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Duane Armitage, *Heidegger's Pauline and Lutheran Roots*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016, 212pp.

Perhaps the greatest achievement of Duane Armitage's book is its sobriety; it renders Heidegger's mystifications clear, even when the discussion turns to the *Beiträge*. The rarity of this feat alone justifies the book's existence. But, this modestly sized book offers more than clear exposition, it also persuasively argues for the continuity of Heidegger's thought from his earliest interest in Luther to his lectures on Paul to *Being and Time* to the aforementioned *Contributions to Philosophy*. Instead of reading the lattermost text, normally noted as the book marking Heidegger's *Kehre*/turn, as a break from his earlier work, Armitage rather shows a homologous continuity of this text with Heidegger's thought that precedes it.

This review, however, will not just summarize and praise Armitage's book. I will rather try to forge possible lines of criticism to expose questions and assumptions operative in Armitage's text that he may be unaware he is asking and assuming.

Armitage understands Heidegger's *Seinsfrage*, in all of its formulations leading up to and including the *Beiträge* of 1936-1938, as the question of intelligibility itself. "What are the conditions for the possibility of intelligibility? ...what makes intelligibility possible?" (2). This formulation implicates Armitage's Kantian understanding of Heidegger's question as a transcendental question about the necessary condition(s) of the possibility of the experience of being as intelligible. While this is an already well established approach to Heidegger, more scandalous is that Armitage argues that Heidegger retains this way of transcendently posing and attempting to answer this Parmenidean question even through the *Beiträge*.

Armitage does not understand Heidegger to be asking about what makes some specific being or even being in general intelligible, which would be to ask after its "beingness (*Seiendheit*)", but he rightly understands Heidegger to be asking why there is even intelligibility at all. He is right to see that Heidegger is ultimately not asking for the specific structures and categories of intelligibility – although that may seem to be the case in *Being and Time*, Heidegger's most transcendently oriented text – but rather why or how such transcendental conditions themselves are at all? I, however, remain less convinced that Heidegger does not move away from a transcendental form of the question of being in the *Beiträge*, given that Heidegger there acknowledges that other conditions of intelligibility are possible and hence that none are necessary.

If Heidegger's question is about why or how there is intelligibility as such, whereas metaphysics deigns to actually provide *the* intelligible condition itself as *the* ultimate condition of "beingness" – i.e., since Plato, beings are grounded in the intelligibility of the idea – then Heidegger's question is about the condition(s) for the possibility of metaphysics. Armitage is thus obliged to explain and trace the lineage of Heidegger's *Destruktion* of metaphysics. Metaphysics, as mentioned, makes the condi-

tion of being, beingness, coincide with intelligibility. Metaphysics conceives of a being “according to it being the grounded of a ground (*Seiendheit*)” (27). Relying on the well-known meaning of *Grund* as referring to both cause and reason, I suggest that metaphysics be defined, in a way compatible with Armitage’s own understanding, as the reciprocal grounding of the principle of sufficient reason in a first being (God) and the inverse grounding of God by means of the fact that the sufficient reason for his existence is contained within God’s own essence, as in the ontological argument. Metaphysics is thus ontotheology or the coincidence of God and the principle of sufficient reason, which means that metaphysics, failing to ask why there is *Grund*/reason/intelligibility in the first place, omits the question of the “truth” of being.

Armitage’s analysis begins by showing that Heidegger’s deconstruction of the metaphysical tradition is rooted in Luther’s destruction of the metaphysics of the Aristotelian, Scholastic tradition. This connection has already been drawn by others, perhaps most brilliantly by Sean McGrath in *The Early Heidegger and Medieval Philosophy: Phenomenology for the Godforsaken*, but Armitage expertly shows that for both Luther and the early Heidegger the deconstructive project is tethered to the desire to expose a “primitive” or “primordial Christianity.” Of lasting significance, as one sees throughout *Being and Time*, is that this return to the primitive and factual is only possible by removing the theoretical. Armitage concludes, “Deconstruction then is primarily aimed at the theoretical, whether it be the theoretical theologizing of the Scholastics or the theoretical philosophizing of the metaphysical tradition” (25). One is here provided with what is apparently so problematic with metaphysics: “‘metaphysical’ thinking, namely, the privileging of the theoretical intelligibility over pre-thematic and pre-theoretical existentiality or facticity” (40). This, however, is something Heidegger learned not just through Luther, but directly from Paul, as Armitage demonstrates in chapter two.

Many valuable connections between pre-*Being and Time* Heidegger and the Heidegger of *Being and Time* are drawn in the second chapter on Paul, but the most central among these hinges upon the notion of temporality that Armitage argues Heidegger first discovered in Paul. Once the theoretical has been repealed and primitive or factual Christianity phenomenologically laid bare, the Christian appears as one called faithfully to live in a between-time ecstatically stretched out between the first and second coming, the *Parousia*, the still-to-come, the future toward which the Christian is called and toward which their whole being is gathered in all its possibilities. In *Being and Time* this becomes the fact that authenticity is only possible in one’s anticipation of a death they cannot share with others. There is, in any event, no privileging of the present, but the Christian, *per* Paul, lives in anticipation of a future possibility on the basis of a past event by means of her presently being called (the call of conscience in *Being and Time* and the winking of the Gods in the *Beiträge*). As Luther exclaimed, the Christian does not regard beings as they are now, but “as if not.” Faithful or authentic existence is futural, regarding beings not as they are but as they ought to be. The theoretical desires knowledge of how beings are, but faith and authentic resoluteness regard beings as they may be and oneself as called to be.

I harbor no objections to Armitage’s genealogy of concepts in Heidegger’s early corpus. When Armitage moves to the *Beiträge*, however, I become more skeptical, but a skepticism by which my mind is set at play. Here I think it proves useful to question Armitage’s formulation of Heidegger’s question of

being as well as Armitage's own assumptions, as he explicitly wants to show that Heidegger's Pauline and Lutheran roots, *and*, implicitly, also his Kantian, transcendental roots are still operative.

If, in the *Beiträge*, Heidegger regards being as the source of its own forgetting, then the human being is seemingly let off the hook for her inauthenticity, her deliverance over to technology and the *Gestell*. How consistently are we think being rather than the human being as source of agency? If the forgetting of being in metaphysics derives from being's own withdrawal, would it not follow that the destruction of metaphysics is also enacted by being rather than the human being? Can only a God can save us now?

Armitage provides an excellent analysis of the temple in the *Origin of the Work of Art* as a way of explaining the passing by (*Vorbeigang*) of the Gods in the *Beiträge*. There is here an ambivalence in Heidegger that Armitage is unable to render less ambivalent. Under a deflationary reading, talk of God and the temple becomes just a fanciful way of pointing to radical shifts in cultural understanding, so that it would not be the case that a God first beckons a people to build a temple/dwelling for itself, but rather that certain events radically reorient human understanding and this is all that is meant by the passing by of a God. So, how much ought Heidegger be demythologized? How demythologized and deflationary is Heidegger's account of the Gods? Does the passing by of the God draft the space of the holy itself or is the temple a prerequisite for the God's advent? Does God only come if humans have first done the work of preparing his entry or do humans first work because called by the coming God? Does grace result from works or are works only wrought in grace?

One indication that God's advent or absence lies in human hands is Armitage's correct gloss of Heidegger that "appearing occurs in *naming*" (123). Yet, "it is the gods who first draw us to name them. The naming of the gods is always an answer or response to the beckoning of the gods" (124). Additionally, "The holy gives the word, and it is this given word that is *Ereignis* itself as the event of the holy" (127). Nevertheless, in the last chapter Armitage will also defend Heidegger from Kearney's critique that if being and the gods are the real agents, this leaves us ethically impotent, insisting "The impotency before the last god is rather a *metaphysical impotency*" (146) as opposed to an ethico-political impotency. This still means that without the human being as the preserver of the truth of being, the one who names and brings the Gods into unconcealment, their passing by cannot occur. Ultimately, Armitage fails to remove this ambivalence in Heidegger's thought. Is the temple built because the Gods have promised to come – making *Field of Dreams* quite Heideggerian: "if you build it, he will come" – or do the Gods advene only as a consequence of human building? Is *Gelassenheit* a lack of works, as in Paul, Luther and Protestantism, or is the (de)construction of temples a human work performed prior to the advent/departure of the God as its very condition? Or, is this a false dichotomy and ambivalence ought to remain? Is a middle voice appropriate? Or, are Gods the anterior agents and human works and understanding consequent, *but* agents only exist through their consequents, what Levinas has termed the posteriority of the anterior? Perhaps to be is to have a consequence and not to have a consequence is not to be, so that though Gods and being are the agents, if their agency does not result in consequents, that agency is as much as naught? I remain skeptical about all of this, but these would be questions I would pose to Armitage.

Armitage has masterfully shown that Heidegger's Pauline and Lutheran roots are not just present in *Being and Time*, but also in the *Beiträge*. But, he does not stop there. He boldly concludes, "My thesis is that since Heidegger is the root to all continental philosophy of religion and postmodern theology, insofar as all presuppose methodologically his onto-theological critique as axiomatic" – a fairly indisputable point! – "and since Heidegger's disdain for onto-theology is rooted in Luther" – as he, and others, have deftly demonstrated – "essentially all postmodern theological thinking is fundamentally Lutheran" (153). This last clause is audacious, but it follows. I will not combat this conclusion, but attempt to push this radical thesis farther. To recall Armitage's transcendental formulation of Heidegger's *Seinsfrage*, could one also conclude that although transcendental philosophy began with Kant that critical philosophy – these are not synonymous concepts – the tribunal of reason, began with Luther and his reading of Paul's critique of the reason of the Greeks and the signs of the Jews in favor of the foolishness of the Cross? Armitage claims,

The deconstruction of the history of ontology and the overcoming of the Western metaphysical tradition is precisely a critique of rationality itself, insofar as rationality is taken to mean the basic fundamental categories of cause, essence, substance, and so on (166).

Armitage justifiably reads Heidegger as a Kantian, but what remains unthought is the possibility that *criticism* has its origins in a Pauline and Lutheran tribunal of reason that does *not* yet pose this critique as a transcendentalism, i.e., as Kantian critique. Perhaps the post-Heideggerian tradition can remain a form of criticism while extricating itself from transcendentalism. If Paul and Luther founded metaphysical critique, do they not also offer a way of bypassing Kantian criticism? This is an unthought possibility liberated by Armitage's penetrating reading.