

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD at the University of Warwick

Permanent WRAP URL:

<http://wrap.warwick.ac.uk/113894/>

Copyright and reuse:

This thesis is made available online and is protected by original copyright.

Please scroll down to view the document itself.

Please refer to the repository record for this item for information to help you to cite it.

Our policy information is available from the repository home page.

For more information, please contact the WRAP Team at: wrap@warwick.ac.uk

Heidegger on Death and Being

Johannes Achill Niederhauser

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

University of Warwick
Department of Philosophy
April 2018

Table of Content

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	6
DECLARATION.....	7
ABSTRACT	8
ABBREVIATIONS	9
INTRODUCTION	10
EXPOSITION OF THE PROBLEM	10
THE STRUCTURE	13
<i>MEMENTO MORI</i>	14
OTHER STUDIES OF DEATH IN HEIDEGGER	16
PART I: <i>SUM MORIBUNDUS</i>	18
DEATH AS POSSIBILITY	18
INTRODUCTION.....	18
CHAPTER 1 WHAT DEATH IS NOT	21
CHAPTER 2 THE NECESSITY OF THE <i>SEINSFRAGE</i>	23
1. THE OBLIVION OF BEING	23
2. FUNDAMENTAL ONTOLOGY AND DASEIN'S SELF-INVESTIGATION	30
3. BEING AS <i>TRANSCENDENS PURE AND SIMPLE</i>	34
CHAPTER 3 UNDERSTANDING AND DASEIN'S TEMPORALITY	39
1. FROM UNDERSTANDING TO DISCLOSEDNESS AND RESOLUTENESS	40
2. DASEIN'S ECSTATIC TEMPORALITY	46
CHAPTER 4 FROM DEATH AS POSSIBILITY TO BEING AS POSSIBILITY	52
1. DEATH AND DASEIN'S BEING-WHOLE.....	52
2. DASEIN'S OWNMOST POSSIBILITY	55
3. FROM DEATH TO BEING?	59
CHAPTER 5 DASEIN'S HISTORICITY.....	63
1. ON BIRTH.....	64
2. DASEIN'S HISTORICITY	65
CHAPTER 6 SIGNS OF THE TURN	67
PART II: DEATH AS TESTIMONY.....	69
INTRODUCTION.....	70
CHAPTER 1 THE TURN.....	74
1. THE TURNING AND ALETHEIA	74
2. DEATH IN THE CAVE	78
3. DEATH IN THE TURN	82
CHAPTER 2 THE UNFOLDING OF <i>EREIGNIS</i> IN LIGHT OF DEATH	83
1. THE WORD <i>EREIGNIS</i>	84
2. THE OSCILLATING OF <i>EREIGNIS</i> AND HUMAN CORRESPONDENCE	88
3. THE ESSENTIAL EVENT AND DEATH	92
4. CONCEALMENT AND DEATH.....	94
CHAPTER 3 DEATH AND THE FISSURING OF BEYNG	105

1. BEYNG-TOWARD-DEATH AND THE MODALITIES	105
2. THE FISSURE OF THE POSSIBLE	111
CHAPTER 4 SEINSGESCHICHTE AND DEATH	113
1. THE MEANING OF <i>SEINSGESCHICHTE</i>	113
2. DEATH AS TESTIMONY TO BEYNG'S EPOCHS	117
3. SHELTERING AND GROUNDING	119
PART III: DEATH AS THE SANCTUARY OF BEING	120
INTRODUCTION.....	121
CHAPTER 1 HEIDEGGER – THE LUDDITE?.....	125
CHAPTER 2 HEIDEGGER'S PATH TO THE ESSENCE OF TECHNOLOGY	130
1. THE METAPHYSICAL ORIGINS OF TECHNOLOGY	130
2. PHYSIS, TECHNE, AND DEATH	133
3. MACHINATION AND THE WILL TO WILL.....	135
4. FROM <i>VOR-STELLUNG</i> TO <i>GE-STELL</i>	139
CHAPTER 3 <i>GE-STELL</i>: THE ESSENCE OF TECHNOLOGY	142
1. THE WORD <i>GE-STELL</i>	142
2. STANDING RESERVE	144
3. POSITING, POSITIONING AND SHELTERING-HARBOURING	145
4. DANGER AND SALVATION	149
CHAPTER 4 DEATH AS SHRINE, SANCTUARY AND LAW	151
1. BECOMING MORTALS	152
2. ON THE HOLOCAUST.....	157
CHAPTER 5 THE FOURFOLD	159
1. THE THING	160
2. THE GODS	163
PART IV: DEATH AS POEM OF THE WORLD	164
INTRODUCTION.....	164
CHAPTER 1 LATER HEIDEGGER ON LANGUAGE.....	169
1. HEIDEGGER'S POETS.....	170
2. THE DANGER <i>OF</i> LANGUAGE.....	175
CHAPTER 2 THE ESSENCE OF LANGUAGE IN VIEW OF DEATH.....	181
1. ON SILENCE	182
2. THE HOUSE OF BEING	186
3. LANGUAGE AS SAYING	189
CHAPTER 3 LANGUAGE AND DEATH IN THE FOURFOLD	193
1. THE ESSENTIAL RELATION IN FOCUS	193
2. LANGUAGE AND THE MOVEMENT OF THE FOURFOLD	198
CHAPTER 4 LANGUAGE AND THE ESSENTIAL TRANSFORMATION.....	200
1. <i>HOMO HUMANUS</i>	201
2. RARE MORTALS AND THE COMMUNITY OF MORTALS.....	203
CONCLUSION	206
1. A RESPONSE.....	207
2. RESTRICTIONS OF THIS RESPONSE	210
BIBLIOGRAPHY	212

Acknowledgments

This thesis was researched and written with the support of a Centre for Arts Doctoral Research Excellence (CADRE) scholarship at Warwick (2015 - 2018). Part of the research for my thesis was undertaken as a doctorate fellow of the CRC 1015 Otium. Boundaries, Chronotopes, Practices at the Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg (2015), funded by the DFG.

My supervisor, Miguel de Beistegui, has been a tremendous support and source of inspiration throughout my doctoral studies. Miguel is an outstanding scholar and pedagogue, who, thanks to his patience, motivation, and attention to detail, has greatly helped me in the process of writing this thesis.

I am also thankful to a number of faculty members at Warwick and outside Warwick who have influenced my research and have also been helpful in Academic matters. At Warwick I would like to thank Stephen Houlgate and Keith Ansell-Pearson. Outside Warwick I would like to thank Ken Gemes, Andrew Huddleston, Tobias Keiling, John Callanan, and Matthew Soteriou for their support over the years.

The thriving postgraduate community at the Warwick Philosophy Department has also been a great source of inspiration for my work. In particular I would like to thank Dino Jakušić, Chris Ivins, James Kay, Filip Niklas, and Joe Shafer. Many thanks also to Sue Podmore, Sarah Taylor, and Rachel Harrington for their administrative support.

Besides my stay in Freiburg I am grateful for having been able to attend the *Collegium Phaenomenologicum* in 2017, which has greatly benefited my research. My attendance of the Heidegger Junior Conference in Vienna in 2016 has also been pivotal for my understanding of Heidegger's philosophy. Furthermore, I would like to thank the City of Meßkirch and Alfred Denker for having allowed me to stay and work at the Heidegger archives in March 2018.

I am also very grateful for the philosophical and artistic friendships I have been allowed to make over the years. In alphabetical order I would like to thank David Ashton, Shaun Berke, Alastair Brook, Jacob Burda (and his Alpine Fellowship), Julian Hensold, Julian Spalding, Benjamin Varas, and Paul Stralek. I am especially thankful to Max Gottschlich for his support beyond Academia. This path began in Bolzano where thanks to Ivo De Gennaro I came in touch with Heidegger's thought. I remain grateful for his sustained support over the years. Dietmar Koch in Tübingen has also been a great source of inspiration for my thesis and I am thankful for his help.

My sister, Tina Niederhauser, herself a philosopher, has since her birth been a constant source of joy and support.

Johannes Achill Niederhauser

Without Birgit Fischer's love and faith in me I could not have written this thesis.

I dedicate this thesis to my parents whose way of being has enabled mine.

Declaration

This thesis is my own work and has not been submitted for a degree at another university.

Abstract

This thesis is a study of the role of the phenomenon of death in Heidegger's philosophy. The central argument is twofold. First, death is the fulcrum of Heidegger's philosophy. As such, second, death is a crucial key to Heidegger's thought in its entirety. Thus I claim is that a response to the question of being can be given, if one takes death into account.

This thesis, therefore, investigates the four main blocks of Heidegger's philosophy and the role of death in them. I identify the four main blocks of Heidegger's philosophy as follows. First, Heidegger's early transcendental analysis of Dasein's existence. Second, the thinking of being as event. Third, Heidegger's critique of technology. Fourth, Heidegger's engagement with language. The thesis is divided into four topical parts according to these blocks.

In the first part I argue that death serves as Dasein's utmost limit and as such death is constitutive of Dasein's existential possibilities. The analysis of Dasein's horizons of understanding is what leads Heidegger to turn to being itself. In the second part I identify the place of death in the thinking of the event and in Heidegger's theory of history as the history of being. I argue that death becomes an interest of being as such and is testimony to its epochs. Third, I argue that death continues to play a significant role in Heidegger's philosophy of technology. This is because the essence of technology is a mode of being itself in the sense that being allows for a certain understanding of the current technological age. Thus, technology is an interest of being itself, too, and the essence of technology is sheer availability. Heidegger begins to call death the refuge of being at this time, which indicates that death is as the utterly unavailable, the resting place of being. As such, I argue in parts III and IV, death co-enables the fourfold, which is Heidegger's response to the technological world. In the fourfold things are not manipulated but form the bedrock of a shared communal world. In part IV I develop Heidegger's claim that there is an essential relation between death

and language. In the information age language is reduced to a transmitter of information. Thanks to its relation with death as the utterly unavailable language retains other dimensions that elude the demands of technology.

I conclude that death is one of the ways to gain a clearer understanding of the question of being. For death regulates the movement of being in Heidegger's thought.

Abbreviations

References to Heidegger have the following form: GA [volume number]: [page number German version / if available, page number English translation]. If I do not provide a reference to an English translation, I have translated the passage in question myself. Quotes from *Sein und Zeit* have the following form: SZ [page number German Version, Niemeyer Verlag / page number Stambaugh translation.]

Other Abbreviations:

ta: Translation amended

me: My emphasis

n: Footnote

Introduction

ταυτό τ' ἐνὶ ζῶν καὶ τεθνηκὸς καὶ [τὸ] ἐγρηγορὸς καὶ καθεῦδον καὶ νέον καὶ
γηραιόν· τάδε γὰρ μεταπεσόντα ἐκείνά ἐστι κάκεινα πάλιν μεταπεσόντα
ταῦτα

- Heraclitus DK B88

Exposition of the Problem

What, today, of dying? Are we at all perplexed by the simple fact that we are mortal? Or are we rather rushing away from our mortality? Why do we tend to avoid the problem in polite society altogether? What motivates us to dream up techno-fantasies of digital immortality? And why even bother? Our mortality is the most obvious fact of all. There is a reason why the proposition “all men are mortal” is formal logic’s standard example (cf. Demske 1970: 1). Is not death, to borrow Goethe’s expression, threefold separation “not hoping ever to meet again” (Goethe 1874: 165)? If death puzzles us, it might be best not to worry about it. Death is the end of life. That much is certain. What else should there be to say? We cannot know what comes after death, but with the help of technology we might not even have to worry about that question any more. Soon, if the various endeavours of transhumanism are fruitful, we might be able to live much longer than ever before. Technology promises us to extend the number of years we live. We might even become immortal. Biohacking and bioenhancement lure us into believing the limitations of the human body can be eradicated at will. The easiest way to enhance the human body is to replace it altogether with machine parts. Others might prefer to dispose of their prison of the flesh by

uploading copies of their selves to the cloud. The aim here is digital immortality. In the cloud the laws of physics and biology no longer apply. The mind is perfectly free to choose at any time any virtual body it desires. If anything, death is but a necessary evil, a passageway to a better, fuller life without limitations, a life of absolute negative freedom in the digital sphere. Here death does not constitute a horizon of meaning, here death is not something that pushes us back into our existence and our possibilities. Instead, death is but something to be overcome and something that, as is the case for Epicurus, does not concern us.

“Death is optional,” Harari and Kahnemann confirm in a conversation from 2015, and Harari points out that “[d]eath has been relocated from the metaphysical realm to the technical realm.” Metaphysics considers death a passageway to another life. This was Socrates’s as well as Christianity’s response to the question of death. Today, death is a problem waiting to be solved by technology. If death is but passageway, then technology will have to provide the afterlife. But if death is purely physical, and as such nothing but the end of our physical existence, then the drive to master death would be a prime example of what Foucault (cf. 1978: 146) calls biopower. Who controls the end of our physical lives, controls populations. In the technological age death can be optional in that sense, too, but it is unclear whether Harari, Kahnemann, and others see that possibility.

Yet, when we stop to think what drives these endeavours, we find at the heart of it precisely what they all run away from: death. Those who wish to eradicate death are bound by the horizon death constitutes. The meaning of their projects originates precisely from what they want to control. But even if im-mortality were technologically achievable, would it not rest on being mortal? Our mortality, then, is not a source of meaninglessness, but a source of meaning. The assumed technical controllability of death amounts to little more than what Thomson refers to as “compensatory subjectivistic fantasies” (2011: 76). Do we not resort to various fantasies regarding our desired subjective immortality, for we are utterly unwilling to face death? These escapist fantasies, however, indicate and at once cover over a certain need. In fact, they indicate the need to consider more profoundly the question of death in a way that does not escape death, but rather in a way that confronts death and in a way that is thus neither technological nor purely metaphysical. It is striking that the technological responses to death are rather similar to some of metaphysics’ responses. Both try to justify and overcome the cosmic evil of death. Like traditional metaphysics

today's technology promises digital or physical immortality. In both cases death is but a passageway and both "solutions" speculate or even calculate what comes after death.

If there is one philosopher, not just of the 20th century, but of the whole of the history of Western philosophy, who substantially devoted his thinking to death, it is Heidegger. In fact, we find in Heidegger one of the most profound and most enduring engagements with questions concerning mortality and death. In *The Event*, a text written from the perspective of the history of being, Heidegger writes that "[w]e devastate the abyssal ... event-related essence of death if we seek to calculate what might be "after" it. Thereby we degrade death to a null passageway." (GA71: 194/165) Metaphysics and technology essentially see death as a passageway. Heidegger's thought, however, is devoted to a thinking of death that is neither metaphysical nor technological, and death is central to Heidegger's thought. Death is, as Haugeland argues, "the fulcrum of Heidegger's entire ontology." (2000: 44) This, I claim, holds true beyond *Being and Time*.

The core argument of this thesis is thus twofold. First, death is central to Heidegger's thinking path. We might expect death to be significant in Heidegger's more existential endeavours in *Being and Time*. But, as I attempt to show, death remains key far beyond the analytic of Dasein. I shall hence argue that death is pivotal for Heidegger's entire thinking path. This means, second, that one can articulate a response to the question of being, Heidegger's "unique question" (GA65: 10/11¹), as manifold as it is, if one takes death into consideration death at every major step of the thinking path. In *Contributions* Heidegger calls death the "highest testimony to being" (GA65: 230/181), and I take this to be definitive for his philosophy as a whole. By explicating death's fundamental role, I thus attempt to formulate a response to the question of being. As any access to being is temporally structured, my attempt at a response to the *Seinsfrage*, of course, "cannot lie in an isolated and blind proposition." (SZ: 19/18²) Thus my response emerges as the argument develops. For the sake of clarity, I can already now say that my response shows death to be a prime entry point into Heidegger's manifold ways of approaching the question of being. This is why my thesis follows the development of the thinking path chronologically. My thesis should thus also be helpful to those interested in the unity of Heidegger's thought.

¹ Rojcewicz and Vallega-Neu translation.

² Stambaugh translation.

The Structure

In my view, the thinking path is comprised of four major topics and approaches to the question of being: 1. the existential-ontological and transcendental analysis of Dasein; 2. the thinking of *Ereignis*; 3. the question concerning technology and the world as fourfold; 4. language and more specifically poetry.

Following the thinking path the structure of the thesis is as follows. Part I engages with the phenomenon of death in context of Dasein's fundamental ontology. *Being and Time* is the main focus here, but I also consult surrounding texts from Heidegger's time in Marburg and from his early years in Freiburg. Part I argues that death brings Dasein before being. Being is here the understandable disclosedness of beings. Death is Dasein's utmost limit and as such death co-constitutes Dasein's horizon of understanding. Thus Dasein can at all project and understand because it is mortally finite. Moreover, Dasein is closest to being when Dasein authentically takes over its ownmost possibility, death.

The second part begins with a reconstruction of the "turn" in Heidegger's thinking. Simply put, the turn means Heidegger moves away from *Being and Time*'s indirect, transcendental approach to being toward an attempt to think being (*Ereignis*) directly. I develop my reconstruction by focussing on Heidegger's radicalisation of the movement of truth as ἀλήθεια, which he presents in a lecture course on Plato's Cave Analogy (cf. GA34). The main body of part II then explicates the role death plays in *Ereignis*-thinking. The main texts of interest here are the posthumously published *Contributions to Philosophy* and *The Event*. Parts I and II serve as the foundation for the rest of the thesis since they reconstruct the transition from *Being and Time* as a text steeped in metaphysics to Heidegger's unique onto-historical approach to being. The tension between metaphysics and history of being, I claim, does not leave Heidegger's thought after the turn, but rather continues to drive it.

Part III investigates Heidegger's writings on technology and looks at the relation between death and technology. I show that death harbours the distinct possibility to overcome *Gestell*. Heidegger refers to death as *Gebirg* of being by the time he engages with questions concerning technology. As *Gebirg* death is the gathering of all *bergen* (sheltering, recovering, concealing) and also of ἀλήθεια as *Ent-bergung* (un-concealment). The mode of *bergen* is aware that any disclosing is

simultaneously a covering over. *Stellen*, in turn, is the prevalent mode of technology and *stellen*, positioning, forgets that all disclosure means simultaneous concealment. *Gestell* wants to position everything everywhere at any time in perfect presence and availability. In technology positioning takes the upper hand. Nevertheless, the sheltering mode of disclosure, *bergen*, is still possible precisely because death utterly defies control and positioning. Hence part III in a nutshell argues that Heidegger sees in death a prime possibility to dismantle the power of technology. In light of his critique of technology Heidegger begins to develop the fourfold as a possibility to overcome technology. In the writings on the fourfold (*Geviert*) Heidegger begins to call human beings “mortals,” for they need to face death in order to provide a way out of *Gestell*. In part IV I further develop the possibility of overcoming technology in light of poetry. Poetic language provides a path toward the fourfold, a world where technology does not rule over us, because, as Heidegger claims, there is an “essential relation between death and language ... [which] remains still unthought.” (GA12: 203/107³) Part IV develops this “unthought” relation from within the thinking path.

Memento Mori

Before I begin my analysis I would like to address claims that Heidegger’s philosophy of death amounts to little more than antihuman pessimism. Givsan, for example, claims Heidegger is an inhumane philosopher and links this to the importance Heidegger places on death in *Being and Time*. With death as a constitutive trait of Dasein, maintains Givsan, Dasein must of necessity be *supposed to die*, the sooner the better. Givsan admits that Heidegger rules out suicide (cf. Givsan 2011: 103&170). Yet, Givsan does not buy that Heidegger’s analysis of Dasein’s death is purely ontological, thus only related to the question, *what it is to be*, but not a moral or ethical endeavour.

Of course, one could point out against Givsan that human beings are mortal beings, that human beings – throughout the ages and across various cultures and civilisations – have thought of themselves as mortal beings, often in opposition to gods. Heidegger’s appreciation of death is a reformulation of *memento mori* for modern times. He warns us against being blinded by hubris and assuming that finite human beings have now reached absolute power and the end of history, where

³ Hertz translation.

everything that is can be manipulated and dominated at will. This is not a moral, but an ontological warning. Instead of a crude, misanthropic pessimism, Luther's and Kierkegaard's formulation of the *memento mori* are in the background of Heidegger's analysis of death (cf. Pattison 2016: 83). Death brings us before the simplicity of existence, which we participate in but which we certainly do not control. Heidegger's focus on death and mortality is not at all "inhumane," except, of course, if our mortality is inhumane. Heidegger stands in the tradition of Socrates, Augustine, Luther, and Kierkegaard. For them our mortality is so fundamentally human that one has to wonder, whether our ignorance of our mortality, the attempts to scientifically eradicate mortality, might not be of a great inhumaneness. Is human hubris not rampant in an age that assumes that everything can at will be controlled at any time and place? It is this hubris of modern human being that Heidegger wishes to counteract by his sustained focus on mortality. Heidegger's *memento mori* aims to show us once more how fragile we are in the face of one of the oldest questions: the question of being. Regarding death integral to our existence lets us appreciate our existence. "*Dasein* never [merely] perishes" (SZ: 247/238⁴) because death is at *Dasein*'s core. Instead, human beings *die*, and they die for they are mortal and finite beings, dwelling on the earth and bound by the earth. In an age rampant with human "self-aggrandisement" (GA90: 52), death reminds us of our true place in the world. We are not the centre of everything, but we are in the midst of beings.

Heidegger's teacher Husserl levels the exact opposite accusation against Heidegger's analysis of death in *Being and Time*. Husserl does not accuse Heidegger of reducing human beings to mortality. Instead, Husserl argues that Heidegger reduces the peril of death: "The dazzling, profound ways in which Heidegger tackles death will hardly prove acceptable to death." (Husserl XXIX: 332⁵) In my view, Husserl's interpretation fails to see the true meaning of death for Heidegger's thought. Heidegger does not reduce existence to death, nor does he try to tackle or domesticate death. Rather, death is welcomed into existence, not as domesticated and tamed, but as utterly inaccessible and unfathomable – and therefore as a mystery for our existence.

⁴ Stambaugh translation.

⁵ As quoted by (Stahler 2016: 207).

Other Studies of Death in Heidegger

If my reading is correct, and the problem of death is central to Heidegger's philosophy, then we should assume that there is an abundant amount of commentary on the subject. But that is not really the case. Thankfully, there have been several studies of death in Heidegger in recent years. Yet, they mostly deal with *Being and Time* or are comparative studies.⁶ A welcome exception is Singh's book on *Heidegger, World, and Death* (2012). Singh argues that world and death are intimately related in Heidegger's thought, that there is world only because of death as utmost limit that gives rise to a meaningful horizon. I shall follow this approach in part I and to some degree in part IV in regard to the fourfold. Singh's book looks at some of the most important texts of Heidegger's thought and finds death to be a key issue precisely because death co-constitutes world. However, Singh does not properly address the turn in Heidegger's thinking path. Nor does he regard core texts concerned with the thinking of *Ereignis* and the crucial role death plays there. Hence Singh's analysis regards all of the later texts, e.g. on the fourfold, from the perspective of Dasein but not in terms of being itself. Singh's argument is diametrically opposed to the Dreyfusian reading of Heidegger on death. From different angles Blattner (1994), and more recently Thomson (2013) have argued that death means something like world collapse. According to their readings, death is not constitutive of Dasein's world. Their interpretations of death also focus exclusively on *Being and Time*. Regarding Heidegger's later philosophy, both Oberst and Agamben have each in their own way devoted an entire study to Heidegger's claim that there is an "essential relation between death and language." I shall address their studies in part IV. Pattison's (2016) recent theological essay on Heidegger also focuses on *Being and Time* and the later works and shows the roots of Heidegger's philosophy of death in the theological thought of Kierkegaard and Luther. Pattison's study also tends to recur to *Being and Time* as a main reference for the later texts.

To this date there has been only one major study on the phenomenon of death that considers the whole of Heidegger's philosophy and that respects the turn: James Demske's *Being, Man, and Death: A Key to Heidegger* published in 1970. Even

⁶ Comparative studies of the phenomenon of death in Heidegger include: Carel (2006) on Freud and Heidegger; Chanter (2002) on Levinas and Heidegger; Adkins (2007) on Death and Desire in Hegel, Heidegger and Deleuze; Dastur (1996) on Plato, Hegel, Heidegger, Sartre.

though Demske did not have access to texts like *Contributions* and *The Event*, he is able to show that death plays a key role for the whole of Heidegger's philosophy. Demske's remarkable study looks at the same major issues of the thinking path as do I. Demske's crucial insight is that from the beginning the question of being is intimately related with death: "Death plays a subsidiary, yet necessary, role in the work of Heidegger." (1970: 2) He also argues that "[d]eath is the key to Heidegger's turning." (ibid.: 190) As outlined above, I shall critically qualify Demske's first claim. Death is not subsidiary to the question of being. Death is at the heart of Heidegger's philosophy. Thus death is central to the question of being and we can only ask the question because we are mortal. How we understand death in Heidegger fundamentally determines our understanding of the question of being.

For all its merits Demske's study shows a profound misunderstanding of the implications of the turn. Demske rightly stresses that after the turn Heidegger tries to think being directly. To my mind, however, Demske fundamentally misreads the turn when he asserts that "[t]he turning in Heidegger's thought is (a) a change of perspective, in which the focus moves from the transcendence of Dasein to being as the horizon of this transcendence, and (b) a change in the relation between being and Dasein, in which being assumes the role of ontological primacy in the process of transcendence." (ibid.: 1970: 91) Being is precisely not a horizon after the turn. The very term horizon only makes sense for a projecting subject. Heidegger's attempt to think being directly means something else and part II of this thesis attempts a reconstruction of this thinking. As a consequence of his misreading of the turn, Demske tends to fall back on *Being and Time* when he discusses technology, the fourfold, and the relation between death and language. Demske does consider "the event (*Ereignis*) of being" (1970: 145), but not in its own right. Yet, in his later thought Heidegger finds genuine new ways of thinking being, language, and death, which we fail to notice, if we misread the meaning of the turn. The turn in Heidegger's thinking originates, as I argue in parts I & II, precisely from the problem that horizontal transcendence poses to thinking being directly: it introduces an element of subjectivity. But this is precisely what Heidegger wishes to get away from in order to think being directly in its history.

Part I: *Sum Moribundus*

Death as Possibility

Introduction

The prologue of *Being and Time* begins with the following quote from Plato's *Sophistes*: "We ... who used to think we understood [the expression being], have now become perplexed." (SZ: 1/xxix) Heidegger maintains that we, today, are still in the same situation. Being has been forgotten. We barely have a sufficient understanding of the meaning of being and we barely seem to be bothered by it. To a large degree this is the case because we are trapped in the claims of a tradition we unquestioningly repeat. This holds true for philosophy as much as for the everyday. We would rather calm ourselves than be perplexed by the question. The task Heidegger sets for *Being and Time* is hence to "reawaken an understanding for the meaning of this question." (ibid.) This is necessary as the modern understanding of what it is to be, maintains Heidegger, is to a large degree informed by the Cartesian dictum *cogito ergo sum*. This dictum is one of the defining moments of modernity because it places the self-referential ego at the centre of the world. Descartes thereby encloses the subject and disconnects it from its world. Descartes also presupposes the meaning of the *sum* as given. Thus the dictum fails to address the question of being (cf. SZ: 24/23). Heidegger's approach is different. He does not presuppose the meaning of being as given, as Descartes appears to do. Instead, Heidegger specifically asks for the meaning of being. In fact, from early on he does so in view of death.

In 1925 Heidegger gives a response to the Cartesian *cogito ergo sum* that is decisive not only for the project of *Being and Time*, but also for the entire thinking path. Heidegger articulates his response to Descartes in the lecture course on *The History of the Concept of Time: Prolegomena* as follows:

If such pointed formulations mean anything at all, then the appropriate statement pertaining to Dasein in its being would have to be *sum moribundus* ["I am in dying"],

moribundus not as someone gravely ill or wounded, but insofar as I am, I am *moribundus*. The MORIBUNDUS first gives the SUM its sense. (GA20: 437f/317⁷)

Hence I shall argue that from early on Heidegger sees a profound connection between being (in *Being and Time* primarily as the being of Dasein) and death. Moreover, I want to show that Dasein's very possibility to ask the question of being arises directly from Dasein's ontological relationship with its death. Dasein can ask the question of being and Dasein's being is an issue for it because Dasein is fundamentally directed towards its death. This is why Heidegger calls death Dasein's "ownmost possibility" (SZ: 263/252) in *Being and Time*.

The short passage from the *Prolegomena* lucidly epitomises Heidegger's early philosophical project. He specifically addresses the question of being in existential terms because the Cartesian dictum reduces being to the existential dimension of the subject. In order to free being *as such*, the being of the human being needs to be freed. As long as modernity has not overcome the Cartesian dictum the question of being of being cannot be asked meaningfully and directly. This is why the first articulation of the question of being needs to be asked in relation to a being, called Dasein, for whom being is an issue. The being called Dasein is, in turn, not primarily a self-referential cognising entity. Instead, Dasein is always already at first out there in the world and with others. Dasein derives its meaning not from thinking of itself, but from its death insofar as death lets Dasein *transcend* and move out there into the world in the first place. For Dasein is directed towards death as its utmost – *äußerst, most out there – limit* whence Dasein receives its meaning. From this very directedness and from Dasein's transcending movement world arises and world is, as Max Müller puts it, "[o]ntologically seen ... always the emergence [*Aufgang*] of being." (Müller 1964: 109⁸) Thus death co-constitutes Dasein's world and as such brings Dasein most radically before its authentic understanding of being.

This is of direct import for the most profound claim of Heidegger's philosophy, a project that sustains his thought until the end: the transformation of the human being. By transformation Heidegger means the possibility of overcoming the subject-object-dichotomy prevalent today in form of a crude postmodern subjectivism that lets the subject assume it has the power to create both itself and the world according to its desires. The analysis of Dasein, and especially the chapters on death, form Heidegger's

⁷ Kisiel translation.

⁸ My translation.

response to that challenge of modernity. His approach is to show that Dasein is always already *in* the world and thrown *into* it. Thus Dasein does not make itself but has to accept itself and its finite ways of being.

The purpose of this part is to explicate Heidegger's early attempt at the question of being and its relation to death. Thus I analyse Dasein's understanding of being in light of Dasein's ownmost possibility, death. I read *Being and Time* as Dasein's transcendental self-investigation and -foundation. Lehmann's extraordinary PhD thesis from 1962 published in 2003 is where I draw inspiration for this. Lehmann argues that Dasein assumes itself as its own hypothesis and begins to investigate itself *fundamentally* in *Being and Time*. The text aims to establish a fundamental ontology for more specific ontologies such as anthropology, biology, or psychology. In order to do so Dasein must ask what it *authentically*⁹ is: "Dasein wants to get to know itself in its being in order to "ground" itself." (Lehmann 2003: 237¹⁰) As Dasein gets to know its structures, its relationships with others, with beings, and with being and world the transformation of the human being is initiated. This transformation is to guide the human being out of subjectivism, and this means that Dasein becomes itself: "Dasein, as itself, has to *become*, that is, *be*, what it is not yet." (SZ: 243/234) The investigation is transcendental insofar as Dasein always already *is* and knows *that* it is. Dasein cannot get beyond this "that" (cf. SZ: 42/41f). Nevertheless, *Being and Time* scrutinises and thematically explicates the "that" of Dasein's being by investigating Dasein's understanding of being. This is possible because of Dasein's ecstatic ways of being, i.e., because Dasein *stands out* into the world. And because Dasein's being is an issue for it, Dasein can begin to investigate "that" it exists. Dasein can separate itself from its ordinary modes of being. The ontic foundation, Dasein, is necessary for the ontological investigation because of the Cartesian paradigm. Before properly and directly approaching being, this peculiar being, *Seiendes*, has to be reconnected with its world and being, *Sein*, as a question. Furthermore, the investigation is transcendental because Dasein gets to know its *a priori* necessary conditions for the possibility of experience. These conditions emerge from Dasein's structures. Heidegger's transcendental approach specifically asks for the being of beings, more

⁹ Haugeland rightly suggests *own* and *ownness* as translations of *eigentlich* and *Eigentlichkeit* (cf. 2013: 62). This stresses the sense of ownness of *Eigentlichkeit*, which may be lost with the standard English translation as authentic. I shall follow the standard translation for ease of reference, but note that the early focus on ownness translates into the later focus on ownness in the thinking of the event.

¹⁰ My translation.

precisely, Heidegger asks for the way in which beings are disclosed. This transcendental philosophy can ask for being, *Sein*, precisely because its presupposition is a peculiar being, *Seiendes*, Dasein, which as the “there” of being can ask what and how beings *are*. In order for Dasein to get to know itself and its being, the ontic-ontological difference must be presupposed. In a nutshell, this transcendental philosophy not only includes the conditions of the possibility of experience, but also the condition of these conditions: Dasein. Yet, in contrast to, say, Fichte’s subject, Dasein does not posit itself. Rather, Dasein is “posited” by being. Overall, *Being and Time* thus aims at a transcendental unity of ontology and *existence*.

The structure of this part is as follows: The first chapter briefly summarises what I take to be misunderstandings of the meaning of death in Heidegger’s existential philosophy. The second chapter addresses the necessity of the question of being. The third chapter analyses Dasein’s temporality. The fourth chapter develops Heidegger’s problematic notion of possibility in light of death and in view of his later interpretation of being itself as possibility. I will show that Heidegger’s initial analysis of death as Dasein’s ownmost possibility is what leads him to conceptualise being as pure possibility outside the Aristotelian schema of *potentiality* and *actuality*. The fifth chapter addresses birth and Dasein’s historicity in view of the history of being. Part II will further develop the history of being. The sixth and final chapter summarises early signs of the turn.

Chapter 1 What Death is not

Before delving into the analytic of Dasein it is helpful to point out what death is not in *Being and Time*. First of all, death is not to be taken as demise. Thus the ontological phenomenon of death Heidegger is after has nothing to do with the measurable end of someone’s life, with passing, or dying in the ordinary sense of the word. Yet, death, and this is the crux, is neither of merely metaphorical meaning nor does death have nothing to do with mortality, as, for example, Blattner (1994) maintains. Blattner defines death in *Being and Time* as an episode of psychiatric depression Dasein has to live through. For Blattner “death” in *Being and Time* has nothing to do with mortality. In a recent paper on the distinction between death and demise in *Being and Time* Thomson (2013) has attempted to synthesise claims that “death” is but a marker for

global world collapse Dasein must experience with the fact that Heidegger does not appear to speak of death in purely metaphorical terms. In a nutshell, Thomson argues that death means momentary “*global collapse of significance*” (2013: 263) and that we each have to live through such an episode of utter meaninglessness in order to make peace with the fact that we demise at some point. I strongly disagree with such readings. Heidegger clearly says that “edification” or “rules of behavior toward death” (SZ: 248/238) are not at all at stake. Death in *Being and Time* does something else entirely. Death as the utmost limit of Dasein’s existence is precisely the *condition* for world to arise but is not the cause of its collapse! Nor is death something each of us has to experience. We must rather understand death in transcendental terms.

Heidegger’s distinction between demise and death intends to make clear that the ontic scientific assumptions about death in the ordinary sense are not the primary concern and do not directly influence his ontological investigation. What we usually consider death is what Heidegger calls demise. Ontological death, as Heidegger wishes to show, is the ground for understanding of ontic demise. Dastur puts it as follows: “If Dasein as such did not already have an inherent relation to death, it could never be put in such relation by any event in the world.” (1996: 51) Hence the analysis of death is “prior to the questions of a biology, psychology, theodicy or theology of death.” (SZ: 248/239) Readings that define death as a psychological “state,” I think, fail to account for the depth of the phenomenon of death.¹¹ Heidegger’s analysis of death is, moreover, not a “metaphysics of death” (SZ: 248/239). Questions as to its origin, whether death is a transition to another life, and whether it is an evil and any such moral concerns are outside the scope of analysis. This holds true also for much of the rest of the thinking path. Heidegger consequently calls the “dying of others” a “substitute theme” (SZ: 238/231) because it is an ontic event. Heidegger rather wishes to arrive at the transcendental *ground* for such ontic occurrences. His question is thus, how we can at all relate to the dying of others and our own death.

Death in the relevant sense, then, has to do with mortal finitude, but the story is quite complicated. It has become a common trope within Heidegger scholarship to compare Heidegger’s analysis of death with Epicurus’ musings about death. In his

¹¹ Golob’s reading of death as a “state” is symptomatic of that. Golob (cf. 2013: 151) maintains that ordinary relations break down in “states” of death and angst. If Golob understands “death” in biological terms, then death is, of course, the collapse of all ordinary relations. But this would be a rather trivial existential truism. If he understands death like Thomson does, then there is virtually no difference between death and angst.

letter to Menoeceus, Epicurus argues that death is nothing to us (in Strodach 1963: 179f). We should not worry about death because when death is, we are not, and when we are, death is not. In the German Heidegger reception, for example, Figal (cf. 2013: 192f) and Römer (cf. 2010: 146) have compared Heidegger with Epicurus and have attributed at least some mild form of Epicureanism to him. In recent Anglophone Heidegger reception Thomson has argued that Heidegger is clearly informed by Epicurus' notorious remarks. I argue just the opposite. Heidegger's analysis of death has nothing in common with Epicurus. If anything, the proper ontologically determined phenomenon of death in *Being and Time* is a complete rebuttal of the Epicurean dictum. To say that death is nothing to us in life would be a meaningless claim for Heidegger. For him, death always already determines Dasein's possibilities since Dasein is, as soon as it is, directed towards its ownmost possibility, which constitutes Dasein's horizons of understanding and from that very directedness Dasein receives its meaning. If anything, then "the they" is stuck in an Epicurean understanding of death, because "[t]he they never dies." (SZ: 424/403) In Heideggerian terms the Epicurean position on death is worldless because death here does not give rise to a horizon against which Dasein can meaningfully understand itself and the world. To be worldless is not identical but close to being oblivious of being.

Chapter 2 The Necessity of the *Seinsfrage*

1. The Oblivion of Being

For Heidegger the necessity of the question of being is intimately related to the supposed oblivion of being. The oblivion of being is not a result of an utter failure of philosophy to address being. Philosophy has addressed being, time and time again. The oblivion of being is more complex. I see three decisive moments as constitutive of the oblivion. First, there are three encrusted prejudices about being, which both philosophy and the everyday operate with. Second, metaphysics' oblivion of the origin of the ontological difference. Third, the oblivion of being is intimately related to what

I call the oblivion of time.¹² In what follows I shall explicate those intertwined moments of the oblivion of being.

The first prejudice is that ““being” is the most “universal” concept.” (SZ: 3/2). All judgments about beings include an understanding of being but being itself is neither category nor genus. Being rather *transcends* them. This hints at the ontological difference. As the most universal concept being is unitary. In this way being relates to the manifoldness of beings. Aristotle calls this the “unity of analogy.” Beings are analogous to being. However, how being and beings are connected has remained concealed throughout history, Heidegger maintains. Before Heidegger the last grand attempt at explicating being was Hegel’s *Science of Logic*. The *Logic* is informed by Greek ontology. Its determination of being as “indeterminate immediate,” however, means that Hegel gives up on the unity of analogy. Indeterminate being forms the basis of the *Logic*’s categories. But how are beings to be analogous to being, if being is utterly indeterminate? Heidegger here indicates that he understands being as analogous to beings and that he looks for a determinate understanding of being. In his lectures on Aristotle’s metaphysics from 1931 Heidegger argues: “Oneness belongs to the essence of being in general and being is always already implied in oneness.” (GA33: 30/24¹³) v. Herrmann (cf. 1987: 41) points out that Heidegger in principle agrees with this. Being denotes the *way* beings *are*. The notion of analogy will thus also be significant for the thinking of the history of being. Heidegger learns from the first prejudice that even though the traditional talk of being as the most universal concept seems to imply that being is the most obvious concept, ““being” is rather the most obscure [concept] of all.” (SZ: 3/2) The missing connection between being and beings will turn out to be Dasein as the place of being’s temporal disclosure.

This is of direct import for the second prejudice about being which states that being cannot be defined. This prejudice also originates with Greek ontology. Being cannot be defined because it is not a being and thus no genus and no differentiating specification applies to it. This also points to being’s *transcendence*. What matters most for our purposes here, is that already in *Being and Time* Heidegger approaches being and our understanding of being as *historical*. The way in which the everyday

¹² Note, in anticipation of the turn, that the oblivion of being feeds back into being as historical. What is forgotten is not lost. Instead, forgetting and concealment are what move the history of being. Time plays a pivotal role in this, but in *Being and Time* we are not quite there yet.

¹³ Brogan and Warnek translation.

and philosophy understand being is historically conditioned. There is, then, for the early Heidegger a quasi-identity of being and the understanding of being.

This informs the third prejudice about being which states that the being called Dasein is always already in a pre-ontological, vague, at times even indifferent understanding of being. An understanding of being is apparently immediately available to Dasein in any encounter of its world, but also in Dasein's self-relationality. Heidegger illustrates this by simple propositions such as "the sky *is* blue" and "I *am* happy" (SZ: 4/3). Heidegger's seemingly trivial claim is that we always already operate with a sense of the meaning of being we do not question any further. "But this average comprehensibility only demonstrates the incomprehensibility," (ibid.) claims Heidegger. Thus we see that an assumed givenness of being only increases being's concealment. Dasein's initial understanding must be radicalised. That is to say, the understanding of being must be developed and disclosed through a phenomenological investigation.

The prejudices Heidegger identifies lead him to appreciate that being moves temporally and historically. Being does so by denying direct access to its meaning. The meaning of being is concealed precisely because its meaning appears obvious. In this regard, Heidegger speaks of "an enigma" that "*a priori*" (SZ: 4/3) structures Dasein's understanding of being. The oblivion of being, then, is inscribed in being as such. Being is necessarily "forgotten." This is an important first hint at truth as ἀλήθεια and the simultaneity of concealment and unconcealment, which moves Heidegger's thought. I shall explicate the movement of ἀλήθεια in part II. Note that concealment is at the heart of being already in *Being and Time*. Heidegger later thinks of being itself in terms of *bergen*, the root of *ver-* and *ent-bergen*, concealing and unconcealing – and of death as the concentration of concealment (*Gebirg*). For Heidegger the seeming obviousness with which both philosophy and the everyday language operate indicates being's concealment. Dasein is always already in a pre-ontological understanding of being, yet being's ontological content and precision must be specifically disclosed and determined.

Furthermore, there is an ontological difference between being and beings but the way in which they relate is obscure. The ontological difference between being and beings is manifest in the fact that being is the *transcendens* and the absolutely undefinable. Heidegger retains the notion that being is the *transcendens* and makes this a thematic focus. I explicate being as *transcendens* in chapter I.3. The ontological

difference is not an unproblematic situation, as Heidegger points out, but rather invites us to think after the meaning of being. Of course, traditional metaphysics knows of the difference between essence and some being in question, but whence that difference comes, remains unquestioned. The oblivion of being is then the oblivion of the origin of that difference. The question of being must hence explicitly ask for the difference between being and beings. In a foreword added to *On the Essence of Ground* in 1949 Heidegger points out that “[t]he ontological difference is the “not” between beings and being.” (GA9: 123/97) This “not,” which is neither privative nor negative, can be experienced, I contend, because of Dasein’s relation to death. Dasein’s fundamental relation to death means that Dasein ontologically always already exists as its “not-yet.” Moreover, being is *not* a being. This “not” is instantiated in Dasein insofar as Dasein is always already threatened by the possibility not to be. Dasein is structured by a “not,” for it is towards its possibility of not-being. The “not” of the ontological difference and the “not” of the “not-yet” of Dasein’s structure are, of course, not identical. Nonetheless, the “not” that is introduced into Dasein’s existence by death opens a window toward the “not” between being and beings. I will further develop these claims below. As we shall see, this “not” is related to *care* as Dasein’s being.¹⁴

The talk of the oblivion of being also indicates an at best impoverished understanding of what it means to be. At worst, “today” a proto-nihilism rules. Another indication that already in *Being and Time* our historical situation is crucial. Although being itself is not yet properly addressed as historical, Dasein’s finite understanding of being is historical. As a consequence, *Being and Time* ends with an analysis of Dasein’s historicity and its last question asks whether the proper horizon – and horizon, of course, also means limit – of the understanding of being is time. The finitude of Dasein’s understanding of being is conditional on Dasein’s mortality. As Müller puts it, *Being and Time* primarily “tries to make room [for Dasein] to be able to bear the infinite question of being with the finite strength of the human being.” (1964: 48) Thus the analysis of death intends to take us toward an understanding of the question of being and out of our impoverished understanding of being.

Being and Time’s final question, whether time is the proper horizon of the understanding of being, reflects back on the project as a whole. In fact, when Heidegger addresses the oblivion of being, he could just as well speak of the oblivion

¹⁴ On this point see also (GA97: 289ff) where Heidegger notes that the human being can differentiate between presence, *Anwesen*, i.e., being, and that which is present, *Anwesendem*, i.e., beings, because of death.

of time. More precisely of time as the ecstatic temporality of Dasein. I will return to this in more detail in I.2 where in light of death I explicate Heidegger's radically new conception of time. Traditionally, being is understood as transtemporal and eternal. Beings, on the other hand, are temporal, i.e. *in* time. Beings are prone to fall prey to the flow of time.¹⁵ Yet, Heidegger points out the crucial role of time for this traditional ontological difference. Time is what brings about "regions of being." (SZ: 18/18) That is to say, time is the origin of the ontological difference but tradition, maintains Heidegger, has failed to account for the role of time. Heidegger here critiques the medieval conception of being as timeless order. Whereas being is timeless, beings are placed in the sphere of becoming and ephemerality. Being as order signifies a non-historical and non-temporal understanding of being. Instead of following that tradition Heidegger, post-Hegel, aims to show that "*in the phenomenon of time correctly viewed and correctly [i.e. non-linearly] explained*" "*the central range of problems of all ontology is rooted*" (SZ: 18/18). For Heidegger the assumption of being's timelessness is only possible because of *time*. Even for "time-less" being time has an ordering function because being is understood as what is not temporal. There can be no time-lessness without time.

But according to Heidegger the oblivion of time begins even earlier with Greek ontology. For Greek ontology something is considered as "being" only when it is present. Beings in their *being* are disclosed as what they are thanks to their presence. For Plato, only the permanently present has true ontological status is. Heidegger hence translates the Greek word for being, οὐσία, as presence, *Anwesen*. Ergo, the being of beings is understood in terms of time. The same holds true for the modern Cartesian understanding of nature and world as presence-at-hand and availability (cf. SZ: 25f/24f). However, Greek ontology and subsequently modern ontology forget time insofar as, first, time does not become the specific thematic focus of the investigation of being. Second, these ontologies reduce time to the flow of homogenous now-states. The oblivion of time hence boils down to a linear understanding of time. Furthermore, the prevalence of presence means that metaphysics operates with a sense of being that forgets absence and concealment.

In his 1930/31 lectures on the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Heidegger points out that Hegel's system answers and finalises the guiding question of Greek ontology, τί

¹⁵ Heidegger returns to his early critique of the ordinary understanding of time in *What Calls for Thinking?* This will be a topic of part III.

τὸ ὄν; (*what are beings?*). Beings have been secured in their beingness once and for all. This finds expression in the claim to absolute and infinite knowledge (cf. GA32: 16ff/11ff¹⁶). The final response to the guiding question claims to be timeless. The *Science of Logic* is of timeless truth. Beings as such *are* insofar as they are “the actual in its genuine and whole reality [*Wirklichkeit*], or the idea, the *concept*.” (ibid.: 17/12) Yet, argues Heidegger, and this is crucial, “*the pure concept annuls time.*” (ibid.) Thus with Hegel “*time is made to disappear.*” (ibid.) Time disappears behind the dominant presence of the actual. The disappearance of time in Hegel’s system, as Heidegger explicitly states, leads to the necessity of the question of being! With Hegel the actuality of beings is secured and fully explicated, but time is obscured, precisely by this utter actuality of Hegel’s response. Hegel’s finalising response to the guiding question represents an encrustation and closure. Heidegger wishes to counter this development with a radical openness of the future. Heidegger begins to regard possibility as higher than actuality. This allows him to establish a radical openness and to break free from the encrustation of the metaphysics of presence: “Higher than actuality stands *possibility.*” (SZ: 38/36). Heidegger says in relation to phenomenology. I shall explicate Heidegger’s notion of possibility in relation to death in chapter I.4. It may for now suffice to say that death as Dasein’s *ownmost possibility* plays a pivotal role in this context. Heidegger’s critique of Hegel also already points to the history of being. The history of being breaks open the closure of metaphysics and grants the possibility of an open future.

In *Being and Time* Dasein’s ecstatic temporality is the thematic focus of the analysis of the importance of time for being. It is my goal here to show that Dasein’s temporality, which is fundamental to time, is conditional on death as ownmost possibility. At the beginning of the thinking path Heidegger’s thought is horizontal. It is a thinking *towards* being. Dasein is fundamentally structured in futural terms, for example, as “being-*toward-death*” and “in-order-to...”, and Dasein is always already “*ahead-of-itself.*” Thus the future apparently has priority. In Davos Heidegger explicitly stated that death is for the horizon of the future: “the analysis of death [in *Being and Time*] has the function of bringing out the radical futurity of Dasein.” (GA3: 283/177¹⁷) Thus in the context of *Being and Time*, where the understanding of being is the focus, the question of being turns out to be the following: *How does Dasein’s*

¹⁶ Emad and May translation.

¹⁷ Taft translation.

futural-horizonal temporality determine Dasein's understanding of being? (cf. Pöggeler 1983: 103) More to the point: how does death as that which grounds Dasein's radically futural temporality enable Dasein's understanding of being? Based on this radical futurity Heidegger can begin to conceptualise being itself as possibility. Death as ownmost possibility, towards which Dasein is, brings Dasein before being as possibility. More precisely, the analysis of death in *Being and Time* opens the path to think being itself as possibility. This will come into full effect with the turn. Müller puts it as follows: "Being is not actual *in itself*, it is not "*actus purus*." Instead, being is reality as the possibility that enables everything. As such being is even "*realitas realitatum et omnitudo realitatum*," i.e., the primary reality in which and through which everything is." (1964: 67) Müller here already speaks from the perspective of the history of being. Müller's remark is nonetheless rather important, if we want to gain a clearer understanding of *Being and Time*. This also already hints at the reason why Heidegger must ultimately move away from the project of *Being and Time*. He must do so because the centrality of Dasein's *understanding* blocks the path to being as such. This is why Heidegger writes in the last paragraph of *Being and Time* that only "something like "being" [*Sein*]" has been disclosed in the understanding of being that belongs to existing Dasein as a way in which it understands." (SZ: 437/414)

This account of the oblivion of being is, of course, too brief and neglects, for example, the impact of *Wesensphilosophie*.¹⁸ Nevertheless, my account sheds light on three features of the oblivion of being that are pivotal to my thesis. First of all, being itself is always already concealed. Being forgets itself as much as Dasein can forget being, whilst it still operates with a vague sense of what being means. Thus it is the task of philosophy to bring being to light. Second, the oblivion of being is intimately related to the oblivion of time as that which grants presence. Third, in order to overcome the oblivion of being Dasein must overcome the oblivion of its ecstatic temporality. Dasein does so in that it investigates itself as radically directed towards its death since death is what constitutes the primary temporal horizon, called future. As we can see, in *Being and Time* the oblivion of being already appears to be integral to being. Nevertheless, the project of *Being and Time* is declaredly to get beyond the oblivion of being. This will prove to be a fundamental tension that drives Heidegger's thought. On the one hand, being is supposed to be fully disclosed in its scope and

¹⁸ Müller's *Existenzphilosophie* (1964) and von Herrmann's *Hermeneutische Philosophie des Daseins* (1987) deliver a more in-depth account.

meaning. On the other hand, being always already and necessarily so conceals itself. Putting that aside for now, the method by which Heidegger intends to overcome the oblivion of being is via what he calls *fundamental ontology*.

2. Fundamental Ontology and Dasein's Self-Investigation

The methodology of *Being and Time* fundamentally connects with the reason why Dasein is the exemplary being of Heidegger's first approach to the question of being. In what follows I shall further explicate why Heidegger in his first attempt must presuppose an ontic foundation specifically called Dasein.

However profound the focus on Dasein and its use of tools and equipment may be, "[t]he real theme is being." (SZ: 67/67). At the end of *Being and Time* Heidegger thus points out that the thematic analytic of Dasein is but one way to approach being. "Our goal is to work out the question of being *überhaupt*." (SZ: 436/413ta) This is crucial because it points to the question whether the fundamental-ontological investigation necessarily requires an ontic foundation, as Heidegger stresses. Here Heidegger also formulates the crux of the argument: "Our *thematic* analytic of existence needs in its turn the light from a previously clarified idea of being *überhaupt*." (ibid. ta) On the one hand, the idea of being can only be clarified by explicating Dasein and its existentials. On the other hand, Dasein's analytic is only possible, if the idea of being has previously been clarified. This is a prime example of the hermeneutic circle and of simultaneity and equiprimordiality. Dasein's self-investigation begins with what is initially ready-to-hand, for example, the daily use of a hammer or driving a car. Even such ordinary everyday dealings imply a pre-ontological understanding of being. In order to use a hammer no investigation is necessary that asks what the hammer is or what its meaning is.

On the face of it there is hence a certain givenness of the meaning of being. Dasein's immediate understanding of being is presupposed. Yet, the presupposition at work is not logical, but existential. For Heidegger to pre-suppose means to project a possibility of being and *let* the phenomenon show itself (cf. SZ: 314f/300f). Thus, the investigation cannot stop at what is seemingly "given" because the text looks for a proper, determinate understanding of the idea of being. The initial "givenness" even covers over a proper understanding of the meaning of being insofar as Dasein falls for its world. The hermeneutics of Dasein is can serve as a way to clarify being insofar as being is an issue for Dasein. Dasein is the path Heidegger chooses in order to free

Dasein from the Cartesian paradigm and thereby clear the way to think being itself. As Heidegger points out on the last page of *Being and Time*, pre-echoing the thinking path: “We must look for a way to illuminate the fundamental ontological question and follow it.” (SZ: 437/414) The reference to illumination is crucial. Being, here as the regulatory *idea of being*, provides light. Yet, there remains a tension at this early stage of the thinking path precisely because being and the understanding of being are quasi-identical. Heidegger will later solve this issue by speaking of *Lichtung*, clearing, of being in which or according to which beings appear without Dasein’s initial disclosure. Dasein’s transcendental self-investigation, in turn, presupposes the light of being that its self-investigation at once brings to light. Put differently, *as* Dasein investigates itself, it brings to light that there must be a regulatory idea of being. Yet, the proper idea of being is not given beforehand, but results out of Dasein’s fundamental self-investigation. In this sense Dasein as ontic foundation enables the ontological investigation. This also stresses that the ontological would be empty without the ontic. Heidegger hence pre-supposes Dasein in order to explicate the understanding of being. In *Being and Time* he writes, “[b]eing is always the being of a being.” (SZ: 9/8) Therefore, what is required is *a* being that can understand the being of beings insofar as it investigates them and asks, *what are beings?*, and, *what is it to be?* Dasein can ask this precisely for its essential relation to being. From this presupposition called Dasein no one can escape, Heidegger thinks at the time of *Being and Time*. In fact, “the question of being is nothing else than the radicalization of an essential tendency of being that belongs to Dasein itself, namely, of the pre-ontological understanding of being.” (SZ: 15/13) My claim is that Heidegger undertakes this radicalisation in the analysis of death. Yet, this does not mean that Dasein posits itself. It is a tendency of Dasein to understand being pre-ontologically. But that tendency is a result of being itself. In *Introduction to Metaphysics* Heidegger is clearer when he says, “Dasein is *itself* by virtue of its essential *relation to being* as such.” (GA40: 22/31¹⁹*ta*)

Heidegger argues that Dasein’s ontic-ontological priority was a common trope already for Aristotle, insofar as “[t]he soul (of the human being) is in a certain way beings.” (SZ: 14/12*ta*) This does not mean that everything exists only because the human being exists as the subject (ground) of all beings. Instead, this says that the soul as the being of the human being is able to disclose beings *as* beings in a *hermeneutical* way, i.e., beings become meaningful as belonging to a world only through that

¹⁹ Fried and Polt translation.

disclosure. The “as” is not apophantic. That is to say, Dasein does not primarily encounter world by making value judgments about a given totality of objects. The hermeneutical “as” is performative. Dasein is in the world insofar as Dasein continuously discloses and lays bare that which is. Furthermore, Aristotle understands the human being as the ζῶον λόγον ἔχον, the living being “whose being is essentially determined by its ability to speak.” (SZ: 25/24) *Speaking* lets us encounter and disclose beings in their being. Through discourse Dasein discloses (ἀλήθευειν) and brings phenomena to light (λόγος). Following Aristotle, Heidegger calls Dasein “the being of the human being” (SZ: 25/24). The being of the human being is such that it discloses beings. The being of human being and its relation to being is the explicit thematic focus of *Being and Time*.

Dasein is the *being, das Sein*, of the human being. This is a crucial claim because Dasein is not an entity like a hammer or a tree. Yet, at the same time Heidegger keeps referring to Dasein as *a being, ein Seiendes*. Unfortunately, Heidegger does not appear to be rigorous enough in his employment of the term Dasein. Which one is it? Is Dasein the being of the human being or is it a being? The possibly dissatisfying answer is: both. Yet, there is a profound philosophical reason for this. Dasein as care is the “between” (cf. SZ: 374/357) between being and beings. We can think of Dasein as the *place* of the ontic-ontological difference.²⁰ As such Dasein is the place of mediation between being and beings. To a certain degree the word “Dasein” expresses that. The German word “Dasein” means presence *and* existence. Presence pertains to being as disclosedness and existence pertains to all that is insofar *that* it is. Dasein is the peculiar being between the two and this allows Dasein to relate to its own being. Dasein’s self-relation simultaneously enables the disclosure of other beings *as* beings. Dasein continuously interprets itself and the world by projecting possibilities of existence against its horizons of understanding. Both Dasein’s horizons and possibilities are ultimately constituted by death.

There is yet another reason for Heidegger to *posit* Dasein as ontic foundation for the investigation. In the introduction to *Being and Time* Heidegger mentions the crisis of the sciences and that “tendencies to place research on new foundations have cropped up on all sides in the various disciplines.” (SZ: 9/9) The oblivion of being has crept into the sciences. Heidegger thus wishes to provide a new foundation for the

²⁰ Sallis makes a similar point when he says that Dasein is “the *place* of prephilosophical questioning about Being.” (1995: 188)

sciences. The crisis stems from the reductive ontology of Cartesianism. Post Descartes the sciences operate with an ontology grounded in the subject-object-dichotomy and the *cogito sum*. Hence they operate with an ontology that, maintains Heidegger, has failed to ask for the meaning of being. The “new” foundation for all ontologies is what Heidegger calls Dasein. This *being* now wants to investigate itself and at the same time *found* itself so as to provide the foundation for all other ontologies of the beings this peculiar being called Dasein investigates. Dasein is the “there” of being and therefore Dasein can understand beings in their respective being. In *Being and Time* Heidegger further develops the claim from his *Prolegomena* that death is the source of meaning for the *sum*. In its self-investigation Dasein finds death to be what constitutes it as a whole and only as a whole can Dasein properly serve as the foundation for the ontologies of beings unlike Dasein.²¹ Ontologies are founded on the ontic structure of Dasein insofar as Dasein dis-covers and so mediates between being and beings: “Thus *fundamental ontology*, from which alone all other ontologies can originate, must be sought in the *existential analytic of Dasein*.” (SZ: 13/12*ta*) Dasein takes itself as its hypothesis. Dasein then interprets this hypothesis in *Being and Time* by means of a phenomenological hermeneutics that asks: *what is it to be?* This hermeneutical phenomenology is hence an ontological investigation.

Heidegger’s decisive claim regarding methodology is this:

Philosophy is universal phenomenological ontology, taking its departure from the hermeneutic of Dasein, which, as an analysis of *existence* [*Existenz*], has fastened the end of the guideline of all philosophical inquiry at the point from which it *arises* and to which it *returns* [*zurückschlägt*]. (SZ: 38/36)

Heidegger aims at a universal fundamental ontology. The existential analytic of Dasein is neither an anthropology nor an exercise in social philosophy. This is especially important to note in regard to the analytic of death. Anything Heidegger seems to be saying about Dasein in its supposed lifeworld is meant as a gateway into being. The descriptions of, say, handling a hammer are directed toward the disclosure of the phenomenon of world, i.e., of the rising of being as universally constituting any and all horizons of meaning. In *Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, a lecture course given in 1929/30 where he deepens his conception of world, Heidegger explicitly denies anthropological readings of *Being and Time*: “It never occurred to me, however, to try and claim or prove with this interpretation [of world] that the essence of man

²¹ See also (Demske 1970: 23).

consists in the fact that he knows how to handle knives and forks or use the tram.” (GA29/30: 263/177) Instead, *Being and Time* begins with Dasein’s immediate, indeterminate and fuzzy everyday modes of being. These initial observations only formally indicate the ontological, but still the text aims at universal claims about what it is to be based on what ontic phenomena cover over.²² The ontic claims about Dasein’s everydayness are primarily auxiliary. The ontic, the inauthentic and the everyday, even if not identical, are all on the same level, as it were. Yet, they are not lower kinds of phenomena or lower than the level of being: “the inauthenticity of Dasein does not signify a “lesser” being or a “lower” degree of being.” (SZ: 43/40) The authentic cannot be without the inauthentic. The ontological cannot be without the ontic. In fact, we can only arrive at the authentic from the inauthentic and the attempt of the text is to show the ontological significance of the ontic. The inauthentic and the ontic *formally indicate* deeper goings-on. Formally here means fuzzy and imprecise. This is especially the case in the analysis of death, where Heidegger does not wish to provide us with a normative guideline on how to deal with, say, moral concerns regarding mortality. Instead, the analysis of death pushes the text to that which Dasein is always already furthest removed from, i.e., to being as such.

The phenomenology of *Being and Time* thus discloses being as Dasein’s understanding of the being of beings. Note that this does not mean that this is the only dimension of the truth of being Heidegger would accept at the time of writing *Being and Time*. The truth of being Dasein discloses is what Heidegger calls “*veritas transcendentalis*”²³ precisely because Dasein can range above beings and thereby disclose them in their being and articulate what it is to be. In brackets Heidegger here adds “disclosedness [*Erschlossenheit*] of being” (SZ: 38/36me) I understand the “*of*” here as a genitive subjective but not objective. That is to say, Dasein is open to being and this is why Dasein can at all begin to investigate the being of beings.

3. Being as *transcendens pure and simple*

As we are in search for an answer to the question *of* being and since my claim is that a preliminary response can already be developed out of the analysis of death in *Being*

²² Heidegger points out that Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*, far from being a catalogue of methods for giving speeches, is “the first systematic hermeneutic of the everydayness of being-with-one-another.” (SZ: 138/135)

²³ Heidegger later abandons the notion of *veritas* when he radicalises his diagnosis of truth as ἀλήθεια. *Veritas* is too close to verification and correspondence truth and Heidegger begins to see *veritas* as a Roman distortion of the original Greek experience of truth as ἀλήθεια.

and Time we must not ignore Heidegger's own assertions *about* being in the text. In a highly contested passage, which I quote here in full, Heidegger writes:

As the fundamental theme of philosophy being is not a genus of beings; yet it pertains to every being. Its "universality" must be sought in a higher sphere. Being and its structure transcend every being and every possible existent determination of a being. *Being is the transcendens pure and simple [schlechthin]*. The transcendence of the being of Dasein is a distinctive one since in it lies the possibility and necessity of the most radical *individuation*. Every disclosure of being as the *transcendens* is *transcendental* knowledge. (SZ: 38/35f)

What is at stake here? Is this a reification of being? Is this an attempt to speak of *pure* being as Stambaugh's translation suggests? Does being as *transcendens*²⁴ refer to a world "beyond"? In order to gain a clearer understanding I first provide a summary of readings of this passage from different schools of thought. I then present my synthesis of these readings and add the aspect of the experience of finitude, which finds expression in Heidegger's notion of being as *transcendens*.

For Blattner being is "the "*transcendens* pure and simple" because everything that shows up in any way, the world, Dasein, the available, or the occurrent, all show up in terms of some ontological framework." (1999: 23) I find the notion of an ontological framework together with Blattner's claim that *Being and Time* is a case of temporal idealism problematic. "Some framework" suggests something stable surrounding beings, a prefixed givenness, which, for the supposed idealism at work, turns out to be inaccessible. A noumenal framework, as it were. Furthermore, "idealism" suggests that being is perfectly independent. Most importantly though, this is a reification of being. Blattner removes the performative character of being and of Dasein's understanding disclosure of being. I shall carve out the performativity of being in more detail in chapter I.3.1.

In my reading I rather follow Pöggeler (cf. 1983: 96) and Dahlstrom (cf. 2005: 34). Both argue that Heidegger in this passage marries Kant's notion of transcendental with the scholastics' notion of *transcendens*. If Heidegger were here to speak of being as *transcendens* only in the scholastic sense, then he would be equating his notion of being with the beingness of beings. As Dahlstrom argues, Heidegger, therefore, "applies the notion [of scholastic transcendence] to a specific sort of being, [Dasein]" (2005: 34). That is to say, to a being that *transcends* and categorises beings. Heidegger

²⁴ In the *Letter on Humanism* Heidegger admits to a failure of language in *Being and Time*. The language was too metaphysically charged. This holds true for being as *transcendens* (cf. Vallega-Neu 2003: 9f)

then combines this with the Kantian “transcendental” insofar as Heidegger looks for necessary conditions of experience *a priori*. However, the purely Kantian “transcendental” is not quite what Heidegger has in mind either, as he does not look for *epistemic* conditions of knowledge, but rather for *existential* conditions of experience. v. Herrmann (cf. 1987: 380) disagrees with such a reading and argues that transcendental cognition is to be taken purely in the sense of a transcending cognising and that it has nothing whatsoever to do with Kant’s notion of the transcendental. True, in 1926 Heidegger explicitly argues that *veritas transcendentalis* is not to be taken in the Kantian sense (cf. GA22: 10). Nonetheless, I wish to stress that the “transcending” of Dasein is the necessary condition *a priori* for any world access and experience and it is in that sense I speak of Dasein’s transcendental self-investigation. It is primarily the *Über-steigen*, transcending, of Dasein that enables philosophical truth. Rather than giving an account of Dasein in its *actual* life-world *Being and Time* seeks to establish the *a priori* structures that make philosophical truth at all *possible*.

It is certainly true, as Dahlstrom maintains, that Heidegger singles out Dasein in its being. I would, however, challenge the notion that what is at stake in *Being and Time* is only and primarily the being of Dasein. In a similar fashion as Dahlstrom, Magnus points out that if we did not understand Heidegger to make a claim exclusively about the being of Dasein, Heidegger would in fact reify being as definite beingness. Dasein’s being is performative. Magnus (cf. 1970: 85f) concludes that being in *Being and Time* is “humanistic Being” since there is no being (disclosedness) without the human being. This is true to a certain degree, but it rather shows the failure of the language of *Being and Time*. Note also that Magnus does not buy Heidegger’s later claims that *Being and Time* already speaks of being’s “it gives.” By *transcendens* Heidegger, however, does not mean the beingness of beings, the most general universality in a metaphysical sense. Instead, he struggles to articulate that there is an openness, a *clearing of* being thanks to which (*qua* world) beings can appear and thanks to which Dasein can disclose beings *as* beings. Heidegger struggles precisely because being is not earlier than Dasein, but always only accessible in a temporal disclosure and response. Heidegger’s early announcement of the “it gives” in *Being and Time* reads as follows: “However, only as long as Dasein *is*, that is, as long as there is the ontic possibility of an understanding of being, “is there” [*gibt es*] being [*Sein*].” (SZ: 212/203) For Magnus, this is clearly a humanistic claim. I read this differently. Being and the being of the human being, i.e. Dasein, are necessarily

related, in such a way that Dasein *is* the place of the mediation between that which *lets* Dasein disclose beings and beings insofar as they can be disclosed. That is, the “it gives” in *Being and Time* points to the possibility to disclose beings as meaningful in the world and as belonging to the world. As such being *gives* into the Open and Dasein is the necessary receiver and carries out that very disclosing. There is no reification because “giving” and “disclosing” are processes or events and being *is* that very giving and disclosing. Thus *Being and Time* already points to the openness *of* being thanks to which beings appear and this openness *transcends* beings, i.e., being is distinguished from beings and this distinction is what allows Dasein to bring beings into focus in the peculiar way that it does.²⁵ There is one being, called Dasein, the existing presence of the *there*, in which this openness finds an anchor. The essence of Dasein is hence, as Dahlstrom, rightly puts it, “to transcend (range over and characterise) itself and the world, others, and any other entities and modes of being that it encounters within the world.” (Dahlstrom 2005: 35) Yet, this is not a humanist claim precisely because being as *transcendens* opens that possibility for Dasein and its ways of being.

We find support for this line of argument in *What is Metaphysics?* There Heidegger writes: “If in the ground of its essence Dasein were not transcending, which now means, if it were not in advance holding itself out into the nothing, then it could never adopt a stance toward beings nor even toward itself.” (GA9: 115/91) Furthermore, he argues that being and nothing belong together not for their “indeterminateness and immediacy [*sic.* Hegel], but rather because being itself is essentially finite and manifests itself only in the transcendence of a Dasein that is held out into the nothing.” (GA9: 120/94f) Thus Dasein’s transcendental self-investigation, with *Being and Time* as its first culmination, is an articulation of Dasein’s relation to being and nothing. This relation, in turn, is the *a priori* condition for Dasein to enter into any encounter with beings. It is crucial to note that Heidegger here determines being itself to be finite. By way of Dasein – the being that transcends as it asks, the finite being, *Seiendes*, determined in its sense and direction by its ownmost possibility, death – the investigation is brought before being. And, as we shall see, Heidegger will later determine being as *possibility* precisely because this allows him to think being *in actu* as that which gives.

²⁵ De Gennaro (cf. 2013: 14), therefore, argues that the notion being as *transcendens*, which indicates the ontological difference, suggests being without beings. For De Gennaro this is an early “flashing” of being as *Ereignis*.

Thus I disagree with Dahlstrom and Magnus that only the being of Dasein is at stake in this decisive passage and elsewhere in *Being and Time*. True, Heidegger there does refer to Dasein's being as distinctive. Yet, he does so as a specific proof of the transcendence of being, i.e., of its disclosure, because Dasein is the being that understands other beings in their being. That is, Dasein is the being that can follow and comprehend (*nach-vollziehen*) that movement of being. Only as such, and this is crucial for our purposes here, is there in the transcendence of Dasein's being "the possibility and necessity of the most radical *individuation*." This means, first, that Heidegger aims at disclosing being *via* Dasein's being precisely because, second, Dasein's being is such that it can radically be singled out. Dasein *is* itself the possibility and the necessity for radical individuation, i.e., Dasein exists as the possibility and the necessity to ask the question of being. Descartes did precisely that, yet (to no fault of his own) his response to the question fell short of properly expounding the meaning of being. Dasein's possibility for radical individuation is then precisely not purely self-referential, but always already only possible in light of the world. As Dasein self-individuates, it ranges over its being and thereby finds the conditions for the possibility of existence and opens itself to the world: "This individuation is a way in which the "there" is disclosed for existence." (SZ: 263/252*ta*) Dasein's self-individuation takes place in running forth towards death. By this *Transzendenzbewegung*, transcending movement, Dasein becomes authentic: "The ownmost possibility is *nonrelational*. Running forth lets Dasein understand that it has to take over solely from itself the potentiality-of-being in which it is concerned absolutely about its ownmost being." (SZ: 263/252*ta*) Only when Dasein is properly concerned with its ownmost possibility to be, does Dasein open itself to the question of being in general and that means Dasein, as the questioning being, is authentically in the world only when it asks, *what is?*

Not only death, but also angst (or anxiety) plays a pivotal role here because "[a]ngst individuates Dasein" (SZ: 187/182*ta*). Angst is neither a psychological state nor fear of, say, demise. Instead, angst as fundamental attunement is "a distinctive disclosedness of Dasein." (SZ: 184/178) Attunement is not a contingent mood for Heidegger, but an existential. Attunement determines Dasein in its being. Disclosedness is the decisive term here. Angst does not have an object but its "before-which," *Wovor*, is "*being-in-the-world as such*." (SZ: 186/180). Angst literally and strictly "comes over" Dasein only during its transcendental-hermeneutical self-interpretation. Consider the following claim by Heidegger: "The nothingness before

which angst brings us reveals the nullity that determines Dasein in its *ground*, which itself is as thrownness into death.” (SZ: 308/295*ta*) Rather than describing the experience of someone in their lifeworld, from a transcendental perspective – i.e., from the perspective of the *That*²⁶ of Dasein’s existence – this means that the fundamental-ontological conception of angst allows Heidegger to disclose Dasein in its nothingness. The fact that nothingness permeates the being of Dasein, however, does not mean that there is no self. This rather points to the essential tension between being and nothing which Dasein *holds itself out into* in advance and which is what enables any encounter of beings in the first place. This also points to the “not” of the “not-yet” of the ecstasy of the future that predominantly constitutes Dasein’s horizon of understanding. That is, Dasein is ecstatically (out of itself) toward what *is not* yet and this movement constitutes the present moment thanks to which Dasein understands itself and the world. The analysis of angst (and death) reveals Dasein’s solipsism. This, however, does not mean that Dasein is “an isolated subject-thing [transposed] into the harmless vacuum of worldless occurrence” (SZ: 188/182). Quite to the opposite, singling out Dasein, i.e. separating it from beings unlike Dasein, most radically discloses that Dasein is always already in the world and always already with others. Furthermore, the solipsism is not static, but is a momentary abstraction in the course of Dasein’s self-investigation. The self-analysis of Dasein, then, depicts an experience of transcendence in the sense of an experience of finitude. This experience at once brings Dasein before itself and before being as such in its finitude. Here we see the striking difference between Epicurus and Heidegger. For Epicurus the analysis stops short of an ontic fear of demise and breaks off Dasein’s self-investigation. For Heidegger proper angst is what fundamentally attunes Dasein to be authentically in the world.

Chapter 3 Understanding and Dasein’s Temporality

When I first introduced the *understanding* of being I presupposed its specific meaning. I shall now carve out what Heidegger means by understanding of being and how it relates to Dasein’s temporality. I tie my findings to the role death plays in this regard.

²⁶ See also the following claim by Heidegger: “Angst is anxious about naked Dasein thrown into uncanniness. It brings one back to the sheer *That* of one’s ownmost, individuated thrownness.” (SZ: 343/328 *me; ta*)

As we know from the *Davos Disputation*, *Being and Time* posits death as utmost limit in order to develop Dasein's radical and "primordial" futurity. I thus also address the question why Heidegger thinks it necessary to posit a radical futurity of Dasein's understanding of being and how death is at all supposed to enable Dasein's futurity. In order to do so I need to explicate Dasein's temporal *ecstasies*, a term based on the Ancient Greek word ἐκστατικόν. Heidegger understands ἐκστατικόν to indicate Dasein's "primordial "outside of itself"." (SZ: 329/302) The analysis of Dasein's ecstatic temporality serves to move the analytic beyond Dasein's pre-ontological and nonthematic understanding of being. My main argument in this chapter is that both Dasein's pre-ontological understanding and its thematic grasping of being are conditional on being-toward-death.

1. From Understanding to Disclosedness and Resoluteness

The task of *Being and Time* is to move from Dasein's vague understanding to a proper ontological *and* temporal understanding of being. By "understanding" Heidegger does not mean the cognitive capacity to perceive and recognise objects as objects. Heidegger neither defines "understanding" in epistemological nor in logical terms, but as a "fundamental existential ... which constitutes the being of the there." (SZ: 143/138) Marinopoulou's recent claim that understanding means that Dasein attempts "to formulate true and valid judgments" (2017: 41) about the world could not be further from what Heidegger has in mind. Readings like Marinopoulou's are based on the prejudice that world is but the given totality of beings. According to such readings Dasein supposedly makes value judgments about that available totality. But world means something else for Heidegger. Dastur puts it as follows: "For Heidegger the world is not the totality of beings, but the *horizon* in terms of which beings may be comprehended as what they are. It is therefore a constitutive moment of *Dasein* itself, not a receptacle into which the latter may be inserted." (1996: 43). The world is neither given totality nor state. World rather arises, as Dasein projects possibilities of being. By presupposing Dasein's fundamental being-in-the-world, Heidegger effectively annuls the problem of knowledge of modern epistemology: how does the subject have access to the world? For Heidegger, the subject-object-relation is only possible on the ground of Dasein's fundamental disclosing of world. The subject-object-dichotomy must presuppose world before abstracting from it. For Heidegger *understanding* then does not mean to cognise an object and verify that one's representations of it

correspond to the object in question. Instead, understanding means that Dasein is always already dis-covering world, i.e., beings in their being (cf. SZ: 220/211). As a fundamental existential, understanding belongs to Dasein's structure. Understanding is primarily nonthematic since it does not specifically need to ask the question of being in order to disclose beings. Furthermore, understanding is non-propositional. Understanding is, then, best defined as disclosing and projecting of possibilities of existence. As such understanding is one of the necessary conditions of disclosing world.

Insofar as Dasein understands Dasein projects itself towards its potentialities-to-be. This projecting is not to be confused with planning. Planning requires actualisation, but Heidegger wishes to retain a sense of pure possibility that, on the most fundamental level of sheer projecting, does not *per se* require actualisation. In the existential-ontological sense projection is "the existential constitution of being in the *realm* of factual potentiality of being." (SZ: 145/141*me*) Projection hence spans open a realm of possibilities for Dasein's factual existence. For its projecting character understanding is of a toward-structure. Dasein understands insofar as it projects possibilities onto a primordial spatio-temporal openness called future. This projection is on the ontological level entirely without content. The ontological level thus requires the ontic, factual decisions of Dasein. The bare, ontological projecting is directed toward Dasein's ownmost possibility, death, as that which limits Dasein but which as that limit discloses to Dasein its potentialities-to-be. This is why Heidegger argues that "[a]s long as it is, Dasein has always understood itself and will understand itself in terms of possibilities." (SZ: 145/141) This is a crucial claim regarding Dasein's self-referentiality. Dasein relates to itself insofar as it understands itself, i.e. insofar as it projects itself toward the future as the horizon of its possibilities. These possibilities are, however, not to be actualised. They are to remain purely possible and thus abeyant. This is already an indication of the abyss that will be pivotal for the thinking of *Ereignis*. This abeyant, purely ontological projecting enables any ontic, factual projecting. Thus the primordial understanding "does not thematically grasp that upon which it projects, the possibilities themselves." (SZ:145/141) Here Heidegger introduces the idea that being is possibility, insofar as Dasein's understanding (thematic grasping) of being is equivalent to being. But with the notion of possibility Heidegger also seems to introduce a certain contingency that is not helpful, if the goal is a thematic analysis of being. This leads to the question, how being as possibility can

properly and thematically be grasped. The short and for now rather unclear answer: through the ecstasy of the future (cf. SZ: 327/312). Dasein understands its ability-to-be as it projects itself toward the open possibility-horizon of the future, which is ultimately constituted by Dasein's utmost limit: death. In order to arrive at a thematic grasping of being the text must hence bring Dasein's futural temporality into focus.

Dasein's ontological directedness towards its death means that Dasein is always already ahead of itself in its ways of being. Being-ahead-of-itself "concerns the whole of the constitution of Dasein." (SZ: 192/185) Dasein is ahead of itself also because of its care-structure which conditions Dasein to always be concerned with..., to be with beings innerworldly,²⁷ care for others and itself. Care is the being of Dasein (SZ: 285/273f). This articulation of being shows the performative character of being. Being is or rather takes place as taking care of..., being concerned with ..., etc. Thus the understanding of being is not the understanding of some entity called Being. Rather being is only understood in the acts of Dasein *understanding* its ordinary everyday dealings. Death plays a pivotal part here: "[c]are is being-toward-death." (SZ: 329/315) Dasein's directedness suggests (1) that it is outside itself and (2) that *being* as Dasein's understanding of being is temporal. In order to make the pre-ontological understanding of being thematically explicit, that is, in order to grasp the meaning of being, the temporality at work must specifically be carved out. Temporality is what enables Dasein's toward-directedness of disclosing (being) in the first place as it generates the presence (being) at work in any *disclosing*.²⁸ Note then that in understanding and disclosing (of being) there is precisely not something given, for being is not something present-at-hand. Rather, only *in* the process of disclosing being is as disclosing itself.

Besides understanding, attunement and discourse co-constitute Dasein's openness to the world. "*Discourse is existentially equiprimordial with attunement and understanding.*" (SZ: 161/155) This, in turn, means that being as disclosedness is constituted by understanding, discourse and attunement. The claim to equiprimordiality means any understanding is always already attuned. Dasein is

²⁷ "Innerworldly" is an adverb. It articulates the way in which beings are and how Dasein encounters them in the world.

²⁸ This is why Heidegger in *Contributions* says that in *Being and Time* "'time' is a directive toward, and a resonating with, that which takes place in the uniqueness of the ap-propriation [*Er-eignung*] as the truth of the essential occurrence of beyng." (GA65: 74/59)

always already in a mood and that mood predisposes and co-determines understanding and hence world-disclosure in discourse.

If, for the sake of illustration, we put the movement of the disclosure of meaning in logical terms, then disclosing rather takes place *ex negativo*.²⁹ Dasein's fundamental attunement angst plays a pivotal role here. Expanding on what I argued above, angst is a prime disclosedness of being. Angst is the name Heidegger gives to the existential-ontological phenomenon of a *seeming* collapse of meaning. Angst is "utter insignificance" (SZ: 187/181) of anything ready-to-hand and present-at-hand. The before-which or the about-what, *Wovor*, of angst is being-in-the-world itself, is the very possibility of anything being present. Angst is most intense before death as the possibility of not-being (cf. SZ: 254/244). Angst hence brings most radically before nothingness. *There is nothing* in angst. In the analysis of angst Heidegger, then, discloses a prime way of thinking outside the realm of beings! As I indicated above angst discloses that a "not" determines Dasein in its ground. Thus any presence and disclosure, including the horizons in terms of which Dasein discloses, are conditional on a "not," a non-availability. Angst, then, does refer to an ontic collapse of meaning. Rather angst as fundamental attunement, as utter insignificance, is co-constitutive of disclosedness, i.e., of a proper grasping of the *meaning* being that Dasein must disclose. Thus meaning arises out of a non-availability. When Heidegger argues that angst "discloses, primarily and directly, the world as world" (SZ: 187/181), I understand him as saying that the meaning of its being arises out of the nullity of Dasein, which is ultimately conditional on death. Dasein can properly disclose the meaning of being only by accepting its thrownness. In sum, the fundamental attunement angst, which is intimately related to death, discloses the ontological difference, the "not" between being and beings. Dasein's nullity tears open new horizons and the "not" here involved prohibits an indeterminate openness. In moments of breaking free from the clutches of beings a radical openness of the horizon of the future unfolds out of Dasein's nullity.

This is crucial because it defies claims that the understanding of being amounts to a sheer positivity or a prefixed givenness of meaning waiting to be discovered. Houlgate maintains that *Being and Time* establishes "a definitive horizon of understanding within which all thought of being ... must occur."³⁰ (2006: 106f). This

²⁹ See (Demske 1970: 82) on this point.

³⁰ This claim is quite close to Blattner's notion of a fixed ontological framework.

is precisely not the case because, as Müller puts it, Dasein is “as living understanding of being the site of being.” (1964: 89) Houlgate’s claim only holds true for the inauthentic mode of the they. The they is truly trapped in a fixed horizon of understanding.³¹ Dasein must, however, wrench itself free from what the mode of the they takes for granted. The proper understanding of being is a horizon that self-constitutes out of the structural totality of Dasein’s temporal ecstasies, and primarily out of the future, *as* Dasein projects possibilities of being. That is to say, a “not-yet” and a “not” constitute Dasein’s horizon of understanding because the future is not yet. Thus Dasein does not encounter a definitive prefixed horizon.

A central problem of *Being and Time* is rather how, or if at all, Dasein can access its fundamental structures and become authentic and whether *each* Dasein must and *can* do so. Heidegger even calls carrying out being-toward-death “existentially a fantastical demand” and an “ideal of existence” (SZ: 266/255). If Dasein is in fact perfectly capable of *becoming* authentic, then Dasein would be precariously close to being capable of positing itself. Moreover, on the ontic level this would imply that Dasein is heroic and tragic. This cannot be the aim of a transcendental project. Thus Demske (cf. 1970: 113) argues that *Being and Time* itself is a text that has an authentic and an inauthentic side. Ironically, *Being and Time* is inauthentic precisely when it comes to the question whether and how Dasein can achieve authenticity. This is most obvious in Heidegger’s talk of the necessity for Dasein to choose its hero (cf. SZ: 385/367). Yet, if we consider *Being and Time* a transcendental self-investigation, then the transformation takes place in the text, insofar as the text uncovers Dasein’s existential-ontological structures that enable Dasein’s authenticity. The text then is a preparation for the transformation. Hence Heidegger’s ontological claims about death are not normative guidelines for action. This, on the other hand, leads to the problem that we cannot seem to make any of the existential-ontological adjustments Heidegger at times seems to be demanding. Dasein simply does not posit itself in its being. Heidegger will consequently move away from the possibility that each Dasein can self-transform according to the ideal of existence when he begins to talk of “the few and rare” in *Contributions* (cf. GA65: 11/11). There, only a select few are required to carry out the transformative tasks and this means only a few are required to carry out being-toward-death. More on this in part II.

³¹ See also (SZ: 49/48), where Heidegger explicitly says we must question what is implicitly self-evident and given.

In *Being and Time* Heidegger introduces the notion of *resoluteness* (*Entschlossenheit*) as Dasein's mode of authentic disclosedness. As "decisive" and "strong-willed" the English "resoluteness" and the German *Entschlossenheit* sound, in the existential-ontological sense Heidegger means something else than our ordinary associations would have us believe. Heidegger often uses ordinary words that carry certain, immediate connotations. He then reverses the meaning of these words. But this is not arbitrary. The reversal in meaning moves the ordinary word out of its ontic meaning toward something as yet unheard-of, something that is in that sense primordial and that has little to nothing to do with the word's ordinary connotations. Ignoring its ordinary meaning, we hear in *ent-schlossen* the root verb *schließen* which means "to lock." To be *ent-schlossen* then literally means to be *un-locked, dis-closed*. At the same time "resoluteness" retains a sense of decision for Heidegger. Dasein decides to be itself according to what it has learnt about itself during its self-investigation. That is, with resoluteness Heidegger assumes to have disclosed Dasein's ownmost ability to be. *Resoluteness* is thus the most primordial way of Dasein's authentic being-in-the-world.

I understand resoluteness as becoming accessible to oneself, an uncovering of one's authenticity, which is not given, but only comes about in self-disclosing. This is tantamount to a thematic grasping of the question of being. Resoluteness comes about when Dasein *understands* the call of conscience and recognises its lostness to the they. It is crucial to note that the call directly addresses Dasein and calls Dasein to decide for its ownmost potentiality-to-be by running forth (indicating the futurity of resoluteness) toward death (cf. SZ: 272/262; 305ff/292ff). I shall return to the silent call of conscience in more detail in part IV. Note for now that literally "nothing" calls upon Dasein to be itself in the call of conscience. That is, the "not" that fundamentally constitutes Dasein and its future calls upon Dasein to become itself. Heidegger calls this accepting one's ontological guilt. To accept guilt is tantamount to found oneself on "a being [*Sein*] which is determined by a not" (SZ: 283/272). That is to say, Dasein does not choose itself out of thin air. Dasein rather recognises that its existence is fundamentally determined by what it is "not" and this "not" limits Dasein's possibilities. This very limitation at once enables Dasein's openness to the world. The "not" is not privative or negative in a dialectical sense (cf. SZ: 286/274). It is not a lack. Instead, it ensures that Dasein is not closed off because, as Heidegger says in *What is Metaphysics?*, Dasein has access to beings, can dis-close them for its inherent

relation to nothingness. Only where Dasein is dis-placed, *ver-rückt*, into nothingness can Dasein begin to grasp beings in their being. Davis thus makes the crucial point that the “later Heidegger often hyphenates the word as *Ent-schlossenheit*, stressing this etymologically original ecstatic meaning.” (2007: 41) Dasein’s ecstatic temporal structure, to which I shall presently turn, means that Dasein comes towards itself in view of what it has been and if it does so properly, then Dasein is authentically in the world, with others and with itself:

As authentic being a self [Selbstsein], resoluteness does not detach Dasein from its world, nor does it isolate it as free-floating ego. How could it, if resoluteness as authentic disclosedness is, after all, nothing other than authentically being-in-the-world? Resoluteness brings the self right into its being concerned [besorgende Sein] with what is ready-to-hand, and pushes it toward concerned being-with with others. (SZ: 298/285ta).

Resoluteness is thus an ecstatic-temporal process rather than a state. Resoluteness is Dasein’s authentic being-in-the-world because it unfolds from Dasein’s ownmost possibility. Methodologically we require Dasein’s authenticity, together with Dasein’s inauthenticity, because only when Dasein is fully disclosed, is there a possibility to gain a full ontological grasping of what it is to be. Ecstatic resoluteness, then, is the first attempt to leave behind the oblivion of being.

2. Dasein’s Ecstatic Temporality

Dasein is fundamentally directed towards the future. That is to say, Dasein is directed toward a radical openness against which Dasein continuously projects possibilities of being. Dasein *understands* because it is futural. But to understand, to be in the world, for example, using a hammer or talking to someone, certainly happens in the temporal mode of what we usually call presence. And how could Dasein understand itself and its present situation, if Dasein were not also to some degree connected to its past? Thus we must consider what unifies Dasein’s temporal modes. The unity of Dasein’s temporality is also required to arrive at Dasein’s thematic grasping of being. For being is unitary and so must be Dasein’s proper, temporal understanding of it. If we want to understand Dasein’s ecstatic temporality, and as a result of that in how far time *is* the horizon of the meaning of being, we must begin with what Heidegger calls the vulgar understanding of time. The vulgar understanding of time is conditional on original, ecstatic temporality (cf. SZ: 425/404). In a nutshell, the vulgar or ordinary

understanding of time represents time as linear. Vulgar time is the time of passing, homogenous now-states: $t_1, t_2, \dots t_n$. As such it is the time of the they and structures the everyday. The three modes of the inauthentic understanding of time are called past, present, and future. As Heidegger notes in the decisive §65 of *Being and Time*, these are represented as separate from one another. Nonetheless, Heidegger takes the ordinary modes to be indicative of the unity of Dasein's ecstatic temporality. Dasein's three ecstasies, which the vulgar components of time are conditional on, are *Gewesenheit* (having-been), *Gegenwart* (good presence), and *Zukunft* (that which is to come). Sallis (cf. 1995: 116) makes the crucial point that Dasein's ecstasies are reflected in its relation-of-being (*Seinsverhältnis*) with itself insofar as Dasein always relates to itself out of what it has been and what it projects itself to be. This is a finite process. In the prevalent mode of the they Dasein forgets its finite ecstasies and makes time a linear, endless flow of available now-states. Beginning with §65 Heidegger aims to provide the final argument for why time is supposed to be the horizon of Dasein's proper thematic grasping of being. The analysis of understanding as co-constitutive of resoluteness has pointed to the toward-structure of Dasein in any primordial understanding of itself, others and world. Heidegger now has to lift the analysis of Dasein's "ahead-of-itself" and "out-of-itself" on ontologically sound grounds. Why is it that Dasein has that direction and what is it that this directedness *towards...* enables? Thus I now address why the ecstasy of the future has priority, what unifies Dasein's ecstatic temporality and what role the phenomenon of death plays in this regard. Following Heidegger's remarks in Davos, I argue that death opens Dasein for its radical futurity and as such is in fact *the* enabling condition for Dasein's disclosing of being.

The ordinary understanding of time, maintains Heidegger, is not just the time of the they, but also the way in which even philosophy, following Plato and especially Aristotle, has often understood time.³² Hegel's conception of time, Heidegger argues, is "the most radical way in which the vulgar understanding of time has been given form conceptually." (SZ: 428/407) This is because Hegel's account of time depicts the most sustained formalisation and philosophical justification of linear time. Hegel first equates time with space. This allows him to posit now-states as points. The point posits itself as the now and as the point posits itself it negates itself. For Hegel time is intuited

³² Heidegger mentions Augustine, Aristotle, and Hegel as examples of vulgar time. Heidegger takes from them the positive insight that the ecstatic temporality of Dasein can only be appreciated in relation to vulgar time (cf. SZ: 427/406).

becoming, the movement from being to non-being and vice versa, for every now is already no longer itself when it posits itself. Becoming is the interplay between *Entstehen und Vergehen*, generation and corruption. Hence for Hegel “[t]he being of time is the now.” (SZ: 431/409) This is the crucial claim. With the being of time as the now and the being of the now as the point, the Hegelian conception of time formalises the vulgar understanding of time. Hegel formalises what everybody knows: ordinary time is fleeting. It passes us by. The future passes into the present and the present passes into the past. Whatever is actual will no longer be actual as soon as the next now comes around and what has passed disappears into the past never to return. The they is interested solely in the actual and the present. “The vulgar understanding of time sees the fundamental phenomenon of time in the *now*, and indeed in the sheer now, cut off in its complete structure, that is called the “present”.” (SZ: 426f/405). In vulgar time there is a certain indifference at work because of the assumed homogeneity of “now-states.” There is also a certain scatteredness about it since every “now” is cut off from all other “nows.” This finds expression in the idle talk about passing time. But Heidegger asks, “[w]hy do we [at all] say that time *passes away* [*vergeht*] when we do not emphasize *just as much*, how it comes into being [*entsteht*]?” (SZ: 425/404) The reason for this is death. The they’s idle talk helps it to isolate itself from its finitude. Its fleeing from death is at work in common phrases like “time flies:”

Dasein knows fleeing time from its “fleeting” knowledge of its death. In the kind of talk that emphasizes time’s passing away, the *finite futurity* of the temporality of *Dasein* is publicly reflected. And since even in the talk about time’s passing away death can remain covered over, time shows itself as passing away “in itself.” (SZ: 425/404)

Hoffman (cf. 2005: 334) reads this as saying that *Dasein* knows its time is passing by because it is mortally finite. In my view this does not only fail to account for the depth of the claim in question, but also rather distorts Heidegger’s project. Heidegger here provides the reason for how the ordinary understanding of time as *passing* has come about in the first place and he also suggests that authentically being-toward-death could bring about an access to ecstatic time! That is, authenticity comes about by running forth toward death. Hoffmann, however, reinforces the vulgar understanding of time. The passage illustrates that *Dasein* always already knows of its death. This knowledge is “fleeting” as long as *Dasein* has not yet taken over its own death as its ownmost possibility. What is reflected in the idle talk about “fleeting time” is *Dasein*’s inauthentic stance towards its mortality. Death is at once the hidden ground

of the chatter about fleeting time, and death provides the way toward disclosing authentic primordial temporality. The vulgar understanding of time then, which Heidegger also suspects to be dominant in most, if not all!, of philosophy, is a direct result of not having faced up to human mortality. This in turn means that philosophy is inauthentic when it does not properly consider human mortality, of having reduced death to a transition. We shall see in parts III & IV that in his writings on the fourfold Heidegger begins to argue for the necessity of the human being to become the mortal being. The ontic talk of fleeting time, however, also indicates something positive – namely, that time cannot be reversed. This is the case precisely because of Dasein’s ontological directedness toward the future.

The passage furthermore stresses that Dasein’s existential finite futurity is conditional on death. This is why Dasein’s fundamental toward-structure is most radically apparent in what Heidegger calls being-toward-death. Death is the limit toward which Dasein exists, but that limit always already determines Dasein in its being. As Vallega-Neu notes, Heidegger understands death as limit in the Greek sense of πέρας, which is “a limit that gives something free in its limiting. Death is a limit that frees Dasein’s ownmost potentiality of being” (2003: 13). That is to say, as πέρας death belongs to Dasein rather than being its other. If Dasein falls for the they, Dasein is precisely not free, because Dasein then isolates itself from its death. The future then has priority because it is *from* its finite futurity that Dasein derives its meaning.

What Heidegger means by future, however, is something else entirely than how we usually think of it. “Here “future” does not mean a now that has *not yet* become “actual” and that sometime *will be*.” (SZ: 325/311) Authentic future hence is not a “now” that is not yet and that has to be actualised or will self-actualise. Instead, future is understood as “the coming [*Kunft*] in which Dasein comes toward itself in its ownmost potentiality-of-being.” (SZ: 325/311) Heidegger exploits the German word for future here. *Zu-kunft* literally means “that which comes toward.” When Dasein is authentically towards its finite futurity, Dasein comes toward itself as its ownmost *Seinkönnen*. That is to say, Dasein comes toward itself as authentic resolute disclosing of its understanding of being. In that sense the future constitutes the horizon against which the meaning of being is disclosed, for Dasein “is futural in its being in general.” (SZ: 325/311) The future then is not a “not-yet” to be actualised. Instead, future means that Dasein is fundamentally directed and oriented toward its utmost limit in such a way that Dasein can meaningfully disclose world. This is also how Heidegger defines

meaning, *Sinn*: “Strictly speaking, meaning signifies the upon-which of the primary project of the understanding of being.” (SZ: 324/310) This is to say that “[m]eaning is an existential of Dasein, not a property that is attached to beings” (SZ: 151/147). Meaning emanates from Dasein because it is ecstatically directed towards its ownmost possibility and thereby is able to disclose beings in their being, i.e., a world as meaningful inter-relationality.

On the face of it the talk of the priority of the future appears to be contradictory to Heidegger’s claim that “an *a priori perfect* [characterises] the kind of being of Dasein itself.” (SZ: 85/83) Let me briefly clarify Heidegger’s peculiar use of the *a priori*, the “before-structure” (*Vor*), and the “always already.” For Heidegger these are not timeless notions. Instead, they point to the methodological necessity of presupposing *a being*, Dasein, that understands being. The “before,” the *a priori perfect* of Dasein, i.e., *that* Dasein has always already existed, is not a transtemporal claim, and especially not a claim made in terms of linear time. This is an ecstatic-temporal claim. As soon as Dasein is, it is already *in* the world, with others, fallen for the world and its factual possibilities. In this sense an *a priori* is what structures Dasein. This is Dasein’s having-been (cf. SZ: 327/312). As long as Dasein is, it exists according to its having-been-thrown. Moreover, “[*b*]eing-thrown means existentially to find oneself in such and such a way.” (SZ: 340/325) Thus Dasein is attuned on the ground of its having-been, which is not of the past in the ordinary sense, but which comes towards it, i.e. co-constitutes its future (cf. SZ: 326/311). Thrownness adds a “not” to Dasein’s being because Dasein is who it is, for it is *not* everything else that it could have been. There is hence an immeasurable wealth of possible horizons in excess of themselves, limited *and* enabled only by Dasein’s ownmost possibility, death, because Dasein “*is always already its not-yet* as long as it is.” (SZ: 244/235) This “always already” is not outside of time but takes place *out of* time, out of the $\epsilon\tilde{\xi}$ of Dasein’s unitary ecstasies that fundamentally structure Dasein and that let Dasein *transcend* and range over beings. Dasein’s ecstasies push Dasein out of itself. Horizons of understanding thus are not given because Dasein is fundamentally determined by a “not:” “Care, the being of Dasein, thus means, as thrown projection: being the null ground of a nullity.”³³ (SZ: 285/273f *ta*) Hence, the “not” as having-been has two functions: first, it delimits the contingency of the radical openness of the future. Second, it indicates that meaning is not previously given, but must always be wrested

³³ Again we see an early reference to the abyss.

from what is coming towards oneself. Dasein's coming toward itself in its ownmost ability-to-be means that Dasein comes toward itself as the possibility not to be and this im-possibility of existence is precisely what determines and mediates Dasein's horizons of understanding. When Heidegger thus determines the meaning of existentiality to be the "future" (cf. SZ: 327/312), he argues that existence is meaningful because abundant, but finite horizons of possibility constitute existence.

Unlike the ordinary understanding of the modes of past, present and future suggests, Dasein's ecstasies are in unity because presence results from the interplay of that which has been and that which comes toward Dasein (cf. SZ: 326/311). This "good presence" is not the presence of a passing now-state that disappears into oblivion. Good presence rather *arises* out of the tension between what is to come and what has been. Heidegger calls this ecstatic unity "temporality." On the most fundamental level Dasein's ecstasies are not successive but simultaneous (cf. SZ: 350/334). Temporality as the unity of the ecstasies is the meaning of Dasein's being because temporality makes any disclosure of world and being possible. Original temporality is finite because it is bound up by Dasein's utmost futural limit, death, and therefore being, as it manifests phenomenologically, is "itself" finite (cf. SZ: 331/316).³⁴ Dasein's understanding of being is not contingent because Dasein's understanding is conditional on thrownness and therefore on tradition and origin. At the same time there is no prefixed set of horizons since new horizons can be torn open from within Dasein's ecstatic moments. This is possible precisely because of the workings of ecstatic temporality. With every Dasein new possibilities of interpreting tradition are born. Moreover, Heidegger argues that as "[a]uthentically futural, Dasein is authentically *having-been*." (SZ: 326/311) Thus only if Dasein is authentically open for its future, i.e., towards its death, can there be an authentic understanding of what has been. What Heidegger calls *existence* in *Being and Time* is then not existence in the metaphysical sense but the ecstatic openness for the meaning of being, which the human being does not posit, but for whose advent the human being is the site.

By privileging the openness of the future Heidegger breaks with the prevalence of the actual and therefore with metaphysics of presence. Pöggeler argues that "metaphysics is not guided by an openness of the future as an exciting and tense possibility that arises from an utmost impossibility. Instead, metaphysics is guided by

³⁴ See also (Demske 1970:82) on this.

“actuality”” (1983: 105³⁵). Pöggeler’s remark points precisely to what I shall address next: death as Dasein’s ownmost possibility which is at the same time the possibility of Dasein’s impossibility. Death as that possibility tears open the horizons of Dasein’s understanding of being, without giving Dasein anything to actualise.

Chapter 4 From Death as Possibility to Being as Possibility

So far the notion of possibility has for the most part surfaced precisely when Dasein’s proper temporal understanding of being was at stake. Possibility is a central but problematic notion in Heidegger’s thinking. The way we understand “possibility” impacts not only our interpretation of death and being in *Being and Time*, but also how we understand Heidegger’s turn and the thinking *of* the event. In what follows I shall explicate Heidegger’s notion of possibility in light of the analytic of Dasein’s death. The core argument of this chapter is that death as ownmost possibility brings Dasein before being. Moreover, I shall carve out how this early nearness of possibility and being introduced in *Being and Time* leads later Heidegger to determine being *itself* as the possible. Most prominently so in the *Letter on Humanism* and in the earlier lecture on *Plato’s Doctrine of Truth*.

1. Death and Dasein’s Being-whole

Besides bringing out Dasein’s futurity the analysis of death in *Being and Time* serves to establish Dasein’s “being a whole,” *Ganzsein*.³⁶ The hermeneutical situation after the first section of the text is such that Dasein has been revealed as always already “ahead of itself,” which, as outlined above, turns out to mean that Dasein is fundamentally determined by a not-yet. In existentiell terms Dasein hence appears to be unwhole. There always seems to be something lacking, there is always something Dasein could still be doing. Apparently, Dasein is complete only when Dasein demises. The same can be said of something ready-to-hand like a ripening fruit (cf. SZ: 243f/234f). The ripening fruit is also determined by not-yet being a ripe fruit. The fruit’s becoming-ripe is conditional on this not-yet. On the face of it, the same seems to be valid for Dasein. Dasein appears to be complete only when it has demised

³⁵ My translation.

³⁶ See also (Marx 1982: 101).

because demise makes it impossible for Dasein to continue to project possibilities. Yet, Dasein is not something ready-to-hand: “In death, Dasein is neither fulfilled nor does it simply disappear; it has not become finished or completely available as something ready-to-hand.” (SZ: 245/236*ta*) Dasein can die before its time, too young, with unfinished projects. Yet, even when Dasein dies old and fulfilled, there is still a sense of lack, even if only the lack felt by others. Dastur hence stresses that after someone has passed they are more present than “he or she ever was in life.” (1996: 46) In chapter I.2 I pointed out the difference between ontological death and demise. The conception of death Heidegger is after is such that it allows for Dasein’s toward-structure, its being-ahead- and out-of-itself, but also for Dasein’s wholeness, as long as it is. Even though demise cannot account for Dasein’s wholeness, this ontic phenomenon still formally indicates ontological death as Dasein’s determining limit.

Heidegger introduces the notions of *Ganzsein*, being a whole, and *Ganzseinkönnen*, being-able-to-be-whole as descriptions of Dasein’s totality. He wishes to demonstrate the possibility of authentic being-able-to-be-whole precisely because that would provide Dasein’s primordial being (cf. SZ: 234/224). There are echoes of Husserl’s practical *I can* in *Ganzseinkönnen*. The *I can* is Husserl’s response to the Cartesian *ego cogito*. Husserl (cf. 1989: 129) anchors the *I can* in the body. The *I can* introduces an element of potentiality that underlies all activity. As such the *I can* constitutes the ego’s practical freedom. The ego never completely gives in to a mere course of action the ego is used to. Instead, the ego always retains the potentiality of the *I can*. The *I can* implies a positive freedom in face of any negative constraints that might arise with new affections. The “consciousness of the free “I can” and not the mere consciousness that “it will come,” “it will happen” frees the subject’s “immediate horizon”” (Husserl 1989: 270) for any future action beyond the current most immediate horizon. In everyday dealings the subject is drawn into a mode of acting where it simply executes rather than chooses what to do. The subject’s most immediate horizon determines its actions. Thanks to its constitutive *I can* the subject can, however, transcend beyond the most immediate horizon. Transcending discloses new possibilities for the subject. For Husserl this possibility is not “merely [a] “logical” possibility ... [but] practical possibility as the to-be-able-to [*Können*].” (1989: 273) This is similar for Heidegger’s notion *Seinkönnen*, potentiality-to-be, which is best thought of as transcendental ability that guarantees Dasein’s positive freedom. While Husserl places weight on the influence of the affects on the subject’s choice-making,

Heidegger analyses the they-self, which Dasein falls for in its most immediate horizon called everydayness. In everydayness Dasein does as *they* do, Dasein speaks as *they* speak. In order to be free Dasein must wrench itself from the they-self and transcend towards new horizons. Dasein *can* do so because of its self-understanding as potentiality-to-be. This is “the idea of existence” (SZ: 232/221) as regulating transcendental idea. The idea of existence as being-able-to-be means that this idea contains the potentiality for Dasein to take on its own being as an issue for itself. In forerunning, i.e., in projecting itself into the future and transcending itself, each Dasein “can wrench itself” (SZ: 263/252) from the they. Dasein *is able to be whole* by wrenching itself free. This, in turn, is possible if Dasein faces death.

By “holding death for true” (SZ: 265/254) Dasein runs forth toward its ownmost possibility and only in this way “Dasein can first make certain of its ownmost being in its insuperable totality.” (ibid.) This is how “[d]eath is a way to be that Dasein takes over as soon as it is.” (SZ: 245/236). Running forth toward death enables “the possibility of existing as a *whole potentiality-of-being*.” (SZ: 264/253) Thus Dasein can be ontologically whole because of death. As Lehmann rightly puts it: “Death, as limit, determines Dasein as a whole. If this limit were the absolute other of Dasein, then it could not reach this limit as long as it is.” (2003: 410). Moreover, Heidegger argues that “[t]he existential-ontological constitution of the totality of Dasein is grounded in temporality.” (SZ: 437/414fta) Dasein can be whole insofar as it runs forth to its utmost limit that determines it as soon as it is. This takes place on the ground of Dasein’s toward structure, put differently, on the ground of Dasein’s ecstatic futurity, which death enables. Heidegger speaks of *Seinkönnen* and *Ganzseinkönnen* rather than merely of Dasein’s totality in order to denote Dasein’s immeasurable possibilities limited only by its ultimate possibility, death. The convoluted claim that the future is “the arrival in which Dasein comes towards itself in its ownmost being-able-to-be” now reads: The future is a mode that lets Dasein authentically relate to itself and the world, if and only if Dasein recognises its ownmost possibility: death.³⁷ Thus at the most fundamental level Dasein can relate at all because it is mortally finite and directed towards that finiteness: *sum moribundus*. The future gives meaning and weight to Dasein’s ability-to-be, for the horizon of the future ultimately arises out of death. As de Beistegui puts it: being mortal “[...] is the privilege and the joy of being human: to

³⁷ Alejandro Vallega (2003: 8) therefore rightly, in my view, identifies Dasein’s futurity with being-toward-death.

be able to be (being): *Sein-können*.” (2003: 31f) Dasein is always already constituted as a whole on the ground of being-toward-death, but Dasein must specifically hold that possibility for true in order to assume itself as whole. Realising its ownmost being-able-to-be-whole lets Dasein properly grasp *being as possibility*.

2. Dasein's Ownmost Possibility

Death supposedly is Dasein's ownmost possibility, even though in the melange of the everyday death is furthest from Dasein. What should death have to do with possibility? Is death not the breakdown of any and all possibility? Is death not the most obvious *fact* of life? We all die sooner or later and until then we need to act on as many opportunities as possible, but death certainly is not one of them. In its everyday dealings Dasein falls for the world, for the next-best opportunity and possibility. But none of those are death. In the public sphere death has nearly no room. Death is at best an occurrence, at worst bad luck. Death is something that happens but something that does not concern *me* for now. Death is of an “inconspicuousness characteristic of everyday encounters.” (SZ: 253/243) Dasein's everyday being-toward-death reveals that death is for the most part understood as something not yet present-at-hand. Even though only *I* can die *my* death and no one can die in *my* stead, the they dictates death to be something so ordinary and irrelevant that it entirely “veils its character of possibility” (SZ: 253/243). Nonetheless, the fact that only *I* can die *my* death, already formally indicates that death is *ownmost* to *me*, no matter how strongly the they wants to tranquillise its fear of its impending demise and fall back into blissful carelessness.

To speak of death as possibility must, of course, at first appear paradoxical. Heidegger, however, introduces death as possibility when he points out that the ordinary “possibility of representation” entirely fails, when it comes to death. “*No one can take the other's dying away from him.*” (SZ: 240/231) This indicates to Heidegger that death “signifies a peculiar [*eigentümliche*] possibility of being” (ibid.) precisely because death allows for a most radical individuation. Death cannot be taken away from Dasein. Moreover, section 1 of *Being and Time* showed Dasein to be “*thrown possibility* throughout” (SZ: 144/139). Thus, as death is in fact a possibility of being that can impossibly be referred to someone else, death must be grounded more fundamentally in Dasein's existential-ontological structures. To refer to death as possibility is hence not as arbitrary as it may at first seem. The existential-ontological determination of death *as* possibility, in turn, allows Heidegger to disclose “the

character of possibility of Dasein ... most clearly” (SZ: 248f/239) because “[d]eath is a possibility of being that Dasein always has to take upon itself.” (SZ: 250/241). Yet, and this is crucial, “[a]s possibility, death gives Dasein nothing to “be actualized”” (SZ: 262/251). That is, in the analysis of death where death is determined as Dasein’s ownmost possibility (where Dasein comes toward itself *as* possibility), Heidegger can fully establish that Dasein is not something present-at-hand, but pure possibility.

Heidegger determines the full existential concept of death as follows: “*as the end of Dasein, death is the ownmost, nonrelational, certain, and, as such, indefinite and insuperable possibility of Dasein.*” (SZ: 259f/248)³⁸ This conception of death anchors in care as Dasein’s being, i.e., in the fundamental ecstatic structure that determines Dasein’s ecstatic being-ahead-of-itself. Death is ownmost to Dasein because only *I* can die *my* death. Dasein’s being is here most radically individuated. This also means that by running forth towards death Dasein can fully accept its ontological guilt. Accepting death is a nonrelational act just like listening to one’s conscience and taking over one’s ontological guilt is. No one can do so for *me*. *I* cannot do so for anyone else. Thus the resoluteness (Dasein’s authentic self) that is disclosed here means a breakdown of “all “worldly” status and abilities of Dasein” (SZ: 307/293). From renouncing beings and worldly status an authentic understanding of being arises. This renunciation is tantamount to running forth toward death as utmost possibility.

On the face of it, it is trivial to say that death is certain. We all have to die. By *certain*³⁹ Heidegger, however, means that only when Dasein self-investigates and self-finds its being-in-the-world and being-with-others, can Dasein reach proper *certitudo* about itself. This *certitudo* is precisely not purely self-referential, as it arises from care. Thanks to its self-founded certainty Dasein becomes free for authentic factual possibilities of being. Factual possibilities are in fact to be actualised. Facticity⁴⁰ is Heidegger’s term for *Wirklichkeit* in the existentiell sense. We do not set the conditions of facticity, but *qua* Dasein we are free to investigate those conditions. From the perspective of Dasein’s transcendental self-investigation this means that in the analysis of death Dasein stands fully and thematically disclosed in terms of the

³⁸ Even though death is Dasein’s ownmost possibility, Heidegger does not reduce possibility to death. In a lecture course on the *1st Critique* in 1927 Heidegger calls “philosophy the freest possibility of human existence” (GA25: 39) because philosophy articulates life.

³⁹ Note that the German *gewiß* is the root of *Gewissen*, conscience.

⁴⁰ Facticity is one of the few places where Heidegger mentions the body appears. Facticity breaks up Dasein’s neutrality into female and male (GA26: 173).

necessary conditions of Dasein's factual freedom. Thus Heidegger speaks of Dasein's "passionate, anxious freedom toward death, which is free of the illusions of the they, factual, and certain to itself" (SZ: 267/255) and which arises from resolute running forth. In resolute running-forth Dasein comes "face to face with the possibility to be itself." (ibid.) With the analysis of death, Heidegger reaches into the most fundamental structures of Dasein and here Dasein is pure possibility. Through realising itself as pure possibility Dasein can assert itself as being fundamentally *open* for its authentic, factual possibilities of being. Once Dasein has disclosed for itself its potentiality-to-be in this way, Dasein cannot overturn or surpass this finding. As this is the full account of resoluteness, death shows itself to be Dasein's "most original possibility. Death determines Dasein in its ground." (Müller-Lauter 1960: 25) Death does so, in fact, not despite but because "Dasein has ... always already turned away from it." (ibid.) Death is thus, as Müller-Lauter calls it, Dasein's "ur-possibility." (1960: 31)⁴¹

Yet, there is an important twist. Even though Dasein is now fully disclosed in its being, Heidegger reminds us that "Dasein is equiprimordially in untruth." (SZ: 308/295) That is to say, even though Dasein has found its authentic self, this does not eradicate inauthenticity. Dasein is still "open for its constant lostness ... which is possible from the very ground of its own being." (SZ: 308/295) On my reading, that ground is death. Death here hence also shows itself to be utterly uncontrollable, inaccessible and unavailable. As such death can, however, fully disclose Dasein's being *and* retain Dasein's "untruth," which inauthenticity and fallenness are instantiations of. Untruth also points to the simultaneous concealment in every disclosure. For that self-concealment, which is conditional on death as "ur-possibility," Dasein's being is never quite static and available but retains its performativity.

Yet, Müller-Lauter (cf. 1960: 42f) argues that death loses its character of "ur-possibility" when Heidegger says that Death is indefinite because death "is constantly certain and yet remains indefinite at every moment as to when possibility *becomes* impossibility." (SZ: 308/295*me*). Death *becomes* impossibility and this, claims Müller-Lauter, refutes death's original character of possibility, for it temporalizes death and because death is apparently actualised as impossibility. True, Heidegger is quite unclear here and by saying "becoming" he seems to suggest that death as possibility is actualised as impossibility. The question is, whether there is a sudden

⁴¹ Müller-Lauter's book is one of the few studies exclusively devoted to *Möglichkeit* and *Wirklichkeit* in *Being and Time*.

reversal in the character of Dasein's ur-possibility. If that were the case, then that would mean the breakdown of Dasein's existential self-investigation because as an existential possibility is not a modal category applicable to beings present-at-hand. The ur-possibility must retain its non-actuality. Furthermore, possibility as existential is not contingent as modal possibility is. Rather, possibility as existential "is the most primordial and the ultimate positive ontological determination of Dasein" (SZ: 143f/139). This, in turn, means that Dasein is not free floating and perfectly at liberty to self-actualise as it wishes (*libertas indifferentiae*). Even though Dasein is pure possibility, Dasein does not choose itself absolutely freely in its actuality (existence) at any given moment. This is how Sartre misunderstood Heidegger. Instead, "Dasein exists as thrown, brought into its there *not* of its own accord." (SZ: 284/272) Hence, as a *positive* ontological determination of Dasein possibility is what *posits* Dasein. Death is that possibility that posits⁴² Dasein so that Dasein is always already determined by its "not." However, this positing does not take place from out of a timeless sphere, as Müller-Lauter suggests (cf. 1960: 51). As limit, he maintains, death is outside Dasein, and hence outside time. I have argued the exact opposite. Death as limit is integral to Dasein and as possibility death immanently posits Dasein. Death is only as long as Dasein *is*. Thus, when Heidegger says that death *becomes* impossibility, this does not mean death loses its character of *existential* ur-possibility. Instead, "becoming impossibility" says that death as possibility is of an abeyance oscillating between possibility and impossibility. This movement thus rather enforces the character of possibility, precisely because as an existential possibility is nothing to be actualised. To say that death *becomes* impossibility, that death is "the possibility of the measureless impossibility of existence" (SZ: 262/251), emphasises that the being of Dasein is never something present-at-hand; that Dasein's being *is* always purely *in actu*. Precisely this *becoming im-possibility* thus guarantees Dasein's withdrawal from reification. This, in turn, guarantees Dasein's freedom. Death as *existential* possibility must, for the law of equiprimordiality and simultaneity, contain its opposite within itself. By becoming impossibility death shows itself as "ur-possibility" because the movement from possibility to impossibility is only possible insofar as the "ur-possibility" contains the impossible. Thus I understand the notion that possibility *becomes* impossibility as saying that this fundamental possibility always already and

⁴² Heidegger later calls death the *Ge-setz*, the concentration of all positing, the Law. This will be a topic in parts III & IV.

at once self-differentiates (in the sense of *auf-* and *aus-differenzieren*) as possibility and impossibility.

Death as hovering possibility *and* impossibility conditions all of Dasein's factual possibilities: "Even in average everydayness, Dasein is constantly concerned [es geht um] with its ownmost, non-relational, and insuperable potentiality-of-being, even if only in the mode of taking care of things in a mode of untroubled indifference ... that opposes the most extreme possibility of its existence." (SZ: 254f/244) Death structures Dasein's average, everyday existence and thus permeates Dasein's world. That is, death gives rise to world as the horizon against which beings appear *as* beings. Beistegui puts it as follows: "death, as the possibility of the impossibility of existence, turned out to constitute the horizon of closeness on the basis of which the clearing of being took place. Death was the condition of possibility *and* impossibility of existence, the absolute limit, and the impending end from out of which the world unfolded." (2004: 143) Bearing in mind Müller's claim that world is the rising of being, it is death as ur-possibility that brings most radically *before* being as the non-available presence in excess of itself thanks to which beings appear.

Seen from the perspective of the history of being the analysis of death and ecstatic temporality together with Heidegger's interpretation of ἀλήθεια as unconcealment depict a milestone for the thinking path. They allow Heidegger to think equiprimordially, simultaneously, and ecstatically rather than dialectically or linearly. This is the reason why death will retain its central place in the thinking of *Ereignis*. In part II we shall see that Heidegger transfers over his findings especially of Dasein's being-toward-death to being itself.

3. From Death to Being?

In this chapter I am tracing Heidegger's move from his early conception of possibility in terms of death to his later determination of being itself as the possible. There is a significant trajectory, I argue, that begins precisely with the analysis of death as ownmost possibility in *Being and Time* because death fundamentally enables Dasein to properly disclose being. The analysis of death allows Heidegger to think being as possibility, more precisely, as a realm of the possible. I shall carve out in more detail in part II what I introduce here.

There is a crucial passage I already referred to above and that I now quote in full because it epitomises Heidegger's conception of death as "ur-possibility:"

As possibility, death gives Dasein nothing to “be actualized” and nothing which it itself could *be* as something actual. It is the possibility of the impossibility of every mode of behavior toward..., of every way of existing. In anticipating this possibility, it becomes “greater and greater.” (SZ: 262/251*ta*).

From what I argued above it is clear that death as “ur-possibility” is not to be actualised. Instead, death spans open a realm and enables all factual possibilities of Dasein. Therefore Sallis’ claim that “death is the possibility that suspends all others” (1990: 129) is only half the story. On the most fundamental level of ur-possibility exactly the opposite takes place. I follow Demske who argues that death as ur-possibility “enfolds and engulfs all other possibilities, just as it enwraps Dasein’s total being-in-the-world, wholly and entirely.” (1970: 26) In the context of *Being and Time* it is death in the existential-ontological structure of Dasein that makes possible all of Dasein’s possibilities — and as possibility death does so precisely because it contains and can turn into its own opposite. This *turning* leaves Dasein open, directs Dasein toward the horizon of the future, and brings Dasein most radically before its being. What being itself does *after* the turn is similar to what death does in *Being and Time*. Reading this against Müller’s notion referred to in chapter I.1 that being itself *is* after the turn the possibility that makes any possibility possible, we see how the conception of death as non-actualisable possibility guides Heidegger to think being itself as a realm of the possible. This is one of the reasons why Heidegger in *Contributions* calls death “the highest testimony to beyng” (GA65: 230/181). When Heidegger turns to his attempts to think *from* being what happens, in my view, is the following: Heidegger radicalises the claim that possibility stands higher than actuality and unites this claim with death as “ur-possibility” requiring no actualisation. Death then is what opens the horizon to think being not as presence-at-hand, actuality, or beingness but as possibility. Thinking being as pure possibility allows Heidegger to think being no longer as the “constant presence [*Vorhandenheit*]” (SZ: 98/96), which he sees active in metaphysics.

The idea of being as constant presence, argues Heidegger, diminishes Dasein’s world access because world is here reduced to the totality of beings as sheer availability. The world is turned into a present object the subject at will commands over. His early and profound worry about that particular trajectory of the interpretation of being as present availability comes into full effect when Heidegger begins to critically think after the meaning of technology. Technology’s motivation is to turn everything into something readily available. I shall carve hence out in part III that it is

precisely death that withdraws from that demand, which is why death also continues to be significant for Heidegger's critique of technology.

Heidegger in *Being and Time* is, of course, aware that there have been other interpretations of being, which are less hypostatizing than being as sheer presence-at-hand. For example, the ontic "talk ... about the *lumen naturale* in human being" (SZ: 133/129) points to Dasein's ontological structural disposition to understand itself and other beings in their respective being. Heidegger in this passage also introduces the notion of *Lichtung*, clearing, which will be a thematic focus of his later philosophy. Clearing is not a function of human reason, as is the *lumen naturale*. Instead, clearing is the way in which being essentially provides a realm of appearance. Even though being clears itself, its self-concealment remains in place. The movement of clearing is the movement of ἀλήθεια. Nevertheless, there is a tendency in metaphysics to reify being and considering being in terms of ἀλήθεια and possibility allows Heidegger to think being performatively.

His analysis of truth as ἀλήθεια in *Being and Time* is also what leads Heidegger to develop his interpretation of being with regards to Plato's Idea of the Good. Heidegger tries to bring to light the original experience the Greeks might have made when they coined the word ἀλήθεια. In *Plato's Doctrine of Truth*, which is pivotal on the way to the turn, Heidegger says: "The expression "idea of the good" ... is the name for that distinctive idea which ... enables everything else. The good may be called the "highest idea" in a double sense: It is the highest in the hierarchy of making possible; and seeing it is a very arduous task of looking straight upward." (GA9: 228/175) Seeing the highest idea is a tedious task because making the Idea, or being, the thematic focus of investigation is difficult, if one wishes to avoid reification. We can see here that Heidegger has moved from death as "ur-possibility" to interpret being itself (*qua* Idea) as that which enables everything else. In the *Letter on Humanism* Heidegger presents his thought most clearly, when he says, in contrast to metaphysical being:

Of course, our words *möglich* [possible] and *Möglichkeit* [possibility], under the dominance of "logic" and "metaphysics," are thought solely in contrast to "actuality"; that is, they are thought of the basis of a definite - the metaphysical - interpretation of being as *actus* and *potentia*, a distinction identified with that between *existentia* and *essentia*) When I speak of the "quiet power of the possible" I do not mean the possible of a merely represented *possibilitas*, nor *potentia* as the *essentia* of an *actus* of *existentia*; rather, I mean being itself, which in its favoring presides over thinking and hence over the essence of humanity, and that means over its relation to being. To enable something here means to preserve it in its essence, to maintain it in its element. (GA9: 316f/242)

Being, he continues, is “*das Mög-liche*,” the possible or the likely, as the “*Vermögend-Mögend*.” That is to say, being is that which at once is enabling and loving. Being as possibility, or rather as enabling love, is not a possibility containing its actualisation. Nor is it in any sense is proto-actual. Instead, being as possibility is in excess of itself. As abundant wealth being opens the realm of all possibilities and thus also the realm of the actual. Heidegger’s early analysis of death as ur-possibility leads him to question the Aristotelian schema prevalent in onto-theo-logy. Thus the claim that possibility is higher than actuality truly becomes a ground-breaking notion for Heidegger that leads him to challenge not only the Aristotelian, but also the slightly different Hegelian schema. For Hegel potentiality is contained in and consumed by the actual: “What is actual [*wirklich*], is as such possible,” Hegel states in the *Science of Logic* (2010: 480). According to Dastur, Hegel articulates here what is true for all of modern philosophy where “the possible has always been defined as inferior to the real and the actual” (1996: 54). The actual is how history unfolds, the actual is the place of rationality, only the actual is *real*. Max Planck carried this to its logical conclusion, when he said that only what is measurable, is real (cf. GA7: 52). However, with Heidegger the story becomes: *What is possible pure and simple, is what enables and loves the actual*. The *wirken*, acting and working, prevalent in *Wirklichkeit* is in fact emphasised by Heidegger’s privileging of possibility. Being as the possible *works* and *acts* through, or rather as, its history. That which is most fundamentally possible, remains possible and in this excess of itself, it enables and acts through the actual. Heidegger’s critique of metaphysics then, as an ontology of presence that neglects latency and concealment, originates from his early analysis of death as oscillating, abeyant “ur-possibility.” Like death latency and concealment are inaccessible and absent, yet they make everything possible that is *actual*. It is crucial to note that Heidegger begins to call death the *Ge-Birg* of being in the late 1940s. That is to say, death comes to be understood as the concentration of all concealment.

Here we can also trace an important trajectory from Paul Natorp to Heidegger. In *Philosophische Systematik* Natorp (cf. 2000: 72) points out that *the* question of philosophy is the question for the unity and meaning of being. Although Heidegger does not logically deduce categories, as Natorp does, they both appear to make similar attempts at articulating the meaning of being. Take this claim by Natorp: “In possibility

being already speaks, or at least it wants to speak.” (2000: 90⁴³) Furthermore, Natorp defines possibility as “always simultaneously [!] the possibility of A and not-A.” (ibid.: 94) “Therefore possibility is the ur-ground.” (ibid.: 90) In possibility being hence announces itself insofar as possibility is the abeyant simultaneity of A and not-A, or (with Heidegger) of the possible and the im-possible.

In *Being and Time* there is even already an announcement of being itself as possibility, as that which grants and gives. This is most obvious in the analysis of being-toward-death as an existential possibility, a possibility that is to remain possibility:

[I]f being-toward-death has to disclose understandingly the possibility which we have characterized as *such*, then in such being-toward-death this possibility must not be weakened, it must be understood *as possibility*, cultivated *as possibility*, and *endured as possibility* in our relation to it. (SZ: 261/251f).

Dasein is stretched along that abeyance, and by facing this as true Dasein can bring its factual possibilities into view.

Chapter 5 Dasein's Historicity

So far I have not yet mentioned a phenomenon which should, however, play a pivotal role when dealing with the question of death. That is, of course, the phenomenon of birth. O Murchadha (cf. 2013: 43f) maintains that Heidegger categorically neglects birth in his analysis of temporality. Yet, Heidegger does appreciate birth in the analysis of history, which the analysis of temporality arguably culminates in. In fact, Heidegger develops Dasein's historicity in light of his analysis of birth.⁴⁴ I shall now reconstruct this final argument of *Being and Time* and bring to bear its importance for Heidegger's later idea of the history of being. Note that later Heidegger speaks of “another beginning” which I understand as a different name for “birth” in context of the history of being. Heidegger's focus on Dasein's historicity plays a pivotal part for his articulation of *Seinsgeschichte*. The history of being will be a central issue in part II.

⁴³ My translation.

⁴⁴ Even though not a focus of this thesis, I would like to point out that Heidegger could have placed more weight on birth. Throughout the thinking path he appreciates death far more than birth. This might be the case because Heidegger lacks a genuine access to the female and to the phenomenology of giving birth.

1. On Birth

Heidegger brings birth into play in §72 where he notes that a temporal being-whole seems to require not just an “end” but also a “beginning.” Ordinarily we understand life as the “between” that spans between “birth” and “death.” In-between the contingent events of birth and death the self accumulates a number of *lived experiences*. Yet, this is a representational account of Dasein and turns Dasein’s being into something present-at-hand that can be reduced to the amount of years Dasein lives. Regardless of his criticism, the ordinary understanding indicates to Heidegger that Dasein must be in some sense stretched out. What enables the ontic appearance of Dasein’s “stretchedness”?

We usually think of birth as something that lies in the past. With Heidegger things are reversed: “Understood existentially, birth [*Geburt*] is never something past in the sense of what is no longer present-at-hand” (SZ: 374/357). Existential here means two things. First, it means that we are to understand birth in existential-ontological terms, i.e., as that which makes the ontic possible. Second, we also have to understand this in light of Dasein’s ecstatic temporality. As ecstatic, birth is never in the past as something that lies behind Dasein, but rather birth continues to work through Dasein. Unlike death, birth is not the ur-possibility of Dasein though. Instead, birth together with death is, existentially seen, co-constitutive of Dasein’s factual possibilities. Heidegger writes: “Factual Dasein exists as being born [*existiert gebürtig*], and in being born it is also already dying ... in the sense of being-toward-death.” (SZ: 374/357) This, again, seems to imply that Dasein exists from birth toward death. Yet, the ecstatic structure is different.

Dasein is at once toward death *and* toward birth. Dasein does not stretch out from its initiation point, birth, toward its end point, death, but it simultaneously stretches out toward birth *and* toward death. Heidegger speaks in this regard of Dasein’s “*stretched stretching-itself*.” (SZ: 375/358) Dasein’s birth is *now* just as its death is *now* and its birth is intimately related to its death and vice versa: “In the unity of thrownness and the fleeting, or else anticipatory, being-toward-death, birth and death “are connected”.” (SZ: 374/357) Birth and death belong together, they are simultaneous in the existential-ontological sense and, thereby, they generate a field of tension along which Dasein stretches itself out, also in the ontic sense. This is what conditions the “movedness of existence [which] is not the movement of something present-at-hand.” (SZ: 374f/358) This stresses the processual character of Dasein’s

stretchedness. Based in his insight into Dasein's ecstatic stretching-itself-along Heidegger can develop Dasein's historicity.

2. Dasein's Historicity

Heidegger calls the distinct temporal movedness and constancy of Dasein "*stretched out stretching itself along*." (SZ: 375/358) More precisely, Heidegger calls this the "*occurrence [Geschehen] of Dasein*" (ibid.). Being temporally stretched out and stretching itself along is the way in which Dasein fundamentally *takes place*. This fundamental *occurring* is what allows for any ontic occurrences that we ordinarily consider as historical events. Heidegger anchors the concept *Geschichte* in *Geschehen*. He also distinguishes *Geschichte* from *Historie*. The latter is an object of research, the former is the way in which Dasein's being unfolds temporally. The difference between *Geschichte* and *Historie*, which Heidegger develops in the German, does not really transport well into English with any possible translation. For the sake of understanding I shall follow Stambaugh and translate *Geschichte* as history and *Historie* as historiography. Note, however, that the crucial notion of *Geschehen* is entirely lost in the translations of *Geschichte* as "history" and of *Geschichte* as "historicity." On the other hand, the translation of *Historie* as historiography is helpful because it points to the scientific nature of *Historie* and to the general backward-looking attitude of the field. Heidegger thus makes a distinction between existential-ontological *occurring* or *taking-place* and ontic *Historie*. *Historie* is inauthentic historicity, *Geschichtlichkeit*, because it makes events and occurrences linear and takes history to be something Dasein is placed in. In view of Heidegger's later notion of *Seinsgeschichte*, of being itself as *essentially occurring as its history*, the term "history of being" must be seen in sharp distinction from historiography. *Seinsgeschichte* must be understood closer to *Geschehen*, taking place and occurring. It will become clearer in part II that Heidegger develops his conception of the history of being out of his early insight into the difference between *Historie* and *Geschichte*.

Dasein then is not historical because it lives *in* the receptacle history understood as succession of historical events. Rather, Dasein is historical, and Dasein can write history and historiography "*because it is temporal in the ground of its being*." (SZ: 376/359) That is, Dasein is historical as stretched out toward birth and toward its death, toward that utmost possibility that holds nothing to be actualised, and which as such determines Dasein in its being. Thus also in his analysis of Dasein's historicity

the notion of a possibility that does not need to be actualised but that rather provides the ground for factual possibilities and hence the actual, plays a pivotal role.

As Dasein's historicity is conditional on its temporality, all three ecstasies are at play here, too. In ordinary terms history is that which lies behind us. History is the past. Heidegger, however, argues that Dasein's original historicity does not primarily look back at the past as something that is inescapably lost. Rather Dasein is properly historical when it considers history as something worth repeating and as something that comes toward us. Nietzsche's distinction between the antiquarian, the critical, and the monumental understanding of history is in the background here. Dasein's authentic historicity is best thought of as an ontologisation of Nietzsche's monumentalism. Dasein authentically discloses history when Dasein regards history as a realm of possibilities worth repeating and to live by. Dasein can do so because it is mortally finite: "The finitude of existence thus seized upon tears one back out of endless multiplicity of closest possibilities offering themselves — those of comfort, shirking and taking things easy — and brings Dasein to the simplicity of its *fate* [*Schickals*]." (SZ: 384/365) Note that repetition in the ontological sense does not constitute a definitive horizon of the understanding of being, but a tearing open of horizons out of what has been precisely because the basic movement is *ecstatic* and not linear. Dasein is futural first and only from this futural directedness can Dasein make present what has been and relate to the gift of tradition:

Only a being that is essentially futural in its being so that it can let itself be thrown back upon its factual there, free for its death and shattering itself on it, that is, only a being that, as futural, is equiprimordially having-been, can hand down to itself its inherited possibility, take over its own thrownness and be in the Moment for "its time." Only authentic temporality that is at the same time finite makes something like fate, that is, authentic historicity, possible. (SZ: 385/366)

Dasein is thus a fundamentally *historical* being in the sense that Dasein first forms history and only secondarily writes historiographies. Everything Dasein does is historical. Dasein is historical in the sense that Dasein is ecstatically towards a finite future that spans open a horizon of possibilities which are equiprimordially informed by Dasein's having-been. The presence of Dasein is never a sheer available "now" but is always constituted (and fuzzily so) by that which has been and that which comes toward Dasein. After the turn Heidegger places even more weight on origin and that which has been. In *Being and Time* Dasein's ur-possibility death ultimately enables Dasein's historicity. This early insight will lead Heidegger to make a similar argument

about the history of being, which, as we shall see, is the realm that, in excess of itself, grants the possibility for history to manifest itself in finite articulations of the history of being as, for example, rationality moving progressively toward freedom. In part II, I shall argue that death is testimony to being's epochs. In context of *Being and Time* death is Dasein's ground of history: "Authentic being-toward-death, that is, the finitude of temporality, is the concealed ground of the historicity of Dasein." (SZ: 386/367) It is on the ground of its historicity that Dasein can disclose itself historically and understand the being of beings in a historical way. For example, in form of "world history" or the "history of nature." After the turn, Heidegger will be able to bring the history of being into perspective precisely because of his early focus on death as possibility.

Chapter 6 Signs of the Turn

In hindsight we can already in *Being and Time* identify signs of the turn. Being *itself* is the aim of the investigation, and, as I noted above, toward the end of the book Heidegger himself wonders whether there needs to be an ontic foundation for an ontological investigation into being itself. The problem is, as Houlgate notes, that Heidegger presupposes that being always means "being of beings." Instead of trying to think being directly this unchecked presupposition leads Heidegger to posit *a* being called Dasein which can investigate the being of beings (cf. Houlgate 2006: 105f). For all the merit there is to a project trying to establish an ontology where the human being is not divided and alienated from the world, considering Dasein's understanding of the meaning of the being of beings is what leads Heidegger astray from considering being directly. In the introduction to this part, I argued that Heidegger first needs to free Dasein. I still think this is true. However, Dasein is in *Being and Time* increasingly inflated until it is extraordinarily close to being the disclosing ground of beings.

Positing world as a horizon constituted by Dasein's futural projection introduces a significant threat of subjectivism. Beings are *as* beings insofar as Dasein discloses them in their being. Hence, even if not being itself, so at least the *meaning* of being is dependent upon Dasein. This does not mean that Dasein posits being. Yet, both the talk of disclosing beings in their being and the talk of the understanding of being leave room for subjectivist or humanist readings. Interpretations like Magnus' mentioned above would not be possible had Heidegger placed more emphasis on being

itself. If we want to be sympathetic to Heidegger, we can take, as I have done, *What is Metaphysics?* into account where the interplay of being and nothing and their significant influence on Dasein is more precisely worked out. Still, there is a shadow of a subjectivism in *Being and Time* leaving something to be desired. This is what leads Heidegger to the thinking of *Ereignis*. More to the point, this is what leads him to a thinking out of and in terms of being itself rather than a thinking in terms of Dasein's understanding of being.

Heidegger explicitly addresses this problem in §264 of *Contributions* where he speaks of the ambiguous meaning of the notion "understanding of being." On the one hand, the understanding of being is truly subjective stretching back to Plato's *ιδέα*. On the other hand, Heidegger claims in hindsight, understanding defined as *Ent-wurf*, as Dasein's thrownness and standing out into the world, already refers to *Da-sein*, i.e., to the realm of grounding of the truth of being, its concealing unconcealment. Seen from this angle, in *Being and Time* Dasein, then, exists as living *Seinsverständnis* insofar as it is analogous to being.

Lehman (cf. 2003: 423f), in turn, argues that there is precisely in the analysis of death in *Being and Time* the greatest danger for a reinforcement of the power of the subject. This is because it appears to be entirely within Dasein's power to run forth towards death and make death *qua* possibility available to itself. One of the ambiguous aspects is precisely the question whether Dasein makes *itself* purely authentic. But does Dasein not need to be inauthentic as well? Does being not need to be concealed as well? Does Dasein make *itself* in running forth? How does Dasein know that it is authentic? If Dasein is to be transformed, does it transform itself, and would that not turn Dasein into the almighty subject Heidegger wishes to overcome? Heidegger even speaks of the power of death and the "superiority" (SZ: 384/366*ta*) Dasein gains by running forth toward death. Superiority over being? Over the world? Richardson, however, argues that in *Being and Time* "authenticity is achieved in re-solve by acquiescing in the finitude of one's transcendence in complete freedom unto death." (2013: 512) This is the case precisely because realising one's finitude shows that death is more powerful than the subject. Nevertheless, in order to overcome subjectivity Heidegger will need to begin to think differently. It appears as though Heidegger was aware of the manifold tensions of his text, when he, toward the end of *Being and Time*, points out that Dasein is but one way to approach the question of being. Beistegui thus

argues that there remains “a kind of subjectivity [in place] as the “singular “I”, emerges from the individuating power of death.” (2003: 29)

Yet, we should also keep in mind that Heidegger later argues that the “metaphysical meaning of the concept of the subject has, in the first instance, no special relation to man and has none at all to the I.” (GA5: 88/66⁴⁵). Dastur also stresses that “[s]ubjectivity must not be confused, as there is a natural tendency to do, with the ability to say “I”.” (1996: 43f) In fact, continues Dastur, “Dasein because it is not indifferent to its own being, is able to indicate itself by means of the personal pronoun “I”.” (ibid.) For Heidegger it is not the enclosed subject that addresses itself as “I,” but “[c]are expresses itself with the “I”” (SZ: 322/308). We must acknowledge that Dasein as care and *Seinkönnen* is already outside the enclosedness of the subject. As death is Dasein’s ownmost but also utmost, *äußerste*, possibility, it is on the path toward death that we leave the enclosedness of subjectivity.

There is, then, in *Being and Time* at least a partial solution to the apparent problem or threat of subjectivism. In the discussion of the first prejudice Heidegger mentions Aristotle’s unity of analogy. Dasein is in an understanding of being insofar as Dasein is analogous to being as such and corresponds to it. Yet, precisely this notion of a correspondence to the call of being is at best underdeveloped in *Being and Time* while Dasein’s ambiguous *projection* is privileged. There is talk of the call of conscience, but not really of the call of being itself. With the thinking of *Ereignis* corresponding to being takes a primary role. There, analogy is understood not in terms of comparability of two different objects. Instead, being as the possible opens a historical time-play-space in which all beings, including the human being, correspond and are analogous to the fate of being. We shall see that this is especially the case in *Ge-Stell* and *Geviert*. Yet, what will have to happen first is a decentring of Dasein.

Part II: Death as Testimony

⁴⁵ Young and Haynes translation.

Lang ist Die Zeit, es ereignet sich aber
Das Wahre
- Hölderlin

Introduction

In *Being and Time* death gives meaning to Dasein. Death is *qua* Dasein's utmost limit the necessary condition for Dasein's world to arise as meaningful disclosedness of beings. As death is simultaneously possibility and im-possibility of existence, there is an oscillating abeyance about death and this, in turn, makes the rise and breakdown of world and meaning possible. Thus death not only enables Dasein's authentic being-in-the-world, but also Dasein's fallenness for the they and inauthentic world disclosure. This double-movement that unfolds from death is a reflection of Heidegger's analysis of truth as *dis-covering* or *un-concealment*: ἀ-λήθεια. In an ontic manner we can say that facing one's inevitable mortality frees one most radically for one's most important factual possibilities. Inauthentic opportunities, which follow the fashions of the they, become insignificant when Dasein faces death. In that sense death is a window toward authenticity. Yet, *Being and Time* fails precisely at providing an account for the achievement of ontological authenticity, as Dasein is not to be a self-empowering subject.

Moreover, with Dasein as the ontic foundation of the text the meaning of being is addressed predominantly in terms of the horizons of Dasein. The declared project of the text is to awaken again an understanding of the question of being but being is arguably under threat to be reduced to the dynamic *Verstandeshorizont* of Dasein. If Dasein's *understanding* of being is the primary focus, then there is the risk of subjectivization of being. Heidegger admits to that in *Contributions* (cf. GA65: 295/233). Considering Dasein's understanding is an advantageous move because it allows us, first, to think being without hypostatizing it and, second, to take Dasein out into its world. The disadvantage is that being appears to be *concealed* behind Dasein's horizon. The question arises, how to think being directly without reification?

After *Being and Time* Heidegger therefore begins to reformulate the question of being so that the question asks for being directly. The truth of being then no longer concerns the being of specific beings. Heidegger's first pursuit of the question of being took its direction from Plato's warning that we do not properly grasp the meaning of

being, even though we always already seem to have an understanding of being. In 1931 Heidegger devotes a lecture course to Plato's Analogy of the Cave in order to initiate, by way of destruction, a thoughtful return to what he later calls the "first beginning." In this lecture course and in a talk on the same matter from 1930 Heidegger radicalises his early interpretation of truth as ἀλήθεια. Plato's Analogy is an archetype of the revealing character of truth. However, Heidegger sees precisely in the Analogy also the epitome of the loss of the primary experience of truth as ἀλήθεια. He sees the Analogy as a loss of the simultaneity of unconcealment *and* concealment. The word ἀλήθεια, claims Heidegger (cf. GA34: 120/87⁴⁶), becomes "powerless" with Plato. This is of a profound impact for Occidental thought because here a sheer presence gains the upper hand and the oblivion of concealment sets in. Moreover, Plato traps us in the Cave, as it were, shackled in front of a primordial screen where beings are but shadows. Plato traps us in a representationalism that requires a sheer presence and that needs those who are in shackles in the Cave as representing subjects.

When he begins to decentre Dasein and to think being directly, Heidegger holds on to the thought of simultaneity. *Being and Time* exemplifies simultaneity in the context of the analysis of ἀλήθεια as well as death as simultaneous possibility and impossibility. In *Being and Time* Dasein's disclosing simultaneously covers over other possibilities of being. In the thinking of *Ereignis*⁴⁷ Heidegger transfers this fundamental motion of simultaneity over to being itself. This decentres Dasein and its horizons of understanding. The decentring of Dasein finds expression in the shift from Dasein to Da-sein. This does not free the human being from responsibility. Instead, now the task of the human being is to respond and correspond to the call of being. The human being's response *grounds* the "there" as the site where being can reveal itself historically. The change from Dasein to Da-sein is not a linguistic trick. It shows that Da-sein is different from Dasein. "Da-sein" prohibits the kinds of schematic imaginations of Dasein as using the tram which *Being and Time* evoked and itself to a certain degree fell for. Da-sein is not a being and cannot be. It will prove to be the grounding of a way of mortal thinking necessary for both the arrival of being and the essential transformation of the human being. Thus Da-sein is not a noun, but an adverb. Da-sein points to how grounding essentially occurs.

⁴⁶ Sadler translation.

⁴⁷ I hesitate to translate the word *Ereignis* just yet because I shall give Heidegger's justification of the term below and this only works in German.

The decentring of Dasein might lead one to think that death is no longer an issue. This is true to the degree that death *qua* existential-ontological phenomenon is no longer part of the investigation. Nevertheless, I argue that death in another sense retains its central position. I shall hence carve out how death itself changes and what new roles it takes on in the thinking of *Ereignis*. The first thing to note is that death is now an interest of being itself.⁴⁸ Heidegger now attempts to think *out of* being itself (cf. GA65: 3/5). Put simply, the way Heidegger achieves the thinking out of being is by transferring Dasein's existential possibilities over to being itself. Heidegger argues in *The Event*, and this claim must for now seem rather extraordinary, that “[f]or the first and only time in the history of being, the essence of death must now be experienced and interrogated out of being itself, i.e. in terms of Dasein.” (GA71: 190/162) In this part, I shall investigate this extraordinary claim by Heidegger and show why death is significant for the history of being. I shall argue that death provides an entry point for mortal beings to think being and its history directly. That is to say death lets us think the concealment of being and thus death is related to ἀλήθεια. Death does so precisely because death as the utterly inaccessible and uncontrollable is a source of concealment for the human being. Death also allows the human being to renounce beings. Heidegger's experience with being is that being refuses itself and death is what first leads Heidegger to make that experience.

To specifically think being's concealment is necessary to achieve a “pre-metaphysical” thinking. That is to say, a thinking outside the claim of a metaphysics that, as Beistegui puts it, “wants presence, full presence, absolute consumption, unlimited, unrestricted access to the world and things within it” (the world, in its view, is nothing more than the sum of things to be found within it).” (2004: 165) With the possibility to think pre-metaphysically Heidegger does not make a linear temporal claim. Rather, by thinking being's self-concealing he can take the history of metaphysical epochs into perspective. Heidegger understands metaphysics as that which “grounds an age,” (GA5: 75/57⁵⁰) insofar as metaphysics normatively

⁴⁸ Haar (1993) argues that Heidegger took it too far when he attributed a variety of core human qualities to being itself. There is in fact something uncanny about that. Heidegger even speaks of *Entmenschung*, dehumanising, in *Contributions* (cf. GA65: 510/401). I shall return to this troublesome notion in part IV. Note, however, that the thinking of being and *Ereignis* is only possible in view of the human being. It is not the case that death becomes an attribute of the object “being” and is taken away as a property from the subject “man.” But human beings can only be because they are touched by being and death alike.

⁴⁹ Metaphysics can achieve this, for example, by determining all life as self-willing will to power (Nietzsche), or all life as life and life only where death is entirely impossible (Fichte).

⁵⁰ Young and Haynes translation.

determines what beings are and how they are present. But this can only be brought into view from the perspective of the history of being. No longer is Dasein's historicity the ground of history but being itself is now construed as inherently historical (*geschichtlich*), and metaphysics responds to the epochs of being.

In *Contributions* and surrounding texts on *Ereignis* Heidegger writes *Seyn* with a “y” to differentiate it from metaphysical beingness and sheer presence (cf. GA65: 436/344). I shall follow Heidegger's spelling. *Beyng* indicates the simultaneous concealment and absence in all presence. Hence the question of being is no longer how Dasein, insofar as its being is an issue for it, temporally discloses the being of beings, but how *beyng* self-discloses, and how the human being responds to those self-disclosures. In the language of *Contributions to Philosophy*, the question of being now reads: *How does beyng essentially occur historically? Wie west das Seyn, wie ereignet sich das Seyn geschichtlich?*

Far from historicising *beyng*, Heidegger wishes to provide an opening to reconnect with the fundamental question, what it means to be – but without aiming to establish an ultimate ground. The history of being is informed by Heidegger's experience of a profound boredom as the fundamental mood of our age (cf. GA29/30: 111ff/74ff). In *Contributions* Heidegger even goes so far as saying that “[t]he hidden goal ... [of modernity and technology] is the state of complete boredom.” (GA65: 157/123) I shall argue that death plays a pivotal role in Heidegger's attempt to ignite another beginning, to ignite again a love for thinking because it is precisely by way of death that the human being can enter into a thinking of *beyng* itself as withdrawing presence, as that which gives as it refuses. Heidegger, therefore, calls “death the highest testimony to *beyng*.” (GA65: 230/181)

The thinking of *Ereignis*, Heidegger writes on the first page of *Contributions*, “is no longer to be “about” something [i.e., Dasein's understanding of being] ..., but to be appropriated over to the appropriating event. That is equivalent to an essential transformation of the human being: from “rational animal” (*animal rationale*) to Dasein.”⁵¹ (GA65: 3/5) Heidegger gives a clear indication who the human being will be after the transformation: “The grounding of Da-sein transforms the *human being* (seeker, preserver, steward).” (GA65: 230/181) And: “the human being steadfastly becomes [Da-sein] through an essential transformation in the transition.” (GA65:

⁵¹ Heidegger argues that the animal rationale is the differentiation of the human subject into animalistic “substance” or foundation (think genetics) and “culture” (the rational part) (cf. GA65:90)

489/385) This takes place, as will become clearer as part II progresses, in that concealment is specifically thought, for this is what *preserves* being's truth, i.e., concealment and withdrawal. And this is open to human thinking for their relationship with death. Humans are to look for concealment, to preserve it and to steward it.

The structure of part II is as follows: First, I shall trace Heidegger's "turn" from the perspective of his radicalisation of ἀλήθεια. The second chapter addresses the unfolding of *Ereignis* in view of death. This serves as the foundation for the third chapter where, in light of death, I develop Heidegger's interpretation of being as essentially fissured. The fourth and final chapter explicates the relation between the history of being and death. In chapters 2 and 3 I shall mainly concentrate on *Contributions* and *The Event*, two of Heidegger's posthumously published texts on *Ereignis*, because in both Heidegger makes explicit claims about death and being.

Chapter 1 The Turn

1. The Turning and ἀλήθεια

The talk of a "turn" in context of Heidegger's philosophy usually refers to what scholars have referred to as the shift from "Heidegger I" to "Heidegger II" (sic. Richardson; cf. GA11: 152/304⁵²). Such a clear-cut distinction, as helpful as it might seem, is a representational account that rather stifles a genuine access to the thinking path precisely because it suggests that the "turn" is an abrupt caesura in Heidegger's philosophy. Nevertheless, there is a shift in Heidegger's thinking. As I indicated at the end of part I, Dasein gets in the way of thinking being directly. In *Being and Time* being as such has fully disclosed itself only in being-toward-death as the possibility of impossibility. That is why Vallega-Neu argues that already in *Being and Time* "[b]eing is thought, thus, in terms of a presencing out of a withdrawal." (2003: 30) The thought of a presencing out of a withdrawal is the thought of ἀλήθεια. Heidegger's experience in his encounter with the history of metaphysics is that metaphysics forgets concealment. Thus I aim to reconstruct how the radicalisation of ἀλήθεια with reference, *Rückbezug*, to Plato leads Heidegger to think being itself and that means to

⁵² Veith translation.

think beyng's self-concealment. Davis⁵³ argues that there is an “immanent overturning and radical twisting free [from metaphysics] ... at work in Heidegger's turn” (2007: 60). It is this line of thought that I follow here without claiming to reconstruct the turn in full.⁵⁴

In the *Letter on Humanism* Heidegger speaks of the failure of *Being and Time*'s metaphysical language to express the desired belonging-together of being *and* time (GA9: 328/250). A thinking in terms of horizons and necessary conditions for the possibility of experience fails to think being itself.⁵⁵ In the *Letter on Humanism* we also learn that the planned third section of *Being and Time* “Time and Being” — where “everything would be turned around [*Hier kehrt sich das Ganze um*]” — had to be withheld because “thinking failed in the adequate saying of this *turning* [*Kehre*].” (GA9: 328/250) On the face of it this seems to imply that Richardson is right, that the turn is a radical caesura. Heidegger's thinking of being in terms of Dasein's understanding of being moves toward an attempt to think being itself. The first has little to do with the second. Heidegger himself, however, in a letter to Father Richardson points out that what Richardson calls “Heidegger I” and “Heidegger II” are interdependent: “Only by way of what Heidegger I has thought, does one gain access to what is to be thought by Heidegger II. But Heidegger I only becomes possible if it is contained in Heidegger II.” (GA11: 152/304) The thinking *after* the turn then does not eliminate *Being and Time*, but serves to disclose the historical, “hitherto altogether concealed realm” (GA65: 3/5) thanks to which Dasein can at all self-investigate, as Dasein does in the epoch of being when *Being and Time* was written. The thinking of *Ereignis* attempts to provide what the missing third section was to set forth. With the publication of texts such as *Contributions* and *The Event* we are now, of course, in a different position than Richardson was and it is easier to reconstruct the turn properly. I do not mean to say that Heidegger does not leave behind the

⁵³ Davis' extensive study on the will in Heidegger's thought is one of the most profound reconstructions of *The Turn* in recent years. In a nutshell, Davis argues that Heidegger by *gradually* giving up on a philosophy focused on the will (to power) he achieves to think the *turning* in the *Ereignis* itself. This is so because in giving up the will the human being is opened for the realm of the counter-resonance of *Ereignis* (cf. Davis 2007: 60ff).

Daniela Vallega-Neu points out that Heidegger's engagement with Hölderlin, especially with the question of the godly as a question to be posited out of beyng, also plays a pivotal role for the turn (cf. 2003:8).

⁵⁴ I do not claim to provide here an exhaustive discussion of ἀλήθεια in Heidegger. I rather wish to carve out the direction Heidegger's thought takes thanks to ἀλήθεια and where it leads him: to the *Ereignis*. For more detailed account of Heidegger on truth see, for example, (Dahlstrom 2009).

⁵⁵ Heidegger also admits to Richardson that in *Being and Time* his thought “inevitably remained captive to contemporary modes of presentation and language.” (GA11: 148/301)

fundamental ontology of Dasein and its transcendental investigation in order to think being itself as history. In fact, there is no (quasi-)transcendental, approach after the turn. The *Ereignis* self-ascertains and self-mediate. Nevertheless, the move toward the *Ereignis* takes place out of fundamental ontology and if we take into consideration ἀλήθεια and death as crucial moments, then we begin to see the continuity and unity of Heidegger's thought.⁵⁶

In the letter to Richardson Heidegger also points out that the question, “[w]hat is the simple, unified determination of being that pervades all of the various meanings?” (GA11: 146/299*ta*) has moved his thinking from the beginning. Heidegger wishes to bring into harmony the various metaphysical determinations of being. Those include being as possibility and actuality, as order, as will etc. There must be a realm whence the determinations of being have come. This realm itself is “pre-metaphysical,” i.e., metaphysics for its reliance on presence cannot think that realm. The realm will prove to be captured in the word *Ereignis* for reasons that will become clearer in chapters 2 and 3 of this part, and it is *Seynsgeschichte* that at once unifies and lets us see all determinations of being.

The first approach to the question of being is by way of a phenomenology that *discloses* being as the being of beings. The Greek word for truth, ἀλήθεια, encapsulates the process of disclosure. Of course, truth does not have the meaning of correctness and correspondence here. Heidegger understands truth as unconcealment. But Heidegger does not understand ἀλήθεια only as unconcealment. Already in the decisive §7 of *Being and Time* Heidegger says: “The “being true” of λόγος as ἀληθεύειν means: to take beings that are being talked *about* in λέγειν as ἀποφαίνεσθαι out of their concealment; to let them be seen as something unconcealed (ἀληθές); to *discover* them.” (SZ: 33/31) In Hades *Lethe* is the river of forgetting. The verb λανθάνω means “I forget” or “I am concealed.” Λανθάνω is the root of ἀλήθεια and indicates that there is no unconcealment without concealment. Thus unconcealment is not the negation of concealment, for concealment remains intact. Dasein's disclosing of the being of beings, which takes place in discourse, is, before any propositional claim is made, conditional on the movement from concealedness to

⁵⁶ See, for example, the Zollikon Seminars delivered between 1959 and 1969. The seminars develop Daseinsanalysis from the perspective of the “*transcendence of Dasein* [which] remains determined from the transcendens *qua* being (*Unterschied*)” (GA89: 240) That is, the seminars develop a theory of Dasein's self-investigation out of being as difference and this is spoken from the perspective of the history of being.

unconcealedness. This is why Heidegger says that ἀποφαίνεσθαι takes place *out of concealment*. That is to say, concealment is primordial and remains intact even when beings are unconcealed in the temporal process of disclosing. This simultaneity of unconcealment and concealment, which is reserved to Dasein's discovering in *Being and Time*, is replicated in the essence of Dasein insofar as Dasein is in existential-ontological terms simultaneously in truth and untruth. This paradoxical claim is not a claim about Dasein's epistemic capacities to recognise objects and make judgments about them. Heidegger writes: "Because it essentially falls prey to the world, Dasein is in "untruth" in accordance with its constitution of being." (SZ: 222/213) In existential-ontological terms Dasein is always already also in "untruth" and this is replicated on the ontic level when Dasein falls for the they and its opinions and — most significantly — when Dasein is oblivious of being.

In his discussion of truth in *Being and Time* Heidegger refers to Parmenides and the two paths the goddess offers him. The path⁵⁷ of discovery, ἀλήθεια, or the path of "concealment," as Heidegger writes. The original Greek text speaks of δόξα. Heidegger points out that Parmenides shows us how Dasein has from early on been understood as being "always already in the truth and untruth." (SZ: 222/214) Therefore, Dasein must engage in κρίνειν λόγῳ, a differentiating understanding of *what is*, and decide for truth. This means to distinguish between what is and what is not, what only seems (e.g., shadows) and what properly is. This also points to the difference between being and beings. The *way* of truth as the *way* of being indicates that being — disclosedness or unconcealment — is something reified as presence-at-hand. The *way* of truth indicates the process of being's self-unconcealing thanks to Dasein's disclosure. Being is not previously given and then disclosed, rather being *is* in disclosing itself. Note also that the goddess in section 2 of Parmenides' poem says that he should consider the ἀπέοντα, the absent, as equally *present* as the present: Λεῦσσε δ' ὅμως ἀπέοντα νόῳ παρεόντα βεβαίως (cf. Coxon 2009: 60f). One could understand this according to the standard textbook reading of Parmenides as saying that the absent really *is* not. Contrary to what the standard reading suggests, Parmenides here, however, rather says that the present can only come into focus, if we take the absent into consideration. In his lecture course on *Parmenides* Heidegger thus explicitly stresses that the early thinkers knew the importance of considering both

⁵⁷ As A. Vallega points out, Heidegger later comes to understand "philosophical discourse as a series of paths of engagement with the occurrences or the events of being." (2003: 166). Heidegger also turns to the *Tao* in his later philosophy.

unconcealment and concealment, presence and absence, when we try to think being (cf. GA54:90f/61⁵⁸). Only thanks to the absent can the present be in focus. That is, with Parmenides being is articulated in terms of the motion of simultaneous concealment and unconcealment. Heidegger sees in Plato's Analogy of the Cave the most forceful canonisation of this early thought of Parmenides — a canonisation that, however, covers over concealment. It is in the Analogy that death explicitly comes into play with ἀλήθεια.

2. Death in the Cave

Heidegger's lecture course on the Analogy of the Cave depicts a deepening of his early interest in "primordial" truth. Heidegger finds the Analogy to be decisive because it raises the fundamental question of the essence of truth. The *truth* in question comes before any propositional claim or judgement, it is the *truth* that makes propositional and correspondence truth possible because before any correspondence or proposition are possible, beings must be disclosed *as* beings as a whole. The process of disclosure presupposes concealment and, argues Heidegger, beings are primarily experienced as concealed because beings are not readily available as a whole (cf. GA34: 13/9⁵⁹). The unconcealment of beings as a whole is the exception. Hence the "Greek expression [of truth] is *privative*." (GA34: 11/7) Note that beings are neither exclusively nor even primarily objects. Instead, beings are "human history, the processes of nature, divine happenings." (GA34: 13f/9). Their workings are thus fundamentally concealed. That is to say, the historical context of meaning is not readily available. Unconcealment must be wrested from beings. Their *being* must be specifically disclosed. We can see here that Heidegger for the most part still thinks being as the being of beings.

The Analogy of the Cave articulates that unconcealment is not given. One person, more precisely the philosopher who has the urge to know beings as to their interrelated meaning, leaves the cave, i.e., leaves concealment, only to realise that she had not seen the light of truth before. Those down in the Cave only see shadows that have no profound inter-relation. As he describes the philosopher's way out of the cave Plato speaks of ἀλήθεξ, i.e., of moments of disclosure. The further the philosopher walks up, the more is disclosed to her, and once she sees the Sun, the Idea of the Good

⁵⁸ Schuwer and Rojcewicz translation.

⁵⁹ Sadler translation.

discloses itself to her as the ultimate unconcealment. When she returns into the cave, she takes the light of the Idea of the Good down with her into the cave. It is this light that for the first time lets her see the shadows *as* shadows. She sees them for what they truly are because only after having seen the truth, she sees the shadows as a mere seeming rather than proper beings. There is, even though Heidegger does not yet speak of it, a call, *Zuruf*, at work in the Cave. Something calls upon the philosopher to leave and to return.

Thus the Analogy tells us of the movement of unconcealment and also of a necessary return. Heidegger points out that the Analogy “as a whole treats of an occurrence [*Geschehen*] and this occurrence involves a return [*Umkehr*].” (GA34: 81/59^{ta}) Hence Plato describes truth as something that takes place. Simply seeing the Idea would not be enough. In order to see the truth the hiddenness of the cave, its shadows, fuzzy boundaries, secluded and non-signposted tracks are necessary for one to arrive at the truth. And once one has arrived at the truth one does not leave the cave once and for all, but one must return into the cave, i.e., one has to move back into concealment.

The return into the cave not only forces the philosopher to face the shadows, but also something else: “How does this occurrence end? With the prospect of *death*!” (GA34: 81/59) Philosophy only begins when we face death and renounce. Thus Schelling notes, who wants to achieve “truly free philosophy” must leave everything behind. This is “a great step that Plato likened with death.” (1979: 12⁶⁰). In the Cave death is the exclusion from others and the powerlessness in the face of truth. As the freed person has seen the light, she will be blinded by the shadowy and gloomy cave and others will only see her stumble, seemingly incapable of seeing. The return into the cave demands the freed person to face “the actual (*actual* I say) constant having-before-oneself of death ... not just death in the physical sense of dying, but the forfeiture and rendering powerless of one’s own essence.” (GA34: 84/61) Death here dethrones the subject and renders it powerless because death is the most actual reality of the human being. That death is what the freed person ultimately faces indicates that the process of truth is finite. The stages of the cave are not linear, but ecstatic. In the return, which has its beginning and its end in the tension of death as the human being’s most fundamental reality, truth *takes place* as the simultaneity of unconcealment and concealment. There is no cave without the Sun and there is no shining of the Idea of

⁶⁰ My translation.

the Good without the darkness of the cave: “Concealment belongs *essentially* to unconcealment, *like the valley belongs to the mountain.*” (GA34: 90/66*ta*) Death is what drives disclosure because facing death moves the human being out of the ordinary. This displacement out of the ordinary lets the philosopher see beings in the whole and lets *differentiate* being from present-at-hand beings.

Yet, Plato forgets something crucial. He does not forget that shadows appear as shadows only in light of the Sun. Thus he respects this moment of concealment and return. To no fault of his own, since he only responds to what had disclosed itself to him, Plato, however, forgets the initial concealment of uttermost unconcealment. That is to say, he forgets the initial concealment of the Idea of the Good and posits the Sun as the ever present and the absolutely unconcealed that requires no disclosure and knows no self-concealment. Plato forgets the moments that lead to the unconcealment of the Idea. The availability of the Open is so vast that it appears to eradicate concealment. The *λανθάνω* becomes insignificant (cf. GA71: 15/9). Even though Plato initially describes *ἀλήθεια* as a *Geschehen*, occurrence, he precisely ignores that aspect at the end of the Analogy. The Sun is posited as stable, fixed, and given and thereby *ἀλήθεια*, truth, is reduced to something fixed. According to Heidegger this has tremendous consequences. This impedes the occidental human being from properly entering into *Geschichte* (cf. GA34: 119f/87). This is the case because “[t]ruth is not static possession ... but unconcealment [truth] *occurs* [*geschieht*] in the *history* [*Geschichte*] of continuous freeing [from concealment].” (GA34: 91/66*ta*) This is a first crucial hint at *Seinsgeschichte*. By the early 1930s Heidegger hence thinks of history in terms of *ἀλήθεια*, as a continuous strife between unconcealment and concealment. In the *Artwork* essay Heidegger calls this the strife of world (openness) and earth (concealment). This early insight is decisive for the realisation of the history of being. There cannot be, for Heidegger, the eternal light of the Idea of the Good as ever available. There can only be, if a true understanding of *history* is looked for, the unitary, but ecstatic movement of ascent and return; a finding and erring that always face death. The searching person cannot stay outside the cave staring at the Sun precisely because every true seeing requires shadows and darkness and the Sun must be found *again and again*. With Plato the Parmenidean and Heraclitean insight into the necessity of the “*ἀπεόντα*” for all presence is covered over in favour of an ahistorical absolute. Plato’s forgetting of concealment indicates that the “first beginning” is a history of loss. The Cave, according to Heidegger, then speaks of an

ecstatic re-turn, a movement of unconcealment that only occurs when there is self-concealment. It is ex-static, for it moves *out of* the ordinary. Only by this movement toward un-concealment can beings as a whole come into focus.

Heidegger's quest for "primordially" leads him into the Cave where searching, finding a path, and dis-closing truth are most formidably gathered and articulated; but simultaneously the *event* of truth is covered over. His reading of the Analogy is a crucial moment for Heidegger's thinking because his intensified engagement with the origin of Occidental thinking leads Heidegger to develop his *aletheiological* thinking.

As decisive as the Analogy of the Cave is for the thinking path, Heidegger here also develops and sharpens his critical, even distinctly averse, stance toward representationalism. In *Contributions* Heidegger begins to try to think in an imageless fashion. In *The Event* he writes: "Thinking – through the imageless saying of the beginning." (GA71: 283/246) The attempt to think *beyng* in an imageless fashion, put differently, in an abysmal way, means to think *beyng* without beings and thus without giving us anything to represent. As we shall see, the language of *Contributions* and *The Event* is such that it attempts to speak out of the unfolding of *Ereignis* in a non-propositional and non-metaphorical way. The technological world is the materialisation of the shadowy gloom of Plato's dark prophecy. In onto-historical terms the Cave works and acts through the history of being and through us. In fact, Heidegger comes to see the prevalence of the image in terms of photographs, film, and scientific models as the fulfilment of the Cave (cf. GA71: 107/90f). In our age that which is pictured, *is* considered real for the seeming perfect presence of the picture. But Heidegger wishes to show that there is in any representation always something that withdraws and refuses itself.

Despite his criticism of the Cave Heidegger follows Plato's interpretation of being as δύναμις. Heidegger (cf. GA34: 110f/80) translates δύναμις as enabling power, *Ermächtigung*, which requires no actualisation. That is to say, Plato understands being as a realm of enabling, itself not *actual*, but enabling all possibilities and actualisations. In my view, Heidegger's interpretation of *beyng* as possibility is an extension of Plato's δύναμις insofar as Heidegger includes *beyng's* self-concealment. Heidegger attempts to be mindful of what Plato forgot: *beyng's* aletheiatic movement. Note also that Heidegger is here still primarily concerned with beings in their being, but that, as he moves further to thinking *beyng* directly, beings will become less significant. Concealment and death play a major role in this.

3. Death in the Turn

Introduction to Metaphysics is another seminal text of the thinking path. With reference to Sophocles Heidegger there continues to develop the idea that death deprives human beings of their powers. This allows Heidegger to further decentre the subject. In *Introduction to Metaphysics* Heidegger argues that “the being of life is also death ... and death is also life.” (GA40: 140/139⁶¹ *ta*) That is to say, there is no way out of death for mortals. Death no longer is Dasein’s ownmost possibility enabling all its other possibilities. Instead, death’s overpowering force now throws human beings into the uncanniness or literally the home-lessness, *Un-heimlichkeit*, of existence (cf. GA40: 167/168). This is a crucial shift in Heidegger’s thought. What remains similar is that death is still utmost limit. But Heidegger extends this limit. Death is now “limit of all limits” (cf. GA40: 167/168) and as such death not only surrounds, “over-limits, *über-grenzt*” (ibid.) human beings, but also beings in the whole.

Introduction to Metaphysics takes another important step. In the discussion of Plato’s Analogy the event of truth is still conditional on human discovery. With the turn this is reversed. Now the *Ereignis* appropriates human beings. Put differently, being lets human beings participate in its ways of occurring. The way human beings participate in being is by corresponding to it. Language and death, for example, are of being first but they touch human beings. Heidegger calls this surrender and renunciation of human subjectivity *übereignen*, transferring over. What was supposed to be a distinct human feature is transferred over, or surrendered, to being and this lets us see those supposed human traits as moments of being itself. The chapters on the grammar of being in *Introduction to Metaphysics* are especially pivotal for the development of the thought of this process of transferring over. Take Heidegger’s example of “*Er ist des Todes.*” (GA40: 95) This literally means, *he is of death*, i.e., he is doomed to die. To be *des Todes* literally means to belong to death, to be dedicated to death, and also to be appropriated by death. Just as death appropriates the human being, so does being.

Besides transferring over, there is another important step that points to the movement of being itself. In his letter to Richardson Heidegger writes: “If instead of

⁶¹ Fried and Polt translation.

“Time” [in *Time and Being*] we substitute the clearing of the self-concealing of presence, then being is determined by the scope of time. Yet, this only results insofar as the clearing of self-concealment makes use of a thinking that corresponds to it.” (GA11: 151/303ta)⁶² Heidegger thus tells us that by “turn” he rather means a *turning*, an inherent movement of *beyng*, and he brings that motion into relation with the motion of ἀλήθεια. The figure of thought of the turning opens the possibility to think *beyng* in its movement: “The *turning* itself is the essence of “*beyng*.” (GA71: 180/153) Turning is the movement of ἀλήθεια, which is replicated on all levels of the thinking of *Ereignis* and in the *Ereignis* itself. In my view, human beings can think the movement of ἀλήθεια because they are mortal beings. The movement of ἀλήθεια, then, anchors in death, i.e., in that which is most real to us but which at once withdraws from human control and which is as such always the utterly non-present, unavailable and concealed.

Chapter 2 The Unfolding of *Ereignis* in Light of Death

Heidegger’s interpretation of the Cave as the process of self-differentiation of unconcealment and concealment, i.e., of ἀλήθεια, is decisive on the way toward his thinking of being as such. The oblivion of concealment is the history of the first beginning, which is, therefore, a history of the loss of concealment. This loss ultimately reduces being to something present-at-hand. What is perfectly present-at-hand does not call for inquiry, and so falls further into oblivion. Heidegger thus increasingly sees the necessity for another beginning, which respects concealment, in order to ignite again the question of being. But how to think being meaningfully and in harmony with concealment?

This is where the *Ereignis* comes in. As we shall see, the choice of the word *Ereignis* is not arbitrary. The thinking of *Ereignis* opens the realm where *beyng* and human beings encounter each other. In that realm human beings correspond, *entsprechen*, in a thinking manner to *beyng*’s claim, *Zuspruch*, and showing, *Zeige*. This chapter is foundational for the other three chapters of this part. We can gain a clear understanding of the history of being, of death as *beyng*’s testimony, and Da-

⁶² In *Time and Being* Heidegger calls the *Ereignis* the word which says being *and* time: “Was beide, Zeit und Sein, in ihr Eigenes, d. h. in ihr Zusammengehören, bestimmt, nennen wir: *das Ereignis*.” (GA14: 24)

sein, if we take the unfolding of the *Ereignis* into consideration. By unfolding I mean that I shall try to think through the *Ereignis* in its motion: “the truth of [beyng] is thought as [*Ereignis*] because this is the way being occurs and is experienced *in* thinking if this thinking abides in the truth of [beyng].” (Vallega-Neu 2003: 33) The thinking of *Ereignis* depicts a certain surrender of the human being to beyng.

What follows is by no means a complete account of the *Ereignis* and the variations it undergoes in Heidegger’s thinking. I wish to provide a reconstruction of the *Ereignis* in view of the history of being, i.e., a reconstruction of *Ereignis* as opening a realm where being and human beings encounter each other. Most importantly, this requires us to think withdrawal and this, in turn, is open to human thinking because of death. I take lead for the importance of death for the thinking of *Ereignis* from a note found in GA97. This is one of the few places where Heidegger explicitly engages with the question of death in the *Black Notebooks*. The note reads: “In death the essence of *Ereignis* conceals itself.” (GA97: 289)

When assessing the *Ereignis* one fundamental question is whether *Ereignis* is a singular event that happens once and which thereby induces another beginning; or whether the *Ereignis* is a “realm” that is as long as human beings are, but which human beings have to bethink and enter anew with every epoch. I shall follow the latter understanding of *Ereignis*.

1. The word *Ereignis*

Ordinarily the German word “Ereignis” means event. Events are sometimes more, sometimes less contingent. Some events are public, some are private. If announced in advance, one can plan to attend an event at a definite point in time. Events take place on a linear timeline and they demand full presence. Heidegger’s *Ereignis* is not an occurrence or event in the ordinary sense. He explicitly says: “By no means, however, may *Ereignis* be re-presented as an “incident” or a “novelty” [*Begebenheit*]” (GA65: 256/201*ta*). Why would Heidegger make such an arbitrary choice for a fundamental word of his thinking? What does *Ereignis* mean? Let me point out straight away that the essential *Ereignis* retains a sense of occurring and taking place. Yet, Heidegger wishes to differentiate ontic events from the proper, essential event because the *Ereignis* does not occur in a linear way.

For Heidegger the choice of the word *Ereignis* is not at all arbitrary. He notes that *Ereignis* is properly “thought of ... as a key term [*Leitwort*] in the service of thinking.” (GA11: 45/36⁶³) Heidegger’s experience with the word *Ereignis* is such that *Ereignis* is a guiding word, untranslatable “like the Greek key word λόγος and the Chinese *Tao*” (GA11: 45/36). What are we to make of such grand claims? In how far, if at all, is the *Ereignis* as pivotal as the Tao or the λόγος? The Tao has arguably sustained and inspired various Chinese schools of thought. The λόγος ignites the entire history of occidental thought including Christianity. Can that really be said of *Ereignis*? If there is anything to that claim, if we want to be sympathetic to it, then we must consider how Heidegger explicates the *Ereignis* and how his thinking arrives at it.

In his lecture on the Cave Heidegger points out that anyone who leaves the cave must return into the cave because one would lose a true understanding of the Idea if one only ever saw its light. That is, one would be exposed to a sheer positivity which would turn even the ideas themselves into something trivial and thus into something negative in its own right. Light needs darkness. The art is to “behold,” “catch sight,” *er-blicken*, of the Idea in such a way that concealment is overcome but without forgetting concealment. “That which is the highest to be beheld [*Er-blickende*] requires the deepest beholding.” (GA34: 111/80*ta*) Heidegger here stresses the prefix *er-* of *er-blicken* by hyphenating the word. In general, the prefix *er-* indicates that something is being achieved or reached. In this case something is being reached by looking at it. But *er-blicken* also points to an aletheiatic process, since *er-blicken*⁶⁴ is ever only possible out of the simultaneity of concealment and unconcealment. *I* can catch sight only of what has previously been obscure or concealed. The *Er-ignis* also contains the prefix *er-*. What does Heidegger hear in the word *Ereignis*?

As Espinet (2009) argues, Heidegger’s thought depicts a return to hearing as the main sense. For metaphysics the *intuitus* is the main sense. This is most obvious in the Cave. After all, the freed person *sees* shadows as well as the Idea of the Good. We primarily think of representations as visual, as pictures rather than, say, soundbites. Note that Heraclitus (cf. Hahn 1987: 28) in his first fragment says that all people are in a *hearing* relationship with the λόγος, but that they that do not *listen* to the λόγος.

⁶³ Stambaugh translation.

⁶⁴ The “*er-denken des Seyns*, inventive thinking of being,” which I explicate further below, works in a similar manner. This does not mean to invent being out of thin air, but rather to *let* being in its original turning take over.

With Plato not only concealment is concealed, but also the importance of hearing. Espinet (cf. 2009: 3ff) has hence coined the term “*Hörvergessenheit*,” oblivion of hearing. With Heidegger a reversal sets in. He *listens to* words, rather than uncritically *looking up* the earlier nominal meanings of words. Haar, therefore, rightly stresses that we should not judge Heidegger’s engagement with language and with the meaning of words by the standards of etymology or philology. Instead, “[w]hat is at stake is to rediscover hidden possibilities in language” (Haar 1993: 103). Thus Heidegger is not a nominalist. He does not merely posit concepts out of thin air only to subsequently become a conceptual realist who believes his own positing. *Ereignis* is neither a new word nor does Heidegger merely posit it. Instead, Heidegger invites us to make an experience with language, which is totally out of the ordinary. Thereby we escape the automatism of everyday communication and begin again to hear the wealth of simple words like *Ereignis*. Note that this also invites a thinking free from “isms.” In that sense the thinking of *Ereignis* is an original thinking.

“The word *Ereignis* is taken from grown language,” (GA11: 45) Heidegger thus says in *The Principle of Identity*. But he does not take its ordinary meaning at face value. Heidegger’s engagement with language is hence, as Pöggeler argues, “a critical trait in his thinking.” (1983: 133). Heidegger aims to “bring forward the presuppositions that thinking makes in speaking.” (ibid.) Pöggeler also stresses that one cannot get beyond language. Language is the historical presupposition of thinking. In this regard Heidegger follows Herder, Hamann, and Humboldt. What Heidegger tries to show with his “etymology” is that the genesis of language and of words, how they unfold and how human beings correspond to that unfolding, is what moves history. That is why Heidegger speaks of *Leitworte*, of words that guide thinking. It is along these words and their unfolding that thinking takes place. It is the task of human beings to respond and correspond to *key terms*. *Ereignis* is a “guiding word,” insofar as it allows us to think the history of being. The encounter with such words is then an act of *Ent-sprechen*, corresponding as a speaking out of. Note that *ent-sprechen* does not mean to passively repeat something, but that there is in corresponding room for dialogue, even objection. I shall return to this in more detail in part IV.

By hyphenating the word *Er-eygnis* Heidegger frees the word from its given ordinary meaning. We can now hear the prefix *er-* together with the apparent stem *eigen*. *Eigen* means own. Yet, *ereignen*, the verbal root of *Ereignis*, does not come from *eigen*. Instead, *ereignen* “originally means: *er-äugen*, peering toward, looking at,

i.e. *erblicken* [!], calling toward oneself while looking at something, *aneignen*, appropriating.” (GA11: 45) This is a crucial passage that makes public what Heidegger had noted down earlier in the only recently published book *The Event*. There Heidegger says: 1) *Er-eigen* comes from *ereugen* or *eräugen* which in English means “to catch sight of ... to catch the eye.” (GA71: 184/156) Heidegger mentions further crucial meanings of *er-eugen*: “to manifest itself, to take place, to give forth, ..., *to clear or to disclose* [*lichten*].” (ibid. *ta*) 2) Heidegger then considers what appears to be a confusion regarding the meaning of the word that occurred at some point. The syllable *eu* of *eugen* was softened to the syllable *ei* of *eigen*, which was subsequently confused “with the unrelated “own” [*eigen*], “*proprium*” (ibid.). Also the verb *eignen*, which means “to appertain to” is now part of *ereignen*. This could simply be regarded a mistake in hearing that distorted the nominal, given meaning of the word. Yet, Heidegger sees something else at work here, and in language more generally, which he tries to uncover. Heidegger does not arbitrarily combine the two elements of the verb *ereignen*. Instead, by granting equiprimordiality to the two elements Heidegger lets the inherent errancy of this word unfold. Hence the verbal root of *Ereignis*, *ereignen*, turns out to mean: “*To eventuate* [*Er-eignen*] = to come into its own of the appearing and at the same time self- concealing.” (GA71: 185/157)⁶⁵ I shall refer to this as the “unfolding passage.”

Eventuating also refers to how Heidegger begins to understand difference after *Being and Time*. Heidegger no longer assumes the rather representational ontic-ontological distinction. Instead, he thinks difference as the self-differentiation of *Bezug* and *Entzug*, as simultaneous coming into one’s own *and* withdrawing. This is not a dialectical movement. This figure of thought as well as the *Ereignis* are best thought of as moving in a heterological fashion, and that means *aletheiological*. This is also, as we shall see in the last chapter of this part, the basic movement of the history of being.

Another crucial, simultaneously occurring moment in the unfolding of essential event, which is captured in the word *Er-eignis*, is *Irre*, errancy. Rather than understanding history as a process that is inherently rational and leading us to greater freedom, errancy is, even if not on its own, co-constitutive of the history of being,⁶⁶

⁶⁵ “*Das Er-eignen* — das in die Erscheinung kommende und so zugleich sich verbergende Sich zu eigen werden.”

⁶⁶ It will become clearer in the last chapter of this part why there is a history of *beyng* and a history of *being*.

and Heidegger fully incorporates errancy into that history. As he writes in *On the Essence of Truth*: “The errancy through which human beings stray is not something that, as it were, extends alongside them like a ditch into which they occasionally stumble; rather, errancy belongs to the inner constitution of the Da-sein into which historical human beings are admitted.” (GA9: 196/150) Errancy is not another name for untruth, hence for concealment. Rather errancy is a mode of concealment.

Heidegger hence provides quite a thorough, even if idiosyncratic, λόγον διδόναι for the *Ereignis* as a key term of his thinking. In what follows I shall explicate the important moments captured in *Ereignis*. I call the way in which the *Ereignis* moves *aletheiatic*. As I have now clarified the German origins of *Ereignis* I shall from now on refer to it as essential event.

2. The Oscillating of *Ereignis* and Human Correspondence

Eventuating can always only be thought *in actu*. This does not mean the event unfolds successively, as if clearing lead to withdrawing, which then leads to clearing and so on. Rather eventuating is simultaneous. Heidegger calls the inherent motion of the essential event “*Gegenschwung*,” counter-resonance, or that which “oscillates in itself.” (GA65: 261f/206). Here one oscillation does not linearly follow the other. Rather any oscillation is always only possible insofar as the sway in one direction *at once* means a sway in the other direction. Counter-resonance is another name for turning. This is the most fundamental movement of the essential event. Heidegger calls the essential event the *essence* of being (cf. GA65: 32/27f). This means, first, that this is the inherent motion of being, and, second, that being can also occur as its *unessence*, that being can act against itself. To speak with the later Heidegger: the fourfold (as essence) and the *Ge-Stell* (as unessence) are simultaneously possible instantiations of being. The fourfold, as I shall argue in parts III&IV, is only possible together with *Ge-Stell*. The essential event is opening up (*qua* letting into free play) the realm of appearance while it simultaneously self-conceals and only through this movement the essential event comes into its own. This thinking does not absolutise the clearing of disclosure but regards the truth of being to be self-refusal *in* clearing. Thus Heidegger here tries inventively⁶⁷ to think what began to be covered over with

⁶⁷ “To invent” comes from Latin *invenire* which means to enter into, to discover, rather than to construct out of thin air.

Plato. This thinking is “the inception of history as owning and estrangement,” as Polt (2006: 84) puts it.

The essential event is not the ground of everything that is. The essential event does not underlie beings. The expression *coming-into-appearance* and *simultaneous withdrawal* defies representation and speaks of a motion of differentiation taking place *out of itself*. They also emphasise the non-foundationalism of Heidegger’s thought. What *lets*, does not *ground*, but *lets* something *be* in its own right of its *own* accord. The essential event *lets happen* and the essential event *is* only insofar as it occurs and unfolds. For its oscillating in itself the essential event is abysmal, *abgründig*, because the essential event itself has no ground and provides no foundation for its oscillating. This is why it needs the grounding of *Da-sein*. *Being* thus needs the human being, for *being* is not a self-sufficient substance.

In *Being and Time* the call of conscience is a first pre-echo of abysmal *being* insofar as “nothing” calls *Dasein*, and if *Dasein* accepts that call, *Dasein* can properly *be*. But Heidegger does not further develop that call there. His later talk of appropriation suggests that the essential event calls the human being. Also, the *er-äugen* or *er-blicken*, a leitmotif of the Cave, is reversed in the thinking of the essential event. Now the essential event looks at the essence of human beings, calls upon and appropriates human beings but this appropriation “swings back” according to the way in which human beings respond. As a realm that resonates and vibrates within itself, the essential event is that “through which the human being and being reach each other in their essence.” (GA11: 46) This does not mean that the essential event is a receptacle into which being and human beings are placed. Instead, the oscillating indicates the historicity of the human beings responses to the disclosures of being. The realm Heidegger speaks of is the realm of the possible as self-concealing δύναμις. Heidegger thus also speaks of the *Eigentum* of the essential event which is to be understood like *Fürstentum*, “principality” (GA65: 311/247). Human beings are addressed and to this claim (*Anspruch*) – as something that concerns human beings – there is a response that feeds back into the initial claim. Yet, in the moment that there is a response — and human beings always respond even if with indifference — a counter-swing and -resonance has already set in. Thus it is upon human beings to ground the truth of being *again and again*. These *groundings* can fail and they can succeed, but the first opening for their possibility is not upon humans but upon *being*. *Da-sein*, now with a hyphen, is the name Heidegger gives to the site of those

groundings. Da-sein is not the human being, is not even restricted to human being, but is itself a moment of the essential event and as such Da-sein is a way of thinking beyng historically. Da-sein, then, is a “time-space” in the sense of *Augenblickstätte*, the place of the proper moment of “the grounding of the truth of beyng.” (GA65: 323/255) I thus understand Da-sein as an adverb. Da-sein is a way of thinking and grounding, as such it is the site where the possible takes its course: “the inventive thinking of beyng, as soon as and insofar as it will have been successful [*geglückt*] in its leap, determines its own essence, as “thinking,” on the basis of that which being as appropriating event appropriates [*er-eignet*], [*aus dem*] Da-sein.” (GA65: 452/356ta) With this reformulation of *Da-sein* the talk of Dasein’s understanding of being is obsolete because Da-sein is the adverbial site of the grounding of the truth of beyng and human beings enter that site as seekers, preservers, stewards.

What human beings have to do so, is to safeguard the counter-resonance of the essential event. That means to enter “into this oscillation” (GA65: 239/188) in a thinking manner. Thereby Da-sein becomes “*the grounded one that grounds the ground.*” (GA65: 239/189) That is to say that Da-sein is the temporal occurrence which beyng needs in order to find an anchor, for beyng is “unsupported and unsecured.” (GA65: 482/379) But Da-sein is not a static ground (noun) for an abyss (noun). Rather Da-sein is an adverb and thus addresses the way in which beyng (verb) unfolds. This unfolding is an oscillation between appearance and withdrawal and it creates a realm where every response triggers a resonance and counter-resonance, even if silently so. Human beings are thus not passive in the grounding and the subsequent transformation. On the contrary, every response matters.

However, Heidegger does reserve the task of profoundly corresponding with beyng to the so-called “few and rare” (cf. GA65: 11/12). In the Cave corresponding is exclusively reserved for the philosopher (king). Heidegger does not restrict the “few” to the philosopher but has also the artist and the artisan in mind, and, as of the mid-1930s, especially the poet. Polt (cf. 2006: 16) maintains that the talk of the few and rare boils down to esoteric elitism. Polt argues that the “few” supposedly span open and sustain a realm of possibilities where the many can merely reproduce the possibilities granted by the few and rare. In my view, this is a misleading illustration. The few do not on their own span open a realm of possibilities. Beyng itself is what spans open such realms (through the strife or earth and world). True, for the course of the history of beyng the way in which the few respond, and whether their attempts at

grounding succeed or not, is pivotal. Yet, Polt's claim seems to suggest that there are some human beings who are nearly trans-historical, outside of human history, chosen ones who conspire and steer the course of history. My worry is that Polt's claim implies control of a few over the many. This would be a humanist account of history which does not apply to Heidegger's understanding of history. I think Heidegger means something else with his talk of the few. The few are simply more open to the call of *beyng* and respond to it sooner than others. Their response, say, in a work of art, is not the act of a rare genius whose work creates a space for others to dwell in. Instead, the response of the few brings forth what has been shown to them in a sign, *Wink*, of *beyng*. They are *beyng*'s medium. As they bring forth an artwork, they wish it farewell, they let the artwork depart, they let it be on its own. They *let go* of the artwork rather and do not claim it as their own or try to possess it. *Letting as Gewähren-lassen* is crucial. It appreciates that thinking and its instantiations in art and poetry cannot be controlled, that thinking must take its course, and that we as mortal beings can only follow it. In that sense human beings become seekers, preservers, stewards. They seek for *beyng*, trying to preserve and steward its truth (clearing concealment), mindful that they cannot possess and control *beyng*. As preservers human beings act at the behest of *beyng* but they hold no power over *beyng*. Groundings are historical tasks and the term grounding echoes the notion of thrownness in *Being and Time*. Each *Dasein* has to accept its thrownness. Now a few have to take over the grounding of the truth of *beyng* in *Da-sein* is and this is where death comes in, for death allows mortals to let go of beings.

But letting-go is not a quietistic position, as there is always something that addresses us and hence something we respond to. McGill's (cf. 1985: 185) claim that Heidegger ends up in a position of passive quietism is rather misleading. In order to understand what Heidegger means by being addressed by *beyng* think of the German idiom, *das geht mich nichts an*. The English says, *that does not concern me*. Taken literally there is something that addresses us, that moves us, even if we react with indifference (cf. GA79: 24/23f). *Beyng* always addresses human beings and it is always only a few that can respond and correspond to that call in any given epoch. Their response allows for appropriation by the essential event and by this appropriation human beings come into their own. As will become clearer in what follows appropriation only properly occurs when human beings take a mortal stance. In other words human beings must renounce beings in order to be open for *beyng* and its abyss.

Taking a mortal stance means just that: renouncing the prevalence of beings and letting-go of them. But this is what in the first place allows one to appreciate their true wealth of their own accord – without trying to possess or perfectly control beings by establishing their common ground (beingness; i.e., ground as noun).

3. The Essential Event and Death

In *Contributions* Heidegger writes that “for us today, it remains difficult in every respect to experience the projection as event out of the essence of ap-propiation [*Er-eignung*] as refusal.” (GA65: 448/353). Moreover, Heidegger says that we are inventively to think forth beyng out of the essential event and this thinking is supposed to induce the transition from metaphysics to the history of being (cf. GA65: 456/359). What does it mean to think inventively out of the essential event, i.e., to think self-concealment? Is it at all possible, as we are used to a metaphysics of presence? In my view, we find in §34 of *Contributions* the decisive hint at how to think the essential event. It reads:

The event is the self-eliciting [*ermittelnd*] and self-mediating center in which all essential occurrence [*Wesung*] of the truth of beyng must be thought back in advance. This thinking back in advance to that center is the inventive thinking of beyng. And all concepts of beyng must be uttered from there. (GA65: 73/ 58f)

How is this thinking back in advance⁸⁸ supposed to be possible? How can we know that the essential event moves as such if we do not yet have any notion of it? Heidegger elsewhere says that the name of beyng “once” was the “immemorial” (cf. GA81: 200). To me this indicates that beyng is, like Schelling’s notion of the immemorial, without presupposition and also that which *once* could not be thought. Yet, with the essential event there is a possibility to think the nearly unthinkable “that” of beyng, to enter into it. As Heidegger says, beyng *once* was the immemorial. Beyng is now to be thought up by thinking out of the essential event, i.e. out of that which comes into its own as it self-conceals. Beyng is now to be thought and understood by thinking back into the original realm of the essential event.⁸⁹ For Schelling the incomprehensible, called immemorial, can only be made comprehensible *a posteriori*. As Hutter (cf. 2003: 118f) points out, Schelling’s positive philosophy can thereby

⁸⁸ Remember that Heidegger speaks of being and nothing into which Dasein stands out *in advance*.

⁸⁹ There are echoes of $\chi\acute{\omega}\rho\alpha$ in the talk of the essential event as realm.

avoid the abyss of the unconditional (that which is unsupported). Yet, for Heidegger thinking the immemorial is supposed to be possible *in advance*. On the face of it, this means that Heidegger's thinking here looks for the presuppositions of being and that being can be understood *a priori* as conditioned. But, contrary to Schelling's *a posteriori* fixation of the immemorial, being is to remain without presupposition and unconditioned. Moreover, Heidegger does not think in terms of the metaphysical schema of *a priori* and *a posteriori*, for this schema is directed at beings. Instead, Heidegger wishes to think, or to leap into the abyss and think without beings. As Hutter (cf. 2003: 118f) notes, Schelling's notion of the immemorial wants to avoid Kant's warning from the *First Critique* that "[u]nconditioned necessity, which we so indispensably require as *the last bearer of all things*, is for human reason the veritable abyss." (A613/ B641 *me*) Heidegger, on the other hand, argues that we "must take seriously [Kant's] reference to the abyssal." (GA65: 448/353) Hence we are invited to think specifically the abyssal dimension of being in terms of the *self-eliciting* and *self-mediating* centre that is totally unsupported, and this is what allows us to think being without presupposition. Metaphysics sees this abyss. Kant obviously sees it, and so do Schelling, Plato, and certainly Hegel. But metaphysics shies away from the abyss that Heidegger calls being. Heidegger thus speaks of a foreboding that opens a glimpse at concealment (cf. GA65: 14/13). Withdrawal, self-concealment and -refusal point to being's abyss. Thus with the essential event as self-eliciting centre being in its self-concealment, i.e., in its truth, can specifically be brought into thematic focus – and death will prove to be the locus of all concealment and the gateway into the abyss.

The leap into this thinking is a letting-go of beings. In §34 Heidegger speaks of the event as *selbst-ermittelnd*, i.e., as that which finds its own middle. This is not a dialectical process precisely because it is not directed at beings, say, nature, but speaks purely of the abyss of being, where there is nothing to hold on to. Also, *ermitteln* does not mediate (*ver-mitteln*) between two poles, but rather finds itself. For Heidegger thinking is, then, the leaping into that middle or centre, which is tantamount to being needed by being, i.e., letting-go of beings, *to be without beings*. For the human being this means to take a mortal stance, i.e., to learn how to die. Before anything thinking is leaping into the abyss by learning how to die and thinking is productive when it lets the event's self-eliciting and self-mediation take their course. To think back in advance then is the leap into the centre and thinking takes its direction from and is enriched by, *schöpft sich aus*, this very centre. This is the experience Heidegger made in his

thinking. From the poverty of abyssal beyng, the perspective for the abundant wealth and riches of beings in their *own* right emerges; proper beings arising out of themselves as they each and uniquely are – not shadows, representations, or noumenal things in themselves! Thinking, therefore, rests on (of course, finding no rest at all!) and is moved by the “in the abyssal ground of the unsupported and unsecured” (GA65: 482/379). Beyng is entirely unsupported and unsecured. The essential event is withdrawing unsupported abyss. Thus beyng “needs those who go down” (GA65: 7/8) into the abyss and those who are prepared to serve as the “there” of beyng, as an anchor for it, i.e., to serve *qua* care as a momentary grounding of beyng’s truth (cf. GA65: 16/15) That is to say that the essential event is precisely not absolute Idea, nor Spinozist substance, both of which are perfectly self-sufficient and independent. Taking a mortal stance is what lets human beings enter into the middle that not only self-mediate but also self-conceals. In order to gain a better understanding of §34 and the thinking of the event in general, I must clarify what Heidegger means by concealment.

4. Concealment and Death

In my analysis I have so far assumed the specific meaning of *concealment*. Yet, what precisely does Heidegger mean by concealment? How can we think concealment? Can we at all think the essential event? These are crucial questions, for they address how meaning constitutes according the thinking of the essential event. This is where death comes in. On my reading, death is pivotal for a proper understanding of the motion called “un-concealment” and thus of the essential event. I wish to point out straight away that instead of asking *what* concealment is, we should rather ask *how* it essentially occurs.

Heidegger sees three concealments at work in the current age of the abandonment of beyng. In the German Heidegger speaks of *Verhüllung* rather than *Verbergung*. These are “calculation,” “acceleration,” and “the outbreak of massiveness.” (GA65: 120f/95f) They are the way in which beyng conceals itself in the current epoch. This speaks of a double-concealment, as it were: beyng self-conceals in that it abandons itself in these concealments. But at once also beyng’s abandonment is concealed. For beings are vehemently pushed to the fore by human self-aggrandisement and the assumption that technology can at will manipulate and

control beings. There is, Heidegger says in *Contributions*, something that concerns us and that indicates to us being's self-concealing abandonment. He sees this manifest in the fact that we do not know our historical goal, that we lack a greater what-for, put simply, nihilism rules (cf. GA65: 11/12).⁷⁰ Heidegger thus sees it as our task today to think that utmost concealment of meaning, i.e., to think being's abandonment. The latter has come about precisely because metaphysics has forgotten to think *self-concealment* in its own right. Thus the self-eliciting, self-mediating centre has to be thought back in advance, we have to think self-concealment and abyss – by thinking the “away” which we know from death (cf. GA65: 324/257). This is precisely what the *grounding* of Da-sein is to achieve, which is to provide again a meaning of history; this time of the history of being brought into harmony. This would include overcoming those three “concealments” Heidegger here speaks of. The three *Verhüllungen* of being can be understood as *dissimulations*, *Verstellungen*, of being. Being self-conceals by dissimulating. But is that the original sense of concealment, *Verbergung*?

In traditional terms we can understand the concealment (*Verbergung*) of being, as *occultatio* and *dissimulatio*. *Dissimulatio* will be an important notion for Heidegger's diagnosis of technology as *Ge-Stell*. There is something sinister about *dissimulatio* and *Ge-Stell* tends to operate by means of that mode of concealment. *Dissimulatio* is sinister, for it pretends to be something it is not and thus conceals what it is, but it also conceals that concealment. *Occultatio*, on the other hand, suggests that there is something that is hidden. To a certain degree some sense of *occultatio* is active in what Heidegger means by concealment, but I think *occultatio* is only secondary with *dissimulatio* being tertiary to the most fundamental sense of concealment.⁷¹ Heidegger explicitly says that “deception and dissimulation ... are not the only opposite to truth [unconcealment] at all.” (GA54: 88/59*ta*) Thus there must be more fundamental sense. For Wrathall (cf. 2010: 19) concealment simply means that the world *qua* object of enquiry momentarily eludes the possibility to make propositional claims about it. Once the world is again determinable we can again make truthful propositional judgements

⁷⁰ Heidegger writes this in the mid-1930s. Hence his involvement with the Nazi regime does not appear to provide him any longer with a meaning or goal of history. After the war, Heidegger writes the important essay *Wozu Dichter?* where he argues that the poet is to receive and articulate meaning for the rest of us mortals.

⁷¹ In a recent paper Ionel (2017) argues that as of the mid-30s Heidegger primarily understands concealment as *dissimulatio* because withdrawal supposedly cannot be thought. I would argue just the opposite because, as Ionel himself points out, earth is that which conceals. Hence if concealment is exclusively *dissimulatio*, then there would be something sinister about earth; but there is nothing that suggests that.

about it and this eliminates concealment. There is something Wrathall rightly touches on, which is the performative movement of concealment-unconcealment. Yet, the talk of propositionality and judgement in context of concealment and ἀλήθεια rather distorts the entire Heideggerian project. Ἀλήθεια and concealment-unconcealment have nothing to do with propositional truth. Even in the context of *Being and Time* propositional truth is derivative to interpreting the world (cf. SZ: §33) There is something deeper going on. The unfolding passage is specifically non-propositional.⁷² In fact, the whole language of *Contributions* is not propositional but rather to be seen as *poietic*. The language intends to bring forth the truth of being as the strife of concealment and unconcealment.⁷³ The language of *Contributions* is poetic also in the sense that it withdraws from representation but at the same time draws the reader into the realm of the grounding of Da-sein. Again, as quoted above, the inventive thinking of being begins with that grounding. If in this grounding, which has to take place *again and again* (cf. GA65: 415/328), the truth of being is to be brought forth, then *concealment* is at its heart. Put differently, there is no clearing and no openness without concealing precisely because the opening is not something present-at-hand (cf. GA65: 304/240f).

In my view, Heidegger proposes a most primordial sense of concealment which is neither *occultatio* nor *dissimulatio*. Both of them suggest something given that is covered over or distorted. Concealment is also not negativity, negation of presence, for this would suggest concealment to be directed toward beings. Primordial concealment is precisely not concerned with beings, with something that is hidden or that dissimulates. In my view, primordial concealment is rather the utterly *beings-less* and non-available: the abyssal. Hence Vallega-Neu points out that in the late 1930s and early 1940s “Heidegger’s thinking *goes down (geht unter)* into concealment.” (2015: 3me) That is, she continues, Heidegger’s thinking “lets go of something; something that we may preliminarily think of as a tension that held his thinking back in *Contributions*.” (2015: 15me) It is true that Heidegger in *Contributions* is not quite there yet, but his talk there of the “unsupported and unprotected,” to my mind, suggests

⁷² Golob (cf. 2014: 2f) argues that already in *Being and Time* Dasein experiences the world in a non-propositional way.

⁷³ Vallega-Neu hence argues: “The language of *Contributions* is poietic in a twofold sense: it enables the e-vent of being to appear as it appears in thinking and—in turn—it enables language and thinking to appear as events of be-ing. What the language of *Contributions* says is found in the performative motion, that is, in the occurrence of thinking and language, and not in something that this occurrence would present objectively.” (2003: 3)

that Heidegger already tries to think the utterly abyssal. Thus, on my reading, on the most fundamental level concealment is utter, abyssal refusal and withdrawal. Refusal, withdrawal, and concealing are uncontrollable. This most primordial sense of concealment (as *bergen* rather than *verbergen*) occurs on the level of *beyng*, more precisely, this is how *beyng* essentially occurs: *das Seyn birgt*. And this *bergen* self-differentiates as *entbergen* and *verbergen* (unconcealment and concealment). This is why Heidegger says that *beyng* is lonely. *Beyng* “casts round about itself only nothingness, whose neighbourhood remains the most genuine one and the most faithful guardian of the solitude.” (GA65: 471/371) For Heidegger abyssal thinking is always removed from beings. Hence he here also points out that “*beyng* essentially occurs in relation to “beings” always only mediately, through the strife of world and earth.” (ibid.) On the level of *Da-sein* as the adverbial site of the grounding of *beyng*’s truth, the name of concealment is “being-away,” which mortals know from death. On the level of beings concealment then does take on another meaning. There it can be *occultatio* and *dissimulatio*, but this is possible only through primordial concealment (*bergen*) and *beyng*’s loneliness.

Heidegger here aims to think history and “negativity” more radical than Hegel. That is to say, Heidegger tries to think entirely without beings, he tries to think the abyss; and this is what opens the possibility to gain a perspective for the simple wealth of beings again without the urge to manipulate and optimise them. In his notes on Hegel’s negativity Heidegger argues that *absolute* philosophy “must *enclose negativity* ... and that basically means *not* to take it *seriously*.” (GA68: 24/19) Regarding death in Hegel Heidegger thus says that death “can never become a serious threat; no *καταστροφή* is possible, nor is any downfall and subversion ... Everything is *already unconditionally* secured and accommodated.” (ibid.) The supposedly unconditional and independent, the self-sufficient absolute is already *secured*. But what secures and supports it? The absolute is always already secured by its consumption of death and negativity. The absolute needs them in order to become absolutely unified. This thinking cannot, rather, does not want to enter the abyss. Note what Hegel says about death in the preface to his *Phenomenology*: “Death, if that is what we want to call this *non-actuality* ...” (2018: 16*me*) Death is non-actuality! Thus Hegel appreciates that death is the utterly unavailable, but absolute thinking immediately consumes this non-actuality, and does not let this non-actuality take its course. Even though death is the “most dreadful thing” (ibid.) for Hegel, it is always already clear that death is what

allows Spirit to secure and fulfil itself. Death is here not an irreducible abyss but is integrated in the total consumption of Spirit. The negativity of death as absolute master serves to mediate the immediacy of positivity. Spirit fully attains itself when it strides through death and thereby makes this non-actuality less or not at all dreadful. Spirit domesticates death. As such death cannot be *the* transformational moment (in the sense of *Seinsgeschichte*) that Heidegger sees in it. Hegel rather uses death to secure against the abyss. Heidegger does exactly the opposite. His thinking remains in the abyss, in the “unsupported unprotected.” My claim that Heidegger tries to think negativity more radical than Hegel and non-dialectically is also supported by a note from 1946/47. There Heidegger says “negativity” is not to be thought dialectically as the opponent of positivity. Instead, the “negative” is to be thought out of being as its refusal, withdrawal and concealment. Heidegger’s “negative” cannot be sublated, it does not negate itself. Its proper name is thus “δεινόν,” the unsupported uncanny (cf. GA97: 261). The abyss remains abyssal and death indicates that most fundamental being-away. This is where Hegel and Heidegger part ways, as Schmidt notes, or rather where Heidegger parts with the entirety of Occidental thinking since Plato: “Heidegger’s challenge to thought is to release thought from its ancient relation to the will to an unconditioned ground.” (Schmidt 1988: 149)⁷⁴

On being-away Heidegger in the German writes deliberately without the verb “is:” “*Vor* dieser [die Offenheit] das Weg-sein und dieses sogar ständig.” “*Prior* to this dislodgment, being-away occurs and indeed even occurs constantly.” (GA65: 304/241) The “prior” is not temporal in a linear sense, but it indicates the primordial primacy of being-away in any appearance. “Away” then, Heidegger says, does not mean “mere absence of something hitherto present-at-hand” (GA65: 324/257*ta*). Instead, the away belongs to the “there.” The away “is the completely other of the “there,” entirely concealed to us.” (ibid.) This tension between the away and the “there,” where the away has primacy, is what opens the possibility for grounding at all. Heidegger continues that we know the “away” and thus concealment from “the various forms [*Gestalten*] of death.” (GA65: 324/256) It is helpful to consider Heidegger’s lecture course on *Parmenides* for a sounder understanding of concealment and of its relationship with death.

⁷⁴ Schmidt concludes that it would be short-sighted to look for a victor between the two. Instead, both Hegel and Heidegger struggle with finitude and negativity, albeit from different angles. I also do not wish to portray Heidegger as superior. But by illuminating their differences here, the difference between classical metaphysics and onto-historical thinking become apparent.

In *Parmenides* Heidegger says that “death is not a “biological” process [for the Greeks], any more than birth is.” (GA54: 88/60) For Greek thinking “[b]irth and death take their essence from the realm of disclosiveness and concealment.” (ibid.) There is a “pre-eminent level of the essence of concealment” where “the essential connection between death and concealment is starting to appear.” (ibid.) This concealment is more fundamental than that of the earth because the earth is the “in-between ... between the concealment of the subterranean and the luminosity, the disclosiveness, of the supraterranean.” (ibid.) The concealment of death is also more fundamental than the concealments of the everyday where, for example, a ship harbours goods we do not see when we look at the ship from outside. This most fundamental concealment is open to human thinking because the human being is the mortal being and stands in a special relationship with death. Death touches only the human being. This is why Heidegger says in *Being and Time* and in later writings on the fourfold that the animal perishes but the human being *dies*. From this most fundamental movement of concealment and death everything else arises. Schmidt hence rightly argues that “[t]his connection between death and concealment defines the original form of forgetfulness upon which all other forms rest.” (2013: 169) This is a crucial insight. All forms and gestalten, all beings, all that is ready-to- and present-at-hand, all that *is*, appears and takes form because of that fundamental connection of death and concealment as sheer *bergen* that always self-differentiates as *entbergen* and *verbergen*. The towering up of the wealth of beings, in the midst of which the human being is, takes place out of itself. There is no substance, no ultimate ground that holds beings. Mortals can appreciate that when they go “through the mortal journey on earth.” (GA54: 178/120) Thus only when the human being appreciates “a concealment and a withdrawal of beings” beings properly appear in their wealth because “at the same time and in opposition to this concealment and this withdrawal there also prevails an unconcealedness in which the unconcealed is conserved.” (ibid) Thus we understand why Heidegger in the writings on the fourfold will call on human beings to become mortals. Death and concealment give rise to all forms and it is the task of the mortal being to be mindful of the absence in all presence, an absence that technological objectification must work against.

I already mentioned above that there is relation in *Contributions* an even more fundamental relation than that between concealment and death: the relation between being and the nought as its neighbour. I write “nought” to indicate that this nothing is precisely not directed at no-thing or no being, but is utter *nothing*, or as Heidegger (cf.

GA70: 9) says in *Über den Anfang*, it is the *nothingless*, *das Nichtslose*. The tension between the beyng and nought is replicated in the tension between being-there and being-away. The latter tension, in turn, impacts the essential transformation, i.e., the grounding of Da-sein in order for the human being to become the seeker and preserver of beyng's refusal and withdrawal. The essential transformation comes about when being-away is specifically thought. In the thinking of being-away, which is open to human thought because of its acquaintance with death, "the deepest essence of nothingness" (GA65: 325/257) shows itself. Thus *via* thinking death human thought reaches into the utter abyss. The nought, however, "nihilates," i.e., the nought is active and structures the there. Death discloses the "not" to the human being, the "not" that belongs to beyng. Beyng's unavailability finds in human existence its only equivalent in the unavailability of death. The singularity and simplicity of beyng also finds its equivalent only in the singularity of death. In the language of *Being and Time*: every Dasein has to die its own death. The threat of death, the most radical possibility of impossibility, shows us that "[b]eing is not [but that] nevertheless, we cannot equate it with nothingness." (GA65: 286/225) Thus the sense of abeyance⁷⁵ that death introduces in *Being and Time* is transferred over to beyng. The way beyng as essential event inherently oscillates, i.e., as that which withdraws and so releases into appearance, was first indicated in the figure of being-toward-death. Death, then, is the presuppositionless presupposition that lets us think the abyss, i.e., the self-mediating centre called essential event. Heidegger hence elsewhere calls death the "*Ge-setz*" (GA5: 304), the concentration of all positing without itself being posited. Of course, this is not a logical, but rather a literal positing. Death as absence is what at all draws into presence. Parmenides says, λεῦσσε δ' ὅμως ἀπεόντα, as he addresses no one else but βροτοί, mortals.

Gonzalez (2008) has argued that *Contributions* silently falls back into a negative dialectic for Heidegger's failed attempt to articulate beyng itself. In a nutshell, Gonzalez maintains that Heidegger must recur to a negative dialectic precisely because Heidegger's attempt to speak of beyng directly fails. Heidegger's talk of primordially, of course, suggests that he thinks beyng can be spoken *about* immediately. Gonzalez' criticism points to something crucial when he argues that one of the fundamental tensions of *Contributions* is that they appear to oscillate "between a characterization

⁷⁵ A. Benjamin (cf. 1993: 4) points out philosophies of destruction like Descartes' and Heidegger's must operate with terms like abeyance, displacing, and distancing precisely because they want something radically different to emerge.

of thinking as always transitional and a characterization of it as transitional only now” (2008: 376). I shall address the history of being in more detail in the last chapter of this part. But Gonzalez’ criticism raises two further important issues I wish to respond to now. The first relates to the question how we understand *Contributions* in the body of Heidegger’s work. In my view, *Contributions* is a declared first attempt at the thinking *out of* the essential event. We find in *Contributions* crucial insights for reconstructing the thinking path, but the text is necessarily experimental. This explains the oscillation, but also the inherent motion of the event itself explains the oscillation of the text. Second, Heidegger does not wish to speak only of beyng. His thought is always directed toward both beyng *and* beings simultaneously.⁷⁶ Heidegger even denies that beyng can be “said directly at all if all language is language of beings.” (GA65: 78; as quoted in Gonzalez 2008: 358) Gonzalez understands this as Heidegger’s implicit admission of defeat. I interpret this differently. Gonzalez omits that Heidegger here stresses the need to return to simple, ordinary words and cherish them, as he does with *Ereignis*. This is tantamount, thinks Heidegger, to a transformation of language and grants the possibility to say out of beyng, instead of saying anything about beyng, precisely for its non-propositional character. This non-propositional, poetic language, for example of the unfolding passage, *is* the language of beyng. The language is of a withdrawing character as that language gives nothing to represent. The language *of* beyng is also inherently historical insofar as the multi-layered concealed elements of words are specifically appreciated. Most importantly, however, is Heidegger’s focus on the leap. The leap that lets go of everything familiar and thus this leap is a liberating movement. There is no need for mediation between A and B (say, concealment and unconcealment) when thinking begins with a leap; and most importantly, when thinking begins with a leap into the unsupported and utterly beings-less. Thinking that takes a leap forbids dialectical mediation. The non-propositional language of passages like the unfolding passage emphasises the leap-character of the thought.

In *Identity and Difference* Heidegger (cf. GA11: 41) makes the leap explicit when he interprets the word *Satz* (principle) as *Satz* in the sense of *Sprung*, leap. This leap leaps away from being as ground and leaps into the abyss. The leap occurs, Heidegger points out, precisely by a *Sichabsetzen*, a distancing-oneself, a leaping away from ordinary representations regarding the necessity of a mediation between subject

⁷⁶ See also (Vallega-Neu 2015: 4f).

and object. This is another example of a language that is freed from informational values and ordinary connotations. Now the ordinary representation no longer interferes and another dimension of being shows itself. The abyss, Heidegger continues, is then an abyss only for metaphysical thinking, for metaphysics always requires a stable ground. But this “abyss” is at once the realm where human beings and being encounter each other. Heidegger here in *Identity and Difference* also speaks of the *brückenlos*, bridge-less or un-bridged, encounter between being and human beings. That is to say, the encounter is not one of mediation between subject (human beings) and object (being), for human beings are always already in that abyss (for their very mortality), but oblivious to it. Appreciating that human beings and being belong together initiates appropriation and that means humans are “transported [*entrückt*] into being.” (GA65: 489/384) But Heidegger here in *Contributions* also notes that appropriation goes together with “loss,” i.e., no appropriation lasts for good and there is always the possibility of forgetting.

Hegel’s *Logic* (cf. 2010: 59f) begins with an immediate statement *about* pure being. Being is, says Hegel, indeterminate and immediate. For Heidegger, however, finite mortal beings cannot immediately and properly say anything *about* being. The only claim mortals can make about being, with caution, is that “being is finite” (GA65: 269/211). What remains is the leap into the essential event as the place of thinking. As soon as we attempt to think the essential event, it is no longer immediate but is always already mediated in and by itself and in that sense the essential event is the “self-mediating centre” out of which everything unfolds and into which everything folds back and which *Da-sein* “in-abides in” (*inständig*). The *inventive thinking* of being is a mortal, finite thinking that does not pretend to amount to absolute knowledge. Being withdraws from such attempts. And precisely with this thought Heidegger has already pushed the boundaries of metaphysics. This is because now concealment is specifically thought. This centre called essential event self-elicits out of the possibilities of its history and it does so finitely, for it withdraws, refuses and self-conceals. In the current onto-historical constellation to which Heidegger responds, the arrival of a last god announces itself, while machination — i.e. the total organisation and mobilisation of the world in terms of scientific control, a manipulation that deprives beings of their unique being, insofar as everything is reduced to a measurable aggregate — appears to dominate. Hence, there is possibility

for salvation, but also for ultimate withdrawal. But both of them are only possible for the movement of the essential event.

However, and this is where Gonzalez is right, we cannot make a deliberate choice to think *beyng* as such. *Beyng* has to address us first and we need to be open for that call. There is no diving board, as it were, from which one could leap into the abyss. There is also “mediation” but not a dialectical one. Mediation takes place in the essential event as the unsupported that *self-elicits*, i.e., that finds itself, and that as such is the realm out of where onto-historical mediation takes its course. But the event self-elicits insofar as it is counter-turning and it can only counter-turn, or counter-swing, for the event is distinct from beings, i.e., from that which “is grounded [*das Grundhafte*]” (GA71: 148/128). Death pulls human thinking into this realm. Heidegger’s thinking is not a thinking in terms of opposites and their sublation, a teleology striving towards, say, freedom as in Hegelian dialectics. Withdrawal is not the opposite of appearance, absence is not the opposite of presence. Nor are those two different aspects of the same. Instead, they *occur* simultaneously. Heidegger’s is rather, as Koch (cf. 2012: 202) suggests, an account of finite teleologies, momentary equilibria reflecting successful groundings. Their finitude suggests that death structures these teleologies. The “mediation” of the essential event is heterological, diverging and converging in immeasurable ways out of its ownmost unity and in this way the essential event is self-eliciting. In that sense “abysmal” means unfathomable to metaphysical representation. The essential event is the centre, the yawning realm where that history takes its course, where its ramifications and possibilities merge, flow into each other and burst apart, and whence human beings receive *possibilities* they are to respond and correspond to. The “other beginning” is hence not the opposite of the first beginning and does not sublimate the first beginning. Nor is the other beginning a caesura-like new beginning out of thin air that begins at a measurable point in time. Instead, the history of *beyng* unfolds as continuous withdrawal and simultaneous re-turning. *Beyng* gapes open and thus provides the possibility for other beginnings. As Heidegger writes in *The Event*: “The first and the other beginning are not two distinct beginnings. They are the *same*.” (GA71: 28/21) For they are sendings of the same *abysmal* realm. This defies representational as well as dialectical accounts of the history of being.

Rather than empty nothingness, as it might appear to representationalism, Heidegger sees in *beyng*’s self-concealment its “highest gift” (GA65: 246/194). This

is because the refusal, the inherent “not” in beyng, its concealment are what let beyng *be* in excess of itself and guarantee the continuous possibility of other inceptions. Thus at the heart of the movement of the history of being is a refusal of sheer availability (cf. GA65: 268/210).

The realm called essential event is not a realm of perfection. Also pain, suffering, failure, decay, erring, decline, and death have and find their place in it. Death takes primacy because death is “departure-like [*abschiedlich*] the *a*-byss with respect to the beginning.” (GA71:193/165*ta*) This is to say that in every beginning, for example, in the first beginning and the other beginning; in any grounding that turns out well; in any work that succeeds to bring forth the truth of beyng, death already has a say. The *a*-byss is the “concealment of being,” is its “nihilating, *Nichtung*.” The abyss allows for the way in which beyng withdraws from objectification and ultimate metaphysical reification, e.g., as *summum ens*, as will, etc. That is to say that historical metaphysical determinations of being are only possible because beyng withdraws. They try to hold on to beyng by determining beingness. This impedes access to the history of beyng (and being). But with Heidegger we can think the nihilating and concealment that give into the clearing, and therefore it is via death that human thinking can inventively think beyng and enter its history. A successful thinking of beyng is then a mortal thinking mindful of its finitude and fragility, its limitedness and openness to erring. This thinking begins with a released withdrawal from the prevalence of beings. It thus begins with a mortal stance of corresponding receivership. That death is present in all beginnings, present in such a way that it withdraws, also means that breakdowns of meaning are inscribed in every beginning. Death in this fundamental role also plays into the danger that beyng can become to itself. Beyng is at once occurring in its essence and its unessence. The way in which mortals respond to these occurrences co-decides the fate of beyng.

In the remaining two chapters I shall explicate Heidegger’s remark quoted above that death is to be thought out of beyng itself (cf. GA71:190/162) We can now more easily see, why the movement of the thought is not dia-lectical, purely two-fold, but always moving between, unfolding out of and folding back into several poles *at once*, i.e. moving in a heterological way, held together by the self-differentiating one-fold: beyng. Death is at once what leads into the thinking of beyng, but death also needs to be thought from the perspective of the history of being.

Chapter 3 Death and the Fissuring of Beyng

Heidegger suspects all of metaphysics to be predicated on the presence of the beingness of beings. The thinking of concealment is a gradual renunciation of the primacy of beings. Heidegger begins to see in *possibility* a distinct way to think outside the scope of a metaphysics of presence. Part I showed how the initial analysis of death leads Heidegger to think being as possibility. This chapter traces how Heidegger continues this thought in *Contributions* in light of the heterological movement of the history of beyng. In accordance with that movement Heidegger refers to the revelations and concealments of beyng as *Zerklüftungen*, fissures (cf. GA65: 244/192) in *Contributions*. Heidegger says that mortal thinking “can prepare the ... time-space (site of the moment) ... in Da-sein” (GA65: 235/186) in order to make the figure of beyng’s fissure accessible. In *Contributions* this preparation takes place with reference to being-toward-death in *Being and Time*. That is Heidegger returns to the analysis of death as possibility *and* impossibility, i.e., where being already split up, in order to disclose the fissure of beyng. Thus the thinking that *Contributions* wishes to prepare is a thinking that carries out *beyng-toward-death*. This at once reflects back into beyng because death is *of* beyng. The discussion of the fissure of beyng will also allow me to touch on Heidegger’s reformulation of the ontological difference. Note also that in the discussion of the fissure of beyng, the abyss of beyng shows itself as multidimensional (fissured).

1. Beyng-toward-Death and the Modalities

The sections on the fissure of beyng and beyng-toward-death are found in the joining “Leap” of *Contributions*. This joining prepares the timid leap into thinking the abyss of beyng (cf. GA65: 278/218). Thus Heidegger’s experimental thoughts regarding the fissure are cautious attempts at leaping into the abyss. In *Über den Anfang* he continues what he begins in *Contributions*, when he tries to think the event as that which catches itself, “das Sichfangen und Sichauf-fangen im Ereignis selbst,” (GA70: 10) as the inception of the event. But it is in *Contributions* where we find the first significant attempts to think the abyssal fissure of beyng, approached in light of being-toward-death. Heidegger, however, also admits he is not the right thinker to properly perform the leap. It is, of course, philosophically dissatisfying to say that there might be some

future thinker able to perform the leap and appropriately think the fissure. Nevertheless, I believe there is also in *Contributions* an attempt to think the fissure of being and this is precisely where death comes in. In what follows I provide a reconstruction of being's fissures. This allows me to show how Heidegger arrives at his determination of being as possibility from his earlier determination of death as Dasein's ownmost possibility.

Heidegger notes that by means of the modalities metaphysics has to a certain degree pursued the fissure of being. Yet, the modalities have covered over the original fissure, since the modalities consider beings in their actuality. They are a symptom of the encrustation of metaphysics. The modalities privilege actuality as that which properly is and forget concealment: "[P]ossibility and necessity [are] – so to speak – its [actuality's] horns" (GA65: 281/221). Possibility and necessity matter only insofar as they guarantee and secure the prevalence of actuality. Still, modalities indicate to Heidegger that being is inherently fissured.

The talk of being's fissures indicates that being unfolds in that it gaps open, withdraws, pushes, brings forth, holds back, collides — slowly but *at once* and always out of a one-fold. The same is the case with fissures in a mountain range. Mortal eyes do not live long enough to be able to see how the fissures come about, but still they have to cross and stride through them.

In order to unpack the fissure of being Heidegger returns to being-toward-death, i.e., to the figure of thought that shows the abeyant movement of Dasein's ur-possibility. Being-toward-death is now seen from the perspective of being and Dasein as the historical site of the grounding of the truth of being. Heidegger says that being-toward-death "harbors two basic determinations of the fissure and is its mostly unrecognized mirror image in the "there"" (GA65: 282/222). It is worth quoting Heidegger here in full:

In the first place, being-toward-death conceals the essential belonging of the "not" to being as such, *which here*, in the Da-sein that is distinctive as grounding the truth of being, shows itself only in unique sharpness.

Secondly, it conceals the unfathomable fullness of the essence of "necessity," which in turn is one of the fissures of being itself; being-toward-death again taken in terms of Dasein.

The collision of necessity and possibility. Only in such spheres can it be surmised what truly belongs to that which "ontology" treats as the pale and vacuous *jumble* of "modalities." (GA65: 282f/222)

On the face of it, Heidegger unfortunately merely belittles traditional ontology rather than provide a concise and relevant presentation of the supposed collision. Yet, Heidegger's choice of words also indicates that ontology calms itself about the fundamental collision of necessity and possibility by keeping them apart. The notion of collision is crucial because it provides a further hint at the motion of the history of being and consequently at the role of death in that history.

In *Being and Time* being-toward-death shows that the ownmost possibility of Dasein is, in fact, at once Dasein's possibility of impossibility of existence. Being-toward-death brings Dasein most radically before its own being and before its understanding of being. Heidegger transfers these insights over to beyng as such. *Beyng*-toward-death now reads literally that beyng as such is toward death and thus beyng is in the possibility of its impossibility. Beyng itself occurs as finite. The "not" that belongs to beyng is the "not" of the possible, of that which is not yet actual, but more fundamentally of that which is not at all to be actualised; of that which always remains an abyss for thinking, where thinking has nothing to hold on to. Heidegger says that the "not" becomes apparent precisely in the grounding of Da-sein as the site of the truth of beyng. This is why the grounding of Da-sein is only fully attainable if death is pulled into it. Da-sein, then, is "a-byssal Da-sein" (GA65: 285/224). Da-sein is not a static ahistorical foundation but is in the motion of grounding and withdrawing and as such opening up to the history of being. The reformulated beyng-toward-death need not be performed by each Dasein. Instead, "[t]he carrying out of being-toward-death is a duty incumbent only on thinkers of the other beginning." (GA65: 285/224) That is, this running forth is the act of grounding the "there" which is initiated by a thinking that can think beyng's withdrawal and poverty – and therefore also beyng's excess. It is no coincidence that the notion of pain becomes quite crucial in *The Event* where Heidegger further develops the saying of the essential event and the history of being. Standing-in or inabiding in the history of being is a painful experience because standing-in brings most radically before inherent refusal and collision (cf. GA71: 144/123). Standing-in in the history of beyng also brings before the intensity of beyng and its threat of an abandonment for good. The pain in death, Heidegger writes, lets experience the abyss of beyng: "Death is the purest nearness of the human being to being." (GA71: 194/165) This is because death brings before beyng as pure possibility and reveals that the nought structures any opening, any unconcealment and beginning, which therefore are finite and fragile. That beyng is pure possibility introduces a

tension-filled abeyance the human being can sense from impending death. Only the few will have to perform running forth. Their running forth, in turn, is possible because being now runs forth toward death. In this way being self-appropriates (*sich zu eigen sein*) but it can also lose itself. That is to say, being itself needs to come in touch with death in order to properly be itself. *Being essentially occurs as it is toward death: das Seyn selbst zum Tode*. Thus the thinkers of the other beginning replicate what being does when they carry out being-toward-death.

Being-toward-death in *Being and Time* proves to be a necessary structure of Dasein because death is the necessary condition for world to arise. From this early analysis Heidegger transfers a sense of necessity over to being, yet without its original transcendental import. *Contributions* predominantly uses the term “*Notwendigkeit*” in relation to “*Not*” which means emergency or distress: “All necessity is rooted in emergency.” (GA65: 45/37) In necessity there is then also a sense of pain. Again we see the return to ordinary words. In *Contributions* there is a decisive section on “*The necessity of philosophy*” (ibid.). Philosophy, Heidegger writes, begins only in utmost emergency. Philosophy is, however, not to eradicate that emergency. Philosophy is rather to bear and justify that emergency. Taken literally the German *Notwendigkeit* says “emergency that turns.” Heidegger speaks of necessity as that which *umtreibt*, i.e. that which bothers and animates. Thus Heidegger does not understand necessity in a modal sense but assumes that modal-logical “necessity” retains some sense of a more primordial necessity anchored in being’s turning; a necessity that induces emergencies, for being occurs as danger. Emergency points to the philosophical need of the human being to know and understand. This is present in the first beginning in the *θαυμάζειν* as the fundamental mood of that beginning. The original question was, how does everything correlate, what are *beings in the whole*? As Hermann Cohen writes in the *Logic of Pure Cognition*, the question for the origin is what first places the human being in a meaningful context of beings: “Only then do beings *as* beings become a problem.” (Cohen 1922: 79ⁿ) Heidegger argues: “This plight is what propels humans around among beings and brings them before beings as a whole ... and to themselves and thereby lets history begin or perish.” (GA65: 45/37) Those in the Cave are trapped in a state where all they know are singular shadows, apparently unrelated, because they have not seen the Idea, they have not asked for origin, they felt no distress, no need to leave the Cave. With Plato the Idea is established as the ground of

ⁿ My translation.

beings as a whole. With Heidegger a shift occurs. No longer are beings the beginning of enquiry, but now the leap into being is necessary in order to think difference specifically. Hence *Not* has nothing to do with hardship, *Elend*, or lack, *Mangel*, in the ordinary sense, which would mean that something present-at-hand is currently missing. What Heidegger calls *Not der Notlosigkeit*, lack of distress, is the oblivion of being. In such an epoch we are numbed by lived experiences and the supposed wonders of machination, but we are equally deaf to the call of origin, to that which at all brings into relation what is. For Heidegger death is the utmost emergency human beings always already know. As such death could reawaken the human beings' questioning stance.

Death at once terrifies and restrains, but also asks us to be attentive. Death is the last resort where the reductive logic of machination does not pretend to rule. Death shocks us back into what is. Shock, *Erschrecken*, is “[t]he basic disposition of the other beginning.” (GA65: 46/38) This shock suddenly makes us aware of the abandonment of being, but it is also a creative experience pushing us back into fundamental questions like, “what is truth?”, i.e., questions that have to be asked again and again. In terms of the history of being, for Heidegger the current epoch is the epoch of the completion, ergo encrustation, of metaphysics. In this situation, in purely philosophical terms, a shock is necessary that lets us ask again the question for origin out of which beings as a whole arise and human beings come into their own. Hence Heidegger reformulates running forth toward death as disclosing “the openness of being ... fully and out of what is most extreme.” (GA65: 283/223) Only through that openness of being, that concealing clearing, beings properly appear of their own accord, and not, say, as resource or units of energy. This is also a reformulation of how world arises again out of death now as the uttermost extreme. Yet, world now is the “self-opening openness” (GA5: 35/26) which discloses paths and routes, where a people can err and find itself, rather than the horizon against which a singular Dasein projects its factual possibilities. World is in strife with earth, that which provides shelter, for it withdraws. There will be more to say on earth and world in parts III & IV when I turn to the fourfold. Through bearing the utmost extreme, i.e., death, there is an opening of “the necessity of the highest possibilities, on whose paths human beings, in a creative and grounding way, go beyond themselves and back into the ground of beings.” (GA65: 46/38) This is the collision of possibility and necessity.

The few, e.g., poets, carry out the collision in beyng-toward-death, thus they think beyng's fissured abyss.

Possibility and necessity, then, are fissures of beyng as it unfolds and occurs *as* history. They occur and collide *before* there is any actuality. Possibility takes the upper hand in the fissures of beyng and I shall presently turn to Heidegger's notion of possibility in *Contributions*. The motion of the history of being is one of fissuring. Once one path bursts open, others are covered over. The history of being is quite literally, and not metaphorically, a mountain range in which human beings roam, hike, get, go astray, fall, hurt, gain, reach peaks only to hike down again, learn – and die.

In the late 1940s Heidegger begins to call death the *Ge-Birg*, the mountain range, of beyng (cf. GA9: 374na). This will be crucial for parts III & IV. *Ge-Birg* is less estranging and arbitrary a term when we take into consideration the notion of the fissure of beyng and the role death plays there. Death is *Ge-Birg* in a twofold sense. First, beyng is fissured, unfolds and occurs as fissured because death is as mountain range fundamental even to beyng. Put differently, death is what lets beyng unfold historically and therefore death is for mortals the window into the truth of beyng. This also explains why and how the history of being is finite. Second, as *Ge-Birg* death is the gathering or concentration of sheltering-harboring, of *bergen*, i.e. of the way in which beyng fundamentally occurs as it conceals, refuses and shelters itself. *Ge-Birg* is also the gathering of *Bergung*, which human beings engage in, for example, through art and poetry. In so doing humans are preservers of the truth of beyng. The self-concealment of beyng goads on acts of *Bergung* (cf. GA65: 56/45) rather than the sheer availability of what is presence-at-hand. For Heidegger the nihilism of our age means precisely that everything is available with seemingly little left to discover. This is what pushes us into circular optimisation of beings for optimisation's sake. When we take into consideration death as *Ge-Birg* and its role in the thinking of the event more broadly, we see that the notion that “[s]heltering [*Bergung*] belongs to the essential occurrence of truth” (GA65: 389/307)⁷⁸ speaks out of death. That is, *bergen*, that most fundamental moment of ἀλήθεια, of *Entbergung* and *Verbergung*, is itself an interest of death and concentrated in it. Furthermore, death as *Ge-Birg* is also related to time as “clearing of the self-concealment of beyng,” as Heidegger writes to Richardson.

⁷⁸ See also: “Die *Bergung* selbst vollzieht sich im und als *Da-sein*.” (GA65: 71)

2. The Fissure of the Possible

Based on what I have argued so far, I can now reconstruct in more detail, how Heidegger arrives at *beyng* as the possible and what role death plays in this regard. As argued in part I, death as the possibility that gives Dasein nothing to actualise leads Heidegger to privilege possibility in a distinct non-metaphysical sense. Thus Heidegger's thought is not simply the inversion of the Aristotelian schema. *Möglichkeit* takes on another meaning, closer to how he understands Plato's δύνναμις, but also closer to the verbs *mögen* and *vermögen*. Heidegger properly develops possibility, *Möglichkeit* in relation to those verbs in the lecture course *What calls for Thinking?* (cf. GA8: 5). Yet, that sense of *Möglichkeit* is already active in *Contributions*.

In the context of Heidegger *vermögen* is difficult to translate. In talks on the fourfold Heidegger begins to call mortals those who *den Tod als Tod vermögen* (cf. GA7: 180/148⁷⁹). *Vermögen* here does not mean what the dictionary suggests. "To be capable of" is a misleading translation of *vermögen*, also because it suggests the capacity to actualise. In his study on death Pattison (cf. 2013: 128) wrongly, I think, equates "mortals" with Dasein and its "capacity" to run forth toward death. Pattison relies on the standard English translation of *vermögen* as being capable of.⁸⁰ Instead, *vermögen* articulates an experience in which *I* have been addressed and where *I* have dared to respond. That is, death touches mortals and they dare to respond to death — in a restrained way. *Beyng* as *das Mög-liche*, then, indicates that *beyng* is a realm addressing (*Zuspruch*) the human being and which the human being analogously corresponds to (*Entspruch*). There is also a sense of love in *beyng* as possibility. In the self-differentiation of *Zuspruch* and *Entspruch*, address or claim and correspondence, the withdrawal of *beyng* is inherent. *Beyng* addresses through withdrawing. The proper human response is timid, mindful that mortal thinking can never have full manipulative control over all that is.

Thus I understand the following claims on possibility in *Contributions* in accordance with Heidegger's later remarks on *das Mög-liche*. Heidegger writes: "beyng is possibility, that which is never present-at-hand and yet is always bestowing and denying itself [*Gewährend und Versagend*] refusal through ap-propiation [*Er-*

⁷⁹ Hofstadter translation.

⁸⁰ Nevertheless, Pattison (cf. 2013: 151) acknowledges that there is a distinct poetic aspect to "mortals" and their community in Heidegger's later writings, which is lacking in *Being and Time*.

eignung].” (GA65: 475/374ta) And: “in the other beginning beyng must first be thought in the form of the possible.” (ibid.) One of Heidegger’s earliest motivations is to think being and the ontological *in actu, im Vollzug*, without reifying it. Thinking beyng as the possible provides Heidegger just with what he was looking for: “Being is, and therefore it does not become a being – this can be expressed most pointedly by saying that beyng is possibility.” (ibid.) Beyng as the possible denies reifications such as *summmum ens* or *genus* because as the possible *and* impossible the “not” of beyng comes to the fore. Thus the possibility and simultaneous *impossibility* that was death in *Being and Time* is now beyng as such. But most importantly, *via* death we have arrived at beyng as possibility and this, in turn, is the gateway into thinking beyng without beings. Metaphysics, on the other hand, “makes the “actual,” i.e. beings the point of departure and the goal of the determination of being.” (ibid.) In the other beginning a thinking *out of* beyng as the possible is necessary in order to overcome a metaphysics of presence and actuality. This is so because that very metaphysics is what fuels the all-encompassing technological manipulation of all that is. The possible is, therefore, the “deepest fissure” (ibid.) of beyng and death as utmost possibility of the human being is testimony to that. The possible then also refers to the abyss of beyng, to the absence of beings in a mortal thinking of beyng.

Thanks to the determination of beyng as possibility in a non-metaphysical sense, presupposing the representational schema of the ontic-ontological difference is no longer necessary (cf. GA65: 250/197). Now beyng itself has been found in the way in which it unfolds. Yet, the talk of fissure still suggests something like difference, *Unterschied*. And beyng and beings are still not identical after the turn because beyng is not a being. There is a difference between the truth of beyng, i.e., the clearing self-concealing dimension of presence, and beings, i.e., what is present. With beyng as realm of the possible we can think of beyng as self-differentiating as *being* and beings. Beyng as the possible is verbal. In the *Onto-theo-logy* essay Heidegger says: ““being” itself says: being that is *beings*.” (GA11: 69) The “is” is intransitive, i.e. *beings* here is not the accusative object, but nominative subject. The “is” is similar to the German *blühen*, the Italian *piove*, or the Greek $\chi\rho\acute{\eta}$: “In each case, the verb is pointing purely to that which is taking place or rather to the taking place or the happening itself, which is entirely indissociable from that which is actually taking place.” (Beistegui 2003: 223) Beyng self-differentiates such that there is presence and something that is present. This is not to say that being is the ground of beings. Rather, this says that beings are

but spatio-temporal occurrences entirely without ground. Presence is the way in which beings are present. Thus difference is now differentiation, or *differencing*, and this works precisely through beyng's self-concealment. This is similar to how Heidegger understands the *Es gibt, it gives* or *there is*, in the talk *Time and Being* (cf. GA14: 9ff). Whenever I say, "*I am here*," I already speak out of that *differencing* (cf. GA11: 69). That is, differencing takes place in this saying and that differencing is being unfolding as self-differentiation. In *Contributions* Heidegger thus says, "beyng is not something "earlier" — existing in itself, for itself. Instead, the event is the temporal-spatial simultaneity for beyng and beings." (GA65: 13/13) Koch (cf. 2007: 97) thus notes that this suggests a unity in difference and difference unfolds out of the simultaneity of the essential event. Thus the heterology emerges out of a homology but that homology is always already fissured and fans out (*auffächern*). We can better understand this unfolding as self-differentiation when we take into account beyng as fissured and with the possible as its main fissure. Beyng unfolds as self-differentiating because it is fissured. In truth, then, what speaks when we say *I am here, I am a thinking being*, or *Why is there something?* is death as the mountain range of beyng, as that which lets beyng self-differentiate: *sum moribundus*. Thus, when Heidegger says that the tiny word "is" moves the history of being (cf. GA11: 79), what really moves that history is death.

Chapter 4 *Seinsgeschichte* and Death

Throughout this part, I have already several times indicated the important role death plays in the history of being. I can now explicate what exactly Heidegger means when he says that "[f]or the first and only time in the history of beyng, the essence of death must now be experienced and interrogated out of beyng itself." (GA71: 190/162) I do so by way of a discussion of my understanding of the history of being.

1. The Meaning of *Seinsgeschichte*

One of the major shifts after *Being and Time* is that history is now primarily the history of beyng itself, rather than that of Dasein. The English translation *history of being* could lead one to assume that Heidegger writes a history of some object "Being," or

that “being” is the stable, unmoving ground of that history.⁸¹ But, as Heidegger says in the *Onto-theo-logy* essay, the history of being is not on display “like apples, pears, peaches ... on the counter of historiographical imagination.” (GA11: 73) Instead, history *of* being is a subjective genitive. Heidegger’s notion of *Seinsgeschichte* places being at the centre, but not as a purely regulative ideal, but in fact, as *the* moving, constitutive feature above all, *Konstitutivum*, of history. Heidegger does not speak of *Sein und Geschichte* or *Sein in der Geschichte*. Rather being itself essentially occurs *as history*. Even though the history *of* being is being in its occurrences and manifestations as “Φύσις, Λόγος, Ἔν, Ἰδέα, Ἐνέργεια, Substantiality, Objectivity, Subjectivity, Will, Will to Power, Will to Will” (GA11: 73), it would be shortsighted to assume Heidegger understands that history of histories simply as a “historical series of ... epoch-grounding understandings of Being” as Thomson maintains (2000: 298) The history of being is precisely not a linear and clear-cut “series!” We can never reduce the history of being to “one epoch of the history of clearing, *Lichtungsgeschichte*.” (GA11: 60) Rather, as argued above, these clearings of being, for lack of a better expression, flow into each other, they mingle and merge. Therefore, they are not reducible to just one at a time and they are not *of the past* in the ordinary sense. Note also that only when the essential event has come into focus, can the history of *being* as its metaphysical determinations come into focus *at all*. Thus I distinguish between the history of being and the history of being. The former is in fact the epochal differentiation of being *as* Φύσις, Λόγος, Ἔν etc., and hence directed at beings. The latter, in turn, is what makes the former possible, and a thinking of it is not directed at beings. The history of being works by radical incisions, which in that history of histories are possible due to the workings of abyssal being as the possible. These incisions result in being’s sendings and those, in turn, bring fates upon the human being. Think of the Heraclitean flash. Death is “highest testimony” to that.

Much of the confusion readings like Gonzalez’ display is caused by the assumption that the “saying” of being is an immediate and perfectly direct access to some entity “Being,” about which we are to formulate propositions. An access so immediate that it requires no history. What then is this saying *of* being as the essential event? Heidegger writes: “saying does not express *about* being something that supervenes to it in general ... on the contrary it says being out of itself.” (GA65:

⁸¹ Demske thinks that “being is the ground of all history.” (1970: 127) This is again a result of his failure to think through the *turning* of being.

473/372) This is possible only thanks to an access to beyng in its history. The fact that Heidegger can see *Seinsgeschichte* is the clearest indication that his is a saying *out of* beyng. *Seinsgeschichte* was not possible before Heidegger. There is then a history of *beyng* and a history of *being* and the latter can only be articulated when the former has come into view. Yet, this does not mean, as Zenklusen (cf. 2002: 15) and Alker (cf. 2007: 566) maintain, that being (or being) is the meta-subject of its history. Beyng is not something acting somewhere beyond or behind us or the world. The meta-subject is a reification of being. Instead, beyng self-differentiates as the way in which beings occur and the way beings occur also always has to do with the way in which human beings respond to their thrownness. And this finds articulation in metaphysical determinations of being as substance, will to power, etc.

In a conversation with a Japanese scholar Heidegger says: “Origin always means future, *Herkunft aber bleibt stets Zukunft.*” (GA12: 91) Yet, this does not mean that Heidegger’s perspective or the perspective of the history of beyng becomes antiquarian and backward-looking. Quite the opposite. The ways in which beyng has disclosed itself still work and will continue to work themselves “through” history. “Origin” begins to take primacy insofar as that which has been feeds back into that which will have been as that which is coming toward us. Any saying of beyng is a saying of the essential event as precisely that realm in which the manifestations of “being as...” are at war over prevalence. Heraclitus’ notion that war is the father of all things is in the background here (cf. Hahn 1987: 66). Mortal saying out of beyng takes place in the tiny word “is” (cf. GA65: 473/372 & GA11: 79). The “is” determines the way in which beings *are* in these constellations. For example, in being as *Ge-Stell*, beings *are as* standing resource, readily available for manipulation. As such beings are analogous to being as the concentration of positioning.

The history of being (and beyng) means that this history works through us and gives meaning, if we listen. This is tantamount to “overcoming metaphysics,” which means to recognise “that metaphysics only now accedes its unconditional domination over beings.” (GA7: 69) The history of the first beginning is a history of withdrawal, but, as I noted above, Heidegger does not want to eradicate the first beginning. Instead, he attempts a *grounding* so as to be able to re-construct and comprehend the original experiences of thinking. That origin remains future means precisely that all is meaningful. The gift that comes to thinking is, in fact, the tradition, is the first beginning. This gift and giving are not readily available, they deny us easy and

immediate access. This is precisely what historicism and its media must operate against in a crude attempt to neatly pigeonhole the entirety of that immeasurable gift. There is at the same time a danger at work, which are precisely these normative determinations of what it means to be. Metaphysics does not so much describe but normatively determines, *what it is to be*. These positings, e.g. being as will, are reifications and abstractions. But as such they drive history.

In a recent extensive study of *Seinsgeschichte* Keiling (cf. 2015: 16ff) argues, like Thomson, that the history of being is but a series of past epochal ways of understanding of being. Based on this assumption he claims that in *The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking* (cf. GA14: 69ff) Heidegger declares the end of the history of being. Keiling also alleges that any meaningful interpretation of the history of being must read anything Heidegger had previously said on *Seinsgeschichte* against the background of this later essay. It is true that Heidegger reportedly in a seminar on *Time and Being* said that the “oblivion of being is “sublated” [*hebt sich auf*] by an awakening [*Erwachen*] to the essential event.” (GA14: 50) Yet, this means precisely the opposite. Namely that with the awakening, which is the equivalent of thinking the withdrawal in the word *Ereignis*, the history of being properly begins. This is because the human being enters into that history in a thinking manner, mindful of the inner harmony of being. *Aufheben* is here neither “sublation” nor “cancellation” but needs to be understood in the sense of harbouring and sheltering (*geborgen sein*). Thus Heidegger writes in *Contributions*: “Only now begin the history of being and the history of the human being.” (GA65: 454/358) The other beginning feeds on the exuberant wealth of the first. Yet, this opening, which Heidegger sees, is neither guarantee for some promised utopia nor is this opening in any way at the mercy of human power. Of course, Heidegger would have to accept that this not only sounds like a grandiose claim, but that, even if his thinking provides a window into the history of being, his is still a mortal thinking. As such this thinking necessarily covers over and forgets “being” because no thinking can ever grasp being in its entirety. Moreover, and Heidegger is aware of that, as being moves by self-withdrawing, the oblivion, even abandonment of being are not ever fully sublated and cancelled out.

Guignon thus rightly argues that the history of being (and being) is precisely not “a series of past events or epochs leading up to today” (2004: 391) If it were, then it would end as soon as it has been recognised. Heidegger, however, does not prophesy the end of history. Instead, Heidegger sees a window for the grounding of the history

of being so that human beings become aware of this history, of which they are suffering participants, but not its prime agents. Thus none of the philosophers who came before Heidegger can be blamed for not having recognised the history of being. The history of withdrawal is, then, not meant as something ordinarily negative. Heidegger, I think, would agree with Benjamin's idea "that philosophical arguments form part of philosophy's history and as such they are already related to the tradition of which they form a part." (1993: 4) As Heidegger says in *What is called Thinking?*: "Withdrawal is essential event." (GA8: 10) If the first beginning is a history of withdrawal, then it is a history *of* the essential event. "[W]hat withdraws," Heidegger continues, "may even concern and claim man more essentially than anything present" (GA8: 10/9). However, there is something that has been missed in the first beginning and that is precisely to specifically think that withdrawal and concealment. As I have argued death is what lets mortals think "being-away." Thinking "being-away" lets mortals reach down into the abyss of being and its essential withdrawal. What Heidegger's specific thinking *of* the event has forgotten, is for future generations to determine, who form a part of that tradition.

2. Death as Testimony to Being's Epochs

We should only carefully speak of the epochs of being because the notion of "epoch" invites the imagination to categorise various understandings of being neatly as historiographical epochs. Yet, when we understand epoch closer to Husserl's *epoché*, we see more easily that the epochs of being are rather radical incisions bursting in and sending their silent and subtle shockwaves through the fates of the human being. Being's "epochs" then are self-reductions *of* being to which the human being responds and which are only subsequently historicised as *historiographical epochs*: "epochs of being are fundamental ways in which being occurs and humans relate to this occurrence." (Vallega-Neu 2010: 151) There is a necessity to the epochs of being rather than contingency, as those self-reductions take place on the level of being itself as the utterly possible in excess of itself into which everything feeds back, and being is in excess of itself for the collision of its fissures possibility and necessity. The history of being and its epochs are, however, not self-actualisations of being. Here the notion of sending is crucial because it refers to being as pure possibility. Sendings are not actualisations. When Heidegger speaks of sendings, he appreciates that being remains the *possible* but sends human beings factual possibilities humans relate to. The plural

here is crucial. There are always multiple and multidimensional sendings at play and the *question* is which one(s) do human beings relate to.

Death is testimony to beyng's sendings. In fact, *Contributions* explicitly mentions death the first time when Heidegger speaks of the dying of a god:

The most frightful jubilation must be the dying of a god. Only the human being "has" the distinction of standing in front of death, because the human being is steadfastly in [*inständig in*] beyng: death the highest testimony to beyng. (GA65: 230/181)

Death is testimony to the history of beyng, to the risings and collapsing of its sendings that form the fates of mortals. Even though Heidegger is at the time of writing this already deeply concerned with Nietzsche's thought, Hölderlin's notion of the departure of gods seems to be the focus here. Nietzsche's *God is dead* is an abrupt caesura. It is an act, more importantly, of a subject that kills God, deluding itself to believe it is almighty and ready to become God. Hölderlin's stance is different. Hölderlin rather speaks of an absence of the godly in modernity and Heidegger calls this absence "dying." In the second composition of *Empedokles*, Hölderlin writes: "To be alone, And without gods, is death." (2008: 548) What announces itself to Hölderlin is a dire age, an epoch of transition. Heidegger notes in §105 *Contributions* entitled *Hölderlin - Kierkegaard - Nietzsche* that something uncanny addressed these thinkers in various ways. For Hölderlin it is an experience of a silent departure of gods, and as a consequence an emptiness, a period devoid of meaning is setting in. A profound worry about the prevalence of nihilism in modernity is what all three have in common. Heidegger also appreciates the fundamental nihilism of the Occident. Yet, in the *dying* of a god, also something else is announced: the god's departure depicts the possibility for a return of the gods and the godly.

Death as the concentration of concealment and harbouring is then the place into which beyng withdraws and thanks to these withdrawals the sendings of beyng occur. Thus death is what fundamentally moves the history of being. This is why Heidegger says that beyng-toward-death and its inherent collision of necessity and possibility is "the goad of the highest historicity and is the secret ground of the decidedness toward the shortest path." (GA65: 282/222) Mortals have access to the history of histories for their relationship with death. But they need to think the unsupported by releasing themselves of beings. Again, death is not an anthropological phenomenon but occurs *within* and *of* beyng and mortals participate in that occurrence, for their essence belongs to beyng. The notion of goad or sting is reminiscent of 1 Cor 15, 55: "Oh death

where is thy sting?” Here, death has no sting, no sway over life, and not at all over eternal life. For Heidegger death is the sting that ignites history. From the perspective of the thinking path this means that Heidegger realised the very possibility of the history of being because of what being-toward-death in *Being and Time* disclosed to him! There would be no history of being without death and there would be no way of entering that history.

Nevertheless, being's sendings are always at first concealed to mortal thinking. That which has been sent is slowly, subtly, silently creeping into that which is to come. This is the slow and silent, *schweigend*, workings of the history of being. “The intrusion of being which is granted to historical human beings does not ever manifest itself to them immediately but only in a hidden way, in the modes of sheltering [*Bergung*] of truth.” (GA65: 236/186) This is why Heidegger begins to call death the *Ge-Birg* of being. As such death is a concentration of *Bergung*, which, says Heidegger, humans carry out “in art, thinking, poetizing, deed” (GA65: 256/201).

3. Sheltering and Grounding

Bergung, harbouring-sheltering, is related to *Verbergung* and *Entbergung*,⁸² i.e., to the self-differentiation of ἀλήθεια. The grounding of Da-sein as the site of being is in tune with harbouring-sheltering (cf. GA65: 386/304). Running forth toward death, now performed by the few and rare, enables the grounding of Da-sein. As harbouring-sheltering is concentrated in death, what Heidegger calls running forth toward death is performed in poetry, deed, thinking, and art. Thus here the groundings, which are of a sheltering mode, are performed *again and again*, for mortals are who performs those groundings. But before they properly perform them, they must let themselves in for mortal thinking and renunciation of beings.

The thinking of the history of being, even though Heidegger sees a window opening up for us to enter it, is not some magical tool by which the problems of modernity can be wiped away. Rather, for its vicinity with death the history of being reminds us of our errancy. Death is at once, however, also what enables the original un-concealing, *entbergende Verbergung*, of being. This is why Heidegger says in *Moirai* on Parmenides:

⁸² Heidegger also interprets the λόγος as differentiation of unconcealing and concealing: “Der Logos ist in sich zumal ein Entbergen und Verbergen.” (GA7: 225)

Whoever expects of thinking some kind of a reassurance and therefore calculates the day when thinking can be ignored as it is no longer needed, demands of thinking to self-destruct. That demand appears to be strange, if we remember that the essence of the mortals is called to be aware and mindful of that behest that calls them to death. Death is as the utmost possibility of mortal *Dasein* not the end of what is possible, but highest *Ge-Birg* (the gathering *bergen*) of the secret of unconcealment calling on human beings. (GA7: 261)

In order to learn how to think we need to become mortals, we have to learn how to die. This is precisely what Heidegger argues in his talks and essays on technology and the possibility of the fourfold. For Heidegger Socrates is the purest thinker because he learnt how to “place himself into this draft,” (GA8: 20/17) i.e., the withdrawal of being. Socrates was able to do so precisely because he learnt how to die.

If death is that which opens the window for *Seinsgeschichte* in the first place, then death must be what gets us out of the current prevalent sending of being: *Ge-Stell*. In *Ge-Stell* everything can be manipulated and posited at will. Like machination, *Gestell* is an essential occurrence of being, but it is being’s unessence, being’s turning against itself and beings: “Machination is, in terms of the history of being, the abandonment of beings by being.” (GA71: 108/91) For the sake of illustration, we can here think of Hegel’s notion of diremption. Being occurs and self-develops historically and it falls out with itself. In a footnote to *What is Metaphysics?* Heidegger added in 1949: “Letting death come to oneself, holding oneself in the arrival of death as *Ge-Birg* of being.” (GA9: 374na) It is for human mortality that the human being can engage in disclosing of the sense of being. The footnote speaks of a stance of restrained releasedness human beings are to take. Heidegger sees the world at a crossroads. Either the human being remains stuck in encrusted metaphysics and becomes the “*technicized animal*” (GA65: 275/216). Or the human being becomes *mortals* and encounters the fourfold as another possibility of being. Death will prove to be central for a successful grounding of the fourfold.

Part III: Death as the Sanctuary of Being

φύσις κρύπτεσθαι φιλεῖ

*Sterbliches Denken muß
in das Dunkel der Brunnentiefe sich hinablassen, um bei Tag
den Stern zu sehen. (GA79: 93)*

Introduction

Heidegger begins to be concerned with technology when he begins to think in (onto-) historical terms. The (onto-)historical situation we are in and the question how this situation has come about by metaphysics' response to being,⁸³ becomes his perspective. Thus he understands technology first and foremost as an essential occurrence and realm of being. For Heidegger technology is neither primarily instrumental nor anthropological. Rather, technology comes to us today from millennia away. In the current prevalent, but not exclusive, disclosure of being the human being is challenged to *position, stellen*, all beings, including human beings, in such a way that they become resources readily available at all times. Human beings act analogously to being as *Ge-Stell*. As *Ge-Stell* being occurs *un-essentially* in the current age. In other words, beings become artificial. Their unique unfolding must now follow the demands of technology.

Despite technology's promises of human empowerment and liberation Heidegger argues that humans are, in fact, subdued by technology. The uncanny situation we face is that technology appears to give us powers previously reserved to gods. For Heidegger, however, human empowerment through technology is an illusion. Technology does not empower human beings but replaces the human with the epistemic-logical dimension. Technology is an uprooting force. As Davis argues, there is a threat of the displacement of "the various peoples of the earth from their traditional contexts of dwelling and replacing them in a Euro-Americanocentric system of economic and technological manipulation." (2007: xxiv) Human beings are numbed by their seeming power and the control they can now exercise over beings. The human being, argues Heidegger, might even lose his self in technology: "*In truth ... precisely*

⁸³ As Heidegger in most of the public talks and essays on technology spells *Sein* with "i," I shall follow his spelling. This means that technology is a metaphysical determination of being *as Ge-Stell*, just like being *as* actuality etc. Also, "being" denotes "presence" or the way in which beings are present. "Being" speaks of abysmal and self-concealing withdrawing being. Still, I shall write "being" where I think this is more appropriate.

nowhere does man any no longer encounter himself, i.e., his essence.” (GA7: 28/27⁸⁴)

Thus far from being at the centre of technological control, in this epoch the human being is challenged “to order the self-revealing as standing-reserve.” (GA7: 20/19) Luddism, however, is not the aim of Heidegger’s diagnosis of the technological age. He rather wishes to provide a basis for a relationship with technology in which the human being is not a slave to technology, but where technology serves the human being (cf. GA11: 46).

Even though Heidegger’s is not a humanist account of history, the way in which humans relate, respond and correspond to being’s occurrences feeds back into the histories of being and human *being*. Adding to what I have argued in part II, we can think of this motion as a spiral feedback-loop where being sends and gives and the way humans respond creates waves within being that feed back into its history and movement – only to come toward us again.

By the time of his most intense public engagement with technology Heidegger determines the essence of the human being “to be the one who waits” (GA11: 118/42). That is, the human being cannot forcefully and by means of technology will a change of being’s epoch. Waiting is connected to *Gelassenheit*, releasement, and to letting-be and all three of them are, I shall argue, anchored in human mortality. For human beings to lose their essence, as Heidegger warns is possible, is tantamount to negating our fundamental possibility and limitation: death. The current onto-historical situation and our self-understanding sees the human being as the willing and commanding subject. The human subject positions itself as the master over the totality of objects. In so doing the subject denies its mortality: “The self-assertion of technological objectification is the constant negation of death.” (GA5: 303/122) Yet, it is precisely death that comes to rescue.

In modern technology positioning takes over *bergen*, harbouring-sheltering, and assumes that anything can be positioned as readily available at any place at any time. Positioning is a process of gathering and concentrating, more specifically of gathering power for some pre-determined end. Its fundamental assumption that everything can be posited and positioned as standing ready for use at any time is a constant denial of finitude. Heidegger hence calls the essence of technology the gathering and concentration of positioning *Ge-Stell*. *Ge-Stell* is the forceful concentration of all modes of positioning. In *The Question Concerning Technology*

⁸⁴ Lovitt translation.

(hereafter: technology essay) Heidegger presents *Gebirg*, mountain range, as an example of a natural occurrence of gathering (cf. GA7: 20/19). As indicated in part II Heidegger, around the time of his intense preoccupation with technology, also begins to call death the *Ge-Birg* of *beyng* (cf. GA7: 180/148).⁸⁵ Heidegger understands *Ge-Birg* as the gathering of all modes of *bergen*. For Heidegger *bergen* is the root for *Bergung*, *ent-bergen*, *ver-bergen*. Death as *Ge-Birg* is therefore intimately related to ἀλήθεια as unconcealing concealment, *ent-bergende Ver-bergung*. As *Ge-Birg* death is the hiding place of *beyng*. *Beyng* withdraws into death, death is the place where *beyng* self-conceals. The central argument of this part is hence that Heidegger sees in death a window out of the rule of technology. Heidegger further carves out death's role in his writings on the fourfold.

In his recent, extensive study on the fourfold Mitchell (cf. 2015: 235ff) translates *Ge-Birg* as refuge of being. I would like to suggest “sanctuary” as a possible translation. This emphasises the sacredness and wealth, which Heidegger increasingly speaks of in later writings, to be granted again to beings. As “sanctuary” *Ge-Birg* means a holy place of gathering and rest. Death as sanctuary is *beyng*'s retreat from itself as *Ge-Stell*: “Death is the highest sanctuary and refuge of the truth of *beyng* itself.” (GA79: 56/53⁸⁶ *ta*) The sanctuary is also the place out of which *Bergung*, performed, e.g., in poetry, sets out. *Bergung* translates into human disclosing and bringing-forth in accordance with one (or possibly several) of the current fates of *beyng*. For its origin in ποιήσις, i.e., in a sheltering bringing-forth, poetry can articulate in a sheltering way the truth of *beyng* in beings (cf. Vallega-Neu 2010: 147). Beings appear differently in a poem than they do in a production plan, for poetry cherishes something else about them. Human articulations of *Bergung* try to discover meaning and mindfully respond to the current age, rather than merely enact, like a functionary, technology's demands. Heidegger thus sees human beings in the distinct responsibility to initiate a free relationship with technology.

In terms of Heidegger's understanding of the history of being, Heidegger can name the *Ge-Stell* because a shift has already set in. This is in tune with Heidegger's non-humanist understanding of history. Human intentions, consciousness, deeds are not the prime agents of history. *Beyng* comes *first*. We are thrown into its history and have to take over its sendings. Of course, this also says that we can fail. Think of

⁸⁵ See also (GA9: 374na; Arendt & Heidegger 1994: 80)

⁸⁶ Mitchell translation.

Descartes' *ego cogito*. Modernity does not begin because of that dictum. Instead, Descartes articulates what already announces itself, that which already is at stake: the inflation of the ego. Heidegger's understanding of the history of being, then, does not mean he makes himself a prophet of that history. Nor is Heidegger a humanist progressive. He does not pretend to know for certain what will happen. Nor does he believe that the future is whatever we want it to be. Nonetheless, the ways we respond to technology, feeds back into the history of being. Heidegger's response to the challenge of technology is what he calls *fourfold*.

Schmid (cf. 2014: 214) argues that *Ge-Stell* is the self-obstruction of the world as *fourfold*. Porsche-Ludwig argues that *Ge-Stell* is "the opponent of the fourfold." (2009: 238⁸⁷). I disagree with the notion that *Ge-Stell* and fourfold are opponents. "World [*fourfold*] and *Ge-Stell* are the same," Heidegger says (GA79: 52/49 *ta*), but they are not identical. Schmid's suggestion of self-obstruction is more to the point. As *Ge-Stell* being obstructs itself. Hence there is in *Ge-Stell* itself a chance to get over it and encounter the fourfold. Mitchell's study of the fourfold hence rightly begins with an analysis of technology and attempts to show how technology can be integrated into the fourfold and, more broadly, how the fourfold comes about. Mitchell appreciates the importance death plays in this regard. I wish to stress death's crucial role as sanctuary even more. Thus I shall bring to the fore the relationship between being as *Ge-Stell* and death as the *Ge-Birg* of being. I do so because Heidegger sees the fourfold coming about if humans become mortals (cf. GA7: 180/148⁸⁸). This paradoxical claim begins to make sense when we explicate the claim that death is the sanctuary of being. Simply put, becoming mortal means to think out of the sanctuary of being. As argued in part II, this means to appreciate the abyss of being. Once more the question of being, which is now the question concerning being's current fate, is intimately related to death. Becoming mortal means that humans, more precisely the few and rare, who are more open to being, must articulate *Bergung* so that being discloses a realm of possibilities, now called the fourfold, for the rest. The few, who are for the most part poets, can help being to release itself, as it were, from its self-obstruction. This does not mean that the human commands over being, but, as Heidegger puts it in the *Letter on Humanism*, that the human being is the "shepherd of being" (GA9: 342/252). As such humans guide being. More precisely, they guide

⁸⁷ My translation.

⁸⁸ Hofstadter translation.

being to its sanctuary: death. There is, however, also a distinct practical aspect to the fourfold and the getting over of technology. Heidegger, in fact, sees the fourfold as a community of mortals and there is a distinct ethos about it.

The structure of Part III is as follows: First, I shall address common misconceptions regarding Heidegger's critique of technology. The second chapter traces Heidegger's path to technology. The third chapter presents the full essence of technology as *Ge-Stell*. Based on this, I can move on to present the role death plays in bringing about the fourfold. A proper encounter with the fourfold is only possible when we take the role of language into consideration. Language will be the topic of the fourth and last part of this thesis.

Chapter 1 Heidegger – The Luddite?

Contrary to a common misconception Heidegger's critique of technology is not an exercise in cultural pessimism. He is not a banal technophobe as some have argued.⁸⁹ Besides Mitchell, Dreyfus (2009) and Davis (2007) have recently argued against the standard reading of Heidegger as a luddite. Heidegger himself was well aware that his concerns with technology caused distress.

In a documentary film from 1970 director Richard Wisser asks Heidegger how he would respond to those who find his criticism of technology to cause severe headaches, *Kopferbrechen*. The German idiom “*jemandem Kopferbrechen bereiten* (to give someone a headache)” means to make someone think profoundly after some issue. This can cause a healthy worry with the inquirer. Heidegger responds: “I find *Kopferbrechen* very healthy! People do not at all worry enough. There is, today, even a great thoughtlessness that goes together with the oblivion of being.” (Wisser 1970: 71⁹⁰) For Heidegger today's thoughtlessness is tantamount to an ingratitude for the gift of thinking. This ingratitude is a most pressing danger. Heidegger then says something rather crucial:

I am *not against* technology. I have never spoken *against* technology nor against the so-called demonic nature of technology. I rather try to understand the essence of technology ... I see in technology, in its essence, that human beings stand under a power that challenges them and in which human beings are no longer free – that something announces itself here, namely a relation [*Bezug*] between being and human being – and that this relation, which hides itself in technology, one day comes to light

⁸⁹ See, for example, Gumbrecht (2003) and Buhr & Steigerwald (1981). For criticism of calling Heidegger a “technophobe” see, for example, Irwin (2011) and Heim (1994). Interestingly, Anglo-American Heidegger reception is less hostile to his writings on technology than German commentators.

⁹⁰ My translation.

... Thus I see in the essence of technology the first appearance of a much deeper occurrence (*Geschehen*) I call *Ereignis*. (Wisser 1970: 73)⁹¹

Heidegger here summarises his stance on technology. The first thing to notice is that he refers to the *essential event* because in technology we can see being's self-reduction, a simultaneous withdrawal of a world that once has been and a world that is to come. We can see in technology an epochal shift and transition that affects all beings. Secondly, Heidegger is not *against* technology. To be against something was Nietzsche's main mistake and Heidegger understands that an antithetical stance requires one to embrace what one is against. At worst this leads one to be consumed by what one despises most. A proper response to technology, Heidegger says in the *Country Path Conversations* and *Gelassenheit*, is a simultaneous yes and no to technology. We are to let technological tools into our homes, but we ought not to let them take over our homes (cf. Davis 2007: xxiv). Thirdly, for Heidegger technology cannot be demonic in a Christian or Greek sense since technology is an essential occurrence of being, and being is not some demonic force that possesses us. Fourthly, as aforementioned, technology overpowers the human being. This overpowering goes together with a simultaneous seeming that technology gives the greatest powers *to* the human being. In such formulations we can hear that technology is given to us.

Fifthly, and most importantly, Heidegger here says that technology goes together with the oblivion, even abandonment of being. Yet, this takes place due to being's inherent movement. The abandoning, however, also indicates a possible return *of* being, i.e., a turning of being's prevalent way of occurring. Simply put, being as *Ge-Stell* already indicates other possibilities of how beings can occur. The withdrawal of being is greatest in technology but this intensification of withdrawal is precisely what primes the return of being – if mortals properly respond. The Open of being, into which human beings are placed, is not one-dimensional. Being moves historically because both withdrawal and relation take place simultaneously, in an intergradient, heterological way. Being's dimensions are *sfumato*, blending into one other. Thus in the moment of being's greatest abandoning its re-turn is already enshrined. But it requires the help of its shepherd.

This is not to say that we should abandon technology because, as Davis puts it, “the will to overcome technology by throwing away its devices would repeat the very

⁹¹ See also: “the modern technological world is a *prelude* of that which is called *Er-eignis*.” (GA11: 46)

problem it attempts to address: the will to mastery that characterizes human being in the epoch of technology.” (2007: 184)⁹² Condemning technology as demonic and attempting to wilfully overcome it would mean to severely misunderstand what Heidegger is trying to tell us about the essence of technology. Heidegger (cf. GA11: 118/39⁹³), therefore, speaks of a *Verwindung des Gestells* rather than of overcoming technology. *Verwinden*, to get over, means to *let* arise out of positionality another possibility of world-encounter called fourfold. But this does not do away with positionality. The fourfold is only possible as long as positionality is. Getting-over is internal rather than an external approach. It refers to another beginning out of what is. Getting-over is co-constituted by human responses. The most important aspect of Heidegger’s remark to Wisser, then, is that in technology as *Ge-Stell* another relation between being and human being, i.e., another beginning, is possible.

Nonetheless, technology is a threat to human beings and the world. Technology challenges us and could enslave the human being: “Human beings do not control technology. They are at its mercy [*ist ihr Spielwerk*] ... In that respect modern human beings are a slave to their oblivion of being.” (GA15: 370) This is the crossroads Heidegger sees us at: either we move towards the world of machines, or we move towards the fourfold. Technology itself is not to be stopped. Once unleashed, once the *ἄτομος* has become divisible there is nothing to stop technology because now a sheer endless amount of energy stands ready for a continuous increase of power (cf. GA15: 433). Once the human genome is decoded there is nothing to stop the human being from artificially creating human beings. Heidegger is fully aware of that. He tells Wisser: “In the foreseeable future we will be capable of *producing* human beings in any way – i.e., we will be capable of constructing humans purely in their organic nature – as we require them: skilled and unskilled, intelligent and stupid. It will come that far!” (Wisser 1970: 73) Human beings are the most important resource because they belong to the dimension of *beyng* and as such human beings carry out *beyng*’s sendings. *Ge-Stell* needs us. For the essential relation between *beyng* and human, human essence is thus most open to the attacks of *Ge-Stell*.

Dreyfus points out that Heidegger’s concern with technology is ontological, but not a humanist critique of technology or a pessimistic view of the world. “The danger, then, is not the destruction of nature or culture but a restriction in our way of

⁹² See also (Dreyfus 2009: 54f).

⁹³ Hertz translation.

thinking — a levelling of our understanding of being.” (Dreyfus 2009: 55) “The human being today is *on the run from thinking*,” (GA16: 519) as Heidegger says. I agree with Dreyfus that Heidegger is neither humanist nor pessimist. As Demske puts it in reference to Heidegger’s analysis of technology, for Heidegger “[h]umanistic subjectivism is the greater threat to mankind.” (1970: 136) I also agree with Dreyfus that Heidegger aims to provide an opening for a free relationship with being. Heidegger explicitly does not want to purport that ““fate means the inevitableness of an unalterable course.” (GA7: 26/25). There is at least one way out and Heidegger, in his response, calls it fourfold. However, I disagree with Dreyfus that Heidegger only worries about our understanding of being, as if Dasein were still at the centre. Dreyfus, I think, neglects the scope of the turning. There is something much more profound at stake. For Heidegger being itself is at work and thus the way we respond to this challenge must be more profound than Dreyfus’ pragmatic example of drinking tea like the Japanese do. There is a practical side to the fourfold, but the response to *Ge-Stell* begins elsewhere.

The proper response to the challenge of technology is found in mortal thinking, in a thinking of the abyss. For Heidegger, “[h]ow must we think?” (GA11: 117/40⁹⁴), is the essential question. “So long as we do not, through thinking, experience what is, we can never belong to what will be.” (GA11: 123/49) Human beings have the duty to think, to ask what the essence of technology is and where it comes from. Human beings have the duty to think after these fundamental shifts upon them, “[b]ut we do not yet hear, we whose hearing and seeing are perishing ... under the rule of technology.” (GA11: 123/48) The *γγαντομαχία* *περὶ τῆς οὐσίας* Heidegger speaks of in the first paragraph of *Being and Time* now takes place in front of our eyes in technology. What it means to be, is currently decided. Thus the crucial question is, how human beings can release themselves from the power of *Ge-Stell* and find a more thoughtful relationship with technology, one that is aware of the powers of technology. For in technology the gigantic battle that determines the fate of the world takes place. Even though the encounter of the fourfold is at stake, this is still not an eschatological process since neither the rule of technology nor the fourfold will be eternal.

The thinking response begins with being *gelassen*, letting-go of beings (and of will) and leaping into the unsupported. Being *gelassen* is a medial grammatical form. Being released is therefore beyond the active-passive distinction, it is between them.

⁹⁴ Lovitt translation.

Medial verbs express that what one does directly feeds back into one's action and one's action has an immediate effect on the agent herself. In terms of *Heidegger*, being-released feeds back into the history of being. Far from condemning human beings to passivity, thinking for Heidegger means "genuine taking a hand, if to take a hand means to lend a hand to the essence, the coming to presence, of being. This means: to prepare (build) for the coming to presence of being that abode [*Stätte*] into which being brings itself and its essence to utterance in language." (GA11: 117/40*ta*) In part IV I shall develop this claim further in light of Heidegger's assertion that there is an essential relation between death and language. In practical terms releasement means to let things be and this letting-be is the initiation of a free relationship with technology, one in which we can at any time let go of our technological tools. In theoretical terms freedom is achievable, if and only if the human being responds to the current fate of being by thinking the abyss. Merely using technological tools means that we "remain unfree and chained to technology, whether we passionately affirm or deny it." (GA7: 7/4) I argue that the thinking that initiates releasement is a bethinking of death and of our mortal finitude. From letting-go of beings and leaping into the abyss, the true wealth of beings begins to appear. Thus releasement lets human beings enter the world. *Gelassenheit* becomes *Eingelassenheit*, embeddedness. The guiding thought for getting over positionality and encountering the fourfold is, simply put, "[m]ortals die their death in life." (GA4: 165/190)

True, Heidegger warns of technology and speaks of the "danger" of technology (GA7: 27/26). Yet, "danger" is a philosophical term of art for Heidegger and must be addressed as such. If there is danger in the *essence* of technology, then there is danger primarily in being itself. And as being occurs as turning Heidegger in many of his writings on technology says, with reference to Hölderlin: "where the danger lies, there also grows that which saves" (GA5: 296/222) Even in one of his seemingly most pessimistic texts, *What are Poets for?*, Heidegger says "[t]his epoch is neither decay nor decline." (GA5: 320/240*ta*) What is required is another perspective directed toward the wholesome totality of all that is. But this can only come into view properly when the "unsupported," the abysmal is bethought. To human thinking this is open thanks to their relationship with death. That which saves, then, grows out of death as sanctuary.

Heidegger's question concerning technology is, whence does technology come? This is a perspective that looks for the origin of the apparently only now

emerging technology. This other perspective can provide possibilities to get over technology (cf. GA5: 290/217). Only if being's inherent self-concealment and abandonment is appreciated, then "[t]he oblivion of being [could] "sublate" itself with the awakening to the essential event. Yet, concealment, which belongs to metaphysics as its limit, must be of the essential event." (GA14: 50) I quote this again with some caution because these are not Heidegger's words, but just notes from a seminar he gave. The "sublating," as noted in part II, is to be understood as sheltering. What I wish to stress now, is that concealment is the limit of metaphysics. Metaphysics cannot think concealment because it needs sheer presence. This is precisely where death as utterly absent and unavailable comes in. Technology is the instantiation of a metaphysics of sheer presence, oblivious to the truth of being, to its withdrawing refusal. This is why carrying out death as the gathering of sheltering is at the heart of getting-over of technology.

Chapter 2 Heidegger's Path to the Essence of Technology

1. The Metaphysical Origins of Technology

Heidegger's path to the essence of technology begins with his critique of subjectivism and metaphysics more broadly. According to Heidegger, metaphysics focuses on beings and then hypostatizes the unique *being* of beings as definable beingness. Take Heidegger's example of positivism as the "crudest of all "metaphysical" modes of thought" (GA65: 172/136). Positivism determines beingness as sense data. Moreover, positivism "*surpasses* ... beings through the fundamental application of a homogenous "causality." (ibid) Or take genetics. All organic lifeforms are assumed to have a genetic code as their static beingness. They can be reduced to their genome and their genetic information can at will even be mashed up and arbitrarily re-combined in order to produce a desired organism. In a note entitled *Tέχνη und Technik* from around 1940 Heidegger writes that technology is the "modification of "beings." (GA76: 288). Technology's "modification" is not random, "but is an assault on beings as a whole for the sake of preparing the self-assertion of human beings [*qua* rational and willing subject]." (GA76: 288)

Metaphysics operates by means of hypostatized representation, *Vorgestelltheit*, of beings and shies away from abysmal being. Technology then is the rule of

subjectivity in the peculiar sense Heidegger understands it. As Vallega-Neu puts it, for Heidegger subjectivity is the dominance of “representation (*Vorgestelltheit*) over the being of beings.” (2003: 60) Once the beingness of organisms is represented, literally placed before oneself, as, say, genetic code (which can be de-coded), organic beings can be positioned and repositioned as to the demands of the representing subject. “Thus technology is the genuine completion of “metaphysics”.” (GA76: 294) This is because technology is the instantiation of the hypostasis of being as beingness under a hermeneutics of making, producing, and manipulating. Technology as the completion of metaphysics is the encrustation of *the history of loss of the first beginning*. The loss of being, initiated by being itself, but also influenced by human oblivion of being, manifests itself in the sheer presence of the technological world.

The world-enclosed, purely self-referential subject, estranged from its world, never quite certain whether God is not an evil deceiver, the scepticism inherent in empiricism lurking in the background – that very subject now finds a possibility to satisfy its desire for absolute certainty and absolute knowledge in the means of total technological control. Technology is the subject’s absolute positioning. Subjectivity, as Heidegger puts it in his notes on *Jünger*, is the “self-aggrandisement of humankind” (GA90: 114). Heidegger begins to criticise the enclosed worldless subject in *Being and Time*. He extends his initial critique in a crucial way when he begins to devote more time to the problem of translation. In *Origin of the Artwork* Heidegger argues that the problem of the subject begins with the Roman translation of the Greek ὑποκείμενον as *subiectum* (cf. GA5: 8/6). This is a thoughtless translation since it does not respect the experience of thinking the Greeks made. The original word ὑποκείμενον encapsulates the original experience of thinking. The Roman *subiectum* is an imitation lacking an authentic experience. The Romans only copied the word into their language and they did so according to correspondence truth (*veritas*⁹⁵). *Subiectum* is a simulacrum. This mindless translation is a problem in its own right but the decisive and rather uncanny moment, as Heidegger points out in *The Age of the World Picture*, is when “the essence of humanity altogether transforms itself in that man becomes the subject.” (GA5: 88/66) *Qua* subject the human being is the ground of all beings. That is to say beings are anthropomorphised. The subject *qua* ground originally does not have an explicit relation to the human being or to the *I*. Thus Heidegger does not per se want to get rid of the *I*. Instead, he wishes to show that the human being *qua* subject

⁹⁵ See Schmidt (2013) on the difference between Greek and Roman thought.

must necessarily transform all beings in their beingness so as to suit the subject's urge for certainty through control. It is the Cartesian *certitudo* of the *ego cogito* extending out into the world securing and certifying its existence by securing the beingness of beings whose very existence that *ego* first had to doubt in order to assert itself. The subject secures and controls beings in that it makes beings comply to its representations.

In the introduction to the B edition of the *1st Critique* Kant most formidably articulates the modern subject's quest for certainty when he calls for a "Copernican turn" in metaphysics: "the object (as object of the senses) must conform to the constitution of our faculty of intuition." (B xvii) In order to establish his Copernican turn Kant has to set up a noumenal realm of things in themselves which are not accessible in their being. All the subject has access to, is appearances of things in themselves and the subject's representations of those appearances. This is the necessary step to ensure that appearances and the subject's representations conform to the subject's categories. If the subject had access to things as they *are* in themselves, then the subject would be capable of altering the very fabric of the universe. Kant did not promise too much. Technology works by a transcendental logic that allows us to set the conditions and parameters we exert control by. As early as 1935 in the lecture course *Introduction to Metaphysics* Heidegger thus points out that modern technology is "*essentially* something different from every previously known use of tools." (GA40: 202/207) This is the case because modern technology is not mere tool use but a system of parameters. I shall expound on the relation between technology and transcendental logic below.

This makes it seem as if the human being as subject were in total control, where control means certainty over beings in their beingness. However, as Heidegger points out in *What are Poets for?* "self-asserting man is a functionary" "[w]hether he as an individual knows it or not, wills it or not." (GA5: 293f/220) Even though the illusion of subjectivity lets human beings assume uncanny powers, the fundamental change in their essence threatens "man with death, and indeed with the death of his essence." (GA5: 294/221) More precisely, "the absoluteness of his sheer willing in the sense of his deliberate self-assertion in everything" (ibid.) threatens the human essence. As Demske notes, the human being "stands under an unprecedented threat of death" (1970: 135) in the present age, not because of the nuclear bomb but because his essence is under threat. Human beings forget themselves as much as they forget being.

Technology, then, is the rule of “beings without beyng,” (GA76: 290) i.e., without rest and self-concealment.

2. Φύσις, Τέχνη and Death

Heidegger’s other access to the essence of modern technology is by way of the origin and meaning of the word τέχνη in Greek thought. Simply put, τέχνη is practical knowledge. Τέχνη is a knowledge of production rather than theoretical knowledge. In early illustrations of τέχνη Heidegger does not further investigate τέχνη’s other meanings of art and craft. In *Introduction to Metaphysics* Heidegger (cf. GA40: 168/169) even flat out denies the validity of these translations. In the technology essay some twenty years later Heidegger reverses this and reminds us that “[o]nce there was a time when the bringing-forth of the true into the beautiful was called τέχνη. And the ποίησις of the fine arts also was called τέχνη.” (GA7: 35/34) Yet, it was his early insistence on the one-dimensionality of τέχνη that would be decisive for his stance on technology. As Wolff (cf. 2008: 324ff) has shown, by omitting the other meanings of τέχνη Heidegger can implicitly isolate any interaction with technical tools from other modes of practical world-access. In the note from 1940 I quoted above Heidegger determines τέχνη as “the knowing-one’s-way-around in making.” (GA76: 290) As such τέχνη is first and foremost “a hermeneutics [*Auslegung*] of the beingness of beings” (GA76: 290) in terms of practicability and operability. Machines and the mathematisation of the world are, for Heidegger, consequences of that interpretation of the world. This interpretation, however, does not begin with human intention and understanding but is an articulation of what had announced itself to Greek thinking.

Heidegger interprets Greek world access through τέχνη as follows. Τέχνη as making is of the human dimension, but as such it is also related to nature as φύσις. By means of τέχνη the human being can support the bringing-forth of φύσις, i.e., that which “naturally” occurs. Think of building a set of stone stairs by giving form to the natural occurring of the stone. Τέχνη can help and support φύσις. The stone mason uses a hammer to form the stone. I will expand on that example in more detail below when I explicate Heidegger’s genealogy of the term *Ge-Stell*. In this example, φύσις comes first, but with the beginning of modernity τέχνη begins to take over. Τέχνη does so under the rule of the representing subject. The relationship between τέχνη and φύσις is of a less and less supportive but of an increasingly demanding and forcefully

challenging nature. For Heidegger, the origin of the threat to the human essence, indicated above, lies in the relationship between τέχνη and φύσις. More specifically, the early interpretation of this relationship in Greek thought now plays out in modern technology.

In a particularly illuminating passage in *On the Essence and Concept of Φύσις* Heidegger demonstrates the interplay of τέχνη and φύσις and works out in how far τέχνη can become dangerous for φύσις. He points out that a modern doctor certainly has better technological means at hand than any premodern doctor. But Heidegger also notes that in and of itself this says nothing about the quality of her understanding of health. To be sure, we now live longer thanks to modern medicine. But an increase in the amount of years we live reveals little about how we live our lives. We could ask, for example, whether we have better communities because we live longer. To add numbers in years is no guarantee for a more fulfilled life. Moreover, to the modern mind it might seem as though the αρχή, the origin, of the healing process were in fact *technological*, but not of φύσις. Yet, Heidegger argues that “[τ]έχνη can merely cooperate with φύσις, can more or less expedite the cure; but as τέχνη, it can never replace φύσις; and in its stead become the αρχή of health as such.” (GA9: 257/197me) The notion of cooperation is crucial here because it points to human correspondence with being (in this case as φύσις). Heidegger, however, also warns that τέχνη might well be on the way to replace φύσις. It is worth quoting him here at length also because the following passage epitomises what has been argued so far on the relation between technology and subjectivity:

This [replacement] could happen only if life as such were to become a “technically” producible artefact [*Gemächte*]. However, at that very moment there would also no longer be such a thing as health, any more than there would be birth and death. Sometimes it seems as if modern humanity is rushing headlong toward this goal of *producing itself technologically*. If humanity achieves this, it will have exploded itself, i.e., *its essence qua subjectivity*, into thin air, into a region where the absolutely meaningless is valued as the one and only “meaning” and where preserving this value appears as the human “domination” of the globe. “Subjectivity” is not overcome in this way but merely “tranquilized” in the “eternal progress” of a Chinese-like “constancy.” This is the most extreme unessence [*Unwesen*] in relation to φύσις – ουσία. (GA9: 257/197ta)

Note that death here does not mean possibility as in *Being and Time*. Nor does death here have anything to do with the sanctuary of being. Death here rather means demise and deterioration of the body. This is hence one of the few times where death is understood explicitly and primarily as bodily. Arguably, one of the implicit goals of

the subject's will to power is to transcend the body, to become immortal by leaving behind the mortal prison of the flesh. This is the crypto-gnostic project of transhumanism, as Gray (2015) argues. In his interview with Wisser, given 30 years after he wrote the Φύσις essay, Heidegger seems convinced that the technological production of humanoid organisms is inevitably in store for us. If the replacement of φύσις with τέχνη were to happen, then this would mean an utter uprooting of human *being*. Human beings would become an artefact of the epistemic-logical dimension. Heidegger's term here is *Gemächte*. As something produced human beings would be at the mercy of machination. This, Heidegger asserts, would mean the end of birth, death, life, and health, in any meaningful sense because it would mean a radically new ontology – if such terms still were to make sense then. An “ontology” of sheer making and producing, circling around itself. An “ontology” in which the reification of being as the beingness of beings (e.g. as genetic code) would finally have taken the upper hand. Technological production of humans would be utter nihilism precisely because the human being would make himself an idol only to turn around himself, aimlessly.

The logic of such endeavours is a logic of prolonging life for the sake of prolonging. This is a consequence of what Heidegger calls the “will to will.” For Heidegger the technological production of organic life would mean the subject's victory. The purely self-referential subject must necessarily prolong itself, for all it knows with absolute certainty is itself. The subject must make itself absolute. Fichte with his self-positing ego and its will that wills itself as its ground, therefore, ultimately and necessarily so ends up in a position where there can be no death, no mortality, and no immortality; but only all-consuming life (cf. Scherer 1979: 134).⁶

3. Machination and the Will to Will

In Contributions Heidegger understands wilful making and producing to be technology's dominant trait and calls this process *Machenschaft*, machination. The German *Machenschaft* means manipulation and intrigue, yet Heidegger focuses on the verbal root *machen*, to make. *Machenschaft* is then the process of making for making's sake. Machination is a dominant way in which being occurs in the present age. It is

⁶ This is similar to Leibniz claim in §69 of the *Monadology*: “Ainsi il n'y a rien ... de mort dans l'univers.” (in Rescher 1991: 231) With Heidegger this is completely reversed: There would be nothing without death.

only secondarily something human beings engage in. Nonetheless, in my view, *Machenschaft* also as an essential occurrence of being retains a rather sinister connotation since machination is being turning against itself (cf. GA65: 84/42). Heidegger first introduces machination in Introduction to Metaphysics (cf. GA40: 168/169). But it is in Contributions that we find a more sustained explication of the term. Thus it is with the proper beginning of onto-historical thinking, which coincides with the claim of the abandonment of being, that machination becomes a central focus. Machination is crucial for a sound understanding of Heidegger's later notion of Ge-Stell.

Machination is a consequence of the first beginning and the oblivion of being's self-concealment. For that very oblivion there is "within machination ... nothing question-worthy, nothing that could be deemed worthy through questioning as such." (GA65: 109/87) Everything seems to stand ready as perfectly disclosed and given. In machination there is no need to ask what it means to be. We rather give in to the spectacle of lived experiences and amusement and numb our deep boredom with enchantment about the "wonders" of technology. As shepherd of being the human being's oblivion of concealment is not the primary reason for machination, yet the human being has led being astray, as it were. If the essence of being as essential event is to let beings be and to let them come into their own in a free play respecting concealment, then being's un-essence (machination) is precisely the opposite. Machination is the forceful challenging of all beings to conform to organisation, to be homogenisable objects deprived of ownness, for everything to become an artefact. The imminent danger of machination is, as Vallega-Neu puts it, its potential for "closing down of the other possibilities of being and thus of essential history." (2015: 12) The threat is that being becomes increasingly one-dimensional, that there is only the realm of technology.

Heidegger sees the will to power at work in machination: "[Machination] is the unconditional completion of being as the will to power." (GA67: 150) By 1941/42 Heidegger critically extends Nietzsche's notion of the will to power, when he, in *The Event*, begins to speak of the "will to will." Like the will to power this will is a will to domination, to ever more power over the earth, its resources and inhabitants. Yet, as Heidegger writes in his response to Jünger and with reference to Nietzsche, the will to will is the "'most uncanny" [guest] ... because, as the unconditional will to will, it wills homelessness [*Heimatlosigkeit*] as such." (GA9: 387/292) For Heidegger the will

to will is a direct consequence of the closure of metaphysics that occurs with Hegel and Nietzsche. Hegel establishes absolute certainty and knowledge about the beingness of beings. Nietzsche determines being as will to power. Thus beings in their being are absolutely secured as will to power. Schmidt points out that Heidegger sees in Nietzsche, even more so than in Hegel, a great “attachment to this willing ground [which] led to the nihilism of the pure will to power willing itself uninhibitedly and unconditionally.” (1988: 149) Heidegger thus sees yet another shift: the will to power actually wills itself – and necessarily so. Nietzsche is not the first and only to speak of the will. The will is an essential occurrence steering the course of modernity. The will is insatiable like Spinoza’s *conatus* and Schopenhauer’s *Will*. Schelling notoriously determines “Urseyn” as will (cf. GA8: 95/90). Fichte rationalises the “acts of the will ... in terms of the will itself, of which we can only say, “It is as it is, because it is so.””⁹⁷ (Beiser 2008: 275⁹⁸). But what does such a will want? It wants itself. This will is its self-sufficient ground. Hence, as De Gennaro argues, “the will in fact wills itself, so that ... the ultimate sense of the will to power is the will to will.” (2012: 204) Heidegger brings the will of modern metaphysics to its logical conclusion. The will wills itself, and it wills itself because it wills itself — because “it is so!” This circularity finds expression in the notion “will to will.” Metaphysics has finally found its ultimate ground: A self-rotating will willing itself because it wills itself and as such it sets itself into effect in technology. “Metaphysics as the science of grounds fulfils and completes itself in the technology of an absolute knowledge, which makes available an ultimate ground.” (Pöggeler 1983: 126)

Like machination the will to will means the rule of being’s reification as beingness of beings (cf. GA71: 79f/66f). Heidegger’s example to illustrate this are “states of aggregation of matter.” (GA7: 173/169) Wine is, according to the scientific worldview, not wine with a unique being that cannot be perfectly reproduced. Wine is not a gift from the gods, something that mortals cherish by sacrificing the wine to the gods and by honouring the earth which gave the wine – the earth that also is the realm where a community’s ancestors are buried. Instead, wine is a liquid (first level of abstraction) and liquid is a state of aggregation (second level of abstraction). The wine entirely disappears behind those abstractions. But those abstractions allow industrial agriculture to produce the seemingly ever-same wine. This, in turn, means that the

⁹⁷ As Shakespeare’s *Caesar* says: “The cause is in my will.”

⁹⁸ Quoting Fichte’s *System der Sittenlehre*, *Werke* IV

rotation of the will is effectively the neutralisation of time and history insofar as technology strives to make beings available by actualising their ever-same beingness. This will is tantamount to the oblivion of being, as this defies the truth (nearly the law) of being, i.e. that withdrawal and denial are inherent to all appearance, that any access to beings is therefore *temporally* structured, where time means “clearing of self-concealment.” (GA11: 151/303) We can see here how Heidegger’s critique of a metaphysics of actuality informs his determination of being as pure possibility. We also see how being as possibility allows Heidegger to conceptualise being in a way that it can free itself from the claims of a metaphysics of actuality, which now manifests as technology: “The universally unmistakable consistency of the progression testifies that *the will to will* has become the actuality of the actual.” (GA71: 91/77a)

Hence Heidegger sees at work in technology, as he puts it with reference to Nietzsche, a “steadily rotating recurrence of the same” (GA8: 112/109). *That* beings are is because they eternally recur. *What* beings are is the will to will. It is this fundamental shift that articulates how beings can at will and at all times be made available. By means of beingness technology makes *becoming* operational in the sense that technology forces all beings to recur (“become”) as the ever-same (“beingness”) in a controlled fashion. Rotation is also precisely what drives the *Ge-Stell* and, to quote Mitchell, “[t]o say that positionality [*Ge-Stell*] circulates is to say that it is without purpose.” (2015: 52) *Ge-Stell*, then, is as an end-less will to will the realm of insatiable nihilism.

In *What is Called Thinking?*, a lecture course given around the same time as Heidegger’s engagement with technology intensifies, Heidegger reads Nietzsche’s *Zarathustra* as epitomising the problem of the hermeneutics of vulgar, linear time. Heidegger understands Nietzsche’s eternal recurrence of the same as a means of the will to power to remain in power. According to the vulgar understanding of time, time is made up of homogeneous now-states that linearly flow from the future to the present and into the past. This continuous flow means that the current now is always already under threat of becoming obsolete. The will wants to hold tight to the current “now” but fails. Hence the will develops a resentment against time and its “it was” (GA8: 97/93). The “it was” offends both representation and the will. Re-presentation needs presence. Only what is present can be represented and only what can be represented is real. What ceases to be, *is* not of its own accord because what is, is only insofar as it

can be re-presented. This explains the prevalence and might of the picture in modernity. The will turns against the ephemeral nature of linear time because what the will needs is presence.

Heidegger quotes from *Zarathustra*: “This, yes, this alone is *revenge* itself: the will’s revulsion against time and its “It was”.” (ibid.) As beings cease to be, the will seeks revenge and its revenge drives the will to want the ever-same outcome at all times, which the will needs for total control over beings. As we shall see, this is what the standing reserve delivers. The German word Heidegger uses for seeking revenge is *nach-stellen*. *Nachstellen* can mean to position oneself behind someone else with the intent to chase after or even harm them. In *Ge-Stell* beings are without guard precisely since they are not allowed their own time and place but must stand ready at any time and anywhere. But *nach-stellen* also means to imitate. That is to say, the will to will operates by chasing after and imitating beings. Thus the will produces the ever-same outcome it desires by producing imitations.

In *What is Called Thinking?* there is another crucial passage where Heidegger lays out his critique of representationalism and its connection to vulgar time. I quote Heidegger here at length because it shows how Heidegger’s critique of representationalism leads him to determine the essence of technology as *Ge-Stell*:

Since long ago, that which is present has been regarded as what is. But what representational ideas can we form of what in a way is no longer, and yet still is? What ideas can we form of that which was? At this “it was,” idea and its willing take offense. Faced with what “was,” willing no longer has anything to say. Faced with every “it was,” willing no longer has anything to propose. This “it was” resists the willing of that will. The “it was” becomes a stumbling block for all willing. It is the block which the will can no longer budge. Then the “it was” becomes the sorrow and despair of all willing which, being what it is, always wills forward, and is always foiled by the by-gones that lie fixed firmly in the past. (GA8: 96/92)⁹⁹

4. From *Vor-Stellung* to *Ge-Stell*

In *Being and Time* Heidegger already criticises representationalism as an insufficient way for describing Dasein’s being-in-the-world. Even just using a tool is too complex a process for representation to fully account for it. When the tool breaks down, argues Heidegger, perception and representation entirely fail us: “Even the most sharp and

⁹⁹ Note in this regard also that Heidegger likens the developments of modern technology and society to Plato’s cave (cf. GA71: 107/90). In the cave all beings *qua* shadows are secured in their presence and they recur eternally in the same order.

most persistent “perception” and “representation” of things could never discover something like damage to the tool. The using [*Handhaben*] must be able to be hampered so that something unhandy can be encountered.” (SZ: 354f/325) Heidegger here understands representation as the linear succession of mental images of a certain object. The current representation is constituted by the present now-state. Hence, from an ontological perspective, representation cannot account for the inter-ruption, the hampering of the tool, because all representation ever perceives is the object in its present now. Representation does not disclose the being concerned in its being. Representation cannot account for what is between t1 and t2 and cannot synthesise the different time states on its own. What really happens in moments of breakdown, according to Heidegger, is what he calls “making present,” *Gegenwärtigen*. Representation on its own only provides a successive stream of what is “out there,” but it cannot provide coherence. Representation knows no unity of temporal ecstasies. But making present is of an “ecstatic unity ... that awaits and retains.” (SZ: 355/325) In order to repair a damaged tool, one needs to make present what it has been and what it will be — and one needs to do so simultaneously — for the tool to be made functional again. Ontologically, this is only possible out of the unity of the ecstasies of temporality. *Dasein* has to be out there in the world, in touch with the tool, and used to handling the tool. Representation by contrast is a purely internal process of representing pictures. Representation is a distanced observational stance operating on the level of correspondence truth.

Our primary experience of being-in-the-world is practical rather than theoretical or scientific. We use tools with our hands, not with our minds. Tools are ready-to-hand and we do not need to consciously represent them and theorise about, say, their material components. In moments of breakdown we make present a tool that is usually ready-to-hand. Thus when in need of repair something ready-to-hand becomes something present-at-hand. Only then do we have to ask ourselves, what the hammer is made of and how we could repair it. With the scientific revolution of the modernity tools become so complex that they are prone to break down more often than tools like a hammer. With the increased need to repair, i.e., to make tools present, the world itself turns into something present-at-hand. This permanence of presence leads to another problem: “When we just stare at something, our just-having-it-before-us lies before us *as a failure to understand* it any more.” (SZ: 149/140) This has to do with the movement of ἀλήθεια. If something is right in front of oneself and perfectly

available at any time, then understanding as dis-closing is — ironically so — impeded. Human beings must no longer engage in ἀλήθειν, when things are perfectly present and presented.

In *The Event* Heidegger interprets *vor-stellen* as follows: “To re-present: making present of something *as* something.” (GA71: 20/13*ta*) For example, making present the world as an image, as a model. As Heidegger argues in *The Age of the World Picture*, the prevalent talk of worldviews, of the world *as* picture indicates that the world *is* only “insofar as it is positioned by the representing-producing [*vorstellend-herstellend*] humanity.” (GA5: 89/67*ta*) In the same essay Heidegger fully explores the manifoldness of the German verb *stellen*. The subject chases after, *nach-stellen*, what it wants to represent, *vor-stellen*, i.e. position before itself, in order to produce, *her-stellen*, which literally means to position something at the place where it is needed. “To represent means here: of oneself to set something before one and to make what has been set in place secure [*sicher-stellen*] as thus set in place.” (GA5: 108/82) Heidegger here appreciates that representation is not a simple picturing of what is out there, but rather an interference with the world. An interference operating with calculation in order to secure the predetermined desired outcome. Beings are now insofar as they correspond to the represented *idea* (say, a production plan) according to which they are produced. This is the impoverished perspective of correspondence truth set to work (cf. GA71: 20/13).

World access in modernity primarily takes place by way of representation, which is predicated on the subject-object-dichotomy. As representation means both picturing what is out there (resemblance) and *vor-stellen*, i.e., positioning before oneself, world-access now first and foremost takes place by preconceived representations: models. Thus nature is now first represented “as an object of research,” (GA7: 19/19), and subsequently approached as such. Nature must obey the subject’s models. Yet, as Mitchell argues: “The “picture” of the world is not really a picture at all, more a schematized and formal outline of it, a construction. The Cartesian mathematicization of nature would be the prime example.” (2015: 30) A (the representation *qua* model by which nature is accessed), is posited in such a way that B (nature) must conform to A. Models by which human beings interact with the world, are precisely not mere representations *qua* resemblance of nature as it is itself or as it appears. They are rather directly transforming the very being in question, i.e., nature as something present-at-hand. Heidegger’s insight into the manifoldness of *stellen*

together with his interpretation of vulgar time inform his determination of technology as *Ge-Stell*, the concentrating of all modes of positioning.

Chapter 3 *Ge-Stell*: The Essence of Technology

Ge-Stell is the unessence of being since it constantly has to work against absence and the unavailable. Thus *Ge-Stell* also has to work against death as the one area it cannot control. Death entirely eludes technology's will to domination. *Ge-Stell* defies concealment and harbouring for the sake of producing a world of sheer availability ready for manipulation. Thereby *Ge-Stell* impoverishes things. This world functions, I argue, by a transcendental logic of positing, *setzen* and *stellen*. Death is the other side to that and as such death utterly denies the positing of *Ge-Stell*. In this chapter I look at Heidegger's justification for the term *Ge-Stell* and its ways of unfolding.

1. The Word *Ge-Stell*

A first step toward a clearer understanding of *Ge-Stell* is via the word itself. The German word *Gestell* is a common word. A *Gestell* is a stand or supporting framework used, for example, in workshops or on farms. Until the second half of the 20th century "*Gstell*" in Southern German vernacular was also used to refer to machines like a circular saw. Yet, this is not what Heidegger means by *Ge-Stell*. By hyphenating the word Heidegger in a sense frees the word from its immediate everyday meanings. The interruption of the hyphen lets us rest on the prefix and simultaneously brings to bear the weight and meaning of the root verb *stellen*: *Ge-Stell* is then the gathering of all modes of *stellen*, of placing, putting, positioning, setting (up), producing, chasing, imitating. Note also that the perfect tense of *stellen* is *gestellt*. As an adjective *gestellt* can mean affected and artificial. The notion of *Ge-Stell* is inspired by Eckhart's *Gestellnis*, a translation of the Roman *forma* and the Greek μορφή. We always produce things according to preconceived forms (cf. Sheehan 2010: 95). But *Ge-Stell* operates by homogenising and making uniform and so *Ge-Stell* eradicates ownness.

Ge-Stell is not a general concept, genus or class under which all technological beings are subsumed. A radio or a smartphone, a plane or a computer are not *gestells* like cows and birds are animals or like telephones and letters are means of

communication. In that sense the common English translation of *Ge-Stell* as *enframing* could be misleading since it implies that what technology essentially does is to *enframe* all beings, as though technology surrounded beings in such a way that all beings are in general enframed, as if it came to beings from outside. Mitchell, therefore, proposes to translate *Ge-Stell* as positionality precisely because *Ge-Stell* is not a framework but rather an essential and currently prevalent essential occurrence of being: “Positionality is not something distinct from the presencing of beings, but rather is their way of presencing in a post-modern era of circulative replacement.” (Mitchell 2015: 51) Beings are analogous to being as positionality. In this sense *positionality* is the *essence* of technology. Note that this underlines the differentiation of *beyng* rather than denying it insofar as *beyng* self-differentiates as being (presencing) and beings (what is present).

When Heidegger speaks of the essence of technology, he does not use the word in the metaphysical sense. In the technology essay Heidegger gives the examples of *Staatswesen* (state affairs) and *Hauswesen* (household matters) to illustrate what he means. In these cases the German *Wesen* does not mean genus or *Essentia*, but instead indicates, says Heidegger, “the ways in which house and state hold sway, administer themselves, develop and decay.” (GA7: 31/30) Hence *Wesen* here is a realm and refers to *how* a realm emerges, sustains and governs itself; *how* it organises, administers and rules over beings; and *how* it eventually declines. Thus “essence” is finite and verbal. Positionality as the essence of technology is hence not a general whatness pertaining to all beings. Instead, positionality opens up a realm of possibilities such that things become circularly replaceable. To say that positionality is an essential “destining of the coming to presence of Being itself,” (GA11: 115/37) then, does not mean that all beings are of the same metaphysical essence. Instead, the way they are present is such that beings are increasingly positioned — as immediately ready for use and instantly replaceable. This is thus an onto-historical conception of essence. The full essence of positionality is found in the essay *The Turning*. It is worth quoting the original German because it shows the manifoldness of the verb *stellen*:

Das Wesen des Gestells ist das in sich gesammelte Stellen, das seiner eigenen Wesenswahrheit mit der Vergessenheit nachstellt, welches Nachstellen sich dadurch verstellt, daß es sich in das Bestellen alles Anwesenden als den Bestand entfaltet, sich in diesem einrichtet und als dieser herrscht. Das Gestell west als die Gefahr.

The essence of positionality is that setting-upon gathered into itself which entraps the truth of its own coming to presence with oblivion. This entrapping disguises itself, in

that it develops into the setting in order of everything that presences as standing reserve, establishes itself in the standing-reserve, and rules as the standing-reserve. (GA11: 115/ 36f *ta*)

2. Standing Reserve

Heidegger calls the peculiar unconcealedness prevalent in positionality *Bestand*, standing reserve. Standing reserve is not a metaphysical claim about the beingness or quiddity of beings. Heidegger asks for the *how* instead of the *what*: “The name “standing reserve” ... designates nothing less than the way in which everything presences that is wrought upon by the challenging revealing.” (GA7: 17/17) Positionality unconceals in such a way that that which is unconcealed finds no rest and is unconcealed only for immediate use: “Air is now positioned [*gestellt*] to yield nitrogen, the earth to yield ore, ore to yield uranium.” (GA7: 16/15*ta*) That is, beings *are* insofar as they can be ordered and calculated as to their projected effect. Standing reserve always stands ready. It is not an object showing resistance to the subject’s demands. The uniqueness of beings is of no import in positionality. What matters is their readiness for use and manipulation. Thus a process of de-ontologisation takes place in positionality insofar as the unique ways of beings are reduced to just one way of being-present called standing reserve: “Through this the other possibility is blocked, that man might be admitted more and sooner and ever more primally to the essence of that which is unconcealed and to its unconcealment, in order that he might experience as his essence his needed belonging to revealing.” (GA7: 27/26)

In positionality a more original relationship with being and consequently beings that are not positioned is covered over. In that sense Dreyfus has a point when he argues that the understanding of being is diminished. Yet, this is a consequence of being’s *Selbst-verstellung*, its self-*dissimulation* and self-disguise. Thus, there is still concealment in positionality, but now concealment is truly a case of *dissimulatio*, a derivative mode of concealment. That dissimulation is the result of metaphysics’ failure to think being’s self-concealment. Being covers over itself and its “essential history” because “technology (metaphysical) and historiography forge ahead and fixate Everything [sic.] into an unknowable *delusion*.” (GA67: 56*me*) Thus in view of the movement of the essential event Heidegger can provide us with an onto-historical explanation for the prevalence of what Baudrillard calls simulation, a copy or imitation, a virtualisation of all that is. As being self-dissimulates, it essentially occurs

as positionality. As beings are analogous to that occurrence they become simulations. And positionality needs beings as simulations so that it can operate nature “itself as a calculable complex of the effects of forces.” (GA7: 27/26)

The role of human beings role in positionality is twofold. On the one hand, as mentioned, human beings are the functionaries of technology, executing its demands. On the other hand, human beings as human material are standing reserve just like oil and timber are (cf. GA7: 18/18). Human beings are challenged to make themselves standing reserve, for example, by growing human organs in half-animal, half-human chimeras (cf. Robson 2017). Note that for this very participation in the ordering and organising of beings according to the demands of positionality human beings are closer to being than is obvious at first. But human beings, and this is the danger, are closer to being's self-dissimulation at work in these orderings.

In positionality our relationship with beings, or things, as Heidegger begins to say in the essays on the fourfold, is diminished. Things are predominantly accessible as standing reserve, but this means that their ownness is concealed, i.e., dissimulated: “The ordering belonging to positionality sets itself above the thing, leaves it, as thing, unsafeguarded, truthless.” (GA11: 122/46*ta*) The logic at work is a transcendental logic of positing. Even a simple thing like a jug or a stone bridge self-conceals. They are never fully accessible. Heidegger himself struggles to determine what makes the thing a thing in essays like the *Origin of the Artwork* or *The Thing*. That things self-withdraw is, however, what structures their uniqueness and is what defies attempts at perfectly controlling them. What self-refuses, cannot be controlled. Therefore, the transcendental logic that operates the technological world pushes the self-concealment of things into the noumenal realm of things in themselves. This is the reason why Heidegger with the fourfold begins to return to *the thing* as it is in itself, to a simple thing like a jug. *The Thing* thus explicitly asks, “[w]hat is the thing *in itself*?” (GA7: 169/165*me*). Heidegger there also points out that we can think the thing as it is in itself, if only we *let* the thing be in its self-concealment, if only we shelter and harbour its concealment. And death is always that which structures, where concealment and sheltering are at stake.

3. Positing, Positioning and Sheltering-Harbouring

Heidegger draws inspiration for the word *Ge-Stell* from Eckhart and the manifoldness of the verb *stellen*. But he also provides an onto-historical genealogy of the word *Ge-Stell* and a justification why positing and positioning take over in modernity. This takeover is the constant denial of death as the concentration of concealment and sheltering-harboring. Death is what comes to rescue because death withdraws from the logic of positing. In what follows I shall demonstrate the relation between positioning and sheltering-harboring. This will allow me to bring positionality into play with death as *Ge-Birg*.

Heidegger gives, as he calls it in *The Danger*, an “essential genealogy” (GA79: 65/62) of *stellen*. Contrary to an ordinary genealogy, an essential genealogy does not trace the historiographical development of a concept. A *Wesens-genealogie*, as Heidegger calls it, means to look for the *essence* of the phenomenon in question. That is to say Heidegger investigates the realms of possibility of being, its sendings and he tries to encapsulate his experience in thought in words. Thus Heidegger corresponds to a certain claim. The presupposition of this specific essential genealogy is that modern technology is the completion and consequence of metaphysics.

Positioning originates with the first beginning. Being essentially occurred as φύσις which Heidegger understands as the following process: “to bring here from concealment forth into unconcealment. This bringing means letting something arrive and presence of its own accord.” (GA79: 64/60) Thus φύσις allows (*lassen*) something to have free play, something comes into good presence from concealment by itself. To let something arrive in unconcealment of its own accord, to grant free-play is the act of being as φύσις. As argued above, τέχνη can contribute to this bringing-forth. This contribution is wholesome when τέχνη supports the letting-into-free-play of φύσις. It is not wholesome when τέχνη forces φύσις. Dahlstrom describes φύσις as the “the constantly emerging presence of things, and their absences” (2011: 144). Dahlstrom also makes the critical point that absence and presence are not dialectical opposites, and that “talk of them as two sides or two aspects is fatally misleading” (ibid.). This is the case precisely because absence and presence are not apart from each other. But it is incumbent upon thinking to perform and appreciate the simultaneity and equiprimordiality of presence and absence. Heidegger says that “darkness is perhaps in play for all thinking at all times.” (GA79: 93/88) More precisely, what lies in darkness is “the origin of the principles of thinking” and this darkness guides thinking. That which is dark, however, is not a “mere and total absence of light.” Instead, “[t]he

dark keeps light to itself.” (ibid.) The darkness at play in thinking, the very limit of metaphysics, is, I argue, death as sanctuary, as the utterly inaccessible. As we forget death, we forget concealment and absence. But to this understanding of being Heidegger wishes to return.

Heidegger’s understanding of φύσις draws inspiration from Heraclitus’ fragment 10: “φύσις κρύπτεσθαι φιλεῖ, φύσις likes to hide itself (medial form), to conceal itself in something else in a sheltering way.” (my translation; cf. Hahn 1987: 32) Through its self-concealing φύσις gives into the Open. Note therefore also the connotation of the German *geborgen sein*, which does not mean to be absent, but rather to be home, to be secure. Things are *sheltered* insofar as they also always retain a certain hiddenness. They are left at peace and are released into their free play. Hence Heidegger interprets the medial κρύπτεσθαι as a self-concealing that is “not simply a self-closing, but a sheltering-harboring, which safeguards the essential possibility of rising [*Aufgehen*].” (GA7: 278) With the course of the first beginning, this possibility of rising out of absence has been forgotten – as the search for the ultimate ground took its course.

According to Heidegger there is not only a “letting” at work in φύσις, but also a *stellen*. The positioning of φύσις is a “bringing-here-forth from itself of a letting persevere and a sheltering.” (GA79: 65/61) Φύσις “positions” in that it lets happen. Thus its positioning does not show any of the forceful traits of the positioning of positionality. Heidegger argues that the original and, as it were, good positioning of being as φύσις makes possible θέσις which is human positioning and positing. Human positioning first of all means to produce something by the use of one’s hands. Heidegger’s example is a set of stone stairs. The stone itself is of φύσις, not in the sense that φύσις is the substance of the stone, but in the sense that the stone appears according to a withdrawing presencing. Human positioning is capable of forming the stone, of bringing something out, so that the stone changes its shape as well as the way it is present. The stone stairs present themselves differently than a block of rock. Heidegger argues that human positioning brings to a stand. Human θέσις forms a material not only according to human needs, but also in accordance with the material. Heidegger calls the positioning of φύσις *zustellen*, delivering. What is of φύσις, is *zugestellt*, brought forth in the sense of delivered, or even in the sense of dedicated. What is of θέσις, is produced. That is to say that φύσις delivers and lets persevere beings in such a way that their presencing is one of uniqueness. Beings appear of their

own accord and are at the place where they can come into their own. They are precisely not of a circular replaceability.

The delivering of φύσις and subsequent human θέσις are for Heidegger also at the heart of the modern sciences. In *The Age of the World Picture* Heidegger quotes Newton's dictum "*hypotheses non fingo.*" (GA5: 81/61) Scientific hypotheses are not invented out of thin air. Newton knew that his hypotheses originate from nature. Nevertheless, one of the fundamental shifts that occurs in modernity is the experiment. The experiment, Heidegger argues, does not wait for nature to show itself but functions by "anticipatory representation of the condition." (GA5: 81/61). The experiment is the positing of anticipatory conditions and it becomes possible because being as positionality now spans open a realm where an anticipatory representation of condition is possible. Thus technology is not the result of the experiment, but the experiment is the result of the shift in *beyng*.¹⁰⁰ Operating with anticipatory representations is necessary in order to extract a desired result from nature. Hence nature has been turned into a "ground-plan" (GA5: 81/61) "[N]ature reports itself in some way or other that is identifiable through calculation and ... it remains orderable as a system of information." (GA7: 24/23) Science makes basic assumptions about a phenomenon, which it then proves by means of setting parameters. Those wilfully set parameters serve to prove the very hypo-thesis that underlies the process of setting parameters. The shift is, as Kant says, that the object must comply to the subject. What things are in themselves is not only unimportant, but actually a threat to the very system of transcendental logic. Thus, as Houlgate notes, the Kantian position on nature is not too far away from Nietzsche who argues "that the world which we experience is made up of layer upon layer of human interpretation or fiction." (2006: 5)

In *The Danger* Heidegger writes that the positioning of positionality "is being itself" (GA79: 65/62). Thus positioning is always already a possibility of being. This finds expression in being as φύσις and its interplay with θέσις. But positioning as one of *beyng's* inherent sendings only comes into full force in positionality. There are two main reasons for that: first, the oblivion of being, which means that *beyng's* self-concealing has been forgotten. Based on this, second, the way in which human beings begin to respond to positioning in modernity trigger positionality. This is why Heidegger says that Kant, the Newtonian, *echoes* the claim of being as φύσις, when he "pronounced the essence of being as "absolute position," as the positedness and

¹⁰⁰ See also (Ruin 2010: 191) on this.

positionhood of the object, i.e., of what presences.” (GA79: 66/63) Kant shows that there is always already mediation between subject and object. But he also determines that the transcendental ego, in order to get out into the world, must make the world according to its categories. Transcendental logic, and the positing of parameters for the sake of control it enables, is an echo of being as φύσις and human θέσις, but this logic is also a response that reduces φύσις to human fiction.

This logic of positing is at work in positionality and it works by an unconcealment that closes off access to simultaneous concealment. Hence, there is a double-concealment which plays out as dissimulation. Yet, this also indicates that even in positionality beyng’s basic event, *Grundvorgang*, of *bergen* still takes place. *Bergen* always takes place in the simultaneity of its self-differentiation as *entbergen* and *verbergen*, the movement of ἀλήθεια. Positionality is then not a perversion of unconcealing, but positioning takes over unconcealing and assumes that beings can be positioned for an increase in efficiency at any time and anywhere. In so doing positionality disregards the simultaneous harbouring-sheltering, the concealing in every disclosure. Nevertheless, Heidegger sees the possibility for another mode of positioning, for ποίησις, as a bringing-forth in tune with ἀλήθεια (cf. GA7: 21/20). Ποίησις would not have to work against the positing and setting of technology. For its very simultaneous origin in beyng together with the unconcealing of positionality, ποίησις is able to *turn* the current sendings of beyng, i.e., ποίησις is able to respond to beyng differently. Art, especially poetry, is crucial here and, as I shall argue in part IV, this is the case because of the essential relation between death and language. We can already now see that ποίησις, for it respects harbouring as it brings forth, is near to death, has death as sanctuary as its source.

4. Danger and Salvation

In *The Danger* Heidegger writes that positionality is the completion of the oblivion of being (GA79: 51/49) What I have referred to as the oblivion of time is also at the heart of the danger of technology: “But the danger is the *Nachstellen*, seeking revenge and imitating, that is the way in which being itself, in the mode of positionality, pursues with oblivion the safekeeping belonging to being.” (GA11: 119/43*ta*) Thus the danger is the oblivion of time, where time means clearing-concealing. The resentful imitation of beings, which forgets to shelter them, hence works by trying to eradicate time, and thereby also place and distance. Seasons no longer matter for growing vegetables.

There are ski areas in the desert of Dubai and scientists at Harvard are about to geo-engineer the global climate (cf. Temple 2017). The human subject assumes to be at the centre of everything and chases after and tries to imitate weather gods – entirely oblivious to the finite powers of humans. Resentful chasing imitation is *the* danger of positionality because it forgets concealment (i.e., death). Therefore, imitation cannot interact with the world in a sheltering-harboring manner, but must turn the world into a standing reserve, which is to stand ready for any subjectivistic fantasies.

Despite the seeming apocalyptic tone of many of his writings on technology Heidegger often quotes Hölderlin's *Patmos* on the possibility of salvation in danger. The possibility of salvation is supposed to originate out of positionality: "The selfsame danger is, when it is as the danger, the saving power." (GA11: 119/42) "Thus the coming to presence of technology harbors in itself what we least suspect, the possible arising of the saving power." (GA7: 33/32) How could being itself come to its own rescue and what, if any, is the human being's role in this? The crucial term is *harbouring*. *Beyng* still takes place in positionality, but mortals must specifically think concealment. In my view, Heidegger's remarks on the possibility of a saving power from within positionality seem less arbitrary when we consider death as sanctuary. This is because the sanctuary is the place where that turning, that twisting free of *beyng* from its current prevalent dimension of occurring, takes place.

If the essence of technology is positionality and if positionality is a fate of being, then positionality holds its own saving grace because positionality is still *Entbergung*, unconcealment. In the unconcealment of technology being even intensifies (cf. GA7: 33/32) because its self-concealment takes over. In technology a disclosure is prevalent that covers over concealment. Ergo, concealment as dissimulation intensifies and this intensification of concealment — as paradoxical as it sounds — is the inherent saving grace. This is where, I argue, death as sanctuary comes in. *Beyng* can turn at all because, as argued in part II, *beyng* itself can run forth toward death as its refuge. Human beings, in turn, can think *beyng*'s movement because they are *mortal*, i.e., touched by death. *Beyng* has in death a place where it can rest and hide. But it is upon humans to help bring this about by becoming mortals. With reference to Lessing Heidegger understands salvation to mean: "to release [*lassen*] something into its own presencing." (GA7: 152/148*ta*) Hence the task of mortals is to release *beyng* itself into its essence! By this releasing or letting-be *of* *beyng* beings are granted free play. This takes place precisely by thinking the abyss of *beyng*, by thinking *beyng* as the

unsupported and unsecured, self-eliciting centre, which frees beings, or things, into their richness and lets them rise on their own accord. This thought at once also releases being from its self-dissimulation, which is its prevalent mode of concealing.

Hence the human being is not passive for Heidegger, despite the talk of releasement and despite the claim that a supposed advent of being is abrupt.¹⁰¹ The advent of being is abrupt insofar as we cannot decide for it. But the advent of being is not the arrival of some mystical entity that saves us at some measurable point in time. The arrival is a thinking stance that can come over us and it can come over us precisely through releasement, through letting go of beings and waiting. Thus there are distinct stances human beings can take toward the sendings of being. Neither do they call for hasty plans nor do they lethargically and idly stand by, waiting for being to provide another realm. Releasement is a preparing comportment, responsible, humble, and aware of the limited powers of mortal existence. A sound mortal stance means to wait for the ripeness of the fruit instead of forcing the fruit to deliver; to wait for rain instead of pumping gas into the atmosphere to generate rain; to wait for the immeasurable movements of the tides; to wait for the birth of the daughter, the coming-of-age of the son, the death of the parents. This does not mean to be idle and wait and see. It rather means to let time *be*. Taking into account death as sanctuary allows us to think of a turning point for being as positionality where being can twist free of its current prevalent dimension.

Chapter 4 Death as Shrine, Sanctuary and Law

Heidegger calls death the sanctuary of being, when he begins to intensify his interest in technology, for death is the utterly unavailable. The only *area* that technology cannot control is death. This is why technology must work against death. Following Heidegger this also means that technology must work against thinking. Heidegger from early on often refers to the “secret” or “mystery,” for example, when he says that “mystery [*Geheimnis*] is lacking in our Dasein.” (GA29/30: 244/163). In my view, death as sanctuary becomes the secret Heidegger looked for early on in his philosophy since death directly concerns us but is a source of uncertainty. In what follows I shall first illuminate what Heidegger means when he says that we are to become mortals.

¹⁰¹ See (Marx 1983: 148) on this point.

Secondly, I shall explicate some of Heidegger's public remarks on the Holocaust he makes in the context of becoming mortals. In my view, his public remarks on the matter are more important and more accessible, as they are presented in a clearly argued series of talks that systematically engage with the question *what is today?*¹⁰²

1. Becoming Mortals

The Thing contains a crucial passage regarding death as sanctuary. The passage also illustrates why I argue that that the sanctuary is crucial for establishing the fourfold:

The mortals are human beings. They are called mortals because they can die. To die means to be capable of [*vermögen*] death as death. Only man dies. The animal perishes. It has death neither ahead of itself nor behind it. Death is the shrine of the nought, that is, of that which in every respect is never something that merely exists, but which nevertheless presences, even as the mystery of Being itself. As the shrine of the nought, death harbours within itself the sanctuary of being [*der Tod ist das Gebirg des Seins*]. As the shrine of Nothing, death is the shelter of Being. We now call mortals "mortals" — not because their earthly life comes to an end, but because they are capable of death as death. Mortals are who they are, as mortals, present in the sanctuary of Being. They are the presencing [*wesend*] relation to being as being. (GA7: 180/176 *ta*)

That mortals are called mortals because they can die is, on the face of it, an existential truism at best. In *The Danger* Heidegger makes the paradoxical assertion that we can only properly die, “when our essence is endeared [*mag* from *mögen*] to the essence of death.” (GA79: 56/53) Thus we apparently need to become mortals. Yet, what Heidegger means by becoming mortal has nothing to do with a capacity for demising. Hofstadter chose a poor and confusing translation of *vermögen* as “to be capable of.” As argued in parts I&II *den Tod als Tod vermögen* means to be open to death. Thus Heidegger aims for a radically different hermeneutics of death. In what follows I shall clarify what the expression “death as death” means in order to gain a clearer understanding of the peculiar claim that we are not yet properly *dying*. Dying is a term of art for Heidegger. Dying does not mean to demise or deteriorate. It retains its sense from *Being and Time*. Thus there is a sense of authenticity at work here as well as a requirement for “mortals” to *be* a certain way. To be open to death *as* death means to bethink death as shrine of the nought and sanctuary of being.

¹⁰² Regarding Heidegger's rather notes on the Holocaust in the *Black Notebooks* see, for example, Trawny's (2016) recent paper.

Heidegger also argues that becoming mortals is tantamount to leaving behind the metaphysical representation of human beings as rational animals: “Rational living beings must first *become* mortals.” (GA7: 180/176) Heidegger’s talk of the “essential transformation” here undergoes one final alteration. Human beings are still to leave behind the metaphysical representation as rational animal. But now human beings are to *become* “mortals.” Mitchell thus rightly argues that Heidegger attempts a “reconception of existence” (2015: 231) with his talk of mortals in the fourfold. But the thought of death as sanctuary and shrine is not restricted to the existential dimension, as it is of *beyng* first.

Demske’s and Scherer’s (1979) readings of the passage in question both respectively rest on *Being and Time* as the default benchmark. Demske sees a dialectical movement at work in Heidegger’s thought. Death is first shrine of the nought which is then sublated as sanctuary of being. Demske argues, death “moves quickly beyond the element of negativity to something positive.” (1970:164) More precisely, Demske claims that death quickly moves to the question of the meaning of being, but in purely existential-ontological terms. This reading is problematic for two reasons. First, it is an existential-ontological perspective and thus neglects the significance of thinking out of the essential event. *Dasein* and its understanding of being are still at the centre. Second, Demske assumes a dialectic which simply is not how Heidegger’s thought moves. The fourfold, for example, does not sublimate positionality. In fact, there can be no fourfold without positionality. As soon as positionality is no longer, also the fourfold will have become impossible. Death is *at once* shrine and sanctuary. Death can only be *beyng*’s hiding place, if death also safeguards the nothing making sure there is *nothing* around *beyng* to support it. Scherer (cf. 1979: 194), in turn, argues along similar lines as my overall argument that death is not just subsidiary but in fact central to Heidegger’s question: the question of being. Nonetheless, Scherer does not develop the genuine other approach of Heidegger’s later philosophy and also makes recourse to *Being and Time*. Scherer argues that by running forth toward death as sanctuary, angst kicks in and this angst brings before being. Yet, Heidegger here has in mind something else entirely.

It is one of the strengths of Mitchell’s study of the fourfold to have considered Heidegger’s late philosophy in its own right and from the perspective of the essential event. Still, I disagree with Mitchell’s claim that we are never to be mortals, but that we are always only trying to be properly mortal. Death is, claims Mitchell, a medium

and “[t]o be in a medium is to be always arriving, otherwise one would be trapped in a container” (2015: 230). Consequently, when Heidegger says that we must first *become* mortals, he does not mean, as Mitchell claims, “a movement from one state into another. Rather this “movement” of becoming is no movement at all — it is instead a way of being, a being “not yet” mortal and “no longer” human, a way of being the between (*das Zwischen*). In this sense, no one dies in the sense of *sterben*, for no one is among the mortals.” (ibid.: 231) In my view, Heidegger, especially in his post-war philosophy, does not at all suggest that humans are not to be human any longer. To be mortal precisely means to be human. I shall expand on this in part IV when I turn to Heidegger’s notion of the *homo humanus*, which he develops in the *Letter on Humanism*. Note that Mitchell makes his claims in order to sanitise Heidegger’s remarks on the Holocaust. In *The Danger* Heidegger appears to be saying that those who died in the death camps did not properly die. There is, as I shall illustrate below, a more substantial solution to this issue.

Mitchell denies the possibility of becoming truly mortal because this would mean to move from the state of the rational animal to the state of mortals. Mitchell seems to understand the “not-yet” as a performative claim about the process-like dynamism of *becoming mortals*. Mortals are never quite what they are, they are *always* “not yet mortal,” always striving to be mortals. But if one is always “not-yet” something, is one not, even if always “arriving,” in the very state of “always arriving?” That would refute Mitchell’s initial claim. To *be* does not automatically entail a represented state. To think *being* without representation is what we can learn from Heidegger. Thus I also understand Heidegger to make a performative claim about the being of mortals when he speaks of humans *becoming mortals*. Yet, I understand this as welcoming death into existence. This is Heidegger’s way of saying that we welcome a mystery into our existence – the mystery of being’s abyss. A mystery we cannot hope to solve, but which as such is a source of meaning. Understanding Heidegger here in this way also maintains a sense of arrival. Death as sanctuary points to the stance mortals take, a stance of thinking as I described in part II, rather than a represented, reified state.

In my view, becoming mortals in a practical sense means to become and appreciate who human beings *are*. This becoming is a task that every community of mortals has to accept in order to provide a good death. Hence there is a certain ethos in the fourfold, an ethos that invites us to think after the world as world. If mortals are

properly mortals they encounter the fourfold: “When we say mortals, we are then thinking of the other three along with them by way of the simple oneness of the four [i.e. gods, sky, earth, mortals].“ (GA7: 180/177) “Mortals” is then not a state *qua* receptacle, but a way of being and it is a communal way of being that casts mortals into a profound interrelated web of meaning: the proper world of the fourfold where being presences in things. The fourfold comes about through mortal thinking and thinking articulates itself most prominently in poetry.

There is an important passage in *What is Called Thinking?* on the meaning of “mortal thinking.” It reads:

Wenn ein Denken es vermöchte, das, was *je und je* zu denken gibt, in sein eigenes Wesen zu verabschieden, dann wäre solches Denken der höchste Dank der Sterblichen. (GA8: 151*me*)

If thinking could wish farewell and let go toward its own essence that which again and again gives pause and invites us to think, then such thinking would be the highest thanking of mortals.

This refers to what I argued in part II on grounding. Grounding is a simultaneous welcoming and seeing off. Mortal thinking responds to being as the abyss that first unsettles us and so summons us to think. Heidegger here points out that mortal thinking is most thankful when it recognises and responds to the respective epoch of being. *Verabschieden*, seeing off, is a term of art for Heidegger: “Parting [*Abschied*] does not mean loss or forgoing.” (GA70: 24) Instead, parting is the beginning of concealment and the beginning of unconcealment as a “gift” (GA70: 26). In this sense the *Abschied*, is the beginning of the *Unter-schied*, of the differentiation of concealment and unconcealment, a movement gathered in death as shrine of the nought and sanctuary of being: “Thinking lives by an elective affinity with death.” (GA79: 114/107) Heidegger says this precisely in relation to “the leaps of thinking into its abyss.” (ibid.: 114/106) Mortal thinking can think inceptively, which means to think that differentiation. Mortal thinking is mindful of the darkness that makes it possible and always guides it: “Mortal thinking must let itself down into the dark depths of the well if it is to see the stars by day.” (GA79: 93/89) I understand this reference to Thales as saying that mortal thinking says farewell to the familiar, to beings, and lets itself fall into the unsupported abyss, not in order to lose itself, but in order to gain the perspective for the star, i.e., the essential, self-eliciting centre.

The task of human beings, then, is to enter into a relationship with being’s self-concealment. Here Mitchell and I are in agreement. The bethinking of death is

necessary because, as Mitchell points out, “[c]oncealment keeps disclosure from being concealed!” (2015: 238) In technology being conceals other ways of disclosure, it closes off other dimensions. But, as Mitchell says, if mortals think concealment other dimensions of being come to light as other ways of disclosing world. Mitchell continues: “The secret of being is the announcement of concealment, an announcement that keeps concealment from falling into oblivion.” (ibid.: 238) And via death mortals appreciate being in its withdrawal, they know that withdrawal and being-away from their death. Heidegger argues that “[d]eath, as the shrine of nothing, harbors in itself what essences of being.” (GA79:18/17) A shrine harbours what is holy. The nothing is the name Heidegger gives to the way in which being essentially occurs: “Death is the shrine of the nothing, namely of that which in all respects is never some mere being, but nonetheless essences namely as *being itself*.” (ibid. *me*) As Heidegger puts it elsewhere, “[b]eing itself nihilates insofar as it protects and keeps safe and conceals.” (GA70: 49) To say being occurs as nothingness is another way of saying that its fundamental process is self-concealment and death regulates being’s self-concealing. Concealment is the way in which being discloses itself. Being is not something given that subsequently withdraws. Instead, being occurs and discloses itself as concealing *and* withdrawing (cf. GA45: 210). Concealment and keeping safe is the process of giving things into the “Open” or the “clearing.” In the other beginning being’s self-concealment is specifically thought and this is mortal thinking.

Death as shrine and sanctuary therefore regulate the clearing concealment, *lichtende Verbergung*, of being. Death here shows itself as the ultimate source of Heidegger’s conception of being. Death is most fundamental to it, death is at the heart of the matter because death is the utterly inaccessible, that which *always already turns away*. Death is not mediator between nothingness and being, but death is as shrine and as sanctuary the “law [*Ge-setz*].” (GA5: 304/228). Death is the ultimate law of the truth of being and all that ensues. Human beings must hence get profoundly involved with their mortality. As Heidegger says in *The Principle of Reason*:

we dwell in proximity to death, which as the most radical possibility of existence is open to [*vermag*] bringing what is most elevated to the clearing and lighting of being and its truth. Death is the as yet unthought standard of measure [*Maßgabe*] of the unfathomable [*Unermeßlichen*], which means, of the most elevated play, in which humans are engaged in on earth way, a play in which they are at stake. (GA12: 167/112¹⁰³ *ta*)

¹⁰³ Lilly translation.

As I shall demonstrate in III.5 and in part IV, this play is the mirror-play of the fourfold.

2. On the Holocaust

As mentioned above, Heidegger says we are to become mortals. We are proper mortals, “when our essence is endeared [*mag* from *mögen*] to the essence of death.” (GA79: 56/53) One could hence understand the formula *Den Tod als Tod vermögen* as a loving relationship with one’s mortality, a reformulation of the *memento mori*. Note, however, that Heidegger makes this remark in relation to Auschwitz. Heidegger says that we are not yet properly mortal, despite the “innumerable and measureless suffering.” (GA79: 57/54) Heidegger also says that the victims of the camps do not die properly because they do not “carry out [*austragen*] death in its essence.” (GA79: 56/53) Does he deny the mortality of the victim?

There seems to be an unsettling echo of the authenticity-inauthenticity distinction here. If that is indeed the case, then Heidegger says that the prisoners of the camps are inauthentically towards their death. A sympathetic reading will, however, point out that that there can hardly be a good death in the death camps. The death in the camps is manufactured. In the language of *Being and Time* this means that the ownmost is taken away from them. But manufactured death also implies something else. Heidegger says in *The Danger* that there are “horribly undying [*ungestorben*] deaths all about” (GA79: 56/54*ta*). This seems to imply that death is already of *τέχνη*, no longer their own. That this is done “inconspicuously,” as Heidegger strangely puts it, then means that we can hardly see how the unspeakable happens in technology: death, the ownmost, can now be taken away from us. This is the most fundamental shift that occurs and the reason we now need to explicitly accept our mortality. When Faye (cf. 2009: 304ff) argues that Heidegger allegedly says the victims of the Holocaust were *essentially* – in the metaphysical sense – *incapable* of dying, he distorts what Heidegger means by essence and *vermögen*. Faye reads Heidegger’s threefold repetition of the question “Are they dying?” as a clear indication that Heidegger means to say that Jews were not properly dying because they are incapable of doing so according to their *essentia*. Note, however, that Heidegger does not answer his threefold repetition of the question whether they die with a definite yes or no. Moreover, Heidegger does not at all make a claim about the *essentia* of the victims.

Instead, Heidegger tells us that we should not confuse the current demise of the masses with the *good* death he has in mind and which is possible in the fourfold.¹⁰⁴ Nevertheless, the talk of the oblivion and abandonment of being can all too easily be understood, and with some justification, as denying the people involved responsibility. However, the *response* of human beings to the current “sendings” of being is crucial and thus there is room for responsibility.

One of Heidegger’s strangest claims is admittedly his talk of the essential sameness of agriculture food production and the production of dead bodies in the death camps. Seen from the perspective of the history of being, he says that what enables that gruesome production of dead bodies is the same realm that makes possible industrial food production.¹⁰⁵ This does not deny the uniqueness of the Holocaust but points out its cruelty precisely by trying to show how it is of its age. Pattison (cf. 2016: 12) argues that Heidegger sees a common horizon for industrial agriculture and the Holocaust. Thus, with reference to Safranski Pattison points out, Heidegger is not too far from Adorno’s position. This is not to say that there are not different human motivations at work in agriculture and the Holocaust respectively. Nor is this to say that agricultural food production and the Holocaust are perfectly identical. But what *first* enables the machines of the former is also what enables the machines and calculation and rationalisation of the latter. However, one could level the criticism against Heidegger that the bodies of the victims are hardly *produced*. They are not part of an economy of production and consumption. Nor are these bodies sacrificed on the altar of a symbolic economy. They were exterminated like pathogen, stripped from their dignity and their rights. But this was done to them precisely for the sake of *producing* the fantasised perfect and pure body of the German “*Volk*.” True, the bodies of the victims were not produced for consumption. But for Heidegger *herstellen* not only means to produce in that economic sense, but also to position and set something up – against its very way of being. In this case against the victims’ mortality which, for Heidegger, is what makes them human in the first place.

In *Building Dwelling Thinking* Heidegger explicitly says: “To guide mortals into the essence of death in no way means to make death, as empty nothing, the goal.” (GA7: 152f/148f *ta*) Rather, the goal is, for there to be “a good death.” (ibid.) In the fourfold an ethos emerges, an ethos of providing places that allow for a good death.

¹⁰⁴ Trawny (cf. 2003: 167ff) argues along similar lines and has also pointed out the vicinity of Heidegger’s and Arendt’s account of the holocaust.

¹⁰⁵ See also Weston (2016: 282).

This shows the distinct Socratic influence on Heidegger's thought. The deaths in extermination camps are not by any stretch of the imagination good death. Heidegger (cf. (GA79: 56/54) explicitly speaks of these deaths as "undying" and "horrible." In positionality, there can be no good death because there is no sheltering-harboring. Still, this means that the victims of the holocaust did not die a proper death. Yet, this is the worst crime that could have been done to them and has nothing whatsoever to do with their supposed metaphysical "essence," as Faye insinuates. Thus we see that Heidegger at the time of working on the fourfold wishes to provide a basis for there to be a good death. The fourfold, then, is Heidegger's response to the claim of positionality.

Chapter 5 The Fourfold

As outlined in chapter 1 of this part Heidegger does not argue for luddism. He rather asks us to confront technology. As Ruin puts it, this confrontation serves "to develop an experience of technological modernity as "destiny", that is, as a "sending" (*Schicksal*, *Schickung*) of being within which we stand." (2010: 190) Such an experience of confrontation might let us see another possibility of world, which Heidegger calls fourfold. In the fourfold human beings are not in every capacity functionaries of a manipulative technology. Instead, they are *mortals*. That is to say, they love their death as the sanctuary of being, as the inaccessible origin of being's wealth, that is, of meaning beyond calculation, meaning that originates only out of what cannot be and is not controlled. The fourfold of earth and sky, mortals and gods is Heidegger's term for proper world at the time of his preoccupation with technology. This world is not a static receptacle. The fourfold *worlds* (*weltet*) and we can only ever encounter it, but we can never possess or control it. In this chapter and concluding in part IV I explicate in more detail why Heidegger sees death at the heart of bringing about the fourfold and thus at the heart of encountering a world not ruled by positionality. There are two ways for the fourfold to emerge. First, by a bethinking of death as described above and in part II. Second, in more practical terms the fourfold comes about by a thoughtful welcoming of death. The latter is a communal effort.

Heidegger underlines the importance of death for the fourfold when he ends *The Thing* as follows: "Men alone, as mortals, by dwelling attain to the world as world" (GA7: 184/180). As indicated above, the fourfold does not annihilate positionality, but

lets us encounter world in a different way in the age of positionality. In what follows I shall, first, expand on the role of the thing because being lights up in the thing. Second, I look at divinities in the fourfold, as they are absently present and point to the limitation of mortals. I have already begun to describe the role of mortals and will further explicate their role in part IV. I will mention the regions of sky and earth where this helps determine the worlding of the fourfold better. I shall complete my reading of the fourfold in part IV. As we shall see, language for its essential relation with death plays a pivotal role for the constitution of the fourfold.

I understand the later fourfold as a critical extension of *Artwork* essay and his first mentioning of a previous fourfold-structure in *Contributions*. In the former Heidegger argues that the artwork spans open a historical world, for it embodies the strife of earth (as that which self-conceals as it gives) and world (the self-opening openness). In the latter Heidegger places the event at the centre and as the centre of the four regions of human being, gods, world, and earth (cf. GA65: 310/246). This indicates precisely that the wealth of the world does not emerge out of the event, but that through a thinking of the self-eliciting centre that wealth arises of its *own* accord. And this tells us that and how beings come into their own. The later fourfold is, however, not restricted to the high and fine arts or the thinking leap into the abyss. There is a distinct practical ethos involved that helps form and sustain a community of mortals.

1. The Thing

Heidegger describes the fourfold as a mirror-play of its four poles. Each of the poles takes part in all other poles, yet all retain their ownness and so preserve difference. Not only do the poles or regions partake in one another, they also enrich one another. Mirror-play does not refer to reflection. It is rather to indicate that no region can be without all others. Mortals are not without gods, earth not without sky. There is in the fourfold a balance, an equilibrium of all four poles. Mortals do not attempt to become gods. Mortals dwell on the earth as that which gives because it self-withdraws, and they dwell under the sky as that which is a natural limit and gives orientation. But, as Mitchell says, the fourfold is foremost “a thinking of things.” (2010: 208)

The thing is not, as Dreyfus rightly puts it, “a flexible and efficient cog” (2009: 56). Things in the fourfold are, as Mitchell says, “gathering points” (2010: 208) of the world and its four poles. The thing in the fourfold is no longer the noumenal thing in

itself. Rather, the thing *in itself* is salvaged and appreciated in the encounter of the fourfold precisely because a thinking of self-concealment, a thinking that is *of* death, sets into motion the mirror-play. The thing is not wilfully positioned to stand ready as standing reserve. Rather, the thing is left alone and this *letting* is based on appreciating self-concealment. The fourfold thus depicts the collapse of transcendental logic. However, the thing in the fourfold, for example a bridge, is not present *in itself* understood in a metaphysical sense. The bridge is not accessible in its substance. There is no substance at all. Rather, the bridge is a spatio-temporal occurrence of its own accord that is not cut off from its surroundings but entirely embedded in them, *eingelassen*.

Dreyfus points out that mortals are in fact free to change their relationship with things “whenever we find ourselves gathered by things rather than controlling them.” (2009: 57) Thus, mortals must first receive this possibility. Mortals are receivers rather than enforcers. In this receivership mortals are open to the Holy, to ceremony and festivity. To be gathered by the thing in its exuberant simplicity – where a jug lets us encounter the earth thanks to which we live and the gods that help guide our ways – means to be gathered by *beyng*’s simplicity itself. Death as sanctuary and shrine retains the self-concealment for the clearing of the fourfold where things light up and gather us. The opposite is the case in positionality: “Ordering the standing reserve, positionality allows unconcealment and its essence to lapse into full forgetting.” (GA79: 52/50) In positionality things are dilapidated, and in that sense there is a certain worldlessness about positionality (cf. *ibid.*). In the fourfold this is reversed. As Demske puts it: “The thing as such, insofar as it gathers and brings the [fourfold] to presence, is thus an appearing of being itself.” (1970:151) With *beyng* at its centre the fourfold is nothing short of an answer of the question of being.

In the fourfold, there is room for creativity and spirited community. There is no room for organisation, bureaucratisation, and technocracy. A warning from the *Gay Science* comes to mind where Nietzsche argues that the modern haste covers life “with a most odd mindlessness. Already one is ashamed of keeping still; long reflection almost gives people a bad conscience.” (2003: 183) Moreover, “one no longer has time and energy for ceremony, for civility with detours, for *esprit* in conversation, and in general for any *otium*.” (*ibid.*: 184) There is no sense of gathering, but an absentmindedness about the modern age. Letting oneself be gathered for Heidegger begins with bethinking death. Letting oneself be gathered for *another* beginning,

which now means to encounter world in a different fashion than the predominant ways of positionality. There is in the fourfold room precisely for *otium*, which in the over-efficient ways of positionality has no place. With reference to Lao-Tse Heidegger (cf. 1989: 7ff) speaks of the joyful leisure a thing like a useless tree can bring, if only we let ourselves be gathered by the tree rather than trying to make the tree comply to our fantasies about how useful it should be.

In *Building Dwelling Thinking* Heidegger gives an example of how things in a practical sense welcome death and birth into the midst of a community and its world. He speaks of the thing “treetrunk coffin” (*Totenbaum*) for those who have died and of the thing “childbed” for new-born children. Both the coffin and the childbed have their place in the homes of families and are not outsourced to hospitals. This honours the dead and welcomes new-born children (cf. GA7: 162/158). As such these things gather the community. Heidegger here explicitly places birth on the same level as death. Birth *and* death both gather and form the community. The treetrunk coffin and the childbed make for sacred places where a community gathers. These things grant the place so that there can be a good death *and* a good communal life. The childbed and the treetrunk coffin are proper things *in themselves*. Moreover, Heidegger here describes death as bodily. The death that in a practical sense gathers the community is the bodily death of loved ones. This experience of the dying of others, which in *Being and Time* does not yield any insight into existential-ontological death, now brings mortals closer to their bodies and to their community. This also tells us that mortals build, craft, and cultivate things that last and gather a community most properly when mortals reflect on their death. Thus, when mortals are in tune with their finitude and do not aim to become gods, when they do not fall for technology’s promises, the worlding of the fourfold comes about.

The dwelling ground of mortals is earth. “Earth” is not a Heideggerian abstraction, but it is the literal earth on which we stand and die, and out of which we grow. The earth bears us, it fructifies and nourishes (cf. GA79: 17/176). And, as Mitchell notes, “[t]he earth supports and bears precisely by withdrawing.” (2010: 210) The earth is not a fixed, stable, ever-available and substantial ground and therefore reducible to an abstract mass of resources. Instead, earth irreducibly withholds itself as it withdraws into itself. Earth is never fully available and this is the secret of its wealth. Earth and death are thus in vicinity and precisely for that vicinity earth is the

dwelling *ground* of mortals. Earth is that which gives and takes and death is that which always reminds mortals that they are never to become divinities.

2. The Gods

Who are the gods of the fourfold? The gods are and remain unnamed. In a recent study Bojda (2017) has, therefore, argued that Heidegger demythologises Hölderlin's gods. Hölderlin takes Greek gods as a model. Heidegger takes Hölderlin's talk of the last god and the possibility of a return of gods seriously but, argues Bojda, Heidegger deprives them of their mythological origin and depth. The fourfold is hence a reductive theology (cf. Bojda 2017: 307 & 370f). True, Heidegger does not appear to have a historical model for his gods. Nor does he take Hölderlin's idealised "Greek" gods as models. *Gods* is but a name. But there are structural and argumentative reasons for this. Heidegger does not wish to write a mythology with the fourfold. Far from it. The other beginning is not something given, but the possibility of an encounter. The fourfold is not to provide a fixed mythology. Rather, and here I go beyond Heidegger, we can understand the gods and the fourfold as a basis for a possible future mythology where the gods will be named. But the fourfold speaks of possible encounters with the divine already in the age of positionality. Thus even the unnamed gods are not abstract precisely because they are the name for possible encounters with the divine. These encounters are of an immanent transcendence, so to speak. This is also why Heidegger in *The Thing* stresses that the absence of the godly in the dire age means the gods' impending arrival. This is precisely the sense of ethos in the fourfold, on how to dwell on the earth as mortals, in order for there to be the possibility of that arrival. Even as yet unnamed the gods of the fourfold are guarantors of meaning and of the possibility to reconnect with the Holy. In the fourfold Heidegger, therefore, maintains Hölderlin's notion of a "bridal festival between men and gods" as "the balance of fate." The bridal fest points to the equilibrium of the fourfold.

The earth is the obscure self-withholding dwelling ground of mortals. The sky, however, is not the heavens where divinities reside. Heidegger gives up on the metaphysical distinction between the earth as the earthly and worldly, the visible and the sensible, and the sky as locus of the intelligible and supersensible. The sky is rather the dimension of the Open which can be that Open only for its tension-filled relationship with earth as that which self-obscures. The equilibrium and the

reciprocally enriching participation of each region in all others only comes about if mortals become mortals and accept again that they are not all powerful.

In a commemorative address in honour of the centenary of Conradin Kreutzer's death Heidegger determines the stance we are to take "in order to remain open for the concealed sense of the technical world [as]: *openness for the secret.*" (GA16: 528) A proper mortal stance respects releasement and the secret: "The releasement toward things and the openness for the secret belong together." (ibid.) As indicated above, the secret refers to death as shrine, sanctuary, and law. Together releasement and the secret form "a new foundation and ground" (ibid.) for the world. The encounter of the fourfold opens a path toward the Holy, that which is wholesome. This possibility is articulated by the poets, for "[the gods] need the word of the poet for their appearance," (GA4: 191/218) as Heidegger says in his lecture course on *Hölderlin*. The poets can properly respond to the call of being because they are open to their death in a distinct way. There is nothing heroic, tragic, optimistic or pessimistic about this. There are profound structural reasons for why Heidegger sees a relation between being, death and language – and explicating this relation shows why poets have an affinity for death.

Part IV: Death as Poem of the World

Death is the sanctuary of being in the poem of the world

– Heidegger

to speak means to be forever on the road

– Ossip Mandelstam

Introduction

Heidegger's thinking responds to the challenge of technology by articulating its essence as positionality. To be more precise I should say that *something* addresses and

claims him, in the sense of *Zuspruch* and *Anspruch*, which prompts Heidegger to attempt to correspond, in the sense of *Entsprechen*, to this claim by naming that essential occurrence “positionality:” the gathering and concentration of all forceful and volitional positioning. Together with *Ge-Stell* Heidegger speaks of two further gatherings. Those are *Geviert* and *Ge-Birg*. As I argued in part III, the fourfold does not abolish positionality. Instead, we are to understand the fourfold as unfolding simultaneously and in a heterological way together with positionality out of the same realm. Wherever the fourfold is brought forth as the mirror-play of its regions, wherever in the proper, crafted thing being itself lights up, positionality is momentarily “sublated.” As there is no dialectics at work, but a simultaneity and heterology, the encounter with the fourfold is momentary and fragile. This says nothing about the measured length of the encounter. It could last the lifetime of a community of mortals or only for the brief moment when someone senses another dimension.

That which addresses Heidegger is, however, not some object that comes earlier and that speaks to him. The claim properly and essentially occurs in the performance of mortal correspondence. That is to say, that which claims us only takes place *in* the act of a sheltering and listening correspondence. This is reminiscent of the hermeneutic circle insofar as *I* can only say and interpret what *I* already understand, but that which *I* always already understand, *I* fully and properly understand only through interpreting or laying out. For Heidegger’s diagnosis of the technological world and of its meaning and origin that which we ordinarily call language seems to be fundamental. After all Heidegger responds to a claim. Hence it is not surprising that Heidegger also significantly devotes his thinking to language during his engagement with technology.

The German *ent-sprechen* literally means to speak out of and against something. The English says corresponding. I think of this as *co-responding* which is to indicate that human beings are required to respond to the claim of being in a collaborative manner. Corresponding is a finite process because it responds to something and engages with a claim in order to pass on a message. Once the message has been carried on, the correspondent needs to wait for the next message. The one who corresponds is in each case a mortal, finite being. The silent call of conscience, which we know from *Being and Time*, is present in Heidegger’s talk of the claim or call of being. Death is what structures corresponding which is indicated by the very finitude of this process. In *The Essence of Language* Heidegger explicitly speaks of an

“essential relation [*Wesensverhältnis*] between death and language [which] flashes up before us.” (GA12: 203/107¹⁰⁶) Yet, notes Heidegger, this crucial relation “remains still unthought” (ibid.) and Heidegger does not explicitly develop it. I shall refer to this claim as “key passage.” The implications of the key passage for Heidegger’s later philosophy are the central question of this part. In my view, the notion of “flashing¹⁰⁷” indicates that any pursuit of the key passage and its claim cannot lie in an attempt to finalise and perfectly fixate the essential relation. The relation *flashes* for a reason and will continue to be present ever only as a flash. We shall see that the key passage is a crucial moment of the thinking path because it brings into dialogue death, the essential transformation, the fourfold, and language. The key passage indicates that death and language are related in terms of their *essence* or *Wesensbereich*, insofar as both are interests of being first. They are to be thought out of that realm where essence prevails, *waltet*, and comes into its own, i.e. out of the event. As Heidegger says at the beginning of his essay *Language*: “To discuss language, to place it [*erörtern*], means to bring to its place of being not so much language as ourselves: our own gathering into the event.” (GA12: 10/188¹⁰⁸ *ta*) Thus this essay and the other essays of the anthology *On the Way to Language* invite us to think language out of the essential event.

From the analytical camp Oberst (2009) has recently written a study on the key passage. Agamben (2006) on the continental side has given a seminar on the matter, which is now published as a book entitled *Language and Death: The Place of Negativity*. Agamben attended Heidegger’s Le Thor Seminars in 1968. Agamben reports that Heidegger there said about the key passage: “You can see it, I cannot.” (Agamben 2006: xi) Thus Heidegger gives his readers the task to think through the key passage. Agamben, however, does not take Heidegger’s remark as an invitation to reflect on the key passage systematically from within the thinking path. Agamben instead turns to “decisive moments in Western philosophy” (2006: xii) in order to explain the key passage. Also, Agamben reads death as a marker for negativity. His reading of Heidegger is too steeped in Hegelian dialectics to provide a genuine access to Heidegger’s thought. The gist of Oberst’s argument, in turn, is that human beings invent language as a reaction to their mortality and their longing for immortality. Such a claim is rather foreign to Heidegger’s thought. Oberst’s argument is a sort of evolutionary theology married with psychoanalysis. Oberst must, therefore,

¹⁰⁶ Hertz translation.

¹⁰⁷ We are reminded of Heraclitus’ flash.

¹⁰⁸ Hofstadter translation.

presuppose that language is primarily a human faculty and an expression of human fear of demise. For Heidegger, however, language is primarily not expression. Oberst thus, in my view, reduces the relation between death and language to a survival mechanism. Human beings' contingent reaction leads them to "invent" language by using their physical capacity to make sounds in order to cope with unfavourable living conditions. This places the human subject at the centre. Yet, as extraordinary as it may sound, Heidegger argues that language is a moment of being and the human being responds and corresponds to language.

My reading of the key passage is different. Heidegger here explicitly thinks in the context of the fourfold and the event. In my view, the key passage is thus also to be understood in relation to positionality and sanctuary. In my approach to the key passage I follow Dastur who concludes her paper on the essence of language as follows: "What remains to be thought is the fact that death as the shelter of being and the nocturnal source of all light is what grants to world its realm and to the human being its existence." (2013: 237) I take it to be most promising to approach the essential relation between death and language by considering their respective essences. At the time Heidegger writes the key passage death is the shelter of being and shrine of nothingness. The essence of language is a more complicated story. Heidegger provides several seemingly disparate "essences" of language. He describes language as originating out of silence, as the "house of being," and as "saying." Nevertheless, I shall argue that it is possible to unite these essences when we understand language as a moment of the essential event. This will allow me to provide a reading of the key passage that speaks from within the thinking path. The last part of this thesis is then an attempt at an original reading of what the essence of language is and my main claim is that we can fully appreciate what Heidegger means by language, if we consider it from the perspective of death as sanctuary.

Mine is similar to Marx's (cf. 1983: 118ff) approach in *Is there a Measure on Earth?* Marx appreciates the turn in Heidegger's thought and it is a strength of his interpretation that he reads the key passage in the context of the event. Marx understands the essence of language to be "saying" and death as shrine and refuge. Six years before the publication of *Contributions* Marx is able to show convincingly that "[d]eath belongs together with the event of appropriation, to which ... saying also belongs." (ibid.: 124) Marx also indicates that death is the mystery Heidegger continuously refers to and that death is the window for mortals to think groundless

being (cf. *ibid.*). However, Marx criticises Heidegger's notion that human beings are no longer to be the rational animal. For Marx this creates the problem that the "poetic dwelling" of mortals boils down to an "irrational" community guided by contingent moods (cf. *ibid.*: 125). I disagree with that assessment. "Overcoming" the encrusted metaphysical position of the rational animal means that the "irrational" is overcome, too. The irrational only makes sense in relation to the rational. But this is not a key theme of my thesis, and thus I shall not further pursue this here. What matters more, in my view, is that Marx neglects Heidegger's other determinations of the essences of language in his interpretation of the key passage. Marx' analysis of language and its essential relation with death could have been stronger, if he had included the other *essences* of language.

To approach Heidegger's thought from within the thinking path does not mean that there are no influences on Heidegger's thought on language. I think there are at least three significant influences. The first is his reading of Parmenides which I shall return to in more detail below. Second, Heidegger's thought of language is influenced by Herder, Hamann, and Humboldt. Heidegger learns from them that the instrumental representation of language is inadequate because language is primarily not a means of communication and humans are not just bearers of the capacity to speak. Instead, beings are insofar as they are *in* language (cf. Gottschlich 2017: 262f). Third, Heidegger's focus on the importance of silence for language draws inspiration from a tradition that dates back at least to Augustine and extends to Pascal and Kierkegaard. They value silence, for silence can bring us closer to God. Heidegger's silence rather refers to a relation¹⁰⁹ to being. Furthermore, I shall introduce Ossip Mandelstam's musings on language, as they can help us gain a clearer understanding of what Heidegger means by language. Heidegger's thought of language is, of course, furthest removed from how we would ordinarily think of the matter.

Heidegger's work on language is not motivated by an interest to increase our knowledge of language. Nevertheless, there is a profound project in Heidegger's pursuit of language since he wishes to provide us with the possibility of making an experience with language that is entirely out of the ordinary. He attempts to show us that language is primarily and precisely not something we operate with in the world in

¹⁰⁹ Heidegger understands the German *Bezug* not as *relatio* but as *postulatio*. That is to say, "relation" is not meant in the logical sense but in the sense of something pulling human beings toward itself and addressing them. This is also how we are to understand the pair *Bezug* - *Entzug*, relation - withdrawal. This then rather means *addressing* - *refusal to address* (cf. GA12: 119/32).

order to communicate, say, our desires. Rather, we *dwell* in language. As a dimension language is a possibility for a home in the age of technology (cf. GA12: 255/134). In his conversation with a Japanese scholar on language (henceforth *Conversation*) Heidegger says that our ordinary associations regarding language fail to grasp what he means when he speaks of *Sprache* (cf. GA12: 136f/47). On my reading, with the thinking of the history of being language belongs to being and therefore also to death as *Ge-Birg*. The basic event of being is *bergen*, which self-differentiates as simultaneous *entbergen* and *verbergen*. It remains to be shown that language *qua* poetry is a primary mode of *Bergung* and thus of being's basic event. This will also explain language's proximity with death. Still, the declared focus of Heidegger's concern with language in *On the Way to Language* is the question after the essence and place of the human being. In this regard, as Heidegger points out, he follows Humboldt (cf. GA12: 9/187).

The structure of this part is as follows: First, I situate the later Heidegger's stance on language by introducing some of his readings of his preferred poets. Second, I explicate the essence of language in view of death. In the third chapter I look at the role of language in the fourfold and bring the key passage into focus. In the fourth and last chapter I explicate language in relation to the transformation of the human being. The anthology *On the Way to Language* serves as the foundation for this part. The anthology is a synthesis of Heidegger's thinking of the event, poetry, technology, transition, the fourfold, and the essential transformation of human beings. I shall also work in other relevant texts and passages of Heidegger's sustained pursuit of the role of language. This also allows me to show that there is a certain unity of the thinking path.

Chapter 1 Later Heidegger on Language

It is helpful to situate Heidegger's stance on language by turning to the poets he reads. In his later writings Sophocles, Rilke, Goethe, Trakl, George, and also the Alemannic poet Johann Peter Hebel are in the focus of Heidegger's thought on language. Of course, Hölderlin also remains crucial. What is true for Hölderlin, is also true for Heidegger – namely, that there is a “sovereignty of poetry over philosophy” (Beiser 2008: 378). Beiser also points out that for Hölderlin “poetry is the source of insights

and ideas that philosophy presupposes but cannot express in its discursive language.” (ibid.) This is certainly also the case for Heidegger. With reference to George’s *The Word* Heidegger puts it as follows in *The Essence of Language*: “in a poem of such rank thinking is going on, and indeed thinking without science, without philosophy.” (GA12: 154/61) In this chapter I first introduce these poets and show their influence on Heidegger’s understanding of both poetry and death.

His turn to poetry may make it seem as though Heidegger romanticises language. But for Heidegger poetry is not primarily something to take aesthetic pleasure in. Instead, poetry is able to articulate the most profound thoughts, precisely for its nearness to the sheltering disclosing of *ποίησις*. Moreover, Heidegger follows Hölderlin who sees in language itself a great danger. Language’s proximity with death indicates its inherent danger. In the second section of this chapter I thus address language as the “most dangerous good.”

1. Heidegger’s Poets

In *Introduction to Metaphysics* Heidegger devotes a substantial chapter to Sophocles’ *Antigone*. He learns from the play that death is what utterly defies the age-old human desire for perfect mastery of the world (cf. GA40: 167/168). With reference to Heidegger’s interpretation of Sophocles Thomson argues that positionality “can be understood as symptoms of Western humanity’s continuing inability to accept our defining existential finitude.” (2011: 75) What art teaches us, and especially poetry, Thomson continues, is that we will never be able to fully master the world precisely because we as finite beings cannot ever exhaust the possibilities of what is.

Heidegger’s work on Rilke is decisive for his stance on death. In *What are Poets for?*, an essay written in the immediate aftermath of the war, Heidegger introduces Rilke as a poet *in desolate times*, a phrase Heidegger borrows from Hölderlin. In *Contributions*, as mentioned in part II, Heidegger views Hölderlin together with Nietzsche and Kierkegaard as a thinker-poet who sees the desolateness of an age to come. “The age is desolate because it lacks the unhiddenness of the essence of pain, death, and love.” (GA5: 275/205*ta*) In what sense is death hidden? The technological age knows as true only what is actual and measurable. Put differently, positionality only knows what is positive and posited: “The self-assertion of technological objectification is the constant negation of death.” (GA5: 303/227) Technology denies and utterly negates death. Death is the natural enemy of

positionality, because death is, with Rilke, “the side of life turned away from us, unlit by us” (GA5: 302/227). As such death cannot be controlled by technology. Technology must work against death (good death) and pain because they impede technology’s will to functionality. Technology works to negate death – for example, by trying to solve death as if it were a technological problem (sic. Harari). But to both Heidegger and Rilke, death is the “other relation” and as that other relation death has more stake in *what is* than technology can even begin to appreciate. Heidegger recognises in Rilke a kindred spirit because to Rilke death is also integral to being itself: “Death and the kingdom of the dead belong, as the other side, to beings as a whole.” (GA5: 302/227)¹⁰ As that other side, which however belongs to beings as a whole, death is not the negation of life or of the actual, but death is rather that which posits all that is. Death is, as Heidegger says and as I have pointed out in parts II & III, the *Ge-setz*, the law: “death gathers into the entirety of what has already been placed, into the *positum* of the whole attraction.” (GA5: 304/228) Death is that which “posits” all there is precisely because death is the utterly non-available and that which withdraws. Death does not logically posit. Its positing is rather a literal setting and placing out of an unfathomable abyss. As law death “touches mortals in their essence and so places them ... into the entirety of the pure relation [*Bezug*].” (GA5: 304/228*ta*) Death pulls mortals into the pure relation with *beyng*. Thus Heidegger learns from the poet Rilke that the Holy can only be experienced when mortals are open to their death and *love* it, rather than negate it. Heidegger understands the Holy, *das Heile*, as related to the whole and wholesome. Already in *Being and Time* Dasein can only be whole by running forth toward its death. In Heidegger’s later thought, where death belongs to *beyng* itself, there can be no wholeness without death either. Positionality is thus essentially un-whole, for it entirely ignores death. This is why positionality strives for a totalitarian totality which it longs to achieve through an all-encompassing manipulation of all that is. But it does not even begin to see all that is, for it is ignorant of death. As I argued in part II, the subject *qua* ground of beings is attracted to the technological world precisely because that world promises the subject perfect control over beings. But, to borrow Trakl’s expression, the subject is “the decomposed form [*verweste Gestalt*] of man.” (GA12: 46/170)

Heidegger views Trakl as the poet who most vividly provides a possible path out of subjectivity. The subject “has been removed from its kind of essential being,

¹⁰ See also (Demske 1970: 139) on this.

and this is why it is the “unsettled” kind.” (ibid.) The subject is the uprooted, free-floating, transcendental ego trying to get back into the world by any means necessary. Thus Heidegger finds in Trakl a companion for the essential transformation of the human being. Moreover, Trakl determines spirit, *Geist*, not as reason or *spiritus* first but as flame. This makes him a Heraclitean poet. Heidegger recognises Trakl as a poet who moves beyond a blind faith in reason. Trakl also prominently focuses on death. The poem “Seven-song of Death” speaks of the holy number seven. The poem thus “sings of the holiness of death.” (GA12: 42/167) It is crucial to note that the poem speaks of a “going-down” to “something strange” and that death summons us to do so. Death is here thus not “the conclusion to of earthly life,” (ibid.) notes Heidegger. This going down into the abyss, into the unsupported, which death allows, “leaves behind the form of man which has decayed [i.e., the subject].” (ibid.: 42/168) I shall expand on Heidegger’s reading of death in Trakl below.

George, as Heidegger already notes in a lecture course on phenomenology in 1919/20, is dear to him because George “can immediately see with such force” (GA58: 69). According to later Heidegger what George sees and what his poetry articulates is that there is a calculative, maximising, cold rationality at work in modernity. This cold rationality “is itself already the explosion of a power that could blast everything to nothingness.” (GA12: 179/84) George is the poet who most clearly captures the madness, *Wahn-sinn*, i.e., meaninglessness, of the age. Listening to George, to his sacrifice and renunciation in a simple poem such as *The Word*, could, thinks Heidegger, spark the move out of the world of machines: “The step back into the sphere of human being demands other things than does the progress into the machine world.” (ibid.: 179/85) The move out of the world of machines includes a return to earth *via* regional vernacular.

Vernacular and dialect become increasingly important to later Heidegger, for he understands them as rooted in the earth. Heidegger’s appreciation of Hebel is especially important in this regard. Hebel is a poet of the Alemannic German dialect. Heidegger sees earth itself at work in vernacular: “The landscape, and that means the earth, speaks in dialects, [*Mundarten*], differently each time.” (GA12: 194/98*ta*) For the mirror-play of the fourfold all other three regions take part in earth. Thus through speaking vernacular world and home arise. Mortals dwell in vernacular. In *Hebel – The Friend of the House* Heidegger emphasises that “vernacular is the mysterious well of each grown language. From this well all of what the spirit of language harbours

flows toward us.” (GA13: 134) Dialects are not disfigurements or derivations of some assumed primary, standard (nationalised) language. There could be no such standardised language without the many grown vernaculars that are its constitutive components: “Language is dialect according to its essential origin,” (GA13: 156) Heidegger argues in *Language and Home*. As long as there is vernacular — *Mundart* which literally means the manner of the mouth — there is the wellspring of language. Without vernacular our spoken languages would be rootless, uprooted from that which gives as it withdraws: earth. In dialect language is properly free from grammar in the nationalised sense. Thus it remains the task also of proper mortal speaking to cherish and care for vernaculars. In this sense Hebel is *the friend of the house*, i.e., of language as the house of being. Hebel shows that language is not an instrument, but that which gives rise to a communal world.

The theme that emerges from Heidegger’s reading of these poets is the immanent and imminent threat of technology to human being precisely in the form of a threat to language. Yet, those poets also provide us with possible ways out precisely because of their ποιήσις, their sheltering ways of bringing-forth of something that is covered over in the worldless (in the sense that the interplay of the fourfold is absent) world of machines, logistics, calculation, and manipulation. Also, the poets’ proximity to earth and death, i.e., to concealment, explains why their poetry points to other ways of being. Today, positionality’s manipulation increasingly takes place, if not exclusively so, in the manipulation of information, and language is represented as a tool of information and communication. The genomic code, for example, is information as is the content of a book. In *The Friend of the House* Heidegger warns that “[t]he representation of language as a tool of information today is pushed toward the outermost.” (GA13: 148) This representation of language is an imminent threat to language and the main problem, argues Heidegger, is that this “takes place in utmost silence.” (ibid.: 149) It is essential that Heidegger here speaks of a *representation*, of a mere *Vorstellung* of language. Heidegger uses the term *Vorstellung* on purpose to indicate that here *Ge-Stell* is operative. Language is reduced to a transmitter of information as it is represented to be nothing but a tool for the wilful positioning and control of entities. Language is here but an accidental property of the bearer of the faculty to speak: the accidentally speaking and calculating animal. Heidegger reverses the metaphysical definition of the human, which has become superficial and external. For Heidegger language is not some accidental faculty attached to a biped creature.

Rather, and I shall develop this further in the next chapter, language is the realm where human beings find a home and come into their own. In my view, this is how we should understand the crucial notion of *Anspruch*. Humans are *claimed* to be human, not destroyers of the earth. That there is a mere “representation” of language also indicates the flatness and one-dimensionality language has to assume here. *Qua* information language is not primarily of the mode of *sheltering recovery* (*Bergung*), but of a deprived mode of making stand and available for manipulation.

Yet, the problem runs deeper than what we can see in technological manipulation. In fact, for Heidegger the trouble begins with everyday speech. This is because everyday speech is automated. Such speech poses a threat to language and our access to the world because it continuously covers over deeper relations. And this means that everyday speech relies on simplistic, one-dimensional representations. Those representations, in turn, reduce the dimensions of being. Following Goethe, who knew the Faustian spirit of Occidental man, Heidegger sees in poetic language a possibility to free us from the one-dimensionality of the everyday: “Goethe calls those other relations deeper relations [*Verhältnis*] and says of language: “In everyday [*gemeinen*] life we barely [*notdürftig*] get by with language because we only describe superficial relations. As soon as deeper relations are at stake, another language speaks: poetic language”.” (GA13: 149). Poetry is not exclusive to what is generally considered poetry. For Heidegger poetry includes dialect and vernacular, and as such is the foundation of all other arts. The path to language is a path back home, out of the world of machines towards the fourfold. The fourfold is a crucial continuation of Heidegger’s early project to situate human beings in the midst of beings rather than in opposition to the world as object. There is hence something more profound at stake for Heidegger in his turn to poetry. Poetry is not only the language that can *describe* deeper relations. Rather poetry is the path toward the *Menschenwesen*, i.e., toward the essence as *home* of the human. The question of home becomes most pressing for Heidegger at the end of his life. His last words, written a few days before his death, ask whether *Heimat* is still possible in “the engineered homogeneous world civilisation.” (GA13: 243) Far from sentimentalising poetry Heidegger’s turn to poetry depicts the profound question whether human beings can regain their essence *qua* home or whether machines and technology take over and subdue human beings depriving them of a home. Language is the house of being, and as such it can be a home, but it can also turn into the utter opposite. Yet, note that the process of positionality’s silent takeover

happens in language and language, as we shall see below, has its origin in silence. Thus language itself is dangerous.

2. The Danger of Language

The Danger of positionality is *Nachstellen*, the resentful chasing and imitating of beings. By chasing and imitating being sets itself into its unessence. The same pertains to language. The threat to language comes from language itself. Recognising the danger of language does not do away with that danger either. There is no essence without unessence, there is no fourfold without positionality, there is no language without danger. The danger of language is to indicate that this danger comes from language. Yet, how is language a danger to us and to itself? I shall argue that it is precisely death as sanctuary and shrine that structures and permeates the danger that is language.

In his lecture course on *Hölderlin* Heidegger explicates the poet's insight that language "is the most dangerous of goods ... given to man [who is the] destroying and perishing, and recurring [creature]." (GA4: 35/54) Heidegger reads this as saying that language "is the danger of all dangers because it first creates the possibility of danger." (ibid.: 36/55) He continues: "Danger is the threat that beings pose to being itself." (ibid.) Danger thus means that we forget being (and being) because of the prevalence of beings. To bethink death frees from that prevalence and opens for being's self-concealment. Language is the most dangerous good because language appears to address beings and beings only. The problem is precisely that language discloses beings as beings and we, of course, need that disclosure in order to be in the world. But at the same time this disclosure of beings covers over being. Heidegger, however, sees another possibility to disclose beings through language such that beings do not block being. For Heidegger the thinking of the essential event depicts a possibility to say out of being directly because, as exemplified by the very word *Er-eignis* in the unfolding passage, this saying is a non-propositional and non-representational saying. This saying and thinking of the simplicity of being discloses at once the true richness of beings. Yet, also being itself, for its very abyss, essentially occurs as danger. For Heidegger (cf. GA11: 79) the word "is" harbours the entire fate of being. In any saying of the tiny word "is" there sways the fissure of being – and thus the abyss. The self-differentiation of being, where being means that beings are, at once opens an abyss. Meaning can collapse. And even where speaking lets something appear, this letting-

appear always at once covers over. Death as sanctuary and shrine structures these processes. Language is its own greatest danger precisely for its relationship with death, which as *Ge-Birg* is also the locus of all concealing concealment and thus breakdown of meaning. Language then exposes itself to danger because “[t]he word as word never offers any immediate guarantee as to whether it is an essential word or a deception.” (GA4: 37/55)

Yet, this is not primarily due to human erring, for language itself speaks. Language is, as Demske puts it, “not primarily a human instrument ... but rather ... a mode of the self-revelation of being.” (1970: 130) That language speaks is observable in the automated speech of the everyday. To a certain degree language must be automated because this is how language can structure the everyday world in a reliable and therefore meaningful way. Yet, this is also precisely where language is at once most harmful because in so doing language covers over deeper goings-on. “[L]anguage must constantly place itself into the illusion which it engenders by itself, and so endanger what is most its own, genuine utterance.” (GA4: 37/55) In everyday communication language necessarily places itself into a seeming. What seeming? The seeming that language is first and foremost expression of the contents of the soul or today of personal will and psychology. The seeming that language addresses beings and only beings. The seeming that language is but communication and transmitter of information. The seeming, as Heidegger puts it in *Traditional Language and Technical Language*, that language is first and foremost a system of signs and ciphers. None of this is to suggest that everyday communication is identical with technology. Nonetheless, the repetitive character of technological production resembles the repetitiveness of everyday speech. We shall see in more detail in the next chapter that Heidegger determines primordial language as a saying that lets something appear and that lets something show itself from itself (cf. Heidegger 1989: 23ff). The German word for showing is *zeigen*. A derivative mode of showing is the sign, *Zeichen*, a marker or cipher which signifies something, but which does so in such a way that what the sign points to, is predetermined and does not show itself from itself. Thanks to the Boolean variable computers and informational technology precisely work by reducing the fundamental question of what *is* and what *is not* to the signs “Yes/No,” or simply “1/0.” The *Seinsfrage* is reduced to the simple but far-reaching answers, “Everything exists” and “Nothing exists.” And their constant interplay now drives the algorithms that make the technological world. The threat of utter death is always present in a most

abeyant and unnoticed manner in any digital mechanism of control. Either everything is, or everything is dead. The reduction of language in the information age, as Heidegger (cf. 1989: 23) points out in *Traditional Language and Technical Language*, is caused by positionality but also by the way in which human beings co-respond to the challenges of technology. Heidegger's examples are news, reporting, and journalism. Information is supposed to be clear, unambiguous, and fast. Hence the technological age must work to disambiguate words. Information instantly reaches human beings everywhere. In this way information allows the subject to be everywhere at the same time, scattered all over the world as its representation. Technical language is a reduction of language and therefore of human existence and nature. But technical language is a self-reduction of language and its aim is "[t]o relegate the animated, vigorous word to the immobility of a univocal, mechanically programmed sequence of signs. [This] would mean the death of language and the petrification [*Vereisung*] and devastation of Dasein." (GA06.1: 145/144^m) A way out of that is *poetic* language.

Ossip Mandelstam is a kindred spirit of Heidegger in this regard. There is a crucial passage in Mandelstam's *Conversations about Dante* that helps us better understand Heidegger's insight into the threat language posits to itself:

Any given word is a bundle [of rays], and meaning sticks out of it in various directions, not aspiring toward any single official point. In pronouncing the word "sun," we are, as it were, undertaking an enormous journey to which we are so accustomed that we travel in our sleep. What distinguishes poetry from automatic speech is that it rouses us and shakes us into wakefulness in the middle of a word. Then it turns out that the word is much longer than we thought, and we remember that to speak means to be forever on the road. (Mandelstam 2001: 52f)

Mandelstam understands the word as a bundle of rays, not as a signifier. To say the word "sun," a word we might daily "use," is not a linear process. There is no word-object that simply means or directly refers to some concrete object out there that is already given as that very object. To Mandelstam just saying "sun" takes us on a journey, a long yet now ordinary path. The fundamental motion is not one of correspondence (in a non-Heideggerian sense) exclusively between the word-object or signifier "sun" and the object-object or signified "sun." "Sun" is hence not some contingent sign for some object we arbitrarily refer to as sun. When we say "sun," we travel to the sun. Saying the word is not an isolated event, but through our saying the

^m Krell translation.

history of the word and the very mother-tongue to which it belongs is moved and moves through the word. Heidegger quotes a line from Hölderlin that is similar to Mandelstam. Hölderlin says, “words [are] like flowers.” (GA12: 196/100) Heidegger argues that this constitutes the bringing forth of the word “from its inception.” (ibid.) In the *Conversation* Heidegger and his interlocutor determine words, based on the Japanese term for language “*koto ba*,” as “petals” (GA12: 136/47). If words are flowers and petals, then words blossom and flourish, they spring from an opening bud, and are at once under threat of death. Words are finite as is any occurrence of language, *Sprachgeschehen*.

Mandelstam also points out that everyday speech is “automatic.” For one, this means that everyday speech makes itself. It is not the activity of subjects as bearers of a set of capacities that make speech. Speech is automatic and repetitive in the everyday precisely because language speaks us. Speech is also automatic in the sense that it operates with a prefixed set of meanings. Speech is deaf to the very words that make it possible. Everyday speech is communication, *Mitteilung*, i.e. the sharing of what is new and what is known: “One means *the same thing* because it is in the same *averageness*.” (SZ: 168/162) Everyday communication, as *Being and Time* points out, works by “*gossiping and passing the word along*.” (SZ: 168/163) This repetition works by a certain sign-character of words. What is said, is always already and on average understood. Communication thus does not need to consider the unity of the manifold of the word. In everyday speech, language can automate itself to a degree that it becomes a sheer automatism. In *Being and Time* that automatism is interrupted by angst, facing death, and the call of conscience. The call of conscience calls on Dasein, but there is no propositional message. Still, the call calls Dasein to become itself by running forth toward death, i.e., by facing its ownmost possibility. The call of conscience is, viewed from later Heidegger, an only insufficient articulation of the call of being and the message human beings receive from language. Moreover, for Heidegger’s later thought it would be the poetry of aforementioned poets through which being most significantly calls upon human beings. The call of conscience is transformed into the call of being. Being addresses human beings who are to respond to that call. The “claim” of being is precisely what is lacking in *Being and Time*. With the thought of *Zuspruch - Entsprechung* being as history and gift calls the human being.

For Mandelstam it also takes poetry as well as the poet and her experience with language to mediate the primordial relationship with language. Mandelstam says that

poetry galvanises its readers. Poetry shakes us “in the middle of the word.” That is, in the middle that is the word. This very middle, however, is itself a manifold, a “bundle of rays.” Poetry breaks with the ordinary, it discloses what is literally there, hidden in the word. Poetry breaks open the word and frees its rays. Poetry shows that words are longer, deeper, wider, less clear than communication can allow for. Both Mandelstam and Heidegger see language as threatening itself in automated speech and they take the poet to be responsible for saving or at least safeguarding language.

In the *Conversation* Heidegger mentions yet another way language is a danger to itself – and to human beings. Heidegger recounts his conversations with Count Kuki and notes that “[t]he danger of our dialogues was hidden in language itself, not in what we discussed, nor in the way in which we tried to do so.” (GA12: 85/4) The danger here is translation. Count Kuki knew German, Heidegger spoke no Japanese. In an attempt to make himself intelligible to the European Heidegger, Kuki *applied* European concepts to Japanese thinking and art. The topic of conversation, however, was not Schiller’s aesthetic or Kant’s *Third Critique*, but the Japanese *Iki*. Heidegger admits that “it was *I* to whom the spirit of the Japanese language remained closed — as it is to this day.” (ibid.) Translation is dangerous, especially in the age of instant communication, because translation works by means of the correspondence theory of truth. However, European categories of *aesthetics* do not easily and flatly correspond to the Japanese way of thinking after art. Communication necessarily operates under the assumption that all languages say the same and that they can all be perfectly translated. “The language of the dialogue,” Heidegger bemoans, “constantly destroyed the possibility of saying what the dialogue was about.” (GA12: 85/5) The language of the dialogue was the language that developed with and out of European spirit and history. That philosophical language of that particular tradition threatens to distort Japanese thinking, if we blindly apply the former to the latter. This is a prime example of how any unconcealing simultaneously occurs with concealment. The conversation discloses something to the interlocutors, but the conversation also covers over something. In this case the *Iki*, which was supposed to be the focus of the conversation. There is an abyss between European thinking and Japanese thinking and this abyss cannot be translated or communicated away. We must rather specifically think this abyss, just like we need to think after the fissure of *beyng*, once it has shown itself to Heidegger. Heidegger reminds his interlocutor of his notion of language as “the house of being.” If language is indeed the house of being, then the Japanese lives in a

different house than does the European. “[A] dialogue from house to house remains nearly impossible.” (GA12: 85/5) Yet, only nearly because the different houses of language are neighbours.

As death is the concentration of all *bergen*, death is at stake in all conversations. Death enables the conversation to disclose something. But death at once also threatens total concealment and withdrawal because as shrine of the nought death also means the possibility of an utter breakdown of meaning.

When Heidegger speaks of a danger or threat to language we must be mindful again that *danger* is a term of art for Heidegger. There is always danger in *beyng*. Heidegger does not long for some imagined better earlier Golden Age when “Being” was without danger. As long as humans are and as long as *beyng is*, there will be danger. Danger is how *beyng* discloses itself, but where there is danger, there also salvation is possible. What comes to rescue is, by the law of equiprimordiality, *language* itself. Yet, this is only the case, if mortals properly speak. This is the task of mortals in the fourfold. More precisely, the task is to respond to the gift of tradition (*Überlieferung*), for example, by cherishing texts. *Überlieferung* is the delivery and dedication of the gift that comes over us. Tradition is handed down *in* language. Since this gift is in excess of itself, it opens up a genuine future.

The threat to language is thus both imminent and immanent, external and internal, and language is under threat as long as it is, and it is primarily a threat to itself. This is precisely because language initially speaks itself. This introduces an element of self-relationality. In that language speaks itself, it opens the realm within which things and world are present. But as such language is also a threat to itself and to the world. As danger to itself language can hence close itself off from its sheltering mode. This is possible because of language’s relation to death. Death is as sanctuary of *beyng* also the utterly inaccessible and that means that death is the realm where language can lose itself. Sheltering-harboursing is by its very locus, death, always under threat to self-conceal from itself. Human beings are responsible for cherishing language precisely as a realm thanks to which beings at all appear. Mortals must properly *speak* and that means, as we shall see, to learn how to be properly silent, especially in an age of constant and instant communication. For the stillness of the grave is what lingers in the essence of language.

Chapter 2 The Essence of Language in View of Death

In his later work Heidegger provides several, seemingly disparate determinations of the *essence* of language. In the *Letter on Humanism*, henceforth *Letter*, he calls language the “house of being” (GA9: 313/239). In the *Conversation*, Heidegger bemoans this notion as clumsy (cf. GA12: 85/5), and also points out that it is not a philosophical concept (cf. GA12: 108). In the same conversation Heidegger employs the Japanese word for language, *koto ba*, in order to determine the essence of language. Heidegger translates *koto* as *waltendes Ereignen*, “happening holding sway.” (GA12: 136/47) *Ba* means “petals.” Thus language as *koto ba* is essentially nothing linguistic in the ordinary sense, but rather petals or leaves originating out of and folding back into the essential event. In other places, like *The Essence of Language* and the *Way to Language* Heidegger, however, determines the essence of language as *die Sage*, *saying* (cf. GA12: 202; 224). Moreover, silence continues to play an important role for the determination of the *essence* of language, as is already the case in *Being and Time*. In this chapter I shall provide a coherent synthesis of Heidegger’s apparently disparate determinations of the “essence” of language. Part III argued that Heidegger understands essence in the context of technology as a realm within and thanks to which beings unfold in a certain manner. This is also how Heidegger understands essence in *On the Way to Language*. Essence is not the timeless whatness of a being. Heidegger understands essence, as Dastur notes, “in the sense of the old verb *wesen*, as the temporal unfolding of the being of something.” (2013: 224) Essence refers to the ways in which something essentially occurs rather than what something is. The mentioned “essences” of language are thus not metaphysical quiddities at odds with one another. In my view, we are to think these essences of language as unfolding out of the thinking of the essential event. The question is how, or if at all, it is possible to unify those ways of unfolding and this is what I focus on in this chapter.

With the essence of language as an interest of being first, we need to think that essence in light of death, since death is where being can come into its own and where it rests. The *Letter*’s proposal to free language from grammar (cf. GA9: 313/239) is in the background of Heidegger’s endeavours to find the essence of language.

1. On Silence

In *Being and Time* Heidegger argues that we ordinarily understand language as made up of “word-things,” (SZ: 161/156) which we find in dictionaries. Thus we tend to reduce language to something present-at-hand we operate with in the world. There is a naïve realism at work here that attributes a *ratio essendi* to language, as if it were some object readily available in the world. This naïve realism goes together with an instrumental representation of language. Heidegger wishes to refrain from such a reductive understanding of language. He rather tries to think language *in actu* and as co-constitutive of the world. This also means that language is not an accidental capacity attached to the human being. For Heidegger, language, or ontological discourse, as he calls it in *Being and Time*, is co-constitutive of Dasein’s existentiality and being-in-the-world. Dasein goes about its world *through* discourse and Dasein’s ontic language is only possible on the ground of ontological discourse. Ontological discourse, in turn, does not consist of “word-things.” Instead, silence and listening co-constitute discourse. These are not deficient modes of discourse but are essential to it (cf. SZ: 161/156). As early as *Being and Time* silence is thus fundamental to Heidegger’s thought of language.¹¹² There would be no ontic speech without the silence of ontological discourse. Ontological silence structures the world insofar as the primary structure of the world is non-propositional. Thus a certain withdrawal takes place in silence. This withdrawal of words co-enables the disclosure of world and meaning.

Heidegger also points out that by keeping silent in the ontic sense one may be able to say more than someone who is eloquent and continuously talks. Speaking too much can even impair understanding because what is essentially at stake gets covered over (cf. SZ: 164/158). Keeping silent can, in turn, be an authentic way of *saying* in the sense of showing someone that one understands and cares. When someone dies or when someone tells us of a tragic situation, listening and keeping silent will often more profoundly understand and “express” what is at stake. Saying too much can cover over an authentic understanding. In some situations we can *say* more by not talking. Dasein

¹¹² Among others, Polt makes the case that there must be a connection between the emphasis Heidegger places on silence and his support for the Hitler regime. Heidegger supposedly emphasises silence so that he would not have to speak about his involvement with the Nazis (cf. Polt 2013: 63ff). Note, however, that Heidegger places emphasis on silence as early as 1925 (cf. GA20: 368ff/267ff). Derrida (cf. 1990: 148) argues that a sympathetic reading of Heidegger’s silence on the Holocaust should consider his silence as underlining the monstrosity of the crime. There is nothing to say about the Holocaust because anything that could be said would be a distortion of the horror.

is properly able to be silent, when it is authentically disclosed to itself, i.e., when it knows itself (cf. SZ: 165/159). Dasein knows itself best when it is authentically towards its ownmost possibility. Thus when Dasein is properly mortal, Dasein is able to properly bear silence and so carry and support others.

Also the call of conscience, which calls on Dasein to be itself, is silent and has no propositional message. Dasein needs to be able to keep silent so that it can hear the call: “*Conscience speaks solely and constantly in the mode of silence.*” (SZ: 273/263) Heidegger would later speak of a “saying nonsaying” (GA11: 78) as co-constitutive of language. Even though no proposition is uttered by the call of conscience, there is a message. The message is a claim to Dasein to leave behind the they-self. The message of the call of conscience is, “[s]trictly speaking — nothing.” (SZ: 273/263) In other words, the “not” that always already constitutes Dasein, sways in the nothing of the call. The silent call is not indeterminate or aimless, but it incites Dasein to accept its ownmost being-able-to-be. The call calls upon Dasein to run forth toward its ownmost possibility, to take over its finite self and to accept its authentic possibilities to be. This early nearness of death, silence, and the call would guide Heidegger toward his thinking of being as the essential event, i.e., as that which withdraws as it approaches; that which is abysmal and unsupported; that which has literally nothing around itself and hence ordinary language finds nothing to address being with.

In his Nietzsche lectures from the late 1930s on the eternal recurrence of the same Heidegger thus says that the essence of language has “its origin in silence” (GA06.1: 423/208). Heidegger already says this from the perspective of the event. In the 1930s Heidegger begins to call *Sprache*, language, an interest of being itself: “every saying [*Sage*] arises from being and speaks out of the truth of being.” (GA65: 79/63) That is, language is *of* being and human beings are thrown into a language. Thus language speaks us. In the 1930s language takes on another meaning than it did in *Being and Time*. Nevertheless, the place language now occupies emerges from Heidegger’s early focus on silence. In *Contributions* silence, or rather Heidegger’s notion of *Erschweigen*, bearing silence, plays a crucial role. Contrary to *Being and Time*, silence as bearing silence is not a mode co-constitutive of discourse. Silence now takes the upper hand. This is why the fundamental attunement of the other beginning is reticence. The just quoted passage from the Nietzsche lecture continues: “wherever the matters of death and the nothing are treated, Being and Being alone is thought most deeply” (GA06.1: 423/206). Thus bearing silence means to think being

abysmally, as outlined in part II, and this is possible for human beings because of death. Bearing silence, however, does not mean to be mute. Rather, and this is how Heidegger understands a proper speaking *out of* being in a thinking manner, bearing silence means to speak of being through a non-saying. That is, a saying that does not try to fixate and hence reify being. A saying non-saying is an elusive, non-reifying, non-propositional saying that articulates being's self-withdrawal.

Vallega-Neu thus argues: "The necessity to bear silence in speaking derives from Heidegger's experience that being itself occurs as withdrawal, that truth occurs as self-concealment." (2013: 128) As part II pointed out, Heidegger makes the experience of withdrawal in the analytic of Dasein's being toward its ownmost possibility that is at once Dasein's impossibility. Bearing silence is, as unsatisfying as this may at first seem, the way in which we can speak *of* being without ever saying too much. Being's claim comes over the human being as the attunement of reticence. It is by *bearing* silence that we can think the abyss of being as the "unsupported unsafeguarded." Thus here a realm opens up where we renounce beings so that we become open again for their true wealth. We can bear silence, and therefore most profoundly think being and only being, if we grant death and nothingness their claim over us. This call then is what lets human beings *stand in* to being's history (*inständig sein*). To not reify being, for Heidegger, means to think being not *in*, but *as* its history and that means to think being itself as moving and evolving in a heterological way as its history. Being refuses itself, but through this refusal *it* gives. It is for being's inherent withdrawal that anything *is*. Beings are because being withdraws itself. Mortals correspond to withdrawal through bearing silence.

In *Contributions* §§ 37 and 38, Heidegger says that any genuine experience with being as history and refusal is such that it leaves us speechless. Therefore, we do not need to invent a new language in order to speak out of being (cf. GA65: 78/63f). This may seem odd because Heidegger is, on the face of it, notorious for his neologisms. With the beginning of the thinking of the history of being, Heidegger, however, noticeably returns to simple words of the vernacular like *Ereignis* and carves out their richness. For Heidegger this also includes the rather strange term *Ge-Birg*, as he assumes to free the word by hyphenating it and so he lets the word itself unfold, as Mandelstam says, as a bundle of rays. For Heidegger the German vernacular names a mountain range *Gebirg* precisely because mountains are a spatio-temporal occurrence that is never entirely accessible, i.e., always to a certain degree concealed. By

hyphenating the word, all of a sudden it breaks free from our ordinary associations and we can begin to hear the moments of *bergen* in it. *Contributions*, in turn, are a prime example of a poetic language that tries to articulate being in its withdrawal and that, therefore, speaks in an elusive manner. For its very elusiveness this language, however, brings forth the truth of being. Wrathall (cf. 2010: 150) points out that the silence of being points to absence, an absence that can, in fact, *be*. Heidegger's language, for example in *Contributions* and *Über den Anfang*, is one that attempts to speak carefully and in a sheltering manner of being without fixating or reifying it.¹¹³ This is how in any saying of being death as being's sanctuary is present.

Mortals correspond to being's silence through bearing silence. Bearing silence also safeguards being insofar as bearing silence is also a timid, non-representational approach to the history of being. The call of being is silent insofar as the message is still strictly speaking nothing, but now in the sense of the refusal of being. Human beings are receivers as well as messengers of the call. In the *Conversation* Heidegger redetermines the meaning of hermeneutics to be closer to ἐρμηνεύειν and to *Hermes*, the messenger of the gods (cf. GA12: 115/29). Properly responding to the call, which includes responsibility for tradition and origin, human beings enact their "*being human*" (GA12: 115/41).

The proper response to being's silent call is renunciation, *Verzicht*. As Davis shows, renunciation is the negation of the will to pure self-affirmation, which is the driving force of machination. But renunciation is not resignation. Renunciation is affirmative insofar as it calls mortals to summon up the courage to refrain from the prevalent will to mastery (cf. Davis 2010: 95f). In *The Essence of Language* and *The Word* Heidegger ties renunciation to the essence of language as saying. Heidegger argues that the German *Verzicht* comes from the verb *zeihen*, which means *zeigen*, to show, and which he understands as related to the Latin *dicere*, to say. Heidegger understands *zeigen* in the sense of "to allow to be seen" (GA12: 210/142) and this, he claims, is the meaning of the old German word *sagan*. In renunciation hence "[s]aying dominates" (ibid.). But not a saying of propositional claims or even human saying. This saying is more fundamental and stems from the movement of ἀλήθεια. This saying is a saying that knows it has to refrain from something. Heidegger says this with reference to his interpretation of George's poem *The Word*. George writes: "*So lernt ich traurig den verzicht: Kein Ding sei wo das Wort gebriecht.*" "So I renounced

¹¹³ See also (Brogan 2013: 43f) on this point.

and sadly see: Where word breaks off no thing may be.” (GA12: 208/140) The poem speaks of a renunciation. But the poem does not, on Heidegger’s reading, depict a pessimist or tragic sentiment by George. The poem rather speaks of a successful, *geglückt*, grounding which the poet at once lets go. This entails to renounce the will to command over beings: “The poet must renounce having words under his control as the portraying names for what is posited.” (GA12: 215/147)

By his renunciation of control over beings, George *says* (in an intransitive sense) out of being in a reticent way. A poem as that by George is proper mortal correspondence, and it lets encounter the world precisely through the very renunciation of control. Such a poem is a grounding aware of its mortal finitude and of concealment in any disclosure. Thus poems, too, are *things* in the old sense, where “thing” meant gathering (cf. GA7: 155/151). Poems gather the world as fourfold. Poetry is *poietic* because it brings forth that other possibility of world, i.e., of a disclosure mindful of absence, and poetry can do so precisely because poems do not objectify and do not want to control what they speak of. This is why Heidegger says in *The Danger* that “[d]eath is the sanctuary of being in the poem of the world.” (GA79: 56/53ta) The thought of death lets us go down into abysmal being, and by renouncing the prevalence of the will, a genuine world for mortals emerges. Wrathall puts it as follows: “[Poetry] can attune us to that which does not belong in presence in our world.” (2010: 152) As Rilke says, poetry can let us glimpse at the utterly absent that however co-constitutes this world. Poetry thus lets us glimpse at death and so beings as a whole come into view.

2. The House of Being

Silence and bearing silence are not to be understood as passivity or quietism. They rather indicate a sheltering. Saying less sometimes safeguards what is at stake, for example, when we keep silent in moments of tragedy or joy rather than commenting the situation to bits. The notion of language as the house of being speaks of a sheltering of being through language. Even though Heidegger calls the notion “clumsy” in the *Conversation*, he does not give up on it and rather tries to explain better what it is he means by it. The problem with the term is that it inspires representation. Also, house of being can easily be understood as a philosophical concept subsuming essential features of language. The house is not an actual receptacle for being. It is crucial that Heidegger introduces the “house of being” in the *Letter* where he also further develops

his notion of being (or beyng) as the possible. In the *Letter* Heidegger critiques the will to actualisation of our age. He begins the letter by pointing out that our age is predominantly characterised by a drive to produce and dominate the actual. This amounts to a production for the sake of dominance over beings without letting being unfold on its own. Exactly this kind of a will to dominance is what Heidegger also considers to be prevalent in Sartre's existentialism. Sartre notoriously turned the metaphysical schema of *essentia*'s prevalence over *existentia* on its head. By his privileging of *existentia* Sartre privileges the actual. Sartre thereby also makes the subject sovereign over its essence, for the Sartrian subject can freely choose its essence (cf. GA9: 328ff/246ff). The subject makes itself. We should not ignore the fact that language and a call to heed language is prominent in the *Letter* in which Heidegger clearly describes how his thought differs from Sartre's. What Sartre ignores in his reading of *Being and Time* is that this text understands *existence* in a non-metaphysical but rather literal sense as *standing out*. Sartre's failure to heed language does not only cover over how Heidegger understands *ek-sistence*, but also reinforces the paradigm of the age, which is the metaphysical paradigm of actuality above possibility, of wilful production for the sake of dominance. That is the oblivion of being in a nutshell. Thus it seems to be the case that we can get over the oblivion of being and think being as the possible by heeding language. There is, I argue, a nearness of language as the house and death as the sanctuary and refuge of being.

In a footnote to the *Letter* from 1949 Heidegger mentions that the essential event is still held back and therefore the talk of being in the text must necessarily lead to confusion (cf. GA9: 321/245na). This is a hint to us today that, after the publication of such texts as *Contributions* and *The Event*, we are to think "being" and "language" in the *Letter* out of the essential event. Moreover, being is here already fully articulated as realm of the *possible*. Thus language as the house of being must be understood out of the movement of the essential event and in terms of being as the purely possible. This is why Heidegger says in the *Letter* that "[l]anguage is the clearing-concealing advent [*Ankunft*] of being itself." (GA9: 326/249) This claim points to the essential relation between beyng and death as sanctuary. Yet, the way in which we increasingly interact with language impedes this understanding of language. The threat to language is the same as Heidegger already identifies in *Being and Time*, namely the instrumental representation of language as a tool of information. Language is the instrument by which technology not only reports its operations, but language is also the instrument

by which these operations function. We naturally speak of programming and coding language and also of neuro-logistic programming, a means by which human beings, purely in their cognitive behaviour, can be reprogrammed at will. A thinking of language in terms of clearing-concealing denies the predominance of language as instrumentality. Heidegger here says that in language, properly understood, being itself *arrives*, but, of course, also at once self-conceals. “House of being” then, as the *Conversation* notes, is not a receptacle, which the object “being” is safely stored in (cf. GA12: 112/26). Instead, the connotations of dwelling and shelter the notion inspires are crucial. Being *dwells* in language, which originates out of abysmal silence, and so do human beings. Language is neither human capacity, nor a random collection of words, nor transmitter of information. Rather language is a realm where human beings dwell and where human beings get in touch with being. The bemoaned “devastation of language” (GA9: 318/243) is not a moral problem first, but, according to Heidegger, comes from being itself insofar as human beings forget being. In our age the most pressing question is how we respond to nihilism. Existentialism co-responds to this problem by reinforcing metaphysics’ oblivion of being and by making the subject sovereign over its existence and essence. Heidegger’s suggestion is to think out of the silent call of being itself, mindful of the fact that human beings do not make themselves. Language as house of being then denotes a dwelling place for human beings and is a place where they correspond to the history of being. The latter is, Heidegger says in the *Letter* “never past but stands ever before us; it sustains and defines every *condition et situation humaine*.” (GA9: 314/240) A house, of course, is not automatically a home. It is upon human beings to co-respond in such a way that language is a home (cf. GA9: 333/247).

Thus what Heidegger calls language belongs to the essential event and its movement. Heidegger says this explicitly in *The Essence of Language*: “Language belongs to this essential occurring, is ownmost to what moves all things because that is its most distinctive property. What moves all things [*All-Bewëgende bewëgt*] moves in that it speaks.” (GA12: 190/95*ta*) Language *wëst*, essentially occurs, as moving and this occurrence self-differentiates as presence, *Anwesen*, and absence, *Abwesen*. Movement for Heidegger does not mean the representation of something changing its position from A to B. Instead, Heidegger understands movement as opening a path (cf. GA12: 186/129). Language is that which at all opens the possibility for human beings to be on the way. Mandelstam’s dictum, that “to speak means to be forever on the

road,” now says that language is what lets human beings enter the history of being. The devastation of language diminishes those paths and enforces the oblivion and abandonment of being because language is as house of being “the keeper [*Hut*] of being present [*Anwesen*]” (GA12: 255/135). Heidegger places language notably close to death as sanctuary by calling language “keeper.” Death and language are not identical, but they are essentially related, and we can now more clearly see why. Both of them grant shelter to being. Equally both can turn against being. Death is always the possibility of both being’s self-appropriation and its utter abandonment. A house need not be a home. It is always upon mortals to appropriately co-respond to the silent call of being, and that means with reticence and releasement precisely in an age that reveres the mirage of human omnipotence. Death is the constant reminder that we are only ever on the way and language is that which opens up finite, but immeasurable paths (possibilities). This is why we need to cherish our languages. The house of being is the shelter of the openness of being. Not only poets and thinkers safeguard this house, but also those communities of mortals that cherish their dialects and vernacular. Death, in turn, as sanctuary is the turning place of being’s self-concealing, self-refusal and self-withdrawal. Language *is* the arrival of being and death *is* being’s departure. The house of being then is not an image or a metaphor. The house of being is the way in which language unfolds as a place of dwelling for mortals and being alike:

Thinking builds upon the house of being, the house in which the jointure of being, in its destinal *unfolding*, enjoins the essence of the human being in each case to dwell in the truth of being. This dwelling is the essence of “being-in-the-world.” (GA9: 358/272me)

3. Language as Saying

From what I have argued so far, a certain hierarchy of the essence of language emerges. I understand hierarchy quite literally as holy and wholesome (ἱερός) leadership (ἀρχή). The hierarchy of language’s essential occurring begins with silence as language’s origin. As origin silence guides language. Being’s self-refusal and self-withdrawal, which takes place *in* death, is what gives rise to language and to being’s silent call to human beings. The silent call means that human beings as thrown beings always already find themselves in a historical context which is not of their choosing but which they, nonetheless, have to respond to. The call is “silent” because there is no set of propositions by which being, this realm of the possible in excess of itself,

communicates its demands to human beings. *In* silence, language paves the ways of being's history. Language is, as that which moves, the house, or the realm, of being. As such language gives rise to the historical dwelling grounds of mortals.

What is lacking in all of this, is how we ordinarily understand language. An ordinary representation of language is that language is a means of expression of subjective contents. Yet, Heidegger claims, "language is never *primarily* the expression of thinking, feeling, and willing." (GA11: 118/41*me*). Nevertheless, what I take to be Heidegger's ultimate determination of the essence of language as saying seems, on the face of it, rather close to expression. How are we to understand *die Sage*, *saying*, if not as expression? In what follows I explicate the crucial notion of saying in relation to death and the essence of language more broadly.

In *Moira*, an essay devoted to Parmenides, Heidegger claims that the representation of language as a means of information stems from the Greek representation of language as φωνή, i.e., from the expression of subjectivity. This early reduction of language has evolved into the representation of language "as a system of signifiers and references and ultimately of reporting and information." (GA7: 250) Φωνή is a derivative mode of *saying*. As φωνή language conceals *itself* since φωνή is directed at beings first. Language, after all, is the most dangerous good. Heidegger, however, understands Parmenides as articulating another possibility of language, a possibility Heidegger wishes to remind us of: "We must learn to think the essence of language out of saying and we must think saying as releasing into *presence* [*vorliegen-Lassen*] (λόγος) and bringing-forth [*zum-Vorschein-Bringen*] (φάσις)." (GA7: 250) Thus λόγος and φάσις constitute *saying*. Λόγος (gathering) is the primary moment of saying and is what releases into *presence*. Λόγος constitutes the primary presence thanks to which beings appear. Φάσις, in turn, brings forth and thus releases into appearance. Thus, if the essence of language is saying, then this does not mean that language expresses subjective contents. Instead, language as saying is primarily the simultaneous event of λόγος and φάσις, of gathering and appearance. In this sense saying is more primordial than human speaking as φωνή. Without saying, without that first opening of appearance, φωνή would not be possible. Hence for Heidegger human speaking is not a reaction to anything, e.g., their mortal finitude. Human speaking is a correspondence to saying, to the essence (realm) of language where presence and appearance *fundamentally*, i.e. without objects, take place. Releasing into presence and bringing forth are not presence of something or

appearance of something. Instead, both are of a “*for...-structure*,” which is to say that they allow *for* something to appear and be present. In the third part of the essay *The Essence of Language* Heidegger understands *Sage* in terms of its Indo-Germanic root *sagan*. Heidegger translates *sagan* as releasing into presence but also as “clearing-concealing releasing [*freigeben*]” (GA12: 188). Thus Heidegger here explicitly emphasises concealment as prevailing in saying.

Thus the movement of language as saying is the same as the movement of the essential event. The concealing of saying corresponds to death as sanctuary. Heidegger thus turns the expression “the essence of language” into “the language of essence.” What he means by this is that language as saying addresses the way in which the essential event unfolds (cf. GA12: 190/95).¹⁴⁴ As saying, Heidegger suggests in the *Conversation*, language addresses the human being (cf. GA12: 143/142). Language is the movement that brings forth a presence thanks to which beings appear. In this sense language discloses world and *speaks* us. Language then is what constitutes the human being as that being that discloses (cf. GA12: 12/190). Poets are in a favoured receivership of language as that which constitutes the world. This is why their words properly disclose world to us.

Language as saying brings forth a *presence* which for its simultaneous absence is in excess of itself and allows for an intelligible presence of beings. Understanding language in this way prohibits one to consider poems as aesthetic representations of objects. Instead, poems grant *being* to beings. In *On the Origin of the Artwork* Heidegger argues that C.F. Meyer’s poem “The Roman Fountain” does not represent some present-at-hand fountain. Instead, says Heidegger (cf. GA5: 25/17), truth is set forth in the poem. That is, the poem sets forth the being of beings as the clearing - concealing thanks to which beings are intelligible and meaningful. There is not some contingent object “Roman Fountain” Meyer tries to describe as precisely as possible. The poem rather gives meaning and access to a thing that is of a past historical world and people. Hölderlin’s poem *Rhine* is hence not a representation of the river Rhine either. Instead, the poem discloses and grants meaning to the river so that the Rhine first becomes the Rhine. The poem is a discovery of the river as river. The poem *is* the river. It is not a representation of the river. When we understand language as *saying*, poems release things into appearance in a different light. This light, however, always arises out of darkness, from out of what utterly cannot be mastered and tamed, from

¹⁴⁴ See also (Dastur 2013: 237) on this.

out of the unintelligible and thus from out of the shelter and limit of any clearing: from out of death.

We must bear in mind that Heidegger's determinations of the essence of language also aim at freeing language from positionality. Positionality reduces language to information and this reduction devastates language as well as human beings' relationship with being and the world. Heidegger's determinations of language as *saying*, as house of being and silent call, depict a possibility of experiencing language in a non-formalised way. These essences of language cannot be formalised. Positionality operates with a formalised non-ambiguous language. Positionality "commandeers for its purposes a formalized language, the kind of communication which "informs" [*eingefornt*] man uniformly, that is, gives him the form in which he is fitted in to the technological-calculative universe, and gradually abandons "natural language." (GA12: 252/132) This informing of human beings so that they stand ready as a resource for the demands of positionality, cannot be done by means of language as saying, for saying eludes objectification. Heidegger's work on language is not readily available for any kind of production, as are, for example, the results of linguistics for coding. Müller has argued that anything that cannot be formalised for immediate production "is degraded as "unclear" and "untrue"." (1964: 83) Because what is unclear cannot be objectified. Müller also points out that universal objectification is not just a symptom of the oblivion of being. Objectification *is* oblivion of being. Heidegger's writings on language may be frustrating for those interested in the formal structure of language. Yet, looking at it from the perspective of technology, objectification and quantification, we more easily see the importance of Heidegger's project. Language as silence, as saying, and as the shelter of being is a resistance to technology. Positionality cannot gain anything from *saying*.¹¹⁵

With the help of mortals, language as saying safeguards itself against self-reduction. In that saying shelters, it is in harmony with language as the house of being and silence. Death as sanctuary is hence what structures language as saying. Silence remains the origin of language, when Heidegger begins to refer to language as that which gives presence because any presence rests on absence, refusal, and withdrawal. Thanks to refusal and withdrawal, which function as shelter, language as saying does not exploit and exhaust itself as an object of use. Rather language as saying is in excess

¹¹⁵ See also Iain Thomson's crucial work on how positionality affects and transforms education and how it does so by reducing language to a transmitter of information (cf. Thomson 2005: 156ff).

of itself precisely because there is an essential relation between death and language. I can now focus on this unthought relation. Death as that which always withdraws, as that which utterly defies the self-aggrandising subject's will to mastery, will prove to be the realm where language finds rest. From that tension-filled relation a path towards the fourfold opens up.

Chapter 3 Language and Death in the Fourfold

The key passage explicitly mentions the essential relation between language and death. As I have shown in this part so far, this does not mean that this relation is at stake only in the key passage. Nevertheless, I now turn to an in-depth interpretation of the passage in question and read it against the background of the tension between fourfold and positionality. I first explicate the key passage and combine this with my findings so far. This will allow me to elaborate on the role death plays in the constitution of the world as fourfold.

1. The Essential Relation in Focus

I bring the key passage into focus now after having clarified the essence of language as saying since the key passage claims that saying reaches out to us because of our mortality. It is worth quoting Heidegger at length here:

Reserving itself in this way, as Saying of the world's fourfold, language concerns us, us who as mortals belong within this fourfold world, us who can speak only as we respond to language. Mortals are they who can experience death as death. Animals cannot do so. But animals cannot speak either. The essential relation between death and language flashes up before us but remains still unthought. It can, however, beckon us toward the way in which the nature of language draws us into its concern and so relates us to itself, in case death belongs together with what reaches out for us, touches us. (GA12: 203/107f)

As noted in the introduction to this part, Agamben reports Heidegger's apparent inability to justify the claim that there is an essential relation between death and language. Heidegger is here, argues Agamben, at "a crucial outer limit ... perhaps the very limit" of his thought (2006: xi). Still, I do not interpret the notion of "flashing up" and Heidegger's suggestion that the essential relation "remains unthought" as an indication that the essential relation is at stake only in the key passage. It may well be the case that Heidegger is here at the limit of what he was able to articulate. However, as I have shown, death relates to language as saying and as house of being as well as

to silence as the origin of language. This is the case precisely because death structures absence and concealment.

Agamben's suggestion of the outer limit of Heidegger's thought is nevertheless quite helpful. Heidegger calls the human being the "Grenzgänger des Grenzenlosen," "he who walks the boundary of the boundless" because the human being receives the message of being and "seeks the boundary's mystery." (GA12: 129/41) That is, the boundary of what mortal saying can say for its very proximity to the mystery (death). And out of mortal saying world arises since mortals form world. In their attempts to properly say, mortals say out of beyng as the unbound, the limitless. The abysmal is limitless. Human beings for their mortal finitude are, however, those who draw boundaries along the "unbound." Heidegger himself with his experimental language is someone who walks the boundary of what can be said. This is the reason why I am convinced that our task as readers is to try to justify the claim of the key passage from within the thinking path.

In this regard the notion of "flashing up" is crucial. In *The Turning* Heidegger says that beyng *flashes* in technology every time when positionality shows its true danger (cf. GA11: 122/44). Just as a flash is a sudden burst of light that immediately disappears, those moments of greatest technological danger erupt suddenly and instantly fall into oblivion. This may be most obvious with the explosion of the Atomic bomb. In such lethal moments beyng itself flashes and human beings, if they are awake to that danger, realise just how powerless they are in the face of the history of beyng. The task of humans is to respond to these flashings. Hence Heidegger says that in danger salvation is possible. Beyng only ever reveals itself in flashing up. But beyng does not always or only flash that visibly. The outburst of the Atomic bomb is a symptom of earlier, deeper goings-on that occur silently. Thus the flashing of beyng is more originally its silent call, and this is what makes beyng so dangerous and the responsibility of mortals so tremendous. To hear those silent shifts in beyng is precisely what mortals "walking the boundary" and "seeking mystery" have to do. The flashing up of the key passage hence rests on and reflects the movement of beyng as a presence arising out of absence and withdrawing back into it. Put differently, the intelligible and the present rest on the unintelligible and the absent and thus in any understanding death is active.

In an essay on Heraclitus¹¹⁶ Heidegger maintains that “the essence of language flashed up in the light of being” (GA7: 233) when Heraclitus thought after the key word λόγος. More precisely, when Heraclitus explicated the λόγος he thought after the presence thanks to which beings appear. This, in turn, means that Heraclitus thought the difference between being and beings. In the first fragment, Heraclitus understands λόγος as that which attunes human beings even if they do not listen to the λόγος (cf. Hahn 1987: 30). That is, the λόγος gathers human beings precisely by withdrawing from presence. The world is meaningful for the very self-withdrawal of λόγος. Heraclitus thus understood language as *saying*, maintains Heidegger. The fact that language was reduced to expression influences the history of loss. With the flashing up of the essential relation between language and death Heidegger hence suggests that there is again a chance to achieve a nearness with being and this happens precisely by accepting mortality. In *The Essence of Language* Heidegger says that the essential relation gives us a hint at “the way in which the essence of language draws us into its concern and so relates us to itself, in case death belongs together with what reaches out for us, touches us” (GA12: 203/107f *ta*). This means that human beings can think the simultaneity of presence and absence, clearing and concealing because humans are touched by language and death alike. To think this limit of metaphysics is the onto-historical task in the epoch of positionality.

It is crucial that Heidegger introduces the essential relation with a reference to animals. Animals neither speak nor die, claims Heidegger. Rather, the animal is numb and perishes. What the animal lacks is access not to beings but to beings *as* beings, i.e., to beings in their being (cf. GA29/30: 274ff; 344ff). This is why language as an interest of being first, language as that which clears and conceals, does not concern and address the animal. I shall here not focus on the contested issue of the animal in Heidegger scholarship.¹¹⁷ Important for our endeavours is to stress that Heidegger does not understand the animal to be addressed by language and death in the same way human beings are. That is to say that the animal is not responsible for being in the same way as mortals are. None of this is to reduce the animal in its being. Instead,

¹¹⁶ By no means do I claim to do justice to Heidegger’s reading of Heraclitus and λόγος. This is just to give an idea where Heidegger draws inspiration for the essential relation between death and language. For an in-depth account of Heidegger on λόγος in Heraclitus see (De Gennaro 2001).

¹¹⁷ See for example Wild (2013) and Calarco (2008). Problems surround the question whether Heidegger turns animals into something present-at-hand, and whether he anthropomorphises the animal. Note that Heidegger refers to the animal a *be-fähigt*, capable or competent to *be* in its own way (cf. GA29/30: 342). However, the animal does not ask for the being of beings precisely because its own being is not an issue for it.

Heidegger's claim about the difference between animals and humans wishes to free human beings from metaphysics. The metaphysical encrustation of human beings as rational animals, as bipeds that happen to speak instead of being feathers, is what Heidegger declaredly wishes to overcome. But freeing human beings from metaphysics is tantamount to freeing nature from anthropomorphisms.

In the *Letter*, Heidegger thus says, “[m]etaphysics thinks of the human being on the basis of *animalitas* and does not think in the direction of *humanitas*.” (GA9: 323/246f) The motivation here is to radically free the human being from classifications in terms of species and genus. According to Heidegger, these classifications are responsible for the objectification of the human being and ultimately for the fact that even the human being is reduced to standing reserve, for these classifications are timeless and transtemporal reifications of what it means to be human. Also, the human being as the supposed highest developed form of animal life becomes the measure for all things in nature. This is why Heidegger warns that “[i]t could even be that nature, in the face it turns toward the human being's technical mastery, is simply concealing its essence.” (GA9: 324/247) In an age in which the human being assumes to be the driving and all-determining force of the history of the planet, what masks as total human control might be just the opposite: a loss of origin and genuine access to the world. The very last section of *Contributions*, which bears the title *Language (its origin)*, addresses the problem. Heidegger there says that language seems to be the “primary and farthest humanizing [*Vermenschung*] of beings.” (GA65: 510/401) However, Heidegger suggests that in language the “dehumanizing [*Entmenschung*] of the human being as *objectively present living being* and “subject” and everything hitherto” (ibid.) is possible. This sounds cruel at first, yet this is not a moral but an ontological claim. What Heidegger means by this is that there is in language the possibility to de-anthropomorphise nature *and* free the human being from the norms of metaphysics. In context of *Contributions* this means the grounding of Da-sein as the adverbial site of being. In the context of the later writings the human being is to become “mortals.” I reserve the question of the transformation of human beings in terms of language and death for the last chapter of this part. For now, it may suffice to point out that in the last section of *Contributions* Heidegger implicitly refers to the *Artwork* essay where he asks in how far the propositional sentence structure “subject-predicate-object” interferes with beings in their being (cf. GA5: 8/6). To assume the human being as *subject* above all is primarily a result of the process of language's

structuring of the world. Similar to the propositional sentence structure “subject-predicate-object,” the human subject commands over the object. However, there is a possibility to step out of the assumption that language must always be propositional in order to be intelligible and meaningful. This is true, for example, for one of Heidegger’s favourite poets, Rilke. The “dehumanising” of nature Heidegger speaks of would then mean both a renunciation of propositional language and a reversal occurring *in* language. To a certain degree Heidegger attempts that in *Contributions*. Besides the poetic nature of the language there employed, Heidegger also reverses words like *Machenschaft* so that they no longer speak of a human activity but of an activity of being itself. Heidegger sees in this the possibility to free nature from human categorisation, objectification, and hierarchizing because it revokes the subject’s powers. Nature would no longer be produced as something present-at-hand available for use and consumption, if a change in thinking and thus language were to set in. Such a change in thinking would include abandoning the will, but it must begin with language. By surrendering language to being the subject realises its limited powers. In the last section of *Contributions* Heidegger thus writes, “[l]anguage is grounded in silence.” (GA65: 510/401) To answer Werner Marx’s question for Heidegger, whether there is a measure on the earth, Heidegger in the last paragraph of *Contributions* also says that keeping silent “is the most concealed holding to measure” and that language is “the positing of measures” (GA65: 510/401). As I have argued in part III, death is the standard of measure. Death and language together, if heeded by mortals, provide a measure on the earth. It is the task of mortal saying to uphold that measure and ground other possibilities of human and non-human existence. Those other, wholesome groundings leave no room for subjectivistic fantasies of human omnipotence, but, says Heidegger in the last sentence of *Contributions*, they only leave room for “moderation” (ibid.). Moderation because even what makes us human, language and death, are not our possession, our capacities, but are a gift.

Hence in the “flashing up” of the essential relation between death and language Heidegger sees a distinct possibility to get over the encrustations of metaphysics. This is not, however, a privileging of the human being but rather a warning to human beings that they must heed language because the measure of the world lies in language. Language can only have that role because it is essentially related with death, i.e., with the concentration of all concealing, sheltering, and withdrawing and thus of giving. Human beings then speak insofar as they are mortal, that is, insofar as they are touched

by death and pulled into the realm of language by death. Mortals speak by responding to language as that which gives presence because language is related to that which withholds presence: death. This tension between language and death is what sets the worlding of the fourfold in motion.

2. Language and the Movement of the Fourfold

As I alluded to above, Heidegger argues that language as saying moves the world (cf. GA12: 195/108). This must seem rather a strange claim by Heidegger. Yet, Heidegger does not mean by this that language moves the world represented as planet earth. Language rather moves the four regions of the fourfold. And yet Heidegger speaks about the satellite “Sputnik” several times in *On the Way to Language*. Sputnik was launched in 1957 and was the first satellite to surround planet earth. By means of the parameters “time” and “space” satellites allow human beings to surveil the planet. Heidegger sees in satellite technology evidence for “the battle for the dominion of the earth [which] has now entered its decisive phase.” (GA12: 201/105) This is not necessarily a battle between political powers for domination, but rather the subject seeking total control over the planet. Here Heidegger’s reference to Thales mentioned in part III shows a further implication. Leaving the earth behind does not take us to the stars, i.e., to that which grants orientation and destiny, but takes us away from them. Mortals can only see the stars when they are truly part of the earth and know their place. That a mortal being, a being that once knew of the *memento mori* and of the ephemerality of existence would assume godlike powers reminds us of Nietzsche’s warning in *The Mad Man* that the human subject has killed God. Far from proclaiming a triumph Nietzsche bemoans that the time is not ripe for humans to become God or even understand the mad man’s message. For Nietzsche the murder of God means that we have wiped “out the entire horizon” and have unchained “this earth from its sun” (KSA3: 481). Thus gluttony, a certain measurelessness, and disequilibrium, and even, depending on how we understand the word “horizon,” a certain worldlessness all announce themselves in modernity. Nihilism and absurdity are the consequence.¹¹⁸ The drive to control and dominate the earth represented as a planet by satellite photographs

¹¹⁸ See also Dreyfus’ paper on the connection of technology and nihilism in Heidegger: “In this technological perspective, ultimate goals like serving God, society, our fellows, or even ourselves no longer make sense to us.” (1993: 306)

is the attempt of the self-aggrandising subject to establish its unchecked rule over the earth in a hasty attempt to cover up the loss of meaning and direction. By establishing a perfect organisation of the planet the subject wants to give itself direction. Ultimately, this will require human beings to leave the earth. For example, by setting up a network of satellites: “The all-out challenge to secure dominion over the earth can be met only by occupying an ultimate position beyond the earth from which to establish control over the earth.” (GA12: 201/105) The subject achieves this total control by reducing time and space to parameters and by reducing language to a transmitter as information. The seeming nearness of the world represented on the screen eradicates distance. Thus, as I pointed out above, Heidegger presents the possibility to think language as *saying* as a resistance to this drive for control. There is no control in saying, only a letting and seeing off, which, however, give rise to the world. The fourfold is a world, a worlding, that cannot in any way be represented as the world of the Sputnik. Or today the world of the drone. The fourfold shows itself as inconspicuous.

Heidegger writes: “Saying, as the way-making movement of the world’s fourfold, gathers all things up into the nearness of face-to-face encounter, and does so soundlessly, as quietly as time times, space spaces, as quietly as the play of time-space is enacted.” (GA12: 203/108) The world of modern technology is a world of permanent noise. The sounds of household machines, cars, airplanes, helicopters, trains, air conditioning, background music that serves to silence background noises, the permanent buzzing, humming and purring that make up the backdrop of our daily lives — what are those but attempts to mute the silent call of *beyng*. Outside the spectacle of the modern planetary entertainment and surveillance grid operating on sheer presence and a fake lack of distance without any ultimate goal but self-preservation — there is the possibility of the fourfold. There, in silence, gods and mortals, sky and earth gather around simplest things like a childbed. The fourfold provides the possibility to understand the world in a radically different way than we do in positionality. Saying enacts in silence the self-concealing openness of the fourfold, where human beings are neither centre nor ground, but mortals who are fragile and vulnerable and who are because “[s]ong still lingers over their desolate land.” (GA5: 274/204) This silent lingering is an invention to enter the history of *beyng*. Heidegger ends the paragraph on the essential relation between death and language as follows: “only saying confers what we call by the tiny word “is,” and thus we say after saying

[*ihr – der Sage – nachsagen*]. Saying releases the “is” into cleared freedom and therewith into the sheltered [*Geborgene*] of its thinkability.” (GA12: 203/108*ta*). The tiny word “is” harbours the history of being because “*what is*” is determined by being as its current occurrences and our subsequent understanding of what it means to be. There are, however, always several dimensions at stake and at work. These dimensions are also the normative positings of metaphysics which continue to influence our future and our presence. Put differently: normative positings of what is are possible because of what announces itself in a given self-concealing presence, which now bears the name saying, and which prevails, as I have argued in part II, always thanks to death, the “goad” of the history of being. This is how saying moves the world, silently sneaking through an unheard history.

Thanks to its silence there is, then, in the fourfold, if not an ultimate goal, the possibility to connect with the vast wealth of the history of being in the sense that Heidegger’s writings on the fourfold bring us closer to the old question, what it means to be, in an age that tends to ignore that question. This question, this mortal articulation of saying together with the silence of saying is what moves the world. Thus Heidegger’s formula from 1925, to a certain degree, holds true for his later thought regarding language: *sum moribundus*.

Chapter 4 Language and the Essential Transformation

The question of the last chapter is what exactly Heidegger means by “mortals” and how language and its relationship with death plays into Heidegger’s ultimate articulation of the transformation of the human being. One could, of course, argue that it is rather reductive to name the human being primarily, if not exclusively, “mortals.” Is this not even a retrograde step for Heidegger’s philosophy? After all, one of Heidegger’s most formidable, genuine accomplishments of *Being and Time* was to have thought Dasein holistically and deeply involved with its world. On the face of it, “mortals” seems to suggest that death and nothing else is what determines human beings. In what follows I show that this final step in the transformation of the human being is not a reductive account of what it means to be human. In order to do so one has to include what Heidegger says on *humanitas* in the *Letter on Humanism* but also who mortals are in his essays on language.

1. *Homo Humanus*

As I have argued in part III, Heidegger sees human beings at a crossroads. Either human beings become “human material” artificially produced in factories (cf. GA7: 93). Or they become what Heidegger in the *Letter* calls *homo humanus*. In *The Essence of Language*, hence in an essay where we might least expect such a claim, Heidegger warns that technological progress might turn us into “monstrous creatures of technology, assimilated to machines.” (GA12: 179/85) He continues: “The step back into the sphere of human being demands other things than does the progress into the machine world.” (ibid.) This step back is a step into the realm of language because language is what makes the human being the *homo humanus* (cf. GA9: 345/262). The *homo humanus*, I aim to show, are human beings who fully embrace and appreciate their mortality.

For Heidegger the problem with humanism is precisely that it is an “ism” (ibid.). Humanism does not think after the essence of the human being. Humanism rather operates with an available representation of the human being. The prevalent metaphysical representation of what it means to be human is the rational animal. Yet, the question whence that representation comes remains unasked (ibid.). Heidegger’s critique of humanism, however, does not mean that Heidegger wants to do with the human being altogether. In the *Letter* Heidegger returns to his notion of *ek-sistence* to address the essence of the human being. *Eksistence* is still the multi-layered tripartite temporality where all three *ecstasies* flow into each other. Yet, now *eksistence* is introduced into the history of *beyng* and thought of as touching and determining the human being from out of the essential event. In a crucial passage in the *Letter* Heidegger says: “This means that the human being, as the *ek-sisting* counterthrow [*Gegenwurf*] of being, is more than *animal rationale* precisely to the extent that he is less bound up with the human being conceived from subjectivity.” (GA9: 342/260) In a footnote to the word “being” he adds: “Better: within being *qua* essential event.” (ibid. *ta*) Heidegger here redetermines the notions of thrownness and *eksistence*. They are no longer structural features of *Dasein*. They are now structural features of *beyng* and its history. In so doing Heidegger critically extends the project of overcoming the enclosedness of subjectivity he began in *Being and Time*, but which, as I have argued in part I, ultimately suffers from the priority *Dasein* takes. The *Letter* avoids the shadow of the subject by transferring over not only thrownness (as Heidegger already does in *Contributions*), but also *Dasein*’s ecstatic temporality to *beyng*. In so doing

Heidegger arrives at an original determination of the essence of the human being, one that is free from metaphysical representations. As it is an instantiation of the *eksistence* of being, the essence of the human being is temporal rather than transtemporal. Moreover, and more importantly, this essence is formed by the history of being and its internal strife.

With *eksistence* as an interest of being itself, the human being is dependent on the disclosures and withdrawals of being. Thus the essence of the human being becomes *geschichtlich*, destinal (cf. GA9: 345/263). Human essence is now onto-historical: “In his essential unfolding within the history of being, the human being is the being whose being as *ek-sistence* consists in his dwelling in the nearness of being.” (GA9: 342/261) This move finally dethrones the subject because the history of being takes priority. This is also why Heidegger speaks of the poverty of human *ek-sistence* (cf. *ibid.*). The poverty of human beings and their role as the shepherd of being have the consequence that human beings are at the mercy of being’s call. But they are equally at the mercy of their response to that call, for they can barely ever fully know whether they have properly co-responded to it. This has to do with human mortal finitude, which leaves no room for any kind (not even the technological kind) of transcendence to a realm of human immortality. To some degree this is in accord with the fourfold, where mortals and divinities meet, even enrich one another, but always retain each their ownness and remain separate and distinct from one another. In this mortal poverty, however, lies human dignity, argues Heidegger (cf. GA9: 342/261). Accepting poverty denies the omnipotence which the subject assumes for itself and which the subject secures by organising all beings according to its desires. To accept that poverty is to accept mortality, is to let go. To accept that poverty is also what lets enter the essential event as self-eliciting, poorest of all, entirely unsupported but oscillating centre. And this thinking lets us see the wealth of things that are of their own accord.

On my reading the *homo humanus* is thus the mortal being who is intimately related with being for her relationship with death. The proper name of the *Homo Humanus* is *Homo Humanus Moribundus*. As we know from *Being and Time* and *Contributions* the transformation of the human being begins with being-towards-death. In *Contributions* it is the task of a few to initiate the transformation. This does not change with the later writings on language, as I show next. Yet, now in *On the Way to*

Language there is a stronger focus on a community of mortals than there is in *Contributions*.

2. Rare Mortals and the Community of Mortals

Running forth toward in *Being and Time* reveals death as Dasein's ownmost and non-relational possibility. This is where Dasein is most authentic. Heidegger says that in this radical individuation "any being-with others fails." (SZ: 263/252) Heidegger even speaks of Dasein's *solipsism* in this context. Dasein is thus apparently cut off from others when it becomes authentic. It seems as though there is no room for community in *Being and Time*. In the texts on the fourfold Heidegger, however, explicitly speaks of mortals in the plural which suggests a community of mortals. Still, amongst others Beistegui and Brogan (cf. 2013: 32f) argue that already in *Being and Time* Heidegger argues for a "community of mortal, factual existents." (Beistegui 2003: 35). As Heidegger himself writes, even in the most radical individuation of Dasein its modes of taking care and being concerned "are not cut off from its authentic being a self." (SZ: 263/252) That is to say, Dasein is most authentic when it runs forth to its ownmost possibility and accepts this possibility on its own because this full self-responsibility is what first opens Dasein to be with others authentically. Dasein then no longer "lives according to the mode of the empty majority" (Beistegui 2003: 35) but can participate in forming a genuine community. A community ultimately formed by Dasein's ownmost possibility.

This sense of community death sparks resurfaces along the thinking path in essays like *The Thing* and *Building Dwelling Thinking*, and also in *Language* and *The Way to Language*. Heidegger there expands on the relation between death and community and he explicitly does so in terms of dwelling. In a nutshell, the ultimate transformation of the human being Heidegger works towards, means to leave behind the atomised and nihilistic existence of the post-modern rational animal maximising its utility, and to enter into a community of mortals. Bernasconi (cf. 2013: 148f) notes that Heidegger arrives at the fourfold and the importance of dwelling thanks to his readings of Hölderlin. Heidegger learns from Hölderlin the right kind of language that can articulate the fourfold and poetic dwelling. From Hölderlin Heidegger also learns the proximity between thinking and poetising and this marks the most significant alteration of Heidegger's own philosophical language. Heidegger's experimental

language becomes *poietical*, a saying non-saying, an elusive language that still says the abyss and self-concealment of being clearer than any metaphysical language before.

In a crucial passage in *Language* Heidegger writes with reference to Trakl's poem *A Winter Evening*:

Not all mortals are called, not the many . . . , but only "more than a few" — those who wander on dark courses. These mortals are open [*vermögen*] to their dying as the wandering toward death. In death the supreme concealedness of being crystallizes. Death has already overtaken every dying. Those "wayfarers" must first wander their way to house and table through the darkness of their courses; they must do so not only and not even primarily for themselves, but for the many, because the many think that if they only install themselves in houses and sit at tables, they are already bethinged [*be-dingt*], conditioned, by things and have arrived at dwelling. (GA12: 20/198*a*)

This passage has strong echoes from *Contributions*. As I have argued in part II, only a few, who are called by being, have to carry out being-toward-death, and their responses, for example, in poetry and art and the sciences, disclose possible ways of existence. Note again, that the few do not provide a realm of their own accord and making, but only reveal what is *there* but covered over. They mediate possibilities of being. Here Heidegger now tells us nearly the same. A few hermits have to wander toward death. What Heidegger calls running forth in *Being and Time*, he now refers to as wandering toward death. Yet, death is now to be understood as sanctuary of being and shrine of the nought. That is, what has disclosed to some remote and lonely few, is that being self-conceals and self-withdraws *as* its history. The few do not span open a realm for the many, they rather safeguard the world of the many. That this arises out of "wandering toward death" also means that this is a finite process. There will be an end to this, either when the last death will have been died or if machines should take over — an outcome Heidegger apparently assumes to be quite possible. Even though those who wander toward death, are remote from the many, they spark a community of mortals insofar as they selflessly think the concealment any wholesome community of mortals requires. In my view, Heidegger understands Hölderlin's notion that "man dwells poetically" as follows. Poetic dwelling comes about when a few think concealment, when they go down into the abyss by carrying out death, and so help bring forth the rich simplicity of the fourfold. This takes place, for example, through the successful grounding and seeing off¹¹⁹ of a world-forming artwork, that opens the

¹¹⁹ As Heidegger notes in the *Conversation*, departure, seeing off, *Abschied*, is not meant as simple negation, but as "the coming of what has been [*Gewesen*]" (GA12: 146/54). We see here again the

realm for a community. That is to say, “ordinary” mortals are also responsible for their world. The ethos of the fourfold is to reflect in a communal way on what it means to be in the world. Thus Heidegger now also no longer understands the everyday as inauthentic. The poet’s words are invitations to reflect on the community.

Yet again it is death that lets world arise. In *Being and Time* death as Dasein’s ultimate limit constitutes world as the horizon of significance against which Dasein continuously projects its possibilities. The world begins where Dasein *ends*. Dasein *is* because it always already is under threat not to be. In *Language* the world as fourfold, as an equilibrium, where mortals dwell, *worlds* because a remote few wander toward death as the concealment of being. Which means that they attempt to think the concealment of being.

This takes place in a dialogue between thinking and poetising, as Heidegger himself undertakes it in his writings. Heidegger understands the German verb *dichten*, to poetise, as related to the Greek τίκτωσα, to bring forth. In poetry, or at least the poetry Heidegger considers, he sees the distinct possibility to bring about a disclosure of being. Being means that beings are. The poet is the one who can properly articulate this difference insofar as the poet calls upon, *heißen*, things, for there to be world (cf. GA12: 23/199). That is, the poet is the one who can articulate the meaningful interrelationality that makes up our world. This is the reason why language is essentially saying, i.e. a disclosure mindful of self-concealment, which provides the presence for all things. The poet makes the world meaningful for the many, but the poet does not do so out of thin air. The poet receives meaning from the concealedness of being and is able to articulate it.

The few are then those who can hear the call of being. They respond sooner to openings in history and even if they may be select they are and remain mortally finite and so is their response to history. Their existence is not described as privileged or elitist. Rather, it is a burden and with reference to Trakl Heidegger speaks of them as *abgeschieden*, secluded, lonely (cf. GA12: 48/170). Heidegger warns that we should not understand his remarks regarding the few as “dreamy romanticism, at the fringe of the technically-economically oriented world of modern mass existence.” (GA12: 76/196). Instead, there is a certain ecstatic dis-placedness, *Ver-rücktheit*, about the few which allows them to see the world differently. They are literally dis-placed from the

ecstatic movement of the history of being. What has been, will come toward us and out of this oscillation the presence forms.

pieties of the current age, from the actual and the current, but for that very displacedness they are inserted into the arrival of being and its fate. For their displacedness they are able to think and articulate possible ways out of the homogeneity of the technological world. They show us that despite the threat of the machine-world there is the possibility to come into one's own. Still, Heidegger does not give an indication who exactly they might be in our age. Yet, given the importance placed on concealedness, their emergence is not utterly contingent, but predicated on and necessitated by the movement and call of being. The call calls on us to return home. Heidegger's thinking path is a remote path and attuned to Novalis' thought that philosophy is homesickness (cf. GA29/30: 7/5). Philosophy always tries to find a way back home, for there to be a possibility of *poetic dwelling*: a dwelling in harmony with self-concealment. Language is that home for Heidegger.

In his 1960 talk *Language and Home* Heidegger suggests that language "thanks to its poetic essence ... gifts and brings forth home." (GA13: 180) This is an echo of his earlier talk *Language I* referred to at the beginning of this part. In *Language* Heidegger says that it is through language that we enter the essential event and come into our own. Heidegger's last written words, shortly before his death, ask whether being-at-home is at all possible in the technological age. Language can be a home precisely for its essential relation with death, i.e., with that which utterly defies technology's will at mastering and in this way provides shelter and possibility of withdrawal. Withdrawal and letting-go are precisely what is needed in order to step out of the homogenising and flattening forces of positionality. Language is a home, when we heed our languages. In 1969 Heidegger says to Wisser that what we require is "a new diligence of language. No invention of new terms as I once believed, but a retreat to the original contents and wealth [*ursprünglicher Gehalt*] of our own language. Language is, however, always under threat of decay." (Wisser 1970: 77) For language not to decay, but for it to flourish goes hand in hand with thinking the sanctuary of being.

Conclusion

Throughout this this I have provided a reading of the four main themes of Heidegger's philosophy in light of the phenomenon of death. In the introduction I claimed that it is

possible to articulate a response to the question of being when one brings death into focus. In what follows I shall provide a synthesis of my findings and also give a response to the question of being. Of course, I do not at all claim that this is a definitive account or even a final response to the question of being. This thesis is not and there cannot be one definitive answer to the question that is as long as there are mortals. This thesis is but an attempt to bear the infinite question of being with finite powers. Also, this response is perspectival as much as it is temporal. Thus by “response” I do not mean a propositional answer that should be evaluated as either correct or wrong. By response I rather mean the response to a certain call that I believe to be present in Heidegger’s texts. To my mind, death is pivotal for the way in which Heidegger responded to this question of questions, *what does it mean to be*. In what follows, I shall, first, present what I take to be a helpful response to Heidegger’s question. Second, I show the limitations of that response and possibilities for investigating the matter further.

1. A Response

A response to the question of being cannot lie in an isolated proposition, as Heidegger makes clear in *Being and Time*. Rather the response arises from reading Heidegger’s texts in view of the tradition he is part of and in view of the history of being. I understand Davis’ study, which I have mainly referred to in part II, as another example of an attempt at a response of the question of being. For Davis letting go of the will is decisive to enter into a relationship with being. To that I should like to add that death – as running forth toward death, as becoming mortals, as wandering towards the sanctuary of being – has a stake in abandoning the will and the prevalence of beings. As I have pointed out, Vallega-Neu’s study of *Contributions* stresses that Heidegger makes the decisive experience with being in the analysis of Dasein’s being-toward-death in *Being and Time*. Being-toward-death brings Dasein most radically and most intensely before being. During its transcendental self-investigation Dasein realises that its ownmost possibility, that which simultaneously limits and releases all its other possibilities, is *at once* Dasein’s utmost impossibility of being. Being withdraws in the moment we get closest to it. Being, *being*, is what self-withdraws and cannot ever be fully grasped. But this is precisely what continues to draw us toward being and to the question of being.

Considering this realisation together with Heidegger's understanding of ἀλήθεια and his insight into ecstatic time, makes apparent the reasons why Heidegger speaks of the turning of beyng and of beyng as essentially occurring. I have argued that truth as ἀλήθεια is pivotal for the "turn" in Heidegger's thought. By way of ἀλήθεια Heidegger can more radically approach the basic occurrence of being he saw taking place in Dasein's being-toward-death – namely, that being self-conceals. With this thought Heidegger is already beyond the limit of a metaphysics of presence and actuality; this is precisely the other moment of being that death reveals to Heidegger. That is to say, Heidegger can begin to think being as the possible, as twisting free from the metaphysical prejudice about being that it is the most actual and thus the most obvious, precisely because of his early understanding of death as ownmost possibility. Death as ownmost possibility is also what frees the subject from its world-enclosedness and places the subject *in* its world. Dasein's being is meaningful because it is mortal. Together with angst death to a certain degree frees from the prevalence of beings.

This is why death remains crucial throughout the thinking path and this is why death is one way of appreciating the very unity of that path. Death is the "highest testimony to beyng" precisely because death brings Heidegger's thinking close to being from the very beginning of the thinking path. Death as *Ge-Birg*, as the concentration of all *bergen* (sheltering, harbouring, concealing), is also most intimately related to time as that which regulates the clearing of beyng's self-concealment. As *Ge-Birg* death is at the heart of the most fundamental figure of Heidegger's thought: ἀλήθεια. And most importantly, in my view, death is what allows thinking to leap into the abyss of beyng, to think beyng as the utterly "unsupported and unprotected." This thinking of the utterly unsupported first fully brings the difference between beyng and beings to the fore. Which is precisely what metaphysics has forgotten and which is what, on Heidegger's understanding, metaphysics sees, but must work against in order to establish a permanent ground. In other words, metaphysics, for it flees from the schismatic abyss, must establish a permanent ground of the beingness of beings. That drive to establish a permanent ground, in turn, is what constitutes and drives positionality. In a nutshell, this is why, positionality must work against death, for death is what continuously reminds us of the abyss. This, in turn, is why Heidegger wishes to welcome death into the midst of existence, especially so in the writings of the fourfold. The fourfold as another

possibility of world, as another dimension we can poetically dwell in – i.e., mindful of concealment and therefore appreciative of the wealth of things – is possible only as long as positionality is a fate of being. But during positionality it is precisely by welcoming death that mortals welcome being into the midst of their ways. As death is at work in the fourfold, the presence of being in the thing, is a good presence, a presence mindful of absence.

In an age in which the human subject assumes to be almighty; in which the solutions to all the world's problems, be they hunger, disease, ageing, the planet's climate, or even death seem at the mercy of human will and manipulation – or even of human making; in a world that supposedly becomes ever more complex Heidegger's voice sounds like an anomaly. He not only tells us that there is just one question that matters, the simple question of being. On my reading, he also tells us that we can only ask this question because we are mortal and that we have to accept our mortal finitude as our most fundamental way of being. For any attempt at dominance and manipulation are ultimately predicated on uncontrollability, on the unmasterable and the inaccessible. Put simply, they are predicated on the concentration of all concealment, death. Those who believe that death is now a problem waiting to be solved by the wonders of technology might find it surprising that their urge to solve this "problem" is driven by the very source of unclarity and mystery they wish to eradicate: death.

Death, as I have tried to show throughout this thesis, is always present thanks to its utter absence. For Heidegger death is not a transition to an afterlife. Death is not the end of a finite timeline. Death is for its inaccessibility the source of the excess of the wealth of being's possibilities. Death is in that sense what goads on history and human creativity.

A decisive passage in *Zum Ereignis-Denken* entitled *Das Sein (Ereignis)* says that when we allow death into our existence, then death releases the gods into appearance: "The gods do not appear *after* death but *through* death." (GA73.1: 73) Heidegger's notorious remark in the *SPIEGEL* interview comes to mind where he says that only a god can save us now. Here in *Ereignis-Denken* we learn what he means by this. Heidegger tells us that gods appear through death which I read as saying that human beings have the distinct duty to appreciate their mortality in order to come into touch again with the divine. The appearance of gods is what could spark another beginning. There is a certain solemnity about this passage. The gods appear through death and so the "bridal festival," a measure can be found again on earth. This

equilibrium, however, only ever lasts for a while, for the question of being has to be asked *again and again*.

2. Restrictions of this Response

This response is but a finite attempt that does not assume to give an absolute or even crucial answer to the question of being. One of the restrictions of this thesis is its focus on Heidegger's understanding of death. Strictly from the perspective of the importance of the phenomenon of death we can learn more about Heidegger as well as the question of being, if we were to take into consideration in more detail and more thoroughly how other philosophers have responded to the question of mortality. I have only briefly mentioned Socrates', Leibniz', and Hegel's theories of death, but it can hardly be said that I have done justice to them. Another, and to my mind, quite important angle one could take, is to read Heidegger's philosophy of death in comparison with non-Western philosophy and the way in which they have dealt with the matter. Heidegger himself turns to Asian philosophy in his later writings, for he seems to see in them something we in the West have lost. That is to say, our focus on a metaphysics of presence nearly prohibits us from thinking absence, the non-actual and the possible. But the prevalence of presence and the actual also seems to deter us from understanding our particular history of thinking in a manner that recognises its inner cohesion, coherence and necessity.

In terms of Heidegger scholarship more work needs to be done that focuses exclusively on death and being as possibility. This thesis has tried to show the central role death plays for much of the thinking path. But with the preliminary work done here – and by Demske before me – it should be insightful to determine more precisely and in light of death what Heidegger means with his notion of the possible. Especially, as now most of Heidegger's texts intended for publication are available. From this angle I understand my thesis as an invitation to investigate this matter further. One way of going about this could be by an extensive study of Heidegger's lecture courses on Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. Also, a more intense study of the *Black Notebooks* might yield interesting insights into Heidegger's understanding of being as the possible.

Another possibility for future research projects, which could take this thesis as their groundwork, is a comparison between Heidegger's understanding of the relation between death and technology and Foucault's critique of biopower. The state exercises

control over bodies by means of biopower and by controlling physical demise – who gets to live and who needs to die – the state can claim an unprecedented sovereignty over its subjects. By bringing this into dialogue with Heidegger’s idea that positionality works against death and his suggestion that we need to welcome death into existence one might be able to show the limitations of biopower. Furthermore, by going beyond a pure exegesis of Heidegger one can take the fourfold as basis for constructing a distinct ethics of the dignity of dying. An ethics of dying that rests on the assumption that every death is unique, an ethics that respects every mortal being as unique and refrains from denying care and attention to those who are on their deathbeds. The fourfold, then, would be the realm for an ethos that lets us encounter and appreciate our mortality in a communal way. Thanks to such an ethos, contra the politics of biopower, death is not a means of population control, but the gateway to a community of unique mortals. But one would have to say more on birth than Heidegger ever did. In order to construct this particular ethics it should be a worthwhile and meaningful project to read Heidegger’s notion of mortality against, for example, Arendt’s (1998) study of birth in *The Human Condition*.

Bibliography

Works by Heidegger

Heidegger, Martin, *Sein und Zeit* (elfte unveränderte Auflage). Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1967.

Heidegger, Martin, *Überlieferte Sprache und Technische Sprache*. St. Gallen: Erker Verlag, 1989.

From the Gesamtausgabe

GA3 Gesamtausgabe, Vol. 3: *Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik*. F.-W. von Herrmann, ed. Frankfurt a.M.: V. Klostermann, 1991.

GA4 Gesamtausgabe, Vol. 4: *Erläuterungen zu Hölderlins Dichtung*. F.-W. von Herrmann, ed. Frankfurt a.M.: V. Klostermann, 1981.

GA5 Gesamtausgabe, Vol. 5: *Holzwege*. F.-W. von Herrmann, ed. Frankfurt a.M.: V. Klostermann, 1977.

GA6.1 Gesamtausgabe, Vol. 6.1: *Nietzsche I (1936 - 1939)*. B. Schillbach, ed. Frankfurt a.M.: V. Klostermann, 1996.

GA7 Gesamtausgabe, Vol. 7: *Vorträge und Aufsätze*. F.-W. von Herrmann, ed. Frankfurt a.M.: V. Klostermann, 2000.

GA8 Gesamtausgabe, Vol. 8: *Was heißt Denken?* P.-L. Coriando, ed. Frankfurt a.M.: V. Klostermann, 2002.

GA9 Gesamtausgabe, Vol. 9: *Wegmarken*. F.-W. von Herrmann, ed. Frankfurt a.M.: V. Klostermann, 1976.

GA10 Gesamtausgabe, Vol. 10: *Der Satz vom Grund*. P. Jaeger, ed. Frankfurt a.M.: V. Klostermann, 1997.

GA11 Gesamtausgabe, Vol. 11: *Identität und Differenz*. F.-W. von Herrmann, ed. Frankfurt a.M.: V. Klostermann, 2006.

GA12 Gesamtausgabe, Vol. 12: *Unterwegs zur Sprache*. F.-W. von Herrmann, ed. Frankfurt a.M.: V. Klostermann, 1985.

GA13 Gesamtausgabe, Vol. 13: *Aus der Erfahrung des Denkens*. H. Heidegger, ed. Frankfurt a.M.: V. Klostermann, 1983.

- GA14 *Gesamtausgabe*, Vol. 14: *Zur Sache des Denkens*. F.-W. von Herrmann, ed. Frankfurt a.M.: V. Klostermann, 2007.
- GA15 *Gesamtausgabe*, Vol. 15: *Seminare*. C. Ochwadt, ed. Frankfurt a.M.: V. Klostermann, 1986.
- GA16 *Gesamtausgabe*, Vol. 16: *Reden und andere Zeugnisse eines Lebensweges*. H. Heidegger, ed. Frankfurt a.M.: V. Klostermann, 2000.
- GA20 *Gesamtausgabe*, Vol. 20: *Prolegomena zur Geschichte des Zeitbegriffs*. P. Jaeger, ed. Frankfurt a.M.: V. Klostermann, 1979.
- GA22 *Gesamtausgabe*, Vol. 22: *Die Grundbegriffe der antiken Philosophie*. Blust, F.-K., ed. Frankfurt a.M.: V. Klostermann, 2004.
- GA25 *Gesamtausgabe*, Vol. 25: *Phänomenologische Interpretation von Kants Kritik der reinen Vernunft*. I. Görland, Frankfurt a.M.: V. Klostermann, 1995.
- GA26 *Gesamtausgabe*, Vol. 26: *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Logik im Ausgang von Leibniz*. K. Held, ed. Frankfurt a.M.: V. Klostermann, 2007.
- GA29/30 *Gesamtausgabe*, Vol. 29-30: *Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik: Welt - Endlichkeit - Einsamkeit*. F.-W. von Herrmann, ed. Frankfurt a.M.: V. Klostermann, 1983.
- GA32 *Gesamtausgabe*, Vol. 32: *Hegels Phänomenologie des Geistes*. I. Görland, ed. Frankfurt a.M.: V. Klostermann, 1997.
- GA33 *Gesamtausgabe*, Vol. 33: *Aristoteles: Metaphysik IX, 1-3*. H. Hüni, ed. Frankfurt a.M.: V. Klostermann, 2006.
- GA34 *Gesamtausgabe*, Vol. 34: *Vom Wesen der Wahrheit: Zu Platons Höhlengleichnis und Theätet*. H. Mörchen, ed. Frankfurt a.M.: V. Klostermann, 1988.
- GA40 *Gesamtausgabe*, Vol. 40: *Einführung in die Metaphysik*. P. Jaeger, ed. Frankfurt a.M.: V. Klostermann, 1983.
- GA45 *Gesamtausgabe*, Vol. 45: *Grundfragen der Philosophie: Ausgewählte "Probleme" der "Logik"*. F.-W. von Herrmann, ed. Frankfurt a.M.: V. Klostermann, 1984.
- GA54 *Gesamtausgabe*, Vol. 54: *Parmenides*. M. Frings, ed. Frankfurt a.M.: V. Klostermann, 1992.
- GA58 *Gesamtausgabe*, Vol. 58: *Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie*. H.-H. Gander, ed. Frankfurt a.M.: V. Klostermann, 1993.
- GA65 *Gesamtausgabe*, Vol. 65: *Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis)*. F.-W. von Herrmann, ed. Frankfurt a.M.: V. Klostermann, 1989.

- GA67 *Gesamtausgabe*, Vol. 67: *Metaphysik und Nihilismus*. H.-J. Friedrich, ed. Frankfurt a.M.: V. Klostermann, 1999.
- GA68 *Gesamtausgabe*, Vol. 68: *Hegel*. I. Schüssler, ed. Frankfurt a.M.: V. Klostermann, 1993.
- GA70 *Gesamtausgabe*, Vol. 70: *Über den Anfang*. P.-L. Coriando, ed. Frankfurt a.M.: V. Klostermann, 2005.
- GA71 *Gesamtausgabe*, Vol. 71: *Das Ereignis*. F.-W. von Herrmann, ed. Frankfurt a.M.: V. Klostermann, 2009.
- GA73.1 *Gesamtausgabe*, Vol. 73.1: *Zum Ereignis-Denken*. P. Trawny, ed. Frankfurt a.M.: V. Klostermann, 2013.
- GA76 *Gesamtausgabe*, Vol. 76: *Leitgedanken zur Entstehung der Metaphysik, der neuzeitlichen Wissenschaft und der modernen Technik*. C. Strube, ed. Frankfurt a.M.: V. Klostermann, 2009.
- GA79 *Gesamtausgabe*, Vol. 79: *Bremer und Freiburger Vorträge*. P. Jaeger, ed. Frankfurt a.M.: V. Klostermann, 1994.
- GA81 *Gesamtausgabe*, Vol. 81: *Gedachtes*. P.-L. Coriando, ed. Frankfurt a.M.: V. Klostermann, 2007.
- GA89 *Gesamtausgabe*, Vol. 89: *Zollikoner Seminare*. P. Trawny, ed. Frankfurt a.M.: V. Klostermann, 2017.
- GA90 *Gesamtausgabe*, Vol. 90: *Zu Ernst Jünger*. P. Trawny, ed. Frankfurt a.M.: V. Klostermann, 2004.
- GA97 *Gesamtausgabe*, Vol. 97: *Anmerkungen I-V (Schwarze Hefte 1942-1948)*. P. Trawny, ed. Frankfurt a.M.: V. Klostermann, 2015.

Translations of Heidegger

- Aristotle's Metaphysics Θ 1-3: On the Essence and Actuality of Force*. W. Brogan and P. Warnek, trans. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995.
- Bremen and Freiburg Lectures: Insight into That Which is and Basic Principles of Thinking*. A. J. Mitchell, trans. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012.
- Contributions to Philosophy*. R. Rojcewicz and D. Vallega-Neu, trans. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012.
- Elucidations of Hölderlin's Poetry*. Keith Hoeller, trans. New York: Humanity Books, 2000.

Hegel. J. Arel and N. Feuerhahn, trans. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015.

Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit. P. Emad and K. May, trans. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988.

History of the Concept of Time: Prolegomena. Theodore Kisiel, trans. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985.

Identity and Difference. Joan Stambaugh, trans. New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1969.

Introduction to Metaphysics. G. Fried and R. Polt, trans. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000.

Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics. Richard Taft, trans. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990.

Nietzsche, Volume I: The Will to Power and Art. D. F. Krell, trans. New York: Harper & Row, 1991.

Off the Beaten Track, J. Young and K. Haynes, trans. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

On the Way to Language, Peter D. Hertz, trans. New York: Harper & Row, 1971.

Parmenides. A. Schuwer and R. Rojcewicz, trans. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1992.

Pathmarks. William McNeill, ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

The Event. Richard Rojcewicz, trans. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2009.

The Principle of Reason. Reginald Lilly, trans. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1996.

Poetry, Language, Thought. Albert Hofstadter, trans. New York: Harper & Row, 1971.

The Essence of Truth: On Plato's Cave Allegory and Theaetetus. Ted Sadler, trans. London: Continuum, 2002.

The Heidegger Reader. J. Veith, trans., G. Figal, ed. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009.

The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude. W. McNeill and N. Walker, trans. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995.

The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays, William Lovitt, trans. New York: Harper & Row, 1977.

What is Called Thinking? F.D. Wieck and J. Glenn Gray, trans. New York: Harper & Row, 1968.

Other Works Consulted

Adkins, Brent, *Death and Desire in Hegel, Heidegger and Deleuze*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007.

Agamben, Giorgio, *Language and Death: The Place of Negativity*. K.E. Pinkus and M. Hardt, trans. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006.

Alker, Andrea B., *Das Andere im Selben: Subjektivitätskritik und Kunstphilosophie bei Heidegger und Adorno*. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2007.

Arendt, Hannah and Martin Heidegger, *Briefe 1925–1975 und andere Zeugnisse*. Frankfurt a. M.: Vittorio Klostermann, 1994.

Arendt, Hannah, *The Human Condition*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1998.

Beiser, Frederick C., *German Idealism: The Struggle Against Subjectivism, 1781–1801*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008.

Beistegui, Miguel, *Truth and Genesis: Philosophy as Differential Ontology*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2004.

Beistegui, Miguel, “The Transformation of the Sense of Dasein in Heidegger’s *Beiträge zur Philosophie*.” *Research in Phenomenology*, 33 (2003), 221 - 246.

Beistegui, Miguel, *Thinking with Heidegger: Displacements*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2003.

Benjamin, Andrew, *The Plural Event: Descartes, Hegel, Heidegger*. London: Routledge, 1993

Bernasconi, Robert, “Poets as Prophets and as Painters: Heidegger’s Turn to Language and the Hölderlinian Turn in Context.” In J. Powell, ed., *Heidegger and Language*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2013.

Blattner, William, *Heidegger’s Temporal Idealism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Blattner, William, “The Concept of Death in *Being and Time*.” *Man and World*, 27 (1994), 49–70.

Bojda, Martin, *Hölderlin und Heidegger*. Freiburg: Karl Alber Verlag, 2016.

Buhr, Manfred, and Robert Steigerwald. *Verzicht auf Fortschritt, Geschichte, Erkenntnis und Wahrheit: Zu den Grundtendenzen der gegenwärtigen bürgerlichen Philosophie*. Frankfurt a.M.: Verlag Marxistische Blätter, 1981.

Brogan, Walter, "Listening to the Silence: Reticence and the Call of Conscience in Heidegger's Philosophy." In J. Powell, ed., *Heidegger and Language*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2013.

Calarco, Matthew, *Zoographies: The Question of the Animal from Heidegger to Derrida*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2008.

Carel, Havi, *Life and Death in Freud and Heidegger*. Amsterdam: Rodopi Publisher, 2006.

Chanter, Tina, *Time, Death, and the Feminine: Levinas with Heidegger*, Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2002.

Cohen, Hermann, *Logik der reinen Erkenntnis*. Berlin: Bruno Cassirer Verlag, 1922.

Coxon, A.H., *The Fragments of Parmenides*. Las Vegas: Parmenides Publishing, 2009.

Dahlstrom, Daniel, "Heidegger's Transcendentalism." *Research in Phenomenology*, 35 (2005), 29 - 54.

Dahlstrom, Daniel, *Heidegger's Concept of Truth*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Dahlstrom, Daniel, "Being at the beginning: Heidegger's Interpretation of Heraclitus." In, D. Dahlstrom, ed., *Interpreting Heidegger: Critical Essays*, 2011.

Davis, Bret, *Heidegger and the Will: On the Way to Gelassenheit*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2007.

Dastur, Françoise, *Death: An Essay on Finitude*. John Llewelyn, trans. London: Athlone, 1996.

Dastur, Françoise, "Heidegger and the Question of the "Essence" of Language." In Jeffrey Powell, ed., *Heidegger and Language*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2013.

De Gennaro, Ivo, *Logos: Heidegger liest Heraklit*. Berlin: Duncker & Humblot. 2001.

De Gennaro, Ivo, "Nietzsche: Value and the Economy of the Will to Power." In I. De Gennaro, ed., *Values Sources and Readings on a Key Concept of the Globalized World*. Leiden: Brill, 2012.

De Gennaro, Ivo, *The Weirdness of Being: Heidegger's Unheard Answer to the Seinsfrage*. Durham: Acumen, 2013.

Demske, James, *Being, Man, and Death: A Key to Heidegger*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1970

Derrida, Jacques, "Heidegger's Silence." In G. Neske and E. Kettering, eds., L. Harries and J. Neugroschel, trans, *Martin Heidegger and National Socialism: Questions and Answers*. New York: Paragon House, 1990.

Dreyfus, Hubert L., "Heidegger on the Connection between Nihilism, Art, Technology, and Politics." In C. Guignon, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Dreyfus, Hubert L., "Heidegger on Gaining a Free Relation to Technology." In D. Kaplan, ed., *Readings in the Philosophy of Technology*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2009.

Espinet, David, *Phänomenologie des Hörens: Eine Untersuchung im Ausgang von Martin Heidegger*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009.

Faye, Emmanuel, *Heidegger: The Introduction of Nazism into Philosophy in Light of the Unpublished Seminars of 1933-1935*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009.

Figal, Günter, *Martin Heidegger: Phänomenologie der Freiheit*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013.

Foucault, Michel, *The History of Sexuality Volume I: An Introduction*. R. Hurley, trans. New York: Pantheon Books, 1978.

Givsan, Hassan, *Zu Heidegger: ein Nachtrag zu "Heidegger - das Denken der Inhumanität."* Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2011.

Goethe, J.W., *The Poems of Goethe*. E.A. Bowring, trans. London: George Bell and Sons, 1874.

Golob, Sacha, *Heidegger on Concepts, Freedom and Normativity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014.

Gottschlich, Max, "Das Problem von Sprache und Weltansicht bei Hamann, Herder und Humboldt." *Allgemeine Zeitschrift für Philosophie*, 42.3 (2017), 261 - 278.

Gonzalez, Francisco J., "And the Rest Is *Sigetik*: Silencing Logic and Dialectic in Heidegger's *Beiträge zur Philosophie*." *Research in Phenomenology* 38 (2008), 358 - 391.

Gray, John, *The Soul of the Marionette: A Short Enquiry into Human Freedom*. London: Allen Lane, 2015.

Guignon Charles. "The History of Being." In H. L. Dreyfus and M. A. Wrathall, eds., *A Companion to Heidegger*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005.

Gumbrecht, Hans Ulrich, *1926: Ein Jahr am Rand der Zeit*. Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2003.

Haar, Michel, *Heidegger and the Essence of Man*. W. McNeill, trans. Albany: Suny Press, 1993.

Hahn, Charles H., *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus: An Edition of the Fragments with Translation and Commentary*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 1987.

Heim, Michael, "The Metaphysics of Virtual Reality." Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.

Irwin, Ruth, *Heidegger, Politics and Climate Change: Risking It All*. London: Continuum, 2011.

Harari, Yuval, Noah and Daniel Kahnemann. "Death is Optional." In *Edge* (2015) https://www.edge.org/conversation/yuval_noah_harari-daniel_kahneman-death-is-optional; accessed 10 March 2018.

Haugeland, John, "Truth and Finitude: Heidegger's Transcendental Existentialism." In M. Wrathall and J. Malpas, eds., *Essays in Honor of Hubert L. Dreyfus Vol. 1: Heidegger, Authenticity, and Modernity*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000.

Hegel, G.W.F., *Science of Logic*. George Di Giovanni, trans. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 2010.

Hegel, G.W.F., *The Phenomenology of Spirit*. Michael Inwood, trans. Oxford: Oxford University Press: 2018.

v. Herrmann, F.-W., *Hermeneutische Phänomenologie des Daseins. Ein Kommentar zu Sein und Zeit: Bd. 1 (§ 1-8)*. Frankfurt a.M.: V. Klostermann, 1987.

Hoffman, Piotr, "Dasein and "Its" Time." In H. L. Dreyfus and M. A. Wrathall, eds., *A Companion to Heidegger*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005.

Hutter, Axel, "Das Unvordenkliche der menschlichen Freiheit: Zur Deutung der Angst bei Schelling und Kierkegaard." In J. Hennigfeld and J. Stewart, eds., *Kierkegaard und Schelling: Freiheit, Angst und Wirklichkeit*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter Verlag, 2003.

Hölderlin, Friedrich, *Gesammelte Werke*. H.J. Balmes, ed. Berlin: Fischer Verlag, 2008.

Houlgate, Stephen, *The Opening of Hegel's Logic: From Being to Infinity*. West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2005.

Houlgate, Stephen, *An Introduction to Hegel: Freedom, Truth and History*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006.

Husserl, Edmund, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy: Second Book Studies in the Phenomenology of Constitution*. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1989.

Husserl, Edmund, *Einleitung in die Logik und Erkenntnistheorie. Vorlesungen 1906/07. Husserliana 24*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1985.

Ionel, Lucian, "Sinn und Verbergung. Heideggers Theorie über die Konstitution von Bedeutsamkeit." In G. Thonhauser, ed., *Perspektiven mit Heidegger*. Freiburg: Alber Verlag, 2017.

Lehmann, Karl, *Vom Ursprung und Sinn der Seinsfrage im Denken Martin Heideggers*. Published online 2003. <http://www.freidok.uni-freiburg.de/volltexte/7/>
Downloaded: 12 September 2013. Written in 1961/62.

Leibniz, G.W., *Monadologie*. Ditzingen: Reclam Verlag, 1998.

Kant, Immanuel, *Critique of Pure Reason*. N.K. Smith, trans. London: Macmillan, 1929.

Keiling, Tobias, *Seinsgeschichte und phänomenologischer Realismus: Eine Interpretation und Kritik der Spätphilosophie Heideggers*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015.

Koch, Dietmar, "'Das erbringende Eignen". Zu Heideggers Konzeption des Eigenwesens im Ereignis-Denken" In D. Barbaric, ed., *Das Spätwerk Heideggers. Ereignis – Sage – Geviert*. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2007.

Koch, Dietmar, "Negativität und Geschichte. Zu Heideggers Auseinandersetzung mit Hegels Negativitätsbegriff im Kontext des "Anderen Anfangs"." In O. Zunec and P. Segedin, eds., *Zblizavanja. Zbornik povodom sezdesete obljetnice zivota Damira Barbarica*. Zagreb: Matica Hrvatska, 2012.

Magnus, Bernd. *Heidegger's Metahistory of Philosophy: Amor Fati, Being and Truth*. Heidelberg: Springer, 1970.

Mandelstam, Ossip, *The Poet's Dante*. P. S. Hawkins and R. Jacoff, eds. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2001.

Marinopoulou, Anastasia, *Critical Theory and Epistemology: The Politics of Modern Thought and Science*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017.

Marx, Werner, *Is there a Measure on Earth? Foundations for a Nonmetaphysical Ethics*. T. J. Nenon and R. Lilly, trans. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983.

Marx, Werner, *Heidegger and the Tradition*. T. Kisiel, trans. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1982.

Megill, Allan, *Prophets of Extremity: Nietzsche, Heidegger, Foucault, Derrida*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985.

Mitchell, Andrew, *Fourfold: Reading the Late Heidegger*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2015.

Mitchell, Andrew, "The Fourfold." In B. Davis, ed., *Martin Heidegger: Key Concepts*. Durham: Acumen Publishin, 2010.

- Müller, Max, *Existenzphilosophie im Geistigen Leben der Gegenwart*. Heidelberg: F.H. Kerle Verlag, 1964.
- Müller-Lauter, Wolfgang, *Möglichkeit und Wirklichkeit bei Martin Heidegger*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 1960.
- O Murchadha, Felix, *The Time of Revolution: Kairos and Chronos in Heidegger*. London: Bloomsbury, 2013.
- Natorp, Paul, *Philosophische Systematik*. Hamburg: Meiner Verlag, 2004.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich, *Kritische Studienausgabe*, in fifteen Volumes. G. Colli and M. Montinari, eds. Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1988. (KSA in text)
- Nietzsche, Friedrich, *The Gay Science* B. Williams, ed., J. Nauckhoff, trans. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- Oberst, Joachim, *Heidegger on Language and Death: The Intrinsic Connection in Human Existence*. London: Continuum, 2009.
- Pöggeler, Otto, *Heidegger und die hermeneutische Philosophie*. Freiburg: Alber-Broschur, 1983.
- Porsche-Ludwig, Markus, *Wegmarken normativer Politik(wissenschaft)*. Zürich: Lit-Verlag, 2009.
- Ruin, Hans, "Ge-stell: Enframing as the Essence of Technology." In B. Davis, ed., *Martin Heidegger: Key Concepts*. Durham: Acumen Publishin, 2010.
- Pattison, George, *Heidegger on Death: A Critical Theological Essay*. Routledge: London, 2016.
- Polt, Richard, "The Secret Homeland of Speech: Heidegger on Language, 1933–1934." In J. Powell, ed., *Heidegger and Language*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2013.
- Polt, Richard, *The Emergency of Being: On Heidegger's "Contributions to Philosophy"*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006.
- Rescher, Nicolas, G.W. Leibniz's *Monadology*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Richardson, William J., *Heidegger: Through Phenomenology to Thought*. Heidelberg: Springer, 1963.
- Robson, David, "The Birth of Half-human, Half-animal Chimeras." *BBC*, 5 January, 2017. <http://www.bbc.com/earth/story/20170104-the-birth-of-the-human-animal-chimeras> (accessed 2 April 2018).
- Römer, Inga, *Das Zeitdenken bei Husserl, Heidegger und Ricoeur*. Heidelberg: Springer, 2010.

Sallis, John, *Echoes: After Heidegger*. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990.

Sallis, John, *Delimitations: Phenomenology and the End of Metaphysics*. Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, 1995.

Schelling, F.W.J., "Über die Natur der Philosophie als Wissenschaft." In M. Schröter, ed., *Schellings Werke: Fünfter Hauptband. Schriften zur geschichtlichen Philosophie 1821 - 1854*. München: C.H. Beck Verlag, 1979.

Scherer, Georg, *Das Problem des Todes in der Philosophie*. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1979.

Schmid, Holger, "Logos and the Essence of Technology." In B. Babich and D. Ginev, eds., *The Multidimensionality of Hermeneutic Phenomenology*. Heidelberg: Springer, 2014.

Schmidt, Dennis J., *The Ubiquity of the Finite: Hegel, Heidegger, and the Entitlements of Philosophy*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. 1988.

Schmidt, Dennis J., "Truth Be Told: Homer, Plato, and Heidegger." In J. Powell, ed., *Heidegger and Language*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2013.

Sheehan, Thomas, "The Turn." In B. Davis, ed., *Martin Heidegger: Key Concepts*. Durham: Acumen Publishin, 2010.

Singh, R., Raj, *Heidegger, World, and Death*. Lanham: Rowman & Lexington Publishing, 2013.

Stahler, Tanja, *Hegel, Husserl and the Phenomenology of Historical Worlds*. London: Policy Network, 2016.

Strodach, G.K., *The Philosophy of Epicurus*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1963.

Temple, James, "Harvard Scientists Moving Ahead on Plans for Atmospheric Geoengineering Experiments." *Technology Review*, 2017. <https://www.technologyreview.com/s/603974/harvard-scientists-moving-ahead-on-plans-for-atmospheric-geoengineering-experiments/> (accessed 2 April 2018).

Trawny, Peter, *Heidegger Einführung*. Frankfurt a.M.: Campus Verlag, 2003.

Trawny, Peter, 2016. Heidegger and The Shoah. In I. Farin and J. Malpas, eds., *Reading Heidegger's Black Notebooks 1931–1941*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2016.

Thomson, Iain. "Ontotheology? Understanding Heidegger's *Destruktion* of Metaphysics." *International Journal of Philosophical Studies*, 8(3) (2000), 297–327.

Thomson, Iain, *Heidegger on Ontotheology: Technology and the Politics of Education*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Thomson, Iain, *Heidegger, Art, and Postmodernity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.

Thomson, Iain, "Death and Demise in *Being and Time*." In M. Wrathall, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger's Being and Time*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

Vallega-Neu, Daniela, *Heidegger's Contributions to Philosophy: An Introduction*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2003.

Vallega-Neu, Daniela, "Ereignis: the Event of Appropriation." In B. Davis, ed., *Martin Heidegger: Key Concepts*. Durham: Acumen Publishin, 2010.

Vallega-Neu, Daniela, "Heidegger's Poietic Writings: From *Contributions to Philosophy* to *Das Ereignis*." In J. Powell, ed., *Heidegger and Language*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2013.

Vallega-Neu, Daniela, "Heidegger's Reticence: From *Contributions* to *Das Ereignis* and toward *Gelassenheit*." *Research in Phenomenology*, 45 (2015), 1 - 32.

Weston, Nancy, "Thinking the Oblivion of Thinking: The Unfolding of *Machenschaft* and *Rechnung* in the Time of the *Black Notebooks*." In I. Farin and J. Malpas, eds., *Reading Heidegger's Black Notebooks 1931–1941*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2016.

Wild, Markus, "Tierphilosophie bei Heidegger, Agamben, Derrida." *Journal Phänomenologie*, 40 (2013), 23 - 35.

Wisser, Richard, *Martin Heidegger im Gespräch*. Freiburg: Alber Verlag, 1970.

Wolff, Ernst, "Aspects of Technicity in Heidegger's Early Philosophy: Rereading Aristotle's *Techné* and *Hexis*." *Research in Phenomenology* 38 (2008), 317 - 357.

Wrathall, Mark, *Heidegger and Unconcealment: Truth, Language, and History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

Vallega, Alejandro, *Heidegger and the Issue of Space. Thinking on Exilic Grounds*. University Park: Penn State University Press 2003.

Zenklusen, Stefan, *Seinsgeschichte und Technik bei Martin Heidegger. Begriffsklärung und Problematisierung*. Marburg: Tectum Verlag, 2002.