

Reading and Writing After Heidegger: Glimpses of Being in *Dasein's* Development¹

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(D)istress varies in the essential beginnings and transitions of man's history. But this distress should never be taken superficially... as a lack or misery... This distress exists outside any "pessimistic" or "optimistic" valuation. (Our grounding-attunement...) differs according to the inceptual experience of this distress.

Heidegger, *Beitrage/Contributions*².

Introduction

This paper is driven by a number of questions; especially this: if the practice of philosophy is a certain transformative repetition, how do we read or respond to or repeat a philosopher—in particular, Heidegger—who articulates this very principle in an exemplary way? There is a logical paradox here, but also a methodological problem. In the case of Heidegger, I first try to show just how he quite self-consciously engages in a repetition of repetition, how he thematizes this whole question as the question of reading and writing philosophy. I propose a way of reinterpreting the fundamental relation between time and being, one that opens Heidegger's thinking onto other traditions, and gives it a future that he himself did not anticipate. I argue that it is the complex temporality of human maturation, our always incomplete development that gives rise to the question of being. And that it is this fundamentally temporalized multiplicity within human identity that needs to inform the mock battles about the primacy of ontological, ethical or sexual difference. For I suspect that it is here that they are all intertwined.

Heidegger's General Remarks about Reading Others

We do not have to read Heidegger in the light of how he reads others, and his reflections on philosophy as reading. But in my view these issues are so central, and so much happens for Heidegger here that we would be crazy not to. I present what I am doing in this way to make it more challenging to those who see themselves as defenders of Heidegger's legacy. In my view that legacy is precisely concerned with the transforming of legacy.³

I would like first to demonstrate what I have so far just claimed about the intimate connection in Heidegger's work between philosophizing and the transformative reading of the tradition. Of course in one sense this is obvious. So much of what Heidegger has published were originally lecture courses devoted to central figures of the tradition, especially the ancient Greeks. But we need to remind ourselves what Heidegger thinks is at stake here, to realize that if he is right these very considerations apply to our reading of Heidegger himself. Now we all know that section 6 of *Being and Time* concerns itself with the need to deconstruct, dismantle, 'destroy' the tradition, to bring out its positive possibilities. But let us look at his remarks a year or two later in his *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*:

[A]n interpretation limited to a recapitulation of what Kant explicitly said can never be a real explication, if the business of the latter is to bring to light what Kant, over and above his express formulation, uncovered in the course of his laying of the foundation. To be sure, Kant himself is no longer able to say anything concerning this, but what is essential to all philosophical discourse is not found in the specific propositions of which it is composed but in that which, although unstated as such, is made evident through these propositions.⁴

*[I]n order to wrest from the actual words that which these words "intend to say," every interpretation must necessarily resort to violence. This violence, however, should not be confused with an action that is wholly arbitrary. The interpretation must be animated by the power of an illuminative idea. Only through the power of this idea can an interpretation risk that which is always audacious, namely, entrusting oneself to the secret *elan* of a work, in order by this *elan* to get through to the unsaid and to attempt to find an expression for it. The directive idea itself is confirmed by its own power of illumination.⁵*

Heidegger claims to have been inspired here by Kant's own formulation of the principle of interpretation:

The fundamental purpose of the present interpretation of the *Critique of Pure Reason* is to reveal the basic import of this work by bringing out what Kant

“intended to say.” Our interpretation is inspired by a maxim which Kant himself wished to see applied to the interpretation of philosophical works and which he formulated in the following terms at the end of his reply to the critique of the Leibnizian Eberhard:

... they do not understand the intentions of these philosophers when they neglect the key to all explication of the works of pure reason through concepts alone, namely the critique of reason itself (as the common source of all concepts), and are incapable of *looking beyond the language which these philosophers employ to what they intended to say* [my emphasis].⁶

Heidegger here distinguishes two kinds of interpretation: recapitulation and real explication, and emphasizes the need for the risk, violence, daring needed for the latter. But curiously, this ‘real explication’ is no less directed by what we might call the truth than recapitulation. The claim, however, is that *the truth at this level* can only appear through the illuminative power of a directive idea, which the reader brings to the work.

This claim, developed later by Gadamer,⁷ helps resolve what otherwise looks like a difficulty in Heidegger’s use of Kant here. For it seems as if Kant writes everywhere of what the *author* intended to say, while Heidegger by contrast speaks of what the words intend, or, in the passive voice, of what “is made evident through these propositions.” Is Heidegger here deploying a certain interpretive violence at the very point at which he is crediting Kant with being the source of his inspiration? Turning again to Kant himself, this time to the first *Critique*, we find Kant’s deployment of the famous words (italicized below) in the context of a discussion of Plato, and of the importance of Plato’s understanding of the Idea, precisely for *not* being a purely subjective property, or merely a creature of the understanding. It is here that Kant writes:

I need only remark that it is by no means unusual, upon comparing the thoughts which an author has expressed in regard to his subject... *to find that we understand him better than he understands himself* [my emphasis]. As he has not sufficiently determined his concept, he has sometimes spoken, or even thought, in opposition to his own intention.⁸

These remarks in a way reproduce within themselves the difficulty in reconciling Heidegger’s version of what is at stake in a real explication, with that of Kant. I am tempted to say that what Kant really means here by the sufficient (or full) determination of a concept is close to what Plato really meant by an Idea. And that while for Kant an intention, or at least the kind of guiding intention that informs a philosophical work directs itself, knowingly or not, towards an Idea, Heidegger adds that the reader needs to provide an illuminative idea for something *of the right order* at least to be able to crystallized. What is put in play here, in other words, are two principles, potentially

pulling in different directions: 1: the need to recognize that philosophers are typically on to something whose precise shape they may not grasp; 2: that a ‘real explication’ is required to try to get at *something of the order of* what a philosopher is on to. Heidegger’s solution to the possible divergence of these two *desiderata* is validation through the illuminative power of a directive idea. And here, it has to be said, Heidegger is endorsing in a completely serious and rigorous form, a certain experimental orientation.⁹ The seriousness and rigor prescribe, however, a certain quality to a successful reading. Heidegger is not saying that it is better to be wrong but interesting, but he is saying that without a certain level of re-animation, we just don’t have thinking, but a dangerous and widespread impostor, sometimes called philosophy!

In *What is Called Thinking?* Heidegger distinguishes between going counter to a thinker and going to their encounter.¹⁰ On the one hand polemics, on the other hand, thinking. In the end, we have to conclude that, as Nietzsche said about friendship, we cannot exclude *polemos* from thinking. To think with someone is quite as much to struggle with them over or about what matters. The point is that the struggle is quite as much that of entering a space in which struggle would be significant, rather than just missing the point. Heidegger makes just this claim at the very end of *Being and Time*:

We must look for a way (note: “Not the ‘sole’ way”) to illuminate the fundamental ontological question, and *follow* it. Whether that way is at all the *only* one or even the *right* one can be decided only after we have followed it. The strife in relation to the question of being cannot be settled *because it has not even been started*.¹¹

If I may now capitalize on my initial selectivity, I would like to make some remarks on the specific responsibility of Heidegger’s readings of Kant and Nietzsche, namely his pursuit of the question of time. Each in a different ways, these two readings will enable me to open up the possibility of a further re-interpretation of Heidegger himself. I apologize for my brevity here.

The central thrust of *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, in the terms we have already announced, is that Kant cannot just be read as an epistemological thinker, that the question of knowledge is subordinated to the question of man’s relation to the world, a relation which is ontological in character, not just in the traditional metaphysical way, but in the sense of our having constantly to deal with the strangeness of this relation. Kant’s failure to grasp the full extent of his own thinking has to do, on Heidegger’s view, with his failure to divest himself of the traditional model of time:

Rather... the laying of the foundation and even in its conclusion... are presented according to the provisional conception of the first point of departure. And because Kant, at the time of his presentation of the transcendental schemata, had not worked out an interpretation of the primordial essence of time, his elucidation

of the pure schemata as transcendental determinations of time is both fragmentary and obscure, for time taken as the pure now-sequence offers no possible means of access to the “temporal” interpretation of the notions.¹²

Now what is interesting from our point of view is the temporal model implicit in Heidegger’s own analysis of Kant’s failure to determine the concept (of time) with which he was working. I do not mean the fully-fledged doctrine of ecstatic temporality and being-towards-death in *Being and Time*: I mean the model actually employed in making sense of Kant’s failure. It is Heidegger’s claim that Kant’s failure was a failure to revisit the temporary provisional model of time with which he started off, in the light of the subsequent vistas of understanding he had opened up. Kant, in other words, has failed to re-work, work-through, the model that did indeed allow him to begin and progress. The ‘fragmentariness and obscurity’ of his account of the schematism itself reflects a temporal deficiency, namely having failed to update his provisional starting point. While precisely acknowledging the necessity of provisional starting points. This is, of course, a quite different account from that in *Being and Time*, where Heidegger insists on the need for a *Weiderholung*, a repetition with would give us access to those “primordial sources from which the categories and concepts handed down to us have been in part quite genuinely drawn.”¹³

My second focus will be Heidegger’s reading of Nietzsche in *What is Called Thinking?* I will begin by showing how Heidegger’s understanding of the forcefulness of reading has changed somewhat from the formulations of the 20s.

Whereas in *Being and Time*, he writes of aiming, destroying, staking out, purpose, achievement, etc, by the time we get to *What is Called Thinking?*, something of a turn has taken place. To hear and to read differently requires a certain acknowledgement and respect (*Anerkennung*) and this, he writes ‘consists in letting every thinker’s thought come to us as something in each case unique, never to be repeated, inexhaustible, and *being shaken to the depths by what is unthought in his thought*’. Which ‘unthought’ he goes on to tell us is not a lack, but ‘the greatest gift that thinking can bestow’.

In this formulation, however, Heidegger stresses something new, a different dimensionality of the repetition. ‘Acknowledgement and respect’ (*Anerkennung*) call for a readiness to let our attempts at thinking be overturned, again and again, by what is unthought in the thinker’s thought’. Heidegger calls for ‘clarity in the manner in which we encounter’ thinkers, which means becoming aware that everything hangs on this—we may, as he puts it ‘go to their encounter’ (*Entgegen gehen*) or ‘go counter to them’ (*Dagegen angehen*). The former will magnify what is great, and allow us to enter ‘what is unthought (*Ungedachte*) in his thought’. Heidegger is offering is a recipe for engagement in which, as a condition and as the ongoing shape of that engagement, the willfulness and dominance of the subject has already been suspended, or rather displaced into a transformative receptivity, not merely a dialogue with the other, but a dialogue with an enhanced version of the other’s silent dialogue.

Going counter to the other is precisely a repetition that fails, as we say, to address

the space of encounter within which it constructs its inversions—an insight that Nietzsche himself of course captured when he described his own style as ‘a dance, an overleaping mockery of symmetries’.

Heidegger’s account of going to the other’s encounter is presented in terms of respect and acknowledgement (*Anerkennung*). This *Anerkennung* is an amplifying grasp of the space of any repetition or retrieval or *andenken*. It is expansive in that the event of this repetition is being opened up both in terms of a transformation of my relation to the other (from willfulness to vulnerability), but also in terms of my grasp of the other as himself engaged in a certain structure of openness and concealment which I can transform. This movement, similar to the way in which Nietzsche structures the space of friendship in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* is perhaps exemplary in understanding how the ethical opening to the other is always figured and then refigured. My respect for the other is a receptivity to his thought already construed as a response. I cannot emphasize enough how much this formulation underlines any naïve opposition between the ethical and the ontological. Philosophy is a response to the vulnerable space of the other’s response.

Thematically, Heidegger’s rethinking of Nietzsche here is tied up with the acknowledgement of the centrality to Nietzsche of an affirmative transvaluation of time coupled with the need for a further transformation.

Pursuing the theme he had already worked on in *Contributions*, that the necessity (*Notwendigkeit*) of philosophy lies in it being a response to *Not*, to distress, to difficulty, Heidegger fastens here on Nietzsche’s lament—that the wasteland grows. The essence of Heidegger’s reading of Nietzsche here can be spelled out in four steps;

1. Nietzsche locates the ‘spirit of revenge’ as a critical dimension of this our wasteland;
2. What drives the spirit of revenge, ‘time and its it was’, seems to be ‘time itself’, time construed as passing away, as transitory, one that condemns every now to extinction.
3. However this is not time as such, but ‘the representational view of time... standard through the metaphysics of the West’.¹⁴
4. Nietzsche’s project of overcoming the spirit of revenge, willing the eternal return, needs to be re-evaluated in the light of this fundamentally unthought-through but fateful conceptualization of time.

Heidegger’s response to Nietzsche is driven by a reflection on the very willfulness of the desire to overcome. That is, by the recognition that the transformation we need can only be met by transforming the very shape of the desire that projects us forward. I believe we can find in the shape of human development, understood not

just psychologically, but ‘ontologically’, the fundamental basis both for a critique of the will. But in our capacity for abumbration of pasts that we cannot completely recover lies the shape of our faith in what both Kierkegaard and Derrida would call the impossible.

For my own ‘illuminative idea’ to stand a chance of striking root, some preparatory remarks are in order. I will be trying here to bear in mind the following: that Heidegger’s method concerns itself with a problematic—impeded repetition—suggesting that the past is not readily available to us. And that Heidegger is right to think that the model of time as a leveled-off succession of now points is a hopeless basis on which to open up the question of being. It flattens the dimensionality that opens up the possibility of freedom, authenticity, transcendence. Heidegger is quite right to insist that man’s being is essentially temporal, that the ontological grammar of our ecstasis is distributed in three dimensions, that the economy through which we acknowledge our being-towards-death is critical to any judgment of authenticity, that being is historical in the sense of suffering epochal transformations, that we misunderstand what it is to think if we believe it is possible to complete philosophy or to return to the beginning, that linear time constantly leads us down the wrong track.

The refusal to think of time either as succession, or as the teleological directedness to an end, a future present, a completion, has consequences for philosophical practice itself, given that philosophical texts appear at least to begin and end, to argue for and arrive at conclusions. Add to this the refusal to think of language as a mere means of expression or communication or naming, and philosophy is inexorably drawn towards the question of performativity in which the very shape of its practice embodies these claims. These concerns are evidenced by Heidegger’s insistence that “our task is to cease all overcoming,”¹⁵ that he does “not want to get anywhere. We would like, only, for once to get to where we are already,”¹⁶ and that these have just been “a series of propositions, (what matters is) rather to follow the movement of showing.”¹⁷ I will pursue the question as to whether a certain understanding of performativity, which seems required by a certain responsibility, might itself be a dangerous seduction.

What was at stake in Heidegger’s raising anew the question of being? Heidegger was trying to create or recreate an immanent basis for transcendence, in the face of the otherworldly mystifications of theology and the one-dimensional threat of domination by representation posed by science and technology. As the very idea of Man opposed both to God and to Nature is caught up in a hopelessly entangled matrix, it is better dropped. The recovery of the question of Being is the recovery of a dimensionality within existence that makes truth, freedom, responsibility genuinely possible. Such a dimensionality is, as he says in *What is a Thing?*, the strange space of the in-between.¹⁸ Why does time seem like the key to such a transformation? First, the experience of strife within our experience of time is common currency—common, for example, to Kant, Nietzsche, Bergson and Husserl. But equally, time has already been put at the service of a certain transcendence in its religious partition into the ‘temporal’ and the ‘eternal’, life on earth and life after death. Heidegger is essentially reclaiming the

power of this distinction from the traditional model of time that it presupposes. Life after death is not one dimension of time *following* the first. Heidegger's distinction between everyday and authentic temporality, and his later accounts of timespace are attempts to secularize the resources made possible by transformations in our relation to time. And not surprisingly, this centers around our relation to death. Different modes of being-in-the-world can, so to speak, co-exist, as different possibilities of existence, and do not need to be thought of successively.

There has been a certain interest in recent years in Heidegger's relation to questions of sexual difference, especially from Derrida and Irigaray. And mostly, it is his neutralization of *Dasein's* sexuality that has been discussed. There has been a struggle for a certain primacy between the ontological difference, sexual difference and just plain difference.¹⁹ The key to this intervention is to show how what may just appear as an empirical difference (sexuality) is (quasi) transcendental in its function, in other words that it serves to distribute other values and concepts. But if this is so, at least as strong a case can be made for the role of childhood, and indeed human 'development' in general. It is hard to imagine temporality playing a more constitutive role than in human development through childhood and beyond. I will try to argue now that what Heidegger calls the question of being is intimately tied to our condition as beings who are essentially the product of development. My main focus will be on individual human development, but some of these remarks apply to history too. I propose to offer a rather abstract account of human development which will both free us from specific allegiance to particular theories (though I will give some specific illustrations). I will argue that with this directive idea we can illuminate many of the claims Heidegger wants to make, and that this developmental perspective gives Heidegger's thinking a new future.

Developing the Idea of Development

Dasein, for the most part, seems to mean adult *Dasein*.²⁰ And there is clearly a significant difference between a human who has developed through a series of stages, both physically and psychologically, and the infant crawling on the ground. The adult has acquired capacities—motor skills, capacities for empathic relatedness, survival skills, language and communication, knowledge, critical skills, moral judgment and so on. The adult has acquired a complex mix of independence and new forms of dependency. The adult has in some respects 'come into her own', become free. And in introducing these kinds of concepts, we are making it harder to confine what is at stake to the realm of the empirical. When we talk about skills, we are tacitly supposing an unchanged bearer of such skills. But we know this is not how it is. We know that these developments involve wholesale transformations in our way of being-in-the-world, dramatic changes in the ways we negotiate the in-between. The kinds of changes I

have in mind here are those marked, for example, by Lacan as the mirror stage and the entry into the symbolic. These each involve a transformation in what we could call the economy of being. In the first we accept the synthetic power of the image in giving us, albeit at this specular level, a sense of ourselves as a unity. In the second, we accept a position in language, an identity through naming, in exchange for accessing the powers of language. I am not here arguing for Lacan's particular account.²¹ What it offers us, however, is a glimpse of what is at stake from a structural point of view, in development.²² Irigaray's account of the primary constitution of a subject boundary through touch, through the caress, would in this respect be no different. Heidegger's later discussions of language are precisely of this order—transforming not our theory of language, but our *relation to* language. And it is hard not to see this as a further step, building on the achievements of childhood development and in the very difficulty of conveying this change, recognizing the opacity of changes in which a whole economy is at stake. If for a moment we were to glance at history more broadly we find in Heidegger's account of the epochality of being an account with at least some analogous features. These epochs are not commensurable, and what qualifies as an epoch is something like a economy of being. And the way he describes technology as the era dominated by *Gestell* is not wholly different from the spectrality of the mirror stage.

So far, then, I have tried to show that there are at least candidates for stages of human development that would qualify as different modes of Being-in-the-world.²³ What significance would Heidegger give to such stages? We know that in the case of the evolutionary steps marked, however complexly, by animal existence, he treated their alterity as a form of impoverishment or indeed absence of world. This uncharacteristic re-emergence of a kind of teleological ordering principle suggests a kind of urgency to the question of the animal, anxiety in the face of the animal?²⁴

There is every reason not to do the same with the child, or the infant if we are really concerned to move thinking forward.

There are two extreme versions one might give of the development of a certain complexity through a series of stages. The first is that the early stages fall away having done their work, like booster rockets, having no further role. Or a taxi one takes home. Simply a means to an end. The second is that all the early stages remain transparently available at the later stage which nonetheless grasps its own privilege in relation to them. Neither of these models seem appropriate to human development. So let us suggest a third option—that some kind of memory of earlier stages may be available, but that access to these stages is extremely difficult not least because the very way in which 'experience' was formatted has changed. And we must also ask whether the transitions from one stage to another have been wholly and successfully completed.²⁵ Let us assume, in the way that Freud understood neurosis a universal phenomena only writ large in neurotics, that in the normal situation these transitions are never quite completed.

Heideggerian Corroborations

If all this were true, what would adult human experience be like? First, it would be riddled with the being question, as well as with normalizing pressures to deny the significance of such questions. Because even the marginal availability of other modes of being in the world, activated, reactivated and transformed within adult experience, make the question of being visible. Second, our experience would be haunted by the possibility of something like self-fulfillment, even as that very idea is being made problematic. Third, the experience of *Angst*, the uncanny, and the anticipation of death (and even what Freud calls the fear of castration), would all become closely linked to one another. Such interconnectedness, as I see it, argues in favor of our proposal. I propose that the common source for all such experiences of *das Nichts* lies in the incomplete transitions from one economy of being to another. From the vantage point one is leaving, a new economy can easily appear as death. And from that of the new economy, the prospect of slipping back into the previous regime can seem like death too. We may not, as Derrida reminds us, be in any better position than an animal to experience or know death *as such*,²⁶ but we are only strangers to the experience of the horror or fear of extinction, of our relation to the world breaking down completely if we have completely sealed ourselves off from childhood. My basic point here is that when ‘beings as a whole slip away’,²⁷ the experience is not that of the loss of the world, but the loss of a certain grasp of the world as whole, which is exactly what is at stake in our developmental transitions. In this way, we find an oddly inverted reprise of Plato’s doctrine of *anamnesis*. On that story, we recover, if we are lucky, the soul’s transitional pre-terrestrial glimpse of the forms. On this story, if we are lucky, we are neither wholly shut off from those transitional experiences, nor reflectively incapacitated by them, and they give us access not to the Forms, but to being, precisely at the moment of its being put into question. I would claim too that it is our access, and sometimes our ability to escape, from such experiences that allows us to think, or at least grope towards thinking, what Husserl described as ‘that there might no longer be any world’ (i.e. that it might cease to have any meaning),²⁸ or what Blanchot calls disaster.²⁹

If this is right, then, the secret connection between time and being is indeed through *Dasein*’s existence, and it does indeed become visible through a transformation of our grasp of *Dasein*’s temporality, and ecstatic being towards death points to what is at stake here. But the truth about *Dasein*’s temporality lies in its developmental incompleteness, and the way in which a complex of different economies are nested in our being-in-the-world. I would like to have shown how these different economies are themselves different ways of economizing time. It is a cliché, of course, that maturity and education bring about a capacity to cope with delay and with frustration of immediate gratification, hence a different economy of time. And to the extent that overcoming metaphysics involves moving away from the privilege of presence, and that ceasing all overcoming involves a recognition that something like presence still survives

as the *telos* underwriting the desire to overcome, then we can see that Heidegger's sense of the subsequent possibilities of thinking continues to involve transformations in the economy of time. I should add here that while for the sake of a transformative inhabiting of Heidegger I have emphasized the connection between economic transition and the sense of 'death', *Angst* etc. there is no reason to assume that our developmentally generated ontological layeredness is not also marked by benign boundary dissolutions—ecstasy, pleasure, *jouissance*—even as one may precisely have a problem owning these experiences.

All this would suggest that *Dasein's* temporality cannot be thought without this grasp of our having each inherited not just a tradition, but also an ontologically ingrained complex of incompatible and unintegrated temporalities. If the word 'economy' grates on the ears of those used to Heidegger's 'horizon', 'dispensation of being', or 'time-space', what is true in each case is that there is a certain uneasiness about whether what is fundamental is time or *a certain horizontality of time*, i.e. a certain dimensionality that might not be quite separable from space.³⁰ The relation between time and economy repeats that uneasiness.

How specifically does this account graft onto Heidegger? Let me just give two examples: first it gives us better access to why Heidegger was so obsessed with Nietzsche. For Nietzsche's whole thought of *ressentiment*, of the spirit of revenge against time, and of the affirmation of the eternal return, is precisely an attempt to overcome both the sense of loss associated with the past, and the crippling psychologies we develop to deal with that loss.

This account is isomorphic, at least, with much of what Heidegger says about the need to retrieve the past (and the difficulty of doing this), about reanimating the tradition, and about our (and Kant) getting stuck with provisional versions of things.

And if I had longer I would try to rope into this account all that Heidegger has to say about pain, the threshold, distress etc.³¹ For the moment, let me suggest that this is a good place at which to return to our opening quotation from the *Beitrag*. When Heidegger says that there is distress (*Not*) 'in the essential beginnings and transitions of man's history', he means, of course, not an individual biography but our involvement in the history of being. Heidegger is not speaking about individual development. But Heidegger is more than open to the shape of this thought—that philosophy is born from the pain of transition and renewal. My claim, if you like, is a loose version of the claim that ontogeny repeats phylogeny³²—that individual human development exhibits the same *kind* of traumatic transformations as are to be found in human history, that our own memories give us access to the difficulty of access to the past. And in my view, Heidegger give us all the resources we need to resist the idea that we will just drown in psychology if we move in this direction. All this makes it understandable why Heidegger should speak of the need for and the difficulties of a new beginning. The need for what Nietzsche called overcoming is precisely, as Nietzsche and Heidegger agree, the need for a new economy of being, which for Heidegger, contra Nietzsche is thought in terms of *Gelassenheit*. And the idea that we must cease all overcoming is

precisely an attempt to not allow our practice of thinking to bear with it the seeds of transformative failure. Hence performativity.³³

Finally, a series of remarks that bear on this experimental interpretation of Heidegger, that lend a little credence to our directive idea, and that encourage us to dwell a while on the strangeness and unwelcome aspects of this thought.

A. *Performativity*

As I have said, the temptation of performativity is obvious, natural, and in some ways surely productive. If a philosopher comes to see the possibilities of transformation as tied up with taking up a new relation to language,³⁴ it is hard to resist the idea that the difficulties of bringing about that change, or even adequately articulating it, might be tied up with the fact that in one's very announcement of these possibilities one may be perpetuating the very relation one is trying to overcome. Performativity would be the attempt to put that right. And the idea that pursuing the question of being is most successful if it follows up the connection with time, and then with shifting economies of time and being, gives a clear direction to such performativity.

To be very brief here, I suggest:

1. That the performative dimension of Heidegger's own trajectory of philosophical experimentation is driven by the need to come to terms with this nestedness of times and economies that we inhabit, and that inhabit us;
2. That the insistence and persistence of these economies may make opening a new beginning into an infinite task;
3. That there will naturally arise a certain temptation, one to which Nietzsche was more sensitive than Heidegger, to strive for a certain *coincidence* between, say the what and the how, the content and style. This may seem obvious. Surely the opposite of coincidence would be a certain dissonance, sowing the seeds for failure by reproducing just what one is trying to move beyond;
4. And that nonetheless it may be wise to raise the performativity to another level, not to try to mirror in one's writing some pure coincidence between the what and the how, but rather to deploy a whole range of styles and strategies, accepting, at each point, both opportunities and liabilities. We cannot, for example, think or write without making propositional claims, comparative judgments, critical remarks—in other words we cannot just allow language to speak itself. Which ever way we turn we take risks, we enter territory in which we are not entirely in control, and it is through risking failure that we may find success. This is not only unavoidable, it is something we could celebrate. And that would be a second level of performativity—affirming the risks, dangers, and impurities associated with thinking anew, without aiming at a pure

coincidence. It is fair to say that I have learned from Nietzsche and Derrida to seek more of this in Heidegger, and sometimes to find it.

B. Psychoanalysis:

Does this reading simply open the way to a psychoanalytical absorption of Heidegger?

That is not the aim. But we are moving to a point at which what psychoanalysis indicates—that structural transformations are inherent in human development, that humans are essentially developmental creatures, and that these developments are essentially incomplete—are truths that are independent of a specifically psychoanalytic interpretation.

Furthermore, there is something of a parallel between the way in which Husserl's phenomenology grew out of Frege's charge of psychologism, and the way in which Lacan transformed and reworked the biologicistic basis of Freud's thinking in the light of a certain structuralist logic. This said, there remains the question of whether Lacan completes this process of transformation, or whether he too gets stuck at a certain point. Thus, while in *Of Grammatology*, Derrida specifically mentions psychoanalysis as the place, outside linguistics, in which the 'deconstitution of the founding concept-words of ontology' is most likely to see a breakthrough,³⁵ by the time of *Le facteur de la vérité* (1975), Derrida is claiming that for all its radicality, psychoanalysis in Lacan's hands is committed to the mastery of truth. "Abyss effects are severely controlled here."³⁶ Derrida sees Lacan as finding in castration a new site of truth. The question then for Derrida would perhaps be this—could there be a disseminative psychoanalysis? While for us the question is a little different. The picture we are developing is one in which human development is marked by a movement through a series of structures of psychosomatic organization, or economies.³⁷ These economies would each constitute different regimes of truth, different ways of distributing self and other, man and world. To the extent that *dissemination* captures the dynamic (associative and substitutive) consequences of the differential basis of meaning and identity, the restlessness of any presence, it would operate *within* any economy, and as a principle of leakage or permeability between economies. In these ways, dissemination operates, as I see it, as a principle that prevents closure. But it can not itself account for the differences *between* the economic organization of different stages. Derrida's remarks about Lacan attempting the mastery of abyssal effects, suggests a parallel suggestion about Heidegger and death. I have suggested that developmental identity transitions are, or are potentially, abyssal in quality. That they are re-experienced as *Angst*. And that such experiences provide us with the lived experience of extinction, or death. I think Heidegger's own thinking of death, and of the possibility of an authentic being-towards-death is precisely caught up in this struggle for mastery over the abyssal dimension of death, and even a struggle with the desire for and value of mastery.

So, the short answer to the question about psychoanalysis is that the question of the

relation between philosophy and psychoanalysis is a reprise of the situation that brought about the birth of phenomenology. We have to trust that whatever empirical content we pursue philosophically will eventually yield a logic, or an economy; the question of being can be constantly refreshed and reworked only by these forays into the *sache selbst*.³⁸

Speculative Conclusion

I will conclude in a speculative way, with a story that I would graft on to Heidegger's discussion of the danger and the saving grace of technology, a story that supplies the answer to a question. I have offered here a way of thinking about the relation between time and being that obviously makes common cause with all those interested in trauma, in mourning, in nonlinear and problematic understandings of memory, and so on.³⁹ Now, I recently had the opportunity to comment extensively on the work of Richard Kearney, who, after Paul Ricoeur, promotes the power of narrative imagination as a way of supplying both personal and national identity with sufficient substance to be able to bear ethical responsibility.⁴⁰ Theoretically, this project seems to be threatened by attacks on the status of narrative from postmodernism, threats of which Kearney is well aware and to which he responds. But suppose we read this debate symptomatically, in the following way. Suppose we bring together Heidegger's diagnosis of technology (as a kind of enframing that prepackages the real in ways that conform to its own principles of relationality), with Deleuze and Guattari's accounts of deterritorialization, and our common sense grasp of the way in which economic relations (of exchange) increasingly dominate, that is, ultimately *define* the real for us. We can *now* understand Nietzsche's account of our cultural and moral wasteland as a diagnosis of our failure to answer a question posed to us by history. If individual human development is quite standardly a traumatic journey, in which different stages are incompletely traversed, one which leaves each of us with a nested bundle of modes of being, times and economies, then we may ask ourselves how people typically have dealt with this constitutive personal legacy. I suggest that in the past the central coping mechanism has been the work of socially integrative narrative at every level, that what we are witnessing today is a crisis in narrativity as it becomes displaced by technological, calculative modes of explanation and legitimation, and that this has the effect of exposing the incomplete work of human development, as a high tide exposes the shipwrecks buried under the sand.

This is at least one lens through we can glimpse the shape of our distress. And this distress supplies the historical pressure under which we are coming to see that time does indeed operate as the horizon of the question of being. This is a secret locked in the heart of the human soul.⁴¹ And if nature hides it from us, it is history that unlocks it.

Heidegger's confrontation with Nietzsche could be said to have culminated in

Heidegger's transfiguration of the will-to-power into performativity, most powerfully in the *Beitrage's* claim to be *thinking from Ereignis*. The will-to-power is not just a vitalistic critique of truth as representation, because it puts in question, even as it draws on it, the very idea of life. Heidegger could be said to have found the truth of the will-to-power in the ineliminable performativity of philosophy, that philosophy cannot ultimately be about..., it must itself eventuate. And it eventuates as a form of self-transformation, one marked by 'life', 'affirmation', 'creativity' precisely to the extent that it draws us back into the truth of *Ereignis*. This is the shape of Heidegger's re-enacting responsibility towards Nietzsche. This responsibility requires that we sacrifice truth as (mere) accuracy for truth as a kind of living in relation to disclosure. Responsibility requires that one live with risk. I have myself taken up this challenge by bringing a particular illuminative idea—that of human development as a fundamentally incomplete ontological journey—to the interpretation of Heidegger's fundamental question. Such a story not only allows a certain 'naturalization' of ontology, it allows us to stage again the whole question of the relation of the ontic to the ontological. On our view, which Heidegger, at times shares,⁴² the ontological is already in the ontic, rightly construed. But such a construal constantly falls away. Finally it might be asked—what is the specific responsibility of choosing this 'illuminative' or 'directive' idea rather than another? That it continues the thematic of time and temporality is not unimportant. What gives it in some ways a distinct advantage over the ways in which Heidegger will develop this question (towards time-space, and the truth of *Ereignis*, and a possibility to come), is that the whole issue of human development is like a courtyard opening onto, and opened onto by, the most pressing concerns of our time—historical, political, educational and environmental. Our continuing responsibility consists in the willingness to keep exploring these passages, opening these doors, and not resting reductively on the attractions of any single account.

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Notes

1. Material from this paper will also appear in chapter 11 of David Wood, *Thinking After Heidegger* (Cambridge: Polity, 2002).
2. Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy (From Enowning)*, trans. Parvis Emad and Kenneth Maly (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1999), section 17.

3. There are in this paper traces and echoes of two previous papers—one in which I try to connect Heidegger’s quest for the originary to a lost memory of the mother, *via* a detour through Freud’s account of the uncanny and the other in which I dealt with the question of repetition in Heidegger, and alluded to some of the same texts. I trust that anyone who notices these overlaps will find them productive. A larger project is underway.
4. Martin Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, trans. James S. Churchill (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1962) 206.
5. Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* 207.
6. Immanuel Kant, “Über eine Entdeckung,” ed Ernst Cassirer, *Werke* (1790) vi 71, cited in Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* 206.
7. See Hans Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. William Glen-Doepel (London: Sheed and Ward, 1975) 238ff where he discusses Heidegger’s development of the fore-structure of understanding, the enlightenment’s prejudice against prejudice, and the positive and negative values of prejudice.
8. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans Norman Kemp-Smith (London: Macmillan, 1964) B371-2.
9. I say ‘experimental’ despite Heidegger’s own association of the experiment with *Machenschaft*. See for example Heidegger *Contributions on Philosophy*, sections 77-80.
10. We may, as he puts it ‘go to their encounter’ (*Entgegen gehen*) or ‘go counter to them’ (*Dagegen angehen*). See Martin Heidegger, *What is Called Thinking?* trans. Fred Wieck and J. Glenn Gray (New York: Harper, 1968) 77.
11. See Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (Albany: State U of New York P, 1996) H437.
12. Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* 206
13. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (Oxford: Blackwell, 1962) H21.
14. Heidegger, *What is Called Thinking* 99.
15. Martin Heidegger, *On Time and Being*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (New York: Harper & Row, 1972) 24.
16. See Martin Heidegger, “Language,” *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper and Row, 1971) 190.
17. Heidegger, *On Time and Being* 2.
18. See *Contributions*, sections 217, 227. See also Martin Heidegger, *What is a Thing?* trans. W.B. Barton and Vera Deutsch (Chicago: Gateway, 1967) 244.
19. See Jacques Derrida, *Spurs/Eperons*, trans Barbara Harlow (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1978), and “Choreographies”, *Feminist Interpretations of Jacques Derrida*, ed. Nancy Holland (University Park: Penn State UP, 1997).
20. Of course the situation is more complicated than this. In his *Contributions to Philosophy* Heidegger begins in effect to identify *Dasein* with Nietzsche’s *Übermensch*, suggesting that ordinary adult existence is only on-the-way towards *Dasein*. I am also grateful to Lawrence Hatab for drawing my attention to section 15 of Heidegger’s *Einleitung in die Philosophie*, Gesamtausgabe vol. 27 (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1996). This section is entitled “Entdeckendsein beim Frühzeitlichen und fruhmenschlichen Dasein,” discussing both primitive *Dasein*, and childhood, albeit somewhat schematically. Heidegger does here seem to treat childhood not as a state with its own positivity, but as a process of growing into the light.
21. On another occasion I would try to show that; 1. Philosophers ignore human cognitive and moral development at their peril; 2. Disagreements among developmentalists are no basis for setting aside this whole perspective; 3. We can better understand both the ‘cognitive’ and the ‘moral’ in ontological terms—that is, in terms of constitutively relational possibilities. We would attempt to show this for developmental psychology as whole—Gilligan, Kohlberg, Piaget, Erickson and Loevinger; 4. Ontology is inseparable from economy—from ways of organizing

inside/outside, self/other, time, risk and death.

22. Given Lacan's hostility to the very idea of development, it might be thought rash to use him as an example. But it is precisely my point that 'development' occurs by transformations which preserve discontinuities.

23. I believe that Freud's distinctions between oral, anal and genital stages, as well as the stages identified by Melanie Klein and the fundamental distinction between what Kristeva calls the semiotic and the symbolic, can all be understood to mark out different economies of being. In saying this I do not mean to underplay the differences between these different theoretical positions.

24. See my "Comment ne pas manger," *The Animal as Other*, ed. Peter Steeves (Binghamton: State U of New York P, 1998).

25. Freud's discussion in *Mourning and Melancholia* depends on this distinction.

26. See Jacques Derrida, *Aporias*, trans. Thomas Dutoit (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1993). This responds, for example, to such remarks of Heidegger's as "Mortals are they who can experience death as death. Animals cannot do so." Martin Heidegger, "The Nature of Language," *On the Way to Language*, trans. Peter D. Hertz, (New York: Harper & Row, 1971) 107.

27. See Martin Heidegger, "What is Metaphysics?" ed. David Farrell Krell (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978) 103.

28. See Edmund Husserl, *Ideas*, trans. W.R.Boyce-Gibson (London: George, Allen and Unwin, 1931), section 49.

29. See Maurice Blanchot, *The Writing of the Disaster*, trans. Ann Smock (Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1986).

30. Heidegger makes this explicit, for example, in *Contributions*, section 98. "Time as what removes-onto and opens up is thus in itself simultaneously what *spatializes*; it provides "space." What is ownmost to space is not the same as what is ownmost to time, but space belongs to time—as time belongs to space."

31. In his essay "Language," Heidegger offers an astonishing interpretation of Georg Trakl's poem "Ein Winterabend" ("A Winter's Evening"), especially the line "Schmerz versteinert die Schwelle"/"Pain has turned the threshold to stone." Pain is understood as a marker of difference, the rift, the mutual bearing/granting of world and things. See also "Language in the Poem" in the same volume (180-4, 189-90). Heidegger insists that this is not normal physical or psychological pain. But perhaps this is just what should be said about the pain, distress, anxiety associated with transitions between one economy of being and another, and our residual memory of such transitions.

32. The original claim, Ernst Haeckel's biogenetic law (1866), may have been something of an exaggeration.

33. See for example, my "Performative Reflexivity," *Philosophy at the Limit* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1990); and Karen Feldman, "The Performative Difficulty of Being and Time," *Philosophy Today* (forthcoming).

34. This is the central theme of "The Nature of Language," *On the Way to Language* (1959), trans. Peter D. Hertz (New York: Harper and Row, 1971) 57-108. And it is clearly both thematized and practised in *Contributions*.

35. Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1976) 21.

36. Jacques Derrida, "Le facteur de la vérité," *The Postcard*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago:U of Chicago P, 1987) 467.

37. This would add a temporally layered dimension to Nietzsche's remark [in the second Preface to his *Gay Science*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage, 1974) 34-5], when he asks himself "whether, taking a large view, philosophy has not been merely an interpretation of the body and a misunderstanding of the body."

38. We do not need to retreat from beings to pursue being. A certain materialist history (I am

thinking of Marx, Nietzsche, a certain reading of Lacan/Freud, and even aspects of Derrida in “Eating Well”), is still perhaps both possible and necessary. In each case we find a logic of materiality, or (perhaps) different economies or organizations of beings. Must the question of being be lost sight of if we pursue beings? Perhaps it is precisely in seeming to be willing to give up the question of being that it can be returned to us!

39. See for example Charles Scott, *The Time of Memory* (Binghamton: State U of New York P, 1999).

40. At the Stony Brook meeting of the International Association of Philosophy and Literature, May 2000. Kearney’s many writings include *Poetics of Imagining*, and *The Wake of Imagination*.

41. I allude here, of course, to Kant’s remark in the *Critique of Pure Reason* that the “schematism of our understanding... is an art concealed in the depth of the human soul, whose real modes of activity nature is hardly likely ever to allow us to discover...” Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* B180.

42. There is a particular move that Heidegger makes that leads him to abjure beings, one tied to the limits of transformative movement present *within* beings. And his sense that what is not there or at the beginning cannot be there later. All discovery is an uncovering or recovery. This may be an unhelpful generalization of the claim that there can be no linear departure from the logic of the beginning. But everything depends on how we proceed. It is true that attempts at recovery often lead to blind repetition—a reawakening of the same mistake! This is a vital insight when thinking about renewal, and the force of the new. And it suggests the need for a systematic engagement with Deleuze, who understands philosophy to be in the business of creating concepts, Derrida who champions invention and chance, and indeed Donna Haraway, who seems to have found a way of undermining Heidegger’s claim that science does not think. Finally Lyotard’s complex position on the inhuman [see Jean-François Lyotard, *The Inhuman*, trans. Geoffrey Bennington and Rachel Bowlby (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993)] suggests that far from technology being essentially repressive, it is contradictory, and the contradictions need feeding to be creative.

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