being and Time* has provided us the whole structure of Dasein's Being, but it is not capable enough to explain the potentiality-for-Being-a-whole (*Ganzseinkönnen*) of Dasein. Secondly, since Dasein acts in its everyday life always according to the potentialities offered by the They, it first and mostly does not project itself toward its ownmost potentiality—authenticity –, but is used to acting in inauthentic ways. Therefore, we cannot meet Dasein's ownmost potentiality simply through the formal analysis of everyday Dasein. Nevertheless, this does not preclude the possibility that Dasein can be authentic and whole. In fact, Heidegger even declares that “[the] care-structure does not speak *against* the possibility of Being-a-whole but is the *condition of the possibility* of such an existentiell potentiality-for-Being.”¹²

The question which the ontological-existential analysis of authentic Dasein faces is as follows: How can Dasein be its Being in the primordial sense? To answer this question, we need to inquire into the phenomenon of care—not only in the care-phenomenon in general, but directly in its authentic mode. It is through this special mode of care that the Being of Dasein can turn itself from inauthentic to authentic. According to this changing, what Dasein mainly cares for is now no longer the entity within-the-world (*das innerweltliche Seiende*) or Dasein-with (*Mitdasein*) which it encounters in everyday life, but its own Self. Because of this difference regarding what is cared for, Heidegger designates this mode of care as care-for-self (*Selbstsorge*). Especially in authentic Dasein, the mode of care-for-self is clearly distinct from the care in everyday life—while the latter presents itself mainly in the modes of concern (*Besorgen*) and solicitude (*Fürsorge*).

Before we analyze the authentic care, which makes Dasein open up to its primordial Being, it is necessary to explain several points. (1) The self, which Dasein in its authentic care *is*, is not the *They-self* (*Man-Selbst*) in everyday fallenness—namely not the self behaving according to the opinions from the They –, nor is it the metaphysical subject of theoretical knowledge. In principle, only the self in its primordial Being can be counted as the authentic “I” of Dasein; in contrast, the They-self is only a “not-I” in the sense that it has lost in the inauthentic self. (2) According to Heidegger, both modes of authenticity and inauthenticity are all characterized by *mineness* (*Jemeinigkeit*).¹³ Therefore, we cannot say that the They-self is not mine, nor that only the authentic self is mine. This means that the mineness is just one of the constitutive conditions of authenticity, but not its sufficient condition.

¹² *Ibid.*, 317; English translation: *Being and Time*, trans. by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, reprinted (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001). Henceforth all English translations will refer to this work.

¹³ Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 42f.

(3) Authenticity is the *most* primordial potentiality of Dasein. A potentiality of Being is authentic not only because it is mine, but also because it can be *decided only by myself* and thus be my primordial mode of Being. It is therefore a kind of potentiality that can only be realized by the authentic “I” in the first person and not by someone else. The authentic self is the “Self which is *specially* grasped.”¹⁴ (4) Since inauthenticity is also in each case mine, everyday Dasein could certainly speak and act in the first person, too. But everyday Dasein saying “I” here understands itself only from the concerned “world” so that it mistakes the They-self as its ownmost potentiality-for-Being and therefore loses its authentic self. In Heidegger’s eyes, the “I” here flees rather into the “not-I.”¹⁵ (5) Although only authenticity is considered as a primordial mode of Dasein, Dasein is *first and mostly* inauthentic and is essentially as They-self projected in the world. This means not only that Dasein is inauthentic until it reaches its authenticity. It also implies that authenticity, once it is reached, can by no means be maintained forever. In other words, the Being of Dasein would lapse from authenticity back into inauthenticity as soon as its will to self-determination decreases. Carman clarifies this point with a simile: Inauthenticity is like the permanent pull of gravity, while authenticity is like resistance to the inertia of falling and can cease at any moment.¹⁶

Our inquiry about the existential analysis of authentic care can thus be reformulated in another way: How can the everyday Dasein as They-self become the authentic self? The intention of this paraphrase here is to point out that there is a unique viewpoint on the concept of individuality which is hidden behind Heidegger’s remark about authentic care. If we can bring Heidegger’s concept of individuality into prominence in our analysis of authentic care, then it would be helpful to reveal how Dasein goes from its potentiality-for-Being to its ought-to-Be.

The existential analysis of authentic care as care-for-self

Let us return to the question which the existential analysis of authentic Dasein was meant to solve: Why can authentic care seize the wholeness and authenticity of Dasein? Our inquiry could begin with three existentialia in the formal structure of care, i.e., *attunement (Befindlichkeit)*, *understanding (Verstehen)* and *discourse (Rede)*. Since care-for-self is the outstanding mode of care—it aims to open up the ownmost potentiality-for-

¹⁴ Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 129, emphasis is mine.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 321f.

¹⁶ See Taylor Carman, “Must We Be Inauthentic?” in *Heidegger, Authenticity, and Modernity: Essays in Honor of Hubert L. Dreyfus*, vol. 1, ed. by Mark A. Wrathall & Jeff Malpas (Cambridge, MA/London: MIT Press, 2000), 28.

Being –, to clarify the structure of these existentialia will help us disclose its concrete way of revealing the authentic self.

Attunement in care-for-self

At the outset, the attunement in care-for-self is to be discussed. Heidegger points out that there is an outstanding basic attunement which “takes away from Dasein the possibility of understanding itself, as it falls, in terms of the ‘world’ and the way things have been publicly interpreted”¹⁷ and thus “manifest in Dasein its *Being towards* its ownmost potentiality-for-Being—i.e., its *Being-free for* the freedom of choosing itself and taking hold of itself”¹⁸. This basic attunement is referred to as “anxiety” (*Angst*).

According to Heidegger, the attunement of anxiety differs from fear (*Furcht*). The object of fear is always an entity within-the-world that can be definitely pointed out; by contrast, the “object” of anxiety is indefinite and cannot be found anywhere in the world, because the “what-it-is-about” (*Wovor*) of anxiety is “nothing ready-to-hand within-the-world,” but “the world as such.”¹⁹ Since the world as such does not signify the totality of all entities within-the-world, to which Heidegger always refers as “world” in quotation marks, but as ‘something’ *most primordial* and/or “the *possibility of the ready-to-hand in general*”; and since the world ontologically also belongs to Being-in-the-world, therefore the what-it-is-about of anxiety is Dasein itself.²⁰ In other words, when Dasein is anxious, it becomes indifferent to the entities within-the-world. What now stands in the foreground is its self. The covering and obscuring interpretation of the “world” that the They brings forward to Dasein can no longer set Dasein’s heart at rest. This anxiety forces Dasein to turn its gaze from the entities within-the-world back to itself and let it *only take care of itself*. This process, in which the attunement of anxiety brings Dasein “back from its absorption in the ‘world’” and discloses it as “*solus ipse*,” is described by Heidegger as the “singularization” (*Vereinzlung*) of Dasein—Heidegger calls it existential “Solipsism.”²¹ Dasein can overcome the covering and obscuring effected by the They only when it is under the condition of its singularization, and thus freely project its ownmost potentiality-for-Being. It is anxiety that brings Dasein to meet its authenticity. So said Heidegger: “Anxiety individualizes Dasein for its ownmost Being-in-the-world.”²²

¹⁷ Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 187.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 188.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 185ff.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 187.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 188f.

²² *Ibid.*, 187.

However, this does not mean at the same time that Dasein in anxiety is already authentic. Strictly speaking, anxiety only opens up the potentiality for Dasein to become sharply aware of two kinds of modes of its Being—authenticity and inauthenticity. It is still possible that Dasein in this moment lacks the courage to face its authentic self and flees again to the entities within-the-world. In this case, Dasein goes from being anxious about Being to being afraid of some entities. To explain how Dasein reaches its authentic and whole self, Heidegger must further resort to another two elements of authentic care—understanding and discourse –, although all the three elements actually unfold together in care-for-self.

Understanding in care-for-self

Let us now turn to the understanding of care-for-self. The understanding which discloses Dasein's potentiality-for-Being through projection has in its turn also an outstanding mode that can project Dasein toward its ownmost potentiality-for-Being. Heidegger calls this mode of understanding "the existential Projection of an authentic Being-towards-death (*Sein zum Tode*)."²³ Death as the uttermost possibility of Dasein's Being is "a way to be, which Dasein takes over as soon as it is."²⁴ Since Dasein's Being after its death can no longer be there, it can finally grasp its potentiality-for-Being-a-whole only through thinking about its death. Anyway, Dasein would not take its Being-towards-death first and mostly seriously, but flees before its own death by talking about the death of others in the form of idle talk (*Gerede*). On the other hand, thinking ahead—with Heidegger's word: "anticipatory disclosure (*vorlaufendes Erschließen*)"²⁵—to its own death brings Dasein before nothingness, and the nothingness makes Dasein anxious, namely lets it only care for itself. At the point of death, Heidegger discerns not only that "Being-towards-death is essentially anxiety,"²⁶ but also maintains further that the existential understanding of death can grasp at the same time the wholeness of Dasein's Being and the possibility of its authenticity.

This is based on Heidegger's analysis of the structure of death. He points out that death as the uttermost possibility of Dasein has five characteristics which are dependent on each other, i.e.: ownmost (*eigenst*), non-relational (*unbezüglich*), not to be outstripped (*unüberholbar*), certain (*gewiss*) and indefinite (*unbestimmt*). Their contents could be explained briefly

²³ *Ibid.*, 260.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 245.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 263.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 266.

as follows. (I) "Death is the *ownmost* possibility of Dasein," because it is the possibility of Dasein's Being which is unique and absolutely cannot be represented by another Dasein (*Mitdasein*). Besides, Dasein can disclose not only "its factual lostness in the everydayness of the they-self" from its Being-towards-death, but also can snatch itself from the They, so that only its Being is now completely at stake.²⁷ (II) Death is the *non-relational* possibility of Dasein, because death lets Dasein detach all connections to other *Mitdasein*, so that it forces Dasein to become individual. Only when Dasein is non-relational in its individuation, i.e., only when it *is* from itself, can it really be authentic.²⁸ (III) Death is the *not to be outstripped* possibility of Dasein, because it is "the possibility of the absolute impossibility of Dasein," the end of the essentially always ecstatic Dasein. If Dasein does not flee before death, then its anticipation of death can give it freedom, so that it can for the first time "authentically understand and choose among the factual possibilities lying ahead of that possibility which is not to be outstripped," before it dies.²⁹ (IV) Death is the *certain* possibility of Dasein, because death can make Dasein not allow the uttermost possibility of its Being to be covered by the They-self, so that Dasein can consider its death as real. The certainty of the not to be outstripped death ensures Dasein the wholeness of its Being. Just because this "considering death as real," Dasein is asked to take a certain behavior (i.e., to select its ownmost possibilities) and to exist "in the full authenticity."³⁰ (V) Death is the *indefinite* possibility of Dasein, because death is for Dasein "possible at any moment." Death is approaching, but the hour of death "remains constantly indefinite." Since death is at the same time certain and indefinite, it means a constant threat for Dasein, i.e., "the utter and constant threat to itself arising from Dasein's ownmost individualized Being." The only thing which can let Dasein stay open to this threat in such a way so that Dasein could ascertain the wholeness of its potentiality-for-Being in its individualization, is anxiety.³¹

Through the existential analysis of death, Heidegger shows how the wholeness of Dasein can be grasped in its anticipation of death. Besides, Heidegger's concept of individuality is also thereby more clearly characterized: With anxiety in anticipation of death, the individualization of Dasein is not only non-relational to any other entities, but also determined from its own end and resolution.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 239f., 263.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 250, 263f.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 250, 264.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 256f., 264f.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 258, 265f.

Discourse in care-for-self

The last element of care-for-self to be investigated is discourse (*Rede*). Since Dasein in its authentic care is, as discussed above, non-relational to any other entities, the authentic discourse must be of a radically individualized character. In other words, it is not Dasein's talking with a *Mitdasein*, but with *itself*. What makes this mode of discourse outstanding is that it can give expression to Dasein's understanding of its authentic self *distinctly*. But this kind of Dasein's talking with itself is not a soliloquy of everyday Dasein as the They-self. The latter remains still arrested in the ordinary idle talk of the public so that its communicated expression cannot be regarded as authentic. In addition, the authentic discourse, strictly speaking, means neither a soliloquy of authentic Dasein, because the latter is a monologue of authentic Dasein itself and is thus not enough to explain how everyday Dasein *becomes* authentic. So "Dasein's talking with itself" can only be a dialogue between Dasein's authentic self and its They-self, although both "selves" are the same Dasein. To prove that this case is possible, Heidegger highlights a phenomenon, i.e., conscience (*Gewissen*). By his explanation of conscience, Heidegger aims "not only [to] carry forward the earlier analysis of the disclosedness of the there (Da), but *more primordially* [to] grasp that analysis regarding the authentic Being of Dasein."³²

Conscience is an "internal" phenomenon that people can experience in everyday life. People hear their conscience calling. It tells people what they "ought to do" or "ought not to do." Through the phenomenon of conscience, one becomes not only aware of the distance between what one actually is and what one should be. He also realizes that his ought-to-be which his conscience reveals must be already "inside" himself. Heidegger's phenomenological explanation of conscience does not in principle deviate from this description. But it is noticeable that his interpretation is neither psychological nor theological. He takes conscience at first as a thrown fact of Dasein, and further as existential evidence to prove that Dasein is able to anticipate its authentic potentiality-for-Being, while it still stands under the rule of the They.

Heidegger interprets conscience as a call of Dasein's authentic self to its They-self, and the call of conscience as a special mode of discourse.³³ Since the call of conscience is a mode of discourse, it can of course be analyzed according to the existential structure of discourse: (1) The call of conscience is a kind of communication (*Mitteilung*), which the authentic self addresses to the They-self. This call communicates something to the addressee and the addressee will do something to respond to this call. Therefore, the call of

³² *Ibid.*, 270, emphasis is mine.

³³ *Ibid.*, 269.

conscience is precisely a special communication which calls for an action. (2) What-is-talked-about (*Beredetes*) in the call of conscience is concerned about Dasein itself, and at first about the addressed They-self. Nevertheless, the what-is-talked-about must include the authentic self, because the addressed They-self is called for coming to its authentic self. (3) Although what-is-said-in-the-discourse (*Geredetes*) in the call of conscience is usually described as “voice of conscience,” it is, when seen from the phenomenological perspective, voiceless: “Conscience discourses solely and constantly in the mode of keeping silent.”³⁴ The call says nothing. That is the reason why the addressee can at this moment stop hearing the loud idle talk of the They and be called back to the state of reticence (*Verschwiegenheit*) of its potentiality-for-Being. Only because of this can the addressee finally listen to his authentic self and then understand it. Heidegger designates this voiceless call as “a primordial kind of discourse for Dasein.”³⁵

Existential solipsism as foundation for an ethical theory

In the foregoing, the existential structure of the primordial Being of Dasein has been briefly explained by Dasein’s three essential existentialia (attunement, understanding and discourse). Corresponding to those three essential moments of disclosedness, Heidegger renames them respectively as *uncanniness* (*Unheimlichkeit*), *will-have-a-conscience* (*Gewissen-haben-wollen*) and *reticence* (*Verschwiegenheit*). Uncanniness is the existential state of “not-at-home” (*Un-zuhause*) which is disclosed by anxiety and means that Dasein now does not “dwell in tranquilized familiarity” of the They.³⁶ Will-have-a-conscience is the self-understanding of Dasein through the call of conscience, an excellent manner of self-projection. This term means that Dasein, while it is “hearing the appeal correctly,” finds itself guilty (*schuldig*), decides to become the authentic self being in uncanniness, and lets this ownmost self “in itself” actively behave. Will-have-a-conscience is at the same time “readiness for anxiety” (*Bereitschaft zur Angst*).³⁷ Reticence refers in general to the existential stillness of Dasein itself. It is to take “the words away from the common-sense idle talk of the ‘They’,” so that Dasein can understand the voiceless discourse of conscience appropriately.³⁸ At last, Heidegger integrates these three moments of Being of authentic Dasein into a united disclosedness and calls it “resoluteness” (*Entschlossenheit*). Resoluteness is the

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 273.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 271ff., 296.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 189, 296.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 287f., 296.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 296.

authentic uncoveredness (*Unverborgenheit*) of Dasein as *care*—and namely the *most primordial* truth of Dasein.³⁹

We can now summarize Heidegger's analysis of authentic Dasein shown above with one of his own sentences: "Dasein is *authentically itself* in the primordial individualization of the reticent resoluteness which exacts anxiety of itself."⁴⁰ This is the disclosedness of the ownmost Potentiality-for-Being. And we could call it the whole structure of existential "solipsism."

The existential "solipsism" describes not only the Being of authentic Dasein, but also suffices here to illustrate how inauthentic Dasein becomes authentic Dasein. Since, as mentioned earlier, authenticity has ontologically an axiological element and is thus superior to inauthenticity, can we now develop on the basis of such an existential solipsism a possible moral theory? Basically, this question is ultimately to ask: In what way can the ownmost Potentiality-for-Being become the Ought-to-Be (*Seinsollen*)?

It is true that Heidegger has not yet used such a term like "*Seinsollen*" and does avoid mentioning "*sollen*" (ought to) in his hermeneutics of Dasein. Apparently, Heidegger's hermeneutics of Dasein is free of any ontically value judgment by describing the Being of authentic Dasein phenomenologically. It seems to suggest that Heidegger excludes the concept of "ought" from his philosophy. But if we more carefully read Heidegger's critique of the differentiation between Being and Ought in *Introduction to the Metaphysics*,⁴¹ we can clearly find out that his inquiry into the historical concept of Being intends to go back to a primordial status of Being where "ought to" and "is" cannot be divided from each other. This means that his description of authentic Dasein has indeed revealed an inclination of ontological value concealed in Dasein's Being. When he inquires into the question of the primordial Being of Dasein in *Being and Time*, he does not only want to let Dasein understand its authenticity and inauthenticity *ontologically*, but also ask Dasein that it ought to reach its authentic, ownmost mode of Being *ontically*. It is at this point that we can seek at least a possible ethics whose task is to turn from inauthenticity to authenticity. As for what such an ethics will look like in the end, it remains to be studied later.⁴²

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³⁹ *Ibid.*, 297.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 322.

⁴¹ Heidegger, *Einführung in die Metaphysik*, 149ff.

⁴² For example, as one anonymous reviewer put it, "the passive occurrence of anxiety needs to be addressed" in this possible moral theory. Unfortunately, due to space constraints, further reflections on Heideggerian ethics have to be discussed elsewhere.

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Transformation of Hermeneutics in Heidegger's *Black Notebooks*

Motoki Saito

Abstract: The *Black Notebooks*, posthumous manuscripts by philosopher Martin Heidegger, are difficult to connect due to their fragmented character. There are also no new concepts to be found as in his previously published works. However, these notebooks contain a unique sphere of thought on the concept of Being that is separate from Heidegger's other writings and lectures. The *Black Notebooks* can be seen as the final "instructions and notes" for all the other Heidegger's collected works and form a closely linked chain of thought. In the *Black Notebooks*, Heidegger presents a new framework of thought prepared for further reflection on his own works and for a radical confrontation with them. They contain the transformation of the concept of hermeneutics, through self-criticism, the deepening of Being-historical thinking, and the retroactive consideration of the event of Thinking. This transformation of hermeneutics in the *Black Notebooks* allows for a deeper understanding of Heidegger's thought as a whole and opens various possibilities of a future time-space in which we will re-live.

Keywords: hermeneutics, being, history, interpretation

How should we read the *Black Notebooks*? These posthumous manuscripts consist of fragments that are extremely difficult to connect, partly due to Heidegger's rejection of systematics in his later years. Furthermore, the new concepts found in previously published works are scarce in the *Black Notebooks*, and there are many circular descriptions of Being. From this perspective, it may seem almost impossible to discern a coherent thought within the *Black Notebooks*.

But this view is misguided. If we attentively follow the descriptions in the *Black Notebooks*, we can see that they contain a unique sphere of thought on Being that is distinct from Heidegger's other writings and lectures. Heidegger positioned the *Black Notebooks* at the end of the fourth section of

his collected works, with the intention that they should be published last. The title “Instructions and Notes” (*Hinweise und Aufzeichnungen*) suggests that this fourth section serves as “Instructions and Notes” for the first through third sections. While the fourth section also includes notes on published works, seminars, and letters, the *Black Notebooks* can be considered the final “instructions and notes” for these as well.

However, the “Instructions and Notes” are not simply “notes” on the earlier volumes. For example, although fragments such as *Contributions to Philosophy* (*Beiträge zur Philosophie*) and *Mindfulness* (*Besinnung*) contain many references to the *Black Notebooks*, the *Black Notebooks* themselves have almost no references to these works.¹ Nevertheless, *Contributions* and the *Black Notebooks* are not entirely unrelated to them and there are often overlapping descriptions. This suggests that the *Black Notebooks* developed an independent way of thinking that maintains a connection to the other volumes. Additionally, the *Black Notebooks* contain numerous references to other fragments within the same volumes, and Heidegger created an index of key concepts at the end of each notebook.² This shows that the fragments of the *Black Notebooks* themselves form a closely linked chain of thought. The *Black Notebooks*, the final and most profound part of the collected works, present a new framework of thought that Heidegger prepared for further reflection on his own thought as a whole and for a radical confrontation with it.

If we divide Heidegger's thought into three periods based on keywords—“meaning, truth, and place”³—the corresponding frameworks of his thought are “Phenomenological Hermeneutics” as a fundamental ontology, “Being-historical Thinking,” and “Thinking.” According to these frameworks, the *Black Notebooks* are an attempt to begin from Phenomenological Hermeneutics and, while running parallel to Being-historical thinking, to move forward to Thinking itself. Moreover, in moving

¹ Cf. István M. Fehér, “Hermeneutische Notizen zu Martin Heideggers Schwarzen Heften und zum Neudenken seines Denkwegs,” in *Jenseits von Polemik und Apologie. Die “Schwarzen Hefte” in der Diskussion* (Heidegger-Jahrbuch Band 12), ed. by Alfred Denker und Holger Zaborowski (Freiburg/München: Karl Alber, 2020), 64-65. See below for important references to the *Black Notebooks* in other published works. Rosa Maria Marafioti, “Die Seinsfrage und die Schwarzen Hefte. Zu einer Ortsbestimmung der jüdenbezogenen Textstellen,” in *Auslegungen: Von Parmenides bis zu den Schwarzen Heften* (Martin-Heidegger-Gesellschaft Schriftenreihe Band 11), ed. by Harald Seubert und Klaus Neugebauer (Freiburg/München: Karl Alber, 2017), 120, Anm. 10.

² In contrast, according to von Herrmann, “a general instruction” was given by Heidegger that “each volume of the complete works should not have any index, including an index of persons or matters” (Martin Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 1: *Frühe Schriften* (1912–1916), ed. by Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1978), 443).

³ Martin Heidegger, “Vier Seminare,” in *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 15: *Seminare* (1951–1973), ed. by Curd Ochwadt (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1978), 344.

from Being-historical thinking to Thinking, the *Black Notebooks* also attempt to deconstruct and critically examine the genesis of his own Thinking, returning to the starting point of Phenomenological Hermeneutics, from a Being-historical perspective. In this transition of his thought, the focus of our investigation is the status of hermeneutics.

As is widely known, Heidegger abandoned the term “hermeneutics” after *Being and Time*, only to return to it later and critically examine it in his “A Dialogue on Language (Aus einem Gespräch von der Sprache)” in 1953/54.⁴ However, hermeneutics was not entirely absent during this period. On the contrary, in the *Black Notebooks*, a radical transformation of hermeneutics was undertaken in order to dismantle Phenomenological Hermeneutics, to deepen the Being-historical thinking hermeneutically, and to retroactively and critically consider the hermeneutic event of Thinking.

In this article, I will examine the transformation of hermeneutics mainly in the *Black Notebooks* and other related fragments, focusing specifically on the three primary phases of this development. By examining the three phases of the Black Notebooks, the destruction of Phenomenological Hermeneutics through hermeneutics of self-criticism (I), the hermeneutic deepening of Being-historical thinking (II), and the critical retracing to the hermeneutic event of Thinking (III), I will reveal a unique hermeneutic sphere of thought in the *Black Notebooks*. The aim of this article is not to investigate the *Black Notebooks* as a systematic hermeneutics, but to describe the trajectory of hermeneutic transformation in them.

Destruction of Phenomenological Hermeneutics: Hermeneutics of Self-Criticism

In *Being and Time*, Heidegger identifies “the methodological meaning of phenomenological description” with “interpretation (*Auslegung*)” and states that “philosophy is a universal hermeneutic ontology, starting from hermeneutics of Dasein.”⁵ This phenomenological hermeneutics interprets the Being of Dasein, thereby tells Dasein itself the meaning of its Being.

However, by the time the writing of the *Black Notebooks* began, in the autumn of 1931, this initial plan for *Being and Time* had already run into a deadlock. In *Ponderings II*, Heidegger writes, “*Being and Time I* is a very imperfect attempt to enter into the temporality of Dasein in order to ask the

⁴ Martin Heidegger, “Aus einem Gespräch von der Sprache (1953/54). Zwischen einem Japaner und einem Fragende,” in *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 12: *Unterwegs zur Sprache (1950–1959)*, ed. by Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1985), 79–146.

⁵ Martin Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 2: *Sein und Zeit (1927)*, ed. by Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1977), 50–51.

question of Being for the first time since Parmenides.”⁶ Nevertheless, the question of Being is not simply abandoned. While Heidegger expresses his own dissatisfaction with his writings of the 1920s, including *Being and Time*, and the lack of understanding from those around him, he remains determined to explore the question of Being more thoroughly. “The question of Being. There is no other option except to write this book and only this book *again and again*. At the risk of remaining a *homo unius libri* [“person of one book”].”⁷ While abandoning the second volume of *Being and Time*, the *Black Notebooks* are attempting repetition (*Wiederholung*) of the entire program toward its own goal, the question of Being. This is indeed a self-criticism of *Being and Time*, and at the same time, a self-interpretation. Therefore, the early *Black Notebooks* can be characterized as *hermeneutics as self-criticism of phenomenological hermeneutics*.

In the fragment from around 1932, three points are mentioned as the causes that prevented him from moving toward his initial goal, the question of Being.

Being and Time on its way—not in its goal and task—did not become master of three ambient “temptations”:

1. the “ground-laying” attitude of neo-Kantianism (cf. p. 113);
 2. the “existentiell” —Kierkegaard—Dilthey;
 3. “scientificity” —phenomenology (cf. p. 73, 133).
- Thence also the “idea of destruction” determined (cf. pp. 128-129).⁸

Heidegger also states that these three temptations were triggered by “an inner deterioration of philosophizing” and “a forgetting of the basic question.”⁹ In other words, *Being and Time* succumbed to these three temptations as the historical trend of its time and was forced to fail because of forgetting the question of Being. It is important to note that Heidegger was

⁶ Martin Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 94: *Überlegungen II-VI (Schwarze Hefte 1931-1938)*, ed. by Peter Trawny (Vittorio Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main 2014), 9.

⁷ Heidegger, GA 94: *Überlegungen II-VI (Schwarze Hefte 1931-1938)*, 22.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 75. Here, the first “neo-Kantianism” refers to the position that takes Kant’s metaphysics as the foundation of natural science, and is considered to be an attempt to found the “ontological genesis of science” by “the mathematical project of nature itself” in *Being and Time* (Cf. Martin Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 3: *Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik* (1929), ed. by Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1991), 274-275; Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 2: *Sein und Zeit* (1927), 479). The second “existentialism” may also refer to Kierkegaard’s “anxiety” and Dilthey’s ontology of “life” (Cf. Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 2: *Sein und Zeit* (1927), 252-253, Anm. 3, 235, Anm. 6, 331, Anm. 2).

⁹ Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 94: *Überlegungen II-VI (Schwarze Hefte 1931-1938)*, 75.

aware of this problem. Because it is believed that the failure of *Being and Time* was determined when he introduced these three temptations.¹⁰

Especially regarding phenomenology, Heidegger recognizes its achievement in reviving the “intuition” of ancient philosophy but criticizes that this intuition remains subordinated to the scientific forms of the nineteenth century.

The phenomenologists (Husserl and Scheler) did manage this one achievement: they awakened the immediate perception turned toward the things themselves (intuition - essence). In other words, they awakened something of the attitude characteristic of antiquity. But rootlessly and in subjection to the nineteenth century, that is, within its schemata and “problems.”¹¹

This scientific view of the nineteenth century sought to secure its own legitimacy through “the understanding of being (ἔστιν, presence) that had long been self-evident.”¹² Thus, phenomenology has subordinated itself to this nineteenth-century scientific attitude too and has made being as presence self-evident. And *Being and Time*, which introduced this phenomenology, also brought in the being as presence, failed to ask the question of Being.

Hermeneutic deepening of Being-historical thinking: Hermeneutics of Mask as Transition

How about hermeneutics? In the *Black Notebooks*, Heidegger rarely uses the term hermeneutics, but he frequently refers to interpretation (*Auslegung*). In the early *Black Notebooks*, he outlines two directions of interpretation in order to return to the beginnings of ancient philosophy and at the same time to maintain the stance of philosophizing in the present age.

... on the one hand, the interpretation of the ancients, as if what mattered was nothing else than to let them alone come into words (beginning and history of the question of Being), and then the attitude of the most broadly and

¹⁰ Cf. Jean Grondin, “The Critique and Rethinking of *Being and Time* in the First *Black Notebooks*,” in *Reading Heidegger’s Black Notebooks 1931-1941*, ed. by Ingo Farin and Jeff Malpas (Cambridge/London: MIT Press, 2016), 101.

¹¹ Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 94: *Überlegungen II-VI (Schwarze Hefte 1931-1938)*, 50.

¹² *Ibid.*, 49.

deeply interpretive questioning out of the ground of Dasein—as if at issue was nothing other than to help “Being” to a bursting forth in actual work and in a first solitude (overcoming of the question of Being).¹³

Here we can see the prototype of the later distinction between the first and other beginning. In this context, the first interpretation is the interpretation of the “leading question” as a confrontation with traditional metaphysical thought in the first beginning. The second interpretation, on the other hand, is the interpretation of the “grounding question” that goes beyond hermeneutics of Dasein and reexamines the basis of Dasein's existence from “a bursting forth” - the event (*Ereignis*) of Being - in the other beginning.

In a fragment of 1936 from *Ponderings IV*, while the distinction between the first and second interpretations is still not clear, the transition from traditional forms of historical research to metaphysics is described as follows.

The *transition* from the proceeding of research to the preceding as metaphysics; the *transition* from ground laying (operating back behind) to the beginning. The transition as changeover: the preparation, the attempts, the preconstruction—all that is indicated in the lecture courses from 1927 to 1936, even though never - intentionally never—communicated directly. The mask of “historical” interpretations.¹⁴

Heidegger sees the transition from traditional historical research with ground-laying to a metaphysics that returns to the beginning, as a changeover. And the transition as a changeover is carried out in the previous lectures as “the masks.” The mask here is not merely a metaphor but expresses the unique performative character of Heidegger's own interpretation. Therefore, it can be called *hermeneutics of mask*. This hermeneutics of mask is an attempt to investigate his own latent thought of Being behind the mask, while “masking” his historical interpretations of traditional metaphysical thoughts.

In the *Black Notebooks*, this hermeneutics of mask is considered in two more phases in terms of content. One is exclusively an interpretation of past thought. This interpretation is carried out to speak of the latent thought which

¹³ *Ibid.*, 11-12.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 243.

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is left unspoken in the leaps of thinking made by past philosophers in their thought. Heidegger writes: "Every essential thinker always *thinks* about a decisive leap more originally than he *speaks* of it; and in *that* thinking he must be grasped and *his* unsaid must be said (cf. p. 66). Therefore, interpretation is required."¹⁵ This first hermeneutic phase, which is like the "violence" (*Gewalt*) of "interpretation" as found in the "Kantbook," can be seen as the basic inheritance of hermeneutics of Dasein.¹⁶

The other, which is the essence of hermeneutics of mask, is the interpretive dimension that is intentionally hidden in Heidegger's own various lectures. Before the preceding passage, Heidegger states, "Start with something small and yet consider what is great." It further goes on to say.

My lecture courses, which belong to this that is small, are *all*, and indeed *intentionally*, still only a superficiality and mostly even a concealment; this holds as well of those courses which express themselves about themselves and their task. How should and could it be said pedagogically what the genuine volition desires?¹⁷

Heidegger clearly separates the pedagogical intent of his lectures from the question of Being, and keeps the interpretation of the question of Being secret. Therefore, it can be said that hermeneutics of mask, following the thoughts of philosophers of the past, tries to double the interpretation of its own thought in terms of the exoteric and the esoteric, and furthermore, to interpret his own thought in terms of the esoteric.

But even with this doubling of interpretations, why did Heidegger have to esotericize his own transitional interpretive thinking behind hermeneutics of mask? In *Being and Time*, he stated that "being-with-one-another" (*Miteinandersein*) is governed by the "ambiguity" of public preconceived interpretation and that "under the mask of mutuality, hostility is at work."¹⁸ Indeed, in the *Black Notebooks*, while regarding not only the mass media and politically oriented philosophies and disciplines, but also public discourse in general as a part of machination (*Machenschaft*), Heidegger

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 258.

¹⁶ Cf. Martin Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 3: *Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik* (1929), 202. However, it should be noted that Heidegger was already uncomfortable with his own attempt in "Kantbook" in March 1932. "(Today (March, 1932) I am in all clarity at a place from which my entire previous literary output (*Being and Time*, "What is Metaphysics?," "Kantbook," and "On the Essence of Ground" I and II) has become alien to me" (Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 94: *Überlegungen II-VI (Schwarze Hefte 1931-1938)*, 19-20).

¹⁷ Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 94: *Überlegungen II-VI (Schwarze Hefte 1931-1938)*, 257-258.

¹⁸ Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 2: *Sein und Zeit* (1927), 232.

criticizes them thoroughly and repeatedly without mercy—one might even express it as “sour.”¹⁹ Should we then assume that Heidegger's esoteric hermeneutics of mask was also mainly intended to preserve the “hostility” toward such machination?²⁰

But it must be said that Heidegger's real aim is not so much to stay on the public level and raise “hostility” as to open the sphere of transition between the two beginnings, to criticize machination and see the essence of it. In his 1934/35 lectures, *Hölderlin's Hymns “Germania” and “The Rhine”* (*Hölderlins Hymnen »Germanien« und »Der Rhein«*), Heidegger, following Hölderlin, positions Dionysus as an “in-between-being” between God and man, and insists the “mask” is a “symbol” of the “fundamental linkage between being and non-being (presence and non-presence)” of Dionysus.²¹ The aim of hermeneutics of mask is, first and foremost, to open the sphere for the transition between being and non-being, the present and the non-present, and the first beginning and other beginning. In this deepening of his own latent thought and opening of the sphere of transition, the “mask” as a boundary between the exoteric and the esoteric, becomes a place of struggle between Being-historical-thinking and machination.

Critical retracing to the hermeneutic event of Thinking: Destruction of Formal Indication

In the process of deepening his Being-historical thinking and confronting machination, Heidegger gained the reversal insight that machination is not merely an enemy opposed to himself, but rather a sign of the “abandonment of being” by Being itself, making the question of machination unquestionable.²² In *Being and Time*, the ambiguity of pre-conceived public interpretation was also held to have its origin in “thrownness (*Geworfenheit*),” which is independent of the intentions of

¹⁹ Richard Polt, “Inception, Downfall, and the Broken World: Heidegger Above the Sea of Fog,” in: *Heidegger's Black Notebooks: Responses to Anti-Semitism*, ed. by Andrew J. Mitchell and Peter Trawny (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017), 76.

²⁰ Some—if not all—of the so-called “anti-Semitic” statements in the *Black Notebooks* can be thought of as such a “hostility” toward machination, twisted and overlapping with a kind of German autochthonism or nationalism on an existentiell level. See my article, *Mythos of ontology*, in *La revue de la pensée d'aujourd'hui*, 46(3), 2018, 63-76 [in Japanese].

²¹ Martin Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 39: *Hölderlins Hymnen “Germanien” und “Der Rhein”* (Winter semester 1934/35), ed. by Susanne Ziegler (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1980), 188-190.

²² Martin Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 65: *Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis)* (1936–1938), ed. by Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1989), 119, 123; Heidegger, GA 94: *Überlegungen II-VI (Schwarze Hefte 1931-1938)*, 383-384, 405.

individual Dasein.²³ This point, however, also applies to the thought of *Being and Time* itself, which relies on public “temptations” of traditional metaphysics. If Heidegger is to be thorough in his thought of Being, he must confront machination of metaphysical thinking that unintentionally lurks even in his own thinking and repeat the critical retrogression to expose it. In this sense, the criticism of machination is a meta-self-criticism that goes beyond even self-criticism. In the *Black Notebooks*, Heidegger gradually criticizes the “interpretation” that involves intentional and technical thinking of traditional metaphysics in order to grasp beings in beingness.²⁴ Correspondingly, the “mask” is also turned into an expression of machination that obstructs the thought of Being.²⁵

But this thoroughness of self-criticism must now be transformed into the inadequacy of even self-criticism itself. In *Ponderings XIII* of the *Black Notebook* in 1939-41, Heidegger writes that “No self-interpretation attains what is first said, because in the latter alone does the unsaid vibrate.”²⁶ For Heidegger, repeatedly taking off the masks that lurk behind the masks means a more thoroughgoing thought of Being according to its vibration, against machination.²⁷ This sphere of vibration of Being deepens and extends Heidegger’s hermeneutical thought far beyond traditional metaphysics. In *On Inception (Über den Anfang)*, the 70th volume of the collected works, established in 1941, hermeneutics of mask is divided into three interpretations, based on the division between the first and other beginnings.

The interpretation of the history of Being is threefold in its essence:

1. the interpretation of the history of Being (of the first beginning and its history, which reveals itself as metaphysics, whereby metaphysics is history in itself, namely the sequence of decision of the truth of Being in its beingness).

²³ Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 2: *Sein und Zeit* (1927), 232.

²⁴ Martin Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 95: *Überlegungen VII-XI (Schwarze Hefte 1938-39)*, ed. by Peter Trawny (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2014), 14, 22, 29, 49, 126.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 283, 330, 435.

²⁶ Martin Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 96: *Überlegungen XII-XV (Schwarze Hefte 1939-1941)*, ed. by Peter Trawny (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2014), 78.

²⁷ When these considerations are on the background, it becomes understandable that in *What Is Called Thinking (Was Heisst Denken)*, Heidegger critically and in multiple meanings discusses the human being as the persona, “the mask of being” with Nietzsche’s “Last Man” in mind. “Persona means the actor’s mask through which his dramatic tale is sounded. Since man is the percipient who perceives what is, we can think of him as the persona, the mask, of Being” (Martin Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 8: *Was heisst Denken? (1951-1952)*, ed. by Paola-Ludovika Coriando (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann), 2002, 65).

2. The interpretation of Being as history, *as* beginning. The saying of the coming-in-between (Dazwischenkunft); the word of the event.

3. the interpretation in the unity of the two previous ways. The interpretation in the transition from the first into the other beginning. The historicity of this transition is determined by Hölderlin's word. The preparatory interpretation "of" poets.

The threefoldness of the interpretation arises from the unity of the simple saying of the word of Being.

What is accomplished by one way of interpretation also belongs to each of the other two.²⁸

The first is an interpretation of metaphysical history in which the Being-historical interpretation does not intervene. The second is a Being-historical interpretation to which a higher reflection on the first beginning is added. The third is the interpretation that unifies the first and second interpretations and is carried out in the transition between the first and second beginning, with the interpretation of Hölderlin's poem as the guide.²⁹ This third interpretation is the practice of hermeneutics of mask, in which one repeatedly unmask oneself. But this hermeneutics of mask is also *hermeneutics of transition*, in which one throws oneself into the equivocation or poly-meaning of the poem, thereby opening a realm of thought in which one can simply name Being. These three interpretations are one and the same, but at the root, they are motivated by the "discomfort" arising from the "tremor" or "vibration" between the first and second beginning.³⁰

With this hermeneutic sphere of transition, Heidegger's thought of Being opens the thought of more than what is said, the thought of the unsaid. "Whoever does not have the power and the will to concede to thinkers essentially more than they themselves have expressed and could express should never attempt an interpretation of them; for otherwise the result is only an erudite degradation."³¹ This hermeneutics of transition to the unspeakable tries not only to uncover the essence of the history of

²⁸ Martin Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 70: *Über den Anfang* (1941), ed. by Paola-Ludovika Coriando (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2005), 149.

²⁹ Cf. Dean Komel, Zur "Hermeneutik der Überlegung" in den Schwarzen Heften, in *Jenseits von Polemik und Apologie*, 41.

³⁰ Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 70: *Über den Anfang* (1941), 148.

³¹ Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 96: *Überlegungen XII-XV (Schwarze Hefte 1939–1941)*, 91-92.

metaphysics derived from the first beginning, but also to “unmask” Heidegger's own “unsaid” thinking retroactively.³²

In terms of this “unsaid” thinking, let us consider the late Heidegger's critical retracing of hermeneutics. Heidegger's hermeneutical method of formal indication, which was developed by the early Heidegger and extensively employed in *Being and Time*, was ostensibly no longer used after *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics (Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik)* in 1929/30.³³ Heidegger, however, continued to reexamine the hermeneutic concept of formal indication. In *Additions and Thought Splinters (Ergänzungen und Denksplitter)*, the 91st volume of the collected works, in the 1930/31 fragment, Heidegger characterized the indication as a projection (*Entwurf*), stating that it does not give an “essence” but “only a direction in the sphere of essence.”³⁴ Indication points to being and provides only a direction in its meaning, but does not reveal anything about it. In his fragment entitled “discoursing instruction (formal indication),” Heidegger quotes “neither says nor hides” from Heraclitus' Fragment 93.³⁵ “Neither says,” because it “inquires only into *Being* and does not target beings or shining,” and “nor hides,” because it “still *indicates* beings or shining.”³⁶ It is worth noting that “beings” are indeed indicated but “Being” is indicated as “unspeakable.” Another noteworthy point is that while early Heidegger drew on Husserl, Dilthey, and Aristotle for the formal indication method, here this inspiration is traced back to Heraclitus. This historical going back to the Pre-Socratic philosophers, such as Heraclitus, provides the starting point for hermeneutics of transition beyond Phenomenological Hermeneutics, as we have seen above.

Ponderings IX of the 1938/39 *Black Notebook* contains a fragment from the 1950s/60s, in which Heraclitus is mentioned as a “3H” alongside Hegel

³² In his book “Hermeneutics of Mask,” Megumi Sakabe also once stated that in order to “form a truly transformative subject of reality in Japan,” it is necessary to “repeatedly return to and inhabit the reality of the historical thickness of poetic language, and to exercise critical consciousness to the utmost limit, and to release thought into the space of the infinite multiplicity of metaphors that disappear in silence, or into the space of infinite layers of the masks of the world, which never reaches its true face, no matter how far it goes.” Sakabe's insight is remarkably close to Heidegger's attempt. See Megumi Sakabe, *Hermeneutics of Mask* (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1975), 155 [in Japanese].

³³ See my book, *Hermeneutik des Seins: Struktur, Kehre und Wiederholung von Martin Heideggers Sein und Zeit*, Hosei University Press, 2012, Chapter 1-3 [in Japanese].

³⁴ Martin Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 91: *Ergänzungen und Denksplitter*, ed. by Mark Michalski (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2022), 138.

³⁵ “The Lord whose ist the oracle at Delphoi neither says nor hides his meaning, but shows it by a sign(ὁ ἄναξ οὐ τὸ μαντεῖόν ἐστι τὸ ἐν Δελφοῖς, οὔτε λέγει οὔτε κρύπτει ἀλλὰ σημαίνει.)” in *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker. Erster Band*, übersetzt und ed. by Hermann Diels und Walther Kranz (Berlin: Weidmann, 1960), 172, Nr. 93.

³⁶ Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 91: *Ergänzungen und Denksplitter*, 185.

and Hölderlin, and “turning his gaze” on “events” (*Ereignis*) is “toward a thought that responds—toward the refusal to say (*Entsagen*), which is (*in multiple senses*) refrained from (*protecting*).”³⁷ Thus Heraclitus and the poet Hölderlin, who is the guide of the transitional interpretation, respond to “the same” in the “unspeakable thing” as formal indication. In *Additions and Thought Splinters* in the fragment entitled “Refusal-to-say (*Ent-sagen*) and ‘formal indication’,” “formal indication (*Being and Time*)” is “saying and indicating (*Sage und Zeige*).”³⁸ And there, furthermore, Heidegger states that “The *Indication*—a preliminary letting gaze of the unity of the same here and there—*indicating*.”³⁹

At first glance, it seems that Heidegger superimposes formal indication on the event of *Beying* as the unspeakable, which is the goal of the interpretation. But this is not the end of the story. Furthermore, in *Preliminarity (Vorläufiges)* I of his *Black Notebooks*, written in his last years, 1963-1970, he doubts that the “formal indication” is “still a residue of Platonism” insofar as it aims at “universal valid and timeless in-itself.”⁴⁰ What should be distinguished from formal indication is the “owing and pre-thinking” (*Verdanken und Vor-denken*) that quietly pervades the “refusal to say.”⁴¹ This “owing and pre-thinking” means Thinking, that is, meditating and foreseeing what has yet to be said, giving thanks to the philosophers who have gone before us.

Conclusion

We have seen the process of Heidegger’s transformation of hermeneutics in the *Black Notebooks*. By moving from Being-historical thinking to Thinking itself, Heidegger attempts to deconstruct his starting point of Phenomenological Hermeneutics and critically examine the genesis of his own Thinking. Interpretation should not require the intention and technique of interpreter, as they are already governed by the thinking of traditional metaphysics. What is required in interpretation is the question itself to be interpreted. In his transformation from hermeneutics of self-criticism to hermeneutics of mask and to hermeneutics of transition, Heidegger finds in the question of Being hermeneutical insights that respond to the event of *Beying*. To discard the intention and technique for interpretation means to take a critical distance not only from traditional

³⁷ Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 95: *Überlegungen VII-XI (Schwarze Hefte 1938-39)*, 266.

³⁸ Heidegger, GA 91: *Ergänzungen und Denksplitter*, 647.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 648.

⁴⁰ Martin Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 102: *Vorläufiges I-IV (Schwarze Hefte 1963-1970)*, ed. by Peter Trawny (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2022), 59.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 60.

metaphysical thinking in order to see through machination at work there, but also from one's own interpretation that unwittingly involves the intention and technique in order to respond to what is being questioned.

This art of interpretation, attempted in the *Black Notebooks* as the transformation of hermeneutics, can be considered as the "step back (*Schritt zurück*)."⁴² Unlike "step forward (*Fortschritt*)" in metaphysical thinking, the step back creates a unique and original sphere of hermeneutical thinking. In *Remarks (Anmerkungen)* II of the *Black Notebooks*, written between 1942-46, Heidegger states that "the pre-liminary in the step back brings a different art of foresight and carefulness of thinking with oneself."⁴³ The step back is a hermeneutically solitary task, yet it is not without companions, because "the preliminary in the step back is first and foremost to experience the fate in which thinking has become philosophy."⁴⁴ Companions in the step back are the unspoken philosophical thoughts of our predecessors, even as critical objects, and the unspeakable things in the words of the poets as guides. Thanks to them, we can create a new and different kind of hermeneutical thinking according to the vibration of Thinking itself that comes from the event of Being. This hermeneutical thinking, however, is by no means a floating fantasy. According to *Remarks* III in 1946/47, the step back had already been taken by entering into "being-in-the-world."⁴⁵ The step back is the hermeneutic thinking that seeks to know how to re-inhabit this world and history. In this sense, "owing and pre-thinking" is a hermeneutical attitude appropriate to interpreting the history of Being and preparing to create new and multiple thoughts of Being for living in our world again. In this way, the transformation of hermeneutics in the *Black Notebooks* opens various possibilities of a future time-space in which we will re-live.

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⁴² Cf. Martin Heidegger, *Brief über den Humanismus* (1946), in *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 9: *Wegmarken (1919–1961)*, ed. by Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2004), 343; Martin Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 6.2: *Nietzsche II (1939–1946)*, ed. by Brigitte Schillbach (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1997), 203, 333-353; Martin Heidegger, "Die onto-theo-logische Verfassung der Metaphysik" (1957), in *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 11: *Identität und Differenz (1955–1957)*, ed. by Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2006), 50-78.

⁴³ Martin Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 97: *Anmerkungen I-V (Schwarze Hefte 1942–1948)*, ed. by Peter Trawny (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2015), 163.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 164.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 265.

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An Elucidation of the Citation from Hölderlin's Poem "The Journey" in Heidegger's Essay "The Origin of the Work of Art"

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Abstract: At the end of his essay "The Origin of the Work of Art," Heidegger quotes a verse from Hölderlin's poem "The Journey (in German: *Die Wanderung*)." The verse reads as follows: "Reluctant to leave the place / Is that which dwells near the origin. (*Schwer verläßt / Was nahe dem Ursprung wohnt, den Ort.*)" For the elucidation of its meaning, the poem itself as well as Heidegger's lecture Hölderlin's Hymn "Remembrance" are investigated, because the same verse is cited in the lecture. This investigation will reveal the reason why it is difficult to leave art as an origin.

Keywords: Heidegger, Hölderlin, art, origin

This paper attempts to elucidate the final sentence of Heidegger's essay "The Origin of the Work of Art." The sentence is a quotation from Hölderlin's poem "The Journey (in German: *Die Wanderung*)." The quotation reads as follows: "Reluctant to leave the place / Is that which dwells near the origin (*Schwer verläßt / Was nahe dem Ursprung wohnt, den Ort*)."¹ This verse concludes Heidegger's essay and summarizes his understanding of the essence of art. Thus, it is evident that Hölderlin's verse seems to play an important role in "The Origin of the Work of Art."

Nevertheless, very little research has been conducted on the quotation thus far. Only a scholar named Karsten Harries mentions it in his

¹Martin Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art," in *Off the Beaten Track*, trans. by Julian Young and Kenneth Haynes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 50. This English translation includes the original German text of Hölderlin's poem "The Journey."

commentary on Heidegger's essay. However, Harries is not interested in its meaning, but only in Heidegger's emphasis on the relation between the Germans and Hölderlin's poetry. Harries says: "What the Germans need to do, Heidegger here claims, a claim that he reaffirms over and over, is to become the preservers of Hölderlin's poetry."² Then, Harries talks about the needy age of God's death and the significance of Hölderlin's poetry in this age. Therefore, Heidegger's citation from "The Journey" remains unexplained in Harries' commentary.

In this paper, I elucidate Hölderlin's verse in "The Origin of the Work of Art." First, I look at Heidegger's lecture *Hölderlin's Hymn "Remembrance"* (winter semester 1941/42), insofar as the same verse is cited and somewhat explained there. (§ 2.) However, his explanation there is not enough to fully understand the verse's whole meaning. Thus, I interpret Hölderlin's poem "The Journey" itself. (§ 3.) On the basis of this interpretation, I reflect on the meaning of the final sentence in Heidegger's essay. (§ 4.) The reflection will contribute to a deeper understanding of the conclusion of "The Origin of the Work of Art."

Heidegger's explanation of the verse from "The Journey" in his lecture *Hölderlin's Hymn "Remembrance"*

In the winter semester 1941/42, Heidegger gave the lecture *Hölderlin's Hymn "Remembrance."* The full text of this poem was interpreted in detail, whereas the other poems were only partially quoted and explained. When Heidegger interpreted the fourth strophe, he mentioned the verse from "The Journey." The beginning of the fourth strophe reads as follows:

Yet where are my friends? Bellarmine / And companion?
Many a one / Is shy of going to the source; (*Wo aber sind die Freunde? Bellarmin / Mit dem Gefährten? Mancher / Trägt Scheue, an die Quelle zu gehn;*)³

Here, Hölderlin asks where his friends are. Heidegger says that it is not "a serious question at all, but more just the linguistic form of ascertaining that the friends are not there," insofar as only the poet "has already come home into his own."⁴ However, this homecoming does not mean returning to

² Cf. Karsten Harries, *Art Matters. A Critical Commentary on Heidegger's "The Origin of the Work of Art"* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2009), 180.

³ Martin Heidegger, *Hölderlin's Hymn "Remembrance,"* trans. by William McNeill and Julia Ireland (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2018), 15-18. This English translation includes the original German text of the poem "The Journey."

⁴ *Ibid.*, 142.

a particular geographic hometown, but “coming to be at home as the passage to one’s own (*das Heimischwerden als Gang zum Eigenen*).”⁵ Hölderlin’s question implies that Bellarmine and the companion are not underway on the passage to what is their own. The verse that follows this gives the reason why they are not underway. They are shy of going to what is their own, namely to the source.

Heidegger distinguishes shyness from timidity. Timid people are apprehensive in view of what they are going to experience. Therefore, they want to avoid it. Shy people, too, fear what they are going to encounter. Nevertheless, simultaneously, they are drawn by what attunes them to shyness. What draws and frightens people in “Remembrance” is the source. Heidegger says: “Of what are those friends shy who are marked by shyness? Of the passage to the source. ... Shyness is shyness before the source itself.”⁶ Since they are shy of the source, although they want to reach it, they hesitate to do so.

According to Heidegger, Hölderlin’s word “source” means “the origin of the waters of the homeland.”⁷ The source authentically belongs to the homeland. It is most difficult to reside at the source, because the source points away from itself, “in the direction of the river flowing from it.”⁸ Nevertheless, there are people who have overcome this difficulty and dwell in nearness to the source. However, the difficulty has been transformed into another difficulty. What is difficult for them is now the abandonment of the homely locale.

In this context, Heidegger quotes the following verse from “The Journey”: “With difficulty that / Which dwells near the origin abandons the locale (*Schwer verläßt / Was nahe dem Ursprung wohnt, den Ort*).”⁹ The locale is the neighborhood surrounding the origin. To dwell near the origin means “to be a good neighbor to the ownmost of one’s own (*Nachbarschaft halten zum Eigensten des Eigenen*).”¹⁰ This ownmost cannot be possessed, but always only “sought in a seeking. Seeking is now more precisely: the passage to the source.”¹¹ Therefore, who dwells near the origin is underway on the passage to the source. Herewith, Heidegger ends his explanation of the verse from “The Journey” and continues to interpret “Remembrance.”

⁵ *Ibid.*, 143.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 146.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*, 148.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 147. In this book, the English translation of the verse from “The Journey” is different from that in the book *Off the Beaten Track*.

¹⁰ Heidegger, *Hölderlin’s Hymn*, 148.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

Given Heidegger's explanation, however, it is not clear why it is difficult to abandon the homely locale. He probably expects his readers to know the reason. However, for those people who are not familiar with "The Journey," they would not be able to understand the difficulty. Therefore, it is necessary to consider the meaning of the verse in the context of "The Journey."

The interpretation of Hölderlin's poem "The Journey"

"The Journey" consists of nine strophes. The verse that Heidegger cited in "The Origin of the Work of Art" can be found in the second strophe. The second strophe needs to be considered along with the first one. In both strophes, Hölderlin praises his hometown of Swabia, which is personified as his mother. Since Swabia is a neighbor to the Swiss Alps, she stays in their shade and "dwells near the hearth of the house."¹² The "hearth" seems to be related to a well-known anecdote about Heraclitus, who was famous for his pantheism. It is reported by Aristotle that foreigners visited Heraclitus to learn his enigmatic theology. However, when they found him warming himself by his hearth, they were so disappointed that they hesitated to enter his house. Then, Heraclitus summoned them and said: "Come in, and don't worry; for there are gods here also."¹³ According to this anecdote, the hearth of the house is the residing place of the gods. Therefore, Swabia dwells in the neighborhood of the gods.

This neighborhood is also indicated in the following verse: "and within you hear / The wellspring purl / From silver cups (*und [du] hörst, wie drinnen / Aus silbernen Opferschalen / Der Quell rauscht*)."¹⁴ This verse does not make any sense, because wellsprings cannot purl and flow from cups, and there are no cups in the Alps unless human beings bring them there. Therefore, "silver cups" must be a metaphorical expression.

A clarification of what Hölderlin means by reference to silver cups is needed. "Silver cups" is not a correct translation of the original German word "silbernen Opferschalen." The English translation does not represent the meaning of the German word "Opfer," which signifies "sacrificial offering." Furthermore, the German word "Schale" does not refer to a cup but rather a

¹² Friedrich Hölderlin, "The Journey," *Hyperion and Selected Poems*, ed. by Eric L. Santner (New York: Continuum, 1990), 203. This translation includes the original German text of Hölderlin's poems.

¹³ Patrick Lee Miller, *Becoming God. Pure Reason in Early Greek Philosophy* (London & New York: Continuum, 2011), 8. Miller quotes this anecdote from Aristotle's book *On the Parts of Animals*. Heidegger also considered it once. See Martin Heidegger, "Brief über den 'Humanismus'," in *Wegmarken* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1976), 355.

¹⁴ Hölderlin, "The Journey," 202-203.

bowl. A bowl is a concave and rounded vessel usually larger than a cup. Therefore, the accurate translation of “silbernen Opferschalen” is “silver ceremonial bowls.”

The accuracy of the translation is essential because silver ceremonial bowls refer to the lakes in the Alps. When the sunlight is reflected from the water of the lakes, their surfaces shimmer in silver and look like silver bowls, not like silver cups. Silver bowls are usually used in ritual ceremonies to pray to God or gods. Therefore, the Alps are like a vast altar, covered with many silver ceremonial bowls. As an altar is a holy table in a church or temple, the Alps become the site where God or gods reside.

The silver lakes are the origins of many brooks and rivers around the Alps. So, the wellspring purls from them. Since Swabia is a neighbor of the Alps, she can hear the wellspring flowing with a murmuring sound in swirls and eddies. Hölderlin describes this flowing as follows: “Snowcaps (*Der schneeige Gipfel*) drench the earth / With the purest water.”¹⁵ Since Swabia is closest to the snowcaps and the lakes of the Alps, she is born loyal to the origin.

Then, Hölderlin says: “A place of dwelling / This near the source is hard to leave (*Schwer verläßt / Was nahe dem Ursprung wohnet, den Ort*).”¹⁶ This is the verse which is cited at the end of “The Origin of the Work of Art.” The source indicates the Alps and their lakes. What dwells near the source is the loyal Swabia. Therefore, the verse means that it is difficult for her to leave the neighborhood of the Alps. However, Swabia as a region is not able to move anywhere. So what dwells near the source refers to the Swabian people. The reason for their difficulty in leaving is revealed in the following verse: “All agree there is no / Better spot for home.”¹⁷ The Swabian people know that the neighborhood of the Alps is the best spot for a home. Therefore, it is difficult for them to move somewhere else.

In view of Hölderlin’s verse that is cited in “The Origin of the Work of Art,” I quoted three English translations: “Reluctant to leave the place / Is that which dwells near the origin”¹⁸; “With difficulty that / Which dwells near the origin abandons the locale”¹⁹; “A place of dwelling / This near the source is hard to leave.”²⁰ They are more or less similar to each other. However, there is an important difference because of the German word “schwer,” which means heavy, weighty, difficult, hard, serious, indigestible, and so on. Then, the first translation stands out from the others, because “schwer” has nothing

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Heidegger, “The Origin of the Work of Art,” 50.

¹⁹ Heidegger, *Hölderlin’s Hymn*, 147.

²⁰ Hölderlin, “The Journey,” 203.

to do with “reluctant,” “unwilling,” and “hesitant.” However, I think that it is the most appropriate translation insofar as the German word “schwer” has another meaning, namely “sad.” For it is sadness that the Swabian people feel when they leave the neighborhood of the Alps. The reason for their sadness is that they do not want to abandon the best spot for home. Therefore, they are reluctant to leave the place.

Reflection on the ending of “The Origin of the Work of Art”

Now, I reflect on the meaning of Hölderlin’s verse, which concludes “The Origin of the Work of Art.” According to Heidegger, the verse is “a certain sign” for the decision in the following either-or situation:

[I]t is decided whether art can be an origin – and therefore must be a leap ahead – or whether it should remain a mere postscript, in which case it can only be carried along as a cultural phenomenon that has become routine. Are we, in our existence, historically at the origin? Or do we, rather, in our relationship with art, appeal, merely, to a cultured knowledge of the past?²¹

This situation clearly shows two completely different perspectives on art. From the first perspective, art can be regarded as an origin and a beginning, whereas art remains a postscript and a routine cultural phenomenon in the second perspective. Those people who adopt the first perspective are historically at art as an origin, whereas other people relate to art only as a cultured knowledge of the past. The second perspective is common in the modern society of the cultural industries. In contrast, the first perspective is quite unusual and thus requires an explanation.

In order to comprehend what Heidegger means by art as an origin, it is necessary to take a look at his understanding of art as founding: “The essence of art is poetry. The essence of poetry, however, is the founding [*Stiftung*] of truth.”²² He understands founding in a threefold sense: bestowing, grounding, and beginning. Art bestows what has not existed before and overflows what is present and available for use. Art opens up the earth, which is the self-closing ground on which human existence rests. So whenever art happens, history begins. Therefore, art is a beginning.²³ According to Heidegger, history is not a series of past events, but rather “the

²¹ Heidegger, “The Origin of the Work of Art,” 49-50.

²² *Ibid.*, 47.

²³ *Ibid.*, 48.

transporting of a people into its appointed task as the entry into its endowment.”²⁴ The task is the creative preservation of truth in the work. When this task is performed, the people enter what is given to it, namely truth. In this sense, art allows truth to arise. Then, Heidegger defines the word “origin” as follows: “To allow something to arise, to bring something into being from out of the essential source in the founding leap is what is meant by the word ‘origin.’”²⁵ According to this definition, art is the origin of truth. Truth originates from art.

It is evident that Heidegger has adopted the first perspective toward art. The question arises as to why he talks about the either-or situation, because his decision already seems to be made. The reason is that Heidegger is addressing those people who have adopted the second perspective on art. And he wants to help them make a new decision. In this context, the verse from “The Journey” is cited. According to my interpretation of “The Journey,” Swabia is reluctant to leave the neighborhood of the origin because it is the best spot for home. By quoting the verse, Heidegger implies that art as an origin is too good for those people to abandon. Therefore, when the people understand Hölderlin’s verse and the merit of the origin, they will decide to dwell at art as an origin.

Epilogue

I want to conclude my paper with a quotation from an Asian thinker. The name of this thinker is Zhu Xi (朱熹). He was born in 1130 and died in 1200. He was influential in the development of Neo-Confucianism. He was also a poet and wrote many poems.

I want to introduce one of his poems, which talks about an origin. The title of the poem is 觀書有感 (관서유감). The original Chinese text reads as follows: “半畝方塘一鑑開 (반무방당일감개) / 天光雲影共徘徊 (천광운영공배회) / 問渠那得清如許 (문거나득청여허) / 為有源頭活水來 (위유원두활수래).”²⁶ It can be translated into English as follows: A half furrow is a quadrilateral pond, on which a mirror is open. / On the pond, the light of the sky and the shadow of the clouds play together. / I ask the pond how it is so pure. / Because there is an origin from which the lively water comes.

This poem emphasizes the pureness of the pond. Since its water is very clean, the pond looks like and functions as a mirror. Thus, it can reflect

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 49.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ 주희, 「관서유감」, 『주자시 100 선』, 장세후 옮김, 연암서가, 2013, 52-53 쪽.

all things, namely light and shadow. The pond is so pure because its origin keeps originating clean water. It is remarkable that Zhu Xi does not talk about the reflection of the pond but the play (徘徊) on the pond. The reason why all things come and play together on the pond is that the origin draws them to itself. There is no better spot to play together.

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Language of the Ineffable: Poetry and Imageless Thought in Heidegger's Later Philosophy¹

Suh-Hyun Park

Abstract: This paper aims to shed light on the characteristics of Heidegger's later thinking on language, which we can illuminate by examining his interpretation of Hölderlin's poetry. Poetic language differs from everyday language, such as statements (*Aussagen*). It speaks of imageless thinking. With the help of *a priori* understanding of its beingness (*Seiendheit*), we routinely state a being (*Seiende*) as something. However, the appearing of a being or an appearing being cannot be determined through a statement of "S is p." An appearing being indeed does exist; however, it disappears once the beingness of a being is given. Hölderlin's "*The Rhine*" is a poem that says the appearing of a being. In this regard, the poem is a language of the ineffable, which cannot be said in ordinary language. Therefore, the interpretation of Hölderlin's poetry presented by Heidegger is an elucidation of a language of the ineffable. It is the task of this paper to uncover this fact.

Keywords: Heidegger, Hölderlin, "*The Rhine*," the ineffable

In his later philosophy, Heidegger says that language is "the house of Being."² This language is, of course, no other than the language of poetry. By examining the poetic language, we can shed light on the characteristics of Heidegger's thinking on poetry. In contrast to this thinking, analytic philosophy or linguistic philosophy as a reflection on language has usually analyzed ordinary language, including statements (*Aussagen*). In this respect,

¹ This work was supported by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Korea and the National Research Foundation of Korea (NRF-2021S1A5C2A03089203).

² Martin Heidegger, "Letter on 'Humanism'," in *Pathmarks*, trans. by Frank A. Capuzzi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 254.

Heidegger's thinking on poetry differs from analytic philosophy. We will examine the implications of that different thinking.

Poetic language, of course, exists as a result of poetizing. According to Heidegger, poetizing is the work of a poet who risks the precinct of being and language.³ Poetry—the poet's language—as we will see later, is a language that says unrepresentable or imageless thoughts. As a language of imageless thought, poetry paradoxically says the ineffable. Hölderlin's "The Rhine" is a poem that says the ineffable, and thus we will examine Heidegger's interpretation of it.⁴

What is essential is that poetizing is the result of a transformation of the human mode of Being. Heidegger's thinking on poetry likewise is closely related to human change, asking about the meaning of language in our lives. A review of his later thoughts on language, therefore, holds importance as a searching out of a philosophy of language which has a sort of ethical meaning. Let us start our discussion by reviewing that Heidegger's thinking on language has undergone changes and then proceed to illuminate the characteristics of poetic language.

Heidegger's changing thoughts on language

In "My Way to Phenomenology," Heidegger says that he came to the path of exploring Being through questions that arose while reading Brentano's dissertation "On the manifold meaning of being since Aristotle," and especially studying Husserl's *Logical Investigation*.⁵ However, the path became longer than he expected and involved many stops, detours, and

³ Martin Heidegger, "Why Poets?," in *Off the Beaten Track*, trans. by Julian Young and Kenneth Haynes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 233.

⁴ Scholars have interpreted Heidegger's dialogue with Hölderlin in various ways. For example, some interpretations pay attention to the political implication of this dialogue with different focuses: Grossman interprets Heidegger's dialogue with Hölderlin as imparting a holistic character that does not fit Hölderlin's poetic texts (Andreas Grossman, "The Myth of Poetry: On Heidegger's "Hölderlin,"" in *The Comparatist*, 28 (2004), 34; Young interprets this dialogue as Heidegger's fundamental confrontation with Nazism (Julian Young, "Poets and Rivers: Heidegger on Hölderlin's "Der Ister,"" in *Dialogue*, XXXVIII (1999), 411. Plus, some interpretations emphasize the overcoming of language in Western metaphysics and found the human dwelling in the event of language (Jennifer Anna Gossetti-Ferencei, *Heidegger, Hölderlin, and the Subject of Poetic Language: Toward a New Poesis of Dasein* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2004), 74; Niall Keane, "The Silence of the Origin: Philosophy in Transition and the Essence of Thinking," in *Research in Phenomenology*, 43 (2013), 45. Of course, there are multiple interpretations that differ in point of view; however, this paper, focusing on Heidegger's interpretation of Hölderlin's poem, "The Rhine," sheds light on how this poem preserves and presents the truth of Being.

⁵ Martin Heidegger, "My Way to Phenomenology," in *On Time and Being*, trans. by Joan Stambaugh (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1972), 74, 79.

wrong roads along the way.⁶ Heidegger's thinking on being likewise changed. In this respect, we should not interpret his so-called turn (*Kehre*) of thought as an absolute disjunction. At the same time, however, we can also see changes in his thought, such as on language. Let us see how Heidegger's thoughts on language changed.

In *Being and Time*, Heidegger says that discourse (*Rede*) is the ontological foundation of language.⁷ Here, language is "the totality of words,"⁸ such as a tool with which we are familiar. In this respect, we cannot regard the language in *Being and Time* as the same language as the house of Being, because the latter is as primordial as the discourse in *Being and Time*. Furthermore, language as the house of Being is even more primordial than discourse because while discourse, with attunement and understanding, constitutes the disclosedness of Being-in-the-world, the former is the presentation and preservation of the truth of Being. We will examine the relationship between language as the house of Being and the truth of Being later; we will first focus on the issues regarding discourse and language in *Being and Time*.

It is crucial in *Being and Time* to uncover the ontological structure of discourse through the analytic of Dasein.⁹ In this regard, the analytic of Dasein is the key to understanding the ontological structure of discourse and its relationship with language. However, the analytic of Dasein is no longer central to understanding the phenomenon of language in Heidegger's later philosophy. Instead, it is central here that a language that poetizes the truth of Being is one that presents and preserves the truth in poetry. Then what are the characteristics of poetic language? To elucidate this question, we will first examine the features of ordinary language, including statements that, as we already noted, are different from poetic language.

The pre-understanding of Being as beingness: the ground of statements

The ground of a statement made that "S is p" is a pre-understanding of the subject of the statement as well as a pre-understanding of the fact that the subject exists, regardless of whether it is an actual being or just an imaginary being. The pre-understanding of the subject is *a priori* understanding of it as a particular being. In this sense, the pre-understanding

⁶ Heidegger, "My Way to Phenomenology," 79-80.

⁷ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. by Joan Stambaugh (New York: State University of New York Press, 1996), 150.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 151.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 153.

is no other than *a priori* understanding of the subject's What-Being (*Wassein*). The pre-understanding that the subject exists is, of course, an understanding that the subject is there in reality or imagination. In this sense, this pre-understanding is an understanding of the That-Being (*Dassein*) of the subject.

Those pre-understandings are pre-ontological understandings, which occur before explicitly raising the question of Being. Implicit pre-ontological understandings of the Being of beings always and already lie in our daily comportment towards beings.¹⁰ Statements about beings, of course, belong to our everyday comportment towards those beings. The pre-ontological *a priori* understanding of the Being of beings occurs before we make statements as well as interpretations about those beings, which are the ground of statements. The problem is that when Being is understood as What-Being and at the same time That-Being, human beings forget Being that is not reduced to What-Being and That-Being or to beingness (*Seiendheit*). As the other name of What-Being and That-Being, beingness is the Being that traditional metaphysics has thought of. Let us examine this issue in more detail.

Heidegger says that "all speaking (*Sprechen*) is speaking about something as something, interpreting it on the basis of something ... hence all speaking possesses, formally, a genus."¹¹ In this respect, a statement speaking What-Being of beings says of the genus of beings, which is nothing but the categories to which beings belong. So, speaking of the beingness of beings is speaking of "Being, which is phenomenally present in the category."¹² Put differently, speaking of the beingness of beings is speaking of the Being concerning the categories to which beings belong. However, the categories say the most universal thing (*Allgemeinste*) that can be said of beings in saying what the being as a being is.¹³

Conceived by way of thinking from beings and back to beings as their most universal element, beingness results from grasping or comprehending the Being of beings on the guidelines of assertion and judgment.¹⁴ But in this case, Being that is not reduced to beingness cannot be thought of. This issue is deeply related to the problem of metaphysics. This is because, according to Heidegger, metaphysics starts with the fact that Being is summoned into

¹⁰ Martin Heidegger, *Phenomenological Interpretation of Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. by Paris Emad and Kenneth Maly (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1997), 17.

¹¹ Martin Heidegger, *Plato's Sophist*, trans. by Richard Rojcewicz and André Schuwer (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1997), 171.

¹² Martin Heidegger, *Four Seminars*, trans. by Andrew Mitchell and François Raffoul (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2012), 67.

¹³ Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche Vol. IV: Nihilism*, trans. by David Farrell Krell (New York: Harper & Row, 1981), 41.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

categories and becomes the *a priori*.¹⁵ However, it also means that traditional metaphysics, conversely, did not think of the Being that is not reduced to beingness.

The late Heidegger's task of thinking is to think of Being that is not reduced to beingness. More specifically, this task is to think of the unconcealment or the truth of Being, which is not reduced to Being as beingness. It is the truth of being that traditional metaphysics had not thought of, and the task of thinking in Heidegger's later philosophy has a motive of non-metaphysical thought likewise. His unusual terminology regarding Being, such as *Beyng*, is a way to think of the Being or the truth of Being, which is not reduced to beingness.

Poetry as a non-metaphysical language

Parallel to the thinking on the truth of Being, Heidegger goes on to think of another language speaking the truth of Being. By extension, he criticizes traditional metaphysics, focusing on the problem of language, saying that human beings, taking language only as a possession, have language within Being that has been stamped metaphysically.¹⁶ This is because when Being is metaphysically imprinted or understood as beingness, human beings use language as a handle for representation of and comportment towards beings.¹⁷

If so, what is a language other than an instrument to represent beings? Heidegger says, "[it] is language that *has* human beings, insofar as they belong to, pay heed to language, which first opens up the world to them and at the same time thereby their dwelling in the world."¹⁸ Here, we come to the idea that man belongs to language and that language possesses man. A language to which human beings belong is not a tool for representing beings but a language that reveals the world to human beings for the first time. But what does it mean for language to reveal the world to human beings and possess them? Answering this question requires examining the relationship between language as the house of Being and human words. It will be helpful for us to reconsider Heidegger's interpretation of Hölderlin's poetry to shed light on that relationship.

¹⁵ "[H]olding fast to being as that which is distinguished from beings indeed compels at the same time an appeal to ideas and to categories. Being becomes the *a priori*. Metaphysics has begun." Martin Heidegger, *The History of Beyng*, trans. by William McNeill and Jeffrey Powell (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2015), 115.

¹⁶ Heidegger, "Why Poets?," in *Off the Beaten Track*, 233.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Martin Heidegger, "Phenomenology and Theology," in *Pathmarks*, trans. by Frank A. Capuzzi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 59.

As is well known, Heidegger's interpretation of Hölderlin's poetry is the core of his later thinking on poetic language. In *Hölderlin's Hymns "Germania" and "The Rhine,"* Heidegger says that the originary (*ursprünglich*) essence of the Being of human beings is language.¹⁹ This means that human beings exist as the originary essence of Being when speaking in response to language as the originary essence of Being, i.e., the language of the house of Being, or simply, the language of Being. In other words, when a man speaks in response to the language of Being, language possesses him. And in this responsive word, the world is revealed. Poetry is, of course, the first language to unconceal the world. But what is the meaning of unconcealment of the world through poetic language?

Heidegger's thinking on poetry as a non-metaphysical language is helpful for us to understand that meaning. He says that "to think Being itself explicitly requires disregarding Being to the extent that it is only grounded and interpreted in terms of beings and for beings as their ground, as in all metaphysics."²⁰ Unlike all metaphysics, "it[the fundamental attunement] opens up beings as such in general, and this opening up of the manifestness of beings is indeed so originary that, by virtue of the attunement, we remain inserted into and bound into beings as opened up."²¹

Therefore, the first unconcealment of the world is an encounter of beings as opened up. The thinking which occurs from this encounter is, of course, different from the understanding of the beingness of beings. That new thinking is what is poetized by an attuned poet. We will hereafter shed light on the meaning of poetizing this new thinking with the support of Heidegger's interpretation of Hölderlin's poetry.

Characteristics of poetic language: Heidegger's interpretation of Hölderlin's poem "The Rhine"

Language is the primal (*anfänglich*) dimension within which the essence of human beings, corresponding to the claim (*Anspruch*) of Being, can belong to Being.²² The poet who belongs to Being and responds to the claim of Being is, as is well known, Hölderlin. Poetizing occurs in Hölderlin's

¹⁹ Martin Heidegger, *Hölderlin's Hymns "Germania" and "The Rhine,"* trans. by William McNeill and Julia Ireland (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2014), 62.

²⁰ Martin Heidegger, "Time and Being," in *On Time and Being*, trans. by Joan Stambaugh (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1972), 6.

²¹ Heidegger, *Hölderlin's Hymns "Germania" and "The Rhine,"* 124.

²² Martin Heidegger, "The Turning," in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, trans. by William Lovitt (New York & London: Garland Publishing, 1977), 41.

hymns in a genuinely primal way, i.e., as another beginning (*Anfang*).²³ In other words, Hölderlin's poetry names the self-showing of the beginning or its present, which comes to presence.²⁴ Heidegger says that "the greatness of creative activity takes its measure from the extent of its power to follow up the innermost hidden law of the beginning."²⁵ We can see the characteristics of great poetry that follows the law through Heidegger's interpretation of "The Rhine."

Interpreting the second strophe of "*The Rhine*," Heidegger deals with the relationships between the origin and the hearing of it. "The hearing of origin ... is ... a hearing that does not yet spring forth, ... and thus remains entirely with itself as an origin: the originary origin (*der ursprüngliche Ursprung*)."²⁶ It is the originary origin that the poet hears.²⁷ "It is his hearing ... that first apprehends the fact that an originary Being prevails here. The hearing ... itself grants a hearing to the fettered origin (*der gefesselte Ursprung*) as such. The hearing ... in this way thus *sets* out for the first time what is really happening there: what in the first instance *is*."²⁸ Then, what *is* in the first place?

Heidegger says that "just as the origin that has merely sprung forth (*der nur entsprungene Ursprung*) is not the origin, neither is the merely fettered origin. Rather, the entire essence of the origin is the fettered origin in its springing forth (*der gefesselte Ursprung in seinem Entspringen*). Yet the springing forth (*Entspringen*) itself first comes to be what it is as the river runs its entire course; it is not limited to the beginning of its course. The entire course of the river itself belongs to the origin. The origin is fully apprehended only as the fettered origin in its springing forth as having sprung forth (*Entsprungen*)."²⁹ To sum up, the origin is fully apprehended only when it is apprehended as the origin of having sprung forth, the origin of springing forth, and the fettered origin as such.

In addition, at the beginning of the fourth strophe of "The Rhine," Hölderlin says the following:

Enigma is that which has purely sprung forth. Even
The song may scarcely unveil it.

²³ Martin Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 70: *Über den Anfang* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2005), 156.

²⁴ Martin Heidegger, *Elucidations of Hölderlin's Poetry*, trans. by Keith Hoeller (New York: Humanity Books, 2000,) 204.

²⁵ Martin Heidegger, *Basic Questions of Philosophy*, trans. by Richard Rojcewicz and André Schuwer (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), 35.

²⁶ Heidegger, *Hölderlin's Hymns "Germania" and "The Rhine"*, 183.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 183-184.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 184.

*Ein Raethsel ist Reimensprunenes. Auch
Der Gesang kaum darfes enthuelen.*³⁰

According to Heidegger, “the innermost essence of what has purely sprung forth is the intrinsically counter-turning doubling of origin (*die in sich widerwendige Doppelung von Ursprung*) as springing forth and having sprung forth.”³¹ However, as we have already noted, the origin is the fettered origin as well because the fettered origin is also an origin. Furthermore, in its springing forth, it remains as the ground of having sprung forth or the river which belongs to it. And the poet apprehends not only the origin of having sprung forth but also the origin of springing forth and the fettered origin as such. Poetizing is the result of the poet’s full apprehension of the origin. Then, what does the poet poetize?

Hölderlin’s poem of the river speaks the truth of being or the interplay of unconcealment as the origin of springing forth, and concealment as the fettered origin as such.³² Of course, Hölderlin’s poem is not the objectification of that interplay. Instead, it is meant to allow the interplay as such to be presented and preserved in the poem. In “The Rhine,” the interplay is presented as the saying of the river that has sprung forth from the origin and belongs to it. “The saying of what has purely sprung forth tears us beyond the origin and back—into the saying of the origin of origin and thereby first face-to-face with the full mystery.”³³ Then, what is the full mystery of the saying of the origin of origin?

The mystery of the saying is that the poem is more a telling that veils than one that unveils. Heidegger again says, “It[the song] is more a telling that veils than one that unveils, and ... [t]he form of the telling in this poetizing ... must count as one of the greatest creative accomplishments of the poet.”³⁴ In the same vein, he states that poetic language is “to leave the unsayable unsaid, and to do so in and through its saying.”³⁵ Hölderlin’s poem

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 217.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 235.

³² Similarly, interpreting Heidegger’s Hölderlin, Bambach says: “Poetry opens language to the hidden dimension of its self-withholding, a dimension that expresses the very play of truth as ἀ-λήθεια, the struggle/strife of unhiddenness and hiddenness (Charles Bambach, “Who is Heidegger’s Hölderlin?,” in *Research in Phenomenology*, 47 (2017), 48.) Also, Gosetti-Ferencei says likewise: “[I]n the readings of poetic language a tension arises between its role as the revealing of beings in their essence—that is, in relation to origin—the of the revealing-withholding of origin itself (Jennifer Anna Gosetti-Ferencei, *Heidegger, Hölderlin, and the Subject of Poetic Language: Toward a New Poesis of Dasein*, 87.)”

³³ Heidegger, *Hölderlin’s Hymns “Germania” and “The Rhine,”* 243.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 185.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 108.

paradoxically leaves the unsayable as the essence of beings, the truth of Being of beings, or the interplay of unconcealment and concealment unsaid in and through its saying. The truth of Being is presented and preserved in poetry, likewise.

Elucidation of the phenomenon of the truth of Being, presented and preserved in poetry

Then what is the interplay of unconcealment and concealment which the poem leaves unsaid in and through its saying? How should we understand it? We can shed light on its concrete meaning in comparison to statements we use daily. As we have already noted, statements state the What-Being of beings based on a *a priori* understanding of beingness. On the contrary, "The Rhine" presents and preserves the unconcealment of beings revealed before a *a priori* understanding of beingness or, put differently, the pure radiance of a being in its truth of Being.

We can understand the meaning of the pure radiance of a being in its truth of Being through Heidegger's interpretation of Cézanne's later works. Heidegger says that "the appearing of what is present in the clearing of presence—in such a way, indeed, that the duality of the two is overcome in the oneness of the pure radiance of his [Cézanne's] painting."³⁶ The phenomenon of appearing what is present in the clearing of presence means what is present as such appears before its presence is given. In other words, the phenomenon means what is present *is* appearing in the oneness of what is present, i.e., a being, and its presence, i.e., its Being. Cézanne painted the oneness of the two or the pure radiance of a being in its truth of Being.

What is presented in poetry is also the pure radiance of a being in its truth of Being. And if a being does not have a fixed presence, i.e., beingness, but is appearing, or put differently, if a being does not merely persist but is appearing, then what is poetized is the appearing of a being. The appearing or the unconcealment of a being is the origin that is the most concealed from us because we first experience a being mostly in terms of beingness. We ordinarily pre-understand a category related to a being and state it as something with the help of that category. However, the appearing of a being is not reduced to beingness but is concealed when beingness as the categorical is being given to it.

³⁶ The translation is cited from Julian Young, *Heidegger's Philosophy of Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 153. The original German text is as follows: "das Erscheinen des Anwesenden in der Lichtung des Anwesens - so zwar, dass die Zwiefalt beider verwunden ist in der Einheit des reinen Scheinens seiner beider." Martin Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 81: *Gedachtes*, (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2007), 347-48.

What is crucial is that thinking of the appearing of a being or an appearing being is “essential thinking [that] is image-less (*bildlose*) poetizing.”³⁷ Thinking of the individual with the help of the image of the general is a representation of *a priori* beingness given to a being. Of course, to represent *a priori* beingness and to perceive an appearing being without an image are different. The latter is to think of (*andenken*) an appearing being as such.

Heidegger says that “the measure taken by poetry ... imparts itself—as the foreign element (*Fremde*) in which the invisible one preserves his presence—to what is familiar.”³⁸ It is because an appearing being is foreign to us, unlike a being to which *a priori* beingness is given and thus familiar to us. An appearing being, therefore, is not a thing that can be known as a being is known through a statement that determines it. And even though, as Heidegger says, “what the poet says and undertakes to be is what is truly real,”³⁹ it is foreign and invisible to human beings who think and state a being in terms of its beingness.

Non-representational and imageless thinking: beyond the human condition

Of course, it is rare for ordinary human beings like us to experience an appearing being as such. However, this experience is a genuine encounter with a being. Unlike metaphysical thought, such an encounter is possible only when a human being lets the self into releasement, which is “the release of oneself from ... representation” and wills “non-willing.”⁴⁰ Moreover, the trace of willingness to let oneself into releasement is wholly extinguished in releasement because releasement as a relinquishing of the willingness of representation no longer stems from willingness.⁴¹ In this regard, releasement can be classified neither as activeness nor as passiveness in the ordinary sense. And poetizing is only possible through an encounter with an appearing being, and thus the will to represent beingness completely disappears. Such change is the ground of poetizing.

Thinking of the encounter with an appearing being rather than representing the beingness of beings is no other than thinking beyond representation, i.e., thinking without an image. However, relating to a being

³⁷ Heidegger, *The History of Being*, 139.

³⁸ Martin Heidegger, “... Poetically Man Dwells ...,” in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. by Alfred Hofstadter (New York: Harper & Low, 1971), 224.

³⁹ Heidegger, *Elucidations of Hölderlin's Poetry*, 62.

⁴⁰ Martin Heidegger, *Discourse on Thinking*, trans. by John M. Anderson and E. Hans Freund (New York: Harper & Low, 1966), 79.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 80.

without the representation of beingness or *a priori* understanding of beingness is something like transcending the human condition. In this respect, non-representative thinking of a being beyond the human condition cannot be said in ordinary language such as statements. For this reason, the poetry of non-representative thought is a language of the ineffable which cannot be said in our everyday language.⁴² What is revealed in Heidegger's later philosophy is that there is a language of the ineffable that is only possible when a poet transcends the human condition. It is a language that exists as the result of human transformation. If so, what is the meaning of human transformation?

Suppose statements as our daily comportments towards beings are based on *a priori* understanding of beingness; traditional metaphysics that has thought of Being as beingness is not far from us. Instead, the language we use every day is based on metaphysical thinking. In this respect, it is we who comport towards beings in representing the beingness of beings instead of experiencing an appearing being as such. Therefore, overcoming metaphysics is not only a task for philosophers but also for us, who make statements about beings in representing the beingness of beings instead of experiencing an appearing being as such.

Human transformation as the ground of poetizing means we experience an appearing being rather than making a statement about a being on the basis of the representation of its beingness. Such an experience is infrequent but indeed does exist. The poetic language that says this experience informs us that this experience does undoubtedly exist. Hölderlin's poem, which is the language of the ineffable, is evidence of the existence of that experience. Of course, it is impossible to have such an experience unless the mode of Being of human beings is transformed first.

Conclusion

Hölderlin's poem "The Rhine" is the result of poetizing the appearing of a being or an appearing being. Of course, this appearing disappears as beingness is being given. The poem is more a telling that veils than one that unveils because it is precisely the result of poetizing the experience of appearing that disappears as beingness is being given or the experience of the truth of Being as the interplay of unconcealment and concealment. The poem is the language that says this experience. However,

⁴² Similarly, Kryeziu, examining Heidegger's interpretation of Hölderlin's later poem, says: "The inexpressible makes itself manifest in poetry, not by being expressed or articulated, but rather by avoiding linguistic formulations. See Saza Kryeziu, "The Unsayable Mystery of the Holy: Hölderlin's Late Poetry," in *ARS & HUMANITAS*, 13, no. 1 (2019), 333.

for such a saying to be possible, human beings must change. Heidegger's later philosophy of language is therefore characterized by the thinking of the language that implies human transformation, which goes beyond representing the beingness of beings and experiences an appearing being as such. I believe that this is the point where Heidegger's philosophy of language is related to human transformation and shows its singularity, which is very different from analytic philosophy or linguistic philosophy.

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