ENIGMATIC ORIGINS

Tracing the Theme of Historicity through Heidegger’s Works

HANS RUIN
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Hans Ruin

ABSTRACT

The preoccupation with the “historicity” of thought and existence is central to the hermeneutic-phenomenological branch of modern philosophy. Its foremost representative is Martin Heidegger, who in his main work Sein und Zeit (1927) developed a theory of historicity, according to which human beings not only exist in history, but are themselves historical. In subsequent writings Heidegger argued that not only man, but also truth and being, must be understood “historically” in a particular sense. The meaning and the implications of Heidegger’s “historicization” of philosophy are here analyzed along two parallel tracks: as a theory of the conditions of philosophical understanding; second, as an incentive to new ways of responding philosophically to these conditions. The study focuses on the sense of belonging which Heidegger assigns to historicity, as a dialogical relation to an enigmatic origin that cannot be exhaustively articulated, but to which understanding must nevertheless respond in repetition and critique. The idea of the “hermeneutic situation,” and what it means to occupy such a situation, is shown to be central in this regard. Heidegger’s “historicization” of the philosophical territory is interpreted as an exemplary attempt to preserve philosophy as a quest for “origins” in the explicit recognition of the interminable historical mediation of thinking. His approach leads to a critical questioning of fundamental philosophical distinctions, such as the temporal and the eternal, the absolute and the relative, subject and object, and of truth as correspondence. Eventually he is led to question the ability of language to express the historicity of thought and of being, which can only be indicated by means of concepts such as “moment” (Augenblick) and “event” (Ereignis). In seven chapters the theme of historicity is explored from different angles, which together provide a guide to Heidegger’s path from a philosophy of life to a thinking of being in the “other beginning.” The study covers the full range of his writings, but it emphasizes the development from the earliest lectures, over Sein und Zeit, to the second major work, Beiträge zur Philosophie (1938, published posthumously in 1989).

Key words: Heidegger, historicity, phenomenology, hermeneutics, temporality, Augenblick, truth, Ereignis.
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How can philosophical thinking remain true to its calling as an original science of being, in view of its inextricable immersion in a historical mediation and transferral of heritage? This question was a constant challenge and a source of motivation to Heidegger, and it also motivates the present interpretation. It may seem untimely, considering that the general tendency in philosophy today is to reject the very prospect of any privileged position of reflection, not seldom in explicit reference to Heidegger, whose thinking is then understood as “historicist” and “non-foundationalist.” Yet such convenient labels betray what is truly at work in his writings, whose defining characteristic is their incessant preoccupation with the historical situatedness of reason together with the attempt to secure from within this finite horizon a privileged position of philosophical thought. The theme of historicity occupies the focus of this self-reflexive concern. It marks a mode of being as well as a mode of acting. It marks the need to articulate the origin to which thinking belongs by responding to that which has always claimed it.

When starting to explore the vicissitudes of historicity in Heidegger’s writings, I did of course not realize how far away from the original starting point this pursuit would take me. Gradually, I understood that this theme does not lend itself to any summary treatment. It belongs to the context of a historical consciousness characteristic of the post-Kantian era, but also to Heidegger’s aspirations to transcend precisely this historical consciousness through a radicalization of its motives. The specific “theory” of historicity advanced in Being and Time is only a way-station in this respect, which becomes clear when it is studied in the context of the later, as well as the earlier writings. What is presented here is an attempt to survey the territory of Heidegger’s “historicization” of thinking and of being from a few chosen observation points. It is not a study of Heidegger as a thinker of history in a concrete sense, that is, as a critical historian of metaphysics. It is a study of Heidegger as a thinker of historicity, in the sense of what it means to belong to history, and of the demands that this places on philosophical thinking.

One purpose of a preface is to give thanks and to acknowledge indebtedness. As such, the preface is already implicated in the very problems discussed in the study. To be historical is to be indebted, and to think historicity is to thematize indebtedness as such. No doubt, this is an infinite pursuit. As the quest for origins, the ultimate settling of debts belongs to the future. In the uncertain anticipation of this future, I would like to give the following persons and institutions their due regards:

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to hermeneutic thinking, has supervised this thesis from the start. His broad grasp of the literature and his taste for traditional scholarship have provided a stable point of orientation for the meandering movements of my own writing. I have been privileged to carry out this work during the tenure of Professor Dag Prawitz, whose open mind has significantly enhanced the intellectual atmosphere of the Department of Philosophy in Stockholm during the past decade. Also instrumental in this respect has been Professor Per Martin-Löf, whose devotion to phenomenological thinking has been a source of inspiration. During the later phase of the work, Professor Dagfinn Føllesdal kindly read and commented on several versions of the thesis. The original outline was conceived during a year as a Fulbright grantee at the Catholic University of America, Washington D.C., where a part was presented for a M.A degree under the guidance of Professor Daniel Dahlstrom.

Most of the work included here has been written in the context of an ongoing research project, “Phenomenology and Critique of Modernity,” which is generously supported by Axel och Margaret Ax:son Johnsons Stiftelse. Some of the chapters have previously been presented in the Proceedings issued yearly by this project. In addition to Alexander Orlowski and Dagfinn Føllesdal, the project group includes Professor Dick Haglund, Docent Staffan Carlshamre, Daniel Birnbaum, and Sven-Olov Wallenstein, who have all read and critically assessed my work in the course of ongoing seminars. The latter two—together with Aris Fioretos and Erik van der Heeg—have also been my colleagues at the journal Kris, the intellectual pharmacy in which several of the substances presented here were originally prepared. During all this time, the friendly and attentive staff at the Royal Library have facilitated the task. A number of people—in and outside the department of philosophy—have shared and contributed to the clarification of my thoughts on the matters treated. Among them I would like to mention Marcia Cavalcante-Schuback, David Gedin, Jim Jacobsson, Claudia Lindén, Anders Olsson, Cecilia Sjöholm, Fredrik Svenæus, Kate Larson, and Gunnar Svensson.

I dedicate this book to my parents.

Stockholm, March, 1994

H.R.
A NOTE ON LITERATURE AND TRANSLATION

In order to facilitate the reading, titles and quotations in German have been moved from the main text to the footnotes. The translations are generally my own, except in the case of Sein und Zeit, where I have tried to stay as close as possible to the translation of J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson, Being and Time (San Fransisco: Harper & Row, 1962), indicating when I have chosen alternative solutions. Since this translation has the original German pagination in the margin, I have not found it necessary to provide separate page references. When previous translations of other works by Heidegger have been consulted, this is recognized in the footnotes, together with references. For the full titles and abbreviations of Heidegger's writings in German and English, see the bibliography.
INTRODUCTION

Im Grunde gilt dies von jedem wesentlichen Gedanken jedes Denkers: Gesichtetes, aber Rätsel – frag-würdig.
M. Heidegger, “Wer ist Nietzsches Zarathustra?”

(1) Historicity as a central theme in Heidegger’s thought, (2) Two leading voices: Hegel and Hölderlin, (3) A survey of previous literature, (4) Orientation and structure of the present study

1. Historicity as a central theme in Heidegger’s thought

Heidegger’s philosophical project could be described as the most daring modern attempt to reawaken the ontological explorations of classical philosophy in general, and of Aristotle in particular. With the tools of Husserlian phenomenology and philosophy of life, Heidegger was able to raise once again the question posed in *Metaphysics*, concerning being as being, from a new, yet at the same time ancient perspective. Furthermore, through his reinterpretation of Aristotle he was able to retrieve not only the significance of a forgotten question, but also a phenomenon that had supposedly always been misrepresented and covered over, even by Aristotle himself, namely temporality. For the purpose of this ontological exploration, Heidegger developed the existential analytic of human Dasein. Eventually, he abandoned this transcendentally-oriented philosophy in favor of a thinking of being as destiny and event, as *Geschick* and *Ereignis*.

The above account would be one way of describing the philosophical course pursued by Heidegger. In any case, this is essentially how he presents his own accomplishment in a few brief autobiographical sketches. When compared to the Husserlian and Aristotelian ideal of

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1 “At bottom, that is true of every thinker’s essential thought: envisioned, but enigma—worthy of questioning.”

2 See the letter to W. Richardson, published as preface in the latter’s *Heidegger: Through Phenomenology to Thought* (1963), pp. ix-xxiii; the essay “Mein Weg in die Phänomenologie,” in *SdD*, pp. 81-90; and also the short preface to the first edition of *Frühe Schriften*, later published as the first volume in the collected works, *GA* 1, pp. 55-57.
a first philosophy, one element in Heidegger’s work might, however, seem to stand in clear contrast, namely his strong emphasis on history, more specifically on the historical nature of philosophical thinking itself: on its historicity. In Being and Time the historical condition of thought is repeatedly stressed, as in one of the opening sections where it is stated: “the inquiry into being...is itself characterized by historicity.” This insistence on the historical dimension of ontology stands in stark contrast to classical ideals in philosophy. In Aristotle, history seems to have no philosophical significance whatsoever. There is no Aristotelian treatise on history, a topic that he considered to be of even less philosophical value than poetry. The relation between philosophy and history in Husserl is of course a much more complex issue, especially if one considers his last writings; however, in the programmatic essay from 1911, “Philosophy as Rigorous Science,” Husserl spoke out strongly against contemporary historicist tendencies in philosophy, arguing for a reawakened first philosophy.

In spelling out his differences with Husserlian phenomenology in the letter to Richardson from 1962, Heidegger pointed precisely to the question of historicity as the dividing line between the two philosophical perspectives:

Meanwhile “phenomenology” in Husserl’s sense was elaborated into a distinctive philosophical position according to a pattern set by Descartes, Kant, and Fichte. The historicity of thought remained completely foreign to such a position.

3 “Das Fragen nach dem Sein, das hinsichtlich seiner ontisch-ontologischen Notwendigkeit angezeigt wurde, ist selbst durch die Geschichtlichkeit charakterisiert,” Sein und Zeit, p. 20. Henceforth this work will be referred to as “SZ.” Macquarrie and Robinson translated Geschichtlichkeit as “historicality.” However, “historicity” has subsequently become the most commonly used alternative.

4 Poetics 1451b. This remark of course only touches the surface of the difficult question of the sense and evaluation of history in Greek thinking. Whereas it is true that Aristotle’s explicit evaluation of ἱστορεῖν as a science was low, it is nevertheless the case that it was in his writings, and in those of his followers (notably Theophrastus), that the first steps toward a “history of philosophy” in the modern sense were taken. Furthermore, a significant point in Heidegger’s early interpretations of Aristotle is that there is indeed a special sense of the historicity of human existence implicit in his writings, which the ensuing tradition failed to grasp.

5 “Philosophie als strenge Wissenschaft,” in Husserliana, vol XXV, pp. 3-62. However, as I will argue in Chapter One, the meaning of the anti-historical message in this essay is not as obvious as it may seem at first, and in the critique of a certain “historicism” Husserl and Heidegger remain philosophical allies.

This letter is of a late date in Heidegger’s life and thinking, from a time when “historicity” is no longer an operative concept in his writings. But this fact only makes the remark an even stronger testimony to the importance of the underlying theme. It is with reference to the historicity of thinking that Heidegger, at this moment of recapitulation, defines his own original path vis-à-vis classic phenomenology and previous philosophical systems.

What, then, is the “historicity” of thought? As a philosophical and methodological problem, “the historical” first appears in Heidegger’s work in the context of an aspiration to develop a form of thinking that could mediate between “systematic” and purely “historical” investigations. This can be seen already in his earliest academic writings. Starting with the lectures of 1919, he becomes increasingly preoccupied with the “historical” nature of life in the course of an attempt to describe the non-objectifiable being of life as meaning-enactment. In a lecture series given in 1923 he uses the concept “historicity” (Geschichtlichkeit) as a designation for human existence, or, to be more precise, for what he then speaks of as “factical life.” In SZ he develops the most detailed account of historicity as an existentiale of human Dasein, and as an ontological foundation for history in general, and for historical knowledge in particular. Historicity is here the name for how Dasein “happens” as a “repetition” (Wiederholung) of heritage, a structure also described as its “fate” (Schicksal). SZ also establishes a definite distinction between two senses of the historical, as historisches and geschichtliches, where the latter represents the historical nature of human existence, out of which history and historiography in the first sense are said to arise. After SZ, Heidegger makes little reference to historicity in this sense. However,
the historical conception of philosophical thinking, to which SZ subscribed on the basis of its theory of Dasein’s historicity, is emphasized even stronger. In the works of the thirties, philosophy is presented as an essentially historical task. But historicity is not only assigned to the practicing of philosophy; it also describes its subject matter. During this time, Heidegger begins to speak both of truth and of being as essentially “historical.” This development culminates in the recently published Contributions to Philosophy (On the Event), written 1936-1938.10

When Heidegger refers to the historicity of Dasein in the “Letter on Humanism” (1947), he speaks of it retrospectively as a theme from his earlier writings. He insists that it be reinterpreted through the idea of a “sending of Being” (Schickung des Seins), which in turn is said to constitute a “destiny of the clearing” (Geschick der Lichtung).11 In other words, at this point the idea of historicity of thought and existence is recast in accordance with the new perspective often summarized under the heading of Heidegger’s “turning,” his Kehre (a question to which I will return at the end of the Introduction). A similar remark is found in the lecture “Time and Being” from 1962, where Heidegger stresses that the concept of a “destiny of being” is inevitably misunderstood when people try to interpret it through the theory of the historicity of Dasein in SZ, which is not (as he adds in a parenthesis) a theory of the historicity of being.12 The only possible way leading from SZ to the later works is here said to be its attempt at a destruction of classical ontology. The principal deficiency of the account in SZ, as seen by the older Heidegger, is thus that it is restricted to a historicity of Dasein, whereas the only way to understand the later thinking is to see how being itself can be historical, and how it can constitute a destiny in itself.

From this brief sketch of a philosophical development it is clear that there is no stable and fixed Heideggerian theory of historicity. With a few significant exceptions, the concept of historicity does not even occur as a philosophical term in Heidegger’s postwar writings.13 But

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10 Beiträge zur Philosophie. (Vom Ereignis), GA 65. This work will henceforth be referred to as “Beiträge.”
11 GA 9, p. 336.
13 One such exception is the programmatic essay from 1964, “The End of philosophy and the Task of Thinking” (“Das Ende der Philosophie und die Aufgabe
even though the concept itself is rarely discussed in the later works, the thematic field from within which it arose remains active throughout the post-war works, up until the very last writings. Eventually, it is this thematic field which is the issue here, not a specific term and its internal history in the corpus of Heidegger's writings.

What then is this "thematic field," and how could it be circumscribed or defined? The answer to this question cannot be given in any clear-cut manner. Speaking in broadest possible terms, the problem of historicity belongs to the context of a new form of awareness and sensibility characteristic of post-enlightenment thinking, to the "Age of History," as Foucault at one point defined the regulative *episteme* of the modern era. In this new sensibility, reason begins to recognize itself as historically, socially, and linguistically conditioned, while struggling to recreate a position from within which these very conditions can be articulated as such. We are then speaking of a displacement or difference in the relation of thought to itself, around which various strategies have developed, and in the relation to which des Denkens"), where historicity, as the condition of history as such, is mentioned as a principal task for philosophical reflection. See *SdD*, p. 66: "Denn jeder Versuch, einen Einblick in die vermutete Aufgabe des Denkens zu gewinnen, sieht sich auf den Rückblick in das Ganze der Geschichte der Philosophie angewiesen; nicht nur dies, sondern sogar genötigt, allererst die Geschichtlichkeit dessen zu denken, was der Philosophie eine mögliche Geschichte gewährt."

14 Some of these texts were collected in the volume *Denkerfahrungen*, *GA* 13. In a fragment written only two years before his death, entitled "The Lack of Sacred Names" ("Der Fehl heiliger Namen"), Heidegger speaks again of the "Geschick der Lichtung des Seins." The reference to a *Geschick* (destiny or sending) here constitutes the end of a life-long winding road of conceptual transformations that could be said to have originated in the reflections on *Geschichte* and *Geschichtlichkeit* more than half a century earlier.

15 One way of delineating the general concept of historicity (leaving aside for the moment its specific Heideggerian connotations) would perhaps be to look it up in the philosophical dictionaries. However, this solution is more difficult than it first seems. The standard English philosophical dictionaries have never carried an article on this theme. Furthermore, the existing encyclopedic articles in German and French testify to how the very definition of the concept is inextricably tied to Heidegger's use, and thus to how one understands the implications of his thinking. It is also significant that these articles are generally written by people who have some stake in Heidegger-studies. See H.-G. Gadamer, "Geschichtlichkeit" (1958); L. von Renthe-Fink, "Geschichtlichkeit" (1976); C. F. Gethmann's "Geschichtlichkeit" (1980). For recent French encyclopedic article that concentrates almost exclusively on the modern phenomenological context of the concept, see D. Buvat, "Historicité" (1990).

16 *Les mots et les choses* (1966), Chapter 7, section 1. However, we should not conclude from this that a distinct phenomenon has been properly circumscribed; rather, a question has been opened up, concerning the limits of an epistemic framework that is still active in the present. The force and validity of this framework is demonstrated not least in Foucault's own writings, for which a certain sense of "history" and "archeology" remained the ultimate horizon of explicable.
many of the borders of today’s philosophical geography could still be articulated. It would be possible to stop at this point and engage in the labyrinthine history of the emergence of this new “historical” sensibility, and the vast literature already devoted to it.\(^\text{17}\) In order to avoid the endless repetition of thinkers and themes to which such an investigation easily leads, I will mention only two characters, who capture two essential aspects of this new predicament: Hegel and Hölderlin.

2. Two leading voices: Hegel and Hölderlin

In the condensed “Introduction” to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel formulates his classic repudiation of traditional epistemology and the idea that it is the task of philosophy first to investigate the “means” of knowledge, and only then to reach for the thing itself. In its place he evokes a specific “transformation” that consciousness must undergo before philosophical thinking can begin. In this transformation consciousness recognizes that there is no privileged and safeguarded vantage point from which the structure and evolution of knowledge can be examined. Instead, knowledge itself must be recognized as a process in which the two preliminary poles, subject and object, are both mediated through each other, leaving neither one untouched. What philosophy should henceforth study is the *appearing* of this knowing itself as an absolute movement, of which knowledge itself is an integral part. This is captured in the following famous image:

> The appearing is the becoming and the passing away, that does not itself become and pass away, but is in itself and constitutes the actuality and the movement of the life of truth. The true is thus the bacchanalian revel in which no member is not drunk.\(^\text{18}\)

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\(^{17}\) The reference here is to the voluminous writing (some of which is listed in the bibliography) on historical knowledge, historical thinking and awareness, and historicism, which evolved out of the methodological strifes within the humanities during the second half of the nineteenth century; beginning with Dilthey, Nietzsche, and Windelband, followed by Rickert, Simmel, Troeltsch, and Meinecke, and, in a subsequent generation, by Mannheim and Collingwood. To this literature could also be added the works of Gadamer, Ricoeur, Habermas on the theory and history of interpretation. For a recent reconstruction of the intellectual environment of German historical thinking in relation to Heidegger, see J. Barash’s *Martin Heidegger and the Problem of Historical Meaning* (1988). Cf. also my “Historicity, Historicism, and the Task of Philosophy - A Study of Heidegger’s Early Work,” Ruin (1991), pp. 24-37.

\(^{18}\) *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, p. 46: “Die Erscheinung ist das Entstehen und Vergehen, das selbst nicht entsteht und vergeht, sondern an sich ist und die Wirklichkeit und Bewegung des Lebens der Wahrheit ausmacht. Das Wahre ist so der bacchantische Taumel, an dem kein Glied nicht trunken ist...”
This dialectical movement of truth is another designation of what Hegel also terms “experience.” When seen from the perspective of this constant movement, knowledge appears not as something that the subject has, but rather as that which it is. A philosophical account of experience, and thus of concept-formation in general, can therefore only consist in the self-explication of the life of the spirit as the continuous mediation of self and other. The truth of the spirit is the history of this development.

A few years before the publication of the *Phenomenology*, Hegel’s friend and spiritual companion Hölderlin composes a fragment on the question of how we should view antiquity. The first lines read:

> We dream of education, piety etc., and we have none, it is all received - we dream of originality and independence, we earnestly believe to be saying something new, and yet it is all reaction, a mild retaliation against the servitude through which we relate to antiquity. There really does not seem to be any other choice than either being crushed by the received and the positive, or to set oneself up, through a violent insolence, as a living force against everything learned, given, positive.¹⁹

From one perspective this statement is only a voice among many in the *Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes* that had been going on in Europe for more than a century; when read more carefully, however, it stands out as a testimony to a new spiritual situation. What Hölderlin formulates here is the dilemma of the follower and imitator, a dilemma which will characterize modernity as a partly manifest, partly hidden, obsession ever after. Seventy years later it will receive its most influential articulation in Nietzsche’s second “Untimely meditation.”²⁰

The dilemma of the follower is to be aware of the past as a spiritual force, as a historical center of energy and creativity, or simply originality, in contrast to which the present is only a pale shadow, a “reaction.” At the same time Hölderlin also sees a positive possibility:


²⁰ This is the essay “Vom Nutzen und Nachteil der Historie für das Leben,” in *Werke* III:1, 241-330, a text discussed in greater detail in Chapter Three.
for there is, he continues, a decisive difference whether this "formative drive" (Bildungstrieb) is blind, or if it works consciously. By establishing a conscious relationship to the conditioning spiritual formations of the past, the present can achieve a greater degree of self-determination than is the case where the creative impulses develop intuitively and blindly.

What is the common denominator here? With his dialectical concept of experience Hegel challenges the inherited view of the position of the subject of philosophical thinking vis-à-vis its object. He challenges the elements of classical epistemology as in fact mediated conceptual formations, the genealogy of which it is the task of philosophy to write. This requires that thinking be prepared to enter the play of dialectics, where no position is stable, and where its own accomplishments are the springboards from which it constantly projects itself. For Hölderlin, the struggle for originality is projected onto the historical stage as a battleground of differing initiatives. In this new awareness, the thinker, writer, and artist not only knows himself to be historically conditioned, but also sees his only chance in retrieving an origin in himself through a systematic reflection on precisely this conditioning. The origin has been lost; therefore, it must be recreated, and this is only possible on the conflictual stage of historical forms and expressions. In their different ways, both these voices testify to a new awareness of the present as a mediated and non-stable construction. In their different ways, they outline a common situation, wherein the subject can only know itself through a confrontation with its history, and where it can secure access to an origin only in the very medium of non-originality.

Hegel and Hölderlin are both important forerunners of Heidegger (the latter more than the former, at least if measured in terms of Heidegger’s own pages of commentaries). Heidegger wrote and lectured extensively on Hölderlin, and he devoted several of his lecture courses and essays to Hegel. Furthermore, he wrote explicitly on precisely the texts discussed above. Hegel and Hölderlin, together with Schelling, mark the historical stage or region—the Ort, to use Walter Schulz’s expression—to which Heidegger remains connected. This is not, however, my principal reason for mentioning them here. The point of the historical excursion is simply to mark the contours of a philosophical territory within which the multifaceted problem of

21 The reference here is his essay "Über den philosophiegeschichtlichen Ort Martin Heideggers," Schulz (1953/54).
INTRODUCTION

historicity belongs. Thus we are not yet speaking of the actual emergence of the concept “historicity,” which belongs to a later phase in German thinking, notably to the work of Dilthey and to the correspondence between Dilthey and Yorck von Wartenburg, for whom historicity is what distinguishes man from nature, and in virtue of which he can understand the past. On the other hand, my interest is not primarily in the history of a concept, but rather in the geography of a certain problem. A viable response to what this problem is can only have the form of a rethinking of the territory where it is actualized most acutely. As we will see, this involves the question of the distinction between a non-historical and a historical approach in philosophy; it involves the nature and possibility of origins in philosophy, as both a logical and an experiential foundation; it concerns the nature and possibility of interpretation and of interpretative truth; furthermore, it activates the question of the self and its other and a certain intersubjective dialectics; finally, it raises the issue of how philosophical discourse can provide an articulation of the historical belonging experienced by thinking. In sum, it involves the conditions, or what I will sometimes speak of as the predicament of philosophical thinking as such.

A paradigmatic example of the standing of the question of historicity in the modern debate is found in an exchange between Karl Löwith and Paul Ricoeur during a symposium on “Truth and Historicity” in 1969. In this context, Löwith provocatively placed the historically-oriented thinking of Hegel and the ensuing philosophical tradition in contrast to the classic Greek ideal of science as concerned with things beyond the reach of temporal and historical change:

In all of Greek philosophy, as well as in Christian Patristics, and in the beginning of the modern era up until Leibniz and Kant, no great thinker had even conceived that the pursuit for true knowledge of the essence of things could be historically grounded, and that the history of philosophy should be drawn into philosophy as such. This correspondence, published in 1923, was of seminal importance for the spreading of the modern sense of historicity as a polemical philosophical catchword. Heidegger’s appreciation for it is vividly demonstrated in the chapter on Dasein’s historicity in SZ. For the complete reference, see Dilthey (1923).

22 This correspondence, published in 1923, was of seminal importance for the spreading of the modern sense of historicity as a polemical philosophical catchword. Heidegger’s appreciation for it is vividly demonstrated in the chapter on Dasein’s historicity in SZ. For the complete reference, see Dilthey (1923).

23 Gadamer, ed. (1972), p. 16: “In der gesamten griechischen Philosophie, aber auch in der christlichen Patristik und am Beginn der Neuzeit bis zu Leibniz und Kant hat kein großer Denker je dann gedacht, das Bemühen um eine wahre Erkenntnis des Wesens der Dinge geschichtlich zu begründen und die Geschichte der Philosophie in
In his response to Löwith, Ricoeur vigorously defended the very same historicization of philosophy, arguing that it issues from a certain experience of history and tradition that can no longer be denied. One should be careful, he continued, not to confuse this experience with a common conception of “historicism,” according to which there are only various historical truths and points of view, for the philosophy of historicity is an attempt to overcome both positivism and historicism:

To seize the eternal in the temporal, the absolute in the relative - this is indeed the most profound intention in the philosophies of historicity.

The dialogue is paradigmatic because it captures and brings together two clearly distinguishable perspectives on the historicization of the philosophical enterprise. In its somewhat simplistic restating of a romantic trope—of the eternal in the temporal—Ricoeur’s reply is more applicable to Jaspers than to Heidegger. Nevertheless, it captures a basic characteristic of the peculiar historicization of reason and philosophy that is encountered also in Heidegger’s “philosophy of historicity”: namely, that the ultimate goal is not to “relativize” a previously “absolute” pursuit, but to reclaim the absoluteness of the relative, or, to use a more sophisticated expression: to think a “constitutive finitude,” and thus to move beyond the static dichotomy of the contingent and the absolute. It is an attempt to pursue a philosophy of origins, an Ursprungsphilosophie, in explicit recognition of the foundering of this very project as previously understood.

For this same reason, it is important to observe the line that Ricoeur also draws between the thought of historicity and “historicism,” in the sense of a historically motivated relativism with respect to truth. As we will see throughout Heidegger’s writings, historicism will always be presented as the threat against which the proper appreciation of the historicity of thinking is in fact the only remedy.

The proper delineation of “historicism,” and the German counterpart, Historismus or Historizismus, is a philosophical labyrinth in itself. In his classic account of German historiography, The German Conception of History, G. Iggers devotes a lengthy footnote to the complex vicissitudes of the concept of Historismus, normally translated as “historicism,” Iggers (1968), pp. 287-290. The translation of one to the other, however, is not obvious. In English, “historicism” normally signifies...
Over the years, the question of the role and significance of historicity in Heidegger’s thinking has attracted substantial interest from a number of different perspectives. In what follows, I will briefly review the most important works that have issued from this preoccupation. The survey involves both ordinary academic studies of Heidegger, and works in which the theme of historicity has been developed in new ways in relation to his thinking. This exploration could be read as a standard survey of previous research, and as such it could be skipped by whoever wishes to get on to “the things themselves.” However, it should also serve the purpose of what Heidegger would speak of as a “working out of the hermeneutical situation,” a making explicit the situation in which we stand today as we try to understand the problem at issue. This situation is itself a historical situation, conditioned by the philosophical achievements that have preceded it. In this respect, the following survey of philosophical writings is also a survey of an aspect our own philosophical present.

3. A survey of previous literature

The most obvious historical background to Heidegger’s analyses of the historicity of existence and thought is Dilthey, to whom Heidegger “historical relativism” in the sense of all values being limited to their historical context; this is not the only sense of Historismus. For this reason, P. Geyl (1955) argues that the German Historismus does not have a good English counterpart, and that it should instead be translated as “historism,” in order not to mix the two. M. Mandelbaum translates it as “historicism,” but he emphasizes that it should in fact be seen as two distinct theories, one that implies cultural relativism, and another that states that the position of the historian is necessarily relative to what is studied, Mandelbaum (1967), p. 89. Yet another sense of the word was introduced by Popper (1957), who used the term to designate a belief that history is determined and that it can therefore be calculated in advance, a use that was often criticized, e.g., by A. Stern (1962), p. 138, who stressed that the normal meaning of “historicism” in the Anglo-Saxon tradition is that of historical or cultural relativism. This also seems to be the general sense of historicism in the current concept of “new historicism,” e.g., in B. Thomas’s The New Historicism (1991). In a recent book on Hegel, Heidegger, and the Ground of History, M. Gillespie even speaks of historicism as “the realm of unrestricted subjectivity and absolutized relativism,” Gillespie (1984), p. 19. Gillespie is clear about the fact that Heidegger is not the proponent of such a view, but when he summarizes his argument toward the end he is vague, hesitating whether or not to designate Heidegger “as a historicist or relativist” (ibid., p. 169), and throughout the study he is surprisingly blind as to the bearing of the theme of historicity on the problem which he discusses. The fact that Heidegger repeatedly and explicitly distanced himself from the label “historicism” has not, and will certainly not, prevent his readers from ascribing it to him. This is the case also among people who know better, e.g., M. Frank, who speaks of Heidegger’s “radikalen Historizismus,” Frank (1984), p. 10,
explicitly refers in the relevant sections in SZ. Hermeneutic philosophy in general, and Dilthey in particular, have been recurrent points of comparison in the reception of Heidegger’s thinking, especially regarding the theme of historicity. The first study of this kind was George Misch’s *Lebensphilosophie und Phänomenologie* from 1930. At a time when many people still looked upon Husserl and Dilthey as more or less philosophical adversaries, Misch managed to bring out the deep affinities between them, in part through a firsthand knowledge of their correspondence. In seeing a latent philosophy of life and historicity in Husserlian phenomenology he was obviously influenced by Heidegger, who, reciprocally, was indebted to Misch for his understanding of Dilthey.  

In this context we could also place the subsequent work of Otto Pöggeler, who in 1963 published the first full-scale philosophical biography of Heidegger, *Der Denkweg Martin Heideggers*. Through his close contact with Heidegger he had access to much unpublished material, including some of the early lectures. In a long analysis of the formative phase of Heidegger’s thought, Pöggeler emphasized the importance of Dilthey, Yorck von Wartenburg, and nineteenth-century historical thought for the first turning in Heidegger’s philosophical orientation around 1920. Pöggeler showed how “historicity,” as a designation of “life,” served the explicit purpose of breaking free from previous (metaphysical) substantialist interpretations of life and subjectivity.  

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26 This is confirmed by the reference in SZ to Misch’s long preface to the fifth volume of Dilthey’s writings, *SZ*, p. 399. Misch’s preface is a valuable guide to the philosophical implications of Dilthey’s work, but it is also symptomatic in the way it stresses the theme of historicity far beyond its actual occurrence in Dilthey’s writings. Misch’s book is just one example of the many close personal and intellectual contacts between the followers of Husserl and Dilthey in particular, and between phenomenology and hermeneutics in general at this early stage. Another example is L. Landgrebe, one of Husserl’s assistants, who also wrote about the connections between phenomenology and historical thought from a firsthand perspective. He published a study on Dilthey in Husserl’s *Jahrbuch* in 1928, where he also explicitly projected the Diltheyan and Heideggerian theme of historicity onto the work of Husserl. In 1967, Landgrebe published *Phänomenologie und Geschichte*, a collection of essays, one of which was written in the early thirties, and which takes its point of departure precisely in Misch’s book. Another early comparison between Heidegger and Dilthey with respect to the problem of historicity is J. Grzesik’s *Die Geschichtlichkeit als Wesenverfassung des Menschen - Eine Untersuchung zur Anthropologie Wilhelm Diltheys und Martin Heideggers* (1961).

27 Works in a similar historical-reconstructive vein, by both German and American scholars, have continued to appear over the years. For a good summary of the actual state of the debate on the early Heidegger and his relation to Dilthey and
interest in theology during this time, and his turning away from scholasticism and Catholicism in favor of Kierkegaard, Luther and a Lutheran reading of Paul. Finally, he outlined how the theme of historicity plays a prominent role in Heidegger’s extensive interpretations of Hölderlin during the late thirties and early forties. In a number of subsequent essays, Pöggeler has returned to the question of historicity in Heidegger. One text in particular should be mentioned here (which has influenced the present interpretation) entitled "hermeneutic-historical thought, see the contributions to a Symposium on “Facticity and Historicity” held in Bochum in 1985, published as vol 4 (1986-87) of the Dilthey Jahrbuch. T. Sheehan should be acknowledged in this context, but the writings of T. Kiesel stand out as the most ambitious attempt at present to articulate the development of the early Heidegger. The results of Kiesel’s long research were recently presented in one extensive study, The Genesis of Heidegger’s Being & Time, Kiesel (1993). In this context, mention may also be made of two historical works on the concept of historicity in general, which appeared in 1963 and 1964, by G. Bauer and L. von Renthe-Fink (for full titles, see bibliography). Both can be seen as symptoms of a dissatisfaction felt over the conceptual confusion that had resulted from the widespread use of the concept during the previous decades. Renthe-Fink distinguished a number of different uses of “historicity,” where the sense Heidegger ascribed to it was said to be that of “a lasting influence and force of a specific past phenomenon.” Obviously this does not exhaust the matter, but Renthe-Fink had no such ambitions.

In this context it is important to note the early reception and development of Heidegger’s analysis of human historicity among Protestant theologians, notably Rudolf Bultmann. The theological implications of the problems raised under the heading of human historicity are an integral part of the history of its reception, and thus they condition its standing in the present. Heidegger received significant philosophical impulses from his theological training, and from his lifelong dialogue with influential theologians, especially Bultmann. If the historicity of human existence and thinking is formulated as the fusion of the temporal and the atemporal, in the assuming of man’s indebtedness, then the relation to a Paulinian-Lutheran image of man’s relation to God is obvious. I will have reason to comment briefly on the theological roots of Heidegger’s thinking in Chapter Five, but the question is outside the scope of the present investigation. A few relevant works by Bultmann are listed in the bibliography. For a discussion of historicity in a theological context, see also W. Kamlah’s Christentum und Geschichtlichkeit (1951), where Christianity is interpreted as a historical event of truth, along the lines of Heidegger’s later writings, and where the concept of historicity is primarily used to capture the process of mediation between the universal and the individual. For another attempt to interpret Heidegger’s early explorations of historicity in the light of his theological background, see K. Lehmann, “Christliche Geschichtserfahrung und ontologische Frage beim jungen Heidegger” (1984). Heidegger’s relation to the Jewish heritage is an interesting question in itself, which has only begun to be investigated. For a valuable assessment of Heidegger and Judaism, see M. Zărăder, La dette impensée (1990).

Concerning the relevance of the theme of historicity in Heidegger’s interpretations of Hölderlin, this has also been pointed out earlier by B. Allemann, in his Hölderlin und Heidegger (1954), p. 72, p. 211. It has been further explored by S. Ziegler (1991), in her Heidegger, Hölderlin und die ‘Αλήθεια - Martin Heideggers Geschichtsdenken in seinen Vorlesungen 1934/35 bis 1944. Historicity is also a guiding theme in C. Fynsk’s discussion of Heidegger’s interpretations of Hölderlin, in his Heidegger: Thought and Historicity (1986), a work to which I will return toward the end of this section.
“‘Historicity’ in Heidegger’s Late Work,” from 1973. It outlines the connection between the preoccupation with historical existence in the earliest lectures and the central concept of Ereignis in the later writings.

The Hegelian background to the problem of historicity is implicit already through the explicit articulation of this problem in the writings of Dilthey, but it was not always brought out explicitly. A somewhat odd, but nevertheless noteworthy, book in this context is Herbert Marcuse’s Hegels Ontologie und die Theorie der Geschichtlichkeit, from 1932, in which the entire Hegelian dialectic of being was reinterpreted in terms of the historicity of life. Marcuse’s explicit point of reference was Dilthey, but on a more fundamental level the book was thoroughly indebted to Heidegger, as Marcuse himself acknowledged in passing. Marcuse’s problem is the nature of historical being, as opposed to natural being. History is analyzed as the dialectical happening and movement of life which separates from itself and returns to itself through its other. Thus the key theme is really the subject-object dialectic according to Hegel, interpreted here as the historicity of life. The book is essentially a rereading of certain sections of the Logic and the early theological writings of Hegel, through the prism of a concept that Hegel never used himself (with a few insignificant exceptions). It is interesting, however, as a first attempt to exploit the obvious connections between Heidegger and Hegel regarding the latter’s analysis of historicity.

The Hegelian vein is also clearly visible in Karl Jaspers’s three-volume Philosophie from around the same time, where the historicity of human existence was presented as the point of departure and of return in philosophical thinking, and as very meeting place of being and knowledge. Heidegger was obviously an important source of inspiration to this work (through SZ, but also through discussions and correspondence), although he is not mentioned as such. A recurrent theme in Jaspers’s book is that of a present recreating the past in itself in a fusion of dependency and originality, in which the gap between the temporal and the atemporal is bridged. Philosophizing is described as “rising out of its own ground out of its time into the atemporal. This is the historicity of philosophizing.” In other words, what is essential to the

concept of historicity for Jaspers is the transformation and mediation of past philosophies into present truths, accomplished by an essentially temporal-historical being. The fundamental form of this mediation is a becoming of oneself through what is other, or the creation of an origin through another origin. In a separate chapter, devoted entirely to the theme of historicity, Jaspers also describes the true historical consciousness and thinking as the meeting place of knowledge and being.³²

A landmark in post-war philosophy, and also an important step in the genealogy of our problem, was the publication of Hans-Georg Gadamer’s Wahrheit und Methode in 1960, a book that could be read as the culmination of a Diltheyan and Hegelian reception of Heidegger as a thinker of historicity. Deeply indebted to Heidegger’s hermeneutic phenomenology, Gadamer here launched a whole new philosophical program and perspective, one which would later be referred to as “philosophical hermeneutics.” The basic conceptual task was to articulate the experience of truth in historical research, in other words, the experience of a truth from the past as a result of an interpretative process. This process, Gadamer argues, is not one that can be captured in ordinary scientific discourse, for it transgresses every limited methodology. This kind of truth is one to which the individual is exposed, rather than one which it discovers or masters. In his book, Gadamer pays explicit homage to the hermeneutic transformation of phenomenology accomplished by Heidegger in SZ, especially through his theory of the historicity of human existence and understanding. He also develops a broad account of how this new historical awareness, had arisen not only in the works of Dilthey and Heidegger, but from the entire tradition of historical thinking, from Schleiermacher onward. He argues, furthermore, that the question of the specificity and methodological standing of the human sciences should be sought not only in the methodological debate of the second half of the nineteenth century, but in the whole tradition of humanism and especially in its concept of Bildung.

As a paradigmatic point of reference Gadamer discusses the

³² Ibid., vol II, p. 119: “Hier sind im Ursprung Sein und Wissen untrennbar verknüpft.” In speaking about Jaspers one should also mention his book on Nietzsche, published in 1936, where, just as Marcuse in his book on Hegel, he repeatedly refers to the concept of historicity for his interpretation, despite the fact that this concept was never used as such by Nietzsche himself. For a more detailed discussion of the theme of Geschichtlichkeit in Jaspers, see H. Gerlach (1974), pp. 110ff.
development of aesthetics. The traditional formative aspect of aesthetic experience was transformed through Kant’s aesthetics, where aesthetic pleasure was entirely separated from the theoretical realm, as the realm of truth. Against this modern tendency Gadamer argues for a concept of aesthetic experience as a fusion of theoretical and practical concerns, a critique suggested already by Hegel. It was also to Hegel and his modern followers, such as Dilthey, Yorck (and Heidegger), that Gadamer looked for support in his reevaluation of modern aesthetical thought and of modern historical consciousness in general. In Hegel he found a theory of life as integration and assimilation, and of truth as an event of historical mediation. In its simplest form this theory could also be found in Dilthey’s conception of historical understanding as a process where life grasps life. But Gadamer is anxious to point out that this mediation of truth through history is not an example of a simple and immediate repetition, rather his account stresses the inevitable and productive distance that enables a truth to be transmitted as both itself and something other. Instead of seeing the fact that our understanding is finite, temporal, and historical as a limitation, we should see it as the positive condition of historical understanding as such. This positive function of finitude and of historical prejudice—in other words, the whole ontology of the fore-structure of understanding—he describes as Heidegger’s great contribution to hermeneutic thinking.

According to Gadamer, Heidegger had taken an interest in historical hermeneutics only as a way to raise the ontological question of being. Gadamer’s own project, however, is presented as a reversed movement, namely, as a restoration of the true sense of the historicity of understanding through a critique of a certain scientistic ontology. However, the ultimate implications of Gadamer’s work point beyond a theory of historical understanding. In clear continuation of Heidegger’s concerns in SZ, he points toward a full account of human historical existence as a form of belonging and subjection to tradition in general and to language in particular. As he says in a classic turn of phrase, “History does not belong to us, but we belong to it.”


34 Ibid., p. 281: “In Wahrheit gehört die Geschichte nicht uns, sondern wir gehören ihr.”
A central aspect of Gadamer’s work is its conception of truth. Truth is here understood not as the correspondence of statement to fact, but as the culminating event of an interpretative process, as itself a happening of truth (a *Wahrheitsgeschehen*). In this regard his account is closely aligned with Heidegger’s later writings in particular, where truth is articulated precisely as “happening” and “event.” The connection between this hermeneutic conception of truth and the problem of historicity, and thus of the “historicity of truth” emerged as a central theme in the philosophical debate during this time, partly as a consequence of Gadamer’s work. A year after *Wahrheit und Methode*, Fridolin Wiplinger published an extensive monograph on Heidegger, entitled *Wahrheit und Geschichtlichkeit.* Wiplinger organizes his material within the overriding dichotomy of thought and being. He reads the history of philosophy as an ongoing attempt to bring these poles together, an attempt which culminates in Heidegger’s account of truth as a process of disclosedness involving the unity of being and thinking. Finally, he ties this process or event directly to the phenomenon of historicity; historicity is the happening of disclosedness. He refers to the early occurrence of this theme in *SZ*, but his most important sources are the writings from the following decades, notably the various texts on truth and *The Principle of Reason (Der Satz vom Grund)* from 1957. Wiplinger emphasizes the transformation that takes place in the later texts, where the event of disclosedness is no longer thought of as emanating from a specific ground, but rather as an explicitly ground-less, abysmal projection, through which being conceals and discloses itself simultaneously. Ultimately this occurs in language, the *logos* which is entirely characterized by historicity. Wiplinger’s book is not, as he readily admits in the introduction, a

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35 In some respects, the book belongs to the theological, rather than to the philosophical, reception of Heidegger’s work; in the concluding section, it points to the dialogue with a divine *logos* as the ultimate consequence of Heidegger’s historical hermeneutics. The substantial part of the discussion, however, is a Heideggerian analysis and discussion of truth and historicity.

36 Wiplinger (1961), p. 359. In a similar vein, but from a different perspective W. Marx, in *Heidegger und die Tradition* from the same year, argued that the historical-philosophical project of the later Heidegger should be understood in the light of the analysis of historicity in *SZ*, Marx (1961/1980), p. 113. A few years earlier a radically different assessment of the role of historicity in Heidegger’s work had been suggested in an essay by P. Rossi, “Martin Heidegger e l’analisi esistenziale della storicità” (1959), for whom the theory of historicity in *SZ* was a misguided attempt to accommodate Dilthey, and in respect to which the later account of being as epoch and destiny marks an entirely new approach.
critical work; it is basically an exegetical study of the theme of truth in Heidegger's major writings. It is noteworthy, however, for being the first attempt to locate the theme of historicity as a key to the overall direction of Heidegger's thinking, and as a point of contact between the early and the later texts. In 1949 Paul Ricoeur published a long essay on "Husserl and the meaning of history," which does not in any obvious way belong to the reception of Heidegger's theory of historicity, but which nevertheless plays an important part in the general picture outlined here, since it paves the way for more radical conclusions concerning phenomenology and history. The principal purpose of Ricoeur's text was to give an interpretation of how and why Husserl's supposedly a-historical mode of philosophizing is transformed in the last writings (most of which were then still unpublished, but which would eventually appear in the sixth volume of Husserliana). Ricoeur did not seek to identify a radical reversal in Husserl's thinking. Rather he argued that the historical reflections should be seen as projections of the reflexive phenomenological approach from the individual and interior level onto the level of collective becoming.

In this context mention must also be made of O. Pugliese's admirable monography *Vermittlung und Kehre* from 1965, whose general orientation has also been of importance to the present line of argument. The study could in fact be seen as a more rigorous attempt to do what Wiplinger had already suggested (even though Pugliese pays surprisingly little attention to the problem of truth), namely to think Heidegger's development from fundamental ontology to a history of being, in other words the *Kehre*, as a development of precisely the theme of historicity. Pugliese writes: "Through an interpretation of the totality of Heidegger's thinking, the theme of historicity proves to be the primary and philosophically most relevant" (Das Thema der Geschichtlichkeit erweist sich so bei einer Auslegung der Gesamtheit des Heideggerschen Denkens als das Primäre und philosophisch Relevante), Pugliese (1965), p. 56. In Pugliese's interpretation historicity, especially in its later transformations, is ultimately equivalent with the transcendental horizon itself, i.e., with the opening or disclosedness of being. Historicity is an event or happening of transcendence (*Transzendenzgeschehen*), which, in respect to the earlier texts, encompasses the entire structure of the ontological pursuit. Pugliese also argues for the central importance of the idea of repetition (*Wiederholung*) as this is originally formulated in *SZ*. The structure of repetition is found both on the level of the existential analysis in the description of Dasein's historicity, but it is also the structure which regulates the question of the meaning of being. Pugliese argues that these two levels cannot be separated, and that ultimately they are both aspects of one and the same "transcendental historicity," as an event of mediation (*Vermittlung*) between subject and object, through which givenness as such comes about.

In this respect his reading of Husserl differed from Merleau-Ponty, who, in *Phénoménologie de la perception* (1945) launched the idea of a radical Husserlian turning in the later writings. At this point it would perhaps have been called upon to address Merleau-Ponty as a "thinker of historicity" in his own right, for he too belongs to this amorphous field of modern thinkers. For an assessment of his work from this perspective, see the article "L'historicité chez Merleau-Ponty," by C. Capalbo (1975).
to all idealisms and classic philosophies of reflection, including phenomenology, and, as Ricoeur concluded, this is a dilemma that is perhaps most clearly illustrated in Husserl’s phenomenology in its analysis of intersubjectivity, notably the fifth of the Cartesian Meditations. Thus Ricoeur established an essential correspondence between a phenomenology of history and a phenomenology of intersubjectivity, a correspondence which he summarized as the process of a certain “eruption toward the foreign at the very heart of the self-same.”

Thereby he also pointed toward a certain enigmatic limit that philosophy experiences when it tries to think history and the other. Over and against the optimistic Hegelian conception of a completed mediation between self and other, phenomenology, in Ricoeur’s reading, seemed to have come across a more fundamental experience of the finitude of philosophical thought itself.

Ricoeur’s essay was an important source of inspiration to another French work on phenomenology and history, one which would later come to be seen as the beginning of a new development in phenomenological research: deconstruction. In 1962, Jacques Derrida published his first academic work, a translation of a late text by Husserl, accompanied by a long commentary, under the French title L’Origine de la géométrie. Even though the study was entirely devoted to Husserl, and Heidegger is hardly even mentioned, it nevertheless occupies an important position within the genealogy of the problem of historicity. In the original Husserlian text, around which Derrida’s analysis is woven, Husserl argues for a particular form of historical reflection with respect to eidetic truths, a reflection that should balance between the two extremes of an a-historical a priori analysis and a factual historical account. More precisely, he speaks of the need for a specific form of questioning return (Rückfrage) to an original and originating act of meaning-constitution, in order to grasp the full sense of geometric truths. Thus he opens the question of the historicity of idealities, their specific ways of being historical, that is, of existing in and through the medium of tradition. Husserl here acknowledges the double edge of language and writing for the historical transmission of truth; writing is the sine qua non of a continuous meaning-tradition, but it is also a threat to this very same continuity, since every sign can

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become a dead and empty shell if it is not fully reactivated. This is a risk that also calls for a particular responsibility on the part of the thinker.

In his commentary, Derrida points to precisely this perilous nature of language. Drawing out the more radical consequences of Husserl’s analysis, he evokes the image of how thinking exists in the medium of tradition, a medium that is linguistic through and through, and where no guarantees of the continuity of meaning or truth are given. But more important to the present context is what Derrida has to say, in the concluding chapter, about a certain “transcendental historicity,” which, he argues, is characteristic of phenomenological reflection in particular, but ultimately of thinking in general. Thinking is a finite attempt to reach for the infinite, it is a temporal event which brings about the a-temporal. But the infinite and a-temporal for which it aspires can only be realized in a finite and temporal passage. Historicity is the name for this underlying passage or movement of meaning itself. Derrida shows how phenomenology, already in Husserl, thus understood itself as a thoroughly dialectical play of activity and passivity, which is another way of speaking about the historicity of thought: “For it is only phenomenology that can make infinite historicity appear, i.e., infinite discourse and dialecticity as the pure possibility and very essence of being in its manifestation.”\(^\text{40}\) This is said to take place within the “living present” which, for phenomenology, is the ultimate source of legitimacy. But this present, Derrida adds, should not be understood as an a-historical absolute, but as an awareness of the irreducible delay or “difference” of thinking with respect to itself. Even within the living present, or the enacted meaning, there is an alterity from and toward which thinking is always moving. And this difference, he argued, is itself transcendental.\(^\text{41}\)

In a sense one could say that Derrida projects a Heideggerian concern onto Husserlian phenomenology, while giving a new articulation to this original concern. The historicity of thought in his


\(^{41}\) The idea of an original “difference” that underlies every metaphysical determination of being is an important theme in the later writings of Heidegger, e.g., in the essay “Die onto-theologische Verfassung der Metaphysik,” \textit{IA}D, pp. 31-67. For Derrida’s reformulation of this “difference” to “differance” with an \textit{a} in explicit reference to Heidegger, see the essay “la différence,” in Derrida (1972), pp. 1-29.
account is not essentially tied to the fact that thought has a history; more important, it is tied to the fact that thought is finite and linguistic and therefore intersubjective. To speak of the historicity of thought is to speak of thought as destined to move within the interconnected poles of *arche* and *telos* in a persistent and non-exhaustible estrangement and difference with respect to itself. It is a response and a responsibility at the same time, a response to the constituted meaning for which it has to take responsibility. In his subsequent works, Derrida would explore various aspects of such a constitutive non-presence, or inverted transcendentality, which would take him far beyond the original phenomenological program; still, it is significant to see how this development takes as its point of departure the problem of the historicity of ideal truths, and of philosophical thinking in general.

For a long time, the question of Heidegger as a thinker of historicity was mostly a German affair, but during the last decade this theme has attracted a rising interest in the English speaking world. One work in particular should be mentioned, which has also influenced my own approach, namely Christopher Fynsk’s *Heidegger: Thought and Historicity*. This interpretation has its roots primarily in the modern French reception of Heidegger, notably Derrida and Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe. Fynsk focuses on the theme of “appropriation,” as the process of making something other than oneself into one’s own, and how this includes a specific experience of “disappropriation.” He traces this theme from *SZ*, through the essay on “The Origin of the Work of Art,” and to the lectures on Hölderlin and Nietzsche. The historicity of thought is here the general name for the fact that thought essentially occupies a place within such a play of appropriation and disappropriation. Fynsk’s question is located within a Hegelian-Gadamerian framework, but it takes on a more critical, and eventually deconstructive, turn, as he tries to locate the points at which Heidegger, in his own interpretations of Nietzsche and Hölderlin, is in fact trying to cover over his own inability to appropriate fully these predecessors. With the

42 One exception was Michael Murray’s *Modern Philosophy of History* (1974), which discusses Joachim de Fiore, Hegel, and Heidegger, but the overall perspective is thoroughly influenced by Heidegger. To the recent works in this field I also count the book by Gillespie (1984) mentioned above (see note 25), and R. Campbell’s extensive survey *Truth and Historicity* (1992), a critical historical-systematic account of the development of the philosophical understanding of truth, written primarily from a Kierkegaardian-Heideggerian perspective. D. Schmidt’s *The Ubiquity of the Finite* (1988), also contains a good comparative discussion of Hegel and Heidegger concerning the problem of historical existence.
help of René Girard’s theory of a mimetic rivalry and Harold Bloom’s theory of an anxiety of influence, Fynsk analyses how Heidegger operates in an essentially conflictual intersubjective medium of history. He also brings out the implicit links between the analyses of historicity in *SZ* and Heidegger’s own theory of intersubjectivity in the same work, arguing that the connection between hermeneutics and the being of the other remained something of an “inner limit” in Heidegger’s thinking. Thus Fynsk reactivates, in more radical terms, Ricoeur’s observation in the early essay on Husserl, that a theory of historicity is inextricably tied to the problem of intersubjectivity as a question of the limits of the self vis-à-vis the other.

Another recent work in English is Jeffrey Barash’s *Martin Heidegger and the Problem of Historical Meaning*, from 1988. Barash approaches the theme of historicity from a different angle, in a study which is historically oriented in a more traditional sense. He situates Heidegger’s reflections on the relation between philosophy and its history within a broader context of historical and philosophical thinking around the turn of the century. The presentation is centered around the problem of meaning in history, defined as “the possibility of systematic coherence of normative criteria of truth in view of its historicity.” In other words, it is the problem of historicism, and its challenge to systematic philosophical knowledge. The problem as such is initially traced back to the conflict between the proponents of the Enlightenment and their critics, between Kant and Hegel, as representatives of a non-historical and a historical thinking respectively. Barash then continues to show how the historicization of culture in all its aspects during the nineteenth century provoked the question of the possibility of a comprehensive foundation for values. He argues that this issue remained crucial to Heidegger, and that Heidegger saw a solution to it in the encounter with the past as a projection toward the future.

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44 As a mediating link in the critical deconstructive evaluation of Heidegger, we should not forget the influence of Levinas, who has persistently argued for the irreducibility of the other as an absolute limit for any philosophical or conceptual appropriation whatsoever. See any of his works from as early as *Théorie de l’intuition dans la phénoméologie de Husserl* (1930) and onward, esp. *Totalité et Infini, Essai sur l’extériorité* (1961). The most important early text on the question of the other in Heidegger and Levinas is Derrida’s long essay “Violence et métaphysique,” in Derrida (1967), which in fact also suggests a connection between the themes of historicity, the other, and the thought of an original difference in both Heidegger and Levinas.

short, Barash distinguishes four phases in Heidegger’s thinking on history, of which the ontological theory of historicity in SZ was one. As an interpretation of Heidegger’s own texts Barash’s study is of limited value, but it is unique in the details of the historical context that it provides.

Barash’s book was published along with an appreciative preface by Paul Ricoeur. In concluding the survey, I return to Ricoeur, who himself returned to the question of historicity in *Temps et recit* (1983-1985). In this vast survey of various thinkers on time, from Aristotle onward, Heidegger occupies a distinct position, and of particular importance is the theory of historicity in *SZ*. This theory is analyzed in a separate chapter where Ricoeur also acknowledges his “immeasurable debt” to Heidegger’s hermeneutic phenomenology. Ricoeur is particularly interested in the relation between temporality and historicity, and what the analysis of human historicity adds to our understanding of time. At the center of this philosophical cluster he identifies the movement of tradition in which a heritage is assumed. In Ricoeur’s analysis historicity emerges as the bridge between the two temporal levels, individual existential time, and collective historical time. He concludes: “It is in fact when the continuity of the existential analysis is placed in doubt that historicity becomes the critical point of the whole enterprise.”

4. Orientation and structure of the present study
To some extent the above survey is a testimony to its own impossibility. There is no simple story to be told about the reception of the theme of historicity in Heidegger’s writings. The assumption of this task inevitably draws the presumptive historian into an ongoing philosophical debate, where the *Auseinandersetzung* between some of the most powerful voices is continuously being enacted. Nonetheless, if we disregard for the moment the philosophical developments to which the

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47 *Ibid.*, p. 176: “C’est en effet lorsque la continuité de l’analyse existentiale est mise en question que l’historialité devient le point critique de toute l’entreprise” (Ricoeur translates “Geschichtlichkeit” as “historialité”). As such a critical point, it also marks the starting point of Ricoeur’s own attempts to mediate within the aporias of time through a theory of narrativity. But that is another story.
reflections on the historicity of thought have led, a limited number of themes and perspectives can still be isolated, through which the foregoing presentation can be summarized and against the background of which the orientation of the present work can be outlined.

First of all, it is clear that much work has already been devoted to the disentanglement of the historical roots of the concept of historicity, as well as to the emergence of this theme in Heidegger’s writings, notably with reference to Dilthey and the nineteenth-century discussion of methods and goals in the human sciences. It is no small irony of fate that regarding this specific topic, as well as in regard to many other central topics in Heidegger’s writings, the historical-reconstructive approach has been so powerful. Heidegger was a thinker who spent much of his intellectual energy trying to break free from that very same tradition into which his followers—in paying him tribute—have often reinscribed him. The historical-reconstructive approach has also been applied to Heidegger’s own body of writings. This is a task motivated in particular by the fact that the early and the later writings seem to differ so drastically from one another. In several studies, the theme of historicity has functioned as such a guiding and mediating theme. As far as the content of this particular guiding theme is concerned, different paths have been explored. When Heidegger is approached from a primarily Hegelian perspective, historicity appears as another formulation of the Hegelian dialectics of becoming, of the paradoxical process of mediation between the subject and the object of knowledge. When the role of hermeneutical thought is underscored, this movement of mediation is explicitly understood as an interpretative movement, and the historicity of thought is seen as the process of bridging a historical distance. In their different ways, both of these perspectives imply that truth must also be seen as historical, and that the question of the historicity of thought cannot be separated from that of the historicity of truth.

The chapters that follow will no doubt betray the extent to which the present study is indebted to its forerunners. Nevertheless, through the questions and perspectives that it adopts, and through its particular emphasis on certain texts, it seeks to open a path and an access to Heidegger’s thinking that has not previously been explored. Its general ambition is simple enough: to further the understanding of both the sense and the significance of the theme of historicity in Heidegger’s
writings through a series of interrelated investigations. In doing so, it is guided by two specific assumptions:

The first assumption is that throughout its various transformations, this theme marks a unique point of condensation in Heidegger’s thinking, a point at which it turns back to reflect on its own possibility, and from which it also seeks to generate the legitimacy of its original approach. This “meta-methodological” aspect is clearly manifested in SZ, where historicity is both a theme within the existential analytic and a methodological starting point for the organization of the work as a whole. But, as I will argue, it is also the case in the previous, as well as the later writings. Only by affirming its historicity, and by choosing to operate from within it, can philosophy remain true to its calling as a first science. This is Heidegger’s version of Ursprungphilosophie.

The second assumption, in line with the first, is that this self-reflexive situation is already from the outset characterized by a measure of ineffability, and by a recognition of the limits of discursive language. This heightened awareness of the form and mode of philosophical discourse itself is ultimately reflected in a certain tendency toward the enigmatic, and toward a signifying silence. This is not something which Heidegger thematizes in any systematic way; but throughout the stations of the study I will pay attention to how this tendency surfaces, particularly in relation to the various attempts to approach the domain of historicity. It is in this domain that a certain enigma makes its appearance, as the signature of the very limit of understanding and signifying. The title of the present study has borrowed its name from this enigma, this Rätsel, to which Heidegger repeatedly resorts at decisive junctures in his writings.

Taken together these assumptions make it clear that the question of the cited expression is borrowed from M. Heinz, who uses it to characterize the role of historicity in SZ, Heinz (1982), p. 142.

The translation of “Rätsel” as “enigma” could certainly be discussed. The closest etymological parallel in English is “riddle,” which stems from the same Old-German root rædan, “to read” and “to guess.” In modern day English, however, “riddle” has the character of puzzle and amusement rather than of something which resists articulation in a more fundamental sense. In the section of Nietzsche’s Zarathustra, entitled “Vom Gesicht und Rätsel,” to which Heidegger’s remark in the motto to the Introduction refers, the Rätsel clearly also has the sense of “riddle,” since Zarathustra here explicitly gives his listeners a riddle to solve. Heidegger’s analysis of this passage and his “response” to the riddle are addressed in Chapter Five. For Heidegger’s own explicit connection between the Rätsel and an inexhaustible origin, see his remarks on Hölderlin’s line “Ein Räthsel ist Reinentsprungenes” from “Der Rhein,” in GA 39, pp. 234f.
historicity will here be looked upon as an exemplary characteristic of Heidegger's transformation of a classical philosophical heritage. In the end, it concerns the self-conception of philosophical reason. A thesis of the study is that we cannot understand what Heidegger means by such central concepts as being, time, and truth, if we are not prepared to follow him onto the terrain where thinking encounters its own historicity. In declaring its own historicity, philosophy passes a momentous judgment on itself; it inscribes its own traditional quest for a first science of being in a new order, wherein the affirmation of finitude and a certain contingency replaces the position of the origin, the foundation, and the transcendental. The point, however, is not to abandon this quest altogether, but to transform the very meaning of the origin itself.

One way to read the seven chapters that follow is to see them as seven stops along a circular path. They are directed toward a common ground, but it is a ground that cannot be articulated from any single perspective. Neither can it be exhaustively summarized after the completed passage. The results of the explorations can only be assessed in terms of the general correspondences that they establish, and in terms of the specific points that are made along the way. The circular structure of the exploration is indicated by the fact that it both begins and ends with the question of beginnings. At the same time the account has a chronological orientation; it begins with the earlier writings, and it ends with the later ones. This chronological orientation also characterizes the different chapters, which are generally organized as a story, moving from what is prior to what is posterior, in a quite conventional sense. In brief outline, the story goes as follows:

Chapter One takes its point of departure in Husserl's classic appeal for a first philosophy of origins. It analyzes how Heidegger loyally administers this Husserlian ideal, while leading its impetus in a new direction, toward a historicization of that very origin. Already here, a guiding theme is evoked, as I analyze how "the historical" designates both that which is studied and the mode in which it is studied.

Chapter Two investigates Heidegger's appropriation of hermeneutics as a response to the demand that philosophical thinking must overcome the artificial dichotomy between the systematic and the historical. It focuses on the nature of the "hermeneutical situation" as a reflexive middle ground that can only be understood from the dual perspective of
both a condition for understanding and meaning-formation, and a need to act on a historical arena. To be historical in Heidegger's sense is to stand in such a situation.

Chapter Three contains two objectives. Starting from a suggestion by Heidegger, it seeks to establish the connection between human historicity and the phenomena of conscience and guilt. The logic of the "voice of conscience," as developed by Heidegger himself in SZ, is shown to function as the regulative model behind the explicit analysis of historicity in the same work. The second objective is to establish the extent to which this analysis can be read as a response to Nietzsche's second "Untimely meditation." With reference to the question of what it means to be addressed by voices of the past, a confrontation between these two texts is attempted. A central problem in the chapter as a whole is the structure of the "repetition" that Heidegger presents as the original phenomenon of historical existence.

Chapter Four brings together two basic pillars of the existential analytic of SZ, historicity and temporality, in a critical assessment of Heidegger's own attempt to ground the former in the latter. Through an analysis of the development of the problem of time and temporality in the writings both before and after SZ, it is argued that the ontological founding presented in the major work was ambiguous from the start. The expectations placed on the analysis of temporality in SZ proved to be untenable, instead, it is the problem of historicity that points beyond SZ toward the later writings.

Chapter Five explores a central but often neglected concept in Heidegger's writings, the "moment of vision," the Augenblick. In SZ this is the bridge between the level of temporality and historicity. But it is also deeply related to the hidden agenda of the thought of historicity, namely, the attempt to think the essentially finite, incalculable nature of understanding and meaning-formation as the meeting-point of appropriation and critique, of passivity and activity. It is argued that Heidegger's preoccupation with the peculiar logic of the Augenblick is what ties together the earliest attempts to define a "kairological" relation to the present with the thought of "event" (Ereignis) in the later writings.

Chapter Six addresses the question of truth and its historicity. The presupposition is that the historicity of thought and of meaning-formation in general must be understood as an attempt to articulate an
event of truth. The explicit theme of the historicity of truth belongs to the writings after SZ, but it is prepared much earlier. As in the case of original temporality in Chapter Four, the account of truth in SZ is seen as a provisionary attempt to articulate the being of the access to beings that Heidegger was subsequently led to abandon. Furthermore, it is emphasized that the peculiar “historicization” of truth toward which he then moves in the later writings is not motivated by a relapse into a historicist conception of truth. The “historical” characterization of truth arises rather from the attempt to think the essence of truth as disclosedness. This attempt, however, reactivates the explication pattern first outlined in the analysis of the hermeneutical situation, of a repetition of an unsurpassable singularity.

Chapter Seven is primarily an attempt to read Heidegger’s Beiträge from the point of view of the questions developed in the previous chapters. In this book the historicization of the philosophical task is explicitly pursued to its utmost extremes. Not only Dasein and truth, but also being itself are here understood “historically.” A guiding idea behind this transformation of the philosophical landscape is that of the “other beginning.” In Beiträge, philosophical thinking understands itself as such an other beginning, or rather as the preparation for it. As a master-trope, the idea of the other beginning regulates not only what is discussed in this work, but also how it is discussed. Thus the two aspects of historicity are here brought together in the explicit affirmation of a thinking whose “historical” mode is inseparable from the “historical” nature of that which it thinks.

The emphasis on Beiträge is partly motivated by the fact that this recently released work is still in some respects an unexplored territory. Its extraordinary aspirations and its exasperating style constitute a challenge to the philosophical interpreter. From the perspective of the questions raised in the study, however, this emphasis can also be defended on principle. Beiträge is a work in which the “historical” conception of the philosophical enterprise reaches a culmination and, perhaps, even an impasse. In addition, I have also tried to make as much use as possible of other recently released sources. An extraordinary text in this respect is the famous draft of a longer projected study of Aristotle from 1922, “Phenomenological Interpretations of
Aristotle. Directives for the Hermeneutic Situation,” which was long believed to have been lost but which was recently retrieved and made available. There are also the many lecture series that appear continuously, in particular those from the earliest period, before the composition of SZ.

A question that is difficult to avoid when writing about Heidegger, and one which also bears upon the above summary of previous literature, is how to respond to the very different ways in which his work is being interpreted in the current philosophical debate, both in terms of style, emphasis, and content. Simply drawing the contours of this landscape is a task in itself. One divisive line is sometimes accentuated over and above the others, namely what John D. Caputo—playing on the fate of Hegelianism a century earlier—describes as “rightist” and “leftist” Heideggerianism, by which he refers to the dual heritage of Heidegger’s work in hermeneutics (Gadamer) and in deconstruction (Derrida). In Caputo’s account, Heidegger himself occupies an uncertain middle position between those who emphasize the hermeneutic Heidegger of SZ, and those who stress the deconstructive turn of the later works, the radical exit from a metaphysics of presence and appropriation. The difference in both content and temper between Gadamer’s and Derrida’s Heidegger should not be denied. Still, the implicit message of the present study is that the two sides of Heidegger represented by these inheritors not only could, but should be read

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50 “Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu Aristoteles. Anzeige der hermeneutischen Situation,” published in Dilthey Jahrbuch (1989), referred to here as PA.

51 Up until Heidegger’s death in 1976, the entire period from the dissertation (published in 1916) to the radically different SZ eleven years later was concealed in the darkness of history, except to those contemporaries, students, and colleagues, who visited his seminars in Freiburg and Marburg, and to a small group of select scholars who were given access to some of the unpublished material. Starting with the publication of the Prolegomena zur Geschichte des Zeitbegriffs in 1979 (which consists of lectures given in 1925, during the time when Heidegger was writing SZ), new material from his lectures during the late tens and early twenties has been appearing steadily. At present, most of the volumes intended for publication have been released, with a few significant exceptions. Important texts that are projected, but not yet released, are: the lectures on the phenomenology of intuition and expression from 1920 (GA 59/60); the lectures on Aristotle’s Rhetoric from 1924 (GA 18); and the unpublished dissertation on the concept of time from 1924 (GA 64).

52 A valuable, although certainly not conclusive, attempt in this direction is Thomas Rentsch’s article “Martin Heideggers 100. Geburtstag: Profile der internationalen Diskussion,” Rentsch (1989-90).


54 This difference was clearly demonstrated in the somewhat unfortunate philosophical encounter between them that was later documented in the volume Dialogue & Deconstruction, eds. Michfelder & Palmer (1989).
through one another. The thought of an original *difference* has its roots in the attempt to articulate what it means for thinking to stand in a hermeneutical situation. Likewise, the thought of an original belonging to being and to language, in respect to which the signifying capacity of language itself ultimately falters, constitutes a radicalization of the logic of the historicity of understanding as outlined not only in *SZ*, but already in the earliest reading of Aristotle. To determine the more precise relation between these lines of inquiry is, of course, beyond the scope of the present work; they are only mentioned here so as to give a sense of the Vorhaben from within which I try to navigate.

The problem of how to respond to different schools of Heidegger-interpretation is closely linked to the question of his so called "turning" (*Kehre*). Ever since the publication in 1947 of the "Letter on Humanism," the question of the turning has been a theme in Heidegger scholarship. Encouraged by Heidegger's own statements, students and readers have sought to understand the transformation that his thinking supposedly underwent during the early thirties. The most obvious sign of this change is of course that Heidegger never completed *SZ*. Instead of pursuing the hermeneutic argument of fundamental ontology, according to which the question of the meaning of being can only be elaborated on the basis of an understanding of human Dasein, he turned instead to reflect on the manifestations of being as truth, as event, and as destiny. Referring to this change, William Richardson in his classic study even distinguished a "Heidegger I" from a "Heidegger II," a suggestion which Heidegger himself reluctantly accepted on the condition that the second be understood from the first, and the first from the second. The discussion of the sense and significance of the turning has resulted in a number of interpretations (some of which were mentioned in the survey above). The present interpretation is not guided by the supposition of a radical break or discontinuity in Heidegger's thinking, but rather by the idea of a spiraling transformation which can be traced to an ongoing attempt to articulate and

55 See, e.g., J. Grondin, "Le tournant dans la pensee de Martin Heidegger" (1987), a book that brings together Heidegger's own remarks in different works on the various meaning of the "turning" in a general interpretation of the significance of this theme.

56 Richardson (1963), p. xxiii. A few years later Heidegger himself suggested instead a trisection of his work, in terms of three key-words: meaning (*Sinn*), truth (*Wahrheit*), and region (*Ort*), as successive steps in an ongoing attempt to raise the question of being, *GA* 15, p. 344.
disclose the philosophical territory or predicament that provoked it in the first place. Furthermore, its implicit supposition is that the theme of historicity does in fact constitute an exemplary path for the understanding of Heidegger's turning. His increasing emphasis on the historical nature of thinking after the turning marks a radicalization of the themes initially addressed in the form of the historical nature of life and of Dasein in the earlier writings. Eventually, it marks a radicalization of the experience of how original thinking always already belongs to that which it is called to articulate. Understood in this way, the theme of historicity can be seen as the key to the overall transformation of Heidegger's thinking.

In the context of these difficulties, one also encounters the question of how to assess and learn from Heidegger's own remarks on his own earlier achievements. The drastic and puzzling way in which he sometimes read his own previous writings was investigated by Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann in 1964, and it has been a source of conflicting assessments of his works ever since. There is no obvious way of handling these "self-interpretations"; from a strictly textual-historical perspective they should be considered as just another possible interpretation, where Heidegger has no priority over anyone else when it comes to explicating his own words; on the other hand, they can be invaluable clues to understanding the inner dynamic and teleology of a specific argument or stance at a certain stage. They are part of the textual corpus itself, and yet they stand outside it. Whatever their varying relevance is, no discussion of Heidegger's early works can ignore the later works. This is not just a normative statement; more important, it is a factual statement, since the early Heidegger has always been received through the later Heidegger, through his writings, but also through his lectures and through his advice to students and collaborators. It is just one of the many interpretative circles within which the reader has to operate.

One example applies directly to the present line of inquiry. In the introductory section, it was mentioned how Heidegger late in life discards the attempts to interpret the idea of "the destiny of being"

57 Judging from two recent works, a tendency now is to see Heidegger's "turning" after SZ rather as a turning back to themes before the major work. See G. Figal (1992), pp. 99-100, and T. Kisiel (1993), pp. 3, 458. This is also the case in a recent essay by J. van Buren (1990).

through the theory of historicity in SZ; the only way leading from SZ to the later writings, he argues, is its attempt at a destruction of classical ontology. How should we understand this remark? The solution adopted here is both loyal and disloyal to its explicit message. It is loyal to Heidegger’s recommendation in that it stresses the logic of destructive retrieve as a defining element of philosophical thinking; it is disloyal for the way in which it refuses to take the strict distinction between a historicity of Dasein and a historicity of being for granted. Instead it seeks to read both of these stages of Heidegger’s work as ways of circumscribing and bringing out the peculiar self-reflexive nature of philosophical thinking, and inversely, the peculiar nature of its theme.

Finally, I want to raise a question which obviously deserves more than a single paragraph. This is the question of how the theme of historicity relates to politics in general, and to Heidegger’s politics in particular. To be historical is to prevail in the medium of transmission of heritage in such a way as to be compelled to act; to engage in repetition, critique, and response. When understood in this way, it is clear that historicity could also be said to constitute a political predicament, in a very broad sense of this word. In Heidegger’s intellectual universe, there is no free haven where theoretical thinking can simply be pursued beyond the reach of conflict. The domain of truth is itself characterized by struggle, where disclosedness and concealment prevail in discordant unity. The connection between the theme of historicity and a possible politics is rarely spelled out explicitly by Heidegger, even though SZ does suggest a certain historicity of the “generation” or the “people,” in which a fate of the “community” is supposedly revealed in collective resolve. From Karl Löwith we have the story of how Heidegger in 1936 acknowledged that the connection between his philosophy and his embracing of the new regime was in fact to be found precisely in the analysis of historicity in SZ. These suggestions are briefly addressed in Chapter Three, Section 7.

59 SZ, pp. 384-385. These suggestions are briefly addressed in Chapter Three, Section 7.

60 Mein Leben in Deutschland (1986), p. 56. Löwith himself does not elaborate further on this remark. One way of understanding it is to hear it as the philosophical echo of another remark to another Jewish friend three years earlier: this is the letter that Heidegger wrote to Elisabeth Blochmann in March 1933, where the people, the historical events, and a certain resolve are brought together in a disturbing illustration of how the affirmation of collective destiny can also be the affirmation of a tragic blindness: “For me the present course of events—precisely because much remains obscure and unmastered—have an unusually gathering power. It increases the will and the certainty to act in the service of a great task and to participate in the building of a
could have been the starting point of a very different study than the one presented here, while still addressing several of its themes. The strategy of destructive hermeneutics, the ideal of the "kairological critic," acting and understanding from within the Augenblick, as well as the "conservative revolutionary" logic behind the idea of the "other beginning," all lend themselves to a political reading of Heidegger's thinking, which would not necessarily be foreign to his own intentions. Rather than adding scattered remarks here and there, however, I have decided to leave this connection aside. The reason for this is not that I find it irrelevant, nor that I subscribe to the innocent view that Heidegger's politics could be entirely separated from his philosophy. It is only that this matter requires a very different approach which would have made the present course of investigation impossible.\footnote{To understand what a thinker has thought requires that we approach the point where he disappears and we encounter what is to be thought. This is not to say that the interpretation must ultimately converge completely with the perspective of the thinker in question. On the contrary, it permits critique as well as transgression, but only after it has learned what can be learned in a critical encounter. In his "Remarks" to Karl Jaspers's Psychology of Worldviews, Heidegger writes: In its basic attitude the critique liberates the proper tendency of Jaspers's work; through this liberation it strives to bring the all-pervading direction of the problems and the basic motive to a sharper distinction and to determine in what way the starting point of the task, as well as the choice and use of methodological means in the process, genuinely respond to the tendency itself and its distinguishable traits, and to determine if these methods and tendencies are radical enough in respect to the tentative basic direction of the philosophical approach in question. In this way every critique oriented along a fixed scale (Maßstab-Kritik) is set out of function.\footnote{Another reason for choosing to leave this matter aside is of course the magnitude of the present state of this discussion. No serious handling of the question of Heidegger and politics can avoid to address the relevant literature, which—to mention some—includes the work of Krockow (1958), Schwann (1965), Farias (1987), Ott (1988), Pöggeler [ed.] (1988), Altwege [ed.] (1988), Brainard [ed.] (1991), Rockmore & Margolis [eds.] (1992).} world based on the people" (Das gegenwärtige Geschehen hat für mich—gerade weil vieles dunkel und unbewältigt bleibt—eine ungewöhnliche sammelnde Kraft. Es steigert den Willen u. die Sicherheit im Dienste eines großen Auftrages zu wirken und am Bau einer volklich gegründeten Welt mitzuwirken, HBB, p. 60).\footnote{"Anmerkungen zu Karl Jaspers 'Psychologie der Weltanschauungen,'" GA 9, p. 2-3: "Die Kritik gibt in ihrer Grundhaltung die eigentliche Tendenz der Jasperssehen...\footnote{\textsuperscript{62}To understand what a thinker has thought requires that we approach the point where he disappears and we encounter what is to be thought. This is not to say that the interpretation must ultimately converge completely with the perspective of the thinker in question. On the contrary, it permits critique as well as transgression, but only after it has learned what can be learned in a critical encounter. In his "Remarks" to Karl Jaspers's Psychology of Worldviews, Heidegger writes: In its basic attitude the critique liberates the proper tendency of Jaspers's work; through this liberation it strives to bring the all-pervading direction of the problems and the basic motive to a sharper distinction and to determine in what way the starting point of the task, as well as the choice and use of methodological means in the process, genuinely respond to the tendency itself and its distinguishable traits, and to determine if these methods and tendencies are radical enough in respect to the tentative basic direction of the philosophical approach in question. In this way every critique oriented along a fixed scale (Maßstab-Kritik) is set out of function.\footnote{Another reason for choosing to leave this matter aside is of course the magnitude of the present state of this discussion. No serious handling of the question of Heidegger and politics can avoid to address the relevant literature, which—to mention some—includes the work of Krockow (1958), Schwann (1965), Farias (1987), Ott (1988), Pöggeler [ed.] (1988), Altwege [ed.] (1988), Brainard [ed.] (1991), Rockmore & Margolis [eds.] (1992).} world based on the people" (Das gegenwärtige Geschehen hat für mich—gerade weil vieles dunkel und unbewältigt bleibt—eine ungewöhnliche sammelnde Kraft. Es steigert den Willen u. die Sicherheit im Dienste eines großen Auftrages zu wirken und am Bau einer volklich gegründeten Welt mitzuwirken, HBB, p. 60).\footnote{Another reason for choosing to leave this matter aside is of course the magnitude of the present state of this discussion. No serious handling of the question of Heidegger and politics can avoid to address the relevant literature, which—to mention some—includes the work of Krockow (1958), Schwann (1965), Farias (1987), Ott (1988), Pöggeler [ed.] (1988), Altwege [ed.] (1988), Brainard [ed.] (1991), Rockmore & Margolis [eds.] (1992).} world based on the people" (Das gegenwärtige Geschehen hat für mich—gerade weil vieles dunkel und unbewältigt bleibt—eine ungewöhnliche sammelnde Kraft. Es steigert den Willen u. die Sicherheit im Dienste eines großen Auftrages zu wirken und am Bau einer volklich gegründeten Welt mitzuwirken, HBB, p. 60).}
The statement is a lucid declaration of the specific conditions, but also of what one could call the "ethics" of philosophical critique.⁶³ Taking it as a model, my aim here is to uncover a "genuine tendency" of Heidegger's work, and to perform this in a critical spirit. By the latter is meant an attentiveness to whether Heidegger has been radical enough, and whether he has chosen the right means, considering the tentative direction of his thinking. I also readily acknowledge that there is no given scale with reference to which his ideas and conclusions can be assessed in advance. It is only in and through an interpretation of the texts and the domain that they disclose that a significant critique can be formulated.

An important aspect of the problem of the historicity of philosophical thought is how to handle the relation between a supposedly "philosophical" investigation and a "historical" account, and whether this limit can or should be superseded. How does this apply to the following interpretation? In many ways the argument follows the conventions of a historical presentation of a particular theme; it compares different texts on the same subject matter, it tries to establish developments and patterns of influence. Still, the ultimate goal is not to establish the history of a concept, but rather to secure the access to a problem as something worthy of philosophical reflection. Ultimately this problem is the predicament in which thinking stands when it claims to start anew, when it claims to direct its gaze toward the things themselves. To reflect and to clarify in matters like these is not a question of mending what is broken or inventing new techniques, but of bringing thinking in tune with that which has always called for its attention.

⁶³ This expression is inspired by S. Critchley's discussion of a certain "ethics of deconstruction," which he elicits from the philosophical readings practiced primarily by Derrida and Levinas, in Critchley (1992).
Chapter One

THE FIRST BEGINNING

...deshalb wird man das Rätsel des Lebens so nie finden, weil man zuvor das Geheimnis des Lebendigen preisgegeben hat.

M. Heidegger, "Parmenides"

(1) Philosophy and the problem of beginnings, (2) Husserl's new beginning and the challenge of historicism (3) The dichotomy of history and systematics, (4) Heidegger's turning toward life as origin and history, (5) Intentional analysis as a "proto-historical" mode of thought, (6) Phenomenology and the mode of access to the given, (7) A note on the multiple senses of "history," (8) Heidegger's remarks to Jaspers on "the historical," (9) Concluding remarks

1. Philosophy and the problem of beginnings

How does it all begin? By asking this question of how and where to begin, something has already begun. This is in fact where it all begins: with a question of beginnings, of ἀρχαὶ and principia. Philosophy has always asked for beginnings, for the original beginnings. A certain problem is going to be addressed, namely, the problem of historicity in the philosophical writings of Martin Heidegger. But now, as the account itself is about to begin, it still faces the perennial question of where to do so. In a sense, this is a historical problem; it is a problem for the historian of philosophy, for whom the problem of historicity—just as the problems of time, of being, and of truth—in Heidegger’s thinking opens up a multitude of possible historical connections and comparisons. But where in the course of the vicissitudes of the modern experience and awareness of the historical indebtedness of thinking is it reasonable to begin? What if the sense of this experience has only just begun; what if the implications of this spiritual and intellectual trans-

1 "...the enigma of life will never be found where the mystery of the living being has already been abandoned."
formation still remains to be settled? Taken in this other sense, history has no solution to the problem of beginnings. A story can only begin once it has been determined what constitutes its true beginning; and this is a philosophical question. And yet philosophy must also tell stories; it must name a beginning, knowing that it may not be the true beginning, which is always located in a future to come, at the end of the story, after the provisional beginnings have been relegated to their proper places. Thus we find ourselves at an impasse already at the outset; having to begin, knowing that the beginning is always likely to be elsewhere.

These remarks are not as far from the issue itself as they may seem to be at first; for it is precisely in and around this question of beginnings that the problem of historicity first arises in Heidegger’s writings. What does it mean for a science that pretends to be an original science to begin, Heidegger asks in one of his early lectures. The problem of historicity is activated when philosophy, as the thought of beginnings, becomes aware of itself as always mediated, deferred, and thus in need of another in order to become itself. Whenever thinking begins, it has already begun; its beginning is already behind it. But at the same time it is something that lies ahead, as a possibility to be recovered in a future to come. Much of what Heidegger has to say about the historicity of philosophical thought concerns this strange circle, to which we will also return repeatedly. More specifically, it concerns the order of priority between history and philosophy, whose understanding of their own proper limits and applications are thereby placed in doubt.

In this first chapter, Heidegger’s early writings are explored along a path that takes its point of departure in the classic appeal of Husserlian phenomenology to transcend the spell of historicism and to secure a proper philosophical origin. This is an appeal to which Heidegger is fully attuned. However, it is also an appeal that undergoes a significant

\[2\] \textit{GA} 58, p. 4: “Was heißt ‘anfangen’ in einer Wissenschaft und gar in der prätendierter Urwissenschaft?” This remark is found at the outset of the 1919/1920 lecture series \textit{Basic Problems of Phenomenology (Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie)}, a text addressed in Section 4. Heidegger will later establish thematic distinctions between \textit{Anfang} and \textit{Beginn} in ways that are not apparent here. For a discussion of these distinctions in relation to the problem of origins, see R. Schürmann, \textit{Heidegger on Being and Acting: From Principles to Anarchy} (1987), part III, Chapter 8, and also M. Zarader, \textit{Heidegger et les paroles de l’origine} (1986), pp. 25 passim., who quotes and discusses an important passage from Heidegger’s Hölderlin lectures in 1934, where he addresses the relation between \textit{Beginn, Anfang}, and \textit{Ursprung}. 
transformation through his writings, as the origin itself is projected as a “historical” task in a specific sense of this word.

2. Husserl’s new beginning and the challenge of historicism

As a beginning, I will consider a philosophical text that not only marks a beginning, but one that also explicitly calls for one, namely, Husserl’s classic manifesto “Philosophy as Rigorous Science.” This text is significant for several reasons. It was alluded to in passing in the introduction, since it was mentioned late in life by Heidegger as a prime example of Husserl’s insensitivity to the historicity of thought. Yet this text plays a decisive role in articulating the relationship between history and philosophy proper at a time when this very distinction was being questioned, and in a manner to which Heidegger, for a time, fully subscribed. The idea of philosophy and the mode of philosophical discourse that pervades Husserl’s appeal is one that would undergo radical transformations over the course of Heidegger’s administration of the Husserlian heritage. Nevertheless, its basic concern is one to which he would always return. This concern can be summarized in the form of a question: How can philosophy respond to its calling as a first science?

Husserl’s initial diagnosis of the state of philosophy is dismal: he simply states that “philosophy as a science has not even begun.” But through the publication of his text, in the new journal of *Logos*, he proposes to lay the groundwork for a future “system,” one that for the first time will be able to shoulder the responsibility of a truly scientific philosophy. The elated rhetoric of Husserl’s appeal carries an echo from a long line of forerunners, a few of whom he mentions with appreciation, notably Kant and Fichte. But what is particularly noteworthy in this text is the way in which Husserl describes the current philosophical situation. His attempt at a new beginning is threatened by two current trends, both of which the new science of phenomenology must battle simultaneously: on the one hand a philosophically naïve naturalism that implies a naturalization of consciousness,

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3 “Philosophie als strenge Wissenschaft” was originally published in the first issue of the journal *Logos* in 1911. I will quote from the version included in *Husserliana*, vol XXV, pp. 3-62.

4 Ibid., p. 4: “...sie [die Philosophie] habe als Wissenschaft noch keine Anfang genommen...”
and on the other hand, a historicism that leads to relativism and so-called Weltanschauungsphilosophie. At the same time, however, both of these adversaries have something worth saving: naturalism cultivates the ideal of “true science,” even though naively and unfulfilled; Weltanschauungsphilosophie, on the other hand, implies an idea of philosophy as “universal wisdom,” a wisdom that also acknowledges its indebtedness to the philosophical systems of the past. It is thus a perilous road that Husserl wants to travel.

This peril is especially visible in relation to the history of philosophy. Whereas the tedious facts of this history constantly threaten to overwhelm the philosopher by a meaningless multiplicity of possibilities, he must nevertheless be prepared to immerse himself in its flow of philosophical “life.” Or, as Husserl also writes:

> Of course, we also need history. Not, however, in the way of historians, in order to lose ourselves in the developmental relations in which the great philosophies have arisen, but in order to let the philosophies themselves, in accord with their proper spiritual content, affect us with inspiration.\(^5\)

This positive inspiration must not, however, fall prey to the historical as such; it must always ultimately be guided by the problems themselves. On this point Husserl is quite clear, for philosophy is not learnt from philosophies, but from the philosophical concerns themselves. And philosophy, Husserl reaffirms emphatically in the last page of the essay, is essentially “...a science of beginnings and origins, and of the roots of everything.”\(^6\) As the tool and guiding light in this process, Husserl presents a “direct intuition” and a “phenomenological intuition of essences.”

Shortly there will be more to say about the idea of a specific phenomenological intuition, which in itself may be seen to contain the seed of Heidegger’s transformation of Husserl’s program. At this point, however, the main interest is the way in which Husserl articulates the relation between the history of philosophy and philosophy proper. This is not a marginal theme in Husserl’s thinking; on the contrary, he would repeatedly return to the question of a specific philosophical use of


history, notably in the work of the thirties. Still, it is often agreed that the early Husserl was—as Heidegger himself would later say—completely foreign to the historicity of philosophical thought. The position stated in the 1911 essay does seem to invite such an assessment; there Husserl clearly speaks out against current historicist tendencies, making an explicit appeal for a new first philosophy. But when viewed more closely the situation appears less obvious. The apparently straightforward argument then turns out to be located in a specific situation—a specific historical situation—in which the whole way of speaking about the relation between philosophy and its history is undergoing a transformation, a transformation to which Husserl's essay simultaneously contributes. Seen from this perspective, Husserl's contribution is not so much the development of an argument; rather, it is how he models a trope, a philosophical way of speaking about the status of philosophical thinking vis-à-vis history, in which something called "historicism" is refuted in favor of a certain "systematics." These concepts are here placed within quotation marks in order to mark their hypothetical status; for, to a certain extent, they must be understood as constructions, the sense of which is determined by the specific oppositional constellation in which they are presented by Husserl.

Husserl establishes this opposition in a uniquely forceful manner. There are, however, important forerunners and parallels, from seemingly competing schools of thought which should be briefly considered. The two most important figures are also particularly noteworthy from the present perspective, since they, like Husserl, occupy key positions on Heidegger's formative horizon: Rickert and Dilthey. Four years before Husserl's famous appeal for a new systematics, Rickert published a long article entitled "Philo­sophy of History," in

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7 Much of this material was later collected in Die Krisis der Europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzendentalen Phänomenologie, Husserliana, vol VI. A striking resemblance to the content and argumentative pattern of the Logos essay is found in the late text on the origin of geometry (listed in the volume as "Beilage III," pp. 365-386), first edited by E. Fink, and later made famous by Derrida. The development of the theme of history and of its specific phenomenological access in Husserl's writings is of course a history in itself, on which I can only hope to touch briefly in the present study. For a more systematic treatment of this topic, see Ricoeur (1949), Derrida (1962), Landgrebe (1967), and Carr (1974).

8 As already noted in the Introduction, the proper definition of "historicism" and its German counterpart is a major problem in itself. In the Logos essay, Husserl speaks of Historizismus, a rather uncommon expression compared to the often used Historismus, which he also uses in what seems to be the same sense in the late text on geometry.
which he articulated the task of philosophy in respect to history. Unlike Husserl, Rickert devoted much of his philosophical energy to the epistemological problems of historical knowledge, and he was a firm advocate of the specificity of historical knowledge in relation to knowledge of nature. But as a philosopher of history he was at the same time anxious to secure a position for philosophy outside the historicization of knowledge and values. Systematic philosophy was possible, he argued, precisely as the pursuit of the fundamental and conditioning framework of the various forms of knowing. The threat to this (essentially Kantian) ideal, and thus the threat to philosophy as such, Rickert saw in a certain *Weltanschauung* which he called "historicism": "Historicism as a *Weltanschauung* is something that philosophy will always have to combat." Whether Husserl’s almost identical expression a few years later is directly inspired by Rickert’s essay, which he may well have read, is of little importance here. What is important is how two contemporary thinkers both, in their different ways, struggle to secure a position for philosophy by way of the common foe of a certain "historicism," a foe which was in many ways their own invention.

9 "Geschichtsphilosophie" (1907). The article also summarizes the principal tenets of Rickert’s main work from 1902, *Die Grenzen der naturwissenschaftlichen Begriffsbildung*.  
11 A reading of the relevant literature on the topic clearly points in this direction. Before Rickert and Husserl there was no one who openly defended "historicism" as a philosophical position. In the work of Troeltsch, *Historismus* is used in a much broader sense, to designate the entire movement of historical studies and historical awareness that emerged during the later part of the 18th century. To the earlier generations of historicist thinkers in this broader sense (Herder, Humboldt, Ranke, etc.), historicism in Rickert’s sense (i.e., epistemological and moral relativism) was not a problem. Their methodological urge to understand every historical event on its own terms did not conflict with the upholding of philosophical, ethical, and political standards in the present. Rather, this “movement” appears to have been nourished by a more or less implicit faith in a universal system of values (sometimes seen as divinely grounded), which shone forth in a more or less perfect form in the different ages and epochs of humanity. It is therefore possible to speak of a “historicist *Weltanschauung*,” but then we are not speaking of a relativistic refusal to acknowledge universal values, but rather of a scientific humanism sustained by the belief that everything human is in principle comprehensible. Furthermore, even if one does acknowledge that historical consciousness in general constitutes at least a latent threat to the belief in permanent and atemporal values, it is not clear how Rickert’s model provides an alternative. The transcendental realm of values that he elaborated was to be disclosed through a meditation on human development in general, and on the actual practice of scientific work in particular. It is revealed not as an existing code of conduct, but rather as a guiding ideal always pointing toward the future for its fulfilment. Rickert’s position could therefore be described as historicism in the wider sense (against
The sense of a fabricated opponent is strengthened if one looks at Dilthey, to whom Rickert and Husserl at some points alluded as a representative of the threat to so-called systematic philosophy. Dilthey never used the term “historicism,” but already in his earliest work, which predates Rickert’s and Husserl’s writings by more than a quarter of a century, he writes of the need to develop a specific kind of historical research with a philosophical goal, by which he meant valid and binding truths. Similarly, in the introduction to his main work, *Introduction to the Human Sciences*, he presented his own research as a “historical” approach that should culminate in a “systematic” account. Thus, despite the significant differences between his line of research and that of Rickert and Husserl respectively, Dilthey may rightly be counted among the initiators of a certain articulation of the tension between historical and philosophical investigations that eventually culminates in Husserl’s appeal.

Besides this general agreement concerning the task of a philosophy of historical knowledge, Dilthey of course offered something more, which was also decisive for Heidegger’s reorientation. A few words on Dilthey’s position are warranted at this stage, even though the general connections are well known. His work could be seen as a neo-Kantian epistemology of historiography grafted onto Schleiermacher’s hermeneutics. His project, to use his own words, was a “critique of historical reason,” that should secure the specificity of historical research and at the same time function as a meditation on the guiding values of humanity. Just like the neo-Kantians, he was attentive to the formal differences between the knowledge of nature and the knowledge of history. But in a more radical manner he posed the question: in virtue of what is it possible for one period or one individual to understand another period or individual from the past? And his answer

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naturalism and simply unhistorical thinking, a position in many ways shared by Troeltsch and others), which generates historicism in the narrower sense as its philosophical adversary.

12 For a clear expression of this concern, see the early text “Über das Studium der Geschichte der Wissenschaften vom Menschen, der Gesellshaft und dem Staat,” *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol 5, pp. 31-73, esp. p. 35 (a text which Heidegger will later quote with appreciation in *SZ*, p. 385).

13 *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol 1, p. xv.

14 *Ibid.*, vol 7, p. 117, and also vol 5, p. 9. In his most important work, *Einleitung in die Geisteswissenschaften* (vol 1), the two goals are stated in the preface: the need for a “founding” of the human sciences, and the importance of what he speaks of as “Geschichtliche Selbstbesinnung.”
was that it is possible because the knower is of the same kind as the known, which is “life.” In historical knowing life confronts life and it is in virtue of this reflexivity that understanding can come about. Life consists in life-experiences (Erlebnisse) that are objectified in expressions (Ausdrücke), which in turn can be transformed into understanding (Verstehen). Finally—and this is especially important in respect to Heidegger—Dilthey’s idea of historical knowledge cannot be separated from his overall desire to restore to historical knowledge the “practical” or “pedagogical” aspect that it had before it became a scientific discipline. Like Hegel, he sought with his theory of historical knowing to transcend the definitive split between the theoretical and the practical dimension of reason which Kant had brought about.

3. The dichotomy of history and systematics
The aim so far has only been to illuminate the urgency of a certain philosophical concern and its articulation during the period in question. It was generally perceived that philosophy must somehow distance itself from its own empirical history in order to avoid being dragged down into its unsurveyable multitude of positions and perspectives, while at the same time securing philosophical access to history as a source of critical and systematic reflection in and on the present. This dichotomy between history and systematics, and the challenge that it poses, sets a stage for philosophical thought. It is the stage on which Heidegger will locate his own earliest writings, as is clearly illustrated by his first independent academic work (written under the guidance of Rickert) on De modi significandi, a treatise on language from the thirteenth century. The title of the introduction to the book reads “The

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15 Ibid., vol 7, p. 86.
16 The “practical” aspect of historical knowledge is also a recurring theme in the correspondence between Dilthey and Yorck von Wartenburg. Heidegger’s discussion of Yorck in SZ is briefly addressed in Chapter Three. During the course of working on this thesis, I became aware of the significance of Yorck as a speculative thinker of historicity in his own right. The results of these investigations are presented separately in the article “Yorck von Wartenburg and the Problem of Historical Existence,” Ruin (1994).
17 Die Kategorien- und Bedeutungslehre des Duns Scotus, in GA 1, pp. 189-411. The text interpreted was later shown by Martin Grabmann to have been written not by Scotus, as was generally believed, but by Thomas von Erfurt. Three years earlier, Heidegger had received his doctorate with a dissertation on Die Lehre vom Urteil im Psychologismus, also in GA 1, pp. 59-188. Another text belonging to this period should also be mentioned here, the essay “Der Zeitbegriff in der
necessity of a problem-historical approach to Scholasticism.” Here Heidegger stresses philosophy’s special relation to its past, one which differs from the relation between mathematics and the history of mathematics. The reason for this difference is partly that philosophy is said not to be cumulative in the same way as other sciences; rather, it brings its past with it in the form of eternal preoccupations. But the condition for this special relationship to its past is also that it is studied with reference to the valid themes of philosophical research:

The history of philosophy is essentially related to philosophy only as long as it is not “pure history,” a history of facts, but when it is projected onto a purely philosophical systematics.\(^\text{18}\)

The dichotomy between the historical and the systematic expressed in this statement clearly echoes the scheme of Rickert and Husserl.\(^\text{19}\)

Three years later, however, in a lecture series entitled “On the Determination of Philosophy,” this scheme is displaced in favor of a new way of organizing the relation between history and systematics. Here Heidegger writes:

For our purposes, however, it suffices to refer to the close connection between historical and “systematic” considerations - both must be overcome.\(^\text{20}\)

\(^\text{18}\) Ibid., p. 196-197: “Die Geschichte der Philosophie hat also solange und nur solange Wesensbezug zur Philosophie, als sie nicht ‘reine Geschichte,’ Tatsachenwissenschaft, ist, sondern sich in die rein philosophische Systematik projiziert hat.”

\(^\text{19}\) That it is indeed some combination of phenomenology and neo-Kantianism that Heidegger has in mind when speaking of a “philosophical systematics” is obvious from his further remarks, and from the concrete interpretations. The idea behind the interpretation of the medieval text is, he writes, to see how it explores logical and semantic categories that can be related to modern research, and to show that it contains “elements of phenomenological considerations.” In his interpretations he repeatedly turns to central Husserlian notions, especially from Logische Untersuchungen, in order to bring out the sense of the medieval terminology.

\(^\text{20}\) GA 56/57, P. 132: “Für unsere Zwecke genügt aber der Hinweis auf einen engen Zusammenhang zwischen geschichtlicher und ‘systematischer’ Betrachtung - beide sind aufzuheben!” When one compares these remarks to some of the statements in Yorck’s letters to Dilthey one can understand why the subsequent reading of this correspondence had such a strong, and almost haunting impact on Heidegger. In the correspondence, which was published three years after the above statement, Yorck says (in a letter written in 1884): “Thus there is no real philosophizing which would not be Historical. The separation between systematic philosophy and Historical presentation is essentially incorrect” (Darum weiter gibt es kein wirkliches Philosophieren, welches nicht historisch wäre. Die Trennung zwischen systematischer Philosophie und historischer Darstellung ist dem Wesen nach unrichtig,” in Dilthey [1923], p. 251, quoted by Heidegger in SZ, p. 402).
Here it is no longer a question of projecting one onto the other. Instead, a new philosophical topology is suggested, defined in part by the refusal to acknowledge the dichotomy between “history” and “systematics” as articulated by both Husserl and Rickert. This slight displacement of the initial scheme may not seem very significant at first. Yet it signals a fateful shift in emphasis not only in Heidegger’s personal orientation, but in the orientation of the whole phenomenological program, for which a certain experience and articulation of history will come to the fore of its theoretical interest. In a lecture from the following year Heidegger declares that history is in fact the “guiding experience” for phenomenological research.\(^{21}\) And a few years later, in a programmatic text on the interpretation of Aristotle, he will state that “philosophical research...is ‘historical’ knowing in a radical sense.”\(^{22}\)

While such formulations no doubt seem to signal a clear step away from Husserlian phenomenology, Heidegger nevertheless continues to present himself as a supporter of Husserl’s project. This is clearly the case in the 1919 lectures, which constitute a fervent defense of Husserlian phenomenology. In the quoted text on the interpretation of Aristotle, Heidegger likewise equates this “philosophical research” with phenomenology as outlined in *Logical Investigations*.\(^{23}\) The question then arises: what has happened in the meantime? What, to be more precise, is the underlying motive for this “historical” reinterpretation of the phenomenological enterprise, and how should its significance be understood and evaluated? This is the task to which I turn next in an examination of some of the texts from the relevant period.

4. *Heidegger’s turning toward life as origin and history*

Every student of Heidegger’s early philosophical development will note a change that takes place during the dramatic period between 1916 and

\(^{21}\) *GA* 58, p. 252.

\(^{22}\) This remark is found in “Phänomenologische Interpretation zu Aristoteles. Anzeige der hermeneutischen Situation,” a text composed in 1922 on the request of Paul Natorp. It was long believed to have been lost, but it was recently found and published for the first time in the *Dilthey Jahrbuch* (it will be referred to as “PA”). This short, but extremely dense, work from a decisive period in Heidegger’s development contains the blueprint for the philosophical program of *SZ* five years later. The relevant quotation is on p. 249: “Philosophische Forschung ist...in radikalen Sinne ‘historisches’ Erkennen.”

This new attitude is first documented in the published writings in the lecture series given in 1919, “On the Determination of Philosophy.” These lectures were advertised as a course on Kant, but they turned into an extensive exposition of the fate and obligation of philosophy and the university. The voice that speaks out here differs from the one in the book on Scotus, and the changes are particularly noteworthy from the perspective of the questions outlined above.

The overriding concern of these lectures is the determination of the nature of the philosophical project itself. The first part is a vigorous affirmation of the scientific attitude, very much in the manner and spirit of Husserl’s programmatic Logos essay. The scientific attitude is described as a will to go beyond and above the personal self of the scientist, a will to objectivity and serious research, which constitutes the deepest form of personal commitment. In order to secure this spirit, Heidegger argues, it is necessary to specify the “Idea of philosophy as original science,” as Urwissenschaft. This idea must be generated from within the tradition, not, however, in the form of a historical fact, but as a present commitment. In this attempt to define the idea of philosophy as a first and original science, Heidegger discusses several versions of neo-Kantian thought, as well as the general argument for “critical realism” (Aristotle) and “critical idealism” (Kant). His guiding question is how, and to what extent, these schools have developed the intellectual means to account for “the given.” He concludes that they all, in their different ways, lead only to theoretical constructions that are

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24 When Heidegger emerges from this period he speaks in a new tone of voice, of a need for cultural and intellectual rejuvenation. His assessments of the present are increasingly critical, which is exemplified most strikingly in his evaluation of the university and of academic praxis (It is during this period that he developed the ideas which will later reach the world in the form of his fateful Rektoratsrede, a text that should be compared with the lecture on the essence of the university from 1919, in GA 56/57.) This first “turning” also has biographical aspects, many of which have been explored by H. Ott (1988). For a first person perspective on the tumultuous mood at the time, see Gadamer's “Existentialismus und Existenzphilosophie,” in Gadamer (1983), pp. 7-17. Philosophically, however, this turning could be dated earlier, more precisely to the time between the composition of the book on Scotus and its actual publication in 1916. At that point Heidegger added a concluding section in which he outlines themes for future research. Here we read first of all that “the living spirit is as such essentially historical spirit in the broadest sense of the word” (Der lebendige Geist ist als solcher wesensmäßig historischer Geist in weitesten Sinne des Wortes, GA 1, p. 407), and furthermore that the principal task of philosophy is to establish a relation to Hegel (p. 411).


26 Ibid., p. 13.
ultimately unable to provide access to a level of original "givenness." Thus, what is needed in their place is a descriptive science of phenomena, which are here equated with "lived experience" (Erlebnis), in other words, a science of the "pre-theoretical." The final section of the first half of the course is an enthusiastic defense of phenomenology as precisely such an original science of pre-theoretical experience. In virtue of its unique faithfulness to the given, phenomenology is said to speak from beyond the theoretical. Indeed, in phenomenology we encounter "the original intention of true life in general, the original attitude of experience and life as such, the absolute life-sympathy that is identical with experience itself." This non-theoretical theory and non-methodological method enable us, Heidegger claims, to have an experience of experience itself as the process out of which stable conceptual formations are generated.

In these lectures Heidegger thus turns a radical affirmation of phenomenology against neo-Kantian philosophy. The latter is said to overemphasize the role of conceptual construction in knowledge, and it is furthermore accused of having been unable to think beyond the distinction of subject-pole and object-pole in its analysis of experience. This polarization of the two schools of thought is brought out even more clearly in the course of the following semester, entitled simply "Phenomenology and Transcendental Value-Philosophy." The key concept in these lectures is "life." Life is used throughout the discussion as the name for the original region or level of experience, for givenness as such, to which phenomenology has cleared the way. By means of this qualified concept of life, Heidegger claims not only to have surpassed the conceptual limits of neo-Kantianism, but also to have

27 Ibid., p. 110: "die Urintention des wahrhaften Lebens überhaupt, die Urhaltung des Erlebens und Lebens als solchen, die absolute mit dem Erleben selbst identische Lebenssympathie."

28 "Phänomenologie und transzendentale Wertphilosophie." This lecture series occupies the second half of GA 56/57. Here Heidegger tries to show how the whole school of neo-Kantian value-philosophy, in the works of Lotze, Windelband, Cohen, and Rickert, grew out of German idealism and its concept of culture and historical consciousness. By addressing the theme of history, Heidegger argues, the philosophy of value demonstrated that it wanted to shoulder the role of a general philosophy of culture. It is also interesting to note how Heidegger here, for the first time, comments on the work of Dilthey, who is presented as perhaps the foremost representative of this entire movement, a role which, as mentioned earlier, was certainly not credited to him by the neo-Kantians themselves. It is also in Dilthey's writings that Heidegger sees the first steps toward what phenomenology is said to have finally accomplished: "The secret longing of his [Dilthey's] life is about to be fulfilled by phenomenology" (Die geheime Sehnsucht seines Lebens beginnt die Phänomenologie zu erfüllen, GA 56/57, p. 167).
appropriated Husserlian phenomenology as well as Dilthey’s theory of historical knowledge. Yet we are told very little about the concept itself, except that—when made into a theme of phenomenological reflection—it fulfills the deepest aspirations of philosophy as original science.29

In SZ, the concept of Leben (as well as Erlebnis) will later be explicitly rejected in favor of “Dasein,” in Heidegger’s particular use of this word.30 In the latter work he admits that the various attempts to create a philosophy of life—a Lebensphilosophie—have been tending toward an understanding of the being of Dasein, but that they have failed by not making life itself an ontological problem. The references here are primarily to Dilthey and Bergson, but no doubt also to his own initial attempts a few years earlier. When the theme of life first appears in his writings, it is not made into an ontological problem, in the sense that it is not placed in the broader context of the question of the meaning of being. Thus one can easily understand why the earlier lectures, where this theme is first introduced rather unreflectively, would seem somewhat naive to Heidegger in retrospect. Still they are of great importance for at least two reasons; first of all, because they constitute a first step toward the project of fundamental ontology as an analytic of Dasein, but secondly, and more important, because they are Heidegger’s first steps toward an elaboration of the idea of the origin as itself “historical” in a particular sense.

29 Of course, “life” had a long history in philosophical thinking before it was taken up by Heidegger, not only in the writings of Nietzsche, Dilthey, and Bergson, but as a more or less salient corollary to idealist thought from Fichte to Husserl. Gadamer discusses these general connections in a section of Wahrheit und Methode devoted to “The Concept of Life in Yorck von Wartenburg and Husserl,” Gadamer (1960/1986), pp. 246-258. Rickert’s critical examination of the whole movement of vitalist thinkers in the book Die Philosophie des Lebens (1920) also marked the currency of the theme during this time. In a lecture course on the interpretation of Aristotle two years later, Heidegger explicitly discusses Rickert’s book, speaking out against its critique of the philosophers of life (GA 61, p. 80). Some years later, however, in a lecture on logic and truth, this critique is modified; he refers more positively to Rickert’s evaluation, thus indicating his own movement away from this conceptual framework (GA 21, p. 216). A remark in a similar vein is found ten years later in the first volume of Nietzsche, where Heidegger notes how Nietzsche seduced a whole generation of scholars with his idea of life, while no one was there to give this interest its proper interpretation, namely, in terms of the fundamental question of being. N I, pp. 252-253. Heidegger’s philosophy of life has recently been reexamined in new and inventive ways by D. Farrel Krell, Daimon Life: Heidegger and Life-Philosophy (1992).

30 SZ, p. 46f. Dilthey’s and Bergson’s philosophies of life are here also said to have the same limitations as Husserl’s and Scheler’s analyses of “personality” (Personalität).
When Heidegger speaks of life in these early lectures, it is generally not defined or qualified at all, since it supposedly designates the original level of experience, or simply "the given." However, when it is qualified it is qualified precisely as historical. This surprising transition in terminology is found in an introductory passage that in every other aspect echoes the stance of Husserl. Heidegger here rejects the idea of a history of philosophy in the ordinary sense of history, and he also argues against the conception of philosophy as a Weltanschauung. But whereas Husserl would counter such relativistic threats to philosophy as rigorous science with a call for a return to an original intuition, Heidegger here indicates a very different strategy; the reason, he writes, that there cannot be a history of philosophy in the ordinary sense of history, is that the history of philosophy "is constituted in life in and for itself, a life that is historical itself in an absolute sense."\(^1\) The lecture manuscript also ends with a series of short and fragmented sentences, one of which reads: "Life is historical; no division into essential elements, but connection."\(^2\) This strange formulation indicates a new sense not only of life and of the given, but also of the historical. History, as that which is past, and thus non-present, is incorporated into a supposedly present givenness that carries its name.

Much is implied in this thematic, conceptual, and rhetorical manoeuvre. It implies a sense of life as the non-objectifiable origin of objectification itself, in other words, of life as a meaning-constituting movement, which will also be explored as "enactment"; it implies a certain understanding of history as self-reflexive being. In general, it implies a mode of description, and thus of access, which is essentially self-referential, and which therefore challenges traditional modes of philosophical discourse. Yet as a first step toward the exploration of these motives, I wish to draw attention once again to a central theme of Husserlian phenomenology, in order to show how it can in fact be said to prefigure Heidegger's apparently unorthodox move. The task, after all, is to see how Heidegger transforms the Husserlian conception of a first philosophy, while claiming to remain true to its guiding ideals.\(^3\)

\(^{31}\) *GA* 56/57, p. 21: "...konstituiert sich im Leben an und für sich, das selbst historisch ist in einem absoluten Sinne."


\(^{33}\) This proclaimed fidelity could of course be regarded in more mundane terms, as simply a strategic choice in view of Heidegger's academic ambitions. This is how
This background is also important because the transformation is often understood too simplistically, as being merely the result of adding themes from Dilthey and hermeneutics to phenomenology.\textsuperscript{34}

### 5. Intentional analysis as a “proto-historical” mode of thought

The guiding methodological idea of Husserl’s new science, as presented in *Logical Investigations*, is to explore the various ways in which objects can be given for a subject in general, and to explicate these modes of givenness in accordance with their essential components. The underlying presupposition is that the meaning of any object whatsoever is dependent on, and can therefore be explicated through, an investigation of the acts in and through which it is intended. From this it naturally follows that *intentionality* becomes the key component in phenomenological analysis, since it supposedly designates the basic connection between subject and object. When the concept of intentionality is first introduced in the Fifth Investigation, Husserl initially refers to how it was used by Brentano to classify psychic phenomena in general (as opposed to physical phenomena, which supposedly lacked intentionality), but he adds that, for his own purpose, only one thing is important, namely,

> that there are essential specific differences in the intentional relation, or, in short, in the intentions (that make up the descriptive class-character of the “act”).\textsuperscript{35}

In other words, intentionality is the most general description of what constitutes an *act* in Husserlian terminology, which, in turn, is the most general way that we have of speaking of givenness as such. The act is just another name for intentional experience, and the starting point for phenomenological analysis is that there are varieties of intentional connections (*Beziehungen*), or simply intentions, which the situation is interpreted by those who see Heidegger’s development during this time as a definitive break with Husserl’s philosophical project. See, e.g., Kusch (1989), pp. 150-151. My aim here will be to show how Heidegger’s “historicization” and “hermeneutization” of the phenomenological enterprise can be read rather as bringing out latent levels and implications of this endeavor, in a peculiar kind of loyal twisting free from its original presuppositions.

\textsuperscript{34} See, e.g., J. van Buren (1990), who has an excellent discussion of Heidegger and Husserl on the basis of the early lectures, but who also repeats this simplistic “projection”-model when speaking of the problem of history (esp. p. 259).

may be explored according to their modes and qualities. The intentional act-analysis permits us to address not just the problem of psychic existence (which was supposedly Brentano’s principal concern), but also the problem of objectivity, or givenness in general, in terms not only of its *what*, but also of its *how*. In Husserlian phenomenology, the ontological question of what a specific being *is*, is thereby transformed into a question of the modes of *how* it is given for a consciousness in general (where consciousness is understood in a non-psychological sense). Thus it can disregard whether or not the intended objects exist “in reality,” since it only explores modes of givenness, of which “reality” is one among many.

All this is expressed quite clearly in the important programmatic section in *Logical Investigations* on the principle of “presuppositionlessness” in epistemological investigations.\(^{36}\) The philosophical requirement of presuppositionlessness, Husserl argues here, can only be maintained as long as the analysis accepts no metaphysical or ontological truths whatsoever, as long as it restricts itself to a reflection on the meaning of knowledge:

> ...thus it [this reflection] must be enacted as pure intuition of essences on the exemplary basis of given cognitive and epistemic experiences.\(^{37}\)

In another formulation in the same section, he speaks of the procedure as a return to an “adequately fulfilling intuition,” an intuition that retraces and brings to explicit awareness the intentional acts that constitute the meaning of any given experience.\(^{38}\)

This image of phenomenology—as the enactment of a presuppositionless intuition of the forms of givenness as such—must be kept in


\(^{37}\) *Ibid.*, p. 19: “so muß sie sich als reine Wesensintuition auf dem exemplarischen Grunde gegebener Denk- und Erkenntniserlebnisse vollziehen.” The requirement that no presuppositions be present and the restriction to an analysis of the meaning of the given will later be presented in various forms under the heading of the “Phenomenological reduction,” which was as yet not explicitly developed in *Logische Untersuchungen*. It is first introduced in the published writings in the lectures “Die Idee der Phänomenologie” (from 1907), in *Husserlana*, vol. 11. For further remarks on the phenomenological reduction, see Section 6.

\(^{38}\) *Ibid.*: “...adéquat erfüllende Anschauung...” The sense and significance of “intuition” (*Anschauung*) in Husserlian phenomenology is of course a vast problem in itself. An early, but still very adequate presentation of it was provided by E. Levinas in his *Théorie de l’intuition dans la phénoménologie de Husserl* (1930). In fact, Levinas’s interpretation can be seen as pointing in a direction similar to the one Heidegger had developed ten years earlier with respect to Husserl (although Heidegger is not discussed Levinas’s book, he is certainly present in its general orientation).
mind in order to understand the transformation which the program undergoes in Heidegger's work. It is only from this perspective that it is possible to understand how Heidegger can defend the Husserlian approach while launching the theme of "historical life" as the original theme of such an investigation. The key here is to see how history, in a particular sense of the word, is already inscribed in the very idea of an enactment of a phenomenological intuition, long before the genetic or historical phenomenology becomes an explicit issue in Husserl's own work. To begin with, the nature of the phenomenological reflection appears in Husserl as a recovery of a lost or hidden origin, since what is brought out and articulated in an adequate intuition is that which was already there, but unthematized, as a latent awareness. In other words, there is a circular temporality inscribed in the method itself, in that the phenomenological reflection establishes an origin through a recapitulating enactment of previous intentional accomplishments. Furthermore, with its emphasis on presuppositionlessness as something to be established within the course of a particular form of reflection, and not as something that is anchored in any specific objective or natural being, phenomenology discloses the environment of thought as a temporal and historical domain which thinking can never ultimately transcend, but within which it can come to occupy a more or less transparent relation to itself and its own accomplishments. These suggestions do not contradict the program presented in the Logos essay. They do not imply that Husserl's idea of a first philosophy is self-contradictory, nor that its claim to distance itself from historical thought is illegitimate. They only add more complexity to the intuitive idea of phenomenology as a science of origins.

In order to follow Heidegger's intricate elaboration of phenomenology, one must first grasp the significance of the methodological attitude as propounded by Husserl, the attitude of a presuppositionless enactment (Vollzug) of meaning-relations. Whereas this attitude in Husserl—at least on the surface—is primarily a methodological requirement, in Heidegger's approach it becomes an ontological task in its own right. In turning toward itself in the manner of phenomenological or intentional analysis, consciousness (or subjectivity, or life; the names for the

39 The so-called "genetic phenomenology" can be said to originate in the lectures on inner time consciousness that Husserl gave in 1904-1905, published in Husserliana, vol X (which also includes later writings on the same theme).
carrier of this operation can be substituted at this stage) demonstrates a mode of its own being, a privileged mode which in itself gives a clue to its being in general. The explicitly theoretical and distanced attitude of the phenomenologist is then seen not as a break with the phenomena under investigation (the various intentional acts of a consciousness), but rather as a transformation of the being under investigation, as a mode of enactment in its own right. In phenomenological analysis, the experiencing subject brings its own being to explicit articulation, and thus makes this being accessible to itself in a process of self-mediation. It is the being of this self-mediation that Heidegger will explore under the heading of “life.” Consequently, the apparently strict distinction between the theme and the method of the investigation collapses, and their determinations begin to cross over into one another. This is at least one way of accounting for the dual function of the “historical” in Heidegger’s early texts; “historical life” (in Heidegger’s terminology) is investigated according to the manner in which it presents itself in its “historical” mode of self-disclosure.

In an informative essay on a lecture series given by Heidegger in the winter of 1921/22, Carl Friedrich Gethmann analyzes the idea of enactment (Vollzug) as a theory of meaning. Gethmann describes Heidegger’s “enactment-theory of meaning” as explicitly opposed to the “mentalism” prevalent at this time. The point of such a theory, according to Gethmann, is to analyze the meaning of any object in accordance with how it is “had.” The content of such a “having” is not understood in terms of any independent reality beyond this having. As


41 The expression “enactment-theory of meaning” (Vollzugs-theorie der Bedeutung) is found on p. 41 of Gethmann’s essay. On pp. 46-46 he argues that Heidegger, through his meaning-theoretical investigations, departed from the dominant “mentalistic” orientation of the tradition, according to which meaning (Bedeutung) has an independent mental existence, a conception he ascribes to Brentano and Husserl, as well as to Frege. This somewhat simplistic conception of Husserl and Frege is motivated by Gethmann’s desire to distinguish Heidegger’s position from that of his predecessors. According to the reading suggested here, Husserl could also be read as exploring patterns or schemes of meaning-enactment, rather than propounding a rationalistic mentalism. Gethmann also draws the natural parallel to Peirce and to pragmatism in general, as well as to the later writings of Wittgenstein. The same comparisons are also suggested in his essay on the problem of truth in Heidegger’s early writings, Gethmann (1989). The theme of Heidegger’s “pragmatism” has many undercurrents and deserves a more detailed discussion than it can be given here. For a recent book on this topic, see M. Okrent, Heidegger and Pragmatism (1988).
Gethmann points out, however, this does not mean that Heidegger advocated conventionalism; on the contrary, the theory or account toward which he was working was one that could balance between the two alternatives of realism and conventionalism, one that could explore and explicate the object as it was intentionally had or enacted.

Gethmann shows how the encompassing ambition of this theory of meaning as enactment inevitably led Heidegger into the deepest aporias of a philosophy of identity, as first articulated by Fichte. On one level, the concept of “enactment” is itself a limited concept among many, one used to describe meaning-formation; on the more encompassing level, however, the very explication of enactment must be understood as an enactment in itself, as concept- and meaning-formation. In all its conceptual achievements, life exemplifies or instantiates enactment, also when it takes the form of philosophical reflection and self-interpretation. The conceptual interpretation of concept-enactment is itself such an enactment; thus enactment becomes the master-concept in an all-encompassing attempt to capture the reality of self-reflexive life. The consequence of such an ambition, as Gethmann notes, is that the difference between the knowledge of the philosopher and the knowledge that he investigates is cancelled out.

The influence of Fichte on the entire school of phenomenology would deserve a closer study, not least regarding the central notion of “enactment,” which resembles Fichte’s understanding of the consciousness of an object as a Tathandlung. In a comparison of Husserl and Heidegger, D. Føllesdal (1979), p. 372, remarks that during the late tens Husserl himself was turning back to Fichte, reassessing not only the concept of action for a philosophy of subjectivity, but also that of history.

It should be observed that during this time Heidegger in fact distinguishes between three different categories of meaning; in addition to enactment-meaning (Vollzugs Sinn), there is also relational-meaning (Bezugssinn) and content-meaning (Gehaltsinn). From Gethmann’s brief commentary, it is difficult to see what exactly Heidegger intended by “relational-meaning.” Gethmann writes: “Der Bezugssinn eines Ausdruck bezieht sich auf das Sich-Verhalten zu etwas,” (ibid., p. 46). This could be compared to the explanation given by T. Sheehan in his analysis of the lectures on the phenomenology of religion from the previous year (also unpublished), where the same theoretical triad is discussed. Of the Bezugssinn, Sheehan writes (referring to, but not explicitly quoting Heidegger’s own explanation): “This is the relational meaning or sense contained in the primordial ‘how’ or way-in-which of the act of experience,” Sheehan (1986), p. 50. Gethmann also draws the natural parallel to Husserl’s distinction between noema and noesis (where noema would be the prototype for content-meaning and noesis for enactment-meaning), a comparison that is reasonable, even though other connections could probably be developed. A. Makkreel argues against this suggestion, for the reason that they—unlike noesis and noema—are not equi-primordial. Instead he holds enactment-meaning to be the more important of the two, since it points toward the pre-theoretical, Makkreel (1990), p. 309.

Gethmann (1986-87), p. 44: “Die Folge dieser Identitätsphilosophie des lebendigen Wissens ist, daß die Differenz zwischen dem Wissen des Philosophen und dem Wissen, daß er thematisch untersucht, eingezogen wird.” Gethmann also notes
Gethman cites passages from the lectures that demonstrate that Heidegger was clearly aware of the inherent problems of this endeavor. Even though the interpretative concept was itself seen as a manifestation of the general phenomenon interpreted (meaning-enactment), it could never be identical with the enactment under scrutiny. According to Gethmann, in these lectures Heidegger distinguished between enactment itself, and a secondary enactment, in which the first is retrieved and articulated in an “indicative” way, as angezeigt. Thus, the concreteness and immediacy sought can never be entirely had. Gethmann quotes Heidegger as saying that “the concreteness can not be had unconditionally (ohne weiteres).” But to what extent can it be had? And to what extent is it even meaningful to pursue the matter? This question casts its shadow over the entire project of a description of life as meaning-enactment as outlined in Heidegger’s early lectures: What are the means by which to attain such a description and what is the perspective from which it could be given? Gethmann ends his discussion by questioning if Heidegger’s “semantic program could be pursued, or if it should be seen as a singular and failed attempt.”

What Gethmann fails to see, however, and this brings us back to our proper theme, is that the reference to life as “historical” could be seen precisely as Heidegger’s attempt to save this so-called “semantic program” from collapsing into the all too familiar paradox of reflection. By designating life as “historical,” Heidegger can be seen as trying to secure an understanding of life as itself a non-objectifiable enactment of meaning, while admitting that in being with itself, life differs from itself; as history it is always on the way toward itself.

6. Phenomenology and the mode of access to the given
The connections between Husserl’s program of intentional analysis and Heidegger’s conception of historical life are brought out more clearly in a lecture series on “Basic problems of phenomenology” from the how this orientation generates a similar rhetorical stance in both Fichte and Heidegger (a remark that could likewise be applied to Husserl), where the philosophical claim to knowledge takes on the form of an appeal to a living and unmediated philosophical thinking, generated from within the ongoing activity of thinking itself.

winter of 1919/1920. Despite the title, these lectures already indicate an ambition not so much to move beyond Husserlian phenomenology, as to circumscribe it from a different angle and through another conceptual framework. The general methodological guideline is still in force: to pursue philosophy as original science in the form of a non-objectifying recapitulation of meaning-constituting acts. Heidegger here describes phenomenological understanding as "an intuitive going-with and moving-along the meaning," a formulation that still echoes Husserl’s program as outlined above. But just as in the previous lectures, the content to be explored is not the essential structures of intentional relations, but "life" as an "original domain," as "life in and for itself." This ambition leads to two questions that together determine the course of the lectures; first of all, what is "givenness" (Gegebenheit), and secondly, how do we get access to it?

It is important to notice that the nature of the given is here addressed as a problem in its own right. Whereas in the earlier lectures Heidegger sometimes appears to take the access to such a domain for granted, this accessibility is here the key concern. When Heidegger claims that it is the task of philosophy to explore an original level of experience, he is not subscribing to some naive conception of the given; on the contrary, givenness is precisely the problem. When the "original domain of life" is presented as the answer, he does not immediately pretend to describe a distinct content; rather, he gives guidelines for further explorations. It is as if he were saying: supposing that there is an original domain of natural experience, structured as a world of an experiencing self, a

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46 "Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie," GA 58. These lectures, which were recently released, should not be confused with the famous lectures with the same title from 1927. Heidegger would later refer to the former as the beginning of the path leading up to SZ (Toward the end of the introduction to the theme of "worldliness" in SZ, §15, p. 72, Heidegger states in a footnote that ever since the winter semester 1919/20, the themes of "environment" and "the hermeneutic of facticity" have been recurrent topics in his lectures.) The general content of the early lectures has been known for some time through the commentaries of a few scholars who have had access to them. F. Hogemann gives a good summary and a discussion of this material in his article "Heideggers Konzeption der Phänomenologie in den Vorlesungen aus dem Wintersemester 1919/20 und dem Sommersemester 1920," in Hogemann (1986-87). These lectures were also discussed in Pöggeler (1963/1983), pp. 27f.

47 GA 58, p. 262: "...ein anschaulisches Mitgehen, Hinlaufen an dem Sinn entlang." This remark is taken from the detailed notes of Oskar Becker, published as an appendix to the remaining manuscript by Heidegger's own hand.

48 See, e.g., p. 82, where, in a summarizing remark, he states that the problem is precisely how to get access to an original domain from out of factual life (Problem ist: Zugänglichkeit des Ursprungsgebietes vom faktischen Leben aus).
self-world (*Selbstwelt*), how, then, should we approach it theoretically? This is not a world made up of sense-data, nor of scientific theories, but precisely the everyday experiential world of meaning-formation from within which such theoretical constructs can emerge. It is in this context that the problem of givenness arises, that is, in the context of trying to approach meaning-formation as an original pre-theoretical world of a self.

The most obvious reservation against such a project is that it is paradoxical from the start, since some philosophical theory is already taken for granted and that the given is therefore already theorized in some way or other, if it is given at all. In view of this, it is especially important to follow Heidegger's critical remarks on various representatives of neo-Kantianism, who often levelled similar criticism against the phenomenologists. One such critical assessment is found in the 1919/1920 lectures. Here Heidegger readily admits that the problem of “givenness” is the decisive problem in contemporary epistemology. He traces a similar common position in both the Marburger and the Baden school: the idea that the theoretical and conceptual is prior to every given object. The given or the concrete is an unknown \( \chi \) that can only be approached in a never-ending series of theoretical determinations. Experience becomes a form of thinking according to certain rules. In Rickert there is an idea that every experience contains a core of unmediated givenness, something which one cannot ultimately reach.

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49 In the lectures from the previous year, Heidegger could be seen to meet this implicit counter-argument on a rhetorical level, when presenting phenomenology as a non-theoretical theory. Here, however, the same indication is developed in the course of meandering reflections on how a theoretical account can enter the domain of original givenness without objectifying it and thereby, supposedly, distorting it.

50 Whether or not it is possible, or even meaningful, to speak of something like an original, pre-theoretical region of experience, and what role is played by conceptual-linguistic construction in acts of knowledge, were issues of repeated discussion and of significant disagreement between the phenomenologists and the neo-Kantians at this time. See, e.g., Natorp’s review of Husserl’s *Ideen* in *Logos* (1917), a review which is also discussed by Heidegger in the lectures from the previous semester (GA 56/57, pp. 102f.). In a sense, this problem is what post-phenomenological thinking is all about. Beyond all convenient clichés of a Husserlian “myth of the given”—be it in the terminology of Sellars, Wittgenstein or Derrida—we must still remain attentive to the persistent validity of the original phenomenological question: What is the given? As J.-L. Marion argues in a recent study on the phenomenological problem of the given, phenomenology retains a privileged access to this question through its critique of objectivism and naive naturalism. See his *Réduction et donation* (1989), esp. the preface, pp. 7-10.

51 Actually it is found in an appendix to the published volume, in which the remaining part of the lectures have been reconstructed on the basis of Heidegger’s incomplete notes, GA 58, pp. 131-135.
by conceptual means. This limit is marked by the category of
"givenness" as such, over and against which there is the category of
"consciousness" in general. But through the construction of these
general categories the domain that Heidegger wants to explore is lost,
or at least so he argues. "The concept of pure experience," he writes,"belongs to a quite different sphere than the factual experience of the
surrounding word." The underlying orientation of Heidegger’s
critique is thus that the epistemological framework of Kantianism lacks
the conceptual means to account for the field of ordinary non-
theoretical experience of one’s own world, the factual life that—as he
says in another section— "does not rest on epistemological theories."

What, then, does Heidegger offer as an alternative? By what means

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52 GA 58, p. 135: “Man konstruiert sich einen Begriff der reinen Erfahrung, der
in eine ganz andere Sphäre gehört als faktische Umwelterfahrung...” (Heidegger’s
italics).

53 Ibid., p. 105: “Das faktische Leben stößt sich nicht an erkenntnistheoretischen
Theorien.” Throughout the lectures of the early twenties, Heidegger uses “life” and
“factual life” interchangeably, and later speaks of “facticity” in the same sense. In a
lecture series from 1923 (discussed at greater length in Chapter Two) he explicitly
defines “facticity” as “our mode of being” (GA 63, p. 7: “Faktizität ist die
Bezeichnung für den Seinscharakter ‘unseres’ ‘eigenen’ Daseins”). It may seem
strange at first that he chooses to designate life as “factual,” considering that one of the
principal goals of his analysis is to develop a non-objectifying conceptuality.
However, it is precisely in order to fulfill the ideal of such a description that the
concept appears in his writings from around 1920. A good account of the emergence
of this concept, and of its implicit and explicit connotations, is given by T. Kisiel in the
essay “Das Entstehen des Begriffsfeldes ‘Faktizität’ im Frühwerk Heideggers,” Kisiel
(1986-87). Kisiel shows how the problem of facticity emerges as a philosophical
problem in neo-Kantian circles in opposition to “logicity” in the context of a discussion
of the nature of individuation and individuality. The concept of facticity is used in
SZ, as one of several subordinate concepts that describe the being of Dasein, and with the
help of which Dasein is distinguished from those forms of being that can be
understood in an ordinary theoretical and objectifying mode. On p. 56 Heidegger
distinguishes “fact” in the ordinary sense of the word from the fact of Dasein, which is
then defined precisely as facticity. He writes: “This complicated determination of
being—i. e., facticity—cannot even be grasped as a problem until Dasein’s basic
existential states have been worked out. The concept of “facticity” implies that an entity
within the world has being-in-the-world in such a way that it can understand itself as
bound up in its “destiny” with the being of those entities which it encounters within its
own world” (Die verwirkelte Struktur dieser Seinsbestimmtheit [Faktizität] ist selbst
als Problem nur erst faßbar im Lichte der schon herausgearbeiteten existenzialen
Grundverfassungen des Daseins. Der Begriff der Faktizität beschließt in sich: das In-
der-Welt-sein eines “innerweltlichen” Seienden, so zwar, daß sich dieses Seiende
verstehen kann als in seinem “Geschick” verhaftet mit dem Sein des Seienden, das
ihm innerhalb seiner eigenen Welt begegnet). In other words, apart from the general
sense of non-objective being, facticity is here used to point explicitly toward a certain
way of existing with respect to one’s own past. For further references to the sense of
facticity in SZ, see §41 and §57. Cf. also Landgrebe (1974), who discusses the
problem of facticity in Heidegger in the context of the question of how history can be
grounded in the individual.
does he aspire to move beyond the apparently interminable dialectic of
givenness and theoretical framework? This question points to the heart
of the present concern, namely, to determine the logic that leads to the
determination of the origin as a "historical" phenomenon. The critique
of the neo-Kantian conception of the given, against which Heidegger
presents the phenomenological approach, is that it takes a theoretical
attitude toward experience for granted. But if experience itself is non-
thetical, if it is, as he also says in the lectures, a "connection of
meanings" (Zusammenhang von Bedeutsamkeiten) in which the
experiencing life is simply immersed in a non-theoretical fashion, how
can it be grasped in a theoretical discourse without being betrayed by
the conceptual means of this very discourse? Is there some attitude
from the perspective of which the experiencing life itself can account
for its own achievements? In trying to respond to this demand,
Heidegger introduces a momentous distinction: a distinction between
different types of "as"-ness (Als).\textsuperscript{54} In a section that deals precisely
with the problem of how factual life-experience can be made into an
experience in its own right (and consequently, a philosophical theme of
exploration), he speaks of the need not to apprehend it in the "'as' of
the separating theoretical isolation." And he asks if there is a
"modification of its style, so that out of this modification possibilities of
specific forms of experience are made available?"\textsuperscript{55} Toward the end of
the same section the answer is given: indeed, there is such a
modification, a distinct "as," that is not the "as" of a generalizing or
conceptual characterization, but "the 'as' of meaningfulness which
always necessarily grows out of the situation, and which is
historical."\textsuperscript{56} This is the first time the idea of the historical is intro-
duced in these specific lectures. Its importance is obvious; it supposedly
designates the very mode of access to the given, defined as original life
experience, a mode that has not yet broken away, or distanced itself,

\textsuperscript{54} I speak of it as "momentous," for in it one can detect an entire theory of
meaning and interpretation, which is not spelled out until later, notably in SZ. It is
discussed further in the subsequent chapter.

\textsuperscript{55} GA 58, p. 111: "Wir fragen nun: Läßt die unabgehobene faktische
Lebenserfahrung irgendeine Modifikation ihres Stils zu, so daß aus dieser
Modifikation Möglichkeiten besonderer Erfahrungsformen sich ergeben?"

\textsuperscript{56} Ibid., p. 114: "Allerdings gibt es auch hier im faktischen Erfahrungs-
zusammenhang und dem ihn ausdrückenden Kenntnisnehmen ein ganz eigenes 'Als'
der Charakterisierung, aber es ist nicht das 'Als' der generellen oder sonstwie
begrifflich regionalen Charakterisierung, sondern das 'Als der Bedeutsamkeit, das
notwendig immer situationsentwachsenes, historisches ist'" (Heidegger's italics).
from this experience. Its use also confirms the above suggestion that it is in fact, strange as it may seem, Heidegger's way of appropriating the phenomenological ideal of a presuppositionless account of intentional acts. It is from this "historical" attitude that experience is to be accounted for in terms of the *how* of its enactment, in a mode of discourse or reflection that does not stand over and against its object, but which leads it to articulation in following its proper movement.

Still, there would seem to be one decisive difference between Heidegger and Husserl on the question of the proper mode of phenomenological analysis; for Husserl, it is crucial that the phenomenological intuition proceeds under the auspices of presuppositionlessness and ultimately of the phenomenological reduction. Only in this way can the analysis be secured from such categorial fallacies as psychologism and naturalism, and, for that matter, historicism. When Heidegger introduces phenomenology during these years, he rarely mentions the reductions or the bracketing of judgment concerning existence. At the same time, he praises phenomenology for having secured an access to life as an original region of meaning and experience from which the psychological and naturalized misunderstandings are excluded through the adoption of a proper mode, which is here that of the "historical." There are several ways to assess this situation. The simplest would be to say that Heidegger felt no need for the reduction. Since he was aiming for an ontology of life or human existence, the pretension of the reduction to withdraw to a pure level of meaning was irrelevant. Yet the brief remarks on the reduction in the lectures under discussion point in another, more intricate and more interesting, direction, one that also seems to support the suggested interpretation. The reduction, or the *époché*, is here presented as a means to ward off "false attitudes." But Heidegger stresses that it should not only be understood in a negative fashion, but also as a positive delimitation of the "sphere of the understandable, pure self-sufficiency." This is immediately followed by a presentation of his

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57 These are retrieved from Becker’s notes, in a section that the editor has entitled "Phänomenologische Reduktion" (GA 58, pp. 249-250). As in the case of several of Hegel’s works, the lectures published in the Heideggerian Gesamtausgabe are based both on authentic manuscripts and student notes and transcripts. For a critical assessment of the editing policy, see D. Dahlstrom (1987).

58 GA 58, p. 250, where he says of the Husserlian reduktion: “Ihre positive Funktion ist: die Späre des Verständlichen, der reinen Selbstgenügsamkeit, abzugrenzen.” And in a parenthesis he adds that the contemporary critique unjustly accuses it of having only a negative function.
own principal goal, namely, to understand the form of life’s comprehension of itself, as well as the basic meaning of the domain from out of which such a comprehension arises, which was previously said to be accessible only through the “historical” attitude. Thus he indicates that the “historical” mode or attitude is really another way of circumscribing the attitude arrived at through the phenomenological reduction. Just like the reduced position, the historical mode of analysis is an attitude in which the phenomenon of experience is not objectified according to given categories, but explicated in accordance with its own meaning.59

The purpose of establishing the general correlations between Husserl and Heidegger has been to prepare the ground for a deeper understanding of the sense of the peculiar “historicization” that the phenomenological program undergoes in Heidegger’s writings. Yet so far, the “historical” has only been mentioned as a new concept that somehow enters a given framework, as an alternative description for a domain of philosophical explanation as well as for a certain mode of philosophical reflection. The question still remains what Heidegger implies when, in these same lectures, he suggests in passing that “there is a principal connection between history and the original problem of life,” that history is “the true “ guideline” for phenomenological investigations,”60 and that it is the “guiding experience for phenome-

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59 These remarks in the 1919 lectures should be compared with Heidegger’s marginal notes to the second draft of Husserl’s Encyclopedia Britannica article eight years later. In this text the reduction is presented by Husserl as a transformation of the reflecting subject, after which it is “no longer a human ego,” Husserliana IX, p. 275. To this formulation Heidegger adds the comment (reproduced in a footnote to the published text): “Or perhaps precisely such [an ego], in its ownmost, ‘wonderful’ possibility of being” (Oder vielleicht gerade solches, in seiner eigenten, "wundersamen" Existenzmöglichkeit), a formulation that he suggests is really in line with what Husserl himself has in mind, when speaking—on the next page—of the reduction as a “change in the form of life” (Änderung der Lebensform). To this latter formulation Heidegger adds that the reduction is a human possibility in which man “precisely comes to himself” (gerade zu sich selbst kommt, Heidegger’s italics). H. Braun (1970), p. 206, formulates it well when he describes Heidegger’s move as a questioning of the “enactment of the epoché” in terms of its ontological implications. This reading is also confirmed by what is probably Heidegger’s most detailed assessment of the Husserlian “reductive” method and its inability to address the question of the “being of the intentional” in the 1925 lectures on the history of the concept of time, GA 20, pp. 148-157.

60 GA 58, pp. 246-247: “Es besteht ein prinzipieller Zusammenhang zwischen der Geschichte und dem Ursprungsproblem des Lebens. In der Geschichte liegt der wahre ‘Leitfaden’ für phänomenologische Untersuchungen.” It should also be noted that this remark is found in direct connection with a positive assessment of Hegel’s philosophy, whose “deeper sense” is said to lie precisely in seeing how a history of the
nological research.” The last quote is followed by a reservation that here history is not understood as historical science, but as a certain “intimacy” (Vertrautsein) of life with respect to itself, in other words, a mode of being that is also a mode of relating to oneself. This remark fits in well with the general picture so far; “the historical” designates a certain mode of self-explicating relation to oneself as also a mode of being. In such a usage, we seem to be far removed from any normal sense of history and the historical, not least as they are manifested in historical knowing. There are, however, other texts where Heidegger seeks to establish this connection.

7. A note on the multiple senses of “history”
In a lecture from 1920 Heidegger offers an explicit discussion about various ordinary senses of history and the historical, a discussion that also testifies to how he was becoming increasingly preoccupied with the meaning of the concept itself during this time. Here he distinguishes six senses of history (Geschichte) through the following examples:

spirit is the true organon of an understanding of human life. Hegel is mentioned briefly on a few occasions in these lectures, always with great appreciation. It is also stated that it is only through “modern phenomenology”—supposedly Husserl, or Heidegger himself?—that the “ultimate tendencies” of Hegel’s Phenomenology is really understood (p. 12). This should be compared to the remarks on Husserl and Hegel in the 1930 lectures on Hegel’s Phenomenology, where Husserl is accused of having developed phenomenology into a “science of consciousness,” as opposed to Hegel, for whom it is said to constitute the “manifestation of the spirit,” GA 32, p. 34.

This is a lecture on the phenomenology of intuition and expression from the summer of 1920. The text only exists in student transcripts, and there is no plan for publication. The references for the following discussion are taken from an article by Friedrich Hogemann, who has had access to the material, Hogemann (1986-87), esp. pp. 63-68.

This list seems to underly the similar shorter account found in SZ, § 73, which introduces its analysis of Dasein’s historicity. Some of the senses of Geschichte in this list would not normally be translated as history in English, but in order to convey Heidegger’s distinctions, they are here rendered in this way. We can also note in passing that, at this stage, Heidegger had not yet drawn the strict distinction between Geschichte and Historie and their derivations, upon which he would later build so much. Up until around 1921, Heidegger uses the terms Historie and historisch to designate both history in the normal sense and as a determination of factical life, sometimes using quotation marks to signal a non-conventional sense of the word. At the beginning of a lecture series on Aristotle from 1921/1922, in a polemic against the common conceptions of the philosophical significance of history, he states: “The historical (Historische) in philosophy will only be grasped in philosophizing itself. It is only conceivable as existence, accessible through the purely factical life, with and through history (Geschichte)” (GA 61, p. 1). By the Historische he means here that
(i) My friend studies history; (ii) He has a good knowledge of the history of philosophy; (iii) There are tribes and peoples without a history; (iv) History is the teacher of life (in the sense of the question of the use and abuse of history for life); (v) This person has a sad history, this city has a changing history, etc; (vi) That strikes me as a happy history, or as an unpleasant history.

The first category is history as science of history, in other words as a theoretical pursuit. The second is history as the objective domain of past events. The third category is more ambiguous; it could mean history as a living tale of past events, or simply an awareness of an individual or collective past. The fourth sense of history is closely related to the former, since history is here inseparably connected to the individual human being (or group) from the point of view of its present concerns and degree of awareness. The same is true of the fifth category, where history is “had” in the form of a personal destiny. Number six is more straightforward, as a name for a chain of events to which a person can relate through mediated identification.

The ultimate purpose of this list was obviously not just to enumerate different meanings of a term; what was sought was rather ways of relating to an object, in other words, structures of meaning. The first category exemplifies history as a theoretical attitude, operating according to certain conscious methods and procedures. The second, however, is something quite different; here history is something without any essential connection to an actual subject. It is rather the object for a (hypothetical) ideal subject. Through this second category, we are confronted with a fundamental distinction that cuts across the various groups, namely, history as the object of an ideal, as opposed to a concrete, subject. The obvious examples of the latter are categories three and five, where history is something belonging to a concrete subject. In a sweeping critique of a few current theories of history which is past in an ordinary sense, in this case the works of Aristotle. But this history of facts must be brought into the activity of philosophy itself, into the process of an exploration of factual, or historical, life. It is for this later activity that Heidegger here introduces the other concept available in German, namely Geschichte and geschichtlich. The passage quoted is one of the first examples of how these two senses of history are terminologically distinguished, even though it will take another few years before they obtain the unambiguous thematic values that they have in SZ, where Historie only designates that which is studied by the science of history, whereas Geschichte (and its derivations) constitutes an existentiale of Dasein. In an essay on Hegelian structures in Heidegger’s thinking on history, M. Haar rightly notes that this distinction is closely related to Hegel’s distinction between history as the inner development of the Spirit and history as external history, Haar (1980), p. 49.
(especially Natorp’s), and in particular reference to the history of philosophy, Heidegger accuses them all of being unable to specify the sense in which man has a history in the sense implied by the latter examples. These theories are said to be committed to a static image of man as the temporal transition within history conceived as an objective sequence. It is a theoretical construction that is said to create an “alienation” (Entfremdung) whereby man loses the means to grasp his own mode of being.\(^\text{64}\)

The last remark brings us back to the previous concern of phenomenological analysis, namely, to secure a mode of self-access that does not objectify its phenomenon according to alien—and therewith alienating—categories of understanding. It does so from the point of view of a discussion of various senses of history. Thus it also gives a clue to the sought connection, i.e., in what way Heidegger means that history can be a “guiding experience” for phenomenological research. Historical knowledge constitutes a structural analogue to that of the self-explication of subjectivity or life. As long as subjectivity is understood as the subject of knowledge within the framework of a subject-object dichotomy, it inevitably generates its own self-alienation. The important point here is that Heidegger is suggesting that this alienation takes place not only in the natural scientific discourse on the function and position of human subjectivity (through what Husserl would speak of as psychologism), but in the discourse of the human sciences in general, and of history in particular. The discourse of history (as normally pursued) generates and implies a sense of time as an indefinite sequence within which individual subjectivity occupies a limited space. It lacks the means to account for how individual subjectivity can have and belong to that which it also theoretically explores, in short how it can be both the object and the subject of the same phenomenon. History, as traditionally conceptualized, creates an alienation, the transgression of which it simultaneously seems to hold in store.

In his commentary to these lectures, Friedrich Hogemann rightly states that they should be read in the context of an attempt to develop a new conception of subjectivity and selfhood, whose “historical” characterization marks a break with a previous tradition.\(^\text{65}\) He fails, however,

\(^{64}\) Hogemann (1986-87), p. 66. Hogemann remarks that Hegel is conspicuously absent in this account. From the remarks in the previous lectures, however, we know that Heidegger at this stage was quite aware of the proximity to the former.

\(^{65}\) Ibid., pp. 67-68.
to articulate the reason why history becomes the model for this new conception. What Heidegger is searching for is a certain kind of philosophical reflection that can convey the meaning of meaning-formation itself without objectifying it, in other words, a self-disclosing discourse that knows itself to be of the same nature as that of which it speaks. It is really the search for an elusive point where the subject and object of knowing converge, and where the movement of meaning-formation is disclosed. History could seem to offer such a point. No doubt, history may be the object of a theoretical pursuit, as in historical science, in respect to which the subject of knowledge may adopt a self-sufficient posture. But history can also be something which the subject knows only by being that something itself. This is the case with knowledge of philosophical knowing of the past. In such historical knowing the subject brings about the object of knowledge in and through itself. It understands its history by being that history, and it is that history in understanding it. Heidegger never speaks in exactly these terms, and we should of course be careful in ascribing to him such a straightforward hermeneutic dialectics. All that I wish to emphasize at this stage is the magnitude of the stakes involved in the constant references to history and historical knowing in these early lectures, and also the principal difficulty of a project where the designation of the theme and the designation of the method essentially overlap. Through the reference to the historicity of life and subjectivity, Heidegger is struggling to preserve the specificity of the original region from the objectifying effects of ordinary modes of discourse and description, while indicating a means to approaching it that should somehow avoid this risk.

8. Heidegger’s remarks to Jaspers on “the historical”

That the reference to “the historical” marks an attempt to safeguard the phenomenon of subjectivity from being alienated, and, inversely, to

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66 Günther Figal has also observed this fundamental ambition, which he formulates as follows: “Die Methode, der Vollzug des historischen Erkennens ist der Gegenstand, und der Gegenstand, der Vollzug des historischen Erkennens, ist die Methode,” Figal (1992), p. 36. He too notes the Hegelian ring of this formulation, but he also rightly argues that already at this point Heidegger begins to distance himself from Hegel, since the origin and the repetition of the origin never ultimately come together; instead, they constitute a force-field, within which historical knowing is maintained. Continuing along this line, it could be argued that already at this stage the thought of the “other beginning” is prepared for. See the discussion of this theme in Chapter Seven, esp. Section Five where the relation to Hegel is explicitly addressed.
guarantee its proper access, is demonstrated quite clearly in the remarks that Heidegger wrote to Karl Jaspers after having read his Psychology of Worldviews. Heidegger's remarks were composed parallel to the lectures discussed above, and they also bring together several of the themes treated so far. Heidegger's principal critique of Jaspers consists in pointing out how the essential concept of "existence" is never properly thematized by the latter, who is moreover said to be unable to reflect critically on his own pre-conception of the spiritual or subjective in general. Heidegger's alternative approach here consists in circumscribing the phenomenon of the subject on its most general level as simply a region of being, and then to ask the question: what does it mean to have access to this region? In the case of subjectivity, he continues, this amounts to what it means to have access to oneself, how the being of the ego, the "I am," is originally given. This is never the experience of something given for inspection as a worldly object; rather, it is an experience of a peculiar "historical" nature. In an extraordinarily convoluted passage, Heidegger then describes the basic experience of the being of the ego as follows:

This experience is not an immanent perception with a theoretical purpose, aiming at confirming present "psychic" processes- and act-conditions, but it has the proper historical extension in the past of the "ego," which for the latter is not an appendage which it drags along, but a past belonging to it that it will experience as a historical, i.e., experiencing ego which it possesses as its own on the horizon of expectancy that it projects ahead of itself. The phenomenological explication of the How of this experiential enactment in accordance with its historical basic meaning is the decisive task in the whole complex of problems that concerns existential phenomena.

67 "Anmerkungen zu Karl Jaspers Psychologie der Weltanschauungen," in GA 9, pp. 1-44. The book was published in 1919; after long deliberations, Heidegger sent his remarks to Jaspers in 1921.

68 As Jeffrey Barash points out in a commentary to these "Remarks," what disturbed Heidegger was Jaspers's "typological" approach to existential phenomena, in which neither the question of their being, nor of their proper access was raised in a thematic way, Barash (1982), p. 92-95.

69 GA 9, pp. 31-32: "Diese Erfahrung ist nicht eine immanente Wahrnehmung in theoretischer Abzweckung, ausgehend auf Feststellung vorhandener 'psychischer' Vorgangs- und Aktbeschaffenheiten, sondern sie hat die eigentliche historische Erstreckung in die Vergangenheit des 'ich,' die für dieses selbst nicht eine mitgeschleppte Beigabe ist, sondern als Vergangenheit des sie historisch, sich dabei selbstlich mithabenden erfahrenden Ich in dessen, von ihm selbst sich selbst vorweggesetzten Erwartungshorizont, erfahren wird. Die phänomenologische Explikation des Wie dieses Erfahrungsvollzugs nach seinem historischen Grundsinn ist in diesem ganzen, die Existenzphänomene betreffende Problemkomplex die
What exactly Heidegger was trying to convey in this passage was not even clear to Jaspers, to whom it was personally addressed. Yet it is obviously a crucial section within the overall argument, since it is here that he tries to define the specific field of existential analysis, both in terms of its theme and its method. How should it be understood? From our present retrospective vantage point we are hopefully in a more favorable position to answer this question.

First of all, the implications of these remarks are not apparent as long as the issue is only the limited problem of the correct methodology of existential psychology (to which Jaspers’s book is devoted); but from the discussion of the preceding lectures it is clear that this region of the being of the ego, or rather of the “self,” is in fact what Heidegger was exploring as the original region of life experience. When Heidegger argues with Jaspers about this matter, he projects the full force of his own deepest philosophical concerns at the time. He is pushing toward a formulation of the task of philosophy as a first science. The historical is not just one qualification among others of the region to be explored by this science; it is only through a proper understanding of its essentially “historical” nature that this region becomes accessible at all. In order to understand what this qualification means, however, the sense of the “historical” must of course already have been specified. As also seen, this was something with which Heidegger was highly preoccupied at the time. When he writes to Jaspers, he is presupposing that the “historical” designates a mode of being which is not only not available to immediate inspection in the present, but which is even covered over when approached in such a fashion. He is presupposing that it serves to safeguard the phenomenon in question from an inadequate objectified, or naturalized, understanding, in the spirit of the Husserlian ideal of presuppositionless intuition.

entscheidende Aufgabe” (Heidegger’s italics).

When Jaspers received Heidegger’s remarks in 1921 he wrote a very appreciative letter, wherein he admitted that Heidegger’s critique was the only one that had really affected him. But despite the general acknowledgement, he is reluctant to discuss details. He fails to see, he says, in what way Heidegger suggests a “positive method” - “also in the discussion of the ‘I am’ and the ‘historical’” (...auch in die Erörterungen über “ich bin” und “historisch”), HJB, p. 23. This lack of appreciation for what Heidegger obviously held to be the major point of his whole critique is noteworthy, especially considering that it comes from someone whom Heidegger at this time looked upon as perhaps his closest philosophical compatriot, and who, furthermore, would soon come forward as a “thinker of historicity” in his own right (cf. the discussion of Jaspers in the Introduction).
CHAPTER ONE

If it was only a matter of making sure that the phenomenon of life was not subjected to ordinary categories of thinghood, then the reservation could have been more easily stated. Then it would also have been easier for Jaspers (and subsequent readers) to understand where he was heading. However, this methodological precaution is here imbedded in an array of concerns which are only vaguely indicated, but which all contribute to the new “historical” conception of the domain of philosophical thought and analysis. When the task of phenomenology is described as “the explication of the How of an experiential enactment according to its historical meaning,” Heidegger is presupposing the sense of “historical” first outlined in the lectures from 1920, where it signified a particular mode of meaning-constitution, namely, a mode in which that which is meant is not grasped as an object of theoretical concern, but in a mode of somehow going with or along the meaning as enacted by oneself. To specify the How of such an enactment implies a mapping out of meaning-structures that one is oneself, in such a way as to remain true to this fundamentally reflexive situation. This is also what is implied in the other remark, where Heidegger stresses that factual life experience must be understood as a “self-experienced enactment-historical” phenomenon.71

A significant aspect of the difficulty in what Heidegger is communicating arises from the attempt to bring in the self-reflexive situation of such an explication into the thematic sphere of the investigation itself. To the nature of the phenomenon to be investigated belongs its possibility of explicating its own being; furthermore, this self-explicating movement is itself an indispensable clue to its being. Or, as Heidegger writes to Jaspers (in another exasperating formulation): “The factual, enactment-historical life in the factual How of the problematic of the How of the concerned self-appropriation of the self belongs originally to the meaning of the factual ‘I am.”72

71 GA 9, p. 32: “Die faktische Lebenserfahrung selbst, in der ich mich in verschiedener Weise haben kann, ist aber nicht so etwas wie eine Region, in der ich stehe, nicht das Allgemeine, dessen Vereinzelung das Selbst wäre, sondern sie ist ein wesentlich dem Wie seines Eigenvollzug nach “historisches” Phänomen, und zwar primär nicht ein objektgeschichtliches (mein Leben gesehen als sich abspielend in der Gegenwart), sondern ein sich selbst so erfahrendes vollzugsgeschichtliches Phänomen.”

72 Ibid., p. 35: “Das faktische, vollzugsgeschichtliche Leben im faktischen Wie der Problematik des Wie der bekümmerten Selbstaneignung des Selbst gehört ursprünglich zum Sinn des faktischen ‘ich bin’” (Heidegger italicizes the entire sentence).
Another puzzling feature of the "historical" is indicated in the remarks to Jaspers, in the form of a brief reference to the problem of "conscience" (Gewissen). At one point Heidegger states that through the reference to conscience, the concept of the historical is not only expanded, but brought back to its proper source of meaning (eigentliche Sinnquelle). In the common relation to history as simply an object of knowledge, he says, we lose the sense of "conscience and responsibility" that lies in the historical itself, as something to which we not only relate knowingly, "but which we ourselves are." As will be seen in Chapter Three, these suggestions point toward a large philosophical domain in itself. In the "Remarks," however, it is just loosely connected to the distinction between various ways of relating to history in a more traditional sense of the term. It suggests again the close structural connection between the problem of historical being and historical knowing on the one hand, and that of the being of "life" and its explication on the other. What Heidegger is trying to convey throughout the early texts that have been examined so far, is that the experience of each of these domains gives a clue to the other, and that the conceptual demands in both cases are of the same kind. In the remarks to Jaspers, these correlations are brought a further step as Heidegger calls for "hermeneutic concepts" in the service of clarifying the historical meaning of existential phenomena. This "hermeneutization" of the philosophical discourse is addressed in the subsequent chapter.

In the reference to the historical in general, to conscience, and to new conceptual means, one and the same ambition seems to be operative, namely, the ambition to gain access to what is supposedly an original level of experience, in short, to the given, or—as Husserl would say—to the things themselves. The presupposition behind Heidegger's circling around this elusive domain is obviously that it is not accessible to common modes and methods of philosophical analysis; furthermore, the latter tend to cover over or alienate this domain in their very attempts to disclose it. We have already seen Heidegger reiterating the point that the original life-experience is not accessible to an ordinary theoretical gaze; like history, we are told, it is not given as a present object. And yet, in the same passage it is stated that this is so for the reason that it is something that we ourselves are. As we are

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73 Ibid., p. 33-34.
74 Ibid., p. 32.
history, we are the experience of which we are trying to give an account. A paradoxical logic rules over this situation: the given that is sought is something that we already are, and yet it is apparently not simply given; for if it were, then the entire conceptual apparatus would be unnecessary. The given is that to which we can hope to have access once we have cleared the way to a proper understanding of its mode of being, which is essentially our own mode of self-mediation. The given is subjected to a mediation into which the radical phenomenologist must enter in order to retrieve it. Thus there can be no straight access to the given; in fact, the given appears as that which is never quite given, but to which we can only attend, as it were, in a certain retrospective projection. The more profound implications of this fundamental deferral of the sought origin is not something to which Heidegger is fully attentive in the beginning. Yet, it is no doubt the logic of this predicament that speaks when, at the outset of the remarks to Jaspers, he also speaks of how the things (Sachen) of philosophy are normally hidden, and that the task therefore demands “a radical de- and reconstruction,” a challenging of the “history that we ourselves are.” As he concludes: “In the end, the determinately oriented detour and the properly enacted detour-understanding is the way.”

Was Heidegger aware of the magnitude of the detour on which he was about to embark? What the remark indicates is an image of philosophy as a quest for the given in the form of an interminable reflection on its own “historical” mediation or detour, as a task in itself. In the chapters that follow, these wanderings will be traced along a few chosen paths.

9. Concluding remarks
How far have we moved from the opening questions of the present chapter, in which philosophy—in the words of Husserl—called for a new beginning, securing the priority of its approach through a strict delimitation of its own empirical history? The conceptual transformation is obvious; from the strict subordination of historical matters to a philosophical systematic, to the “historical” characterization of the very aim of the systematic approach. But if we turn to the level of the

75 Ibid., p. 5: “Am Ende ist der bestimmt gerichtete Umweg und das vollzugsmäßige Umwegverstehen der Weg” (Heidegger's italics).
actual philosophical content the development is much more difficult to assess, as I have also tried to show. This is due partly to the fact that Heidegger’s “historicization” of the phenomenological project could be read as bringing out a latent ambiguity in the manifestly “a-historical” initial formulation of the project itself; but it is also due to the unfulfilled sense, or even circularity, of this very “historicization.” The genuine understanding of what it means to be historical depends on the ability of thought to relate precisely to this condition. The concept designates what it purports to describe only in a mediated way, in the form of repeated appeals to occupy a certain position in which its descriptive force will eventually be fulfilled. Like Husserl’s call for a new system, it too promises an insight to come, on the condition that the reader embarks on a journey toward an origin that is not yet here; or, to put it in the terms with which we began: toward a beginning that is yet to arrive.
Chapter Two

HISTORICITY AS HERMENEUTIC SITUATION

(1) The problem of hermeneutics in Heidegger’s writings, (2) Heidegger’s initial appropriation of classic hermeneutics, (3) Philosophy in the hermeneutic situation, (4) Understanding, interpretation, and the two levels of “as”-ness, (5) Discourse as a hermeneutic domain; hearing and keeping silent, (6) Meaning as an indeterminate space of disclosure, (7) Language and the hermeneutic relation, (8) Concluding remarks

1. The problem of hermeneutics in Heidegger’s writings
Few modern thinkers have paid such persistent attention to the problems of method and access in philosophy as Heidegger. Philosophy, or “thinking” as he would later say, is always threatened. It is therefore part of its task constantly to care for its own proper modes, moods, and obligations: in short, to secure an original access to itself and to its own domain. This is true not only of the early writings; one only has to read a lecture like “What is Called Thinking?” from 1952 to get a clear sense of the urgency of these matters. There Heidegger states that the fact most in need of thinking through is the lack, or inability, of philosophical thought that characterizes modern man.2 His final judgment

1 “-But what does ‘hermeneutic’ mean then? I do not have the audacity to yield to the suspicion which here suggests itself, that you are now using the word ‘hermeneutic’ wilfully... – I will be glad to do as you ask. Only, do not expect too much. For the matter is enigmatic, and perhaps we are not dealing with a matter at all.”

2 VA, pp. 123-137, p. 124: “Das Bedenklichste zeigt sich daran, daß wir noch nicht denken.”
in this text—a strange echo of Husserl's dismal evaluation of his own philosophical present forty years earlier—is that thinking has not yet “properly entered into its element.” \(SZ\) could also be read as a meditation on the proper mode of the philosophical questioner. The entire work is one long preparation, a preamble for a question which at the very end still remains unanswered: namely, that of the meaning of being. Its path toward self-explication is bordered by suspicion, critique, retrieval, and removal, in a violent urge to rid Dasein of its own deceptions. When Heidegger wrote to Jaspers of the need to apply “hermeneutic concepts” in the service of explicating existential phenomena, or simply “historical life,” he could have been seen as advocating only a specific method for a specific task. But, as the discussion in the previous chapter clearly showed, the idea behind these apparently innocent remarks was much more encompassing. In the end it concerned precisely the proper mode of philosophical reflection as such. This is eventually spelled out in \(SZ\), a work that defines its method as explication, or interpretation (Auslegen). It is a hermeneutical process, and the phenomenology of Dasein is also accordingly said to be a “hermeneutic in the primordial signification of this word.”

The goal of the present chapter is to show how the idea of the historicity of life or existence stands in a mutually implicative relation to Heidegger's idea of hermeneutic analysis and the application of hermeneutic concepts, or what could be called a hermeneutic mode of discourse. The sense in which Heidegger holds existence to be historical can only be understood from the perspective of a certain methodological and conceptual ideal. More precisely, to be historical in the sense indicated by Heidegger means to stand in a certain epistemic situation: a hermeneutical situation. This is a circular situation, on several levels, to which attention will be given in due course.

At this early stage we must also observe an ambiguity concerning the role of hermeneutics in Heidegger’s writings; on the one hand it designates a method, or a mode of access to a certain domain (which, at least to begin with, is the domain of the ontology of Dasein), and on the

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3 As quoted in the previous chapter, \(GA\) 9, p. 32. Starting with the lectures from 1919, Heidegger sometimes refers to his own method as “hermeneutical,” and he speaks of the need to use “hermeneutic intuition” and “hermeneutic concepts” (\(GA\) 56/57, p. 117).

4 \textit{Ibid.}, p. 37.
other hand an ontological datum (a supposedly original level of meaning-formation). This ambiguity, which Heidegger does not thematize as such, is in fact an exact parallel to the one encountered in the first chapter in the use of the "historical"; both of these concepts designate modes of access that are also modes of being. They both occupy the center of a fundamentally self-reflexive concern that could be articulated as follows: what is the being of the access to being? Thus, when Heidegger speaks of the "historicity" of human existence he could often just as well speak of its "hermeneuticity." This is not a word he ever uses, but it gives a sense of the continuity of the theme under investigation.

Before continuing with the actual analysis, a few remarks are warranted concerning the general difficulties in assessing the role of hermeneutics in Heidegger's work. In most current handbooks on the history and development of hermeneutics, Heidegger is accorded a decisive role. He is recognized as someone who took the previous tradition of hermeneutic thought, as a specific method of the human sciences, and incorporated it into a broader context of an analytic of human existence. In Heidegger's writings, classic hermeneutics is said to undergo an "ontological turn." Thereafter it is no longer seen as just a method of understanding, but also as an ontological theory of the being of understanding, and of its conditions of possibility. However, despite the fact that \textit{SZ} is generally recognized as a significant step (if not always in a positive sense) in the development of hermeneutical thought, its more specific relation to the tradition is not so easy to establish. Heidegger's references in \textit{SZ} to previous users of the

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5 This comes as no news to the readers of Heidegger and of the literature issuing from his work. The problem of the "universality" of hermeneutics is central to contemporary philosophical debate, exemplified first of all by the discussion between Habermas and Gadamer (Cf. Habermas [1970]). Here I will leave these later developments aside and concentrate on how the universalization of hermeneutics is introduced in Heidegger's own writings, especially in the work of the early twenties.


7 This general description of Heidegger's attempt can be easily verified from a reading of the relevant sections in \textit{SZ}, which also clearly demarcate this fundamental hermeneutics from earlier methodologies, which are declared to be "rooted" in the former, \textit{SZ}, p. 38. For the problem of the hermeneutical nature of existence, see especially § 4, §7C, §§31-32. Cf. also \textit{Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie}, \textit{GA} 24, §20, where understanding is described as the original determination of human existence, irrespective of if it engages in an explaining or an understanding type of science (p. 390).
concept of hermeneutics are scant and often evasive. And his own discussion of it is surprisingly brief, considering the importance he obviously attaches to it for his own investigation. When the question of hermeneutics again appears in a published text after SZ it is in the dialogue between Heidegger and the Japanese professor Tezuka, which took place in 1953. When asked for the reason why he introduced hermeneutics into his phenomenology, Heidegger replies that the term was familiar to him from his theological studies and that he later found it in Dilthey. However, the common source was Schleiermacher, from whose *Hermeneutik und Kritik* Heidegger quotes the first lines. He then states that in *SZ* hermeneutics signifies neither the art of interpretation, nor interpretation itself, “but rather the attempt first of all to define the nature of interpretation on hermeneutic grounds.” The use of the term in *SZ* is then said to have been only a way-station, which is why it was so suddenly abandoned. Later on in the dialogue

8 Consequently, as long as *SZ* was the only document from Heidegger’s early phase, the more precise importance and position of hermeneutics remained somewhat obscure to his readers and commentators. In his important study on Heidegger’s method from 1974, *Verstehen und Auslegung*, C. F. Gethmann remarked that in *SZ* the concept of hermeneutics is introduced in a vague and unsatisfying way, Gethmann (1974), p. 115 (which, however, did not prevent him from arguing that hermeneutics was the most fundamental concept of Heidegger’s ontology). A few years later a similar critical point was made by J. Kockelmanns: “By specifying the phenomenological method with the help of the concept of hermeneutic Heidegger again makes any interpretation of his claims very difficult. Hermeneutic has a relatively long and complex history to which Heidegger does not really relate his own efforts,” Kockelmanns (1978), p. 132. In his reconstruction of the sense and significance of hermeneutics in *SZ*, Gethmann tried to circumscribe it through a detailed account of Heidegger’s views on language and understanding. For the readers of Heidegger who did not have access to the earlier material, this was the only way of approaching the problem at this time. Through the publication of the early Freiburg lectures, this situation has changed. During this time Heidegger was elaborating his own method of textual and existential interpretation. Thus these early writings enable us to see more clearly how he envisaged the points of contact between phenomenology and classical hermeneutics during a critical phase of his development. In a recent essay on some of this material, J. Grondin (1990) concludes that it changes the image of Heidegger by making the question of hermeneutics central again. The most important materials for a discussion of Heidegger’s early conception of hermeneutics are the already discussed lectures from 1919 (*GA 56/57*), *Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu Aristoteles. Einführung in die phänomenologische Forschung* (lectures from 1921/22, in *GA 61*), and *Ontologie. Hermeneutik der Faktizität* (lectures from 1923, in *GA 63*), and also the afore mentioned manuscript on the interpretation of Aristotle from 1922, referred to as *PA*.

9 It was published in the volume *Unterwegs zur Sprache* in 1959, which was later incorporated in the *GA* as vol 12.

10 *GA* 12, p. 93: “Hermeneutik meint in S. u. Z. weder die Lehre von der Auslegungskunst noch das Auslegen selbst, vielmehr den Versuch, das Wesen der Auslegung allererst aus dem Hermeneutischen zu bestimmen.”
the topic of hermeneutics appears again, as Heidegger makes a new attempt to explain his usage of the term, this time through its etymology. Hermeneutics is now defined as “the bearing of message and tidings.” Heidegger suggests that this fits very well with the use of hermeneutics in SZ, since the task there was precisely to “bring out the being of beings.” This is followed by the claim that there is a relation between man and the being of beings which is ultimately upheld by language, through which being is disclosed; from this he concludes that “language defines the hermeneutic relation.”

This remark is puzzling in view of the common conception of Heidegger’s development, according to which the theme of language only comes to the forefront of his thinking at a late stage. Should it therefore be regarded as an example of his sometimes distortional self-interpretations? The question is not so easy to answer. Clearly, SZ does not say that the relation between man and the being of beings is upheld or mediated by language. Still, in a few central passages Heidegger discusses how the relation is established through a certain meaning-formation that is explicitly described as “hermeneutic.” One could of course argue that this primitive world-disclosure described in SZ has little to do with language in an ordinary sense. However, this may immediately be countered by the argument that neither do his later thoughts on language. Eventually I will argue that the continuity between the early thoughts on meaning-formation and the later reflections on language is greater than it may seem at first.

In the “Dialogue on language” the explicit discussion of hermeneutics is exhausted by the brief remarks quoted so far. In the autobiographical sketch “My Path in Phenomenology” from 1963, Heidegger does not mention hermeneutics among the important early sources of his thought. However, from this we should still not infer that hermeneutics represents only a temporary interest in the course of his philosophical development. On the contrary, we should pay close attention to the enigmatic utterance from the same Dialogue where he responds to the question of why he abandoned both the concept of

13 SZ, p. 158. Also, the work as a whole is focused on finding and establishing a mode of discourse through which these (ontological) relational structures are to be made accessible, a mode that is likewise designated as “hermeneutic” (SZ, p. 37).
14 SdD, pp. 81-90.
hermeneutics and that of phenomenology; this was done, he says, not in order to deny their significance, but in order to "abandon my own path of thinking to namelessness."\(^{15}\) This is a desire of which much could be said and which has far-reaching implications for any conventional philosophical historiography. It signals a need not to look too closely at the actual words and concepts used, but to pay attention to the underlying thematic movements of the thinking under consideration. It is to such a thematic movement that this study is devoted. The task of the present chapter is to elaborate the sense of the historicity of existence and thought somewhat further by examining the multifaceted sense of hermeneutics in some of Heidegger's writings. The presupposition is that in order to understand what it means to be historical, one must understand what it means to exist and operate in a hermeneutic situation, as an essentially circular situation of meaning-formation.

2. Heidegger's initial appropriation of classic hermeneutics

First, let us look at how Heidegger defines his relation to classic hermeneutics in a lecture series from 1923, the topic of which is ontology as "hermeneutics of facticity."\(^{16}\) The single most important characteristic of facticity as Heidegger describes it in these lectures—and this again repeats the idea with which we are familiar from the previous chapter—is that it is given not as an object (Gegenstand), but in accordance with its "how," in other words, according to certain patterns and ways of meaning-enactment. It is explicitly in the service of elucidating facticity in this sense that hermeneutics is developed here.\(^{17}\) It is introduced through a rather detailed historical account which is significant in itself, both for its image of hermeneutic thought in general and for the idiosyncratic way in which Heidegger connects to it for his own purposes.

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\(^{15}\) GA 12, p. 114: "...um meinen Denkweg im Namenlosen zu lassen". Cf. the similar remark in the "Letter on Humanism," where Heidegger speaks of a need to learn how to exist in a certain "namelessness," GA 9, p. 319.

\(^{16}\) Ontologie. Hermeneutik der Faktizität, GA 63. "Factivity," as already mentioned in the previous chapter, was used by Heidegger during a certain period to designate "our" mode of being, which is what SZ speaks of as "Dasein."

\(^{17}\) The first line of the section on hermeneutics reads: "The expression hermeneutics designates the unitary mode of the beginning, attempt, approach, questioning and explicating of facticity" (Der Ausdruck Hermeneutik soll die einheitliche Weise des Einsatzes, Ansatzes, Zugehens, Befragens und Explizierens der Faktizität anzeigen, GA 63, p. 9).
In his historical account of hermeneutics, Heidegger initially mentions its vague connection to Hermes, the messenger of the Gods, referring to Ion, where Plato speaks of the poet as such a messenger, a hermeneus, between gods and men. However, it is in relation to Aristotle that he articulates his idea of hermeneutics. In Aristotle, Heidegger claims to find hermeneutics connected to the use of speech in general, in the more mundane sense of simply making something known. The Aristotelian treatise Peri hermeneias is substantially a treatise on λόγος, in the broad sense of the use and structure of language. It is not concerned with hermeneutics in the later sense of "interpretation." Yet Heidegger connects directly to the use of ἐρμηνεύειν as it appears in this text. It is a characteristic of speech, he says, "to make something openly there, present at hand and accessible." Within the Christian church and the tradition of Bible exegesis, hermeneutics then takes on the sense of explication and commentary. Heidegger mentions a number of Christian thinkers from Augustine onward who have written on the proper technique of reading holy texts. It is only in the seventeenth century that this tradition incorporates the term "hermeneutics" for what up until then had been designated by varying names, such as Clavis Scriptura or Philologica sacra. In a work published in 1723, Jakob Rambach describes a technique entitled hermeneutica sacra. Heidegger mentions this work as symptomatic of a new turn in the sense of the hermeneutical. Hermeneutics is no longer the name of explication itself, but rather the name of a doctrine that describes the various elements and techniques involved in interpreting classical texts. This turn is confirmed fully in the work of Schleiermacher, who in his Hermeneutik und Kritik defines hermeneutics as an "art" or "technique" (Kunstlehre), as the art of understanding. Dilthey is finally said to represent only a

18 GA 63, p. 11: "etwas als offen da, als vorhanden seien zugänglich machen." This capacity of words to make available and accessible is also referred to as their ability of making true, of αληθεύειν. During this time one finds the first traces of Heidegger’s critical assessment of the classic conception of truth. For fear of overburdening the presentation, I have devoted a separate chapter to this matter. But it is important already at this stage to keep in mind that Heidegger’s conception of language as explication and interpretation is determined from the outset by a wish to account for it as also the locus of truth.

19 This image of Schleiermacher, as simply a philosophically less interesting predecessor to Dilthey (which still lives on in Gadamer’s account of the same development in Wahrheit und Methode) has later been questioned in interesting ways by M. Frank. See the informative preface to his own edition of Hermeneutik und Kritik, Schleiermacher (1977), and also the preface to Was ist Neostrukturalismus? (1984).
continuation of this approach, as he incorporated the art of understanding into his methodology for the human sciences.

As a philosophical gesture this account is quite remarkable; already at the outset Heidegger more or less dispatches the entire school of hermeneutics in the modern sense as one long line of aberrations. Instead he ties his own appropriation of the term to what is described as an earlier and original use of it; namely, as the unfolding of facticity, or simply existence. This move is surprising, considering that the specific connection between ἐρμηνεύειν and human existence in classical times has hardly been confirmed by his previous account (and it seems unlikely that this could be done). What was confirmed was rather a more general sense of ἐρμηνεύειν as providing an account, an explanation, or a clarification of any phenomenon whatsoever that could reasonably be placed over and against the more limited practice of textual interpretation (a discipline for which the classic Greek thinkers showed little philosophical interest). We should therefore be cautious in our evaluation of Heidegger’s account, which could in fact be read as covering up a philosophical-political manoeuvre. The reason for sorting out Schleiermacher and Dilthey from the true sense of the hermeneutical here is no doubt that Heidegger is anxious to secure for himself a methodological standpoint that is not already from the outset encircled as a specific practice, in this case the theoretical practice of the human sciences. Still, it is clear that the modern sense of hermeneutics as having to do (in some way or other) with the bridging of a temporal and conceptual distance, remains in force behind Heidegger’s idiosyncratic application of the concept. I will have more to say about the nature of this “distance” in the subsequent section.

In the continued description of his own use of hermeneutics, one passage stands out as especially significant. It states:

The task of hermeneutics is to make one’s own Dasein available in its way of being to this Dasein, to communicate it, to pursue the self-alienation with which Dasein is struck. In hermeneutics a possibility is developed that enables Dasein to become and to be understanding for itself.20

Two aspects are particularly noteworthy here. First, that hermeneutics

20 GA 63, p. 15: “Die Hermeneutik hat die Aufgabe, das je eigene Dasein in seinem Seinscharakter diesem Dasein selbst zugänglich zu machen, mitzuteilen, der Selbstentfremdung, mit der das Dasein geschlagen ist, nachzugehen. In der Hermeneutik bildet sich für das Dasein eine Möglichkeit aus, für sich selbst verstehend zu werden und zu sein.”
is related directly to human Dasein and its tendency toward self-alienation. Hermeneutics is the process of bringing Dasein closer to itself, of bridging a certain estrangement in which it supposedly stands in respect to itself. Secondly, hermeneutics is said to constitute a mode of being, or rather a possibility of being defined as a certain way of making sense of oneself. The guiding idea behind this description of a qualified discourse is no doubt the one contained in the phenomenological explication of meaning-constitutive acts, which—as we saw in the preceding chapter—was also described as "historical knowledge" (in Heidegger's qualified sense of the word). That this is indeed what is going on in this first elaboration of a "hermeneutic" method is eventually brought out quite clearly in the introductory §7 of SZ, that defines the phenomenological method as Heidegger conceived it at the time. This section has often been a puzzle to readers of Heidegger, but from the perspective of the lectures it obtains a new significance.

In §7 of SZ Heidegger supposedly declares his loyalty to the program outlined by Husserl, and here he also gives his most detailed treatment of the method of phenomenology as he then perceived it. Yet, despite its length the section says surprisingly little. Or rather, it moves on a level of generalities which makes it difficult to identify any specific methodological claim. Phenomenology is here broken down to its etymological components, φαινόμενον and λόγος, which are then defined as "that which shows itself" and "speech, which lets something be seen" respectively. Just as in the lectures, the definition of λόγος as speech which lets something be seen is taken directly from Aristotle's Peri hermeneia, where λόγος is described as that which αποφαίνονται (that which displays, renders, but also declares). Finally phenomenology is defined as: "to let that which shows itself be seen from itself in the very way in which it shows itself from itself," which, as Heidegger adds, is just another way of formulating the Husserlian maxim "to the things themselves!" This affirmation brings his conception of phenomenology to a full circle; phenomenology was said to be a type of "historical knowing" and this knowing is now said to

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21 The technical use of "Dasein," with which we are familiar from SZ, is not fully established at the time of these lectures. It is used interchangeably with the concepts Mensch and Leben, or simply—as the title indicates—Faktizität.

22 This is certainly not the case with F.-W. von Herrmann, who devotes a book-long interpretation to this single section in his Hermeneutische Phänomenologie des Daseins (1987), pp. 277-392.
“hermeneutical,” as defined with reference to the classic idea of saying as showing, which is what phenomenology is then said to have been pursuing all along.

It is only toward the end of this section that Heidegger begins to make claims that show more clearly where he is heading. There he asks the question: what is the proper theme of a phenomenological demonstration? And he replies: such things that do not normally show themselves, i.e., what is normally hidden. Phenomenology is said to be in fact a science of the hidden, of that which resists ordinary modes of representation and which even tends to conceal itself. Phenomenological description, Heidegger states—and this is where hermeneutics first enters the methodological discussion of SZ—is interpretation:

The λόγος of the phenomenology of Dasein has the character of ερμηνεύειν through which the authentic meaning of being, and also those basic structures of being which Dasein itself possesses, are made known to Dasein’s own understanding of being. The phenomenology of Dasein is a hermeneutic in the primordial signification of this word, where it designates this activity of interpreting.23

This description of hermeneutics repeats the one developed in the earlier texts on the hermeneutics of facticity: ερμηνεύειν is the use of language in the service of revealing the being of human existence, factical life, or—as is the case here—Dasein. But it simultaneously broadens the scope, since it states that it is also the method of making the meaning of being in general known to Dasein. Also in its brief remarks on the normal use of hermeneutics, as a methodology of the human sciences, this section constitutes a direct continuation of the earlier lecture. In passing it is stated that hermeneutics, in the sense of a methodology of the human sciences, can only be called hermeneutics “derivatively.” To this Heidegger adds that in order to see how this is the case, i.e., how hermeneutics in the latter form is derived from the hermeneutics of Dasein, it must be ontologically elaborated how history is rooted in the historicity of Dasein.24 In this brief remark the two


24 Ibid., p. 38: “In dieser Hermeneutik ist dann, sofern sie die Geschichtlichkeit des Daseins ontologisch ausarbeitet als die ontische Bedingung der Möglichkeit der Historie, das verwurzelt, was nur abgeleiteterweise ‘Hermeneutik’ gennant werden kann: die Methodologie der historischen Geisteswissenschaften.”
themes are explicitly connected as parallel pursuits. In both cases a mode of knowing in reinscribed as a mode of being, which in turn is said to found the former.

Neither in the 1923 lectures on the hermeneutics of facticity, nor in \textit{SZ} §7, is hermeneutics qualified, except as a mode of disclosure or of making known. In the lectures it is said to overcome a certain “self-estrangement,” and in \textit{SZ} it serves to articulate that which normally is not known. One reason for this lack of a more precise definition is that Heidegger has here simply grafted the concept of a hermeneutics onto Husserlian phenomenology. However, this remark still leaves us in the dark as to why he feels a need to bring in hermeneutics in the first place. The question reinstates the concern of the previous chapter: namely, to understand the significance of Heidegger’s “historicization” of phenomenology. In what way is the analysis of fundamental structures of meaning-enactment transformed by defining it as a historical-hermeneutic exploration? In order to answer this question we must look at a parallel idea that emerges in Heidegger’s writings during the early twenties: that of the “hermeneutic situation.” It provides a link between hermeneutics in the traditional sense and in Heidegger’s supposedly more original sense of a hermeneutics of facticity, in other words the commonly recognized distinction—articulated by Pöggeler and others—between an epistemologically oriented hermeneutics and a hermeneutic philosophy.\footnote{Pöggeler (1983), p. 254.}

And it also establishes the link between the historicity of Dasein and the question of the relation between philosophy and its own history.

### 3. Philosophy in the hermeneutic situation

The basis for the discussion of the “hermeneutic situation” will be the famous essay on the interpretation of Aristotle, which Heidegger composed in 1922. The explicit purpose of this text is to contribute to the history of ontology and logic, but its most important result, especially if one reads it in the context of Heidegger’s own subsequent development, is its methodological reflections. Heidegger here starts out by stating that the real content of any interpretation (its \textit{Sachgehalt}) can only speak for itself on the condition that “the hermeneutical situation” has been made sufficiently available. Broadly speaking, this
situation is the situation in which we stand with respect to what is to be interpreted as the interpretation begins. It designates an actual philosophical and conceptual position, not as a static entity, but as something that can be elaborated and qualified. On the opening page Heidegger writes:

History itself, as a past that has been appropriated in understanding, grows in its comprehensibility through the originality of the decisive choices and the elaboration of the hermeneutic situation. The past discloses itself only in proportion to the decisiveness and power of the ability to unlock which a present has at its disposal.

The image of philosophy here is not that of a historically progressing accumulation of knowledge, where one generation can simply continue where the other left off. Rather, philosophy designates an ability to raise fundamental questions that may be repeated in a more or less original manner by every new generation, depending on its abilities and interests. The philosophical attitude or comportment is a challenge which faces every generation anew. Of course, this does not mean that philosophy does not formulate theories or solve problems. But the point is that this theoretical activity could be pursued in a more or less radical manner, from a greater or lesser width of perspective. In short, it is the problem of access once again. In the case of Aristotle this implies that our understanding of his writings depends on our ability to raise philosophical concerns in the present. In Heidegger’s words, it depends on the ability to “repeat that which is understood in the sense of and for one’s own situation.”

The most general name for this diversified phenomenon is that of the “fore-having” (Vorhaben). However, Heidegger introduces his account with a formal definition of the situation in terms of three components (a distinction to which he does not devote much attention in the discussion that follows): a “standing of the gaze” or “perspective” (Blickstand), a “direction of gaze” (Blickrichtung), and an “extent of vision” (Sichtweite). In parenthesis one can note the connection to what, a few years later will be expounded in SZ §2 as the threefold structure of the question of being, and also to the three-fold structure of understanding in general (in terms of Vorhaben, Vorsicht, and Vorgriff), as this concept is analysed in §32, p. 151.

The notion of a “repetition” (Wiederholung) may seem innocent in this context. But in SZ the entire discussion of “historicity,” as a mode of being of Dasein, will focus on precisely such a “repetition” for one’s own situation. What is here a directive for a philosophical interpretation will there be presented as a
What, then, is our “situation”? Ultimately this question brings us back to the issue discussed in the preceding chapter: namely, what is the sense and content of original philosophical investigations? And Heidegger’s response is also familiar: the principal aim of philosophical research, he states here, is “human existence” (menschliche Dasein). He immediately adds that this must be pursued not from an external perspective, but as a description of that which in itself is a movement toward self-clarification. Human existence or “factual life” is both the topic of philosophical concern and a process or movement which encompasses this philosophical concern itself. Philosophical research is the “enactment of a fundamental movement of factual life.”

This initial presentation of factual life is then followed by a ten-page account of this phenomenon, basically an outline of what will later be presented in a much more elaborated manner as the analytic of Dasein in S2. We are thus on familiar ground, but with one significant difference. Whereas the attempt to explore the being of factual life was initially seen as a continuation of the Husserlian program of mapping out structures of intentionality, it is here introduced in the service of an interpretation of Aristotle.

structure of being in its own right. In the next chapter the peculiar logic of this repetition is explicitly addressed as the ontological structure of historicity.

29 PA, p. 239: “Vollzug einer Grundbewegtheit des faktischen Lebens.” This could be compared to a statement from the lectures on the hermeneutics of facticity (from the subsequent year), where Dasein is defined as “on the way toward itself” (Unterwegs seiner selbst zu ihm, GA 63, p. 17, Heidegger’s italics).

30 In the center we find the concept of Sorge, which is defined as the “relating of factual life to its world” (Umgang des faktischen Lebens mit seiner Welt), a world which is always already disclosed in a certain vision and articulation. Within this ongoing concern with the world a distanced attitude of pure onlooking can take shape, as the preamble of a scientific, or theoretical attitude. But more often life instead tends to lose itself in its everyday concerns, in a “falling with respect to the world” (Verfallen an die Welt). Factual life is individual, but it nevertheless moves in a certain “averageness” (Durchschnittlichkeit), which Heidegger already here identifies with a das Man. This tendency is revealed most clearly when factual life reflects on how it relates to its own death. Thus the basic scheme of the existential analytic, as we know it from S2, is already operative in this text.

31 The actual interpretation of Aristotle that Heidegger develops is not something I will discuss at this stage, even though it is quite remarkable in itself. The central theme is the relation between φρόνησις and σοφία, in other words between pre-theoretical and theoretical life, as two ways of generating truth. Starting in Nicomachean Ethics, Heidegger shows how Aristotle can be read as investigating structures of factual life, especially with a view to the practical foundations of theoretical thought. This is a theme that he also traces in Metaphysics and that is brought to its fulfillment in the discussion of movement in Physics. At the same time he also outlines for the first time the critical account of how Aristotle’s understanding of “life” (ζωή) reflects an underlying “fore-having” (Vorhabe), according to which beings in general are understood on the model of practical objects (Umgangsgegenstände). For a more
Does this not mean that Heidegger is still loyal to the rather simplistic model of historical interpretation to which he seemed to subscribe in the book on Scotus, where it was stated that every historical text must be projected onto a systematics of valid philosophical concerns? In other words, is he not simply saying that Aristotle must be read from the point of view of the present, in the form of a phenomenology of factual life? In a sense he is, but with the important reservation that the present is no longer seen as such a simple matter. The present, in the form of enacted factual life, is not something to which we have immediate access. It can not be studied or described directly and in general terms; it can only be reached, Heidegger states, through a questioning, and ultimately a destruction, of its own motives and tendencies. This step is crucial; the idea of a "destruction" practiced on factual life introduces a new element in Heidegger's program, an element that in itself undermines the division between a historical and a systematic account. In order to reactivate Aristotle's past ontological concerns as present, the legacy of established interpretations must be destroyed. However, the ground from which this destruction is launched—the clear understanding of factual life—is not accessible except through another destruction, which is then aimed at the past elements in the present. The past is only accessible through an active repetition in the present, and inversely, the present is only accessible through a critical repetition of the past. This is the circularity with which philosophical thought must now attempt to struggle.32

extensive discussion of Heidegger's reading of Aristotle in this particular text, see Fical (1992), pp. 23-49.

32 At this point the question could be justly posed: What if Heidegger is shown to be "wrong" in his actual interpretation of Aristotle? How would that affect the validity of his account of historical interpretation as such? There is no simple answer to this question. On the one hand, everything depends on the validity of his readings, on their force and persuasiveness. The methodological reflections are only appendices to the actual interpretative work being done, the actual expansion of the conceptual reach with respect to these texts. On the other hand, the general scheme of how the present can make room for the past, through circular, destructive retrieve, is valid beyond any particular historical appropriation, with its relative faults and merits. The difficulty in deciding between the two is due to the fact that the general validity of the scheme can never be assessed beyond the individual case, where the validity of the interpretation is, or is not, directly experienced. For Heidegger in any case, these methodological reflections would have no meaning, were it not for their claims to validity, objectivity, or simply "truth." For what he sought was never just a "useful," or renewed, interpretation, but a true and objective interpretation, in what he considered to be the deepest sense of these words. In fact, the sense of truthfulness and objectivity in historical interpretation is precisely the problem here. In a concluding section, following the articulation of the hermeneutic situation in terms of an analysis of factual
This description of the hermeneutical situation gives a deeper sense to the idea, mentioned in the foregoing section, of how hermeneutics is needed to bridge a certain self-estrangement to which Dasein is subjected. This estrangement may be understood on one level as the lack of the proper concepts and attitudes for an explication of its own being, which it tends to understand in a naturalizing or objectifying mode. In this form, the problem is familiar from Husserlian phenomenology, but—and this is what is significant here—this estrangement, or inner distance, can also be understood as a historically mediated distance in Dasein itself, manifested by its tendency to repeat, unknowingly, inherited forms of understanding of itself. In the same introduction to the hermeneutical situation, Heidegger writes:

> The philosophy of the present situation moves to a large extent inauthentically in the Greek conceptuality, indeed, in a conceptuality traversed by a chain of varying interpretations.\[^{33}\]

Dasein tends to “fall” in respect to the world, but also in respect to history, as the general name for inherited models of thought. For this reason there is a need for a hermeneutics of destruction and active, authentic repetition. Historical destruction, or destruction of historically inherited forms of understanding, is a way for the present to come to terms with itself, which, in turn, is a prerequisite for a valid historical interpretation of—in this case—Aristotle.

Five years after the introduction to the interpretation of Aristotle, Heidegger publishes a work entirely modelled on the scheme of this seminal essay, with only one really significant exception: namely, that “Aristotle” has been replaced by “being.” This work is \(\text{SZ}\). It is built on the model of a hermeneutic argument, according to which the sense

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\[^{33}\] PA, p. 249: “Die Philosophie der heutigen Situation bewegt sich zum großen Teil uneigentlich in der griechischen Begrifflichkeit, und zwar in einer solchen, die durch eine Kette von verschiedenartigen Interpretationen hindurchgegangen ist.”
of a lost question is to be retrieved through a working out of the present situation of questioning. This situation is the ontology of factual life, or, as it is called here, the "analytic of Dasein." Only by making explicit the being of the questioner, as the privileged point of departure of ontological questioning, can the meaning of the guiding question be clarified. This is the argument of fundamental ontology put in the briefest possible terms. The actual concept "hermeneutical situation" is not mentioned explicitly in the opening methodological sections of SZ, but it appears a few times later in the book, always at decisive junctures of the argument. It organizes not only the overall presentation, but also the steps leading up to it.34 This is a point that deserves to be emphasized: ontological knowledge, in Heidegger's version, is organized along the lines of a textual interpretation, as outlined by himself. The same means are activated for the proper understanding of past thinking as for approaching the most general philosophical question: that of the meaning of being.35

34 At the opening of the second division of the book, on "Dasein and Temporality," (§45) Heidegger sums up the previous sections and states again that his goal is to explicate and raise the question of the meaning of being. The discipline of ontology is then declared to be a form of interpretation (Auslegung), which, like every interpretation has its fore-having (Vorhabe), fore-sight (Vorsicht), and fore-conception (Vorgriff). This general fore-structure is then equated with the "hermeneutic situation." In order for the interpretation to succeed this situation must be clarified, something which Heidegger here notes that his own previous discussion has not yet succeeded in doing. This remark introduces the rest of the book, in which the existential structures of the first division are reinterpreted in temporal terms. It is not necessary to say more about the actual content of these analyses at this stage, since the principal interest here is only to see the hermeneutic structure of the argument. Twenty sections later Heidegger mentions the hermeneutic situation again, but now in a more limited sense as the situation required for a complete interpretation of the being of Dasein as "care" (§63), and in a few general remarks he defends the circular structure of the investigation as a whole, that is, the fact that the meaning of being is explored from the point of view of Dasein's understanding of being. The concept of the "hermeneutic situation" is mentioned once more in SZ (in a context that is of particular interest here), in the penultimate section of the chapter that deals explicitly with Dasein's historicity. Here Heidegger writes that the existential-historical source of history as a science can be presented by analyzing the specific type of thematization that is constitutive for this science, a thematization which is then equated with the cultivation of the hermeneutical situation (SZ, p. 397). This remark does not apply directly to the structure of the argument of SZ; instead it suggests that the elaboration of the hermeneutic situation is also what underlies all historical knowing. The consequences of this correlation will be spelled out later.

35 In passing we can note the continuity of this organizing form of philosophical knowing. Thirty years after the text on Aristotle, Heidegger publishes a lecture on one of the Heraclitean fragments, entitled simply "Logos" (in VA, pp. 199-221). At the outset of this text he notes that the most questionable of all is our preconception that the words of Heraclitus should immediately reach our common understanding. The task of thinking, he continues, is therefore to take a few steps toward the place where the
The correlation between these two aspects of hermeneutics—which together could be said to define the philosophical territory of \textit{SZ}—has a number of consequences for the questions raised up until now. It indicates that one must understand the function of hermeneutics in Heidegger's thinking in a more complex way, as representing not only a methodological ideal and a description of a certain type of situation, but both at once, in a mutually implicative relation. To put it differently: Heidegger's hermeneutization of phenomenology (which at the time of writing \textit{SZ} is understood as historico-hermeneutical self-explication) presupposes a certain understanding of the situation in and out of which any such explication operates, namely, the hermeneutic situation. To speak of phenomenological investigations as "hermeneutical" is to draw the ontological consequences of the fact that any such investigation takes place from within a hermeneutic situation. The hermeneutic situation could of course be understood simply as a methodological starting point; in that case it designates the sum total of the preconceptions that are already at work whenever we begin to interpret any phenomenon whatsoever, preconceptions of which one must become actively aware in order to take control over the epistemic process. But the perspective toward which Heidegger is moving is more far-reaching; it says that the phenomenological-hermeneutical self-explication is itself the elaboration of such a hermeneutic situation, a situation which it never leaves, but in the medium of which it prevails. From this follows yet another fragment itself speaks to us in a more questionable way, where it can reach us with its question. The strategy which he then employs can be schematically summarized as follows: in order to understand the Herclitean use of \textit{λογος} it is necessary to abandon the common translations of this word (reason, order, word, etc.) and to reach for a more original meaning. In this attempt he turns to etymology, to the sense of \textit{λέγειν} as "gather" and "display." But these etymological remarks are in fact only a take-off for a meandering reflection on what he holds to be the essential connections between the acts of gathering, reading, speaking, and making true. What is still often discarded by his critics as philological imposture is in fact a very conscientious attempt to open up an interpretative space, into which the past can enter or strike. This strategy continues the elaboration of the hermeneutic situation outlined thirty years earlier. The first step is to acknowledge the distance and mediation that separate us from the interpreted text. The next move is to establish a hermeneutic situation, first through a destruction of traditional, inherited meanings, and second through an elaboration of a philosophical concern in the present, by means of which the philosophical content of the interpreted text can eventually be encountered, if only as an open question and a future task. The one really significant difference—and this is noteworthy in itself—is that whereas the early text on Aristotle ultimately aims at a critical evaluation of Aristotle's conception of "life" from the point of view of Heidegger's own hermeneutics of facticity, the latter text is entirely subservient to the reactivation of Heraclitus's fragment. Ultimately, the destruction in the later text is exclusively directed toward the present and toward its inability to experience the meaning of the question that the fragment addresses to it.
point—no doubt the most difficult one—namely, that since it is the task of such an explication to do justice to its own mode of being, it must find a way of expressing the being of a process of understanding and articulation into which it is already drawn. From this perspective the hermeneutical situation signals the unsurpassable predicament of an ongoing mediation, a distance that philosophical knowledge is destined to seek to overcome, but whose fundamentally elusive reality it is its task to present as such.

In the preceding chapter Heidegger was quoted saying (in the Remarks to Jaspers), that the proper way of exploring our “historical” existence was by means of a certain “enacted detour-understanding.” Perhaps the contours of this somewhat enigmatic utterance can now be anticipated. It indicates a wish to designate the movement or process of meaning-formation which we ourselves are. We are the passage toward an understanding and clarification of our own being, a living detour, so to speak. How can this situation be expressed as such? How can the situatedness of understanding be given its proper articulation, considering that this articulation is itself only an extension or elaboration of that very condition? In the present reading of Heidegger this is one way of phrasing the question: What does it mean for Dasein to be historical? The problem of the historicity of Dasein, as it has been traced up until now, is essentially a problem of thinking and articulating the original self-mediating meaning-formation that we ourselves are.

The previous discussion has examined this problem through a discussion of two senses of the hermeneutical in SZ. However, so far it has been silent about the sections in this work that are most often quoted as the very epitome of Heidegger’s appropriation of classic hermeneutics: the ones that deal with the fore-structure of understanding and interpretation (§§31-34). The delay has been intentional, since these well known sections are often read too simplistically; it is only when seen in the light of the attempt to describe the historicity of Dasein in the sense indicated that their significance can be fully appreciated. Furthermore, it is also only then that the problems and aporias to which they lead can be discerned. In these sections we should detect a philosophical discourse trying to account not only for its own conditions of possibility, but ultimately for its own being.
4. Understanding, interpretation, and the two levels of “as”-ness

In §§31-34 in SZ Heidegger explores the phenomena of “understanding” and “interpretation” as existentiales of Dasein, in other words, as constitutive elements of our mode of being. These analyses form part of a larger exploration of Dasein’s way of being in its world, as an encompassing description of the various attitudes, or simply existentiales, in and through which it has access to a world, which—reciprocally—is thereby revealed to it. Besides understanding and interpretation, these existentiales also include Dasein as “state-of-mind” (Befindlichkeit), and as “discourse” (Rede), and finally as “falling” (Verfallenheit). The overriding concern of this analysis of “being-in” is to develop a description of Dasein not as the subject of knowing, but as itself a “clearing” (Lichtung) in and through which beings manifest themselves, including Dasein itself. Another word for this clearing, that will later obtain a fundamental thematic role in the work is that of “disclosedness” (Erschlossenheit). Dasein, Heidegger also says in the introduction to these sections, “is its disclosedness.”

In short, these analyses aim for an articulation of the access to beings, captured in such a way as not to objectify this most fundamental phenomenon.

In his commentary to SZ, Hubert Dreyfus describes the general theme of this part of SZ as the “situated way of being-in,” and he equates the clearing with “the situation.” This is never said explicitly by Heidegger himself, and Dreyfus does not make the connection to the hermeneutic situation. (Instead he refers briefly to what Heidegger says of the situatedness of Dasein in a subsequent section of the book, where “situation” designates the possibility of authentic resoluteness.) But his intuition is correct; the proper way of reading these key sections is to see them as Heidegger’s attempts to describe the hermeneutic situation as something that we ourselves are, as this had already been tentatively presented in the essay on Aristotle. As such, the section also continues the attempt to bring the “historical,” self-mediating nature of life to explicit awareness.

36 SZ, p. 133: “Das Dasein ist seine Erschlossenheit” (Heidegger’s italics). It is with reference to this idea of Dasein as disclosedness that Heidegger will develop his theory of truth in SZ (§44). Disclosedness is discussed further in Chapter Six, Section 3.

The topic of “understanding” is not introduced here as a theoretical or scientific ability. Instead, understanding is presented as the most primordial level of Dasein’s relation to the world. It is a name for how the world is made accessible to Dasein from the point of view of its basic possibilities of being. It is a supposedly non-theoretical process of making the world accessible as a region of existential possibilities, toward which Dasein projects itself. Or, as Heidegger writes: “As projecting, understanding is the mode of being of Dasein in which it is its possibilities as possibilities.” By positioning understanding as a primordial level of world access Heidegger takes an important step. It is not only a question of transforming the normal sense of a word; it is saying that nothing is given that is not given as a projection of a possibility of Dasein, as a “for-the-sake-of-which” (Worumwillen). In the same context he also brings in the concept of “significance” (Bedeutsamkeit): “In the understanding of the ‘for-the-sake-of-which,’ the significance which is grounded therein, is disclosed along with it.” “Significance” has been introduced at an earlier stage of the book, as a general name for the structure of the world in which Dasein is located. It inevitably occupies an ambiguous position in the account, since it is never made clear—and from the way the whole

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38 To be exact, it is one among several so-called “equiprimordial” (Gleichursprüngliche) strata within a total structure of disclosive existentiales, among which Heidegger also groups “state-of-mind” and “discourse.”

39 SZ, p. 145: “Das Verstehen ist, als Entwerfen, die Seinsart des Daseins, in der es seine Möglichkeiten als Möglichkeiten ist.” Heidegger here also introduces “sight” (Sicht) as an existential-technical term for understanding in general. The idea behind the introduction of this metaphor is to emphasize how understanding makes things accessible, as “access in general” (p. 147). It may seem surprising that Heidegger chooses to reappropriate the metaphor of vision for his own purposes, considering that a principle goal of the book is to critically evaluate a tradition which has supposedly over-emphasized θεωρία. In the same section he defends his choice, stating that when seeing and vision is formalized in this way it can be made to cover all forms of access. Normally understanding would be considered as a higher and more refined way of world-disclosure, as opposed to, e.g., perception. Heidegger’s transformation of this common meaning of the term is certainly not philosophically innocent. Nowhere in SZ is there a discussion of perception in any traditional philosophical sense of the word. The few times when it is mentioned it is always in critical terms, as a philosophical naiveté, that the existential analysis must abandon. Cf. his use of Wahrnehmen in the same section (p. 147). On the topic of perception in Heidegger, cf. my remarks in Chapter Six, note 21, on the relation between ἀλήθεια and αἴσθησις in his readings of Aristotle.

40 SZ, p. 143: “Im Verstehen des Worumwillen ist die darin gründende Bedeutsamkeit miteröffnet.”

41 See p. 87, where Heidegger first defines Bedeutsamkeit as “das, was die Struktur der Welt, dessen, worin Dasein als solches je schon ist, ausmacht.”
argument is built, it probably could never be made clear—if it only reflects the interests of Dasein, or if it marks an objective structure of the world. Significance is that which is disclosed, as Dasein continuously projects its possibilities.\textsuperscript{42}

The subsequent section, entitled “Understanding and Interpretation,” is probably the most well-known illustration of Heidegger’s existential-hermeneutic theory of understanding. “Interpretation” in this terminology is the “development” of understanding, a “working-out” of the projected possibilities. It is on this level of interpretation that Heidegger locates the “fore-structure,” which conditions the transformation of understanding into interpretation. However, just as in the essay on the interpretation of Aristotle, the actual treatment of this structure is quite brief. It is divided into three components, the “fore-having” (Vorhabe), the “fore-sight” (Vorsicht), and the “fore-conception” (Vorgriff). We are then told that the fore-having is the appropriation of a certain totality, out of which the fore-sight focuses or distinguishes what is to be interpreted in a more specific orientation. Finally, there is always a fore-conception involved, in virtue of which a general conceptual orientation is fixed in advance. Much could be said at this stage about the nature and implications of this structure, concerning its applicability for a theory of interpretation and its consequences for objectivity and truth.\textsuperscript{43} Nevertheless, I will here disregard these aspects and concentrate instead on another aspect of Heidegger’s account, which, as it seems, is rarely thematized as such by his commentators: namely, the passage between the different levels of articulation or meaning-formation that is brought out here and in the following sections.\textsuperscript{44} It is a stepwise movement from understanding,

\textsuperscript{42} The ambiguity is reflected throughout, as when Heidegger writes in the same section: “‘For-the-sake-of-which’ and significance are both disclosed in Dasein, which means: Dasein is that entity which, as being-in-the-world, is an issue for itself” (Worumwillen und Bedeutsamkeit sind im Dasein erschlossen, besagt: Dasein ist Seiendes, dem es als In-der-Welt-sein um es selbst geht, p. 143). Significance is disclosed in Dasein, and still Dasein only exists as a being-in-the-world. As the division between subject and object is intentionally broken down with the help of this concept and others throughout the book, there no longer exists a conceptual framework to deal unambiguously with matters such as where significance is located.

\textsuperscript{43} The implications of the idea of the fore-structure for a theory of interpretation and interpretative truth are central to Gadamer in his references to Heidegger in Wahrheit und Methode. As H. Dreyfus demonstrates, these sections are also highly relevant to contemporary discussions in the philosophy of science of the importance of background skills and tacit knowledge. He relates the problem of the fore-structure of interpretation to the work of Kuhn, but also to the contemporary debate over the limits and possibilities of artificial intelligence, Dreyfus (1991), Chapter 11.

\textsuperscript{44} The concepts of “articulation” and “meaning-formation” are here used in an
through interpretation, to assertion, into which language (as “discourse”) eventually—and somewhat surprisingly—is inserted in between understanding and interpretation. From the perspective of the questions that have been raised so far, it is possible to sense the magnitude of the stakes involved in this attempt. It is an attempt to capture, in one and the same account, the (“historical”) disclosing, meaning-formative being that we are, and to account for our own possibility of giving voice and articulation to this predicament, in the words of the early lectures: the “historical” attitude.

Just as in the previous discussion of understanding—and in accordance with a philosophical manoeuvre with which we are by now familiar—the term “interpretation” is here initially dissociated from its normal use as a limited theoretical activity. As a “development” of understanding, it designates making explicit and accessible that which in understanding is supposedly only projected in a non-thematic way. Through interpretation, that which is understood is transformed into an “as which” (Als): “The ‘as’ makes up the structure of the explicitness of something that is understood; it constitutes the interpretation.”

This “interpreting” transformation of that which was previously disclosed in “understanding” could seem to be related to what would normally be spoken of as predication, or the forming of a judgment on the basis of a pre-theoretical grasp of a given situation. However, Heidegger insists that the transformation must not be linguistic. Interpretation in the sense intended is still a process which is said to precede the actual linguistic assertion or statement. Before the qualities and determinations of any phenomenon whatsoever are brought to explicit articulation, it has always already been grasped or seen as something.

intuitive and non-thematic sense, just to give a general idea of what Heidegger is searching for. The concept of “meaning” is one which Heidegger himself thematizes, and to which I return in Section 6. This may seem an unsatisfactory way of handling the presentation, but the circular relatedness of all of Heidegger’s fundamental concepts forces the reader/interpreter to make a choice of where to enter the structure.


46 This is one of the many points where Heidegger’s ontological descriptions of human understanding in SZ could be compared in fruitful ways to Wittgenstein’s analyses in Philosophical Investigations, especially what he has to say about “seeing as” in Division II, Chapter 11. To determine the true sense of the relation between Heidegger and Wittgenstein is a philosophical task in itself. As can be seen from recent literature, this question is also attracting a rising interest. See, e.g., Mulhall (1990). Much could have been said about this matter within the scope of the present study, not
From the discussion in Chapter One we are familiar with another “as”-ness, suggested at an early stage by Heidegger: the so-called "historical ‘as’" that was presented as the proper attitude of phenomenological-philosophical explication. Should we look upon them as related? If so, what is the significance of this correlation? Heidegger gives no clues in the relevant section. However, in the subsequent section on the nature of the assertion he will contrast this “as”-ness of interpretation with another type of “as”-ness: the one that arises once the interpretation is converted into a statement, the “as”-ness of a completed predicative stance. In order to distinguish the two he designates the latter as the "apophantic ‘as’," and the former as the "existential-hermeneutic ‘as’." Through the use of the term "hermeneutic" in this context, Heidegger reveals the continuity of a specific concern: to capture the original level of meaning-formation as a "historical" and also a "hermeneutic" event. But by describing it this way he also betrays a conflict within his whole approach. This conflict may be elucidated through the following question: what is the relation between this hermeneutic “as” of interpretation and the supposedly "hermeneutic" mode of disclosure to which SZ subscribes as its own method? The significance of this question may not be evident at first. Some readers would perhaps answer that they obviously refer to one and the same methodological stance. However, the apparent simplicity conceals the real difficulty that Heidegger is facing, a difficulty that must be articulated clearly if we are to be able to follow the strange logic of the argument that is developed around it.

When Heidegger presents the existentiale of interpretation and the stance of a hermeneutic “as,” he is trying to designate the existential conditions for his own phenomenological-hermeneutic discourse. And it is this circular-reflexive ambition that creates his deepest problems here. One may of course neglect this problem as only an extreme only concerning their views on the practical foundations of theoretical understanding and on language, but also concerning their different ways of defending the uniqueness of philosophical reflection in a post-metaphysical era, as well as a certain tendency toward an essential taciturnity. These are questions to which I hope to return elsewhere.


This dual purpose is demonstrated toward the end of §32, where the “meaning” disclosed in existential understanding is exemplified with the meaning of being sought
branch on the impressive system of fundamental ontology and instead immerse oneself in Heidegger’s vast explorations of various existential structures (of which very little has been said so far). In other words, it would be quite possible to appropriate the manifest achievements of Heidegger’s great work, while leaving aside the perhaps impossible question of whether or not it manages to bring itself to such a completion. However, in that case one would not only remain deaf to Heidegger’s own innermost concerns, but also would fail to see how he is in fact obsessed with precisely the question of the possibility and conditions of philosophical thinking itself. Whatever decision is made with regard to this problem, it is clear that if one wants to follow what Heidegger has to say about the historicity of thought, it is necessary to recognize the fundamental role of this ambition.

What positive description could we then possibly give of the interpretative activity that we ourselves are? How can the “as”-ness of the hermeneutic stance come to expression? By describing it precisely as “hermeneutical,” and by outlining it as operating within a circular fore-structure, Heidegger could seem to give at least a rudimentary picture. But if we look more closely at how he develops this theme, the picture changes, in favor of an account where this original attitude seems to withdraw from the possibility of a positive description. This is at least one way of reading Heidegger’s account of the transformation from the hermeneutic “as” of the interpretation to the apophantic “as” of the assertion.

The general and manifest purpose of this particular analysis could be summarized as follows: to show that the assertion (Aussage, λόγος) must be located within the context of Dasein’s being-in-the-world, and that an understanding of it as something present at hand distorts its true nature. Along the lines of the introductory §7, the assertion is first introduced in terms of Aristotle’s conception of λόγος as ἀπόφασις, i.e., as that which shows or lets something be seen. In §33, Heidegger by the work as a whole, and where the circularity of understanding and interpretation is described as the condition that rules over theoretical knowing at large. Of course, Heidegger generally refers to such “theoretical” modes of understanding as “derivative” with respect to the “original” pre-theoretical existential versions. But when he refers (on p. 153) to an ideal theoretical knowledge that could somehow learn to master these conditions—that could step into the circle in the “right way”—then this simple organization of the argument collapses. Then the theoretical account (i.e., his own) speaks about its own ideal practice in the very same terms used to describe its ontological (practical) foundations.
begins his discussion by distinguishing three senses of assertion. The first is precisely that of showing forth or pointing out (Aufzeigen); the assertion lets something be seen as what it is. The second sense of assertion is said to be predication, as the act of ascribing a predicate to a subject. The third is that of communication (Mitteilung), the letting something be seen by others. The general idea is to convey how every mode of assertion is really grounded in the first sense, that of making something seen. The complete definition of an assertion is then given as follows: “an assertion is a communicating and determining showing forth.”

The next and truly problematic step, however, is to describe the relation between this assertion and “interpretation” in the sense just developed, and more precisely, how the modification of one to the other is structured. At first Heidegger is anxious to specify the similarities; just as the interpretation, the assertion is also said to be always determined by the threefold fore-structure. Still, this remark only provides the two phenomena with a common framework. When the real distinction is introduced it is exemplified by means of a well known distinction developed earlier in the book, between the two categories of beings, “ready-to-hand” and “present-at-hand,” between the object as practically incorporated in Dasein’s being-in-the-world and as the object of a theoretical contemplation. When this distinction was first introduced, it served the purpose of developing an alternative conception of “world,” through which the Cartesian, and essentially modern physical, conception of worldliness and object-hood could be critically retrieved as in fact a derivative thematization within Dasein’s being-in-the-world. Now it is brought in again to serve as a scheme to distinguish between two levels of meaningful disclosure, or rather the transition between them.

Heidegger’s account of the transition goes as follows: the initial fore-having is the object as ready-to-hand, as immediately and non-discursively accessible to Dasein. Now, this initial fore-having is transformed from a “with which” (Womit) to an “about which” (Worüber) of an assertion. This slight transformation is a momentous turn, the implications of which should not be underestimated. The assertive fore-sight aims for the aspect of present-at-hand in the object

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49 Ibid., p. 156: “Aussage ist mitteilend bestimmende Aufzeigung.”
50 For the theme of Zuhandenheit and Vorhandenheit, see SZ, §§15-16.
initially given as ready-to-hand. Or, to be more precise, it discloses the ready-to-handness as such; it makes what was initially not even presented, but simply had, into an explicit quality. It is only at this stage that “properties” become accessible, and consequently something to which properties may be attached in judgments. The object is recognized as this or that object with this or that property. However, as the ready-to-hand is uncovered as such, it is simultaneously covered over. As it is transformed into the object of an explicit predication, its primordial mode of givenness is closed off. This is the inevitable fate of the assertion. In this assertive way of grasping the phenomenon, “the ready-to-hand becomes veiled as ready-to-hand.”

What conclusions should be drawn from this description of the two ways of relating to, or “having,” objects, and of the transformation of one into the other? Is it, for example, the case that the “existential-hermeneutic ‘as’” of the understanding interpretation only concerns a certain practical relation to objects? Or should Heidegger’s account rather be understood as an image of or guide to a more encompassing phenomenon? The previous discussion of the workings of understanding and interpretation clearly point in the latter direction. Interpretation designates a certain type of meaning-formation, which is operative at various levels and which is characterized first and foremost by not being accessible to the “apophantic ‘as’” of the assertion, except in retrospect, so to speak. But how could this primordial “as”-ness be understood in a positive sense? If the practice of assertive discourse inevitably distorts or conceals the nature of this primordial level, what are the means for its disclosure? Heidegger insists that if this original “as” is indeed concealed, then Aristotle’s account of λόγος will inevitably be read as only a theory of judgment, and thus as a preamble to modern logic. In other words, the assertion itself as λόγος will be distorted if it is permitted to cover over its own origin; in that case it will only be accessible as an object present-at-hand, whereby we lose sight not only of the connection between assertion and showing, but also, Heidegger adds, of a more original conception of truth. This is what is at stake. It all hinges on the proper delineation between the two modes of givenness, and on the legitimacy of the distinction as such.52

51 SZ, p. 158: “Durch die Hin-sicht und für sie wird das Zuhandene als Zuhandene verhüllt.”
52 One can note that despite the crucial importance of this transition between the two levels, the description is quite brief. Later on in the book, in §69c, Heidegger
If it is the fate of the assertion to cover over that original meaning-formation to which it nevertheless remains indebted, what implications does this have for the discourse of hermeneutic phenomenology? Supposing, as I have suggested, that we read Heidegger as actually trying to account for the possibility of his own discourse, what remains of its possibility after this analysis? This is not a question that Heidegger ever raises as such, but it is a question that one could trace behind the subsequent move in the analysis of the triad of understanding, interpretation, and assertion: the move to language as “discourse.” A discussion of this particular section in SZ will permit us to bring together the various concerns of the present chapter with regard to the nature of historical existence as a hermeneutic domain and the extent to which language could be said to define the hermeneutic relation already in SZ. Finally, it will also provide a link to the next chapter, which addresses the intersubjective aspect of historical existence.

5. Discourse as a hermeneutic domain; hearing and keeping silent
At the outset of §34 in SZ, which deals with language as “discourse,” Heidegger says explicitly that the delaying of this theme has been intentional: “The fact that language only now becomes our theme will indicate that this phenomenon has its roots in the existential constitution of Dasein’s disclosedness.” The thrust of Heidegger’s approach is to undermine the common philosophical conception of language that takes its point of departure from some isolated aspect of language, such as the assertion. With his analysis he wants to indicate, as he says later in the same section, the ontological “region” of language. This region is the fundamental existential structure of “being-in,” more precisely the existentiale of “discourse,” which is presented as equiprimordial with that of understanding (and thus also with that of “state-of-mind”). In the terms of SZ, it is thus conceived of as more primordial not only than
returns to this transition and the two modes of making sense, which are there discussed in terms of the “changing over” (Umschlag) between them, the temporal meaning of which Heidegger struggles to articulate. Unlike some of the other modes of disclosure, however, the temporal reinterpretation seems to add very little to this phenomenon.

the assertion, but also than interpretation, as the making explicit of understanding. Through his account of discourse, Heidegger thereby posits a pre-linguistic discursiveness on a fundamental level of the existential ontology, a discursiveness within which the "interpretative" movement operates, or out of which it arises. It is intersubjective, in the sense that it constitutes a way of being with others, of sharing a world through communication. For in discourse, Heidegger writes, "the being-with is 'explicitly' shared."\(^{54}\)

Despite the many interesting suggestions in this section one must still conclude that \(SZ\) is remarkably evasive when it comes to language. One explanation for this silence is no doubt the one just quoted, that Heidegger is anxious to establish that the qualified use of language is rooted in more primordial ways of constituting meaning. But there also seems to be another, hidden, agenda operating behind this taciturnity, namely, the vexing question of whether and how there can be a language proper to the kind of explication for which the work as a whole is striving. Can the historical-hermeneutical situatedness of Dasein be explicated as such, perhaps through the adoption of a proper historical-hermeneutical attitude? And can this attitude then be made to serve the explication of the meaning of being as such? As already suggested, one could read the theory of interpretation and of the hermeneutic "as" on this meta-philosophical level, as a vacillating attempt to secure the possibility of such an approach. The same strategy can be detected behind the account of "discourse," which implies the existence of a mode of communication that is not already determined by the objectifying logic of assertive speech. However, the final word of \(SZ\) on discourse leaves the reader in doubt as to whether it can fulfill its role in communicating the being of Dasein to itself. This is the case in the brief and often neglected §68d, "The temporality of discourse." In this section, Heidegger asks in what way discourse in general temporalizes, and he indicates that it is somehow tied to the temporality of "making-present" (\(Gegenwärtigen\)). However, this is a mode of temporalization that he connects to inauthentic temporality on other

\(^{54}\) \(SZ\), p. 162: "Das Mitsein wird in der Rede 'ausdrücklich' geteilt..." (Heidegger's italics). Much more could be said of this brief sketch of the roots of language and linguistic communication. It is only a few pages long, but it contains the seed of a far-reaching critique of most common philosophies of language, foreshadowing not least the work of the later Wittgenstein. However, our task here is not Heidegger's philosophy of language as such, but the implications of these remarks on language for the question of the historical-hermeneutical being of Dasein.
occasions (e.g., in the foregoing §68c). If we take into account that discourse is also the means of philosophical thought and articulation, then the indication that it is pre-determined to reproduce an inauthentic relation to its object opens a vertiginous space in the heart of the project of fundamental ontology. In fact, the question “How can language temporalize authentically?” hovers unanswered over \textit{SZ}, and it will continue to haunt Heidegger’s thinking.\footnote{In his reconstruction of the development of \textit{SZ}, T. Kisiel remarks that “the most tantalizing” note among those included in the first edition of \textit{SZ} was one appended to §68d, signalling a “Chapter II” in the Third Division, that was to have dealt with “the temporality of discourse” in a more thorough manner. As is well known, this third division was never completed, and in subsequent editions the note was removed. See Kisiel (1993), p. 456. The question of temporality is discussed at greater length in Chapter Four.}

In saying this, the present argument is moving ahead of itself, since the implications of these remarks will only surface toward the end of the study. In order to indicate the direction of this movement, I call attention to a momentous passage in this initial section on discourse, concerning a certain communicating “keeping silent” (\textit{Schweigen}). This form of “keeping silent” is said to have the ability of conveying a more authentic understanding than someone who is never short of words. When silence is kept at the right moment, it can undermine the apparent understandability of a prolonged discourse. Nothing more is said of this silence in \textit{SZ}. When it is read only in the context of this work, it is quickly engulfed in the multitude of its many marginal points. But when read in the context of what is to follow, it enters the foreground. In \textit{Beiträge}, the mode of discourse of philosophy is explicitly characterized precisely with respect to silence: it is “\textit{sigetic}, in its most explicit reflection it guards its silence.”\footnote{\textit{GA} 65, p. 58: “...in sich sigetisch, in der ausdrücklichsten Besinnung gerade erschweigend.” In Chapter Seven, I return to question of this reticent mode of thought.} On this signifying silence there will be more to say later. It should only be observed that from the perspective of the questions developed with respect to the earliest texts, a route of interpretation has been opened that points toward the radical transformation that Heidegger’s thinking undergoes in a later phase. To be more specific, if we permit ourselves to read the sections on the ontology of understanding, interpretation, assertion, and discourse as also motivated by an ambition to secure the possibility of their own articulation, they reveal a new level of argumentation, which in itself provides clues for the continued development.

If the question is postponed whether and how the primordial region
of meaning-formation could be properly disclosed in a more conclusive manner, we can still pay attention to the various ways in which Heidegger tries to circumscribe this region as an enigmatic crossing point where the proper philosophical discourse encounters its own condition of possibility, a point we have already learnt to identify with its historicity, or its "hermeneuticity." There is one other aspect in particular that is worth noting concerning the description of discourse, an aspect to which I referred above as a link between the two senses of the "historical" that have not yet been brought together. In the same section on discourse, right before the short passage on the peculiar "keeping silent," Heidegger suddenly remarks that the connection between discourse and understanding is manifested in an "existential possibility" that belongs to discourse itself (and that is even said to be "constitutive" for it): that of "hearing." This hearing, he writes, is the primary and authentic openness of Dasein for its own innermost potentiality-for-being, as a hearing of the voice of the friend, whom every Dasein carries with it.\footnote{SZ. p. 163: "Das Hören konstituiert sogar die primäre und eigentliche Offenheit des Daseins für sein eigenstes Seinkönnen, als Hören der Stimme des Freundes, den jedes Dasein bei sich trägt." The connection between language in general (and speech in particular) and hearing is outlined already in a lecture series from 1925 on logic, in GA 20, pp. 365-368. In the subsequent chapter I discuss how the explicit account of historicity in SZ is modelled on a certain conception of address and response. And in the final chapter this peculiar dialectic of existence is traced in the later writings. This may also be the proper place to recognize M. Riedel’s interesting explorations of what he designates as the "akroamatische" dimension of Heidegger’s hermeneutics (from ἀκροαομαι, to listen), which he also sees as a link from the early to the later Heidegger, Riedel (1988).}

This hearing is not dependent on the actual sensuous capacity of the ear to perceive acoustic signals, so much is clear from Heidegger’s short account. The hearing in question instead co-constitutes the disclosedness of discourse through which Dasein has access to its world in the first place. As an elucidation of discourse this idea is remarkable in many ways. First of all, it departs from the natural inclination to think of language primarily as an active capacity for expression and communication. The idea of hearing as constitutive of discourse suggests that this “capacity” must also be thought of in terms of a primordial passivity and—as Heidegger himself indicates—an “openness” with respect to another, who is furthermore a part of oneself, as the strange “friend” mentioned in this passage. This aspect could be developed along a separate track, where the task would be a
theory of language and speech as an intersubjective structure which permeates every member of a linguistic community. However, this suggestion also acquires particular weight when read from the perspective of our overriding question, of how Heidegger circumscribes the historical-hermeneutic being of Dasein as an original space of meaning-formation and meaning-mediation. The remarks on hearing imply on the one hand an intersubjective dimension of this original domain, and on the other, and as a result of this, what we—also with Heidegger—should recognize as a certain “belonging” of the self to its other. The significance of this belonging should not be underestimated. Its implications will be elaborated upon in the subsequent chapter, which explores what will be described as an “intersubjective” aspect of historicity. What this idea of a primordial hearing brings out is a sense in which Dasein is always and irreducibly addressed, or placed under a demand.

Dasein is a discursive being, a being that is constantly communicating itself and its world to itself; it exists in the medium of this ongoing self-mediation that we have now come to know as the multifaceted structure of understanding, interpretation, assertion, and discourse. It is a hermeneutic situation in which Dasein is always located, before any specific decision has been taken and out of which every elaborated, linguistically formulated description supposedly emerges. Throughout the discussion of this domain or region, I have defined it sweepingly by referring to the concept of “meaning.” Before the present discussion is concluded, this concept must also be raised to a thematic level.

6. Meaning as an indeterminate space of disclosure

In the foregoing chapter, the analysis of meaning as “enactment” was presented as a central concern in Heidegger’s early lectures, and also as a direct continuation of the Husserlian idea of phenomenology as explication of intentionality. Furthermore, the specification of life as

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58 Heidegger explicitly plays here on the semantic correlation between hören and zugehören, between hearing and belonging, when he writes: “Als verstehendes In-der-Welt-sein mit den Anderen ist es dem Mitdasein und ihm selbst ‘hörig’ und in dieser Hörigkeit zugehörig” (SZ, p. 163). The same correlation is formulated in the History of the Concept of Time a few years earlier: “Being-with has the structure of belonging to the other” (Das Mitsein hat die Struktur der Zu(ge)hörigkeit zum Anderen, GA 20, p. 367). The translation follows that of T. Kisiel in HCT, p. 266.
“historical” was interpreted as one way of escaping from the aporias of a philosophy of identity to which this quest seemed to condemn him. In the present chapter, the hermeneutic situation has been tentatively described as a condition of meaning-formation. For practical reasons, I have taken the concepts of meaning and meaning-formation for granted as stable points of reference. However, the philosophical situation implied by Heidegger’s account is in fact more complicated. Just as in the case of understanding, interpretation, assertion, and discourse, meaning itself is drawn into the dislocating circularity toward which the entire account is moving. Here meaning itself is “historicized.”

Speaking of the concept of meaning in Heidegger, one could quote the remark found already in his earliest published lecture, where it is said that the question of meaning is the decisive question of philosophy.\(^5\) The opening statement of \textit{SZ} could then be read as an elaborated echo of this declaration, for at the outset of this work Heidegger states that the principal task of philosophy is to raise again the question of “the meaning of being.” “Meaning” is a master-concept that defines the goals and limits of the work as a whole. With this in mind, however, it is a puzzling fact of \textit{SZ} that it says nothing about the concept of meaning in the initial, methodological sections. It is only in the context of the discussion of understanding and interpretation that it surfaces again as an explicit theme. And just like the previously discussed “significance,” meaning is here primarily located within the framework of a description of how beings in the world are disclosed to Dasein. In an extraordinarily dense passage Heidegger writes:

> When beings within-the-world are discovered along with the being of Dasein—that is, when they are understood—we say that they have meaning.... Meaning is that wherein the intelligibility of something maintains itself. That which can be articulated in a disclosure by which we understand, we call “meaning.” The concept of meaning embraces the formal framework of what necessarily belongs to that which an understanding interpretation articulates. \textit{Meaning is the “upon-which” of a projection in terms of which something becomes intelligible as something; it gets its structure from a fore-having, a fore-sight, and a fore-conception}.... Meaning is an existentiale of Dasein, not a property attached to beings, that lies “behind” it, or that floats somewhere as an “intermediate domain.”\(^6\)

\(^5\) \textit{GA} 56/57, p. 199.
\(^6\) \textit{SZ}, p. 151: “Wenn innerweltliches Seiendes mit dem Sein des Daseins entdeckt, das heißt zu Verständnis gekommen ist, sagen wir, es hat \textit{Sinn}.... Sinn ist
The passage is quoted at length, since it requires careful reading. Its meandering movements are generated from the same ambition that we saw operating in the description of discourse; namely, to establish a concept of meaning that is non-linguistic and which yet conditions linguistic articulation, and that is neither an objective nor a subjective entity, but somehow the medium of understanding itself.

From one perspective, Heidegger could be seen as approaching a Fregean, linguistic idea of meaning here, when he says that meaning is what is articulated, as opposed to the entity which is thereby understood. At least he seems to draw a clear line between meaning as the form of presentation and the entity which is being represented. Still, the comparison collapses, for he is not speaking of meaning as essentially tied to a sign; instead, meaning is ultimately said to belong to Dasein itself, in an unmediated way. Thereby he manifests a continuity with respect to the earlier analyses of various types of meaning-enactment, and to the general phenomenological analysis of meaning as intentionality. Meaning is here primarily found within a projective movement of Dasein. The real problem is to see how this movement is structured. And it seems, Heidegger’s attempt to capture it can only restate the ambiguities in a dialectical form. This is clearly the case with the italicized sentence toward the end of the quoted passage. Here meaning is the name for the direction, the “upon-which,” of an interpretative projection. It is not a property of the thing, nor of the word, but of a movement of Dasein itself. Still it is only to the extent that Dasein projects itself onto the world that meaning is activated. Meaning only belongs to Dasein to the extent that Dasein is involved in the world, in a continuous disclosure of the world.

61 See Frege’s discussion in his classic essay “Über Sinn und Bedeutung,” an essay of which Heidegger was an early admirer (as can be seen from his discussion of it in his 1912 essay “Neue Forschungen über Logik,” GA 1, pp. 17-43, esp. p 20). In Frege’s model, Sinn is the property of the sign that determines in what way the object, or reference (Bedeutung), is given. Another natural point of comparison here is of course Husserl’s notion of “noema,” which is sometimes understood in parallel terms. To address the debate around this concept in the literature on Husserl would lead too far here. For a general discussion on the relation between Husserl and Frege with respect to the problem of meaning, see Føllesdal (1982).
When Heidegger identifies meaning with the “upon-which” of a projection, he takes a stand on perhaps the most difficult issue for any theory of meaning simply through a turn of phrase: the question of locality. In his account, meaning is not a mental or linguistic schema in Dasein, nor is it an entity which exists independently of Dasein. In identifying it, not with the projection nor with the entity understood, but with the “upon-which,” he seeks to avoid the risk of objectifying meaning. Meaning is the direction of the movement, defined through, but not identified with, its goal. It is the unstable point of contact between projection and understanding, as two opposed movements: meaning is the upon-which of a projection, from out of which something becomes intelligible. Right after the quoted passage, Heidegger suddenly makes the connection to the overall ambition of the book—the question of the meaning of being—stating that when this question is raised it should not be understood as a brooding over what lies beyond being, but as a quest for being “itself, to the extent that it enters into the intelligibility of Dasein.” This is clear enough from what has been said so far about meaning, but nonetheless it reaffirms the ambiguity. The meaning of being is investigated to the extent that Dasein projects it in understanding, but the whole point of the analysis is to expand this understanding through a hermeneutic movement, i.e., to uncover further possibilities of meaning.

The unstable and dialectical image of meaning is strengthened by the important addition that the projection is structured by a fore-having, a fore-sight, and a fore-conception. In other words, meaning itself is conditioned by the fore-structure, whose threefold orientation has been said to organize every instance of understanding (including its progressive articulation in interpretation and assertion). By locating “meaning” to the level of understanding, Heidegger implies that it is not dependent on the actual use of signs, nor even on the forming of sentences. Meaning simply concerns the recognition of something as something, in the pre-assertive mode of the hermeneutic “as.” Nevertheless, and as we have also seen repeatedly, in his account of this entire structure of disclosure, Heidegger tends to drift between various levels of meaning-formation. Toward the end of §32, for instance, he shifts again to the specific problem of textual and historical inter-

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62 SZ, p. 152: “Und wenn wir nach dem Sinn von Sein fragen, dann wird die Untersuchung nicht tiefsinng und ergrübelt nichts, was hinter dem Sein steht, sondern fragt nach ihm selbst, sofern es in die Verständlichkeit des Daseins hereinstehlt.”
pretation, as a "derivative" form of understanding and interpretation. Every such interpretation is similarly said to arise from within an understanding and a fore-structure. As it develops it can never leave this original environment of meaning-formation, but can only hope to bring it to explicit articulation. Thus the interpretation is forced to move within a \textit{circle}, where it presupposes that which it simultaneously tries to clarify. Heidegger here explicitly recognizes this circular character of meaning-explication, denying that it should be of a vicious nature. What is decisive "is not to get out of the circle, but to come into it in the right way."

This classic formulation sums up his conception of hermeneutics and how this is practiced in \textit{SZ}. As general advice for any textual and historical interpretation, it is easy to accommodate. Still, this general and often cited remark on the practice of interpretation conceals a deeper and more problematic level of the account, one that concerns not the practice of textual interpretation but the nature of meaning as such, as the content or object of the interpretation. Supposing that we accept "meaning" as the name for that which is sought and articulated in an interpretative act and supposing, furthermore, that this activity is necessarily circular in the manner indicated, then the meaning itself could still be seen as a stable entity that the circular activity seeks to determine. But a more dramatic consequence of Heidegger's description is that not only the activity but also meaning itself is circular. Meaning itself—as stated in the long quoted passage—is characterized by the three-fold fore-structure of the hermeneutic situation. In the last sentences of the same paragraph, Heidegger explicitly connects the image of the circle to meaning itself: "the 'circle' in understanding belongs to the structure of meaning."\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, p. 153: "Das Entscheidende ist nicht, aus dem Zirkel heraus-, sondern in ihn nach der rechten Weise hineinzukommen."} Meaning is the name of a projective movement, which itself is essentially circular and thus in a sense "historical" (even though Heidegger does not express himself this way in \textit{SZ}). What we reach when we reach the meaning is not the static center within an interpretative movement, but just a phase of the movement itself.

In the passage quoted, the word "circle" is put within quotation marks. The reason for this deserves a comment, since it brings out a

\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}: "Der 'Zirkel' im Verstehen gehört zur Struktur des Sinnes..."}
point that has pervaded the discussion up until now. Heidegger indicates his motives for this precaution a few lines later when he ends the section with a warning against the use of the concept of the "circle," which is said to belong to the order of things present-at-hand, i.e., to the order of worldly objects. In other words, when the circle and the circularity is applied to meaning and to Dasein in general, it is used in a metaphorical way, in order to designate that which, apparently, cannot be designated properly. It indicates the structure of a situation in which Dasein is located and out of which its own ability for self-disclosure arises. Thus meaning itself is ultimately confined to the same enigmatic conditions of disclosure that regulates the entire account of the existential structure of being-in which has been examined so far.

7. Language and the hermeneutic relation
At the outset of the present chapter, a late remark by Heidegger on the use of hermeneutics in \textit{SZ} was mentioned, where he says that language defines the hermeneutic relation. It is supposedly a relation that prevails between man and being, through which the latter is disclosed to the former. In the discussion that followed, we encountered the difficulties that one faces when trying to specify the nature of this relation, because it tends to withdraw from a stable conceptual grasp. To what extent is it reasonable to say that this relation is defined by language? In order to respond to this question, one should compare the analysis of discourse in \textit{SZ} and the account of language in the later writings. In the terminology of \textit{SZ}, language is derivative with respect to discourse, but that does not automatically apply to language as used in the later writings. On the contrary, it could be argued that the defining characteristics of discourse in \textit{SZ} are in fact activated in the description of the latter as well. This is especially true of the fundamentally self-reflexive frame-work within which these themes are articulated at both times.\footnote{A similar point is argued at some length by Martin Kusch in a recent work on Heidegger's conception of language. Kusch's main purpose is to specify the idea (articulated by van Heijenoort, Hintikka and others) of language as "universal medium," as opposed to "language as calculus." The former idea is clearly applicable to the later Heidegger, but Kusch also shows how it can be used to interpret his earlier writings, notably \textit{SZ}. See Kusch (1989), esp. pp. 180-193.}

As a paradigmatic example of the thoughts on language of the later Heidegger, one may read the lecture "The Way to Language" from
1959. The principal task here is to develop a philosophical access to language, to create a path of thinking where the being of language can open itself to reflection, in awareness that this reflection itself is essentially indebted to language for its own possibility: a task that Heidegger summarizes in the formula: “To bring language as language to language.” In other words, the same fundamental reflexive concern that has been traced so far also defines the situation in which this essay operates. Language is both the subject and the object of thought and it is this very reflexivity that must be brought to bear on the question what language is. Many of the claims that follow in this essay certainly go beyond what is said in SZ, for instance, that “the ability to speak is what characterizes man as man.” Still, the account in SZ of discourse as a primordial mode of being-in is not far away. When Heidegger tries to encircle the phenomenon of language, he activates a set of metaphors similar to those that regulate the previous discussion: language is that which shows through an activity of saying that is not dependent on a linguistic system of signs. On the contrary, all signs are said to arise from this original showing.

Just like discourse in SZ, the being of language is here conceived as something that can only be grasped in thought from the reflexive

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67 GA 12, p. 250: “Die Sprache als die Sprache zur Sprache bringen” (Heidegger italicizes the entire expression). In the essay “Dichtung und Sprache bei Heidegger,” W. Biemel describes precisely the articulation of this experience of language as Heidegger’s deepest aspiration, Biemel (1969).
68 Ibid., p. 229: “Das Vermögen zu sprechen zeichnet den Menschen zum Menschen aus.”
69 Ibid., p. 252. The same remark could be made with respect to the text on Heraclitus, mentioned earlier. The goal of this essay is to prepare an interpretation of the Heraclitean λόγος through a development of a concept of language or saying as disclosure, in explicit disregard of attempts to define it in terms of “expression” and “signification,” VA, p. 204.
70 Ibid., p. 242. The question of the sign in Heidegger’s thinking, of its position and function in his philosophy of language, is a significant problem in itself, which would have deserved a separate discussion in the present context. An investigation of this theme should take its point of departure in what Heidegger has to say about the (supposedly) non-linguistic sign in SZ §17 and compare this to the contemporary Prolegomena zur Geschichte des Zeitbegriffs (GA 20), pp. 285-292. These texts suggest a theory of the sign as a kind of higher-order tool (Zeug), to which it belongs that it permits the totality of tools to be accessible as such. This could then be brought to bear on what he says about the signifying function of the work of art in Vom Ursprung des Kunstwerk (GA 5, pp. 1-74, especially pp. 25-44). From there on it would be possible to assess the function of language in the later writings as a “signifying” act in the form of a dual movement of concealing and revealing. I hope to carry out this exploration elsewhere. Some of these points are foreshadowed in the discussion of the Augenblick in Chapter Five.
position, where thinking recognizes its own fundamental indebtedness to it in the very act of disclosing it. In the earlier writings (including \textit{SZ}), this fundamental condition or predicament of the question is signaled by a call for a historical-hermeneutic attitude, as the only means of access. This is so because of the historical-hermeneutical nature of that which is questioned. Despite the many transformations that Heidegger's thinking undergoes in the meantime, this conceptual configuration remains in force. Finally, in these late remarks on language we read that "all language is historical."\textsuperscript{71} Just as the access Dasein has to itself and its world is described as historical, language, as the medium of accessibility to beings in general, is here said to be historical. It is historical not primarily in virtue of having a history in the sense of \textit{Historie}, but of being historical in the sense of \textit{Geschichte}, as the self-reflexive medium of world access.\textsuperscript{72}

When Heidegger late in life says that language defines the hermeneutic relation as this is described in \textit{SZ}, he could be read as giving us a sign in retrospect concerning the level on which to identify the hermeneutical in this work. More precisely, he could be seen as indicating that we must not be mistaken about the fundamental position of this theme. It is not just an auxiliary method, nor is it just subservient to the encompassing ontological goal of the book. Instead, the hermeneutical situation from within which it operates is also the region toward which it is moving. Throughout these philosophical developments, hermeneutics remains the name for the movement of access, in which what is hidden is brought to the foreground in a "circular" process of "meaning"-formation, in such a way as not to be objectified. It designates or \textit{indicates} an original access as a discursive, linguistic event. Throughout the writings of Heidegger, one can trace this idea of language, as an activity of \textit{λέγειν}, that gathers, mediates, and discloses, in a way that is not accessible to the ordinary discourse of

\textsuperscript{71} \textit{GA} 12, p. 253: "Jede Sprache ist geschichtlich..."

\textsuperscript{72} In an essay on Hegel, Heidegger, and Gadamer, W. Schulz argues that Heidegger's hermeneutic conception of language can be described as an extension of the Hegelian dialectics of experience, Schulz (1970), p. 311. This point is worth stressing here, since the "historical" nature of language professed by Heidegger in some of his later writings is sometimes reduced only to the idea that the expressive abilities of every language is bound to its specific history. When language is designated as \textit{historical}, we should also listen for a response to the question concerning its mode of being as a mode of manifestation. Language manifests itself to thinking as something to which thinking always already belongs, and it does so only to the extent that thinking steps into this self-mediating movement.
philosophers of language, nor to the scientists of language, such as the grammarians. The point Heidegger is trying to convey cannot be captured in the standard dichotomy of *langue* and *parole*. He does not simply emphasize a user’s perspective. In the end, the activity of λέγειν is both act and event, an event of disclosure. Even in his earliest lectures on Aristotle this function, ability, or simply being of language is equated with the act of ἐρμηνεύειν. It therefore seems as appropriate to say that language defines the hermeneutic relation as it is to say that hermeneutics defines the linguistic relation (supposing that “linguistic” is here understood as “discursive” in the terminology of SZ). These two concepts remain mutually implicative in Heidegger’s thought.

8. Concluding remarks

It is time to recapitulate the steps taken. More specifically, it is time to secure the connections between hermeneutics, the hermeneutic situation, and the historical being of Dasein. The opening question concerned how, and under what conditions, hermeneutics was brought into Heidegger’s investigations. As soon as the immediate connection to historical interpretation (in the common sense of this word) was abandoned, it became possible for Heidegger to present hermeneutics as a direct continuation of a phenomenological analysis of the basic modes of factical life. In fact, hermeneutics offered itself as the (temporary) solution to the problem with which any such description, including traditional phenomenology, had to struggle: how to describe the very movement and event of objectification in a non-objectifying way. This was, as we have seen, both the main obstacle and the main challenge of the analysis that Heidegger was trying to develop. Furthermore, this was also the obstacle which he initially tried to transcend through the description of life or Dasein as historical.

This common source of interests naturally calls forth the question of the underlying presuppositions that led Heidegger to adopt the hermeneutic vocabulary for his own project. The answer must be sought, or so at least I have suggested, in the nature of the hermeneutic situation. The defining aspect of this relation is the peculiar distance and mediation that separates the knower from the known. To recognize, or to admit, the distance is to take a first step toward overcoming it. But
whereas the overcoming of the distance could seem to be the ultimate goal of traditional hermeneutics, this is not Heidegger’s purpose. It is rather to secure the epistemic situation as such as a mode of being of subjectivity. Thus one may see more clearly the sense in which Heidegger designates Dasein as historical: it designates this being according to the way in which this being has access to itself and its world. Or rather, it does not designate in the normal sense of this term; instead it serves to indicate the means by which this phenomenon may be discovered, its means of presentation, and the conditions under which it can be experienced. These conditions always constitute a hermeneutic situation.

In this situation the various levels come together: the historicity of Dasein, the hermeneutic exploration of Dasein, as well as of the meaning of being, and finally also the appropriation of the history of philosophy. All situations in which a philosophical questioning is about to begin are hermeneutical situations, in the sense given to this term by Heidegger. And in order to initiate a philosophical questioning, this condition must be acknowledged. It means recognizing an initial distance as also an indebtedness: a historical, existential, and linguistic indebtedness. It means recognizing a certain tendency of “falling,” in the sense of giving way to established modes of thinking and of disregarding the distance as such, and a corresponding need for a destructive retrieve. To say that Dasein is historical could therefore seem to be equivalent to saying that it has access to itself and its world in and through a hermeneutical situation. If we also recognize the “evocative” side of the historical description of human Dasein—i.e., the way in which it calls forth a certain philosophical attitude—we could say that it amounts to saying that to be historical is to stand under a demand to interpret, to activate what is hidden through a destructive retrieve of latent possibilities of being.

The question of a “demand” at the core of the problem of historical existence is in fact more than just a rhetorical turn of phrase. It points to an entire aspect of the problem that so far has only been vaguely indicated: namely, in what sense historicity is also a problem of intersubjectivity, or of a certain way of relating to an other. The subsequent chapter is devoted to a discussion of this aspect, which is approached partly with reference to the phenomena of conscience and guilt as analyzed by Heidegger himself. In the above account of
“discourse,” as one of the so-called equiprimordial pillars of disclosedness, it was observed that Heidegger describes this discourse or discursiveness as co-constituted by a certain “hearing,” as an openness to the other. The relevance of this remark for the question of Dasein’s historicity is certainly not apparent. It requires a series of new steps, steps that will no doubt appear as so many detours. But, as we must not forget: on the territory which is here being explored, the detour is itself the mode of understanding.
I. Historicity as intersubjective dynamics

Traditional hermeneutics formulates the problem of history and historical knowledge in terms of a philosophy of intersubjectivity. Knowing in historical matters is a problem of relating to the other. This is clearly the case in Dilthey, whose categories of historical understanding are the categories of relating to the other person, notably that of "empathy" (Einfühlung). In order to understand history, the hermeneutist must decipher the external features of whatever material configuration is at stake, and he must bring out their meaning through an act of re-living. The other subject is a riddle for the understanding subject to solve, and for this task the latter must develop the proper means. This basic situation—which is here presented in its crudest possible form—could be developed to any level of sophistication through an elaboration of the means needed to grasp the being of the other person. The guiding question would be: how can I—the knowing, reflecting subject—have access to the other?

Compared to such an apparently simple image of the interpretative

1 "...the very aim of this exposition is to lead us face to face with the ontological enigma of the movement of historizing in general."
Heidegger's thoughts move in a different, and more complex pattern. On several occasions he explicitly distances himself from the philosophical program implied by a theory of *Einfühlung*. To be historical in the sense implied by his analysis is rather to belong to the past, in the sense of being subjected to a demand issuing from the past. It is to be wanting, and thus guilty and responsible vis-à-vis the past. This description has no immediate bearing on the epistemological problem of historical knowledge, even though the acknowledgement of an indebtedness with respect to the past may function as an incentive to enter an interpretative process (as seen from the preceding discussion of Heidegger’s hermeneutics). Once we acknowledge that the conceptual means that we believe we fully master are in fact the result of a heritage operating through us, a critical-attentive posture with respect to these means is opened up, and consequently a need for a new route to the same heritage. In this regard, the effect of Heidegger’s analysis of historical existence is to lead his listeners to a point where a theoretical concern is transformed into a practical necessity to act and to respond.

In Heidegger’s later works the primordial dialogicity of being and of language is often affirmed. To use language is described as responding to an address, which is ultimately the address of language itself. These ideas clearly go beyond what is said in *SZ*. Yet there are several ways in which dialogic structure is more fundamental in this work than what is commonly recognized. This is the case in the analysis of discourse, as described in the preceding chapter. As an existentiale, discourse is constituted not only by the capacity to articulate understanding, but also by the capacity to hear, in the sense of being open to the voice of the other. Furthermore, a similar image is activated in the analysis of conscience, where the address is a crucial step on the route to authenticity. Finally—as will be explored at greater length here—it is the case in the explicit analysis of Dasein’s historicity in *SZ*, which

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2 This is exemplified in the lectures on the concept of time from 1925 (GA 20, pp. 334-335), and also in *SZ*, p. 125. I have permitted myself here to present a somewhat caricatured image of Dilthey, whose theory of historical understanding obviously is not exhausted by the idea of empathy.

3 In the later writings the idea of man as someone who is addressed by language is often repeated and elaborated. See, e.g., the essay on Hölderlin “Dichterisch wohnet der Mensch...,” where Heidegger writes: “Man only speaks as long as he complies with language, as long as he listens to its address” (*Der Mensch spricht erst und nur, insofern er der Sprache entspricht, indem er auf ihren Zuspruch hört*, VA, p. 184). And in the essay “Der Weg zur Sprache” from 1959 it is said that every spoken word is already a response (*Antwort*, GA 12, p. 249). The connection between hearing and speaking in Heidegger’s writings is discussed further in Chapter Seven.
is modelled on a certain dialectic of address and response that constitutes a structure of “repetition.”

In the present chapter this dialogical element of historical existence will be traced along two distinct lines. Together they constitute first of all an attempt to address the explicit analysis of historicity in \(\Sigma\) (Chapter Five, Second Division). On the one hand, the phenomena of conscience and guilt—as articulated by Heidegger—will be seen as crucial links in the development of his understanding of historicity. On the other hand, the analysis of this theme in \(\Sigma\) is interpreted in the light of Nietzsche’s second *Untimely Meditation*. These two strands may seem disparate at first, but the supposition here is that they both point toward a common concern, namely, the attempt to understand historical existence in terms of a dialectic of self and other, the understanding of which at the same time implies an imperative to act. It is only when understood from the perspective of this demand that it is understood at all. In Heidegger’s articulation of this situation the distinction between knowing and acting ultimately collapses, in favor of a thought of an enigmatic passage. 

2. Nietzsche’s diagnosis of historical existence

In the Introduction, Hölderlin was mentioned as one of the early exponents of a new form of historical awareness, in which the thinking

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4 The line of questioning opened up in this chapter owes a debt to the analysis of C. Fynsk, who, in his *Heidegger: Thought and Historicity* (1986), first suggested the connection between the problem of historicity and conscience as the voice of an other (see esp. pp. 39-51). For a tentative analysis that tries to bring together the description of conscience and guilt in \(\Sigma\) with the later thoughts on language and responsibility, see also the long footnote in Derrida’s *De l’esprit* (1987), pp. 147-154. These ideas are developed in a recent essay, “Heidegger’s Ear: Philopolemology (Geschlecht IV),” Derrida (1993).

5 A note of warning is also warranted at this stage. Readers who are familiar with the discussion of Heidegger as a philosopher of intersubjectivity, initiated by M. Theunissen’s impressive study of “social ontology,” *Der Andere* (1965/1977), will perhaps be puzzled by the structure of the argument here. The natural port of entry to the question of intersubjectivity in Heidegger are of course the sections in \(\Sigma\) on *Mitsein* (§§25-27), an analysis which Theunissen compares to Husserl’s account of the experience of the other in the Fifth Cartesian Meditation, and which he finds to be deficient in the same respect, namely, that it supposedly reduces the other to a projection of the self in the context of a transcendental argument. In the present chapter these sections in \(\Sigma\) will only be addressed in passing. Instead the interpretation will move in a roundabout way in order to trace the different ways in which the question of the other emerges in the analysis of conscience and in account of Dasein’s historicity, as a structure of being-guilty and of being addressed.
subject knows itself to be indebted to an origin that it cannot claim as its own. In Hölderlin’s remarks on the relation of the moderns to the Greeks, this sense of a lack of originality and initiative is brought to its most radical expression hitherto. To be a historical being here appears as an essentially antagonistic predicament, in which originality is only available through a struggle with origins, and in which the release from the supremacy of the past is only possible through a deeper immersion into that same past. Hölderlin’s articulation of the problem of historical belonging anticipates the discussion of the proper relation to history and tradition, and thus also the discussion of “historicism,” as it comes to the fore a century later. At the very outset of this new historically minded era history is perceived as Janus-faced: as a threat to originality in the present, and as offering a possible originality in a future to come. However, the single most important text in this respect is not Hölderlin’s brief and little known treatise, but Nietzsche’s “On the Use and Abuse of History for Life.” The disturbing effect of the argument launched in this text reverberates throughout the works of the thinkers and writers of the subsequent generations, including Heidegger. No discussion of the theme of historicity in Heidegger’s thinking can avoid confronting this particular text.

The basic ideas of Nietzsche’s well-known essay can be summarized briefly as follows. It is organized around the dichotomy of a historical and a non-historical attitude: The former is the attitude of the animal, which lives unreflectively in the moment, the latter is the fate of man, who cannot escape from his awareness of the past. For man, historical awareness can be a motivation to act, but it can also be detrimental to action. Nietzsche’s explicit goal here is to show the way to a liberating use of history. He distinguishes three different ways in which history is used by life: the monumental, the antiquarian, and the critical. The first glorifies heroes and feats of the past, the second piously preserves every possible thing from the past, and the third passes critical judgment on the past in order to carve out new possibilities for the future. All of

6 “Vom Nutzen und Nachteil der Historie für das Leben.” The essay was one of the four “Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen,” which were originally presented as lectures in 1874, in Werke, III:1, pp. 241-330.

7 The only passage in the published works where Heidegger explicitly discusses this text is in the relevant chapter on the historicity and temporality of Dasein in S2. Ten years later he devotes an entire lecture course to this specific text; unfortunately, these lectures have not yet been published (announced as GA 46).
these approaches have their respective validity and yet all of them can be abused. “Useful” history can only be written from within a present which is sufficiently “strong” to counter the weight of the past. After having made these distinctions, the remaining larger part of the essay is a highly critical evaluation of the present situation in German academia, whose excessive emphasis on useless erudition is said to passivize the entire culture. Toward the end of the text, Nietzsche suggests that the only solution to the present state of affairs is a youthful, historically negligent generation, which will be able to create culture anew.

Nietzsche never speaks of human “historicity,” but his account points toward a theory of human historicity, in the sense that it investigates patterns of historical belonging. The distanced relation to history represented by historical science is described as just one possible activity which historical existence can assume. History is something to which life always relates, knowingly or unknowingly. “Objectivity” in matters of historical knowing is therefore described as the superstition that there could be a state in which the practicing historian beholds things so purely as not to be affected by them.8 The specific nature of the “effect” that history exerts on life is not thematized. Nietzsche’s whole argument is built around the dichotomy of strength and weakness, between that which enhances and that which undermines life. His analysis could perhaps be described as a “pathology” of historical existence.

Nietzsche’s preoccupation with the potential danger of history and historical science sets the stage for a certain articulation of the problem of historicism. He describes the “historicizing” tendencies of his own time in terms of an overwhelming, anesthetizing and violent phenomenon, which makes the young people who are exposed to it blasé.9 But the irony of the situation is that, just as Hölderlin—and just as every subsequent thinker who will reflect on the danger of an exaggerated historical awareness—Nietzsche must ultimately repeat the idea that it is only through history itself that the problem caused by history can be cured. In other words, the historicization must itself be historicized, the origin of historical education...must itself be historically known, history must dissolve the problem of history itself.10

8 Werke III:1, p. 285. Objectivity is also described as a “positive characteristic,” but then as a “schaffendes Darüberschweben, ein liebendes Versenktsein in die empirischen Data, ein Weiterdichten an gegebenen Typen,” p. 288.
9 Ibid., p. 296.
10 Ibid., p.302: “...der Ursprung der historischen Bildung...müß selbst wieder historisch erkannt werden, die Historie müß das Problem der Historie selbst
CHAPTER THREE

This formulation is particularly noteworthy, since it is expressed within the context of an essay which fiercely criticizes the whole ideology of humanist historical consciousness. It confirms the insurmountable limits of a situation in which the problem of history cannot be avoided. Unlike Dilthey, Nietzsche does not believe in the healing powers of historical understanding, of a future oriented Nachleben of the past. Nevertheless, he can see no other way of exorcizing this induced impotence than by repeating the event of the historicization itself.\textsuperscript{11} The other alternative is to become a Nachkommen, someone who comes afterwards, a latecomer and an epigone. This is his harsh truth of historical existence. The predicament of the follower can only be handled creatively by entering into a conscious struggle with the conditioning spiritual forces of the past.

There are many ways to approach this provocative text. Some have described it as outlining a new attitude to time, through a synthesis of the three types of history.\textsuperscript{12} Others have read it simply as a Socratic appeal for self-knowledge, irrespective of disturbing outer forces.\textsuperscript{13} Here, however, another aspect will be emphasized, namely, the radical manner in which Nietzsche invites us to consider history as inter-subjective dynamics, or in terms of the effect of the other on the self. In Nietzsche’s account, history is deprived of its guise as anonymous heritage or as the remnants of times past. Instead, what emerges is history as an ongoing struggle for initiative between individual centers of activity. It is a struggle for initiative, but also for originality and for authenticity in the sense of a stable selfhood within the stream of history, as a stream of transmission of heritage. History is the domain where the subject can be itself only through an active encounter with an other who is already exerting an influence on the self. It is for this reason that there cannot be “objectivity” in historical studies in any ordinary sense of the word; for such objectivity would imply that we could somehow step outside the ongoing transmission of historical heritage simply by choosing to look at it from a distance.

When read from this perspective, Nietzsche appears as the therapist auflösen.”

\textsuperscript{11} In an interesting discussion of Nietzsche as a critic of Ursprungsphilosophie, P. Dews (1988) shows how the ambiguity of this strategy can be used to illuminate the conflict between Foucault and Derrida on how to write the history of reason.

\textsuperscript{12} R. Scharff, “Nietzsche and the ‘Use’ of History” (1974).

who suggests a cure from an induced weakness and lack of initiative. He exposes a danger and he invites his listeners to take the appropriate measures. In this account, history is transformed from a domain of knowing to a domain of acting. To pretend simply to know, is already to have acted, and whoever does not act cannot know. Nietzsche thus changes the perception of the historical in two significant ways; on the one hand he shows how history must be understood in terms of an intersubjective dynamics; on the other hand he introduces an “activist” and “decisionistic” element into the discussion of historical knowing. From his conception of history as an antagonistic intersubjective field follows a need to understand knowing in the terms of acting. However, when one tries to elicit more exactly what kind of “therapy” and what means of action he is propounding, the picture is not as clear as it may at first seem.

A common view is that Nietzsche is simply advocating a radical departure from the historicizing tendencies of his time. In order to build a future, and in order to create a strong and affirmative life, history must simply be surpassed. Such an interpretation is supported by the remarks that encourage hope of a new, stronger and healthier generation which has learnt to manage the antidotes of the “supra-historical” and the “unhistorical.” Yet, at the same time he also concludes that it is only by challenging the conditioning forces of the past that this can be accomplished. It is only by critically assessing one’s own heritage that this stronger, and supposedly healthier life can be brought about. It is only by “organizing the chaos” of the different influences of the past that the present can create itself. But from what position should this critique be launched? Nietzsche’s argument is rhetorically construed by means of constant references to some kind of “nature,” be it under the heading of “life,” “strength,” or “health,” but how this nature may function as a basis of historical critique is never made explicit. How should the present generate the necessary strength so as to be able to interpret and pass judgment on the past? This is a question implied by Heidegger’s hermeneutics of destructive retrieve as well. It is a question of critical standards, but it is also a question of strategies of learning and of interpretation; what exactly does Nietzsche

14 *Werke* III:1, p. 327, and *passim*. Nietzsche speaks of “das Unhistorische” as the ability to forget, and of “das Uberhistorische” as the ability to turn away from change and becoming altogether.

recommend that the critically minded historian do? On this particular and decisive point the text remains evasive.

When Nietzsche’s essay is evaluated along these lines it can in fact be seen as harboring two incompatible strategies or attitudes, between which there seems to be no definitive way of deciding. On the one hand a future-oriented decisionistic attitude which defines its position vis-à-vis history in antagonistic terms; on the other hand an attitude of increased awareness of the indebtedness of the present to the past, an awareness that every origin is always mediated through an other origin, and that selfhood is only accessible in the course of a dialogue with what is other. The ambiguity of Nietzsche’s message is particularly noteworthy with regard to Heidegger, in whose works these two attitudes also compete, especially—as we will see shortly—in the analysis of historicity in \textit{SZ}.

If, however, the situation is not examined primarily from the perspective of recommended strategies, then a more general point can be made. The two different attitudes reflect a fundamental condition of historical existence: to be historical is to be placed in a condition where one must respond to the forces and initiatives acting upon oneself, in some way or other. It is to be located in a condition of primordial indebtedness and thus of responsibility, in the original sense of this word, i.e., of having to respond. It is in the direction suggested by such a remark that the present account will try to move. More precisely, it will focus on how historical existence can be described as intersubjective dynamics, in which the autonomous self is maintained through a responsive relationship to an other. In such an investigation concepts are activated that are not normally found in discussions of historical existence and historical knowing, quasi-ethical notions such as conscience, guilt, and responsibility.

3. Guilt and conscience as determinations of historical existence
The tentative attempt to establish a connection between a theory of historical existence, and a psychological-ethical discourse on conscience and guilt must now be made more precise. Is there indeed a basis for these correlations in Heidegger’s own writings? So far his historicization of philosophy and of human existence has been discussed
primarily in relation to the problem of origins and foundations, what they are, and how we can have access to them. In what way does Heidegger himself invite us to reflect on the problem of historicity in these other terms? The contention here is that not only does Heidegger explicitly invite us to recognize these connections; furthermore, they constitute something like a hidden agenda that animates the historical conception of life in the early writings, and even more so the analysis of the historicity of Dasein in *SZ*.

An important passage in this respect is the one from the Remarks to Jaspers, to which reference was made in Chapter One. In connection with the attempt to establish the “historical” sense of life as enactment, Heidegger suddenly turns to the notion of “conscience”:

“Conscience,” here understood as the enactment of conscience, not as the mere having of conscience—conscientia—is a how of self-experience in accordance with its historical basic meaning...With the reference to the connection between the meaning of historical experience and the meaning of the phenomenon of conscience, the concept of the historical is not broadened, but returned to its authentic source of meaning...

As a testimony of the connection between conscience and “the historical” that was being worked out during this period, the statement is quite striking. Conscience is not just a related issue, it is said to be “the source of meaning,” the Sinnquelle of historical experience. In the same passage Heidegger also states that as long as history is seen only as an object of knowledge we lose the “sense of conscience and responsibility” that belongs to it. In a lecture on the concept of time a few years later there is a similar remark. Here Dasein’s way of being historical is described in terms of how it retrieves its being-past through the future, and this way of coming back to oneself is again exemplified by the phenomenon of conscience.

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16 *GA* 9, p. 33: “‘Gewissen,’ hier verstanden als Gewissensvollzug, nicht als gelegentlich Gewissen haben—conscientia—, ist seinem Grundsinn nach historisch charakterisiertes Wie des Selbsterfahrens...Mit dem Hinweis auf den Sinnzusammenhang historischen Erfahrens mit dem Phänomen des Gewissens ist der Begriff des Historischen nicht etwa erweitert, sondern auf seine eigentliche Sinnquelle zurückverstanden...”

17 *GA* 9, pp. 33-34: “Gewissens- und Verantwortungssinn.”

18 *BZ*, p. 25: “Das Dasein ist aber geschichtlich an ihm selbst, sofern es seine Möglichkeit ist. Im Zukünftigen ist das Dasein seine Vergangenheit; es kommt darauf zurück im Wie. Die Weise des Zurückkommens ist unter anderem das Gewissen.” Heidegger does not say what the other ways of returning are, to which he here implicitly refers.
To these remarks, which are not elaborated further by Heidegger, we could add a passage found in the monumental lecture series on the *Sophist* from around the same time. In speaking of the proper way of relating to historical material (in this case Plato) Heidegger writes:

> To appropriate a past means to know oneself as indebted to this past. That is the real possibility of *being* history itself which philosophy discovers; that it is guilty of a neglect, a non-taking, when it believes that it can start anew, and that it can make itself comfortable, that it can permit itself to be affected by a philosopher at will.\[^{19}\]

Together these scattered remarks establish the suggested correlations in a tentative manner; historicity somehow contains a sense of conscience, responsibility, and of guilt.\[^{20}\] Heidegger does not explore these matters explicitly; they remain indications of something to decipher. However, their elusive character should not lead us to underestimate their importance. They mark the presence of a vast concern, namely, the problem of the relation to the past as a relation to the other, and to historicity as a particular form of intersubjectivity.

As was pointed out in the discussion of Heidegger’s hermeneutics, the general connection between historicity and a certain interpersonal or intersubjective relationship was both recognized and suppressed by Heidegger’s own account. When he applies the hermeneutic-interpretative model so broadly so as to cover the whole range of Dasein’s disclosive practices he also conceals the specificity of the original situation in which the hermeneutic event takes place, namely, the interpreting relation to the other. Nevertheless, it is in the interpretative encounters with texts from the past that the theme of historicity is actualized most clearly. The fact of Dasein’s historicity is a fact that determines the conditions of every interpretative endeavor,

\[^{19}\] GA 19, p. 11: “Eine Vergangenheit sich aneignen, besagt, sich selbst gegenüber dieser Vergangenheit in der Schuld wissen. Das ist die eigentliche Möglichkeit, die Geschichte selbst zu *sein*, daß die Philosophie entdeckt, daß sie in der Schuld eines Versäumnisses, eines Nichtnehmens ist, wenn sie glaubt, neu anfangen, es sich bequem machen, sich beliebig von einem Philosophen anregen lassen zu können.” It is tempting to read this general remark as an explicit critical commentary on the formulation from Husserl’s *Logos* essay, quoted in Chapter One, where Husserl speaks precisely of how philosophy can use history in “letting it affect us with inspiration” (*auf uns anregend wirken zu lassen*). See Chapter One, p. 38.

\[^{20}\] It should also be added that in this general remark by Heidegger concerning historicity as indebtedness, it is possible to trace the shift in meaning that the concept of guilt undergoes in *SZ*; from guilt as an actual indebtedness to a specified other, to guilt as a general and irredeemable condition of human existence. As we will see shortly, what the voice of conscience discloses according to *SZ* is precisely such a primordial being-guilty, from which every specific debt is supposedly explicable.
since it designates the inescapable fore-structure of the hermeneutic situation. These general formulations suggest a sense in which Dasein’s historicity involves indebtedness and even guilt, and thus perhaps indirectly conscience. For the self to recognize its historicity is to recognize that it is somehow already indebted to that which it is at the same time trying to understand. And it is—to speak the more ominous language of Hölderlin and Nietzsche—also to recognize that it is always, to some extent, a latecomer and an epigone with respect to the predecessors of the past.

However, the metaphorical connection to guilt and conscience should not be left at that. We must ask ourselves: what is implied in Heidegger’s reference to these phenomena? Is there a deeper connection under the manifest, metaphorical one? In the quoted passages Heidegger does not develop the matter further. However, in the remarks to Jaspers he adds a parenthesis in which he says that the history of the concept of conscience (Gewissen) must be considered in the context of “the existential problematic.”21 This parenthesis could in fact be read as anticipating a section in SZ (§§55-60) where the themes of conscience, guilt and responsibility, are developed precisely as a part of the existential analytic. These sections are often read only as digressions into existential psychology, but they deserve close attention not least for the way in which they also offer an implicit passage to the intersubjective and the ethical structure of historical existence. Actually, they can be read as a hidden link in the development of the articulation of Dasein’s historicity.

4. Heidegger’s account of conscience and guilt in SZ
The two foregoing chapters both stressed the problem of access in Heidegger’s thinking, how the possibility of a proper attitude and mode of explication is made a guiding philosophical theme in itself. The general and well known (if not always well understood) distinction in SZ between an “inauthentic” and an “authentic” form of existence should also be read in this context. It is ultimately meant to be an account of the two ways in which Dasein understands itself, either from within its own possibilities, or from the possibilities handed over to it by the non-personal das Man. In Heidegger’s account, the original

21 GA 9, p. 33.
position of individual Dasein is within the anonymous structures of inauthentic understanding. This gives rise to the question of how to account for the possibility that Dasein can in fact undergo the existential transformation, from its original position within the collective and inauthentic Man to authentic selfhood. This question is important not only for the completeness of the existential-ontological account; but the reason why Heidegger devotes so much attention to it is also that it concerns the conditions for the account as such. For it is supposedly only from the perspective of individualized and authentic Dasein that the full significance of the ontological question itself can be grasped.

It is in the context of this "methodological" concern that the phenomenon of "conscience" is first introduced. The question is: How can the transformation from inauthenticity to authenticity be accomplished concretely, or how can the modification of a collective "they-self" into individualized self be, as Heidegger says, "attested" in individual Dasein itself. He writes:

In the following interpretation I will claim that this potentiality is attested by that which, in Dasein’s everyday interpretation of itself, is familiar to us as the voice of conscience.

In the analysis that follows, Heidegger makes it quite clear that he is not interested in the psychological, nor in the theological concept of conscience. He seeks a neutral, phenomenological, and existential-ontological elucidation of it, according to which it designates a mode of disclosure, in this case a disclosure whereby Dasein obtains access to itself. In other words, Heidegger does not view conscience primarily as a fact or characteristic of Dasein, but as a way in which Dasein reveals and grasps itself and its situation in a qualified sense. It is the specific nature of this disclosure that is his principal interest here, and

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22 The authentic attitude is first described in terms of how Dasein in anxiety understands itself in an anticipatory realization of its own inescapable finitude. This development is initiated in §40, where anxiety is described as the mode in which Dasein confronts its pure possibility for being, and it culminates in §§50-53, which contain the account of Dasein’s realization of its finitude. However, this original description does not completely satisfy Heidegger. Toward the end of the chapter devoted to the explication of finitude, he concludes that the pure ontological possibility of an authentic existence (designated as “anticipatory resoluteness”) does not mean anything as long as this possibility is not secured on the ontic level of actual existence (SZ, p. 266). In other words, he lacks a description of a more concrete process in and through which something like the transformation from inauthenticity to authenticity could possibly take place. This is the point where the discussion of conscience and guilt begins.

23 SZ, p. 268: "Was in der folgenden Interpretation als solche Bezeugung in Anspruch genommen wird, ist der alltäglichen Selbstauslegung des Daseins bekannt als Stimme des Gewissens."
more precisely the dialectic of calling and listening through which it is brought about.  

In the discussion of the structure of the hermeneutic situation in the previous chapter, it was described how Heidegger in *SZ* describes the *existentialinale* of “discourse” in terms of a potential for “hearing,” as an openness to the voice of the other. When Heidegger introduces the theme of conscience in the context of the question of access to the self, he reactivates this previous analysis of discourse as an aptitude for hearing, as being open to the address. Conscience first appears in the form of a voice. Conscience, Heidegger says, discloses in the form of a “calling” (*Ruf*) that gives the addressee something to understand. This calling speaks from a distance, and yet from within Dasein itself, exhorting it in some direction or other. Who is speaking to whom in this splitting of Dasein into voice and ear? It is on this strange dialectic that Heidegger focuses his interest here. The manifest purpose of the analysis is to locate a concrete event that can account for the possibility of Dasein coming to itself from its original position in the they-self of *das Man*. The addressee of the calling of conscience is said to be “the they-self in its self.” The calling calls the self forth from within the they-self. However, it is important to note that this event does not presuppose the existence of a previously stratified structure of self and they-self. On the contrary, the difficulty that Heidegger is trying to account for lies precisely in the fact that he does not want to take such a structure for granted. Instead, he wants to capture the disclosive event whereby the stratification itself takes place, and whereby something like a self emerges through an existential modification. Heidegger’s solution to this dilemma is to give an account of the emergence of a listening to a calling where the self is not presupposed or taken for granted, but analyzed as a constitutive process initiated by the act of listening.

This model, of a self called forth in listening, is only the first step of the analysis. The next, and inevitable, question concerns the identity of the speaker or caller; from where does the calling issue? Heidegger’s

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24 As mentioned in the previous chapter, according to the systematic scheme of *SZ*, every act of disclosure ideally involves a “state-of-mind,” an “understanding,” and a “discourse.”

25 It may even be suspected that the account of discourse was in fact composed to accommodate this phenomenon of conscience, which, in that case, would only strengthen the present course of interpretation.

26 *SZ*, p. 274: “...der Ruf, als welchen wir das Gewissen kennzeichnen, ist Anruf des Man-selbst in seinem Selbst...”
response reads: “In conscience Dasein calls itself.”27 Taken at its face value, this declaration makes little sense. How can one and the same being be both the caller and the listener; and furthermore, how can it call in such a way so as to bring about itself in the very act of listening to itself? In response to this skeptical question, Heidegger presents us with the following “phenomenological finding,” which he insists should not be discarded:

Indeed the call is precisely something which we ourselves have neither planned nor prepared for nor voluntarily performed. “It” calls, against our expectations and even against our will. On the other hand, the call undoubtedly does not come from someone else who is with me in the world. The call comes from me and yet over me.28

The call issues from Dasein, but not as a voluntary action, but rather as an event that strikes Dasein from over and above itself, shattering its image of itself. Thus, even though it comes from Dasein itself, the calling has a strange, and even frightening nature. To the they-self it even sounds, Heidegger writes, as an “alien voice” (fremde Stimme). The reason is that it emanates from a region or dimension of Dasein to which it does not itself normally have access: the original uncanniness (Unheimlichkeit) of existence.29 What is more, this call does not communicate any specific message; instead, it speaks “in the mode of silence.”30 It communicates a silence in which Dasein becomes a part, by attuning itself to the position from which the silence speaks.

Even though the call of conscience communicates in silence it still gives something to understand. According to the common experience of conscience, this message is a message of guilt. Conscience makes Dasein aware of being guilty, of having failed in some way or other. In his continued analysis of the phenomenon of the voice of conscience, Heidegger uses as his point of departure this common experience of being guilty. However, he does not accept it at its face value; instead he

27 Ibid., p. 275: “Das Dasein ruft im Gewissen sich selbst” (Heidegger italicizes the entire sentence).


29 Since “care” has previously been established as the most fundamental description of the being of Dasein, he can also conclude that conscience is “the calling of care” (Das Gewissen offenbart sich als Ruf der Sorge, SZ, p. 277).

30 SZ, p. 273: “Das Gewissen redet einzig und ständig im Modus des Schweigens” (Heidegger italicizes the entire sentence).
turns to the existential foundations of guilt as such. Beyond every specific case of being guilty of something with respect to someone he posits, following Kierkegaard, an original being-guilty. In Heidegger’s words:

This implies, however, that being-guilty does not first result from an indebtedness, but that on the contrary, indebtedness becomes possible only “on the basis” of a primordial being-guilty.\(^\text{31}\)

The existential-ontological expression for this original being-guilty is Dasein’s “thrownness.” To the totality of Dasein belongs both to be projective and to be projected or thrown, to have a factual determination which it grasps by taking over its “already-there.” Dasein has access to this thrown foundation only to the extent that it projects itself in the direction of those possibilities into which it has already been thrown. Such a projective-understanding appropriation of its own facticity does not, however, Heidegger remarks, enable Dasein to “get this foundation into its power.” Its thrownness marks a negativity that can never be fully mastered or appropriated, but which it can nevertheless assume in an affirmation of its own negative foundation. It is to such an affirmation or resolution that the call of conscience exhorts; it calls forth the self by calling it to recognize and affirm in understanding an original being-guilty as the negative foundation of its own being.\(^\text{32}\)

Thereby the initial and explicit purpose of the analysis of conscience and guilt is completed. It has provided a possible description of how a qualified selfhood emerges as a mode of disclosure in which Dasein is led to attest its own authentic self.

\(^\text{31}\) Ibid., p. 284: “Das Schuldigsein resultiert nicht erst aus einer Verschuldigung, sondern umgekehrt: diese wird erst möglich ‘auf Grund’ eines ursprünglichen Schuldigseins” (Heidegger italicizes the entire passage). The transition that takes place in this formulation, between guilt as indebtedness, and guilt as an absolute being-guilty, is certainly not philosophically innocent, and it has significant implications for the articulation of Dasein’s historicity. On the one hand, when historicity is understood as indebtedness to a specific predecessor, e.g., Aristotle, it would seem to be negotiable through the proper handling of the hermeneutic situation, through destruction and critical retrieve, etc. On the other hand, when it is understood as absolute guilt, the historical space of the possible encounter seems to be closed again, in favor of the irredeemable situation of thrownness. In Heidegger’s account, however, these two levels cannot be easily separated; instead they blend into one another, in ways which will be considered shortly.

\(^\text{32}\) As a threefold disclosure, this event is characterized by the state-of-mind of anxiety, by understanding as a self-projection of Dasein’s own being-guilty, in the discourse of reticence (Verschwiegenheit). And the general designation of this qualified mode of disclosedness is “resoluteness.” See SZ, p. 297: “...das verschwiegene, angstbereite Sichentwerfen auf das eigenste Schuldigsein—nennen wir die Entschlossenheit” (Heidegger’s italics).
Heidegger's account of conscience and guilt is certainly open to a number of criticisms, not least regarding the reductiveness of his argument, which lets all common experiences of these phenomena appear as only derivative versions of a single existential predicament. Also on its most general level, as an account of how selfhood and authenticity can be accomplished, it may be criticized for seeming to neglect the true significance of what it means to occupy a relation to a real other, a critique that has been expressed in various ways in the literature. These aspects are not, however, of immediate interest to the present line of argument. The discussion of Heidegger's analyses of conscience and guilt was initially motivated by his own earlier indications that these phenomena somehow constitute keys to the understanding of the historicity of Dasein. Yet in the relevant sections in SZ there is no mention of the theme of historicity. What reason is there to suspect that Heidegger's account of conscience and guilt is relevant to his understanding of historicity?

First of all, consider the concern expressed by Heidegger in his remarks to Jaspers: when he attempts to convey the "historical" nature of life or subjectivity, he refers to conscience primarily in order to secure an understanding of the being of life that does not succumb to an objectivist or atomistic misconception. He seeks a form of understanding and conceptualization that can guarantee that the proper sense of the phenomenon of life is not lost. The "historical" supposedly functions as such a guarantor as long as history is understood as a history which we are. Conscience, when understood along the lines indicated by Heidegger, can be a "key" to such an understanding of history precisely because in listening to the voice of conscience the apparently stable structure of Dasein is shattered in order to make room for an other level of self-hood as its own potential for being. Listening to the voice of conscience thus constitutes a mode of understanding and of disclosure in which the distinction between the knower and the known disintegrates. It is a process in which the

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As already noted above, an early exponent of this view was M. Theunissen, who reads Heidegger's description of how authenticity is accomplished and attested through radical individualization as a confirmation that Heidegger remains caught in a Husserlian theoretical conception of subjectivity (Theunissen [1965/1977], pp. 178f). A similar view is expressed by J.-F. Courtine in the essay "La voix (étrangère) de l'ami. Appel et/ou dialogue" (1990). For a critical discussion of Courtine's argument, cf. G. Guest, "L'Origine de la Responsabilité ou De la 'Voix de la Conscience' à la Pensée de la 'Promesse'" (1992).
knower becomes the known in a mediation of the subject and the object of thought. This qualified mode of subjectivity, or simply space of awareness, is opened up, not as the result of an active process of reflection, but as the result of being addressed by and listening to a call over which individual Dasein has no final control.

Furthermore, the early reference to history as indebtedness and guilt is also elucidated by the corresponding description in *SZ*. To speak of an indebtedness to the past is a commonplace as long as the sense of indebtedness is not specified, and as long as the understanding of this being-indebted is not thematized more precisely. In the analysis of original indebtedness Heidegger can be seen to move exactly in this direction; indebtedness or guilt is described as something that Dasein is, but the sense of this being-guilty is only accessible through Dasein’s affirmation of its own thrownness. Likewise, to understand oneself as historical is not to understand oneself as possessing a certain characteristic, but as having to affirm and to take responsibility for something for which one was never responsible in the first place. Thus, the guilt is enacted—in other words, made accessible—only in a permanently deferred mode of understanding. Understanding itself is essentially delayed on this territory. This mode of understanding we encountered also in the foregoing chapter, regarding the hermeneutic situation. What it means to exist in a circular historical-hermeneutical situation is only revealed to someone who enters the circle, and who thereby realizes that the articulation of the situation is ultimately subjected to the same type of interpretative process that the situation describes. Still, these connections move on the level of analogy and formal correspondence. Now we must turn to an explicit comparison with the description of Dasein’s historicity as this is presented in *SZ*.

5. Historicity as dialectic of self and other

We have seen how the description of conscience as a route to authenticity involves a play of voice and hearing, of address and response. A new level of self-awareness is accomplished in Dasein through the act of listening to a voice that summons it to recognize a guilt which it can not cancel, but which it can only project as an explicit recognition of its own thrownness. This voice reaches Dasein from a distance, and yet it is described by Heidegger as its own. From one perspective the process
is entirely autonomous; a self constitutes itself through an initial splitting that eventually accomplishes a healing on another level. However, from another perspective it may be said to describe exactly an essentially non-autonomous event; no one acts in this event, it simply happens, as an original splitting of the self and its own other, and it can only be understood and articulated as re-action on the part of Dasein, as it responds by taking over its own indebtedness. This will now prove to be the key to the unraveling of the logic behind the explicit analysis of historicity in \textit{SZ}.

When the theme of Dasein’s historicity is raised explicitly toward the end of \textit{SZ} (Division two, Chapter Five) it is posed as the problem of a peculiar “happening” or “historizing” \textit{(Geschehen)} characteristic of Dasein. The analysis that follows is difficult to summarize, which is due not least to its multiplicity of purposes. This, no doubt, is the result of the multiple concerns which Heidegger by then had invested into the theme of historicity, some of which have already been treated. First, the chapter declares that it wants to provide a description of the “stretch” or continuity of Dasein in terms of a specific “structure of happening.” Second, it is meant to provide an existential-ontological foundation for the possibility of both history and historiography as these are commonly understood. Finally, it seeks to establish a platform from which the critique of the present as well as the past could be launched. All of these concerns are ultimately contained in the response to the first question, which is how to describe Dasein as a structure of “happening” or “historizing.”

The initial step in this analysis is to note that the phenomenon of history at large concerns that of “pastness.” History is essentially connected to \textit{pastness}, which in turn is somehow related to (present) Dasein in a way that remains to be determined. What is the more

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34 In the essay “Nonbelonging/Authenticity,” C. E. Scott argues along similar lines that the authenticity achieved in this process can not be understood as simply the securing of a stable self, but precisely as a realization of a certain “non-belonging,” a tension which he also traces throughout \textit{SZ}, Scott (1993).

35 The theme of historicity has been introduced briefly much earlier in \textit{SZ}, in the introductory §5, where the fact of Dasein’s historicity is presented as the motivation for the methodological (critical-destructive) orientation of the book as a whole.

36 These multiple claims are never clearly structured by Heidegger as such, but they can be extrapolated from the text. See esp. the introductory §72.

37 This preliminary characterization (on pp. 378-379) is elicited from an account of various senses of “history,” similar to the one from the 1920 lectures discussed in Chapter One, section 7.
specific nature of the relation between Dasein and pastness? That is the phenomenological task which Heidegger must solve. He begins by focusing his attention on objects that we normally associate with pastness, namely, the kind of objects that we find in museums. As a phenomenological problem this pastness is indeed peculiar. It belongs to the meaning of these objects that they are not part of the present, that they somehow "belong to the past." What is it that conveys this aura of "pastness" to certain objects? Heidegger invites us to reflect on a household utensil that is lying in a museum show-case, and which is thus no longer in use. The pastness attaching to this object, he concludes, comes from a world that is no longer there, a "world within which they belonged to a context of equipment and where they were encountered as ready-to-hand and used by a concernful Dasein who was-in-the-world." In other words, it is the connection to a past world, in the sense of a humanly organized context, which gives an object its historical quality. The object obtains a temporal-historical quality by having been part of a human context of concern. And pastness is ultimately the quality of that which belonged to or was connected to Dasein. Heidegger concludes that the phenomenon of history and pastness must be examined as a trait peculiar to Dasein. In full accord with the overall argumentative pattern ofSZ, he thus reinterprets the categorial object-characteristic of pastness in terms of an existentiale (i.e., in terms of an attribute purely applicable to Dasein) which he designates as "having-been-there" (da-gewesen). It is in terms of this existentiale that the object-pastness, and thus pastness in general, must ultimately be understood.

This concept of da-gewesen (the past tense of Da-sein, but in the adjective form, not a noun) at first seems to fit well into the overall structure ofSZ. It is not explanatory in the sense that it provides a reason for why other, less original phenomena achieve an aura of pastness. It is a phenomenological-descriptive concept, which purports to portray an original ontological datum, in terms of which other phenomena may be interpreted. It resembles an existentiale introduced at an earlier stage and in a different context, namely, "having been" (Gewesenheit), but they are in fact quite distinct.

38 Ibid., p. 380: "die Welt, innerhalb deren sie, zu einem Zeugzusammehang gehörig, als Zuhandenes begegneten und von einem besorgenden, in-der-Weltseienden Dasein gebraucht wurden" (Heidegger's italics).

39 Cf. SZ., pp. 326 f.
describes the aspect of pastness which is part of the temporal stretch of individual Dasein. When Heidegger brings in the term da-gewesen, however, he is speaking of the other Dasein that is no longer there.\textsuperscript{40} The problem that this raises for his own project should not be underestimated. As long as we take the passage of time and of generations for granted, history is simply a natural attribute of Dasein that is no longer there. But the idea that Heidegger is trying to establish is that history is not something that comes to Dasein as a result of a certain passage of time, but something that belongs to it originally and throughout its actual existence. In other words, the purpose of the analysis is to secure that Dasein is historical not as a result of no longer being there, but in virtue of its own historicity (the sense of which he is trying to determine). This requires that he can articulate in a convincing way the relation between the two types or levels of pastness; on the one hand the pastness that is a constitutive aspect of (individual existential) temporality, on the other hand the pastness that is characteristic of Dasein that is no longer there. The problem of this transition—from the time of the other to the time of the self—is a key to much of what goes on in this particular section of *SZ*.\textsuperscript{41} This is not always clear from Heidegger's own demonstration, but when read carefully it reveals such an argumentative level.

Heidegger concludes the first step of his analysis by affirming that the common phenomenon of history must be understood in terms of a specific way of being of Dasein, and not just of Dasein as already past. The meaning initially ascribed by himself to Dasein as past must somehow be wrestled from its grip and be redistributed on the basis of the historicity of present Dasein. What he looks for then is a particular type of event or "happening," from within which, or on the basis of which, pastness is generated in a future-oriented projection. In other

\textsuperscript{40} At this point it would have been interesting to develop the connection to what Heidegger elsewhere has to say about the death of the other (in §47). In this previous discussion the goal is to show how the individual understanding of death is distorted when it is understood from an experience of the death of the other. In that section Heidegger also notes that there is a particular form of "being with the dead" (*Mitsein mit dem Toten*), in rites and commemorations, etc. However, when he speaks of past Dasein in connection to the problem of historicity the context is quite different. Here he brings in an *existentiale* to designate the form of existence of the dead, which is thus apparently assigned a meaning-constitutive potential of its own.

\textsuperscript{41} It is in the context of this problem that C. Fynsk concludes that the being of the other marks an "inner limit" in Heidegger's text, in other words, something which challenges its pretensions in a more radical way than Heidegger himself is prepared to admit (Fynsk [1986], p. 28).
words, he seeks to grasp the proper happening of individual Dasein in
such a way so as to account for the possibility of the presence of the
past of the other. The formal scheme of this happening has been
prepared through the descriptions of Dasein’s authentic resoluteness in
which it recapitulates its thrownness in a future-oriented resolve.
However, the description of this event is entirely formal. It says
nothing about the nature or origin of the actual content. However, this
fact now provides Heidegger with a surface on which to graft the
historizing happening that he is seeking. For, as he writes, the
possibilities which Dasein discloses in its future-oriented resolve derive
from the “heritage” that it takes over.\footnote{SZ, p. 383: “Die Entschlossenheit, in der das Dasein auf sich selbst
zurückkommt, erschließt die jeweiligen faktischen Möglichkeiten eigentlichen
Existierens aus dem Erbe, das sie als geworfene übernimmt.”}
Heidegger designates this overtaking as “repetition,” as Wiederholung.
This is the same term by which he had previously defined the task of
the philosophical interpreter in the manuscript on Aristotle, where
philosophical understanding was defined as a “repetition for one’s own
situation.”\footnote{This remark was quoted in the preceding chapter, p. 82.}
Heidegger’s work could hardly be underestimated.\footnote{In his book on Heidegger’s phenomenology of freedom, G. Figal even
proposes that it could be read as the “key to Heidegger’s whole philosophical project,” Figal (1988), p. 321.}
However, just as in the case of the hermeneutical situation, the image he

\footnote{SZ, p. 385. One should also be aware of the connection to Kierkegaard, and
his literary-philosophical treatise from 1843 entitled simply “The Repetition”
(Gjentagelsen), Samlede Værker, III, pp. 169-264. This correlation is discussed at
length by W. Spanos, in Heidegger and Criticism (1993), Chapt. 3.}
is trying to convey is obviously not that of a simple reiteration of the same. The first indication of this is the somewhat surprising expression that in this repetition Dasein does not let itself be "persuaded" by the past, a formulation that implies that the possibility has the character of an address. Instead, he adds—playing on the similarities of words—the repetition (Wiederholung) is one that "responds" (erwidert) to these past possibilities. Thus, historicity as the movement and happening of Dasein is here captured in the dialogical terms of address and response. The responsive repetition is further specified as an "explicit handing down," which means a going back into the possibilities of Dasein that has been there.\(^{46}\) In the curious logic of this repetition one encounters both an affirmation of a primordial debt to a past other in general, while at the same time a pretension to ground this very indebtedness in an act of individual Dasein.

The idea of a primordial indebtedness is confirmed by yet another concept with which Heidegger rounds up his account: "fate" (Schicksal). The description of Dasein as coming back and repeating also implies that these recurrent movements cannot not take place. Repeating the past—or bringing about the past in the form of repetition—is not something that Dasein can choose to be without. The repeating can be more or less explicit, more or less consciously future-oriented, but it must take place. Dasein has to choose and affirm a possibility of existence, even though it often tends to swerve from the explicit recognition of this condition in an inauthentic acceptance of the possibilities handed over to it by das Man. It is this predicament of having to take over and affirm a possibility that Heidegger calls "fate."\(^{47}\) Normally fate would signify a specific course of events, applicable to one or a number of individuals. This is not the case here. Dasein, he says, is fate, and only in virtue of being fate can it be, as one says, "struck by fate." In other words, to have a fate in this sense is not to have a certain history or direction, but rather the predicament of having to have a history as such. Dasein cannot not have a history, since

\(^{46}\) *Ibid.*, p. 385: "...die ausdrückliche Überlieferung, das heißt der Rückgang in Möglichkeiten des dagewesenen Daseins" (Heidegger's italics). The way in which Heidegger almost imperceptibly moves across the distinction between Gewesensein and da-gewesene has its immediate parallel in the two senses of Wiederholung with which he works here. In the analysis of historicity, Wiederholung is a repetition of a past possibility for the present; however, in §68a, when speaking of the temporality of understanding, Wiederholung is defined simply as authentic Gewesensein, p. 339.

it cannot cease to project past possibilities. In other words, it is obliged to respond to an address in the form of a projection of a possibility of an other, and this obligation constitutes its historicity.

6. Heidegger’s response to Nietzsche
There are many obvious connections between Nietzsche’s and Heidegger’s accounts of historical existence. Clearly, they both aim at destroying the image of history as a resting reservoir of past facts that may be observed at will. History, according to both thinkers, is that which is always exerting its influence on the present. The present is circumscribed by a past from which it can never escape, and toward which it is therefore destined to adopt some posture or other. Whereas Nietzsche describes this predicament in terms of three fundamental attitudes—the monumental, the antiquarian, and the critical—Heidegger seeks to specify the existential movement or happening through which this relation is continually constituted. His word for this phenomenon is “repetition.” But what further correspondences can be elicited? In the present section these two texts will be brought closer together, in an examination of how Heidegger’s description of Dasein’s historicity in $SZ$ can also be read as a response to Nietzsche.

The comparison is obviously warranted. Apart from the correspondence between Dilthey and Yorck, Nietzsche’s essay is the only text explicitly discussed by Heidegger in this specific section of $SZ$. Of this text Heidegger says that “it has said the essential concerning the use and abuse of history,” after which he recounts the three ways of relating to (or writing) history mentioned by Nietzsche. These types are then said to be foreshadowed (vorgezeichnet) in the historicity of Dasein, as this has been described by Heidegger himself. In other words, he explicitly presents his own analysis as somehow providing a ground for Nietzsche’s previous analysis. However, the argument for this grounding is quite brief, and not very convincing. The idea is that the three ways of relating to history are rooted in the three temporal ecstases of Dasein, as future, past, and present, respectively. Monumental history issues from the anticipatory resoluteness toward a future, antiquarian history is somehow made possible by the pastness of Dasein, and finally critical history is generated as an authentic way of

48 This discussion of Nietzsche’s text is found in $SZ$, on pp. 396-397.
CHAPTER THREE

constituting a present that distances itself from the common conceptions of the present, or, as Heidegger says, from “the falling publicness of the today.”

Heidegger’s grafting of Nietzsche’s scheme onto his own account is puzzling in several respects, first of all for the plain reason that it seems too convenient. Also when examined more closely it is hard to see why the specific attitudes toward history should be correlated to specific temporal horizons. All of the attitudes that Nietzsche describes constitute ways of projecting the past onto a future, and thereby of bringing about a present in the form of a specific attitude. Therefore it makes little sense to elicit the distinction between monumental and antiquarian history from the distinction between two temporal horizons. But the fact that the two accounts do not overlap as elegantly as suggested by Heidegger does not invalidate the comparison between them on a more general level. Clearly they share the common concern of seeking to provide a description of historical existence that is not modelled on the experience of history as the object of historical knowledge, but on intersubjective categories, such as admiration, pious preservation, and critique. Furthermore, they both constitute ways of coming to terms with historical existence as various ways of dealing with the possibilities of the other as past. Thus it seems more correct to say that instead of providing a foundation for Nietzsche, Heidegger thinks in the wake of his original claim, repeating it responsively for his own time.

However, the question that I really wish to address is the following: if Heidegger’s account is read as a reply to Nietzsche, in what way does it respond to the part of Nietzsche’s text that speaks of a need for action and a mobilization of strength on the historical arena? And in what way does it see itself as responding to the menace outlined by Nietzsche, the enfeeblement of a present burdened by too much history, too much tradition? In Heidegger’s brief summary of Nietzsche’s text this crucial aspect of its message is not explicitly addressed. He only notes in passing that the possibility of history being of advantage and disadvantage to life is grounded in the fact that Dasein is historical, in

49 SZ, p. 397: “...verfallenden Öffentlichkeit des Heute.” Notably, Heidegger restricts his commentary to these three modes of being historical as a using of history. He does not address the limiting cases of the “unhistorical” and the “suprahistorical.” However, he adds the enigmatic comment that the beginning of Nietzsche’s meditation signals that “he understood more than he has made known” (Der Anfang seiner “Betrachtung” läßt vermuten, daß er mehr verstand, als er kundgab, SZ, p. 396).
other words that it exists as futural repetition of past possibilities. But this apparently simple gesture should not make us lose sight of how the profound provocation of Nietzsche's diagnosis in fact resonates throughout Heidegger's account as well: the provocation to the present to establish itself as the legitimate judge of the past. For as Nietzsche puts it, it is only from the greatest force of the present that one may interpret the past.\textsuperscript{50} This formulation suggests the possible existence of a criterion through which the passivizing weight of the past can be transformed into active and life-enhancing affirmation.

Heidegger does not say so himself explicitly, but his response to this challenge is no doubt the use of the distinction between authenticity and inauthenticity with respect to the choice of possibilities. At first glance the account of Dasein's historicity is just a neutral description of an ontological condition; however, in the relevant passage that describes Dasein's historicity in terms of a taking over of past possibilities Heidegger indicates that this may be accomplished on varying levels of authenticity. The choice of possibilities which it makes can be made less accidentally and less equivocally the more authentically it is pursued. But how is this authenticity accomplished by individual Dasein? It is accomplished, Heidegger states, as an anticipation of its death. When Dasein projects itself in the direction of its own inescapable finitude it gives itself an ultimate goal, in relation to which all other accidental possibilities are "driven out." Furthermore, through this realization Dasein is brought into the "simplicity of its fate," or as the full statement reads:

\begin{quote}
The more authentically Dasein resolves—and this means that in anticipating death it understands itself unambiguously in terms of its ownmost distinctive possibility—the more unequivocally does it choose and find the possibility of its existence, and the less does it do so by coincidence.\textsuperscript{51}
\end{quote}

This is an extraordinary statement. In order not to succumb to the multiplicity of historical possibilities, Dasein is referred to the one possibility that it can certainly never master: its non-existence.

How is it that this projection can generate the force or power

\textsuperscript{50} Werke III:1, pp. 289-290: "Nur aus der höchsten Kraft der Gegenwart dürft ihr das Vergangene deuten" (the entire passage is italicized in Nietzsche's text).

\textsuperscript{51} SZ, p. 384: "Je eigentlicher sich das Dasein entschließt, das heißt unzweideutig aus seiner eigensten, ausgezeichneten Möglichkeit im Vorlaufen in den Tod sich versteht, um so eindeutiger und unzufälliger ist das wählende Finden der Möglichkeit seiner Existenz."
necessary to match the force of the past possibilities? Or is this not the right question to ask? Perhaps Heidegger does not relate to Nietzsche’s power-game at all. The subsequent passage makes it quite clear that he does indeed do so, as he even articulates the situation in a terminology of power. He writes:

If Dasein, by anticipation, lets death become powerful in itself, then, as free for death, Dasein understands itself in its own superior power, the power of its finite freedom, so that in this freedom, which “is” only in its having chosen to make such a choice, it can take over the powerlessness of abandonment to its having done so, and can thus come to have a clear vision for the coincidences of the situation that has been disclosed.\(^{52}\)

In two consecutive steps this strange passage suggests how a “power” is generated from the very experience of powerlessness, and how a fate is mastered through the realization of the impossibility of a completed mastery. In permitting that which it can never master—its own death—to become powerful in itself, Dasein generates a power through the freedom for this possibility. Furthermore, this freedom is available to Dasein only as the need to act and to take over a possibility for being, in other words as thrownness. This follows exactly the same scheme as the account of being guilty discussed earlier, which was described precisely as a foundation that Dasein can never “get into its power,” but which can nevertheless open a passage toward authenticity when it is affirmed as such.\(^{53}\)

Heidegger brings out the correlation himself when he sums up his account of fate in the following way:

Only if death, guilt, conscience, freedom, and finitude reside together

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\(^{52}\) SZ, p. 384: “Wenn das Dasein vorlaufend den Tod in sich mächtig werden läßt, versteht es sich, frei für ihn, in der eigenen Übermacht einer endlichen Freiheit, um in dieser, die je nur ‘ist’ im Gewählthaben der Wahl, die Ohnmacht der Überlassenheit an es selbst zu übernehmen und für die Zufälle der erschlossenen Situation hellsichtig zu werden.” As J. Taminaux has pointed out, this idea of “freedom for one’s death” is in fact taken directly from the first part of Zarathustra, which contains a section entitled “On the Free Death,” Taminaux (1991), p. 180. This section of Zarathustra also contains the classic formulation of “being too old for one’s victories,” a passage to which Heidegger refers in his discussion of death earlier in SZ (§53).

\(^{53}\) That the strategy outlined here is also intended as a way to transcend “historicism” is obvious. Right before the explicit discussion of Nietzsche, Heidegger remarks that “the very appearance of a problem such as that of “historicism” is a clear sign that history strives to alienate Dasein from its authentic historicity” (Am Ende ist das Aufkommen eines Problems des “Historismus” das deutlichsste Anzeichen dafür, daß die Historie das Dasein seiner eigentlichen Geschichtlichkeit zu entfremden trachtet), SZ, p. 396.
As a directive for how historical existence may take charge of itself it remains as ambiguous as Nietzsche’s original initiative; on the one hand it signals an activist step beyond the multiplicity of historical possibilities, on the other hand this affirmative stance vis-à-vis history is only possible precisely as an affirmation of the abandonment to history as thrownness in general. But where Nietzsche operates with two mutually contradictory attitudes toward history, Heidegger could be read as seeking to articulate a critical-affirmative stance through the very recognition of an original indebtedness. For—as the account of conscience and guilt demonstrated—the authenticity that is to serve as a critical correlate is grasped and appropriated only through a confrontation with Dasein’s own non-appropriable foundation. It is as if Heidegger responds to Nietzsche’s challenge by saying that the threatening force of the past can only be mastered by a confrontation with the condition of indebtedness as such on a more profound level, where Dasein recognizes this indebtedness as a general determination of its own being.

7. A note on the critical discussion of Heidegger’s analysis
The general orientation of the existential analytic of SZ requires that every phenomenon is articulated as a possible projection of Dasein, and consequently also the phenomena of history and historiography. On the other hand these phenomena could appear to exclude such a treatment since they are precisely what present Dasein cannot encompass from its individual horizon. This specific problem has also been a dominant concern in the discussion that has followed upon Heidegger’s account of historicity in SZ. A number of critics have argued that this account reduces history to individual Dasein, and that it therefore fails to capture the essentially collective nature of history. In an article on the concept of repetition in Heidegger’s theory of historicity, Calvin O. Schrag questioned the possibility of accounting for the “communal character of existence,” and in a survey of Hegel’s, Marx’s, and

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\[^{54}\text{SZ, p. 385: “Nur wenn im Sein eines Seienden Tod, Schuld, Gewissen, Freiheit und Endlichkeit dergestalt gleichursprünglich zusammenwohnen wie in der Sorge, kann es im Modus des Schicksals existieren, das heißt im Grunde seiner Existenz geschichtlich sein.”}^\]

Heidegger’s theories of history Nathan Rothenstreich even proclaimed that Heidegger’s existential approach for this same reason is “incapable of accounting for the historical domain par excellence.” The contention behind this critique is that history essentially involves public events and impersonal structures, and therefore inevitably escapes the conceptual means of Heidegger’s analysis. In Paul Ricoeur’s careful survey of the relevant chapter in SZ there are similar critical remarks. Throughout his generally appreciative summary of Heidegger’s scheme, Ricoeur points to its inability to account for the transition between individual Dasein and the essentially intersubjective nature of history. He even sees a need to raise the question if it is right to say that a heritage is transmitted from oneself to oneself, and not from another.

There are several ways to approach these critical concerns. In part they concern the hierarchical “grounding” of historicity in authentic temporality that Heidegger puts forth. The sense and legitimacy of this peculiar grounding is a question that is discussed at length in the subsequent chapter, where I argue that it is not possible, although for different reasons. However, as a more straightforward reply to such criticism one could point to the fact that Heidegger does indeed recognize the collective aspect of history. Within the course of the same

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55 C. O. Schrag, “Phenomenology, Ontology, and History in the Philosophy of Heidegger” (1958), p. 291; N. Rothenstreich, “The Ontological Status of History” (1972), p. 54 (Twelve years later Schrag returned to the same theme in a much more favorable essay, in which he even outlines the possibility of a dialogue between Eastern and Western philosophy on the basis of Heidegger’s thought of historicity, “Heidegger on Repetition and Historical Understanding” [1970].) These articles are also part of a discussion which I do not address here, concerning to what extent Heidegger has really—as he claims—provided a “foundation” for the historical sciences through his analysis of Dasein’s historicity. For an argument that he has indeed succeeded in this respect, see de Waelhens, “Notes sur les notion d’historicité et d’histoire chez M. Heidegger” (1971).

56 Ricoeur (1985), p. 137: “Est-il vrai, toutefois, qu’un héritage se transmette de soi à soi-même? N’est-il pas toujours reçu d’un autre?” To be fair, one should recognize that Ricoeur’s argument is much more sophisticated than those of the other critics mentioned. Ricoeur is not unsympathetic to Heidegger’s attempt to articulate the phenomenon of history from the perspective of Dasein’s proper experiential horizon. His ultimate critique is rather that Heidegger fails to account for the proper traits of this experience, and more precisely for the central and irreducible role of the “trace” (ibid., p. 143), a (Levinasian) notion that plays an important role in Ricoeur’s attempt to unite the historical and the existential levels of time (cf. also ibid., pp. 220-228). These conclusions were anticipated in an earlier essay, which spells out the dual prerequisite for historical knowledge, as both belonging and distance. Ricoeur (1976). As a phenomenologist of historical knowing, Ricoeur is certainly more exhaustive than Heidegger, who, on the other hand, pursues the question of historical being in a more radical way.
analysis, and as a parallel existentiale to individual "fate," he introduces the existentiale of "destiny" (Geschick), which is said to designate a "happening-with-others," the historical being of a community (a community that Heidegger exemplifies with "people" and "generation"). Considering the immense implications of these remarks, one would have expected Heidegger to elaborate on them much more. Still they rest securely on the fundamental position that he assigns to the concept of Mitsein, to the fact that Dasein is primordially a being-with-others. With reference to this aspect of the overall analysis, others have defended Heidegger against the accusation that his concept of historicity reduces the phenomenon of history to the individual sphere. This is the case with David Hoy who insists that the stress on authenticity and resolve never meant to subjectivize history, but only to present the necessary condition for an appropriation of the past.

This type of discussion certainly has its relevance in respect to Heidegger's analysis. The question whether or not it is meaningful—or even possible—to understand a phenomenon like history from the point of view of what it means for an individual to exist historically could be pursued at length on the basis of Heidegger's sketch. However, from the perspective developed so far this particular question leads astray. It fails to capture the dual struggle for origins that has been described here as a motivating force behind Heidegger's account: the attempt to specify the original being of Dasein, and the possibility of establishing oneself as an original force in the midst of a transmission of heritage. Furthermore, it fails to take seriously the intricate logic involved in the "repetition" that Heidegger puts forth, in which the other is already inscribed in the self, and in which the possibility of authenticity is always mediated through a recognition of a certain non-propriety.

As they stand, these few lines seem to exhaust what SZ has to say in terms of political philosophy. Cf. the remarks in the Introduction, pp. 32-33.

See the essay "History, Historicity, and Historiography in Being and Time," Hoy (1978), where he argues that the open and explicit confrontation with finitude does not escape the historical and social conditions; rather "it leads to a recognition of the compelling situation of the actual historical world" (ibid., p. 340). A similar approach had been developed earlier by Heinrich Ott, in an essay entitled "L'herméneutique de la société. Le problème de l'historicité collective" (1971), which relates Heidegger's conception of a collective historicity to the modern debate in the social sciences, on the order of priority between hermeneutics and critique of ideology.

It should be noted that Hoy, in his detailed discussion of the relevant chapter, sees how the concept of historicity functions as a means to save the project of SZ from lapsing into historicism and nihilism (a point also made by B. Rollin (1970), p. 112). However, in his defense of Heidegger's intentions he ultimately avoids the
8. Historicity as enigmatic passage
What is Heidegger's philosophical concern in these sections of SZ on
the historicity of Dasein? Obviously, they point in a number of
different directions. Here I have focused on the peculiar nature of the
passage or movement that Dasein is, and through which it is constituted
as a self through the repetition of what is other. The idea of repetition
is an attempt to account for what Dasein is when it understands itself by
way of such a critical encounter. The account in SZ suggests a model
in the form of responsive repetition, but it also indicates that on a more
fundamental level this movement challenges theoretical description. To
give meaning to a phenomenon is to show how it may be had in
projective understanding from the viewpoint of evolving Dasein. But
from where and toward where can the transition from past to present
Dasein be understood and articulated as such? This passage, Heidegger
admits himself in the actual context, is an enigma; it is the "ontological
enigma of the movement of happening." It is an enigma that he, in
the end, does not primarily seem to be intent on solving, but "up
against" which he wants to "lead" his investigation. The enigma is not
solved but only outlined, and one reason for this is supposedly that what
is to be understood undermines the necessary stability of a position of
thought and articulation.

The philosophical problem of historicity is surrounded by linguistic
limits and precautions throughout Heidegger's writings. In the actual
chapter on Dasein's historicity this is explicitly the case. This is illus­
trated by the remarks just quoted, but it is brought out even more
explicitly in the concluding section of this chapter, a section almost
entirely devoted to a survey of the concept of historicity in the corre­
spondence between Dilthey and his philosophical compatriot Count

problem that provoked the critics, namely, the claim that historicity is said to originate
in temporality. And he betrays an insensitivity to the workings of Heidegger's
argument when he eventually voices the critique that Heidegger has not provided the
critical means for choosing between historical possibilities. Heidegger indicates that the
anticipatory resoluteness in the specific situation somehow enables Dasein to make its
choice authentically, but the real tension in his description arises from the recognition
that no rule can be established for this event, while at the same time the philosophical
analysis has set itself the task to do justice to the event as such. The significance of this
approach will become fully apparent only with the discussion of truth in Chapter Six.

60 SZ, p. 389: "ontologische Rätsel der Bewegtheit des Geschehens." A similar
formulation is found on p. 392, where he speaks of how the existential interpretation
of historicity always finds itself in the dark, and that it is haunted by the enigma of
being and motion.
Yorck von Wartenburg. For Yorck the problem of historical being (which he, like Heidegger in his earlier lectures, considers to be the defining characteristic of “life”) is explicitly something that withdraws from ordinary theoretical discourse. Heidegger quotes a long passage that states that the “ocular” theoretical attitude can more easily find expression in words, whereas that which enters into the foundation of life is “excluded from an exoteric presentation”; this is so “because philosophical thinking is of a special kind, its linguistic expression has a special character.” These statements are then combined by Heidegger with a much later statement from the correspondence, in which Yorck admits his “liking for paradox...as a mark of truth,” a truth that is likened to the workings of “lightning.” These quotations from Yorck, brought in by Heidegger into his own text, no doubt speak in the same vein as the introductory remark of SZ, where it is explicitly said that for the task of grasping beings in their being “we lack not only most of the words but, above all, the ‘grammar.’” However, what is noteworthy is that it is with respect to the problem of historicity that this linguistic limit surfaces again.

To think the passage of the historicity of Dasein is to think the enactment of a self through its other. In this “happening” activity is released through passivity, in a paradoxical movement, where Dasein, as Heidegger writes in yet another formulation, “hands itself down to

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61 This odd section of SZ deserves a much more careful analysis than is normally allotted to it by Heidegger’s readers (Ricoeur, symptomatically, only devotes a footnote to it in the course of his detailed discussion of the relevant chapter). It is built around the remarks of Yorck, from whose letters Heidegger quotes extensively, taking sides with Yorck against Dilthey on several crucial points. Considering the explicit interest that Heidegger has just devoted to historical existence as repetition, it is noteworthy that he here concludes the chapter by an unprecedented instance of repeating the voice of an other. Yorck comes forth here as the historical forerunner who, unlike Nietzsche, is not in need of philosophical foundation, but who is permitted to speak directly through Heidegger’s own work. In his detailed reconstruction of the genesis of SZ, T. Kisel points out that the long review that Heidegger wrote on the correspondence between Dilthey and Yorck in 1924 was in fact the first piece of writing that was eventually included verbatim in SZ in this particular section, thus making it literally the Urtext of SZ, Kisel (1993), p. 322.

62 For these quotations of quotations, see SZ, pp. 402-403. This imagery of “lightning” will appear later in Heidegger’s own radicalized attempt to develop a new philosophical discourse in Beiträge, where the understanding of being will be likened to the lightning (Erblitzen) of being itself (GA 65, p. 409).

63 SZ, p. 39: “Mit Rücksicht auf das Ungefüge und ‘Unschöne’ des Ausdrucks innerhalb der folgenden Analysen darf die Bemerkung angefügt werden: ein anderes ist es, über Seiendes erzählend zu berichten, ein anderes, Seiendes in seinem Sein zu fassen. Für die letztgenannte Aufgabe fehlen nicht nur meist die Worte, sondern vor allem die ‘Grammatik.’”
itself, free for death, in a possibility which it has inherited and yet chosen.” This coming to oneself through what is other in such a way so as to constitute an origin in the present is what animates the theory of historicity in this work.

9. Concluding remarks

In \textit{SZ} Heidegger has inserted a chapter that purports to describe the historicity of Dasein as one of the fundamental \textit{existentialia} that define this particular being. Here I have tried to approach this description from two different angles—both inspired by Heidegger’s own remarks—from the point of view of the problem of conscience and guilt, and from the point of view of Nietzsche’s second \textit{Untimely Meditation}. The contention has been that the peculiar argument of this particular part of \textit{SZ} is only accessible when read from these differing, and to some extent conflicting, perspectives.

On the one hand, Heidegger here seeks to describe the historicity of Dasein as a space of awareness opened up through a dialectic of address and response. To be historical is to be an ongoing mediation of self and other, in which the self projects itself through a “repetition” of the possibilities handed down from the other. The phenomenon of conscience may be a “clue” to historicity because in experiencing the voice of conscience Dasein obtains access to itself, its own possibilities and its obligation to act, by listening to a demand of an other. The fact that this other is ultimately identified with Dasein’s own authentic self should not make us blind to the structure of the passage and to the constitutive function of hearing, as a being open to a foreign voice.

On the other hand, the description of Dasein’s historicity contains an implicit strategy, by means of which it seeks to handle the relativizing consequences of the historicization of knowing and judging. Thereby it locates itself at the focal point of Nietzsche’s appeal, the provocative challenge to establish a strong present that can balance the threatening force of a tradition that the analysis itself recognizes as operating through the individual Dasein. Heidegger’s response to this challenge is the description of how a repetition of heritage can be authentic by affirming the inalienable necessity of its own finitude. The lack that it

\footnote{\textit{Ibid.:} “...ursprüngliches Geschehen des Daseins, in dem es sich frei für den Tod ihm selbst in einer ererbten, aber gleichwohl gewählten Möglichkeit überliefert.”}
experiences when confronting this necessity is a lack that it can never cancel, but which it can transform into a higher potency by affirming it as such. At this point the account of conscience, and especially of guilt is activated again; for it was precisely the purpose of the latter description to show how selfhood and authenticity is established by moving from a non-conscious lack of selfhood to an awareness of a more fundamental lack of self that is guilt as such, as an inappropriable thrownness. In other words, both in the description of authentic historicity, and in the attestation of the passage to authenticity through the voice of conscience, a similar scheme is active, namely, one in which a lack of selfhood is cancelled through a recognition of a lack on a more principal level. The indebtedness to the possibilities of the others in the form of das Man is appropriated and projected by individual Dasein through the ultimate recognition of the indebtedness that it itself is. Likewise, the indebtedness to the other Dasein as past is appropriated and projected through the recognition of finitude as a possibility that is Dasein’s own, and yet something that it can never control.

Finally, in these descriptions one may trace an orientation familiar from the previous discussion: to seek an articulation of our own being—as a passage of understanding and meaning-formation—that should constitute a manifestation of this being. Through the account of historicity in SZ, Heidegger makes it clearer than before that this passage poses a fundamental challenge to thinking. It brings it up against the enigma of how thinking only reaches itself and its own being through the mediation of what is other than itself. It suggests that it can localize and determine its own being only in the recognition of the unsurpassable limit of any such localization. While this description apparently brings in external features into Dasein itself (the voice of the actual other as well as the past other, and of heritage in general), at the same time—reciprocally, one should perhaps say—it opens a space of indeterminacy in the individual Dasein, a constitutive distance and lack of self-possession. Dasein is the transition from other to self, and when it knows itself most authentically it knows itself as this passage; or rather, it knows itself as the need to accomplish this passage.
Chapter Four

HISTORICITY AND TEMPORALITY

...wir stehen immer noch vor dem rätselhaften Es, das wir nennen in der Rede: Es gibt Zeit.

M. Heidegger, Zeit und Sein

(1) Time and temporality as fundamental phenomenological concepts,
(2) Temporalization as meaning-enactment, (3) Authentic temporality as foundation and qualified mode of access, (4) Anticipation and intentionality; temporality as being-possible, (5) Temporality and historicity in SZ, (6) The Temporalization of being; the reappearance of the historical, (7) Time, being, and the historicization of temporality, (8) Concluding remarks

1. Time and temporality as fundamental phenomenological concepts

The purpose of this chapter is to bring together the two themes of temporality and historicity in Heidegger's thought, with a particular view to the claim of SZ that historicity is rooted in temporality, and that a theory of temporality could therefore provide a foundation for a theory of historicity. I view this attempt as motivated more by the architectonic ambitions of the work than by its actual phenomenological findings. Instead, these two fundamental themes in Heidegger's thinking will here be presented as parallel attempts to describe a common domain, which could tentatively be defined as the being of the understanding, disclosive movement that we are, and to which we also belong. Through an analysis of how the two themes of temporality and historicity develop from the earliest writings onward, and how the priorities between them change, I hope to throw some further light on Heidegger's attempt to map out this philosophical territory.

To elucidate the sense of temporality in Heidegger's work is certainly no small matter, not least considering the claim of SZ that

1 "...we nevertheless always stand before the enigmatic It, to which we refer when saying: It gives time" (a more idiomatic translation, in which Heidegger's point is lost, would read "there is time").
the central problematic of all ontology is rooted in the phenomenon of time. In a sense the problems of time and temporality are the phenomenological problems par excellence. Not only do they designate a route travelled by Heidegger, but time is also the problem toward which Husserl turned after Logical Investigations and to which he would continue to return over the following decades as the deepest and most elusive level of phenomenological reflection. Furthermore, it is the principal ground on which later generations of phenomenologically oriented philosophers, notably Levinas, Ricoeur, and Derrida, have expanded the conceptual limits of the founding fathers. In other words, it is a theme whose broad ramifications in- and outside phenomenology are not easily assessed.

Heidegger’s basic idea, as I will discuss in more detail shortly, is that every previous attempt to think time has been modelled in different ways on the idea of the present—in other words, on a limited aspect of a more fundamental structure, which is laid out in SZ as the original three-fold “ec-static temporality.” He purports thereby to capture that out of which the present itself can be seen to arise as a derivative temporal phenomenon. In an elaborated essay on Heidegger’s concept of time and temporality, Derrida has argued that there was never a non-metaphysical concept of time, nor could there ever be such a concept. Derrida here directs Heidegger’s own critical apparatus against Heidegger himself, in order to show that the very notion of an original temporality stumbles on the same problems that Heidegger has detected in the previous history of metaphysics. According to Derrida,

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2 SZ, p. 18. Especially throughout the later part of the twenties, Heidegger is preoccupied with the problem of time and with working out a new and more adequate conceptual framework for speaking about it. This is first manifested in the published works in a lecture on the concept of time from 1924, referred to here as BZ. This text is followed by a number of works, which are, in chronological order: GA 20; GA 21; SZ; GA 24; GA 25; GA 26; GA 3. A detailed comparison of these works would undoubtedly uncover a multitude of developments and transformations. Here, however, I will focus primarily on the aspects of the problem of time that have implications for the theme of historicity.

3 For a good discussion of Husserl’s development with respect to the problem of time, and for a brief account of the later developments in phenomenological thought on time, see R. Bernet’s preface to his edition of Husserl’s writings on inner time consciousness, Texte zur Phänomenologie des inneren Zeitbewußtseins (1893-1917), Husserl (1985), pp. xi-lxvii. For a large-scale coverage of the whole movement from Husserl to Derrida with respect to the problem of time, see also D. Wood’s The Deconstruction of Time (1989).

4 “ousia et grammè - note sur une note de Sein und Zeit,” in Derrida (1972), pp. 31-78. For the following remarks, see esp. pp. 73f.
“time” will always remain a metaphysical concept in Heidegger’s own sense, since it cannot be construed in any other way without recourse to other concepts also modelled on the ideal of the present. To think original time is to think a constitutive absence, and for this we lack concepts. Derrida recognizes that after Heidegger’s own destruction of time has been deconstructed, the only discovery that remains is that of the “trace.” This would transcend the opposition of present and non-present, and ultimately it would resist articulation. Derrida finds indications of this in Heidegger’s own later texts, notably his essay on the saying of Anaximander.5

This critical assessment of Heidegger’s project with respect to time in SZ is significant, for it has influenced much of the subsequent writing on this problem.⁶ Today the opinion seems to be widespread that time is an essentially aporetic phenomenon, which no philosophical methodology can hope to fully capture, or rather for which we essentially lack an appropriate conceptual framework. This state of the discussion is also relevant to the present argument, according to which Heidegger’s development toward such a thought of a non-present presence and an original difference can in fact be said to be anticipated by his conception of historicity.

Any discussion of Heidegger’s views on time must take into account the position from which he approaches this philosophical territory. As opposed to all the classic treatises on time, Heidegger’s question is not: “What is time?” He never takes the form of this ontological question for granted. His premise is instead that the meaning of this question—the question “What is?”—is already temporally determined, because the meaning of being implied in the classic form of the question is itself temporally determined: as presence. Thus, the question of the being of presence is never just a limited ontological concern, but is inevitably implied in every other ontological question. Whenever we take the

⁵ “Der Spruch des Anaximander,” in Holzwege, GA 5, pp. 317-368.

⁶ This is at least implicitly the case with Ricoeur (1985), and it is certainly true in the case of Wood (1989) and Wood (1993). When Bernet (1983) applies Derrida’s critical conclusions in an analysis of Husserl as a metaphysician of presence, he also suggests that this applies to a certain extent to Heidegger as well. Ricoeur and Wood could also be described as attempting to overcome the impasse instituted by Derrida, in studies of how a temporal horizon is in fact established through linguistic practice. In this context one may also mention a long essay by Patrick Bigelow, “The Indeterminability of Time in ‘Sein und Zeit,’” that carries Derrida’s skeptical conclusions even further, Bigelow (1986).
standard temporal framework for granted in our characterizations and
determinations of beings, we are already ontologically committed.
Heidegger’s challenging of this temporal framework thus runs parallel
to his ontological explorations of being.

Despite this originality of Heidegger’s approach, and despite his own
claims of having surpassed every previous philosophical thematization
of time, he is still indebted to certain forerunners in particular. In the
above mentioned essay, Derrida develops the connections to Aristotle
and Hegel in a more detailed manner than Heidegger does himself.
However, the obvious point of comparison is Husserl, whose writings
anticipate the connections between time, objectification, and the limits
of representation that also surface in Heidegger’s writings. This is
not the proper place to probe more deeply into the labyrinthine
territory of Husserl’s philosophy of time, though a few remarks are
appropriate to introduce the subsequent discussion of Heidegger.

Just as in the case of Heidegger, it is misleading to speak of Husserl’s
writings on “inner time consciousness” as concerned only with inner
time, as opposed to outer or objective time. From early on, Husserl’s
explorations led him to confront the constitution of objectivities as
such, and eventually to develop a theory of how this must be sought on
the level of so-called “absolute consciousness.” In this sense, the
Husserlian phenomenology of inner time-consciousness was onto-
logically implicated from the start. Like Kant in the first Critique,
Husserl was concerned with the possibility and constitution of the
durable object. In his lectures on the history of the concept of time,
Heidegger states that the problem of time has always stood in relation to

7 This connection to Husserl is rarely mentioned by Heidegger himself, whose
silence in SZ with respect to the former is quite striking. In one brief passage in a
footnote toward the very end of the book, Heidegger refers to how recent analyses of
time (no names mentioned) have added nothing to Aristotle and Kant, except in the
domain of the “consciousness of time,” (i.e., an expression that echoes the title of
Husserl’s lectures that Heidegger himself was editing at the time), SZ, p. 433.
However, a different, and more generous, evaluation of Husserl (and also, in fact, of
Bergson) is outlined in the lecture series on the metaphysical foundations of logic from
the summer of 1928, where Husserl’s analyses of inner time consciousness are recog-
nized as a project on an equal footing with Heidegger’s own explorations of original
temporality, GA 26, pp. 264f. Husserl’s Vorlesungen zur Phänomenologie des
inneren Zeitbewußtseins were first published by Heidegger at Husserl’s request in
1928 in Husserl’s Jahrbuch (with most of the editorial work done by Edith Stein).
For a good comparative discussion of their positions on time, see Bernet (1987/1988).

8 Still the significant differences between Husserl and Kant on this issue should
not be denied. For a good comparison between the philosophies of time of Husserl and
Kant, see Ricoeur (1985), pp. 43-109.
the fundamental question of philosophy: of the reality of reality or the being of being. This is no doubt also true of Husserl’s investigations into inner time consciousness, at least if one considers them in their full historical development. There is an argumentative pattern that unites Heidegger and Husserl (and in some respect Kant), which leads from a theory of constitution of objectivities to the positing of time (or temporality) as the non-objectifiable domain of objectification itself. It is to the logic of this development in Heidegger’s writings that we should now turn.

2. Temporalization as meaning-enactment

The problem of time appears very early in Heidegger’s writings. One of his first independent works is an essay from 1916 on the concept of time in the historical sciences (mentioned in passing in Chapter One). This essay is often too easily discarded as only a student’s work from Heidegger’s neo-Kantian period, but it constitutes an important background for the interpretation of the later developments. In this essay there is yet no trace of the theory of existential temporality found in _SZ_. It approaches the question of time in a straightforward neo-Kantian way, in terms of how a specific conceptual framework structures its object. Time is thus analyzed as a conceptual tool that is shown to function differently in different contexts, which is illustrated most clearly when one compares the natural and the historical sciences. The temporal qualification of nature as “succession” is described as a conceptual order different from that of historical time, which is primarily chronological and qualitative. The explicit purpose is not to ground one temporal framework in another, but rather to make sure that the concept of time used in the natural sciences is not naively applied to the historical material, in other words, to make sure (in the spirit of Rickert) that the uniqueness of historical understanding is

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9 GA 20, p. 8. In speaking of the later developments of Husserl’s work on time, from the Bernauer manuscripts (from 1917-1918) and onward, Bernet in his introduction explicitly mentions such an “ontologizing” turn, in which the ontological consequences of the idealist epistemology are made brought out by Husserl himself, Husserl (1985), p. Ixvii. However, one could argue that such a turn had in fact been initiated much earlier.


11 As K. Lehmann also pointed out in an early essay on Heidegger and the neo-Kantians, it is significant that this is the only text from Heidegger’s early period to which he explicitly refers in _SZ_, Lehmann (1963/64), p. 343.
grasped and preserved as such through a proper understanding of its conceptual structure.

This text may nevertheless be seen to anticipate the subsequent step in Heidegger’s thinking on time, for it assigns to the concept of time a fundamental role, not only in the demarcation among different types of objects, but also, implicitly, in their constitution. Another important aspect of this essay is how, despite its apparently neutral approach, it still implicitly evaluates the different temporal categorizations. In passing, Heidegger states that the division of time for purpose of measurement “destroys authentic time in its flow and lets it freeze.”

This is a marginal remark in the context of the essay, but its repercussions can be sensed throughout his continued reflections on time. It suggests that the different types of temporal constitution are not equivalent. The time of natural science not only complements the time of history; somehow it also “destroys” it. A few years later Heidegger will elaborate his theory of Dasein’s “authentic temporality” (which will be discussed in more detail shortly), where “authenticity” is tied directly to the mode in which individual Dasein relates to its own finitude. Here, however, “authenticity” characterizes historical time, as the qualitative, non-homogeneous time of the deed and the event. In other words, at this earliest stage, the most original level of time is not as closely tied to the individual Dasein as during the phase of SZ. This is noteworthy not least considering that the theory of existential temporality attempted in this work was one of the points with which Heidegger was least satisfied, and from which he would later distance himself.

In Chapter One, Heidegger’s general orientation during this period was described as directed toward a philosophy of life as enactment of meaning. It was also discussed how this idea of enactment could be understood as an extension of the Husserlian idea of intentional analysis. The shift in focus occurred partly because Heidegger directed his questioning toward the being of intentionality itself. In order to have access to the domain of intentionality, or of life as enactment of intentionality itself.

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\(^{12}\) Ibid., p. 424: “Wir machen in der Zeitskala gleichsam einen Einschnitt, zerstören damit die eigentliche Zeit in ihrem Fluss und lassen sie erstarren.”

\(^{13}\) This conception of historical time also anticipates what he will also explore as “kairiological time” in some of the lectures from the early twenties, a theme which is addressed in Chapter Five.
meaning, the analysis must observe certain precautions. Most important, it must not objectify its field of study in accordance with the having of ordinary objectivities. On the contrary, it must recognize the fundamentally self-reflexive situation in which such an analysis operates, as its achievements are instances of those very same structures that it studies. It was in the context of trying to secure the specificity of this type of investigation, both in terms of its theme and of its method (or attitude), that the concept of “the historical” appeared in the early writings, in ways of which I have already spoken at some length. When the problems of time and temporality appear in the early lectures, a few years after the above mentioned essay, it is in the focal point of the same methodological concerns: namely, of finding new concepts for speaking about the constitution of meanings and objectivities that can transcend the traditional philosophy of consciousness and subjectivity.

When Heidegger first begins to operate with the concepts of temporality and “temporalization” (Zeitigung) as alternative ways of designating the being of the meaning-constituting process that we are, there is in fact no clear distinction between the level of “the historical” and “the temporal.” And when the theme of temporality eventually comes to the fore of his philosophical concerns during the later part of the twenties, it incorporates many of the problems initially addressed in terms of historicity. In his lectures on Aristotle from 1922, this conceptual polyphony is often exemplified. In describing the subject-object relation in terms of a “having,” Heidegger writes:

> The proper having of an attitude qua attitude is the how of its enactment. What is decisive is the being of the enactment (temporalization, the historical).  

Here the concepts are apparently just stacked together, as mutually implicative or perhaps even synonymous. The order of priorities is not yet settled at this stage.  

\[14 \text{GA 61, p. 60: “Das eigentliche Haben aber eines Verhalten qua Verhalten ist ein Wie seines Vollzugs. Entscheidend ist also das Sein des Vollzugs (Zeitigung, das Historische).”}

\[15 \text{The same conceptual parallelism is attested to already in the lectures on the phenomenology of religion from the winter of 1920/21, which have not been published. T. Sheehan, on whom I partly rely for the knowledge of this material, explicitly recognizes this blending of concepts, without, however, addressing it as a problem in itself. Commenting on the lectures, he writes: “The generation of temporality (or equally, of the ‘historical’) is both the theme and the method of the new phenomenology.” Sheehan (1986), p. 51. The same observation is made by R. Makkreel (1990), p. 313, who simply cites the same passage from GA 61, without further commentary.} \]
The lectures on Aristotle mark the beginning of Heidegger’s idiosyncratic use of Zeitigung, which occurs frequently in this text. The verb zeitigen is a rather uncommon expression for either the transitive “bring to maturity” or the intransitive “come to stand,” or simply “mature.” The noun exists as an even rarer expression for the process or activity of maturation. Thus in its normal use it has no immediate connection to time. But in this context it obviously marks a transition toward a temporal qualification of life in a new sense. What kind of concept is it, and what is its relation to time proper? To begin with, one may consider it in the context of the early essay, where the time of natural science was recognized as an organizing framework in terms of which objectivities are constituted as extension and sequence. As such, time is the universal, homogeneous, and encompassing form of all that is given. If life, as enactment of meaning, is seen as a process in time, it is placed on equal footing with every other natural event. However, if the goal is to understand precisely such events in terms of the different ways in which life “has” its world, in other words, in terms of its meaning-enactment, then we cannot presuppose this temporal framework. Instead, the temporal framework itself must be grasped as a manifestation of the constitutive process under investigation. For this reason, enactment of meaning must itself be seen as a time-constituting operation, an operation in and through which events are given their ordinary temporal qualifications. This is the process or movement of “temporalization.” At least this seems to be the logic behind the introduction of this uncommon expression.

How can this supposedly temporal-temporalizing movement itself be circumscribed and grasped in understanding? Where does it exist in respect to time in the ordinary sense? Does it stand outside time altogether? Or, to put the question in somewhat less naive terms: if time is the organizing framework for speaking about beings, how can this framework be explicated further? Heidegger never formulates the

16 This is the same problem as the one with which Husserl had to struggle, once he had posited an absolute consciousness as a time-constituting intentionality. What kind of temporal predicates can we reasonably ascribe to this level, without corrupting the entire endeavour? Husserl was led at this stage to develop his idea of an original present, an absolute or living present (Gegenwart), and its object-correlate, the original impression (Urimpression), with reference to which objective and constituted time could be accounted for (the critical assessments of which constitute a tradition in itself that cannot be addressed here. See Derrida [1967], Held [1981], and Bernet [1983]). Husserl’s step has no immediate equivalent in Heidegger’s analysis, even though—as I will argue in a subsequent chapter—it is structurally reminiscent of how

problem as straightforwardly as this. Instead, he tries to circumscribe it by a series of conceptual *tours de force* whereby time is both placed in and withdrawn from an ordinary linguistic framework. However, he is clearly aware of the problem, as is demonstrated by the remarks in a lecture from 1925, where he explicitly speaks of the need for what he calls an “indicative” (*anzeigende*) language when speaking about *Dasein*, time, and temporality:

All statements about the being of *Dasein*, all statements about time, all statements within the problematics of temporality have, as expressed statements, the character of the indication: they only indicate *Dasein*, since they, as expressed sentences, primarily refer to present-at-hand...¹⁷

The concept of “temporalization” may be seen as one example of this kind of language; it designates that which is not to be understood as progressing in time, but which nevertheless generates time and temporal predicates. The mode of being of this process is to temporalize; but not even this formulation is really permitted, since “being” is already a differentiated predicate that presupposes its different modes of temporalization. Consequently, it is said in *SZ* that temporality is not a being; temporality simply temporalizes, *die Zeitlichkeit zeitigt sich.*¹⁸

And for the same reason Heidegger will also speak (in the same section of *SZ*) of temporality as “ec-static,” that is, as being “outside-of-itself,” *Außer-sich*, and even as being the “primordial” outside-of-itself. Temporality is not “located” in, nor localizable to, anything other than itself, it is the ungrounded ground. The examples of such reservations could be multiplied. Together they indicate an origin, with reference to which every other possible determination should be

the the concept of *Augenblick* is introduced in *SZ.*

¹⁷ *GA* 21, p. 410: “Alle Aussagen über Sein des *Daseins*, alle Sätze über Zeit, alle Sätze innerhalb der Problematis der Temporalität haben als ausgesprochene Sätze den Charakter der Anzeige: sie indizieren nur *Dasein*, während sie als ausgesprochene Sätze doch zunächst Vorhandenes meinen...” Also concerning this ineffability of temporality there are noteworthy connections to Husserl that could no doubt be elaborated. Original time-consciousness appears in his writings as an ever receding horizon of questionability, where language itself ultimately seems to falter. This is clearly exemplified by the section on absolute subjectivity in the lectures on inner time consciousness. Of this time-constituting level of absolute subjectivity, Husserl states that it cannot even be ascribed meaningful predicates. The image of the stream (*Fluß*) is said to be really just a metaphor, since the stream, as opposed to that which it portrays, passes in time. For this non-temporal stream, Husserl concludes, “we lack the names” (*Für all das fehlen uns die Namen*, Husserl [1928/1980], p. 429).

ultimately explicable, while itself being inaccessible to the descriptive schemata to which it gives rise.

On a general level the philosophical problem, or rather the philosophical situation, is familiar. The structure of the argument is the same as the one that organizes the discussion of life as historical. In the case of both temporality and historicity, the descriptive force of these philosophical concepts is surrounded by precautions. They designate what they designate only by indicating their own enactment. In the case of historicity it was explicitly stated that what it describes—a certain fundamental mode of being of Dasein—is only accessible on the condition that Dasein adopts the historical-hermeneutical stance toward itself. The circular epistemic situation is thus the key to the field of exploration. This situation is repeated in the case of temporality. Like historicity, temporality somehow implies its own mode of access. It is important to see this situation clearly, for only then is it possible to understand the development of Heidegger's argument, and only then is it possible to sort out the ambiguities that result from it, especially concerning the distinction between temporality, authentic temporality, and primordial temporality. As we will see, part of the difficulty of his analysis of time results from his dual use of "authentic temporality" as a qualified mode of temporalization, and as a concept that designates the deepest level of temporalization, which he also speaks of as "primordial temporality."

3. Authentic temporality as foundation and qualified mode of access

In the writings from the early twenties life is often described as "temporalization," but it is only in a seminal lecture from 1924 that this theme is explicitly placed in the context of the general problem of time and temporality. 19 This lecture, which was only recently made available, is striking in many ways. It may be read as an outline or blueprint for the much longer discussion in SZ, with which it also shares some of its internal problems.

Heidegger begins by discussing the time of physics in much the same way as in the early essay on time in the historical sciences. Physical

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19 This is the essay "Der Begriff der Zeit." It grew out of a larger work with the same title, which has not yet been published (projected as GA 64), which was partly motivated by Heidegger's encounter with the Dilthey-Yorck correspondence (see H. Tietjen's post-face to the published lecture). See also T. Kisiel's discussion and summary of the main points of this work, Kisiel (1993), pp. 315-361.
time is said to be the time of measurement, a time that ultimately consists in the continual stipulation of a now, in relation to which other nows are organized. As an alternative route to the problem, he turns to Augustine, quoting the famous passage from the Confessions where it is said that time is measured in the soul. He then concludes that his considerations of time have led him back to Dasein. In other words, he openly chooses an Augustinian (and, one could also say, Husserlian) way, as opposed to an Aristotelian way. The task is consequently stated: “to make visible the connection between that which is in time and authentic temporality.”

Here we must stop and reflect on the significance of a philosophical move, the difficult implications of which can be followed throughout the subsequent elaborations of time as temporality, namely, the idea of authentic temporality. It has been observed how the idea was put forth in the earlier text on the concept of time, but there it was not thematized as such but only left as an indication that historical time constitutes a more primordial time than the time of physical measurement. In this lecture, however, a scheme is established that will organize Heidegger’s discourse on time during a certain period, including SZ. The general idea behind this scheme was discussed in the foregoing chapter (Section 4); the authentic understanding of oneself serves as a route of access to the ontological explorations, which, in turn, have precisely the possibility of this authenticity as one of their explicit themes. Reciprocally, authenticity, or authentic understanding, also marks the ultimate level on which the existential analyses can be verified. In the introductory section on the nature of Dasein in SZ,

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20 Confessions, Book XI, Chapter 27, p. 272: “in te anime meus, tempora metior.”

21 BZ, p. 12: “...einen möglichen Zusammenhang dessen, was in der Zeit ist, mit dem, was die eigentliche Zeitlichkeit ist, von allem Anfang an sichtbar werden zu lassen.”

22 This inner dialectic of Heidegger’s account in SZ and elsewhere cannot be discarded if one is to follow its argument, even though it may certainly be critically discussed. The general problem of authenticity and inauthenticity has been somewhat of an embarrassment to many of Heidegger’s modern readers, who have tried, encouraged by Heidegger himself in later writings, to distance themselves from the existentialist aspects of his early work. It was mentioned how Derrida criticized the notion as such for being caught in a metaphysical conceptuality, which is perhaps also why he chose to disregard how it actually functions in Heidegger’s account of time. Ricoeur is more attentive to its importance, when he comments on the crucial distinction between existential (existenzial) analysis and existentiell (existenzial) understanding, where the latter functions as a confirmation or anchorage of the former in individual Dasein, Ricoeur (1985), pp. 118ff.
Heidegger states that authenticity and inauthenticity are “both grounded in the fact that any Dasein whatsoever is characterized by mineness,” in other words that it always relates to itself as its own possibility.\(^\text{23}\) Dasein’s tendency to “fall” is precisely the tendency to understand itself not from its own possibilities but from the possibility of something else, natural objects or the anonymous structure of das Man.\(^\text{24}\) “Authenticity,” on the other hand, designates the existential understanding that issues from one’s own possibilities. This is why it holds such a prominent and problematic position within existential analysis. It designates a quality of Dasein, but only to the extent that Dasein relates to some aspect of itself in understanding.

Strictly speaking, it should thus not make sense to speak of authenticity beyond the actual cases where something is understood by Dasein. However, Heidegger sometimes also uses authenticity as a qualification of that which is understood. This ambiguity becomes especially poignant in the notion of “authentic temporality.” Authentic temporality is always first introduced as a qualified way of relating in understanding to a fundamental predicament of existence, namely, that of finitude. But subsequently it is also presented as an ontological datum, on which Heidegger’s theory of time is erected, or rather, in terms of which time as such is reinterpreted. This ambiguity is partly responsible for the difficulties that one encounters in reading what he has to say about time, and this ambiguity is often propagated by commentaries. It is therefore necessary to examine more closely how these two aspects are related.

How then is authentic temporality introduced in the 1924 lecture? After having concluded that time must be sought in Dasein, Heidegger recapitulates the basic steps of the existential analytic, whose scheme is fully elaborated by then (with the existentiales of being-in-the-world, being-with, care, own-ness, das Man, etc.). However, what is important here is the path that leads to the temporal level. The first step is the description of Dasein’s finitude, its being-toward death, as the most extreme possibility of individual Dasein. He writes:

> The self-explication of Dasein, which surpasses every other assertion in certitude and authenticity, is the explication in the direction of its death,


\(^{24}\) On the concept of “falling,” see esp. SZ, § 38.
the indeterminate certitude of the most proper possibility of being-
toward-the-end.\textsuperscript{25} What is the connection to time here? Heidegger—rhetorically—asks the question himself. It is by no means obvious. Never before in the history of philosophy was the question of the nature of time based on an account of the finitude of human existence, not in Aristotle, not in Augustine, and certainly not in Husserl. What does the philosophical recognition of mortality accomplish here?

First of all, it secures the possibility of authenticity, in the sense that the explicit recognition of mortality invites Dasein to understand itself from the perspective of its own most certain possibility: that one day it will not be. However, it still remains unclear—Heidegger acknowledges it himself—how this relates to the problem of time. In the next step Dasein’s being-toward-death is designated as “anticipation” or “moving-ahead” (Vorlauf-en), as “the authentic future of Dasein” (eigentliche Zukunft des Daseins). However, what really opens the field of time as temporality is the move from the recognition of the authentic possibility of one’s own death to possibility in general. The singular, inexchangeable possibility of death discloses Dasein to itself as possibility, or as Heidegger says here: “Dasein as human life is primarily being-possible.”\textsuperscript{26} And it is from this being-possible that the “futurality” of Dasein issues.

But if Heidegger wants to say that Dasein’s authentic temporality is rooted in its being-possible, why is it necessary to go by the question of finitude? Perhaps if there were not at least one anticipated possibility that was Dasein’s “own,” then the whole structure of anticipation would not become intelligible as such. The one and unique possibility of death keeps this structure from drifting away from Dasein’s grasp. Finitude marks an utmost horizon of comprehensibility, against which the attempt to grasp the being of Dasein rebounds; as a unique, inexchangeable possibility it discloses Dasein to itself as possibility in general.\textsuperscript{27} Nevertheless, the point that Heidegger wants to make about

\textsuperscript{25} BZ, p. 16: “Die Selbstauslegung des Daseins, die jede andere Aussage an Gewißheit und Eigentlichkeit überragt, ist die Auslegung auf seinen Tod, die unbestimmte Gewißheit der eigensten Möglichkeit des Zu-Ende seins” (Heidegger’s italics).

\textsuperscript{26} Ibid., p. 17: “Dasein als menschliches Leben ist primär Möglichkeit...,” a remark that prefigures the definition of existentiality in SZ, p. 42.

\textsuperscript{27} From the preceding chapter we are in fact familiar with this strange way of grounding the understanding of a phenomenon in a projection toward non-being. In
anticipation, and the one that eventually leads to his conception of temporality, does not seem to depend on this unique possibility. Even though it is the specific and unique possibility of death that clears the way to Dasein’s authentic self-understanding, it is the phenomenon of possibility or anticipation in general that enables Heidegger to introduce time as a determination of Dasein. It is also with reference to anticipation in general that the future is designated as the “basic phenomenon of time.”

What remains then of the sense of “authentic temporality,” as opposed to temporality simpliciter, and what remains of the distinction between them? Toward the end of the lecture Heidegger does not use the expression “authentic.” He only speaks of temporality, but still the temporality he claims to have revealed is designated as finite, and as a way of being toward one’s end. Should we thus think of authentic temporality and temporality as ultimately indistinguishable?

The same question applies to the presentation in SZ, where the problem of temporality is introduced along the same lines as in the 1924 lecture, by means of a discussion of finitude. Its definition of temporality simpliciter is modelled on the basis of an account of how Dasein can relate authentically to its own finitude, in anticipatory resoluteness. It reads:

Coming back to itself futurally, resoluteness brings itself into the situation by making present. The character of “having been” arises from the future, and in such a way that this future which “has been” (or better, which is “in the process of having been”) releases from itself the present. This unitary phenomenon of a future which makes present in the process of having been we designate as temporality.

However, only a few pages later he speaks explicitly of how it is the account (in Section 6) of how historical repetition could be authentic, the same logic was manifested. In both situations, finitude is what eliminates possibility, and yet discloses it. Finitude permits it to be grasped and enacted as such. As a mode of self-possession it is essentially dubious, for the same reasons that were mentioned in the previous chapter: it is a self-possession mediated through a realization of the ultimate non-possibility of self-possession that is one’s own death. For a discussion of this mode of reasoning, precisely in regard to BZ, see J. Sallis, Echoes After Heidegger (1990), pp. 50-55.

28 BZ, p. 19: “...das Grundphänomen der Zeit ist die Zukunft” (Heidegger italicizes the entire expression).

"authentic temporality" that temporalizes from the future, as opposed to other modes of temporalization. Later on in the book he develops the distinction between temporality as a supposedly neutral threefold structure, and the modification of this structure toward authenticity.\(^{30}\) To this terminological mix is also added the interchangeable use of "primordial" or "original" (ursprünglich) and "authentic" (eigentlich) as descriptions of temporality.\(^{31}\)

These puzzling features of the analysis of temporality no doubt signal unresolved tensions in Heidegger's own understanding of this matter. The general conclusion to be drawn from his discussion is that authentic temporality first and foremost marks a privileged mode of self-disclosure, of Dasein's "having" of itself. Furthermore, this privileged mode of access opens up a fundamental mode of being of Dasein, which is here called "temporality," and which is characterized by existing as a finite projection of possibilities.\(^{32}\)

4. Anticipation and intentionality; temporality as being-possible

The reference to the problem of possibility in relation to temporality may seem irrelevant at first, but it opens up a philosophical space wherein one can sense the return of all the classic paradoxes raised by Aristotle when introducing the question of time in Physics. Considering that neither the future nor the past really exists, but only the present, and that the present is only a limit value between the past and the future, it seems as if there really is no part of time that truly exists. Time itself then seems to disappear altogether into the region of possible being. Starting from this premise, the various discourses on time, including Aristotle's, could be read as one long attempt to specify

\(^{30}\) In §68 (pp. 335-350) he will distinguish authentic forms of future, present, and past from the corresponding inauthentic versions.

\(^{31}\) Cf., e.g., p. 329: "The primary phenomenon of primordial and authentic temporality is the future" (Das primäre Phänomen der ursprünglichen und eigentlichen Zeitlichkeit ist die Zukunft). Thereby the possibility of drawing a distinction among temporality, authentic temporality, and original temporality clearly collapses.

\(^{32}\) Using a classic distinction—which is not found in the lecture on time nor in SZ—one could perhaps say that authentic temporality has priority as a ratio cognoscendi, if yet not as a ratio essendi. However, this still fails to capture the peculiar nature of Heidegger's quest where the order of knowledge and the order of being are inextricably intertwined. If the existential analysis is to remain true to its calling, the ratio cognoscendi must also be made the theme of an investigation into its ratio essendi. (One may note that the distinction is in fact briefly discussed by Heidegger himself, in a discussion of Schopenhauer and his reading of Leibniz, in GA 26, pp. 139-140.)
time in terms of a present, whose elusive nature escapes a stable grasp.

Through his radical move, Heidegger initially seems to have eluded the weight of this tradition. By positing the future, the not-yet, or simply the possible, as the principal phenomenon in an account of time as a threefold movement of temporalization, he can initiate his critique of all the previous thematizations of time as guided by a naive preference for the present. But through the reference to "anticipation" as that which opens up a future, Heidegger’s analysis nevertheless returns to the central Husserlian theme from which it originally departed: intentionality. Anticipation, as a being-ahead-of-itself and a directedness toward an unfulfilled possibility, recapitulates the structure of intentionality. As already noted, intentionality is not an operative concept in Heidegger’s thinking, at least not at the time of SZ. In the 1922 manuscript on Aristotle it is, however, explicitly mentioned as a general category for speaking about the total “structure of an object,” to which also belongs the “temporalization of its enactment.”33 In the same context he speaks of intentionality as the “basic movement” of life, a movement that is furthermore equated with “care.” It was through the analysis of care that Heidegger saw himself as having retrieved what was only implicitly and insufficiently captured by the Husserlian notion of intentionality.34 In SZ the account of temporality is presented as the answer to the question of the “meaning” of care, that is, as the direction toward which this phenomenon is ultimately explicable.35 Thus in Heidegger’s analysis, intentionality (in Husserl’s sense) is separated from temporality by two levels of ontological repetition or meaning retrieval. Still, this doubly removed explication does not transcend the initial problem of how to grasp anticipation and being-possible as such.

At this point, where the attempt to think and understand temporality returns to its own origin—the movement of anticipation—we can also see its relation to the problem of historicity as this was first put

33 PA, p. 247.
34 This connection is explicitly recognized by Heidegger on several occasions. See, e.g., the section on “Sorge und Intentionalität” in GA 20, p. 420, and also in GA 61, p. 98. F.-W. von Herrmann discusses the connection in Der Begriff der Phänomenologie bei Heidegger und Husserl (1981), p. 38. In the article “Husserl and Heidegger on the Role of Actions in the Constitution of the World,” D. Føllesdal even reports a reciprocal use of Sorge in one of Husserl’s later writings, Føllesdal (1979), p. 372.
35 SZ, §65.
forward. The sense of historical life was said to be comprehensible only from the perspective of life’s own enactment, not of its actuality, but of its actualization, in other words, of its passage from possibility to actuality. A key formulation in this context, repeated over and over again, was the need to think life in terms not of its what but of its how. Therefore it comes as no surprise when Heidegger, in the 1924 lecture, says that “the returning through anticipation is itself the how of caring in which I linger.” And in the concluding remarks the same thought is expressed even more poignantly, as he simply states: “Time

36 These central Aristotelian concepts are never far away in what Heidegger has to say about historicity and temporality. Indeed, a different and no doubt very interesting discussion of Heidegger’s relation to Aristotle on the issues of temporality and historicity could be developed not on the basis of Physics Δ: 10-14 (where time is the explicit theme), but on the account of possibility (δύναμις), actuality (ἐνέργεια), and actualization (ἐντελεχεία) in Metaphysics Θ, a work to which Heidegger would always return. It is toward this particular text that his projected interpretation is moving in the 1922 manuscript on Aristotle. In a lecture series on human freedom eight years later, he devotes a long section to the interpretation of it (GA 31, pp. 73-109), and when he lectures on Aristotle in 1931, he speaks of this particular section as the single most important passage in Aristotle, and as containing “the greatest truth” in all of classical philosophy (GA 33, p. 219). In these lectures there are only a few explicit connections to the problem of time, but the overall orientation of Heidegger’s analysis is clearly concerned with precisely the questions encountered in the previous discussions of temporality and historicity, namely the enigma of the being of the possible, as a specific type of non-objectifiable present. Especially noteworthy is his account of Θ:3 and of Aristotle’s argument with the Megarian philosophers, who held that the only mode of being of the possible is the actualization (ibid., pp. 160-224). The problem, as Heidegger sees it here, is: “what ‘is’ a possibility, which is not only thought as possible, but as really there, if yet not in actualization?” (Wie “ist” ein Vermögen, das nicht nur als mögliches gedacht, sondern wirklich vorhanden ist, obzwar nicht sich verwirklichend?, ibid., p. 171). According to Heidegger, the Megarians were unable to think this mode of existence, a mode that he reinterprets with the expression of “enactment” (Vollzug). Aristotle is here credited with at least having pointed toward this other mode of being, which is also said to constitute another mode of presence incorporating the actuality of that which is not yet actualized (ibid., p. 184). This mode is not that of an actualization in the sense of ἐνέργεια, but of an ἐντελεχεία, a having, (ibid., p. 189). Both of these concepts—Vollzug and Haben—are familiar from the analyses of historical life, as this was discussed in Chapter One. Here they are reactivated in explicit connection with the problem of the being of the possible. From Heidegger’s viewpoint, it is of course also highly significant that Aristotle exemplifies this mode of being in terms of learning and linguistic capacity. One may also note in this context that five years later, in the first lecture series on Nietzsche, Heidegger will say about Metaphysics Θ that it is the most “question-worthy” (frag- würdigste) of all of Aristotle’s works (NI, p. 77), were he also describes Nietzsche’s concept of power as incorporating all three modalities: both δύναμις, ἐνέργεια, and ἐντελεχεία. Finally, it is certainly no coincidence that κίνησις as the peculiar “combination” or Mittelzustand between δύναμις and ἐνέργεια was also a central concern to Brentano in the book that Heidegger would often refer to as his philosophical initiation, Von der mannigfachen Bedeutung des Seienden nach Aristoteles, Brentano (1862/1960), pp. 40-72, esp. pp. 70-71.

37 BZ, p. 19: "Das Zurückkommen im Vorlaufen ist ja selbst das Wie des Besorgens, in dem ich gerade verweile."
is the how."\textsuperscript{38} We recall the statement in the Remarks to Jaspers, where the decisive task of an existential analysis was declared to be the "explication of the how of this experiential enactment according to its historical basic meaning..."\textsuperscript{39} Thus in the lecture "the temporal" seems to have taken the place of "the historical" in the earlier text in a description that remains the same in its other aspects. They mark parallel attempts to think the being of the understanding, meaning-constitutive movement that Dasein is, in a way that discloses it to itself and yet does not reify it, which is another way of saying that they mark different ways of developing Husserlian intentionality.

Whereas this parallelism between the historical and temporal is clearly demonstrated in some of the early texts, it is also clear that these themes are developed in different directions during the years leading up to the composition of SZ. While the idea of Dasein's historicity is elaborated through the hermeneutical conception of understanding and language, and the questions of conscience, guilt and indebtedness (as explored in Chapters Two and Three), the idea of temporality leads elsewhere. It leads toward an increasingly formal conception of a finite structure of anticipation that is equated with the being of Dasein. In SZ temporality is presented as the "being of Dasein that understands being."\textsuperscript{40} And understanding is here conceived in an entirely formal sense: as projection of possibilities \textit{qua} possibilities, which is what the future really amounts to, an empty possibility, or possibility as such.

How then should one view the claim of SZ that historicity is "grounded in" or "founded on" temporality? This question was mentioned at the outset of the chapter. Now it is time to address it explicitly.

5. Temporality and historicity in SZ

The task of SZ is to raise again the question of the meaning of being. The argument of fundamental ontology implies that the clarification of this task requires the being of the questioner to be made explicit as far as possible, which is the task of the existential analytic. The position of temporality and historicity within this project may seem quite

\textsuperscript{38} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 27: "Die Zeit ist das Wie."
\textsuperscript{39} \textit{GA} 9, p. 32.
\textsuperscript{40} SZ, p. 17: "...Sein des seinverstehenden Daseins."
straightforward at first; they both signify existentiales, i.e., modes of being of Dasein. However, they are not just elements in an ontological structure. They both also determine the nature of the exploration of this structure. This is stated quite clearly in the introductory sections. Dasein is temporal, in the sense that temporality is the mode of being in which every understanding maintains itself, including the understanding of being (p. 17). Dasein is also historical (p. 19), and consequently the question of the meaning of being is itself said to be characterized by historicity (p. 20).

As the analysis progresses, Dasein is eventually defined as care, the fundamental concept that summarizes the entire structure of existenti-ality. As the “meaning” of care, Heidegger then introduces temporality as the ultimate level of explicability of Dasein. As seen already, temporality is here both reached and defined through the account of anticipatory resoluteness for death. The three subsequent chapters in SZ (which also make up the last three chapters of the published work) are devoted to the exploration of this temporality from various angles: from “everydayness,” from “historicity,” and from “within-time-ness.” This structure implies a hierarchy, where the different themes are conceived as concrete elaborations of a more fundamental structure; they all, in their different ways, add content to the formal scheme of ecstatico-horizontal temporality. The analysis of everydayness is essentially a recapitulation of the major points of the existential analysis from the first part. The account of historicity (with which we are familiar from the discussion in Chapter Three) adds such concepts as heritage, destiny, and repetition. In the concluding description of within-time-ness, Heidegger tries to explain the emergence of the conception of time as the universal medium of all events, and how this conception arises out of original temporality. For this purpose he develops an intermediary level of analysis of how Dasein in its practical concerns is always “counting” on and with time, which manifests itself primarily in its “datability.” The original within-time-ness thus has a certain extension, and a public nature; in short, it is a filled time, as opposed to the purely formal level of temporality. The ultimate goal of this concluding chapter is to account for the emergence of the so-called “vulgar” concept of time, that is, the notion of time as a sequence of

41 “Everydayness” and “Within-time-ness” is the common way of translating Heidegger’s Alltäglichkeit and Innerzeitigkeit.
nows, which according to Heidegger is what underlies every philosophical account of time, from Aristotle onward. Thus the chapter also plays an important part in securing the legitimacy of the whole previous argument, by reducing the competing accounts to derivations of Heidegger's own discovery.

This overall structure of the book suggests a clear hierarchy in which the general and formal structure of temporality is applied, or schematized, in various ways, so as to tie together the different levels of the analysis. Thus historicity should have a clear position within the totality, as a derivative aspect of temporality. However, the relation between these levels is not as clear as Heidegger’s formal structuring of the work may at first suggest. Initially, temporality is presented as “the condition of possibility” of historicity, defined as a “temporal mode of being of Dasein” (p. 19). At a later stage of the book, historicity is designated as the general name for “the structure of temporalization of temporality” (p. 332). In the chapter on historicity and temporality, historicity is first said to be “rooted” in temporality (p. 375). Therefore it is also from out of temporality that it is to be “clarified” (ibid). Further on, historicity is said to be essentially just “a more concrete elaboration” of temporality (p. 382). However, the “original” clarification of historicity is possible only from out of authentic temporality (ibid). Shortly thereafter authentic historicity is said to be “made possible” by authentic temporality (p. 385). In the same context authentic temporality is said to be the “hidden ground” of historicity (p. 386). I mention all of these formulations to give a sense of the urgency with which Heidegger seeks to establish the conceptual hierarchy between the two levels, but also to give an idea of the vacillating way in which it is performed. This vacillation is partly due—I believe—to Heidegger’s struggle to impose an order among concepts that he has not fully elaborated, but also to his working against his own original orientation.

Historicity is not just a more concrete elaboration of temporality. At an earlier stage they are not even clearly distinguished. As philosophical themes, they are introduced in the existential vocabulary at around the same time, in order to capture the peculiar non-objectifiable movement of understanding and meaning-formation. In SZ they are developed as two parallel descriptions of Dasein’s most fundamental mode of “happening,” in which a past is released from a
future so as to generate a present. The account of temporality captures this movement on its most abstract level, where Dasein is seen as a futural anticipation of possibilities in general. When the theme of historicity is retrieved on this level, it is through the question of the origin of these possibilities, to which, as we have already seen, Heidegger responds by introducing his concept of "heritage." From this perspective it seems reasonable to say that historicity adds an element of "concreteness" to the previous description of Dasein's temporality. But such a description fails to recognize how historicity introduces a new aspect into the understanding of understanding. To speak of Dasein's possibilities as heritage suggests that the temporalization of understanding cannot be thought apart from a certain belonging of Dasein to its past, an original opening to the other, which is also an opening to language.

In short, only the introduction of historicity gives the hermeneutization of thought the position that Heidegger assigns to it elsewhere in the book. It is also a concept that keeps the entire account of SZ in suspense in a more radical sense than the "foundational" theory of temporality seems to suggest. The theory of historicity in SZ invites us to think the movement of understanding in a way that challenges the possibility of closing the existential account. In a more radical sense than Heidegger himself acknowledges, it invites us to think of it as a movement where what is one's own is continuously being mediated through what is other in the course of an open-ended hermeneutic situation.\[42\]

6. The Temporalization of being; the reappearance of the historical
The unresolved tension between a "temporal" and a "historical" analysis of Dasein in SZ can also be traced in relation to the guiding question that the book leaves unanswered as it breaks off: the temporal structure of being itself, its "Temporality" as Temporalität (not Zeitlichkeit).\[43\] In Heidegger's treatment of this theme in the works

\[42\] As I suggested in the preceding chapter, there is also another way of conceiving this "founding" role of authentic temporality with respect of historicity, according to which it is not seen as a logical or ontological foundation, but rather as the qualification of an interpretative action. As anticipation of death, so-called authentic temporality marks the mode in which historical repetition should be performed in order to disclose its own situation.

\[43\] Following MacQuarrie and Robinson, the distinction between Zeitlichkeit and
that follow directly upon *SZ*, the priority between the historical and the temporal is again called in question. Here these further developments will be briefly addressed in a discussion of the two types of temporality.

When the question of time is introduced in §5 of *SZ*, it is stated that time is the horizon of the understanding of being, and the purpose of the work is to clarify the temporal (*zeitliche*) structure of this understanding of being. However, a further and ultimate goal is to describe the Temporal (*temporale*) structure of being itself, as a “Temporality of being” (*Temporalität des Seins*). In *SZ* it is never made fully clear what exactly this would amount to. The book ends after four hundred pages with an open question, whether there is indeed a temporalization of ec-static temporality that makes a projection of being as such possible. Should it be taken to mean that the structures of temporalization studied within the extant part of *SZ* were only applicable to non-philosophical or non-ontological understanding, and that they could be complemented by other forms of understanding? Or should it be taken to mean that being, over and above Dasein, has a temporal structure of its own?

The closest Heidegger comes to answering this question explicitly is the famous lectures he gave in the spring of 1927 right after the publication of *SZ*, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*. In these lectures—to which I will refer as *Grundprobleme*—he makes an attempt to do what *SZ* leaves undone: namely, a “Temporal interpretation of being itself.” In *Grundprobleme*, the level of Temporality is given a clear definition in terms of the scheme developed in *SZ*: Temporality (*Temporalität*) is here presented as the name for temporality (*Zeitlichkeit*) to the extent that the latter functions as a “condition for ontological understanding of being.”

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44 *Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie, GA 24* (henceforth referred to as *Grundprobleme* in the main text). For a detailed analysis of the specific problem of the relation between temporality and Temporality, through a comparison of *SZ* and the *Grundprobleme*, see M. Heinz’s monograph *Zeitlichkeit und Temporality* (1982), esp. pp. 164-180.

45 The ambition is restated not only in *Grundprobleme*, but also in the lectures from the following year on Leibniz and the metaphysical foundations of logic, where “Fundamental ontology” is said to consist in, first, an analytic of Dasein and, second, an analytic of the Temporality (*Temporalität*) of being (GA 26, p. 201).

46 *GA 24*, p. 388: “Wir nennen die Zeitlichkeit, sofern sie als Bedingung der
other words, it is the name for the temporal structure of ontological understanding. What does this analysis add to what has already been stated in SZ concerning the temporality of understanding in general? Is there yet a deeper, temporally determined level, which could somehow incorporate the entire result of the previous ontological investigations as its higher order self-reflection? The long account that follows leaves the reader in doubt. Essentially, it amounts to a recapitulation, in greater detail, of the temporal structure of understanding as this has already been explored in SZ.

Understanding is a basic determination of Dasein, and ontological understanding is a modification of understanding in general. This has also been stated clearly in SZ as a truth of existential ontology. In Grundprobleme its significance increases, however, since the discussion there is explicitly concerned with the conditions of ontological knowledge as such. When the question of the possibility of ontological knowing is raised explicitly in Grundprobleme, Heidegger first specifies that understanding is the “fundamental determination of existence.” This description is later followed by the remark that through the concept of understanding the “happening” of Dasein has been characterized: its historicity. The temporality of understanding of being is said to be characterized by repetition, or to be more precise, “repeating anticipation.” To temporalize is to be “had”...
according to a projective, disclosing scheme. The Temporality of being is described in terms of the temporality of how being is given to Dasein, which is the structure of authentic understanding. In SZ this structure is called “historicity” only to the extent that it repeats a heritage for its own time. In Grundprobleme Heidegger speaks of authentic understanding in general as historicity. To some extent, these statements challenge the conceptual priorities of SZ, but essentially they just demonstrate how the two levels of description tend to merge. In Grundprobleme he also insists that there should be a more fundamental temporal (zeitliche) interpretation of this structure. Temporality, he declares almost desperately, “must be the condition of possibility for an understanding of being.”

Still he is unable to articulate this level in other terms than the structure of a repeating anticipation.

The failure of this ambition is of course a significant event in itself, and one that has been much debated in the literature on Heidegger. Why did it fail, and what were the consequences of this failure for Heidegger’s subsequent orientation? The third division of the first part of SZ, which was to have been entitled “Time and Being,” was never published. Was there ever such a division, and if so, why was it not published? These questions are directly related to Heidegger’s so-called “turning.” In the lectures on Leibniz and the metaphysical foundations of logic (from 1928), he explicitly speaks of the move to a Temporal (temporale) analysis of being as the “turning.” The step from the analysis of Dasein to the way in which being itself Temporalizes supposedly marks a new frontier of philosophical analysis and understanding. But if the project is never carried out as such, what does this signify? Was it vain from the start, or should we instead look for its ramifications in other directions?

Ibid., p. 397: “...so muß auch die Zeitlichkeit die Bedingung der Möglichkeit des Seinsverständnisses und damit des Entwurfs des Seins auf die Zeit sein” (Heidegger’s italics). These remarks should be compared to the penultimate section in Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik, written during the following year. The clarification of temporality as a “transcendental original structure (Urstruktur)” is here still presented as the principal task of fundamental ontology. Similarly, the transcendental interpretation of historicity on the basis of temporality is said to provide a preliminary conception (Vorbegriff) of the mode of being of the “happening” whereby the question of being itself is “repeated,” GA 3, p. 242.

GA 26, p. 201: “Diese temporale Analytik ist aber zugleich die Kehre, in der die Ontologie selbst in die metaphysische Ontik, in der sie unausdrücklich immer steht, ausdrücklich zurückläuft.”
CHAPTER FOUR

One thing is clear: after SZ Heidegger begins to distance himself from the philosophical scheme that organizes this book. The problem of the ontology of Dasein recedes in favor of the question of truth and of the work of art. Heidegger himself would always say that the overriding ambition—to raise the question of being—remained the same. But it is also clear that this led him to exploring different paths and modes of access. A decisive question for any reader of Heidegger is how to assess these ensuing steps, and thus how to assess the “turning.” One possibility, expressed in a recent study by Françoise Dastur, is that Heidegger never abandons the idea of a Temporality of being, he only gives up its systematic formulation. This is then said to be connected to a new perspective on the ontological task itself, which is no longer seen as the “transcendental-horizontal” problem of the meaning of being in terms of the temporalization of Dasein, but the “aletheiological-existential” problem of a truth in which Dasein maintains itself.\(^{53}\) In one respect this assessment is uncontroversial. The transformation that Heidegger’s thinking undergoes during this period is generally understood in terms of a change in emphasis from Dasein as an original domain of (active) meaning-projection, to truth as an event to which Dasein is (passively) exposed, and of which Dasein itself is only a manifestation. However, even though these transformations are clearly demonstrated in the subsequent writings, the sense and significance of the underlying developments are by no means obvious.

One way of understanding this transformation is to see it precisely as a radicalization of the idea of Dasein’s historicity. In many respects it is the analysis of the historicity of existence and of thought, not the analysis of existential temporality, that leads out of the systematic structure of SZ toward the later works. The insistence on the temporality of Dasein as an ultimate interpretative horizon gives Heidegger his most difficult problems, whereas the model of understanding developed as Dasein’s historicity contains the seed of much that is to follow, even though this requires that it is twisted away from its position within the systematic structure of fundamental ontology. In one

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\(^{53}\) Dastur (1990), p. 95: “Heidegger n’a donc pas abandonné la problématique de la Temporalité de l’être, il a simplement renoncé à sa mise en forme systématique, et s’il l’a fait, c’est certainement parce que cette problématique a commencé au début des années trente à lui apparaître dans une nouvelle perspective qui n’est plus celle, transcendental-horizontale, d’un sens de l’être qui se temporaliserait dans la temporalité ekstatique du Dasein, mais celle, alethiologique-eksistentiale, d’une vérité de l’être dans laquelle le Dasein se tient et à laquelle il a à correspondre.”
respect the continuity could be traced on the level of philosophical praxis. The description of Dasein’s historicity implies that the only route to authentic historical existence is through repeating a philosophical heritage for one’s own time. Only by entering a critical dialogue, an Auseinandersetzung, with the strongest voices of the past can one prevail as a self in the medium of history. Furthermore, only by pursuing in an ever more radical way the destruction of classical ontology—a need for which SZ argues precisely with reference to the historicity of thinking—can a measure of ontological clarification be achieved. In this regard, Heidegger’s encompassing attempts to assess the philosophico-heritage of the West, and to establish a dialogue with Hölderlin and Nietzsche, could be seen as logical sequels to his own description of the Dasein’s historicity in SZ.

Apart from this “practical” extension of the account of historicity, there is, however, another philosophically more important sense in which the idea of historicity determines the course of his thinking after SZ. This is a course characterized first and foremost by a radicalized sense of the dependency of thinking with regard to what is thought. Marion Heinz describes it well when she speaks of Heidegger’s subsequent thinking of being as “assuming an attitude of indebtedness, in which it no longer claims to disclose the truth of being on the basis of itself.”^54 On the basis of her reading of SZ, Heinz also suggests that this transformation must be understood as an abandonment of the idea of historicity of Dasein in favor of an idea of the historicity of being. This is certainly correct if the former theory is understood only within the confines of Heidegger’s manifest claims in SZ, where historicity is grounded in temporality as the ultimate region of meaning-projection. However, in the present account of the development of these two themes, a different picture of Heidegger’s development has been outlined.

According to this picture, we should detect in the description of Dasein’s historicity an attempt to capture a structure of dependency and disclosure, a disclosive “movement” that we are and to which we belong. Throughout the various references to the “historical” in Heidegger’s thinking, we should listen for a particular mode of understanding and disclosure, characterized by a simultaneous

recognition of non-autonomy of the knower vis-à-vis the known. While this aspect of the problem of historicity is not always apparent in the earlier writings, it is brought out explicitly in the later works, where historicity is assigned to being itself. This is the case in a text which has a special significance in the context of the present discussion, the seminar from 1962, which Heidegger gave the same title as the entire division once withdrawn from SZ: “Time and Being.” In the subsequent section this text will be briefly examined, with a view to the question of the relation between temporality and historicity.

7. Time, being, and the historicization of temporality

The basic premise in “Time and Being” is the same as in SZ, in that metaphysics is said always to have thematized being in an implicitly temporal manner, namely, as presence (Anwesenheit). However, here Heidegger does not repeat the attempt to ground or deduce this temporalization from a more fundamental structure of temporality. Instead, he immediately recognizes that time and being are inextricably tied to one another and that they cannot be thought independently. Being is presence, but presence is always the presence of a being. Confronted with this circular situation, Heidegger instead develops a reflection on the nature of the “giving” of this presence. To begin with, the scheme from the earlier period appears to be intact. Just as in the earlier phase, the common conception of time as a sequence of nows is questioned and replaced by an account of time as a unity of future, past, and present. This unitary structure is described by means of several names: “authentic time,” “time-space,” or simply “the open.” However, the most obvious change with respect to the previous account concerns the position of man within this temporal framework. Here Heidegger explicitly states that time is not a “doing” of man. Instead

56 This also includes his account of the historical transformations of being. In Heidegger’s account, the “history of being” (Geschichte des Seins) is precisely the transformations of the mode of givenness, the sequence of the key epochs in the articulation of being (δεῖα, ἐνεργεία, Begriff, Wille, etc.). I have refrained here from discussing the content of Heidegger’s history of being, since my principal interest is the meaning of “the historical” as itself a mode of being (or rather as the mode in which being is given).
57 SdD, pp. 14f: the expression are eigentliche Zeit, Zeit-Raum, das Offene.
58 Ibid., p. 17: “Die Zeit ist kein Gemächte des Menschen...”
time is what has always already reached man, so that he is what he is only in so far as he stands within it. The task therefore becomes not one of specifying a primordial level of temporal existential projection, but of developing a reflection that may somehow do justice to the enigmatic giving—the *Es gibt*—in which both time and being are given to man. This attempt eventually culminates in the account of *Ereignis* as an event of truth, as *ἀλήθεια*. However, it is also an attempt for which a whole range of “historical” concepts are activated: being is here designated as “history,” as “sending,” and as “happening” (*Geschichte, Geschick, Geschehen*). The purpose of the essay is to raise again the question of time and being, but the conclusion is that being must be understood as history in a certain sense of destiny and sending. Time and temporality are derivative concepts in relation to this history of being. Indeed, time itself is ultimately grasped only through a reflection on how it is given, in other words, how it “happens.”

The text thus illustrates how Heidegger eventually ends up affirming the priority of a “historical” understanding of being, over and against the “Temporal” structure of being which *SZ* left behind as an unfulfilled promise. One could even say that whereas Heidegger in *SZ* and *Grundprobleme* still sought a temporal interpretation of historicity, he here returns to providing a historical interpretation of temporality. Even though such a conclusion has a certain general validity, it moves much too fast. It takes for granted that we can grasp the meaning of “history” and “happening” in this context on the basis of the earlier works. This is, however, a premise that Heidegger himself explicitly questions. In a unique remark in this particular essay, he regrets that people have tried to interpret his idea of a “history of being” through the account of the historicity of Dasein in *SZ*. And he continues by noting that the only way that leads from *SZ* to the later thought is “the destruction of the ontological doctrine of the being of beings.” How should this disavowal of the earlier account be understood?

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59 *Ibid.*, pp. 20-25. The theme of *Ereignis* is discussed at greater length in Chapters Five and Seven.

60 *Ibid.*, p. 9: “Weil man überall das Seins-Geschick nur als Geschichte und dieses als Geschehen vorstellt, versucht man vergeblich, dieses Geschehen aus dem zu deuten, was in ‘Sein und Zeit’ über die Geschichtlichkeit des Daseins (nicht des Seins) gesagt ist. Dagegen bleibt der einzig mögliche Weg, schon von ‘Sein und Zeit’ her den späteren Gedanken über das Seins-Geschick vorzudenken, das Durchdenken dessen, was in ‘Sein und Zeit’ über die Destruktion der ontologischen Lehre vom Sein des Seienden dargelegt wird.”

61 One possibility is that he is implicitly arguing against Werner Marx, whose book *Heidegger und die Tradition* had been issued the year before, and in which the
The remark is ambiguous. It has its obvious place in the context of Heidegger's repeated attempts to distance himself from the existentialist, and implicitly subjectivist, implications of *SZ* (declared most poignantly in the "Letter on Humanism"). As such it can be read as a disavowal of the attempt to base an account of the meaning of being on a theory of Dasein's temporality and the supposedly derivative historicity. Still, the reference to the destruction of ontology communicates a different message. We should not forget that the whole idea of the necessity of such a destruction was motivated by Dasein's historicity. Neither should we fail to see that the destructive retrieve was part of the very meaning of historical being as this was originally developed in the lectures prior to *SZ*, notably in the description of the hermeneutic situation. Furthermore, as we saw already in Chapter One, this "historicization" of the domain of philosophical understanding was motivated by an attempt to find a way of speaking of "the given" that would not alienate it by positing it as an object.

Beyond Heidegger's own manifest declaration, we could therefore sense the continuity of his thinking, on the condition that we remain within this question: How can the "giving" of meaning and of being be conceptualized and "had" as such in philosophical understanding? The meaning of a concept like "sending" (*Geschick*) cannot be understood unless it is recognized as also a manifestation of (or perhaps an invitation to) a certain mode of understanding and of signifying: namely, an indicating toward an opening in which this understanding is always already located. From the outset we have seen how the idea of historicity in Heidegger's thinking implies a dialectic of access and non-access, of an original exposure that cannot be mastered but can somehow be assumed and projected as such. To the "giving" or "sending" of being, Heidegger will later say, there belongs a certain withdrawal, an *Entzug*; and to the *Ereignis* an *Enteignis*. In other words, to the event of appropriation belongs the event of disappropriation. In all of these formulations the reader of his text is invited to repeat the same unrepeatability, to project the limit of the possibility of a projection.

The path of Heidegger followed here is one along which thinking...
enters deeper into its own historicity, in the sense of a more profound confrontation with its own "belonging," while seeing it as its task to give voice to this belonging as such. In doing so, it reinscripts its own finitude and facticity through ever new conceptual means, in a continuous enactment of the limit of its own expressive capacity. From the earliest explorations of the historical-temporal character of factical existence to the late attempts to articulate time as gift and event of presence, a certain mode of understanding struggles to manifest itself in the recognition and safeguarding of this essential non-manifestability.

8. Concluding remarks
The starting point of the present chapter was the claim in SZ that historicity is rooted in temporality. Through a comparison with other texts from the same period, this hierarchical organization of the two concepts was brought into motion again. In some of Heidegger's earliest writings, they mark parallel attempts to grasp a common, and yet fundamentally elusive ground, for which no names seem to be quite applicable, but which was initially conceived as the movement of meaning-enactment, or simply "understanding." The question of time is inevitably drawn into this quest, for the obvious reason that time is the most general framework in terms of which objects are constituted. The meaning-enactment of Dasein cannot be understood simply as progressing in time. Heidegger instead develops an account of existential temporality as the supposedly deepest level of this movement of understanding. In the account of SZ, Dasein is revealed to itself as such a temporality through the anticipation of its innermost possibility, namely, its death. Temporality is "futural" in the sense that the three temporal horizons are generated from the future. For this reason, Heidegger claims that the historicity of Dasein, as a name for its being-past, is made possible by its temporality; for the past is disclosed from the future. However, this founding of historicity on temporality hides a

63 It is toward this elusive logic that Derrida is working when, toward the very end of the essay referred to above, he speaks of the concept of a non-present presence evoked in Heidegger's essay on Anaximander: "Il faut donc que le signe de cet excès soit à la fois absolument excédant au regard de toute présence-absence possible, de toute production ou disparation d'un étant en générale, et pourtant que de quelque manière il se signifie encore: de quelque manière iniformulable par la métaphysique comme telle," Derrida (1972), p. 76. Somewhat surprisingly, Derrida does not address "Zeit und Sein" in his essay, which owes its motto, as well as its critical orientation, to this particular text.
deeper complication, which SZ never addresses as such: that these two
descriptions of Dasein and its understanding seem to give two different
responses to the possibility of a philosophical founding in general.
Whereas the idea of authentic temporality suggests that there is a level
on which Dasein can grasp its own projective capacities, as a
transcendental field of meaning-constitution, the conception of
historicity indicates that the hermeneutic situation rules over every
level of ontological explication. The idea of Dasein’s historicity can
therefore also be said to mark a breach in SZ, signaling the
transgression of its own themes through a deepened historical critique,
and also through a deepened articulation of the meaning of historical
belonging.
Chapter Five

THE TIME OF HISTORICITY: AUGENBLICK

Aber das Rätsel und das Erraten des Rätsel wären hier gründlich mißverstanden, wollten wir meinen, es handle sich um das Treffen einer Lösung, mit der sich alles Fragwürdige auflöste.

M. Heidegger, "Die ewige Wiederkehr des Gleichen"^1


1. Heidegger as a thinker of the "Augenblick"

The classic treatises on time attempt in different ways to develop a description of the present so as to explain time as sequence and unity. Heidegger initially claims to have reached behind these attempts by positing an original temporality within which the present is seen as a derivative phenomenon in relation to a temporalizing movement whose principal manifestation is the future. There is, however, a central concept that belongs to Heidegger’s thinking on temporality and historicity, through which he tries to capture a qualified sense of present-hood and which was not addressed in the foregoing chapter: the Augenblick, the moment, or the twinkling of an eye. Even though it is often neglected in the discussion of Heidegger as a thinker of time

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1 “But the riddle and the solving of the riddle would be fundamentally misunderstood, if we believed that it had to do with finding a solution, through which all that is question-worthy would disappear.”

2 The German Augenblick literally means “gaze of the eye,” but with the connotation of a “twinkling of an eye.” Normally it is translated simply as “moment.” As a philosophical concept it is also sometimes rendered “moment of vision” (which is how Macquarrie and Robinson translate it in SZ in the passages where they consider it to have a more specified philosophical sense). Here “moment” will be used interchangeably with the untranslated original Augenblick.
and history its importance can hardly be overestimated. In a short essay from 1965, Gadamer suggests that the problem underlying the philosophical catchword *Augenblick* is really that of historicity. He presents the *Augenblick* as the name for the experience of history as lived and unpredictable event, in contrast to history as the object of a theoretical investigation. Gadamer only advances this idea in general terms. Others, notably Pöggeler, have studied the development of this theme in Heidegger’s writings. Yet so far, it has not been systematically explored how and why the *Augenblick* comes to the fore in Heidegger’s attempt to grasp the nature of historical being.

Through the thought of historicity Heidegger seeks to designate the situatedness of knowing and of existence while not admitting their relativity. It is an attempt—or so at least I have tried to present it—to think a constitutive finitude, the point from which the generality can be grasped in its manifestation, without taking it for granted as a given framework. This point of reflection, which is also a point of transmission of meaning and of heritage, is not itself localized within the categories which it claims to reflect. In other words, the finite horizon of projection cannot be understood as existing as a present in time or in history in a conventional sense. The way in which it belongs to history can only be thought from within itself, and from the mode of mediation of heritage that takes place in it. This is the paradoxical logic that rules over the thought of historicity, as has also been demonstrated by all the linguistic reservations with which Heidegger surrounds it. Here the point is to show how these paradoxes are centered in the idea of the *Augenblick*. The *Augenblick* is Heidegger’s attempt to secure a sense of the present which does not succumb to the inauthentic conception of a now-point. It is a present which brings together the future and the past. It is the name for the filled and uncalculable present of historical existence. But—and this is particularly important—it is also a quali-

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3 This neglect is true of Derrida (1972), Heinz (1982), Ricoeur (1985), Wood (1989), and Dastur (1990).


fication of a critical attitude, or the attitude of the philosophical critic. The *Augenblick* is both a descriptive and a normative concept, through the use of which a certain understanding of history and historical existence is challenged.

It has been stated repeatedly that the thought of historicity is not understood unless it is understood as both the description of a condition and as an incentive to act on a historical arena. Historicity, as conveyed by Heidegger, signifies a need to interpret and to respond; or rather, the meaning Heidegger assigns to it is grasped only to the extent that it is also heard in an evocative key. As I will try to show, this duality is also a defining characteristic of the thought of the *Augenblick*, brought out most clearly in Heidegger's interpretation of Nietzsche's *Zarathustra*. It is in this sense that the thought of *Augenblick* can be said to mark the peak of Heidegger's thinking of historicity. Finally, the *Augenblick* is here interpreted as the axis around which Heidegger's early thinking of human historicity is transformed into his later reflexions on the event (*Ereignis*). The chapter begins with a rather long historical excursion, which discusses two Greek concepts that underlie the emergence of the modern idea of the *Augenblick* as a name for human lived historical time. The relevance of this background will become apparent in the subsequent sections.

2. *Two Greek moments: ἔξαίφνης and καιρός*

As a philosopheme the *Augenblick* occupies a privileged position in modern thought. In a sense, it could be described as the stigma of a modernity obsessed with the problem of its own present, as well as with the nature of historical change and discontinuity. As such it could be traced along a path from Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, to Jaspers, Heidegger, Adorno, and Benjamin, to mention some of its most prominent advocates. In order to understand how the idea of the

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6 In *Der philosophische Diskurs der Moderne*, Habermas provides a characterization of this philosophical situation (within which he locates Nietzsche and Yorck, as well as Benjamin and Heidegger), as preoccupied with how to secure an authentic present in which tradition is mediated while also founding future-oriented innovations, Habermas (1985), p. 23.

7 For a general discussion of the concept of *Augenblick* and associated themes, see the essays in the volume *Augenblick und Zeitpunkt*, eds. Thompson et al. (1984), and also K. H. Bohrer's *Plötzlichkeit* (1981) and G. Wohlfart's *Der Augenblick* (1982). Its importance in modern literary theory and text theory is demonstrated by J. Hillis Miller in *The Linguistic Moment* (1985) and by A. Fioretos in *Det kritiska*
Augenblick is elaborated by Heidegger, it is helpful to see how it was philosophically charged by previous thinkers. When introducing it in SZ, Heidegger recognizes a debt to both Kierkegaard and Jaspers. There is also, however, an earlier background that should not be neglected. Two Greek concepts and their subsequent historical vicissitudes are particularly important for an understanding of the modern sense of Augenblick: έξαιφνη and καιρός, the "sudden" and the "right time."

In the discussion of the nature of the One in Parmenides, Plato touches upon the curious nature of change, or more precisely on the temporality of change. That which at one point was not, will at a later point be. In order to reach from one point to the other, and in order to become, it must undergo change. But whereas the past and the present at least could seem to be non-problematic phenomena, the moment in which the change takes place raises profound questions. In the moment of change the One is neither past nor present; in regard to time it is "non-located" (άτοπον). Plato's word for this elusive non-locality is τὸ έξαιφνη, the sudden, or the instantaneous. This enigma of the passage between different modes of existence and between different conceptual determinations appears in different formulations throughout the history of philosophical thought. A prominent example is Zeno's arguments against motion (as referred to in Aristotle's Physics); another is Augustine's perplexity vis-à-vis the nature of the present, which can contain neither past nor future and which thereby seems to shrink down to just an empty limit. Leaving aside the immense effort and literature devoted to these paradoxes, we may simply note that the problem of the moment can thus be addressed both as a temporal problem and as a problem of the nature of change. In Parmenides, the problem of change stands in focus. The "sudden" is the name for that which lies between motion and rest, but the relation to the problem of time is obvious, since the argument presupposes that whatever happens always happens in time. There cannot, however, be a time at which

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8 SZ, p. 338, note 1.

9 Parmenides, 156. The word itself is first documented in the Iliad (17: 738) to designate sudden events, as a quickly roused fire. Cf. Liddell and Scott (1989), p. 582.
something is both in motion and at rest, which leads Plato (or the character Parmenides) to locate the sudden outside time.

In Plato we also find the concept of καιρός, which is sometimes translated as "the right time." It is the word he uses to speak of the moment in a qualitative sense, the right moment, in due time, etc. During an earlier period of the Greek language, καιρός signifies a particular and qualified space, but later on it obtains a temporal value. In one of the Letters, Plato states that it is "a fitting time" (καιρός) to discuss a certain topic. That which is καίριον thus has to do with measure and proportion. As such, it belongs in the context of the central Greek conception of a means with respect to which extremes are balanced. This becomes important not least in classical rhetoric and its doctrines of the right time and place for speech. Aristotle has a similar use of καιρός as the qualified moment, or the moment of a particular action, especially in Nicomachean Ethics, where the word is often used. It is not mentioned in Physics, where he develops his most detailed analysis of time, and where the nature of the νόμος stands in focus. In this context, however, he devotes a brief digression to the

10 The common way in Plato of speaking of the present is of course τὸ νῦν. There is no systematic Platonic account of time. The closest he gets is the discussion in Timaeus of how time was created as a moving image of eternity. Eternity has no temporal predicates whatsoever; we can only say that it is. In Timaeus it is never spelled out that to eternal being belongs an eternal present, even though what is implied is no doubt the same image as in Parmenides’s poem, which describes what truly is as that “which never was, nor will be, since it is now (νῦν), all together, one.” In this use, the concept of the now has been stretched out to encompass time itself, as the resting form of change and motion, and thus as ultimately located outside time proper. Thus on a formal level it may be said to be connected to the phenomenon of the ἔξαίφνης, since this too was said to be located outside time. But the important difference is that whereas “the now” is the proper form of being, “the sudden” was said to lack both time and being.

11 See the article “Kairos” by M. Kerkhoff (1976), p. 668.

12 Letter VII, 324b.

13 For a good discussion of the importance of kairos in classical rhetoric, see J. Kinneavy’s essay “Kairos: A Neglected Concept in Classical Rhetoric” (1986). Kinneavy shows how the problem of “the right time and place” was of great concern to the classical rhetoricians, not just as a practical matter, but also as a problem with ethical and epistemological implications.

14 See, e.g., 1096a32 and 1110a13.

15 The well-known idea in Physics is that time is the “measure” or “number” (ἀριθμός) of motion. Motion is the more fundamental concept, and of course the principal theme of natural philosophy according to Aristotle. Time measures motion with the help of some uniform motion, preferably circular (223b19). Furthermore, in this account “the now” is not a part of time, not what composes time, but rather a “link” (συνέχεια, 222a10) or, as he often says, a “limit” (πέρας) of time. “The now” is the limit which separates past and future, but which is not itself part of time, a relation which Aristotle explicitly compares to that of the point (σημεῖον) to the line.
problem of the “sudden” (i.e., the ἐξαίφνης), no doubt as a response to the discussion in Parmenides, even though no references are given. “The sudden” is said to designate a passage so small as to be imperceptible (ἀναίσθητος). To this Aristotle immediately adds that in fact all change alters things from their former condition. By generalizing the problem he thus avoids the puzzle encountered by Plato, at least at this stage. For the enigma itself will reissue instead in the analysis of motion, more specifically the paradoxes of motion, which I will not consider here.16

If we turn briefly to New Testament Greek we find that ἐξαίφνης is used at times to express suddenness, but with no specific philosophical or theological connotation.17 Καιρός, however, is a significant concept, especially in the letters of Paul. Walter Bauer distinguishes four uses of this concept: for time in general; for the right or profitable time; for a fixed point in time; and finally as one of the most important eschatological concepts. In this fourth use, καιρός is the word for the last day, the time of the return of the Lord.18 It is the moment when this time will come to an end.

The appearance of the Augenblick as a modern philosopheme dates back to Kierkegaard and his critical discussion of Plato and the whole dialectical-philosophical tradition in The Concept of Dread from 1844.19 For Kierkegaard, the Øieblik (as the Danish form reads) is (γραμμή).

16 See esp. Physics 239b-241b. In arguing against Zeno’s conclusions, Aristotle builds much of his argument on the refutation of the idea that time is composed of distinct moments.

17 Griechisch-Deutsches Wörterbuch zu den Schriften des Neuen Testaments, Bauer (1952), p. 492. Bauer ascribes no theological significance to ἐξαίφνης, but it is noteworthy that in Mark 13:36 (a passage stylistically and thematically closely related to I Th 5:1), it is used to describe precisely the unexpectedness, or suddenness of the Lord’s arrival, which again is also spoken of as the καιρός. For this reason his servants are asked to always remain awake (γρηγορεῖτε). Thus in the apocalyptic rhetoric of the early Christian writers a certain relation between the καιρός and the εξαίφνης could be said already to have been established.

18 Ibid., pp. 715-717. It is especially frequent in the letters of Paul. See, e.g., I Cor 4:5, 7:29, Eph 1:10, I Ti 4:1, I Th 5:1. In I Cor 15:52 we also find what is perhaps the first use in Greek of the literal equivalent to the German Augenblick, as Paul, in another apocalyptic passage, speaks of how we shall all be transformed and resurrected εἰς ἡμέραν ὕδας ἀντικείμενον, i.e., literally “in the twinkling of an eye.”

19 Begrebet Angest, Samlede værker, vol IV, pp. 273-429, esp. pp. 350-363. The mediator, however, was Schleiermacher, in whose German translation of the Parmenides ἐξαίφνης had previously been rendered as Augenblick.
primarily connected to the problem of the "passage." In Hegelian thinking, the phenomena of passage, of negation and mediation, are parts of a logic of becoming, in which, Kierkegaard argues, they are presupposed uncritically. In opposition to this use, he insists that they must be identified in their proper sphere, which is that of "historical freedom." In this sphere, the passage is an event in which the new is realized in a "leap," which is described as an "elastic" phenomenon which is not captured by a purely quantitative interpretation. In a long footnote, Kierkegaard develops his critique of what he holds to be Plato’s understanding of the e\(\varepsilon\)\(\alpha\iota\phi\nu\varepsilon\)\(\varsigma\). He notes how Parmenides makes Øieblikket into the principal category of passage and transformation, but concludes that within this Platonic context it remains an "atomistic abstraction." Precisely for this reason, it is also the most important concept for distinguishing between Greek and Christian spirituality. According to Kierkegaard, there is no clear distinction in Greek thought between the now (\(\nu\nu\nu\)) as "the present" and as "the moment," or for that matter "the eternal." The moment, as the enigma of passage, is ultimately reduced to the minuscule quantity of the now, which again functions as the model for eternity, seen as the resting form of the passage of time. But if the moment is perceived in its right relation to the spirit, we can say that man lives in the moment, unlike nature, since for nature time has no meaning. Nature rests comfortably in time, whereas "history only begins in the moment."

Some thirty years after Kierkegaard’s dissertation, Nietzsche composed Thus Spoke Zarathustra, a work whose entire force at one point is gathered in an enigmatic Augenblick. As Zarathustra is about to explain his thought of the eternal recurrence to the dwarf, they come upon a gate. Zarathustra describes the gate as having two faces, one that leads back into an eternity, and another that leads forward into an eternity. They contradict one another, he says, and yet they come together at precisely this point. The name of this point is the Augenblick. In this story, the Augenblick could be seen to mark the unthinkable passage of time. What Nietzsche lets Zarathustra suggest is that the thought of the eternal recurrence must somehow pass

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20 Ibid., p. 359: "Først i Øieblikket begynder Historien." This is where guilt (Syndighet) begins, and thus spirit. It is only with this step that the distinction between the present, the past, and the future obtains its true significance. Among the three temporal dimensions the future is said to be the most important, since it comprises the whole, making room for eternity.

21 Werke, Div. VI, vol 1, p 196.
through this Augenblick. As such, it also holds out the promise of a redemption, in which the thought of recurrence should be thinkable not just as passively received fate, but in an affirmative mode. This particular passage in Zarathustra holds a special place in Heidegger's Nietzsche, which I discuss in Section 7.

In a condensed historical account of the Augenblick as a temporal qualification, Karl Jaspers, in his Psychology of Worldviews, attempts a categorization of various views on time.22 One is the purely quantitative time of the physicist, in which the moment is only an abstract limit. Another is the actual experience of passing time, measured against objective time. In formal dialectical thought, the moment is the paradoxical opposite to eternity. Finally he mentions what he calls "the metaphysics of time," for which eternity is seen as a completed eternity, which can be grasped only through images, as in religious poetry. In contrast to this view, Jaspers distinguishes the Kierkegaardian conception of the filled moment, as the temporal medium of history. For Jaspers, too, the Augenblick, is the name for real and lived time.23 As such, it is closely associated to another central concept in his book: that of the "border-situation," the decisive moment of danger and risk, as well as of clarity and insight.24

Even though the account of man as located in this moment of uncertain historical freedom is undoubtedly inspired by a reading of Paul, neither Kierkegaard nor Jaspers discusses the concept of καιρος, which, as we will see, is subsequently used in Heidegger's early lectures to articulate a similar point.25 For both Kierkegaard and Jaspers,

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22 Jaspers (1919), pp. 96-97.
23 In Jaspers's book on Nietzsche (1936/1981), written fifteen years later, the Augenblick also holds a prominent position. Jaspers here repeats the Kierkegaardian analysis of the moment from the earlier book, in order to specify three different ways in which the idea of the moment may be articulated with respect to eternity: as past, as distant future, and finally as a fulfilled present. To this scheme he compares the Nietzschean idea of the eternal return, as a decisive moment when the eternal recurrence of the same is affirmed. Despite the very Greek notion of a circular temporality, Jaspers argues that Nietzsche's fusion of the moment and eternity in fact continues a Christian pattern of thought, ibid., pp. 362f. Finally, the Augenblick also appears in Jaspers's systematic work Philosophie (1932), in direct relation to the problem of historicity, as the fusion of time and eternity, vol II, pp. 126-127.
24 It has often been pointed out that these descriptions were important to Heidegger in his account of how Dasein comes to realize its being-toward-death in anxious anticipation, as well as for his understanding of the Augenblick in general, so for example, in the above mentioned article by Pöggeler (1989).
25 One should note, however, that this connection was made among contemporary radical theologians, notably Paul Tillich, who also evoked it in a polemic assessment
however, the kairological moment (if this somewhat redundant expression is permitted) is not just the abstract logical paradox of the sudden, as this was first discussed in Plato. The Augenblick is meant to designate the reality of lived time, of human, finite, historical time. It is not meant as a name for the elementary parts out of which human temporality is composed, but rather as a metonomy for that temporality. The Augenblick is an image of human time, in its essentially free and unpredictable nature. The logical problem of passage and change in Plato is thus transformed into a description of the existential predicament of human life. From the vantage point of this historical sketch it is now time to turn to Heidegger as a thinker of the Augenblick in his own right.

3. The moment as foundation for description and critique
The question of the difference between Greek and Christian spirituality arises immediately in Heidegger’s first attempts to develop a philosophical analysis of the temporality of life. In 1921 he gave a lecture series entitled “Introduction to the Phenomenology of Religion,” in which he begins to develop his account of “factical life” with reference to the epistles of Paul. Here he outlines a certain attitude or self-explication that is said to be characteristic of early Christianity. A focal point of these lectures is the concept of καιρός, which is presented by Heidegger as temporality of a certain form of self-awareness, of one’s situation in the face of an uncertain future, in short, as the temporality of factical-historical life.²⁶ No doubt inspired by Kierkegaard and of historicism. In 1926 Tillich edited a volume of essays by contemporary scholars, entitled simply Kairos, Tillich (1926). In the preface, which is a philosophical mix of various contemporary ideas and characters, Tillich describes the project as a search for a responsible outlook and approach to the present, a platform (Standpunkt) from which the “free-floating historicism” can be challenged through prophetic spirits, among which he counts Marx and Nietzsche. The word kairos belongs in the context of this sought prophetic force. Kairos, Tillich writes “means ‘filled time,’ concrete historical moment (Augenblick) ... a breaking in of eternity into time” (heißt “erfüllte Zeit”, konkreter geschichtlicher Augenblick... Hereinbrechen des Ewigen in die Zeit, ibid., p. 8). For Tillich, kairos signifies the fusion of temporality and eternity within time, as the opening of finite time toward the eternal. He attacks the conservative theological viewpoint that sees the eternal (and the ideal in general) as the already established Christian message. But he also turns against those who place the eternal in the distant future, as a goal toward which society is slowly progressing. The kairolological perspective implies that the eternal breaks into the present as man comes to realize the “destinal character of this historical moment” (Schicksalscharakter dieses geschichtlichen Augenblick).

²⁶ The contents of these unpublished lectures are summarized and discussed by T.
Jaspers), he argues that this supposedly Christian sense of temporality is something that no Greek conceptuality was able to grasp.27

Only a year later, however, Heidegger will develop an interpretation of Aristotle where a kairolological temporality is said to characterize the way that this (very Greek) thinker understands life. This is the 1922 manuscript on the phenomenological interpretation of Aristotle. Here he elaborates on the fact that the time of so-called “practical wisdom,” of φρόνησις, is explicitly designated by means of καιρός in *Nicomachean Ethics*. This Aristotelian καιρός is here translated by Heidegger as *Augenblick*.28 Thus he opens a route back to the Greek philosophical heritage by means of the very same thought with which, following Kierkegaard, he had claimed to distance himself from it only a year earlier.29 Five years later, in *SZ*, he will argue that the authentic temporality contained in the concept of the *Augenblick* was never accessible to a previous tradition, neither Greek, nor Christian. In a sense, this critique is anticipated in the earlier manuscript, which culminates in a critique of Aristotle for not having been able to grasp the specific being of life, except in terms of categories of production. But through its discussion of the Aristotelian φρόνησις, and the interpretation of it in terms of a temporality of the *Augenblick*, this particular text nevertheless opens a philosophical space within which Heidegger’s thoughts will continue to move. For these reasons it deserves closer consideration.

The manifest concern of the 1922 manuscript is to assess critically how the phenomenon of factual life is disclosed, implicitly and explicitly, in a few central passages from *Nicomachean Ethics*, *Metaphysics*, and *Physics*. The guiding question, however, is really that of the genesis of theoretical life and the theoretical attitude, on the basis of factual life. For Heidegger, it is of crucial importance that Aristotle distinguishes between different ways of making true, and in

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28 PA, p. 259.
29 Much is implied in this turn from Christian to Greek that cannot be addressed at this point, not least the fact that it occurs during the time when Heidegger officially severs the ties to his Catholic background, and when he embarks on his life-long *Auseinandersetzung* with Aristotle in particular and the Greek philosophical heritage in general.
particular between the theoretical and the practical attitude, σοφία and φρόνησις. The praxis of life has its special way of making itself and its situation available to itself; it is oriented toward its own present, but in such a way as to bring the ultimate principles to bear on this very moment. The practical truth, Heidegger writes, is nothing but the always uncovered complete moment (Augenblick) of factual life in the How of its decisive preparedness for dealing with itself, within a factual concerned relation to the presently encountered world.

The most important difference between this mode of making true and the mode of theoretical knowing is in its way of relating to principles of conduct and thought. Whereas theoretical knowledge is characterized by the application of abstract and general principles, practical knowledge constitutes a realization of such principles in and through its very enactment. This point is indicated in passing by Aristotle, and Heidegger very convincingly develops it in the direction of his own goals. The principle (ἀρχή), he states, is what it is only in its concrete relatedness to the moment (Augenblick), it is there, in the being seen and being grasped, in it and for it.

In the subsequent lectures on “the hermeneutics of facticity” he will also speak of the “kairological elements” of Dasein, as the qualified temporality that characterizes life, for which everything encountered is always there in the mode of a “not yet,” an “already,” etc. From...

30 In Nicomachean Ethics, 1139b. In Chapter Six this specific passage and Heidegger’s interpretation of it is addressed from the perspective of the problem of truth.

31 PA, p. 259: “Die αλήθεια πρακτική ist nichts anderes als der jeweils unverhüllte volle Augenblick des faktischen Lebens im Wie der entscheidenen Umgangs bereitschaft mit ihm selbst, und das innerhalb eines faktischen Besorgens bezuges zur gerade begegennenden Welt.”

32 Ibid., pp. 259-260: “Die ἀρχή, was sie ist, immer nur in der konkreten Bezogenheit auf den Augenblick, sie ist da, im Gesehen- und Ergriffensein, in diesem und für diesen.”

33 GA 63, p. 101: “That which is the object of concern is there as not yet, first to-, as already, as almost, as till now, as primarily, as finally. These will be described as kairological elements of Dasein” (Besorgtes ist da als noch nicht, als erst zu-, als schon, als nahezu, als bis jetzt, als fürs erste, als schließlich. Das sei bezeichnet als kairologische Momente des Daseins). This idea of the essentially qualitative aspect of lived time will reappear in the analysis of “within-timeness” (Innerzeitigkeit) in SZ, especially the description of its “datability” (Datierbarkeit), SZ, pp. 406-411. As suggested in the foregoing chapter, this conception had been anticipated already in the early essay on the concept of time in the historical sciences, where historical time was qualified in similar ways. But whereas historical time in this sense was presented there as one possible descriptive scheme, Heidegger is here moving towards a philosophical understanding of this historical-kairological time as itself the origin of all other
these examples one may see how the moment, as *Augenblick* and *kairos*, functions as a description in the context of Heidegger’s attempt to explicate the structure of factical life, the various modes and ways in which life “has” its world. It indicates the essentially *situated* nature of this being and the fact that it cannot be grasped and understood according to ordinary object-categories, including a standard temporal framework. As such it obviously belongs to the cluster of concepts introduced earlier in order to come to grips with the nature of “historical” being.

Apart from its descriptive role in the context of an interpretation of Aristotle, the “moment” also plays a very different role in these early texts: as a quasi-“normative” term that qualifies the attitude of the philosophical interpreter. In the manuscript on Aristotle, Heidegger addresses his audience with the appeal: “one must question and consider one’s time in a kairological-critical mode!”\(^{34}\) The quote is found within a discussion of how to come to grips with the actual philosophical situation and of how to establish a productive relation to the past. This is said to require a certain “readiness” or “attentiveness” (*Bereitschaft*) that permits the present to reveal its possibilities, indeed, to reveal itself as these very possibilities. The “kairological” is here the name for a relation to the present in which one does not objectify what one encounters in accordance with preconceived concepts, but in which one instead permits these concepts to arise out of the given, enacted time. In short, this kairological relation to the present is what was discussed in Chapter Two as Heidegger’s critical hermeneutics. The kairological attitude is the name for the attitude in which the present risks itself in favor of an uncertain repetition of a past, for which it has prepared itself by means of historical critique. Thus it comes as no surprise that the subsequent pages in the Aristotle manuscript contain some of his most poignant, and by now familiar, reflections on the nature and conditions of philosophical thinking itself. Philosophy, it is stated here, cannot secure its legitimacy with reference to eternal concerns, but even so, it should not give way to the relativism of a culturally confined *Weltanschauung*. The very distinction between the temporal and the eternal, as well as between the general and the particular, collapses in this temporality of philosophical critique. It is a

\(^{34}\) *GA* 61, p. 41.
temporality which supposedly designates their common root, while also being the only attitude in which philosophy can remain true to its calling.\textsuperscript{35}

The philosophical manoeuvre may seem puzzling, but from our present vantage point we recognize it: the same conceptual configuration is used to designate both a neglected origin of the theoretical attitude and the proper attitude for a critical retrieve of this very origin. The origin of understanding and the origin of critique converge, or rather, the origin of understanding as a certain pre-theoretical attitude and the establishment of an original attitude in the present are brought together as one and the same quest. In this respect the thought of the \textit{Augenblick} is structured in the same way as the thought of historicity. In both cases we are confronted with a concept that describes a condition, while it also aims at bringing about a strategy and an attitude vis-à-vis this condition. Neither of these concepts is purely descriptive. They serve to organize an interpretation and they signal a possible route of \textit{access}, to use a word frequently applied in Chapter Two. Whenever Heidegger speaks of the historicity of thought, he is delineating a situation where certain means and actions are implied. From the beginning, the \textit{Augenblick}, or the \textit{kairos}, is inscribed in an evocative discourse of wakefulness, attention, and critique. Indeed, the moment is always critical, simply because it contains a permanent risk of succumbing to inauthenticity, to tradition, to passively inherited positions. The moment is the time of this risk. In the early writings, the connection between the two themes, historicity and \textit{Augenblick}, is not made explicit—as is the case in \textit{SZ}—but they clearly belong to the same philosophical territory.\textsuperscript{36}

\textsuperscript{35}This normative sense of the kairological is also demonstrated in the lectures on the hemeneutics of facticity from 1923. Here Heidegger quotes an article by Eduard Spranger (a student of Dilthey and a slightly older contemporary of Heidegger) on “Rickert’s System,” that had just been published in \textit{Logos}. In this article Spranger describes what he considers to be the common concern of all the dominant philosophical schools, the phenomenologists, the Neo-Kantians, as well as the followers of Dilthey, namely, the great struggle for the “atemporal in the historical or beyond the historical,” and for a “theory of values that can lead beyond the purely subjective to what is objective and valid” (GA 63, p. 42). From this project Heidegger sarcastically asks “to be excluded,” and throughout these lectures he repeats again and again the need to develop a relation to the \textit{present} and to make the present itself a philosophical problem.

\textsuperscript{36}In an essay entitled “Phénoménologie, herméneutique et historicité,” A. Grøn defines the “historicity of history” in terms of “the risk and unpredictability” of reason, of identity, and of essence on the historical arena, Grøn (1981), p. 79. His analysis could be read as an echo of the situation of the kairological critic as described by
What, then, is this territory? And to whom does it belong? Is it Greek or Christian? Certainly there is no trace in Aristotle of the apocalyptic connotations (of risk and redemption) that surround Heidegger's references to the kairological. Nevertheless, there is clearly a Greek sense of kairological time, one that is found not in connection with the classical discussions of time but in the context of qualifying acts (linguistic and epistemic acts, as well as non-epistemic acts); there is a developed Greek sense for the right time of speech and judgment, in short, for the kairos of the word as well as of the deed. As soon as the task becomes the ontological description of this moment—or rather, of this momentaneity—then the whole Platonic-Aristotelian question of change and passage is activated again, and with it the enigma of the sudden, the €ξαιρήσεις. Beyond Kierkegaard's dismissal of the Greek attitude, a very Greek question is inevitably reopened by Heidegger: what is this historical-momentaneous existence, and by what conceptual means can it be grasped? It is with these questions that Heidegger will struggle, in a quest that will lead him toward the deepest aporias of theoretical reflection. In his writings, the Augenblick—as a name for the being of judgment and critique—is both the medium and the task of thought.

4. The "Augenblick" as authentic present

When the theme of the Augenblick appears in S2, it is deeply embedded in the architectonic structure of this work, at the heart of its analysis of original temporality. As we saw in the previous chapter, this threefold ec-static structure is initially presented by Heidegger as the unity and ontological foundation of care. Furthermore, as the "primary phenomenon" of original and authentic temporality, Heidegger presents the future. After thus having introduced original temporality, Heidegger turns to a new task: the specification of how this general structure is activated in everyday existence. It is in this context that he first mentions the Augenblick in a thematic way. In antic-
ipatory resoluteness, Dasein projects itself knowingly toward a future in understanding. But in doing so it brings about a qualified kind of present, in which its situation is revealed to it, and in which Dasein is gathered around itself and its task, open to its future as well as to its past. This is the authentic present, as contrasted to the inauthentic present which loses itself in immediate concerns. Its name is the Augenblick:

That present which is held in authentic temporality and which thus is authentic itself, we call the moment of vision (Augenblick).\(^{40}\)

He immediately states that this phenomenon cannot be understood along the lines of the “now” (Jetzt), which belongs to another order of temporality, namely, to sequential time within which events take place.\(^{41}\)

In this passage the Augenblick is repeatedly contrasted to the other, inauthentic form of making present. Over the course of the analyses in \(SZ\) on temporality and everydayness, on temporality and historicity, and on temporality and within-time-ness (Chapters 4, 5, and 6) this point is often repeated.\(^{42}\) The basic presupposition is that the present must always be analyzed in terms of how it is constituted. There is no simple and primitive present, to which different attitudes may then be adopted. There is no neutral phenomenon of present-hood to be extracted or abstracted from the actual modes of temporalizing. Dasein is always making present, bringing forth a present through projection and repetition, in a way that can be augenblicklich or not. The pivotal

\(^{40}\) Ibid., p. 338: “Die in der eigentlichen Zeitlichkeit gehaltene, mithin eigentliche Gegenwart nennen wir den Augenblick.” It is in connection with this passage that Heidegger, in a footnote, gives credit to Kierkegaard for having first located the phenomenon of the Augenblick, even though the latter is said to have “failed to perform a full existential interpretation of it.” Similarly, Jaspers is mentioned for having raised the issue.

\(^{41}\) As already noted, in \(SZ\) Heidegger makes no explicit reference to his previous analysis of Aristotle’s \(\kappa\alpha\rho\omicron\omicron\omicron\) and of kairolological time. In the \textit{Grundprobleme}, however, he is somewhat more generous to Aristotle on this point. Here we find a passage that connects directly with the earlier manuscript, where the relation between Augenblick and \(\kappa\alpha\rho\omicron\omicron\omicron\) is spelled out explicitly: “Aristotle already saw the phenomenon of the moment, the \(\kappa\alpha\rho\omicron\omicron\omicron\), and he defined in the sixth book of his \textit{Nicomachean Ethics}, but again, he did it in such a way that he failed to bring the specific time character of the \(\kappa\alpha\rho\omicron\omicron\omicron\) into connection with what he otherwise knows as time (\(\nu\nu\nu\)).\(^{42}\) Schon Aristoteles hat das Phänomen des Augenblickes, den \(\kappa\alpha\rho\omicron\omicron\omicron\), gesehen und im VI Buch seiner “Nikomachischen Ethik” umgrenzt, aber wiederum so, daß es ihm nicht gelang, den spezifischen Zeitcharakter des \(\kappa\alpha\rho\omicron\omicron\omicron\) mit dem in Zusammenhang zu bringen, was er sonst als Zeit (\(\nu\nu\nu\)) kennt, GA 24, p. 409). The English translation is a slightly modified version of A. Hofstadter’s, in \textit{BP}, p. 288.

thesis on time in SZ is that not only every previous account of time, but every ontology in general, is guided by an inauthentic conception of time as present, or as “now-time.” In other words, it is dominated by an understanding of time as encountered in everyday concerns, where time is what is measured and negotiated. According to Heidegger, it is partly as a result of this predominance of—or the prejudiced preference for—the present that the ontological question of the meaning of being has been neglected. Therefore it is only through a critical reassessment of the various modes of temporalization, more specifically through a critical displacement of the presumed priority of the present, that this question can be raised anew.

And yet, despite this sweeping critique of the philosophies of presence, Heidegger's entire account nevertheless continues to gravitate toward this peculiar mode of presence: the Augenblick. Within this non-present presence the temporal ecstases are gathered, but it should still not be confused with the “now.” How should this emphatic stress on the Augenblick be understood and assessed? Does it not imply that in the end Heidegger’s analysis somehow returns to the priority of the present it claimed to have transcended? And are we then perhaps faced with just another version of that absolute, living, and constitutive present with which the Husserlian analysis concluded after having analyzed the intentional structure of the now? And if not, what is the more precise nature of this qualified present? How can it be

43 Cf. Heidegger’s sweeping critique of Aristotle and the ensuing tradition on p. 421, where there is no longer any trace of the interpretation of the augenblicklichkeit of φρόνησι elaborated only five years earlier.

44 The conception of the original impression (Urimpression) as that which underlies the constituted present plays an important role already in the early lectures on inner time consciousness, in Husserl (1928/1980). The idea of an original, or “living” present (Lebendige Gegenwart) emerges as a dominant theme in the later manuscripts on time, the so-called C Manuscripts, that have been analyzed in detail by K. Held in Lebendige Gegenwart, Held (1966) (Cf. also Held [1981], especially, pp. 192-194). R. Bernet has an interesting discussion of this phase of Husserl’s work in the preface to his edition of Husserl’s manuscripts on time. In the very attempt to think an original living present and the corresponding absolute consciousness, Bernet sees a self-defeating move that opens phenomenology toward a thought of original difference and of historicity, Husserl (1985), pp. lvi-lx. Finally, one should note in this context that the term Augenblick is in fact used by Husserl in Logische Untersuchungen, in a quasi-thematic way, when describing the non-mediated communication of meaning within one single consciousness, Part II:1, pp. 36-37: “In der monologischen Rede können uns die Worte doch nicht in der Funktion von Anzeichen für das Dasein psychischer Akte dienen, da solche Anzeige hier ganz zwecklos wäre. Die fraglichen Akte sind ja im selben Augenblick von uns selbst erlebt” (my italics). Derrida analyses this particular passage in La voix et le phénomène (1967), pp. 67-77, within the course of a far-reaching critique of Husserl as a thinker of presence.
conceptually circumscribed and understood; in other words, how can the meaning of the *Augenblick* be determined? Does it even have a meaning? This question is more problematic than it may seem at first. We are not simply facing two straightforward alternatives, that of meaningfulness and that of meaninglessness. Temporality as temporalization is itself supposedly what makes meaning possible; temporality, so Heidegger tells us, is the meaning of meaning, of the general name for the projective possibilities of Dasein. The *Augenblick* signifies the highest vantage point of this temporalization, but in doing so it also threatens to escape the ordinary logic of signification more radically than temporality at large, of which we have already learnt that it requires a peculiar "indicative" mode of discourse. The *Augenblick* indicates a presence which does not belong to the present.

About the peculiar mode of non-signifying signification there will be more to say shortly. Prior to that, however, the full width of this enigmatic present in *SZ* must be circumscribed. In the remarks above on the sense of *kairos* and *Augenblick* in the early writings, I pointed to their dual function, as both a descriptive and a strategic/critical concept. The same duality may in fact be traced in *SZ* with respect to the *Augenblick*. This aspect deserves special attention, for it brings us back to the question of Dasein's historicity.

5. The "Augenblick" as authentic historicity

In the discussion of the account of historicity in *SZ* in Chapter Three, the role of the *Augenblick* was only mentioned in passing. The attention was focused primarily on the strange dialectic of the movement or happening of destiny, as described by Heidegger. In this happening, passivity is transformed into activity, thrownness into projection, and the possibility of another into the possibility of oneself. It was seen as a precarious process, one in which the autonomy and authenticity of Dasein is at risk. Yet in Heidegger's description, the authenticity of this event is supposedly secured as long as the repetition of a past possibility takes place on the basis of an anticipatory resoluteness for death, in other words on the basis of authentic temporality. In an italicized passage in §74 (devoted to "the basic constitution of historicity"), Heidegger repeats this key move, stating

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45 Cf. Chapter Four, Section 2, esp. note 17.
that only the being that assumes its finitude in a futural project makes possible an "authentic historicity." Here, however, this authentic historicity is also qualified by another concept, namely, that of being *augenblicklich* for one's time:

Only a being which, in its being, is essentially *futural*...can, by handing down to itself the possibility it has inherited, take over its own thrownness and be *momentaneous* for "its time." The *Augenblick* is not just the name for a specific temporal modality; here it also marks the goal of the reflection on the historical existence of Dasein as such. To exist as authentic historicity is to exist in a momentaneous way. Heidegger does not say so himself, but we should not fail to recognize in this description the mode of existence of the kairological critic and interpreter. This "momentaneous" way of being is *SZ*’s version of the interpretative imperative put forth in the lectures on Aristotle in its appeal to a "kairological-critical mode."

Further on in the same section Heidegger speaks of how, by being *augenblicklich*, the repetition of the past possibility also constitutes a disavowal (Widerruf) of that which appears as pastness today. It marks a mode of existing historically that transforms the conception of the historical landscape; in other words, it is the mode of the critic and the re-evaluator. In this mode, he continues, one is neither preoccupied with the past as such, nor with any specified progress. In the *Augenblick* they are of no importance. This should not, however, be taken to mean that one is entirely preoccupied with one's "present." On the contrary, it is precisely this tendency "to understand the past from the present" which characterizes the inauthentic historicity of *das Man*. Through its preoccupation with what is new and "modern," it becomes blind and forgetful of the possibilities of repeating the past. Authentic historicity, on the other hand, temporalizes differently. It understands history as the "return of the possible." Furthermore,

...it therefore knows that the possibility only returns when the existing being, in a destinal-momentaneous way, is open to it in the resolute repetition.

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46 *SZ*, p. 385: "Nur Seiendes, das Wesenhaft in seinem Sein zukünftig ist...kann sich selbst die ererbte Möglichkeit überliefernd, die eigene Geworfenheit übernehmen und *augenblicklich* sein für 'seine Zeit.'" Macquarrie and Robinson translate *augenblicklich* here as "be in the moment of vision for 'its time,'" an expression that fails to convey how the moment here qualifies an attitude or a position vis-à-vis the present.


These last passages, located in the context of a section dealing with the historicity of Dasein and World history, are remarkable for the way in which they sharpen the paradoxical logic of historical existence and critique, with reference to an ever more elusive Augenblick. The resoluteness of this attitude constitutes a "loyalty" (Treue) to one's own self, but it is not manifested by any principle whatsoever; on the contrary, resoluteness as destiny is the freedom for the possibility of having to "abandon" any specific decision. And in doing so, Heidegger adds, the "steadiness" of existence is not broken, but precisely preserved in a "momentaneous" way. The Augenblick marks the redeeming transformation of a necessity into a free task, the enigmatic point at which the negative weight of the past is released in the form of a force in the present.\(^{49}\)

As an indication of Heidegger's own perplexity vis-à-vis what he himself has just said, or tried to say, this passage is followed by the statement which was also mentioned in Chapter Three, on how the existential interpretation of historicity keeps ending up in the dark and how it is haunted by the "enigma of motion.\(^{50}\) The obscurity surrounding the existential enterprise at this decisive stage is perhaps not so surprising, considering the array of concerns that have condensed in als die 'Wiederkehr' des Möglichen und weiß darum, daß die Möglichkeit nur wiederkehrt, wenn die Existenz schicksalhaft-augenblicklich für sie in der entschlössenen Wiederholung offen ist.\(^{49}\)

\(^{49}\) At the outset Walter Benjamin was mentioned among others as a thinker of the Augenblick. From a general perspective, the correspondence between his reference to the Augenblick in the "Geschichtsphilosophische Thesen" (composed in the mid-thirties) and Heidegger's discussion of it in the chapter on historicity in SZ is striking. Just like Heidegger, Benjamin is influenced by Nietzsche's second Untimely Meditation and against "historicism" he sets up an account of how history is only accessible in an incalculable Augenblick. See esp. Fragment VI, where historical knowing is likened to the seizure of a memory as it flashes in a moment of danger, Benjamin (1955), p. 494. When examined more closely, however, their perspectives can be seen to differ significantly. To compare them as thinkers of historicity would certainly be a worthwhile endeavour. C. Fynsk takes a few steps in this direction in an essay that carefully explicates a passage from Benjamin that contains an explicit remark on Heidegger's concept of human historicity, Fynsk (1992). The relation between them has been a controversial issue. Some, notably Hannah Arendt, have emphasized the similarities, not least in respect to history (see her preface to Illuminations). Others, less favorable to Heidegger, have stressed the differences, quoting Benjamin's disdainful comments on the former. For a recent survey of the discussion, see M. Bullock (1990).

\(^{50}\) SZ, p. 392: "Die existenziale Interpretation der Geschichtlichkeit des Daseins gerät ständig unversehens in den Schatten. Die Dunkelheiten lassen sich um so weniger abstreifen, als schon die mögliche Dimensionen des angemessenen Fragens nich entwirrt sind und in allen das Rätsel des Seins und, wie jetzt deutlich wurde, der Bewegung sein Wesen treibt."
one point, in this one Augenblick. It is the name for the temporal structure of factual life; it is the name for the qualified present that gathers the three temporal dimensions (thus also the point of contact between past and future); it is a name for the proper attitude of the philosophical critic and interpreter; finally, it signals a possible redemption from a modernity that has become enclosed in itself, unable to reflect its own historical situation.

The last point may not be apparent on a first reading of SZ, but what is only implicit in this work is brought out quite clearly in the extensive lecture course during the winter semester 1929/30, published under the title “The Basic Concepts of Metaphysics,” where the expectations tied to the Augenblick as a moment of redemption are indeed striking. These lectures mark Heidegger’s most ambitious attempt to articulate and address the spiritual-cultural climate of his own time in explicit dialogue with contemporaries such as Spengler and Klages. The task he sets before him is to activate the latent “basic attunement” (Grundstimmung) of the present, which is here developed as “ennui” (Langeweile). Only by bringing this attunement to explicit recognition can it be overcome, such is at least his presupposition. In the analysis of this phenomenon, Heidegger refers to the theory of temporality developed in SZ, in order to show how the attunement of ennui is in fact rooted in a certain mode of temporality. This mode is the dominance of the present. The release from this enchainment to the present is also reminiscent of the analysis of authenticity in SZ: it is said to depend on a certain resolve with respect to oneself, which is then equated with the Augenblick. Just as in SZ, the Augenblick

51 GA 29/30, Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik.
52 The connection between the themes of historicity and “mood” or “attunement” (Stimmung) would have deserved a much longer treatment in the context of the present study. In the early writings this correlation is not apparent, but starting with these lectures it becomes clear that Heidegger identifies the historical situatedness of man with specific attunements that vary over time. This type of analysis is exemplified not least in the lecture series on Hölderlin. In the essay “Grundstimmung und Zeitkritik bei Heidegger,” K. Held develops a broad perspective on the issues of attunement, Augenblick, and the overcoming of metaphysics. He reads the above mentioned passage from the 1929/30 lectures as a decisive link between SZ and Beiträge, Held (1990).
53 Ibid., p. 224. On p. 230 the entire analysis is summed up in one exalted passage, italicized in its entirety by Heidegger: “The ennui is the spell of the temporal horizon, whose spell lets the moment belonging to temporality disappear, in order to force the spellbound Dasein to enter into the moment as the authentic possibility of its existence, an existence only possible in the midst of beings in their totality, which falls
here is the name of a possible resolve that permits Dasein to exist in the present, through the very negation of that same present, or rather of its present articulation. The content of this transformation is not specified, nor could it be specified. The moment of resolution ultimately describes a formal condition for an essentially incalculable event, the event of opening oneself to the demand of a situation that is supposedly only accessible on the basis of the resolution itself.

6. Heidegger’s interpretation of Zarathustra’s vision
The fundamental significance which Heidegger ascribes to the *Augenblick* is brought out very clearly in a section of his *Nietzsche*, more precisely in the part entitled “The Eternal Recurrence of the Same,” composed in 1937. On the surface, this section is simply an interpretation of Nietzsche’s conception of the *Augenblick* in *Zarathustra* (mentioned in Section 1 above). On a deeper level, however, it is an exposition that throws light on Heidegger’s own thinking. It is one of the most exalted sections in this two-volume study, and it is also one in which Heidegger is unreservedly affirmative in his assessment of Nietzsche. Through his reading of this famous passage he brings together several of the themes raised up until now.

Heidegger’s interpretation is focused on the account that follows upon Zarathustra’s attempt to explain to the dwarf his understanding of the eternal recurrence, while standing before a gate that carries the inscription *Augenblick*. At this point in Nietzsche’s story Zarathustra hears a scream, coming from a shepherd into whose mouth a snake has crawled while he was sleeping. Horrified, Zarathustra first tries to pull in its totality within the horizon of the spell” (*Die Langeweile ist der Bann des Zeithorizontes, welches Bannen den der Zeitlichkeit zugehörigen Augenblick entschwinden läßt, um in solchem Entschwindenlassen das gebannte Dasein in den Augenblick hineinzuzwingen als die eigentliche Möglichkeit seiner Eixstenz, welche Existenz nur möglich ist inmitten des Seienden im Ganzen, das sich im Horizont des Bannens gerade im Ganzen versagt*).

“*Die ewige Wiederkehr des Gleichen,*” *N I*, pp. 438-447. The title of this particular section is “Augenblick und ewige Wiederkehr.” The interpreted passage is found in Part Three, Section 2 of *Zarathustra*, entitled “Vom Gesicht und Rätsel.” Heidegger addresses this particular passage on two different occasions in the same work. It is first introduced on pp. 289-298 in the course of a general outline of the problem of eternal recurrence. Heidegger describes it as Nietzsche’s attempt to think the “most difficult thought” (*schwersten Gedanken, N I*, p. 297), after which he says he will return to it later. For the corresponding passages in the original lectures, see *GA* 44, pp. 39-47, and pp. 195-204. Heidegger made several changes in both passages before the 1961 publication, but they do not affect the remarks I make here.
it out, but the snake has bitten itself into the man’s throat. As in sudden inspiration, Zarathustra calls out to the man to bite its head off. So he does; he then rises, spitting out the decapitated head of the snake. And then, Zarathustra says, he was transformed, no longer shepherd, no longer man, but transfigured and laughing. This story is presented by Zarathustra as an “omen” and a “riddle” or “enigma” (Rätsel), as something to be interpreted. It is clearly a key passage in the book, but its meaning is never explained by Zarathustra himself.

How does Heidegger deal with this riddle? Despite his respect for unsolvable riddles, he initially approaches it with the clear intention of explicating its philosophical message. First of all he states that the snake is an image of nihilism, as the fundamentally meaningless repetition of the same, which has taken possession of the man. The fact that Zarathustra cannot pull it out signifies that this kind of nihilism cannot be pulled out from outside, it cannot be taken away and replaced by something else, by some new God. The inspired scream marks the insight that this form of nihilism can only be overcome from the inside, from whoever is affected by it. The bite, Heidegger then declares, is the overcoming of nihilism. The shepherd is actually an image of Zarathustra himself, who indicates through this fable how he has succeeded in gaining his insight and his laughter, the cheerfulness expressed in The Gay Science. Yet in a wider sense, the man into whose mouth the snake has crept is everyone who has begun to think the thought of the eternal recurrence, but who has not yet followed it through to its end. The thought of the recurrence, Heidegger states, is only completed through the bite. Indeed, the thought itself is only possible as this bite.\(^{55}\)

When we have reached this point in our interpretation, Heidegger continues, we also understand why Zarathustra has just hesitated before the gate of the Augenblick, and also why the dwarf—who represents the gloomy image of the eternal recurrence—suddenly disappears altogether from the scene. Before the bite is accomplished, the moment (Augenblick) is not yet thought. In Heidegger’s reading, the bite is the answer to the question what the gate itself is, and thus what the moment is. The moment is the decision, in and through which the foregoing history (as the history of nihilism) is confronted and at the same time overcome. In this interpretation, the moment is no longer just the gate

\(^{55}\) N I, p. 445.
before which Zarathustra stood reflecting on the nature of the recurrence; the moment is a deed, an act of refusal and insight, whereby someone—the shepherd, Zarathustra, Nietzsche, Heidegger, or simply authentic human Dasein in general—refuses to accept the gloomy predicament which this insight apparently implies.\(^6\) At this point, at this moment, nihilism is thus overcome, in the very act of thinking it to its end.

What is decisive in the thought of the eternal recurrence of the same, according to Heidegger, is not its content, but the *mode* according to which it is thought. And the foremost description of this mode is provided precisely in terms of the moment. To think from out of the moment here means "to place oneself in the temporality of the one who acts and decides," and from within an anticipation of what is to be done in a recognition of what is given.\(^7\) It is to think from within a "need" that one can only experience by placing oneself in the moment. The fact that the mode is emphasized over the content does not imply, Heidegger continues, that the content is set aside; rather it comes forward in a unique manner, in the form of the "conditions of the enactment of the thought."\(^5\) That which is to be thought, the content, reaches the thinker through the way in which it is to be thought. The mode here is the content. In this decisive moment they are inseparable.

In Nietzsche’s fable of Zarathustra’s encounter with the shepherd the *Augenblick* is not explicitly mentioned. This is Heidegger’s refiguration of the story by means of a concept found in a foregoing section of the book. But it is also—which is so much more important—a refiguration by means of a concept with which Heidegger himself had sought to secure the temporal, linguistic, and existential peak of his own systematic attempts a decade earlier. The question of whether this is also a viable interpretation of the passage in *Zarathustra*, or of the idea

\(^6\) *Ibid.*, p. 445: “Bevor der Biß nicht vollzogen ist, ist auch der Augenblick nicht gedacht; denn der Biß ist die Antwort auf die Frage, was der Torweg selbst, der Augenblick sei: daß er die Entscheidung ist, in der die bisherige Geschichte als die Geschichte des Nihilismus zur Auseinandersetzung gestellt und zugleich überwunden wird.”


\(^5\) *Ibid.*, p. 447: “...Bedingungen des Denkvollzuges.” The standard English translation has “thought-process” for *Denkvollzug* (*NE II*, p. 183). In order to bring out the conceptual continuity with regard to the early lectures, I have chosen the present alternative.
of eternal recurrence in general, need not be addressed here. What is important is what it says about Heidegger's own use and understanding of the Augenblick. Nietzsche gives his reader an enigma to solve, so he says himself. He does not explicitly connect the Augenblick to the fable of the shepherd. It is Heidegger who, in the image of the bite, sees the Augenblick of redemption from the meaningless repetition of the same, which transforms a passive repetition into an active, affirmative repetition, that transforms it into a decision and a task for the future. This transformation cannot be thought as such; it can only be refigured through a tale about violent deeds. It is with this violent, transfiguring deed that Heidegger identifies the Augenblick. It is an act of understanding that transforms the one who understands. But it is also the thought of that which constitutes the conditions of thinking as such, of its enactment.

In this interpretation we can discern the essential elements of the thought of Augenblick as this has been considered so far, but also the thought of historicity. Thus we may begin to see in what sense historicity is, as Gadamer suggested, what really underlies the reference to the Augenblick. The Augenblick is the name for the event of understanding and of meaning-enactment: it is the name for the deed whereby a strong interpretation takes control of its own historical situation, but only through a recognition of its essential need and finitude; it is the bridge between the eternal and the temporal; finally, it is the understanding act through which the manifestation of the eternal may be grasped as such. For these reasons Nietzsche's strange fable of a horrifying and ecstatic transformation provides Heidegger with the possibility of investing the full force of his own philosophical resources.

7. "Augenblick" and "Ereignis"

Heidegger's interpretation of Zarathustra was written in 1937, which is also the time during which he was writing his own second major work, Contributions to Philosophy (On the Event), or, as it has been generally been referred to here: Beiträge. This grand attempt to

59 M. Zimmerman develops a comparative analysis of Heidegger and Nietzsche on this issue, precisely in regard to these passages in Heidegger's Nietzsche, in which he argues that the thought of the eternal recurrence is indeed the same as Heidegger's thought of the Augenblick in SZ. See Zimmerman (1977).
redirect the course of philosophical thought, and to prepare the overcoming of nihilism, is centered on a specific concept that has sometimes been described as the basic concept of his later thought, Ereignis: "event," "appropriation," or "enowning." This particular concept stands as a monument to one of the most radical attempts to reorganize the conceptual priorities of classical ontology: it supposedly designates what is more fundamental than both subjectivity and objectivity, as well as space and time. No doubt it would require a separate study. Here a particular route of access will be suggested, namely, to approach the thought of Ereignis as Heidegger's attempt to perform what he himself ascribes to Nietzsche's thought of the Augenblick. Thereby it may also be seen as a refiguration of the Augenblick as this had previously been elaborated by Heidegger himself.

In what way, then, is the idea of Ereignis connected to that of the Augenblick as discussed up until now? As already shown, the thought of the Augenblick develops out of an attempt to determine the temporal mode of authentic historical existence as a qualified present. The Augenblick is primarily a "temporal" quality of Dasein, but already in SZ a connection is established to a corresponding sense of spatiality that goes under the name of the "situation." Together, the temporality of the Augenblick and the locality of the situation designate modes of Dasein's relation to itself, in which its own

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60 Heidegger himself would later date this new direction of his thinking to the years 1936-1938, which were the years of the composition of Beiträge. Cf. the record from the seminar on "Zeit und Sein," in SdD, p. 46. Several English translations of Ereignis have been suggested, among them the ones mentioned. Yet, as C. Espinosa remarks in an essay on Heidegger's use of this concept, only a philosophical interpretation can do justice to the semantic richness of the original German term, Espinosa (1992), p. 293. For the evaluation of Ereignis as the main concept of the later Heidegger, see, e.g., Pöggeler (1992), p. 19. As Pöggeler has pointed out, when discussing the motives behind the introduction of Ereignis as the central concept in the later writings, we should not forget the line from Hölderlin's "Mnemosyne," to which Heidegger would also refer: "...es ereignet sich aber das Wahre." Cf. Pöggeler (1992), p. 39.

61 Whenever Heidegger speaks of a situation, we should also listen for the "hermeneutic situation" as this was discussed in Chapter Two; the situation is always a situation of understanding. For the explicit correlation of these two phenomena, the Augenblick and the Situation, see the section on temporality in SZ (§65), where Heidegger writes (p. 328): "When resolute, Dasein has brought itself back from falling, and has done so precisely in order to be more authentically 'there' in the 'moment' as regards the situation which has been disclosed" (Entschlossen hat sich das Dasein gerade zurückgeholt aus dem Verfallen, um desto eigentlicher im "Augenblick" auf die erschlossene Situation "da" zu sein [Heidegger here italicizes "blick"]).
conceptual achievements are supposedly reflected from the highest possible level. In Heidegger's subsequent writings, it is possible to trace an attempt to develop a concept that could combine the temporal and the spatial, and on the basis of which these determinations could be reformulated. One such conceptual configuration occurs frequently in Beiträge: the Augenblicksstätte, the momentary place or place of momentaneity. It is on the basis of this Augenblicksstätte that time and space, or simply space-time, is to be thought. Which is the way, Heidegger asks here, to a first and anticipatory reflection on space-time? He responds: "From the Augenblicksstätte of Da-sein." The fact that this region is ascribed to Dasein does not, as he insists in the same section, imply a "subjectivization" of space-time; instead it points in the direction of its possible "overcoming." The general orientation of this argument is familiar from SZ, where the existentiales were developed explicitly as foundations from which to grasp the derivative concepts of space and time, subject and object. The temporality and situatedness of Dasein in the earlier work is here compressed and refigured in the Augenblicksstätte. What is particularly important from the perspective of the suggested comparison, however, is how Heidegger thereafter introduces the theme of Ereignis in the same section. Immediately after having presented the Augenblicksstätte as a foundation of space-time, he writes: "This origin of space-time corresponds to the unicity of being as Ereignis." Thus, Ereignis is here explicitly presented as another way of speaking about the Augenblicksstätte.

Another interesting indication of the proximity between Augenblick and Ereignis is the correlation of Ereignis and Er-äugnis, mentioned in several late texts, for instance, in the essay "The Principle of Identity" from 1957. Here Heidegger writes (in a passage that no translation could possibly hope to convey): "Er-eigen heißt

62 GA 65, p. 374: "Welches aber ist der Weg zu einer ersten vor-läufigen und zwar übergänglichen Besinnung auf den Zeit-Raum? Von der Augenblicks-stätte des Da-seins." Pöggeler has argued that it was the absence of a sense of situatedness that made the Augenblick in SZ empty and therefore in need of being reworked, Pöggeler (1963/1983), pp. 210-211.

63 Ibid., p. 375: "Dieser Ursprung des Zeit-Raumes entspricht der Einzigkeit des Scyns als Ereignis." In another section of the same work he speaks of the Augenblick itself as a "flashing" (Erblitzen) of being, which withdraws from every spatio-temporal framework since it arises from a singular and non-calculable Ereignis (p. 409), and further on he speaks of an Augenblick as the very Ereignung of the turning (Kehre), in which the truth of being becomes the being of truth (p. 415).
ursprünglich er-äugen, d.h. er-blicken, im Blicken zu sich rufen, an-
eignen."

As it seems, no interpretation has developed the conse-
quences of these elusive correspondences. From Heidegger himself
we get little help; in the later writings he is constantly, at times even
desperately, seeking new modes of expression for a limited number of
recurring themes. It becomes the task of the reader to extrapolate the
underlying movements of his thought and to establish the thematic
patterns. What, then, is the pattern here? What more can be said of the
relation between Heidegger's references to Augenblick and Ereignis?

From the previous discussion we should have become aware of the
close interconnectedness between the thematic level of Heidegger's
thought (that of which it speaks) and what we could call its meta-level,
its reflections on the possibilities of its own discourse. The meaning of a
concept like the Augenblick is understood only when a qualified mode
of understanding is also presupposed as included in it. Furthermore, it
is part of its meaning that it—or rather its application—constitutes an
attempt to displace the philosophical order of concept and object, and
ultimately of subjectivity and being. We could speak of it as a certain
critical potential or charge, or perhaps even in the traditional
dichotomy of locutionary and illocutionary utterances. Still, neither of
these determinations capture the specific nature of Heidegger's claim
when he introduces these key concepts. It has already been suggested
that the Augenblick, at least in some contexts, should be understood
ultimately as a mark of the limit of signification as such, supposing that
signifying implies a "having" of whatever is signified before one's eyes
(in a direct or metaphorical sense). As we will see, this remark is also
applicable to the Ereignis.

64 "Der Satz der Identität," in IuD, pp. 24-25. A tentative translation could
perhaps be the following: "To occur as event originally means to appropriate by means
of the eye, i.e., to behold in a gaze, to call to oneself in the gaze, to appropriate." The
same conceptual construction, of the Ereignis as an Er-äugen is found in the essay
"Der Weg zur Sprache" from 1959, GA 12, p. 249. It is simply noted here, but it is
applicable to every stage of the conceptual adventure that we have followed in this
chapter, namely, the somewhat surprising fact that Heidegger does not seem to
question the fundamentally visual metaphor of the Augenblick, as the gaze of the
eye. A treatment of this question should address his extensive discussion of different
modes of gazing (of Blicken and Anblicken) in the lectures on Parmenides from

65 In Richardson (1963), p. 614, the connection between Ereignis and Eräugnis
is briefly discussed, but with no reference to the Augenblick. F. Dastur mentions the
passage just quoted in the context of a discussion of the role of Ereignis in
Heidegger's later thinking, but she does not acknowledge the connection to the
Augenblick, Dastur (1990), p. 111.
As in the case of the Augenblick, the idea of Ereignis—as presented in Beiträge—is an attempt to think and conceptualize being in a new way, in an explicit dissociation from how it was conceived at the outset of philosophy, namely, as presence, Anwesenheit. But the implied “eventhood” of being should not lead us to think that a “static” description of being has been replaced by a more “dynamic” conception. In a somewhat surprising attempt to distance himself from Nietzsche on this point, Heidegger accuses the latter of having made precisely this mistake. To understand being as “process” is just to objectify it in another way. The Ereignis does not signify an event in time; on the contrary, it is one of a series of fundamental concepts through which time itself is thematized, as indicated already in the remark on space-time above. In a section in the final appendix to Beiträge, Heidegger enumerates several aspects of Ereignis in short paragraphs. Without entering into the details of his formulations, one can note that throughout they designate a means, or—to use Heidegger’s often repeated word—a “between” (Zwischen), in and through which opposites are brought together (among them he enumerates man and gods, world and earth, being and beings, ground and abyss), not in order to be mediated, but rather in order to be seen in their contradictory unity. In this approach, the human capacity for thinking and conceptualizing is not to be separated from that which is to be thought. With the concept of Ereignis, Heidegger explicitly declares that he wants to move beyond the distinction between the agent and the object of thought by undermining the distinction itself.

In SZ, Dasein was the starting point from which any investigation into the meaning of being must proceed. The existential analytic could be read as an inventory of human cognitive capacities, and as a preparation for an analysis of being to come. In Beiträge the connection between man and being is more opaque, and this opacity is concentrated in the thought of Ereignis. Throughout Beiträge, the idea is reiterated in various ways: to approach being through the thought of Ereignis includes an acknowledgement of one’s belonging to being. Indeed, the thought of Ereignis culminates in this recognition. In order for the concept to fulfill its purpose, it therefore

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66 GA 65, p. 31.
67 Ibid., p. 472.
68 This section (entitled “Ereignis ist:”) is found on pp. 470-471.
69 Cf., e.g., the passage on p. 320: “Sofem das Da-sein sich zu-geeignet wird
presupposes that Dasein abandons its hopes for a completed fulfillment, or that the fulfillment is brought about only as a sort of short-circuiting of its own expectations.

Interpreted in this way, the structural and thematic proximity between *Augenblick* and *Ereignis* comes to the fore. Just like the *Augenblick*, *Ereignis* is a concept through which Heidegger tries to think a presence beyond the present, and in doing so approaches the limits of the sayable and thinkable. The *Ereignis* is a concept intended to include its own limited definability. In one of the paragraphs Heidegger speaks of it as that which “draws away from the calculating representation, appearing as defiance.”\(^70\) The word for “withdrawal” here is *entziehen*; toward the end of *Beiträge* the thought is often repeated that the *Ereignis* is characterized by a certain *Entzug*.\(^71\) It is something which appears in withdrawing. The same thought is then expressed twenty-five years later in the essay “Time and Being,” mentioned in the previous chapter as the culmination of Heidegger’s thoughts on time. In this late essay it is also stressed that the *Ereignis* can never be placed over and against man, and that it therefore remains inaccessible to a “representative-founding” thinking.\(^72\) Here Heidegger also speaks of how a certain *Enteignis*, disappropriation, belongs to the *Ereignis*, and how the *Ereignis* therefore never fully reveals itself, but preserves what is proper to it.\(^73\) The *Ereignis* appears as withdrawal; it appropriates in disappropriation.

What is disclosed through this enigmatic logic? It is something with many names, yet with no fixed and determinate name. Here I have tried to interpret it as the domain of historicity, as an essentially self-reflexive predicament. Heidegger’s *Ereignis* can be read as an attempt of thinking to signify its own happening as a constitutive event in which it is both the subject and the object. It is an event of receiving and receiving as zugehörig zum Ereignis, kommt es zu sich selbst, aber nie so, als wäre das Selbst schon ein vorhandener, nur bisher nicht erreichter Bestand. Vielmehr zu sich selbst kommt das Da-sein erst, indem die Zu-eignung in die Zugehörigkeit zugleich Über-eignung wird in das Ereignis.”

\(^70\) GA 65, p. 470: “...sich jeder vorstellende Verrechnung entzieht und als Verweigerung west.”

\(^71\) *Beiträge* the *Entzug* is sometimes placed along the *Ent-setzung*, as parallel determinations of the *Ereignis*, see, e.g., p. 482: “Ent-setzung und Entzug sind des Seyns als des Ereignisses.” It also denotes a founding displacement, which obeys a similar logic as that of the *Entzug*.

\(^72\) *SdD*, p. 24. For the remarks on the *Entzug* in this text, see p. 23.

projecting, and also of its own self-becoming. In thinking and
signifying this predicament, the mode and the content cannot be
separated. As in (Heidegger’s) Nietzsche’s greatest moment, to think it
is to think from within a need, or a lack. Historicity is the domain of a
belonging that can be grasped only as a projection of an indebtedness.
Thinking here deliberately ceases to signify; instead it turns to an
indicative mode of expression, openly admitting its own shortcomings.
Therefore it should come as no surprise when Heidegger also writes,
still in Beiträge, that “the Er-eignis is the original history, whereby it
could also be indicated that here in general the essence of being is
understood ‘historically.’”" To understand being historically does not
mean to understand it as a history in the common sense of the word, as
a process in time. It is to understand it as that which happens in a
passage of thrownness and projection, of disappropriation and
appropriation, as an enigmatic origin that thinking can never master.

In the introductory section two Greek concepts were discussed, καιρός
and ἐξαιφνης. Despite the obvious connections between Heidegger’s
Augenblick and the Augenblick of Kierkegaard and Jaspers,
Heidegger’s references was to “kairological” time, rather than to the
time of “the sudden.” To end this discussion of Augenblick and
Ereignis, I want to address briefly two passages in Heidegger’s later
writings where he explicitly returns to this other root of the moment:
the ἐξαιφνης, or “the sudden.” The first is a passage in the lectures on
Parmenides, given five years after the composition of Beiträge, and
the only place I have found where Heidegger explicitly refers to the
Greek ἐξαιφνης. The question here concerns the proper way of
thinking being, something which, Heidegger concludes, requires a
certain “awakedness” for the meaning of the “it is.” This meaning, he
continues,

...shows itself, if it does show itself, in each case only ‘suddenly’—in
Greek ἐξαιφνης, i.e., ἐξαφανής, the way that something irrupts into
appearance, from non-appearance."5

74 Ibid., p. 32: “Das Er-eignis ist die ursprüngliche Geschichte selbst, womit
angedeutet sein könnte, daß hier überhaupt das Wesen des Seyns ‘geschichtlich’
begriffen wird.”

75 GA 54, pp. 222-223: “Das “es ist” des Seienden, das Sein, zeigt sich, wenn es
sich zeigt, jedesmal nur “plötzlich,” griechisch ἐξαιφνης, d.h., ἐξαφανής, in der
Weise, daß etwas aus dem Nichterscheinenden heraus mitten in das Erscheinende
In this remark on the mode of appearing of being itself, the two roots of the *Augenblick* converge, as the kairological openness of anticipatory resolve and as the enigma of the happening of the opening itself. Considering that the *Ereignis* has previously been presented precisely as the mode of manifestation of being, as well as the mode of its understanding, the remark could be read as another conceptual detour from the *Augenblick* to *Ereignis*.

The second remark is found in *The Principle of Reason*, presented as a series of lectures another ten years later. In a highly opaque passage in the penultimate lecture the category of “suddenness” is here explicitly connected to the proper understanding of the historicity of being itself, as well as to a certain *enigma*. The context is a discussion of how to think the history of thinking as destiny (*Geschick*), beyond the common conception of history as a process whereby the ideal is realized in time. Heidegger concludes that this conception stands in the way of the attempt to

...bring into view that which is unique, the unique concealed in the enigmatic constancy which at times erupts and is assembled into the abruptness of what is authentically destinal. The abrupt is the sudden, which only apparently contradicts that which is constant, which means, that which endures...we will never reach the vicinity of the historicity that is to be thought with a view to the sending of being so long as we remain ensnared in the web of representations which, all in all, blindly take refuge in the distinction of the absolute and the relative...\(^{76}\)

This highly convoluted passage could no doubt lend itself to an extensive interpretation. Here I will only add a few remarks which also bring out some of the points mentioned earlier. What Heidegger is trying to communicate here is the need of a certain mode of thinking and conceptualizing, without which the peculiar nature of the historicity of being as sending and destiny itself is lost. This phenomenon cannot

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149. The dubious etymological connection to φαίνω need not be addressed here, even though it could no doubt be made the starting point of an interesting discussion of how phenomeno-logy is transformed by Heidegger into kairo-logy.

\(^{76}\) *SvG*, p. 160: "Freilich erschwert die eingängige Vorstellung von der Geschichte als zeitlicher Verwirklichung des Überzeitlichen jedes Bemühen, das Einzigartige zu erblicken, das sich in der rätselhaften Stetigkeit verbirgt, die sich jeweils in das Jähe des eigentlich Geschicklichen bricht und versammelt. Das Jähe ist das Plötzliche, das nur dem Anschein nach dem Steten, d. h. Ausdauernden widerspricht.... Wir gelangen niemals in die Nähe der aus dem Blick auf das Seinsgeschick zu denkenden Geschichtlichkeit, solange wir im Netz von Vorstellungen hängen bleiben, die sich unversehens auf die Unterscheidung des Absoluten und des Relativen zurückverzettten...." The translation is a slightly modified version of R. Lilly’s translation of this passage in *PR*, p. 95.
be understood along the line of a process in time. It must be thought from the viewpoint of a singularity which in itself is not a part of this history, but through which its mode of being is manifested. This singularity cannot be thought within the dichotomy of the relative and the absolute, or the temporal and the eternal; it strikes across these categories, or at least it claims to so. It claims to name the region from within which this very conceptual framework can be broken down and reflected in understanding, while also acknowledging that it is precisely the applicability of this framework that prevents it from being understood.

In Heidegger's attempt to indicate this elusive phenomenon we should not fail to recognize again the thought of the Augenblick, as well as that of Ereignis. Here neither of these concepts are mentioned, instead he speaks of a "suddenness" that thinking can never fully master, but in the vicinity of which it must try to operate. In \textit{SZ} the Augenblick is the name for the authentic historizing of Dasein, its authentic way of being history itself. The Ereignis is an attempt to grasp the historizing of being itself, as movement into which Dasein is drawn, as belonging and response. In this late remark this event-hood and historizing of being is again reinscribed in the category of the "sudden," the \(\varepsilon \xi a \iota \phi \nu \eta \zeta\), as the non-localizable passage from within which the idea of the Augenblick was originally said to have evolved.

8. Concluding remarks: on Heidegger's style

The Augenblick not only designates a moment of resolve and action, it also marks a resolve in itself, a philosophical resolve, whereby the thinker of the Augenblick precipitates himself into a certain philosophical predicament. By way of conclusion I would like to add a few remarks to this suggestion.

To begin with: what kind of resolve does the thought of the Augenblick imply? To some extent it could be described in terms of specific philosophical theses, concerning the nature of being, of truth, of language, and of understanding. More important, however, the resolve is manifested in a certain mode of thinking and writing. The thought of the Augenblick implies a certain conception of how thinking and writing are made possible through the proper handling of their own enactment. This forces us as readers to raise the question at
some point: to what extent is Heidegger’s own writing carried out in the mode thus implied? And how does this affect our reading of him? Is there a description of his thinking to be elicited from the conditions for thought in general as described by him, a description that would give us the clues for how to read his own texts? Generally speaking, it would be strange if this were not the case. Heidegger is a thinker uniquely preoccupied with the conditions of his own theoretical activity. Everything he says about the historicity of existence and of thinking applies also to his conception of philosophy. Indeed, his thinking is inseparable from the conditions of its own activity, or, to be more precise, from how it understands these conditions. It operates within a specific understanding and articulation of what it is to perform philosophical thought. The Augenblick, as well as the Ereignis, can both be seen as names for how he understands the goal of his own activity: to think from within the Augenblick, to respond kairopologically to his own situation.

This philosophical resolve undertaken by Heidegger determines the course of his thinking and his writing and places certain demands on his readers. To some extent one could perhaps describe the mode of Heidegger’s thought in terms of a number of rhetorical means: for example, how it applies particular turns of phrase, certain words as well as combinations of words. It was suggested earlier that it would be possible to isolate a series of tropes or figures that belong to the manifest register of the moment, such as wakefulness, preparedness, and resolve. The style of Heidegger’s thinking could thereby perhaps be captured in terms of a limited number of semantic manoeuvres that could be designated as “kairopological writing.” Despite its indisputable interest, however, such an analysis would still leave us at loss when it comes to the question of how Heidegger’s thinking produces its truth. In order just to raise such a question in a meaningful way, we cannot neglect what Heidegger himself has to say about truth, not least of its historicity, which is the theme of the next chapter. Only then will it be possible to return to the problem of his own philosophical discourse. In the final chapter I address this issue in a more elaborated analysis of Beiträge.

From what has been said in the present chapter, a tentative conclusion could nevertheless be outlined. To be historical is to exist in
the medium of loss and indebtedness, and to do so in a movement
toward oneself in a continuous mediation through that which is other.
As such, it also implies an original need to act and to respond. As an
origin in itself this situation cannot be grasped and conceptualized
within the framework of beings in general; ultimately, it can only be
“indicated” as the non-localized origin of possible determinations. In
Heidegger’s writings, historicity is designated from the very beginning
by concepts that somehow seem to undermine their own signifying
capacity in the very act of being applied. The Augenblick, as the name
of the mode of manifestation of authentic historicity, is such a concept.
It is presented as the time of meaning and of understanding precisely by
virtue of its non-locality, its non-present presence, which shows or
“indicates” through the enactment of a loss. At least this seems to be the
aspiration of Heidegger’s thought of the Augenblick: to preserve the
uniqueness of what it thinks in the very act of thinking it. A philo-
sophical quest of this kind is predestined to circle around the experience
of its own conditions of possibility, as an inexhaustible event of
disclosure and as an enigmatic origin.
Chapter Six

HISTORICITY AND TRUTH

Die Αλήθεια ist das Rätsel selbst—die Sache des Denkens.
M. Heidegger, "Hegel und die Griechen" \(^1\)

(1) Introducing the question of truth and its historicization, (2) Truth as openness; the ambiguity of the Greek prelude, (3) Disclosedness and the analytic of Dasein, (4) Truth and Dasein's disclosedness in SZ §44, (5) Truth as relative to disclosedness, (6) Reinterpreting disclosedness as historical happening, (7) The domain of truth as history and art (8) Concluding remarks; the time of truth

1. Introducing the question of truth and its historicization

In a review from 1968 of Ernst Tugendhat's book on the concept of truth in Husserl and Heidegger, Otto Pöggeler remarked that by then it had become an opinio communis to regard "the historicity of truth" as the main theme of the later Heidegger, as well as of modern philosophy at large.\(^2\) The connection between the themes of truth and historicity in Heidegger's later works is manifested on an immediate conceptual level; in the later writings truth is often explicitly described as "happening" and "historizing" (Geschehen or Geschehnis). It is a happening of unconcealment, of clearing, or simply of the opening in and through which beings are given, in a process that is "historically" determined in an unusual sense of this word. However, one need not go to Heidegger's later writings in order to find this connection. In his earliest attempts to specify the task of philosophical thinking with respect to its own tradition, the question of the standing of truth with respect to history is clearly implied. It is implied in the attempt to overcome the distinction between a philosophical "systematics" and the

\(^1\) "The Αλήθεια is the enigma itself—that which is to be thought."
history of philosophy, and to generate—from within this very tension—a sense of philosophical truthfulness that can escape the nihilism of historicism. Thus no account of the theme of historicity in Heidegger’s writings can avoid confronting, at some point or other, the question of truth. This question of truth—what it is, how it comes about, how it temporalizes and “historizes”—could in fact be described as the horizon toward which the matters treated here have been pointing all along. I do not, however, want to indicate that these previous matters should be seen simply as preparations for a final and definite task; rather they can be regarded as different ways to approach a goal, the final formulation of which remains essentially elusive. Nevertheless, in regard to the question of truth, several of the points made so far can be sharpened.

To grasp Heidegger’s thoughts on truth in any comprehensive way is a complicated task for many reasons, not the least of which is the size of the textual corpus devoted to this particular theme.3 Furthermore, Heidegger’s thoughts on this question—like so many others—undergo transformations over the course of his work. Truth is also one of the few subjects on which Heidegger late in life seems to have recognized that his earlier attempts were somehow misguided.4 Finally, the transformations are related not only to changes in his own thinking, but more important, to changes in his ongoing project of critically re-interpreting and reassessing the foundations of Western philosophical thought. A persistent theme throughout these meandering explorations of the nature of truth is the reflection on the Greek word for truth, ἀλήθεια, and the historical vicissitudes of a presumably original notion of truth. No discussion of Heidegger’s conception of truth can avoid confronting the historical claims that serve as a basis for his own conclusions. I therefore begin with a brief discussion of Heidegger’s reading of Aristotle in particular, and of his assessments of the Greek prelude in general.


4 The reference here is to the discussion in the essay “Das Ende der Philosophie und die Aufgabe des Denkens,” SdD, pp. 61-80, esp. p. 77. I return to this issue shortly.
Before doing so, however, I must draw certain demarcations. It is clear that Heidegger’s thinking on truth implies some kind of “historicization” of truth. However, the meaning of this “historicization” is by no means obvious. Often it is simply understood as the refusal to acknowledge eternal truths, or in other words, as the idea that just as human beings and human cultures evolve, so does truth. According to this conception, it would be useless to search for trans-cultural and trans-temporal truths, since all we can do is to observe the various ways in which the world is understood and conceptualized over the course of history. This is historicism in its crudest form. This position is sometimes ascribed to Heidegger, as his own view, or as a consequence of his overall perspective. But—as already emphasized in Chapters One and Two—it is not a conclusion that he ever recognized as valid. On the contrary, it is precisely in order to avoid such a subjectification of truth that he was searching for new ways of speaking of the phenomenon of truth as such. A good illustration is the statement from *Beiträge* concerning the “spell of generality” which he diagnoses as a characteristic of modern thought, and which he exemplifies in the following way:

This is finally demonstrated in the fact that, even when one believes that one has understood something of the historical essence of truth, it only results in a shallow “historicism”: it is considered that truth is not eternally valid, but only “for a certain time.” However, this view is only a “quantitative” limitation of a generality.\(^5\)

Nevertheless, in the attempts to escape the impasse between a naive conception of truth as eternal validity and truth as relative to a specific historical-cultural context, Heidegger sometimes—notably in *SZ*—ended up very close to precisely the position he was trying to avoid, or rather, from which he was trying to break loose. What is so demanding in Heidegger’s approach is that in and through its radical “historical”

\(^5\) This misconception continues to distort the reception of Heidegger’s work, especially in the Anglo-American context, where his attempts to articulate the “historical” essence of truth is often equated with historicism in precisely the sense which he himself persistently struggled against. This is illustrated, for instance, in the writings of Rorty, in whose pragmatic revision of Heidegger’s idea of historical truth the originality of the latter’s purpose is lost. See Rorty’s discussion of hermeneutics and truth in *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (1979), pp. 357-365.

\(^6\) GA 65, p. 343: “Dies zeigt sich zuletzt darin, daß selbst dort, wo man glaubt, etwas vom geschichtlichen Wesen der Wahrheit zu begreifen, nur ein äußerlicher ‘Historismus’ herauskommt: man meint, die Wahrheit gilt nicht ewig, sondern nur ‘auf Zeit.’ Diese Meinung aber ist nur eine ‘quantitative’ Einschränkung der Allgemeingültigkeit.”
mode of philosophying, it nevertheless struggles to preserve the uniqueness and originality of philosophical thinking over and beyond every other domain of knowing.

The most obvious aspect of Heidegger’s writings on truth is his never-ending campaign against what he held to be the one and only dominant conception of truth in the history of metaphysics, namely, the “correspondence”-theory of truth. In its classic (Thomistic) formulation this theory holds truth to consist in the correspondence, or aedequatio, between thing and intellect, rei et intellectus.\(^7\) When seen only in the light of the critique of this conception, Heidegger’s work seems to be quite in line with several parallel strands in modern philosophy. The critique of the standard correspondence theory is shared in various ways by pragmatism, coherentism, verificationism, consensus theories, holism, etc. In his critical assessment of the philosophical tradition, Heidegger never refers to contemporary alternatives. To establish this nonexistent link is certainly a worthwhile endeavor, but it is not something I will attempt to do here.\(^8\) One reason for the difficulty in establishing such points of contact is that most other attempts to go beyond the correspondence theory of truth have experimented with “contextual” models of truth, over and against the classic Aristotelian emphasis on the sentence as the atom of truth. However, in these attempts to redefine the conditions for truth, the meaning of truth—or what truth is—has rarely been questioned as such. Truth itself is still thought along the lines of correspondence, between a (linguistic) theory and something else, although in broader, more sophisticated terms.\(^9\)

\(^7\) The original formulation of this theory is, of course, normally attributed to Aristotle (an attribution which Heidegger—at least for a time—will dispute).

\(^8\) Recently several attempts have been made to establish this non-existent dialogue between Heidegger and contemporary thinkers, working from within other traditions. Among these one can mention M. Okrent’s *Heidegger’s Pragmatism* (1988), and in particular R. Campbell’s *Truth and Historicity* (1992), which is a large scale overview of the problem of truth in a historical perspective, with a critical but essentially sympathetic attitude to Heidegger, whose thoughts on truth are compared to holism, verificationism, and intuitionism, and especially to M. Dummett. Yet the most obvious point of comparison remains the Husserlian-phenomenological approach, as is clearly demonstrated by Tugendhat’s comprehensive study *Der Wahrheitsbegriff bei Husserl und Heidegger* (1966/1970). In the course of the discussion I will refer at some points to this particular background.

\(^9\) Richard Campbell argues that the important difference between Heidegger and most other twentieth century philosophers is not the critique of the correspondence theory as such, but the rejection of theory as the domain of truth, and furthermore that Heidegger’s idea of truth belongs in the domain of action rather than in the domain of discourse, Campbell (1992), p. 395. The opposite camp is summarized by Campbell under the heading of “Linguistic Conception of Truth,” under which he finds the entire
To be sure, the account elaborated in *SZ* implies a contextualization of truth, which is said to arise only in the totality of human praxis. Still, what Heidegger is searching for all along is an understanding and articulation of truth not as the result of such practical activities, but rather as their condition of possibility. Truth, as opening or disclosed-ness, is a condition in which human existence is always located, while also continuously manifesting this condition through its activities. It is transcendental, as Heidegger also suggests in *SZ*, where phenomenological truth is equated with *veritas transcendentalis*. It is perhaps tempting to compare this with the idea of “transcendental truth” that still survives in Kant as the general condition that underlies every single empirical truth. Even though Heidegger’s conception of truth is obviously connected to the transcendental problem of givenness in general, it should not, however, be understood simply as a static (logical or ontological) condition. The problem that continues to guide Heidegger’s reflections is how this “condition” is manifested, how it comes to stand or how it “happens.” In other words, it is the question of access all over again, of how the “having” of a world comes about, and consequently how the enigmatic “opening” that we are and to which we belong is to be thought. For this reason, it should come as no surprise that the “historical” conception of understanding encountered in previous chapters will again emerge in the course of the present discussion of the being and essence of truth.

Finally, a few words are called for concerning a critique that has often been voiced against the perspective on truth proposed by Heidegger: namely, that it does not permit us to draw the fundamental distinction between the true and the false in a conventional sense. If truth is ultimately thought as happening and event rather than correspondence, then we have no means of qualifying different events with a tradition that takes its point of departure in Frege, from Russell, over Tarski, to Davidson (*ibid.*, pp. 355 f.).

10 The apparent tension between a passive condition and an active production in this formulation is in fact one of the defining characteristics of Heidegger’s elaborations of the concept of truth, and one that will be addressed in what follows.

11 *SZ*, p. 38: “Phänomenologische Wahrheit (Erschlossenheit von Sein) ist *veritas transcendentalis*” (Heidegger italicizes the entire sentence).

12 In the famous exposition of the problem of truth in the first *Critique* (B 82) truth as correspondence between knowledge and object is first “taken for granted.” Later on, in the context of the transcendental analytic, Kant also speaks of “transcendental truth” as a name for the relation between knowledge in general and possible experience (B 185).
respect to each other.\textsuperscript{13} In short, we have no means to distinguish—to speak with Aristotle—between “how it is” and “how it is not.” From a theory of truth we can of course never expect a criterion for making the distinction in the actual case. Still, what it should give us is a definition, or at least a philosophical interpretation, of the distinction as we constantly apply it, in ordinary as well as in scientific discourse. A critical question is whether Heidegger does indeed fail to provide such a critical distinction. In his review of Tugendhat’s book, Otto Pöggeler challenges precisely this critique, stating that the very idea of a stable foundation is precisely what Heidegger questions, and that he even betrayed his own ideals when he suggested in \textit{SZ} that there could be an authentic truth of being. At the same time, Pöggeler is anxious to distance himself from what he sees as a tendency among some of Heidegger’s readers to understand the later writings simply “as a panhermeneutic dissolution of every systematics into an uncontrolled fluctuation and happening.”\textsuperscript{14} Against this image of a complete relativization of truth, Pöggeler rightly suggests that in both Husserl and Heidegger one finds an attempt to rethink the Hegelian “speculative principle”; in the course of the transformation of the truth of being there prevails a “speculative middle” (\textit{spekulative Mitte}), which is itself historical, and yet maintained according to certain measures. Pöggeler does not elaborate further on this “middle” in his review. The attentive reader will have recognized, however, that the various points of convergence of knowing and being examined here—as historicity, as temporality, as understanding, \textit{Augenblick}, and \textit{Ereignis}—could be read as an exploration of Heidegger’s different ways of approaching this enigmatic middle, where truth appears as happening and measure at once.

\section*{2. Truth as openness; the ambiguity of the Greek prelude}

Throughout the course of Heidegger’s shifting reflections on truth, one thing remains stable: the philosophical struggle with the Greek—and, in particular, the Aristotelian—conception of truth as an origin and a point of departure. It is in his reading of Aristotle that Heidegger first

\textsuperscript{13} This is essentially the critique voiced by Tugendhat (1966/1970), and also by Habermas (1973).

develops the idea that truth must be conceived of not primarily as correspondence, but as “opening” or “disclosedness.” This is brought out most clearly in the remarkable manuscript on the interpretation of Aristotle from 1922 (to which reference has been made repeatedly). The starting point of Heidegger’s discussion here is the famous passage from the sixth book of Nicomachean Ethics, where Aristotle speaks of the various ways in which the soul possesses truth. But the use of the word “possesses” here is already problematic, for what Aristotle actually implies about the relation between the soul and truth is really what is philosophically at stake, and the conclusion hinges on translation. Aristotle writes: “Εστὶ δὲ οἷς ἄληθεῖς ἡ ψυχὴ τῷ καταφάναι καὶ ἀποφάναι πέντε τῶν ἀριθμῶν.” One standard English translation (Ross) of this passage reads as follows: “Let it be assumed that the states by virtue of which the soul possesses truth by way of affirmation and denial are five in number.” Heidegger, however, translates the passage: “Es seien also der Weisen, in denen die Seele Seiendes als unverhülltes in Verwahrung bringt und nimmt—und das in der Vollzugsart des zu- und absprechenden Explizierens—fünf angesetzt.” His translation thus deviates from Ross’s in that truth is seen not as the object of a conscious act, but as a qualification of the mode of givenness as such, which is here described as “unconcealed.”

In the argument that follows, Heidegger stresses in particular the importance of a correct understanding of ἀλήθες and ἀληθεία in Aristotle. He criticizes the common view of Aristotle, which portrays him as having upheld a correspondence-theory or an image-theory of truth and knowledge. In its place, Heidegger presents the following

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15 This text contains the first outline of the understanding of truth as disclosedness. As we will see, it differs somewhat from the corresponding discussion in SZ five years later, and it could in fact be said to anticipate the position toward which Heidegger moves in his later writings.

16 Nicomachean Ethics, 1139b 15-18. This is followed by the enumeration of the five ways: τέχνη, ἐπιστήμη, φρόνησις, σοφία, νοῦς. In the preceding chapter the significance of the Aristotelian φρόνησις for Heidegger’s development of the practical, historical, and kairological mode of existence was emphasized. It is of course also of crucial importance in Heidegger’s reinterpretation of Aristotle’s conception of truth that the latter actually speaks of several ways of making true, beyond the theoretical attitude and the use of sentences.


18 PA, p. 255 (my italics).

19 Heidegger speaks of it both as “unverhülltes” and as “unverborgen,” in what seems to be a synonymous way.
definition, which also marks the opening of his own explorations:

The sense of \( \alpha λη\theta ε\zeta \) as unconcealed being-there, i.e., as being-meant in itself, is by no means explicatively generated from the “judgement,” nor is it originally located to and related to the judgement. ‘\( \alpha λη\thetaε\varepsilon\iota\nu \) does not mean: “to appropriate truth,” but to hold and preserve as unconcealed the presently meant being as it is meant.\(^{20}\)

In the subsequent pages Heidegger attempts to justify this definition through a discussion of the relation between truth and falsity with reference to the third book of *De Anima*. His main point is that truth is not primarily located in judgement or thought in their relation to reality; instead it concerns the mode of givenness of reality itself. He stresses that falsity, according to Aristotle, is only possible in synthesis or judgement, whereas truth always characterizes the immediate sensation of an object. Thus falsity on the whole presupposes a sense of truth which is not essentially tied to the level of \( \lambda \varrho\gamma\omicron\sigma\zeta \). To support his view Heidegger cites *De anima* (427b), where Aristotle speaks of how the perception of the special objects of sense (\( \alpha\iota\sigma\thetaη\sigma\iota\varsigma\ \tau\omega\nu \ \iota\delta\iota\omega\nu \)) is always true.\(^{21}\)

\(^{20}\) *Ibid.*, p. 256: “Der Sinn des \( \alpha\lambdaη\thetaε\zeta \) als unverborgen da-sein, bzw. an ihm selbst vermeint-sein ist in keiner Weise aus dem ‘Urteil’ explikativ geschöpft und daher auch nicht ursprünglich da beheimatet und darauf bezogen. ‘\( \alpha\lambdaη\thetaε\varepsilon\iota\nu \) besagt nicht: ‘sich der Wahrheit bemächtigen,’ sondern das je vermeinte und als solches vermeinte Seiende als unverhülltes in Verwahrung nehmen.” The use of the word *Verwahrung* can hardly be done justice in a translation. It could be translated as “to hold,” “to keep,” “to preserve,” “to be in custody of,” etc., but the relation to *Wahrheit* is inevitably lost. In this formulation the role of the soul is passive rather than active. It was indicated at the outset that the tension between passivity and activity can be traced all throughout Heidegger’s thinking on truth. This tension is illustrated also on the level of translation, as can be seen from a comparison with the lecture series on Plato and the *Sophist* a few years later. These lectures are introduced by an extensive analysis of the Aristotelian concept of \( \alpha\lambdaη\thetaε\varsigma\iota\varsigma \) and of the different ways in which truth can be accomplished, according to Aristotle. The analysis starts off from the same quotation from *Nicomachean Ethics*, which is here translated as follows: “Es seien also der Weisen, in denen das menschliche Dasein als Zu- und Absprechen das Seiende erschließt, fünf” (GA 19, p. 21). Here the earlier formulation “Seiendes als unverhülltes in Verwahrung bringt” (for \( \alpha\lambdaη\thetaε\varepsilon\iota\nu \)) is replaced by the simple “das Seiende erschließt,” which already signals a more active role on the part of human Dasein, a development that will culminate in *SZ*.

\(^{21}\) The question of the relation between \( \alpha\iota\sigma\thetaη\sigma\iota\varsigma\) and \( \alpha\lambdaη\thetaε\zeta \) in Heidegger’s reading of Aristotle is a difficult problem in itself. Sometimes it appears as if Heidegger is actually referring to perception when speaking of truth, as the simple, unmediated having of something through the senses, which can subsequently be made the object of a predicative statement. Heidegger often refers to Aristotle’s equation of truth with an immediate sensory contact, not just in *De anima*, but also in *Metaphysics* \( \Theta \) (1051b 24), where truth is identified with “touching” and “appearing” (\( \thetaι\gammaε\upsilon \) και \( \phiα\alpha\upsilon \)). In *SZ* this connection also appears in passing, in the introductory section on the phenomenological method. There Heidegger states that “‘true’ in the Greek sense is \( \alpha\iota\sigma\thetaη\sigma\iota\varsigma \), the sheer sensory perception of something, and indeed
As an interpretation of Aristotle, Heidegger’s reflections could certainly be criticized. Aristotle obviously does speak of truth in his *Ethics* in a broader sense than simply as a qualification of theoretical sentences, and he does speak of it also as a qualification of immediate awareness. Yet on most occasions, both truth and falsity are presented precisely as properties of composite statements. What, then, should be made of this first attempt to elicit an alternative sense of truth from the very philosopher who is usually recognized as the father of the correspondence theory of truth? It would be possible to stop at this stage and devote a discussion to the questionable aspects of Heidegger’s interpretation. In doing so, however, we would also, unknowingly, be repeating his own subsequent moves. Heidegger’s evaluation of Aristotle is continually undergoing changes, as he seeks to develop his own account of truth. And it is the latter which is of interest here.

The shifting assessment of Aristotle is illustrated again in the lecture series on logic and truth held four years later (during the time when Heidegger was completing *SZ*). Here the interest is focused on the classic account in *De interpretatione*. The complex way in which this work establishes the relation between truth and assertion (λόγος) is examined by Heidegger in detail. His most sensational claim here is that truth is in fact never defined by Aristotle in reference to the sentence, but when the two are connected it is always the sentence which is defined with respect to truth, as in *De interpretatione* (17a), where the specific class of apophatic assertions, or propositions, is defined as those which can be true or false. In other words, the category of truth more primordially so than the λόγος (“Wahr” ist im griechischen Sinne und zwar ursprünglicher als der genannte λόγος die αισθησις, das schlichte, sinnliche Vernehmen von etwas, p. 33). The implied reference is obviously Aristotle. However, in the lectures on logic and truth from 1925, where the same section in *Metaphysics* is discussed, Heidegger states that Aristotle’s use of θείεν and φάναι when speaking of truth should be understood metaphorically, as an attempt to articulate the disclosure of something as a “having” of it in its self-sameness, (GA 21, pp. 180ff.).

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22 *Logik - Die Frage nach der Wahrheit, GA* 21. In these lectures the historical background of the problem of truth is discussed at great length, including a detailed assessment of the developments in philosophical logic during the previous century, notably in the works of Lotze and Husserl. It is here that Heidegger, as mentioned above, gives much credit to the work of Husserl, who, through his concepts of intentionality and intuition (Anschauung), is described as having taken the decisive step away from the previous models of truth (p. 114). The ambition of these lectures is to develop a maximally broad perspective on logic, which for Heidegger is not restricted to the rules of correct reasoning but comprises the entire field of linguistic disclosure of the world. The basis for such linguistic activity is that beings can be brought out in the open. The same move—from truth as an attribute of sentences, to truth as disclosedness—is here repeated over and over again.
is more fundamental than that of propositional sentence, which is why it must be investigated and clarified in other terms. Or, as Heidegger puts it: "The proposition is not the seat of truth, but truth is the seat of the proposition."\(^{23}\) The turn from one perspective to the other is subtle, and yet momentous. The apophantic assertion arises in a space of communicating speech where the true and the false are already there as possibilities. But what is this possibility of truth, and how could it be theoretically explored? In pointing toward this elusive phenomenon, Heidegger invites us to reflect on something which is said to precede the actual use of linguistic synthesis, while still anticipating its characteristics: that of uncovering (Entdecken). It is a "structural phenomenon," he says, which neither Aristotle nor the subsequent tradition was able to address.\(^{24}\) Thereby he has also taken a step away from his earlier interpretation. Now Aristotle only serves as a critical departure for thinking something which we should not expect to find in his writings: an original uncovering.

The idea of such an original uncovering is presented in the lectures in a preliminary way. Dasein is said always to be "open to the world," which in turn is "unlocked" or "revealed" to it.\(^{25}\) Every predicative statement, even language itself, arises from within this initial condition of a primordial openness and accessibility. Language does not mirror or depict the objects and states of affairs in this world, but arises out of the practically concerned relation which already exists between Dasein and its environment. Thus the problem of the truth of a sentence is transformed into the global problem of the openness of a world, including—as a derivative question—the origin of linguistic communication and description. Throughout these elaborations, Heidegger often returns to the problem of falsity, its being and its possibility (which was of course also a central concern for the Greeks). To think truth as uncovering is supposedly to think an uncovering for which there is no covering over, in other words, for which there is no falsity. A point often made in these early interpretations is that falsity is only possible when there is synthesis and judgement.\(^{26}\)

\(^{23}\) GA 21, p. 135: "Satz ist nicht der Ort der Wahrheit, sondern Wahrheit der Ort des Satzes."

\(^{24}\) Ibid., p. 141: "Er und die Griechen—und die weitere Tradition überhaupt—haben es unterlassen, diesem Strukturphänomen noch eigens nachzufragen."

\(^{25}\) GA 21, p. 43: the expressions here are "welt-offen" and "aufgeschlossen."

\(^{26}\) In GA 21, p. 182, Heidegger argues for the existence of an Aristotelian
Over the course of the years, Heidegger will continue to struggle with the classic Greek philosophical texts in search of an original sense of truth as unconcealment, and also in search of the shift whereby this original notion was transformed into correspondence or correctness. So far we have seen how Aristotle is first attributed a concept of truth, of which he is thereafter said to have been unaware. Later on, the shift will be located to a historical point before Aristotle, more precisely in Plato, in whose parable of the cave the two senses of \(\alpha\lambda\eta\beta\epsilon\iota\alpha\alpha\)—as disclosure and as correctness of a proposition—are said to compete.\(^{27}\) Some years later, however, Plato is recognized as being already under the influence of the latter sense of truth.\(^{28}\) And in a step even further back, the tension between the two senses will be located to the fragment by Anaximander.\(^{29}\) What is the more permanent significance of this continuous struggle for an apparently ever receding historical origin? It has certainly not lacked its philological critics.\(^{30}\) A text written forty years after the first introduction to Aristotle, “The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking,” Heidegger again returns to the problem of truth as \(\alpha\lambda\eta\beta\epsilon\iota\alpha\alpha\) in an attempt to specify the non-articulated foundation of Western metaphysics. As the prerequisite for any phenomenological return to “the things themselves” he here points toward an openness and a clearing (\(Lichtung\)), ascribed not to Dasein but to being itself, which is subsequently identified with \(\alpha\lambda\eta\beta\epsilon\iota\alpha\alpha\) as unconcealment.\(^{31}\) But after having again circumscribed \(\alpha\lambda\eta\beta\epsilon\iota\alpha\alpha\) with the help of concepts such as conception of uncovering for which there is no covering over (\(f\ddot{u}r\ das\ es\ keine\ Verdeckung\ gibt\)). For a similar argument from around the same time, cf. \(GA\ 19\), pp. 182-184, where he also discusses how it is the synthesizing \(\lambda\gamma\alpha\sigma\) that makes possible mistaken beliefs. Several years later, in an interpretation of Plato’s \(Theaetetus\), he will argue that it was precisely the inability to deal with the false judgement that led the Greek thinkers to lose hold of the original truth as disclosure toward which they were nevertheless moving. Through the analysis of how the false assertion is constituted in its failure to “hit” its target, Plato is here said to give birth to the correspondence theory of truth, according to which the true statement is precisely the statement that \(hits\ or\ attains\) its goal (\(GA\ 34\), pp. 322 passim.). It should be added, however, that during this stage Heidegger begins to speak of this primordial unconcealment in a more ambiguous and antagonistic way, as containing the possibility of untruth and even the strife between them. These later developments are discussed further in Sections 5 and 6.

\(^{27}\) See “Platons Lehre von der Wahrheit,” in \(GA\ 9\), pp. 203-238.

\(^{28}\) See, e.g., \(GA\ 65\), pp. 333-334.

\(^{29}\) “Der Spruch des Anaximander,” in \(GA\ 5\), pp. 321-373.

\(^{30}\) For the philological critique of Heidegger’s discussion of the Greek \(\alpha\lambda\eta\beta\epsilon\iota\alpha\alpha\), see Friedländer (1954), and Boeder (1959). R. Bernasconi has a good summary of Heidegger’s argument with the philologists, in Bernasconi (1985), pp. 19-20.

\(^{31}\) “Das Ende der Philosophie und die Aufgabe des Denkens,” in \(SdD\), p. 71.
"openness," "unconcealment," and "clearing," he suddenly acknowledges that this whole question does not concern the problem of truth in the sense of Wahrheit: "Therefore it was not appropriate, and thus misleading, when \(\alpha\lambda\eta\theta\epsilon\iota\alpha\) in the sense of clearing was called truth." Furthermore: "The natural concept of truth does not mean unconcealment, not even in the philosophy of the Greeks." And finally: "Therefore the consideration of a transformation in the essence of truth, i.e., from unconcealment to correctness, is not tenable." In other words, here Heidegger seems to suggest that there never was an original—Greek or other—understanding of truth as unconcealment, and that the idea of a historical loss of this sense was fictitious all along.

What does this acknowledgement imply with respect to the earlier texts? Does it mean that the previous efforts were vain from the start, and that the interpretative results could be discarded as flawed? This is obviously not the conclusion drawn by Heidegger himself. Instead it permits him to specify that in the end his thesis was never a historical-philological one, but rather a task for present and future philosophy to explore and articulate.33 What conclusions should we as readers draw

32 Ibid., pp. 77-78: "Darum war es nicht sachgemäß und demzufolge irreführend, die \(\alpha\lambda\eta\theta\epsilon\iota\alpha\) im Sinne der Lichtung Wahrheit zu nennen.... Der natürliche Begriff von Wahrheit meint nicht Unverborgenheit, auch nicht in der Philosophie der Griechen.... Dann ist aber auch die Behauptung von einem Wesenswandel der Wahrheit, d.h. von der Unverborgenheit zur Richtigkeit, nicht haltbar." As a postscript to this brief account of Heidegger's dialogue with the Greeks, we can note that he avoids discussing the only text where a Greek thinker explicitly tries to unearth the (historical) roots of \(\alpha\lambda\eta\theta\epsilon\iota\alpha\), Plato's Cratylos. In his attempt to establish that the words of the Greek language were invented by a people who embraced a Heraclitean doctrine of movement, Socrates here argues that \(\alpha\lambda\eta\theta\epsilon\iota\alpha\) comes from \(\theta\epsilon\iota\alpha\ \alpha\lambda\eta\), i.e., a "divine wandering" (421b). To my knowledge, Heidegger mentions this Platonic passage only once in the published works, in a brief remark added as an appendix to the lecture series on the Sophist, where it is seen only as a joking reversal of the "real" sense of the word (GA 19, p. 619). He thereby manifests a rather commonplace understanding of Cratylos, as essentially a poetic-philosophical diversion. But the questions raised by Plato in this peculiar text could open a much more complex dialogue with Heidegger once we see how it could be read as one possible articulation of the historicity of truth. In Cratylos, Plato at least suggests the possibility that language, as the medium of philosophical reasoning, has a history, which, furthermore, is the history of a philosophical misconception. In his brief remark to Plato's humorous suggestion, Heidegger seems to agree with the dialogue's explicitly anti-Heraclitean position. It is therefore a somewhat ironic twist of fate when he twenty years later, in his Parmenides lectures, whose thrust is Heraclitean and anti-Platonic, identifies the Parmenidean Goddess 'Αλήθεια with the "beginning" as a historical destiny that rules over Western thinking. (GA 54, pp. 242-243).

33 A few years before the text just quoted, in the lecture "Hegel und die Griechen" from 1958, Heidegger addresses his philological critics. To them his thoughts on the \(\alpha\lambda\eta\theta\epsilon\iota\alpha\) had become, as he says, such an "annoyance" (Ärgernis). In return he accuses them for being unable to think the thing itself (GA 9, p. 441), saying also that
from this? At least it should lead us to not being blinded by specific historical interpretative claims. The remarks in the late essay communicate rather a need to be attentive from the start to the level on which these writings are struggling to carve out a philosophical territory from within which the phenomenon of truth can be critically retrieved in understanding.

3. Disclosedness and the analytic of Dasein
The above conclusion leads us back to the point of departure: the question of how to grasp and articulate this idea of an original openness or disclosedness, an Aufgeschlossenheit, with respect to which truth as propositional truth is supposedly derivative. It is to the shifting articulations of this primordial region over the course of Heidegger’s writings that we must now turn. From the outset the question of the being of this disclosedness is connected to the question of a certain “movement,” with which we are already familiar. This movement of an opening and a disclosure is implied in Heidegger’s explorations of the being of the intentional, of life, and of Dasein, as “historizing” and “temporalizing.” Despite the apparently static character of a transcendental condition, the guiding concern in Heidegger’s analyses of truth as disclosedness is how this disclosedness is manifested. This is the case already in the 1922 manuscript on Aristotle, where the question of truth is stated in terms of ways of making true, which is then said to point toward the general problem of life as movement and temporalization, or in other words, as historizing or happening. Disclosedness is a condition, but it is also something that can be investigated as such in terms of how it happens; or rather, its being is understood in terms of how it happens. But this happening is also that of the opening in which every understanding maintains itself. This remark captures a self-reflexive pattern that will guide Heidegger’s explorations into the nature of truth.

What changes, or rather what vacillates, during the course of these explorations is first of all the relation between this disclosedness and human existence or Dasein. In the earliest texts, it sometimes seems that Heidegger wants to think of disclosedness primarily as a condition to the experience of the αλήθεια does not depend on any etymology, but on the philosophical issue (ibid., p. 439).
which Dasein is subjected or bound in its existence. This is, in any case, the direction in which the later writings on truth will move. During a certain period, however (manifested most clearly in \(SZ\)), disclosedness is equated with the being of Dasein itself. Here it is said that “only with Dasein’s disclosedness is the most primordial phenomenon of truth attained.”\(^{34}\) But the exact position of the central existentiale of disclosedness remains ambiguous in this work as well. Before turning to the explicit account of truth in \(SZ\) (as developed in §44), we should discuss its elaboration of the structure of disclosedness.

In the fourth section of \(SZ\), where Heidegger first outlines the idea of fundamental ontology, we are told that Dasein is first and foremost characterized by the fact that it has a relation to its own being. Furthermore, it belongs to its being that this being is disclosed to it: “It is peculiar to this entity that with and through its being, this being is disclosed to it.”\(^{35}\) This is the initial datum from which the investigation must proceed. How, and in what form, Dasein’s own being is disclosed to itself is not specified here; that is the task of the subsequent investigation to establish. But it is from this most general condition that it has to proceed. What is stated thereby? Not much it seems, and yet it establishes a starting point, like the initial Kantian supposition that there is experience of objects, the conditions for which it is the task of philosophy to explore. What follows thereafter is the first section of \(SZ\), from §9 to §44, which describes the structure of “being-in-the-world,” ultimately summarized under “care.” Still, when the results of the first division of the book are presented at the outset of the subsequent division on “Dasein and temporality” (which constitutes the rest of the published work), Heidegger writes:

\(^{34}\) \(SZ\), pp. 220-221: “...daher wird erst mit der Erschlossenheit des Daseins das ursprünglichste Phänomen der Wahrheit erreicht.” This concept of disclosedness, Erschlossenheit, which does not appear in the lectures from the same time, is Heidegger’s technical term in \(SZ\) for Aufgeschlossenheit (which is the concept used in the lectures together with that of Entdecktheit). For the introduction of erschließen and Erschlossenheit as technical terms for aufschließen and Aufgeschlossenheit, see \(SZ\), p. 75. The importance of the idea of Erschlossenheit for Heidegger’s theory of truth was not always fully recognized by readers and commentators. This is not the case with Tugendhat, who devotes an extensive treatment to this particular part of \(SZ\). (Cf. the comment on this neglect of previous commentators, Tugendhat [1966/1970], p. 328.) In the course of a long life of reflections on truth and falsity, Heidegger passes through a number of conceptual alternatives. The different names for truth in his writings—Aufgeschlossenheit, Erschlossenheit, Unverborgenheit, Unverhülltheit, Entdecktheit, Unverstelltheit, etc.—constitute a history in themselves.

\(^{35}\) \(SZ\), p. 12: “Diesem Seienden [Dasein] eignet, daß mit und durch sein Sein dieses ihm selbst erschlossen ist.”
In being-in-the-world, whose essential structures center in disclosedness, we have found the basic state of the entity we have taken as our theme. The totality of being-in-the-world as a structural whole has revealed itself as care. Even though it is “care” that summarizes the existential structures of being-in-the-world, it is in the phenomenon of disclosedness that they are “centered.”

What, more specifically, is this disclosedness according to SZ? It is in fact the same structure we discussed in Chapter Two as the totality of the hermeneutic situation, namely, the “there” (Da) of Dasein. It is under this heading that Heidegger groups the existentiales of “state of mind,” “understanding,” “discourse,” and “falling.” This space or region is circumscribed by a number of names, which all strive toward a neutral middle ground, neither subject, nor object: it is the “In-Sein” in the formula “In-der-Welt-Sein,” the “in-between” or the “clearing.” In his urgent attempts to make sure that Dasein is not understood according to the model of a subject that stands over and against an object, Heidegger repeats the same move with all of these descriptions of disclosedness, when speaking of them as Dasein’s own mode of being. Dasein is the being of the “in-between,” Dasein is the clearing. Consequently, he reaches the point where he can say: “Dasein is its disclosedness.”

Ibid., p. 231: “Gefunden haben wir die Grundverfassung des thematischen Seienden, das In-der-Welt-sein, dessen wesenhaften Strukturen in der Erschlossenheit zentrierten. Die Ganzheit dieses Strukturganzen enthüllte sich als Sorge” (Heidegger’s italics).

In the relation between these two parallel concepts one can already trace the tension within the work, on which I remarked above. Sorge is an intentional concept, in that it describes various ways in which Dasein is directed toward and involved in a world which is thereby constituted for it. Erschlossenheit, on the other hand, describes a condition which seems to precede the (active) constitution of world and of specific objects. It points rather toward a primitive (passive) givenness. (It is therefore somewhat misleading when Tugendhat introduces Erschlossenheit as a continuation and radicalization of Husserl’s concept of “intentionality,” in Tugendhat (1966/1970), p. 281. As stated earlier, the closest parallel in SZ to Husserl’s concept of “intentionality” is Sorge, whereas the most relevant point of comparison to Erschlossenheit is probably Evidenz.) In SZ, however, Erschlossenheit seems to become more closely tied to Dasein as an existential property as the analysis progresses. From §44 we have the phrase, quoted above, that the ultimate foundation of truth is Dasein’s disclosedness. Does Heidegger thereby understand Dasein’s (active) disclosing, or a (passive) disclosing of Dasein? Much hinges on the exact interpretation of this single genitive.

Heidegger speaks of it both in terms of Zwischen and Lichtung. These descriptions appear in the extremely dense §28. To this structure Pöggeler’s Hegelian expression, of a search for “a speculative middle,” certainly seems to apply.

SZ, p. 132-133: “Der Ausdruck ‘Da’ meint diese wesenhaften Erschlossen-
Leaving aside for the moment the grave philosophical difficulties involved in the attempt to capture this most primordial region, we may still consider how Heidegger develops its structure. To some extent the four-fold structure of disclosedness has already been addressed in Chapter Two. It was mentioned then that the transition between the two levels of disclosedness, designated as the “hermeneutic ‘as’” and the “apophantic ‘as,’” constitutes a key move in Heidegger’s overall philosophical approach. This takes place in §33, which is also the first section in which the problem of truth is mentioned in SZ (apart from the introductory remarks in §7). What Heidegger will eventually have to say about truth expliciter hinges precisely on the possibility—and meaningfulness—of somehow distinguishing a pre-theoretical level of disclosure from a disclosure contained in the judgement, that is (in the terminology of SZ), the two senses of “as”-ness: the hermeneutic and the apophantic. He has to show not only that the former can be delimited, but in what way it relates to and conditions the latter. The analysis of the emergence of the judgement from within a pre-theoretical access to the world thus becomes a decisive test of the thesis that is to follow: that truth as correspondence is rooted in truth as disclosedness.

Heidegger’s example is that of a being ready-to-hand, a hammer, which, when simply used, is first disclosed in a hermeneutic “as.” It is only when the object is withdrawn from this immediate pre-theoretical sphere of usefulness that it can be seen in terms of “properties,” which can then be predicated of it in a description of its what-ness. On the primordial level of being “laid out,” the “as”-ness of the object belongs within a context of practical needs. An object is seen as that which can be used for this or that purpose. On the level of the assertion, however, the as-ness has become a property which can be contemplated independently of this immediate context. It sinks down, Heidegger writes, to the “structure of just letting one see and determine what is present-at-hand.”\[40\] This is the distinction between the “existential-heit.... Das Dasein ist seine Erschlossenheit” (Heidegger’s italics).

\[40\] Ibid., p. 158: “Es sinkt herab zur Struktur des bestimmenden Nur-sehens von Vorhandenem.” The spatial metaphor here is both significant and problematic. Heidegger speaks of how it “sinkt herab,” and even of a “Nivellierung,” in order to describe how the original disclosedness is replaced by a disclosedness where the object is linguistically articulated. It would be perfectly reasonable to see it rather as an elevation, in which that which was not given in full awareness is brought up to a level of full awareness. Heidegger’s reasons for choosing the opposite model are obvious; he wishes to criticize a certain form of philosophizing which has lost its
hermeneutical as” and the “apophantical as.” The assertion is made possible by a certain turning or withdrawal within the practical attitude, whereby the object ready-to-hand within a fore-having becomes the object present-at-hand for a fore-sight, for which it is revealed as a thing with specific properties. The point of this description, which will be brought up again in the explicit discussion of truth, is that the relation of the statement to that of which it speaks is derivative with respect to the primordial disclosedness within which Dasein is already located as an understanding-interpreting being.

In SZ, Heidegger does not speak of a historicity of truth. Yet the subsequent development in this direction does not mark such a drastic step away from its confines as it may seem at first. In a sense the “historicization” of truth is prepared precisely through this account of disclosedness. As a part of the discussion of Heidegger’s hermeneutics in Chapter Two, the situatedness of Dasein (as described in SZ) was analyzed in terms of the structure of understanding, interpretation, and discourse. It was argued that this structure should be read as part of the exploration into Dasein’s historicity. To be historical is to stand in a hermeneutical situation of the kind described in these sections. Disclosedness is the totality of the practices enumerated by Heidegger as constituting Dasein’s situatedness. If we consider that truth will eventually be defined in terms of disclosedness, it follows that every manifestation of truth—or event of truth, if I may use this expression which is not found in SZ—is also organized according to the historical-hermeneutic conditions that structure this situation.

From this perspective, one could also use the terms of SZ to speak of a theory of the historicity of truth, in the sense that every instance of truth only holds sway in the context of a circular-hermeneutic domain. The primordial disclosedness is not some kind of unmediated access; it is itself characterized by the fore-structure. This is never spelled out as such in the actual section on truth to which I will turn shortly (§44), but could nevertheless be said to be implied by the overall structure of the argument. Disclosedness, as the “there” of Dasein, is a hermeneutic situation. When applied to the question of the historicity of truth, it sense of origins. Nevertheless, on a metaphorical level this makes it even more complicated, since the origin which Heidegger is defending is normally located by himself at the bottom, as “roots” (Wurzel) and “ground” (Boden), etc. The implications of these conflicting images, which are not philosophically innocent, deserve critical discussion.
means that truth is historical, not because it is valid only within a limited historical-temporal framework, but because the ontological disclosedness out of which it arises, and on the basis of which it is ontologically interpreted, is itself "historically" determined in this specific sense. Once this connection is recognized, the subsequent steps may be easier to follow.

Finally, a few remarks on the fourth pillar of disclosedness, on the description of Dasein in its "falling," or simply the disclosedness of the das Man. At the outset of the analysis of everydayness, we are told that what is at stake is the specific nature of disclosedness characteristic of das Man. Its modes are modes of disclosedness, but of a disclosedness which "closes off" and "covers up." In discourse as "idle talk," that which is spoken of is no longer "kept open"; instead it is covered over and hidden, in a closing off. This closing off should not, however, be understood as a general name for false statements or lies, but rather as what Husserl would speak of as a linguistic practice lacking evidential support. Whatever the specific sense of this covering-up is, the truly problematic point is how disclosedness should be understood, once it is acknowledged that it can also contain forms in which the thing disclosed is in fact not disclosed, but covered over. It would have been much easier if Heidegger had simply said that there are various ways in which things can be disclosed, and then enumerated the different conditions under which this can take place. Then the concept of disclosedness would have been neutral with respect to the question of the ideal limit of a "correct" or "true" disclosure. But with the image of a covering-up, the analysis has left this neutral ground.

41 The description of the first three elements within the structure of the "there," or the disclosedness of Dasein, contains the existential categories of state-of-mind, understanding, and discourse. These categories can, however, be distributed in various ways by Dasein in its everyday life. Discourse, for example, is usually not characterized by the ideal realization of given meanings just described; most often it is an ongoing reporting of inherited views and opinions, what Heidegger defines as "idle talk" (Gerede). This mode of speech is rooted in the fact that language is a shared means of expression, in which one can take part with varying degrees of awareness. Other examples of everyday modes of relating to the world are that of "curiosity" (Neugier) and "ambiguity" (Zweideutigkeit). In describing these habits of man in everyday life and encounters, Heidegger insists that they should be understood not as a critique of modern life, but rather as natural aspects of communal life, a way of disclosing and making things comprehensible in their own right. (Still the words with which he describes these attitudes clearly betray an evaluative scheme; they are part of the Verfall of Dasein, they are entfremdend, they represent an Absturz in a Bodenlosigkeit, etc.) Finally they are organized in the familiar over-all scheme of authenticity and inauthenticity.

42 SZ, p. 169.
behind. Over and against the limited and corrupt disclosing of everyday speech, there is the ideal correlate of genuine disclosedness. Disclosedness thus seems to occupy two different positions in this analysis: as the name for givenness in general, and as the more limited name for of "how it truly is." As we will see in the subsequent section, this will create problems for Heidegger's explicit analysis of truth in \( \text{SZ} \).

4. Truth and Dasein's disclosedness in \( \text{SZ} \) §44

By the time Heidegger reaches the explicit theme of truth in \( \text{SZ} \) (in §44), all the basic categories for dealing with this theme have in fact already been established. The conclusions in this section simply seem to fill in the spaces in a given scheme. But the relation between this section and the previous ones could also be seen in a reciprocal light; truth is the problem toward which the previous analyses were gravitating all along. By all standards, it is a key section within the book and it deserves a careful study. Three basic goals are outlined at the outset; first, to lay bare the foundations of the "traditional" concept of truth (i.e., the correspondence-theory); second, to reveal the original phenomenon of truth with respect to which the traditional concept is derivative; finally, to lay bare the ontological roots of the common way of speaking about existing truths.

Heidegger's critical approach to the model of truth as correspondence is here pursued on a general level. He addresses the common problems of this conception by questioning what exactly it is in the intellect that is supposed to "correspond" to the thing: the actual sentence, the psychological judgment, or perhaps the ideal judgment-content. After having acknowledged the deficiencies of all of these alternatives, he asks instead for the circumstances under which truth as a phenomenon is actually given. This occurs when a piece of knowledge "demonstrates" (ausweist) itself as true. It is in this phenomenological context of demonstration that the idea of a correspondence must be sought. The Husserlian background is quite obvious, and Heidegger readily admits it.\(^43\) The example with which he illustrates a

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\(^{43}\) The Husserlian background is the sixth of the *Logical Investigations* (Heidegger refers in particular to §§36-39) that addresses the problem of the referent, the *Bedeutung*. It is the problem of how acts can intend an object and how the relation between the intention and its possible fulfillment should be accounted for in terms of the act-theoretical perspective. Husserl himself states that in more traditional
demonstration is an adaptation of the Husserlian description of a Bedeutungserfüllende act, in which the object as intended and the object as intuited are ultimately fused in an identity.

Heidegger asks us to imagine a man standing with his back turned to the wall on which there is a painting, of which he has formed the belief: “the painting is hanging askew.” In this situation the man has formed a judgment of something to which he does not have immediate access. What is the structure of this intellectual entity? To what does it relate? It is not related to a psychic representation, since it belongs to its very sense that it is related to the picture on the wall. The actual perception or intuiting of the object in question ultimately serves to prove that it was this very object toward which it was related in the first place.

What comes up for confirmation is that the asserting being toward that which is asserted is a showing forth of this being, that it discovers the being toward which it is.\(^{44}\)

In other words, the statement is not an image of a state of affairs, but rather an act of demonstration, which is at the outset directed toward its presentation or disclosedness. When the object is actually seen, it shows itself to be in itself as it was already disclosed to be in the statement. In the act of “confirmation” (Bewährung) the object presents itself as it is in itself. However, this is only possible on the condition that the knowledge which is thus confirmed is already itself a discovering being toward the real being, not just an image of the real being which is somehow likened to it in the act of its disclosure.

Heidegger’s main point here is obviously to undermine the conception of an image-like relation between a belief-statement and a thing, terminology it is the problem of the relation between concept and intuition, and thus of truth (vol II/2, pp. 2-3). The ideal goal of all such acts is that of a completed adequation of concept and object, a “final fulfillment” (letzte Erfüllung), or, as Husserl also says, “evidence” (Evidenz). In passing, one can note that it was precisely this tendency on Husserl’s part always to relegate questions of truth to “evidence” that Frege saw as his lasting concession to psychologism, and thus to a certain form of relativism (on this matter, see Føllesdal [1958], pp. 34-40, and p. 50).

It is interesting to try to read Heidegger as located within the philosophical dilemma outlined by these philosophical forefathers. In SZ the guiding model for the analysis of truth remains that of a fulfilling act in the Husserlian sense; the ultimate goal, however, is not designated as “evidence,” but the “showing of the entity in self-sameness” (sich zeigen des Seienden in Selbigkeit, SZ, p. 218). At a later stage, however, Heidegger will explicitly distance himself from the whole logic of evidence and certitude that still underlies the approach in SZ. See Section 6.

\(^{44}\) Ibid., p. 218: “Zur Bewährung kommt, daß das aussagende Sein zum Ausgesagten ein Aufzeigen des Seienden ist, daß es das Seiende, zu dem es ist, entdeckt” (Heidegger’s italics). Macquarrie’s and Robinson’s translation of this passage is misleading and has been modified.
by insisting that the belief-statement is never a separate entity, but essentially directed toward the object in question, in a preliminary disclosure of this very object. The statement is true to the extent that it shows the object, in the sense of letting it be seen. What then is the important difference between an image of something and something which shows something? The underlying scheme is clearly the intentional operation, whereby a belief-sentence is related to its object as that toward which it is directed. It is not an image distinct from the object, but a projecting movement, on the way toward its disclosure.45

The next step in the argument is to show how the interpretation of "true sentence" in terms of an act of uncovering actually retrieves an original sense of truth. Again Heidegger returns to Aristotle and the Greek ἀλήθεια, which is said to indicate an early intuition of how truth actually involves not a representation or an image, but an uncovering. In _SZ_, the Greek connection, developed at length in the lectures from the mid-twenties, plays only a minor role. Here it is not unconcealment as such which stands in the center of the discussion, but the uncovering nature of Dasein. To be true is to be uncovering, which could be a property of the statement, but only derivatively in respect to Dasein itself. The foundation for the phenomenon of truth is an uncovering, which in turn is said to be founded on a structure with which his readers are by then familiar, namely, disclosedness. It is here that we find the conclusion mentioned above, "that it is only with Dasein's disclosedness that the most primordial phenomenon of truth is attained." In this step, two senses of truth are in fact involved, which at the outset of the section are not clearly distinguished: truth as uncovering (an activity of Dasein), and truth as that which is or has been uncovered (the object in its aspect of being uncovered), "uncovering being" and "being-uncovered."46 In Heidegger's terminology they are both names for truth, but on different levels. When they are eventually distinguished in _SZ_ it is as a "primary" and "secondary" sense of truth. True in a primary sense is the uncovering (not necessarily only statements) of Dasein, and consequently Dasein itself; true in a

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45 The structure is familiar from the previous account of meaning (Sinn), as that wherein an intelligibility maintains itself. Cf. my discussion of this theme in Chapter Two, Section 6.

46 Heidegger's words are "Entdeckend-sein" and "Entdecktsein." The same duality can in fact be found in Husserl's writings, between truth as "lived evidence" and truth as the "object itself," in _Logische Untersuchungen_, vol II/2, §39.
secondary sense is that which is uncovered in this process. They both depend on the primordial disclosedness of Dasein, within which uncovering of beings can take place.

Since disclosedness is the primordial phenomenon of truth, and since disclosedness is part of what Dasein is, Heidegger can also say that Dasein is “in the truth.” This is of course not supposed to mean that Dasein is always “right” in the ordinary sense of the word, but that it is always situated in the midst of an opening, whereby it has access to a world and to itself. This primordial disclosedness is then qualified with the help of the concepts that we encountered in the previous analysis, namely, authenticity and inauthenticity. It is also at this stage that the problem (signalled earlier) emerges concerning the two levels of disclosing. If Dasein is able to understand itself from the point of view of its own possibilities, and not from what it encounters in the world, then it can disclose itself authentically to itself. If, on the other hand, it succumbs to its natural tendency of falling (Verfallen), and thereby enters the discursive mode of das Man, its disclosing will instead become a closing off and covering over. Whereas the authentic disclosedness represents an ideal of existential awareness, the inauthentic disclosedness is an inevitable part of the existential predicament. It is equiprimordial to disclosedness in general, which is why Dasein is “equiprimordially both in the truth and in untruth.”

The scheme is puzzling. It seems as if Heidegger was speaking on the one hand of a general condition of truth and falsity, after which these two possibilities are given their respective foundation in terms of the two existential modes. But he implies rather that there is a basic condition where disclosure and closing off occur simultaneously, and out of which a qualified existential truth may emerge under the proper conditions. In this case there would be two levels of truths, accompanied by one level of falsity. But this is unacceptable, since Heidegger obviously wants disclosedness to cover the total situation. Disclosedness should both incorporate its own degenerate version and serve as its counterpart. But why speak of the “closing off” as a mode of disclosedness if it causes these conceptual and structural problems?

The answer to this question touches the core of Heidegger’s project in SZ. If disclosedness is not an absolute foundation, containing its own counterpart, then we will have to admit the presence of an

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47 SZ, p. 223: “Das Dasein ist gleichursprünglich in der Wahrheit und Unwahrheit.”
independent correlate, to which Dasein is related in mediation (language, thought, perception, etc.), in a more or less "correct" manner. Truth and falsity will then be two distinct possibilities which Dasein can occupy, but which both ultimately refer to this third, ideal correlate. It would still be possible to give a general and neutral name for Dasein's way of disclosing this given correlate, perhaps "intuition," which could then be qualified with respect to truth and falsity according to how well it discloses the object in question. Such a view would certainly be closer to a common sense understanding of the situation, but it would also return the account to a pre-phenomenological level of reflection, with all its inevitable problems. In short, it would restore a pre-reflective conception of absolute and pre-determined being as the ultimate correlate, in respect to which all the constitutive processes, including verification, are simply derivatives. Heidegger is in the midst of a crucial dilemma, which he is trying to solve while also attempting to conceal his own shortcomings.

The subsequent analysis of the origin of the correspondence-theory of truth could be read as Heidegger's partial response to such critical questions. The condition for this theory or view is the existence of a shared language. It is not necessary, or even possible, that every single individual verifies every "true" statement of which it is capable. Most statements are inherited knowledge. They represent possibilities of original disclosedness which we make use of in daily communication. As such they have the character of ready-to-hand; they are part of an entire referential context, within which certain objects are constantly being singled out in the mode of present-at-hand. But it is also possible to bring this whole referential structure of both sentence/sign and object under a theoretical gaze as a complex present-at-hand structure (as, for instance, in theoretical semantics). From this perspective it seems natural to view the two components as two corresponding objects to be compared with one another. But through this image the original situation is also obviously covered over. Take the example of the sign (which Heidegger does not address in this particular context): the sign in its role of actually functioning sign is not a sign-object, but that with the help of which the world is disclosed. It is always possible to withdraw and reflect on the sign as such, but then we have stopped actually using the sign, in favor of a secondary level of signifying from
which the first sign can be viewed as just one worldly object among others. It is only when we stop using the sign that we can speak about it as a sign, it is only when we are not involved in the process of disclosing that we can view the sign as a distinct entity in the world as already disclosed.

5. Truth as relative to disclosedness
In the last pages of §44, Heidegger draws several radical consequences of his analysis, which deserve particular attention in the present context since they concern the problem of the temporality and the historicity of truth in a more direct manner. Here he explicitly asserts that “there is truth only in so far as Dasein is and so long as Dasein is.”\(^{48}\) As an example he chooses Newton’s laws, which, he argues, are true only from the time when they were discovered by Newton, and which remain true only as long as there is Dasein. They become true with Newton’s discovery, since it is only from this moment that they disclose a sector of being to Dasein. This does not contradict the fact that it is part of their meaning that they were also true before the discovery. Still, this aspect of what it means to be true should not overshadow the deeper fact: that it was only with this particular discovery that they actually became true. Truth is always related to Dasein and thus relative to its disclosedness. This position seems to signal a radical relativism with respect to truth, but Heidegger denies such a consequence. His point is not that truths are simply constructs; a truth is precisely a disclosure of being, but such a disclosure can only take place through Dasein. He is not denying that there is a definitive way in which the world is; he is only saying that “the way in which the world is” is a disclosure of being, and as such, a Dasein-related phenomenon.\(^{49}\) When we say that we must “presuppose” the existence of certain truths, we are justified, Heidegger seems to imply, as long as we are prepared to see that such a presupposition in the end comes down to recognizing ourselves as determined by disclosedness. As Dasein lives on and


\(^{49}\) In *Grundprobleme* from the subsequent year, this specific point occupies the center of the section on truth (§18). Here Heidegger repeats the example with Newton’s laws, and he also discusses the nature of mathematical truths, such as the simple proposition “2 by 2 = 4,” which is likewise said to be true only so long as Dasein exists (GA 24, pp. 314f.).
continues to disclose, the world will be uncovered in an unending series of specific truths. He insists on this last point because he wants to remain loyal to the idea that there is truth only wherever and whenever there is Dasein, or simply disclosedness. Thus, when we speak of future truths, which have not yet been realized, we must understand their mode of being, not as self-subsisting entities or states of affairs, but as possibilities of disclosure for Dasein in general.\textsuperscript{50}

It is misleading to ascribe to Heidegger a historicist or relativistic standpoint. What he tries to accomplish with his discussion of truth here, and elsewhere, does not address the actual validity or applicability of specific “truths” but the ontological conditions for truth in general.\textsuperscript{51} Nevertheless, his attempts remain burdened with difficulties. Through the attempt to found the phenomenon of truth on the disclosive practice of Dasein, Heidegger (like Husserl) is forced to accommodate a tension in his own presentation between two senses of truth, between truth as disclosedness and truth “as it really is.” This tension is intrinsic to every “idealistically” oriented theory of truth. It does not invalidate the attempt, but it does remain as a non-incorporable element provoking further reflection. Heidegger’s analysis is obviously an attempt to transcend this tension, in that he is working toward a perspective from which the difference could be reflected on as such. This would be possible if there were indeed a level on which we could reflect on the meaning of those very experiences that underlie the designating of something as an objective truth. The philosophical dilemma, however, is that there are no factual experiences that exhaustively contain this meaning, since the meaning itself is located in an ideal realm. Thus the philosophical reflection on truth must reflect on an ideality, the meaning of which may never be fully realized in any limited experience. It must reflect on the happening of an opening that binds Dasein in its very act of projecting it, while accepting that it does not have access to the ideal correlate that signals its presence in this very happening. When Dasein’s active disclosive practices are stressed as strongly as in \textit{SZ}, this ontological question of the being of the event

\textsuperscript{50} This remark brings us back to the question (cf. Chapter Four, Section 4), of what it means to \textit{exist as a possibility}. As already indicated, the problem of this modality continues to haunt what Heidegger has to say not only of temporality, historicity, but also of being and of truth.

\textsuperscript{51} In a critical assessment of Tugendhat’s reading of Heidegger, C.-F. Gethmann argues repeatedly for this specific point, which he finds to be misrepresented by Tugendhat and other critics of Heidegger. See his article “Zu Heideggers \textit{Wahrheitsbegriff}” (1974), pp. 195 passim.
of truth recedes in favor of a kind of verificationism. But what Heidegger is seeking to articulate is really something else.

The question he faces could be stated as follows: On what level and by what descriptive means could this being of disclosedness be captured? To think the being of disclosedness obviously requires that we leave the natural level of beings behind, and that we develop an appropriate philosophical-ontological discourse. This is precisely the project that animates SZ, and that leads it to the level of temporality. Temporality supposedly marks the ultimate level of explicable every phenomenon. To determine the meaning of any mode of being, according to SZ, is to analyze its mode of temporalization. That is at least the promise held up by the work as a whole. It ends with the open question concerning the Temporality of being itself, a question which Heidegger at that point could only answer by restating the temporal structure of Dasein’s understanding. A question SZ never raises explicitly, but nevertheless implies, is: “What is the temporality of truth?” The question is implied, since Heidegger devotes an analysis to the temporal interpretation of the different elements that together constitute the total structure of disclosedness (which, as he has argued, is the foundation for truth). This analysis restates the four pillars of disclosedness on the formal level of different patterns of anticipation. However, just as in the case of the question of the Temporality of being (discussed in Chapter Four, Section 6), he does not move beyond these existential temporal schemata.

The implicit question concerning the mode of temporalization of truth, is still what points toward the subsequent development. We must not forget the important quotation from Beiträge (cited above), which criticizes those who think they understand the historical nature of truth when they say that every time has its truths. This understanding amounts to merely the limiting of the general case, where the presumed eternal validity is made into something temporal. This remark is obviously applicable to the examples above concerning fundamental laws of nature and mathematical statements. To conceive of such truths as non-relative is normally to conceive of them as eternal. Thus we are pre-

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52 See the discussion in Chapter Four, Section 6.
53 This is the case in Chapter Four (Division Two), esp. §68, which deals with “The Temporality of Disclosedness in General,” where Heidegger analyzes, in due order, the temporality of understanding, of state-of-mind, of falling, and of discourse.
supposing a temporal concept, “eternity,” as the defining characteristic. But eternity must also be questioned with regard to how it manifests itself. In the terminology of Sz this means: how it temporalizes from the finite horizon of Dasein. When Heidegger later distances himself from the framework of existential analysis, this question of the (temporal) manifestation of the eternal is not abandoned. On the contrary, as the remark from Beiträge clearly demonstrates, it remains a question of utmost importance. Furthermore, it is a question which he will then approach as the “historical” nature of truth.

It is important to see that when Heidegger returns to the question of truth in subsequent works, where he explicitly argues for a “historical” conception of truth, this development marks an extension of the question of its temporality in the above sense. Just as with the question of being, the question of truth is recast in accordance with a “historical” mode of thinking as a way to transcend the framework of the existential analytic in Sz. One theme from the account of temporality in Sz continues to play an important role in this development: the Augenblick, as an attempt to think the enigmatic meeting point of finitude and infinity. In the following sections these later developments will be addressed directly; here I only want to make a few general remarks on how to understand this step toward the “historicization” of truth, which is so easily misrepresented. It is not motivated by a desire to convey the historical relativity of truth, i.e., the idea that supposedly eternal scientific and philosophical truths are in fact relative to community and locality, etc. In other words, it is not a generalization of the claim that the law of gravity—to take again Heidegger’s own example—is relative to a historical Dasein. Instead, it is motivated by a desire to find a way of speaking generally of the being of the disclosedness in which such a singular truth manifests itself. A defining aspect of this phenomenon is that we have no independent access to it. Every access to it is also a manifestation of it. To seek the being of truth is to seek the truth of truth. What mode of understanding could possibly do justice to this fundamentally self-reflexive concern? From what has been said so far, it should perhaps not come as a surprise that it is in the domain of a certain historical understanding that Heidegger will subsequently stage this quest. To think the being of truth is to think a belonging, and to do so in the mode of a projection of an unsurpassable indebtedness.
5. Reinterpreting the disclosedness as historical happening

Heidegger's explicit "historicization" of truth is first manifested in the seminal essay "On the Essence of Truth," written in 1930 and first published in 1943. In a discussion of Heidegger's views on truth, this lecture occupies a special place. It elaborates the approach of SZ, while opening up perspectives that lead toward the later writings. In its general orientation it is still closely tied to the account in SZ, in that the correctness of the assertion is said to derive from an "openness" of Dasein. However, whereas in SZ this openness is equated with disclosedness, it is here equated with Dasein's "freedom." This freedom, in the sense of an "ek-sistent, un concealing letting-be of beings," is here presented as "the essence of truth," as another name for the foundation of its possibility. The reference to freedom seems to imply that the voluntaristic aspect of SZ is here in fact strengthened. However, Heidegger counters this by interpreting freedom not primarily as an active capacity, but as an ability to engage in beings precisely by "letting them be." Freedom is here the ability to be open, to be exposed to a "binding directive." As such, this concept of freedom could be read as an attempt to circumvent the perhaps too voluntaristic consequences of the analysis in SZ. To be a disclosing being is not to create openings at will, but to be free for that which announces itself as directive and orientation, as being there in its self-sameness.

54 "Vom Wesen der Wahrheit." This text was later incorporated in Wegmarken (1967), now available in an expanded version as GA 9, pp. 177-202.

55 This is the lecture that Heidegger would later refer to as the "turning" in his thinking, GA 9, p. 193 (in a footnote added in 1943, when the text was first published).

56 In a note added in 1943, Heidegger also writes that this idea of "letting be" should not be understood negatively, but as a "preserving" and a "guarding" (gewähren, Wahrnis). In a sense, this expression could be said to signal a return to the expression from the 1922 manuscript on Aristotle (quoted above, in Section 2), where ἀλήθευεν was interpreted as "unverhülltes in Verwahrung bringt." The formulations also point to the much later essay "Gelassenheit" (1955), in which he demonstratively distances himself from a voluntaristic language, and where the letting-be of things similarly goes hand in hand with an openness toward the "secret" (Geheimnis), Heidegger (1959), p. 24. Another significant passage in "Vom Wesen der Wahrheit" in this respect is where Heidegger speaks of how freedom is not a property of man, but that man only exists as "a property of this freedom," GA 9, p. 191. The connection between truth and freedom, and the general orientation toward an explicit recognition of truth as the happening of an opening, is indicated already in the lectures on the metaphysical foundations of logic from 1928 (GA 26), and the text "Vom Wesen des Grundes" from 1929, in GA 9, pp. 123-175.

57 GA 9, pp. 185-186: "Das Sich-freigeben für eine bindende Richte ist nur möglich als Freisein zum Offenbaren eines Offenen."
The principal definition of the essence of truth in this lecture is freedom, in the sense indicated. However, toward the end of the fifth section something is added to this description that complicates the scheme. There Heidegger writes that while Dasein lets individual beings be, it conceals the "totality of beings."\textsuperscript{58} The letting-be is also a concealing. From one perspective, this image is not so surprising; it describes the necessity of leaving the totality unnoticed in the service of individual disclosure. But the very mentioning of an original and conditioning concealment is precisely what points to the decisive step in the subsequent section, where the non-essence of truth is identified with an original concealment.\textsuperscript{59} What the disclosing letting-be of Dasein accomplishes in relation to this concealment is described as a concealment of concealment, which Heidegger names "the secret" (das Geheimnis). How should the use of this word be understood here? It is obviously a secret kept by no one; it is a secret that has no truth, since it is itself a non-truth, the event of a non-truth, of which there never was a truth. There seems to be nothing here for us to disclose in understanding, since the only access we have to the secret is the awareness of concealment.\textsuperscript{60} The question to ask instead is: what kind of understanding of truth is implied by this model? It has the peculiar structure of a remembrance of a forgetting. It is only as a repetition of a loss that the evanescent origin can be recovered, or that it can be thought as such. Heidegger does not spell out any such conclusions here. He is experimenting with new formulas, with new modes of thought in order to articulate the nature of the opening within which beings are disclosed to Dasein. By doing so, however, he treads on familiar ground. This ground is that of history, in the sense of a mode of being as a mode of belonging. Consequently, in this essay we also find the first attempts toward an explicit historical understanding of truth. It can be traced in two directions.

First of all, it is during this period that Heidegger begins to speak of

\textsuperscript{58} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 193: "...eine Verbergung des Seienden im Ganzen."

\textsuperscript{59} It is this passage between the fifth and the sixth section of the essay that Heidegger (as mentioned above) will later refer to as "the leap into the turning." \textit{GA} 9, p. 193. Cf. also the remark in "Brief über den 'Humanismus,'" where "Vom Wesen der Wahrheit" is said to give a first indication of the thought of the turning (\textit{GA} 9, p. 328).

\textsuperscript{60} We should not fail to see behind this idea a continuation of the logic from the discussion in \textit{SZ} of the relation between the assertion and the hermeneutic "as," where the fate of the latter is to cover over its own origin in the very act of articulating it.
the event of disclosure explicitly as a “happening” and “historizing” (Geschehen and Geschehnis). These new concepts mark tentative steps toward a new mode of thinking the being of truth, as no longer primarily a disclosing activity, but rather as a (passive) event. At the same time, this happening is identified with a specific historical opening, namely, the opening of history as such. The essay on the essence of truth clearly exemplifies the latter idea; here the event of truth as a free opening is identified with the beginning of philosophical questioning. Historical existence is here said to begin through the first philosophical question: what is the being of beings? This question places man in relation to original concealment, and thus in a possible relation to unconcealment. The continued attempts to respond to this question constitute the development of metaphysics as we know it. In the lecture series from the following year, carrying the same title, the two aspects of truth, Geschehen and Geschichte, are explicitly brought together:

A basic character of the unconcealment consists in the fact that it is something that happens (geschieht) to the beings themselves. This happening (Geschehnts), however, still belongs in a certain way to the history (Geschichte) of human Dasein as something that exists.

To think the unconcealment as happening is to think a historical event. This obviously goes beyond the explicit scheme of SZ, but as I indicated above, it also brings out a latent strand of the former work. In the texts from the subsequent period, truth itself is thought on the model of a unique historical opening in which we recognize ourselves as already standing: the unique opening of philosophical questioning as such. This move seems to imply (even though it is not stated outright here) that the being of truth can only be understood as the truth of being in which we are already located. It can not be grasped outside the system to which the question itself belongs; it can only be realized as the ultimate projection of that very quest itself.

Initially, it seems that Heidegger only complicates things by not keeping the two phenomena apart: on the one hand the general problem.

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61 GA 9, p. 190: “Erst wo das Seiende selbst eigens in seine Unverborgenheit gehoben und verwahrt wird, erst wo diese Verwahrung aus dem Fragen nach dem Seienden als solchem begriffen ist, beginnt Geschichte.”

62 GA 34, pp. 144-145: “Ein Grundcharakter der Unverborgenheit besteht darin, daß sie solches ist, was mit dem Seienden selbst geschieht. Dieses Geschehnis aber gehört gleichwohl in einer bestimmten Weise zur Geschichte des Daseins des Menschen als eines Existierenden.”
of what truth is or how it is brought about, and on the other hand the specific problem of how we should understand the historical event that initiates metaphysics as such. We expect a general theory of truth to be applicable to every single case of truth, which is why it cannot take one specified truth as its model. One of the many new difficulties in Heidegger’s thinking after *SZ* is precisely that he explicitly challenges this seemingly straightforward demand. Truth is a happening (*Geschehnis*), but as such it can only be understood as the history (*Geschichte*) to which the very question of truth belongs, namely, the history of the disclosure of being. In order to think the essence of truth, thinking must confront this specific singular historical event. It must do so, however, not as the historical question of when and where in the sense of *Historie*, but as the history which the question itself is, and to which it belongs, that is, as *Geschichte*.

The essence of truth is thus no longer accessible through examples of mundane acts of verification, such as the one discussed in *SZ*, but only by confronting the nature of philosophical thinking on its highest possible level, as it raises the question of the meaning of being and thereby brings about a new mode of disclosure. Heidegger’s quest for the essence of truth thus takes a leap into a territory where we can not follow him, unless we refrain from the demand that the determination of truth should give us a generally applicable conceptual scheme for every empirical case. Instead, the priorities are reversed; the generality of truth can only be understood through the singularity of the unique historical opening to which the question itself belongs, which is another way of saying that it can only be understood in the historical mode.

6. The domain of truth as history and art

In the course of exploring new ways of articulating truth as history and happening, Heidegger will begin to reflect on openings that are not confined to the domain of knowing. In the works of the thirties he will turn to one type of “historical” opening in particular: the work of art. The work of art is then seen as a founding event of truth, which gathers

63 This distinction is anticipated in the essay “Vom Wesen des Grundes” (1929), in which Heidegger makes a distinction between “ontological truth” and “ontic truth,” where the latter is the general name for the disclosure of beings in general. It is only in the light of an understanding of being, of ontological truth, that this ontic disclosure can take place, and thus it is only through a reflection on the ontological truth that the general phenomenon of truth can be philosophically understood (*GA* 9, p. 169).
and binds according to a scheme which he also exemplifies with the founding of political communities. Both of these developments are demonstrated clearly in the famous lecture from 1935, “The Origin of the Work of Art.” Here Heidegger moves from the problem of the origin and essence of the work of art, as itself a happening of truth, to the problem of truth as such and its possible philosophical thematization. The prerequisite for this pursuit is precisely that philosophical thinking recognizes how it is itself already claimed by the theme to which it is devoted, and how this can only be understood in the midst of a repetition of a past for a future. To know the work of art, Heidegger writes, is to be pulled into a “belonging to the truth that happens in the work,” and which then founds the “historical exposure of Dasein through its relation to unconcealment.”

Earlier in the same essay he explicitly formulates the question: “Can truth happen at all and thus be historical?” The task is to determine a sense of this happening which could explain how it can constitute a history. The happening is an event of disclosure, an opening in which beings are revealed in their being. However, the opening initiated by the work of art is not just any opening, but the opening up of a world. Furthermore, this world is described as the world of a

64 “Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes.” There are several versions of this lecture, which was originally composed in 1935 and subsequently revised. Here I refer to the version published in the separate Reclam edition in 1960, which is also found in later editions of Holzwege, published in the collected works as GA 5, pp. 1-74. The topic of Heidegger’s aesthetic and ontological interpretation of the founding of political communities during this time will not be addressed here. For an exploration of these connections, see Schwan (1965), esp. pp. 9-68.

65 Here it would have been possible to stop and reflect more in detail on how Heidegger describes the happening of truth in the work of art, in terms of a struggle (Streit) between world and earth. This is a recurring aspect of the thematization of truth in the later works. See especially the lecture series on Parmenides, from 1942, which is essentially a text on truth and falsity. It gives an extensive exposition of the Parmenidean goddess Αλήθεια, who is interpreted as a disclosedness that in itself gathers all appearance and disappearance. The only concept that eventually remains to describe this mythic origin is precisely “strife.” Toward the end of the lectures Heidegger also speaks of the strife between concealment and unconcealment as a domain to which man belongs (ibid., p. 237).

66 GA 5, p. 55: “Die Bewahrung des Werkes vereinzeit die Menschen nicht auf ihre Erlebnisse, sondern rückt sie ein in die Zugehörigkeit zu der im Werk geschehende Wahrheit und gründet so das Für- und Mitandersein als das geschichtliche Ausstehen des Da-seins aus dem Bezug zur Unverborgenheit.” A few lines earlier he has explicitly equated the preservation (Bewahrung) of the work with a certain form of knowing (Wissen). My translation deviates on some points from A. Hofstadter’s, which renders Zugehörigkeit as “affiliation” (BW, p. 193).

67 Ibid., p. 23: “Kann Wahrheit überhaupt geschehen und so geschichtlich sein?”

68 GA 5, p. 30: “In-sich-auftragend eröffnet das Werk eine Welt und hält diese
historical people and its destiny, its Geschick. Heidegger enumerates several ways in which such historical openings can occur; not just as a work of art (as the classic temple around which the discussion is centered in this text), but also as the founding of a state, as an essential sacrifice, and as the philosophical question of being. What unites them all is that they initiate a world as a collective destiny, within which Dasein as community and being-with prevails as bound by and yet free for the original opening. Finally, the general structure of this opening is described in similar terms as in the lecture on the essence of truth, namely, as a “double concealment.” The response to the question raised at the outset of the essay is thus that truth can happen as an opening of a world, and that it is historical in the sense of initiating a world as a destiny to be repeated.

At first glance, this description is indeed very far removed from the account of truth in SZ, so much so as to make any comparison difficult. Truth is no longer even accessible as an experience in the present, but only as a recapitulation of a specific, founding event. But the continuity becomes apparent once we leave the immediate level of differing examples and focus instead on the form of understanding activated in the description of this event. To understand it is to think of its dual concealment as a past to be repeated for a future, as a destiny to which the thinker always already belongs. Behind this transformation one may detect a strategy similar to the one discussed in Chapter Two, concerning Heidegger’s hermeneutics; here again the thinking appropriation of the past serves as the model for grasping a phenomenon that in its very essence cannot be understood in a representational mode. As long as the opening of truth is thought within the (Husserlian) act-theoretical scheme that still guides the account in SZ, it risks getting trapped in only one of its traditional metaphysical config-

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69 Ibid., p. 35: “Die Welt ist die sich öffnende Offenheit der weiten Bahnen der einfachen und wesentlichen Entscheidungen im Geschick eines geschichtlichen Volkes.” The term Geschick is the same as the one used in SZ to designate the historicity of Mitsein. Cf. Chapter Three, Section 7.

70 Ibid., p. 49. The “wesentliche Opfer” to which he refers in this passage is never specified. The most obvious reference is the crucifixion of Christ, but considering the time of its composition it could certainly lend itself to more disturbing readings.

71 Ibid., p. 41: “Zum Wesen der Wahrheit als der Unverborgenheit gehört dieses Verweigern in der Weise des zweifachen Verbergens” (Heidegger italicizes the entire sentence).
urations: as subjective certainty. In order to think truth not only as the opening which Dasein is, but to which it also belongs, a different perspective is needed. It is this perspective which Heidegger here finds in the historical situatedness of thinking, in an indebtedness made accessible only in a finite repetition.

The idea that the being of truth as the truth of being can only be thought as history is stated with an even greater emphasis in Beiträge, as we will also see in the discussion of this text in the subsequent chapter. Concerning truth, it is stated explicitly in Beiträge that the question of the truth of being can only be approached as a historical reflection. At the outset of this work, Heidegger writes: “Transitional thinking brings about the founding projection of the truth of being as historical reflection (Besinnung).” The question of the truth of being is here

72 Truth as certainty is one of the steps within the history of the transformation of the concept of truth that Heidegger begins to elaborate during the mid-thirties (as a kind of summary of his various interpretative explorations). One brief statement of this scheme is found in Beiträge, section 210, “On the History of the Essence of Truth” (Zur Geschichte des Wesens der Wahrheit). In this sketch the manifestations of truth are: 1) as yoke (ἱύγον), i.e., as that which connects the perceived with the perceiver; 2) as correspondence (ὁμοίωσις); 3) as rectitudo, and also as relation (συμπλοκή) or connexio; 4) as certitudo, certainty; 5) as validity, Gültigkeit; 6) and from validity to that which is valid, to Geltung. The epochal transformation of truth as the truth of being to truth as certainty is discussed at greater length in the text “Metaphysics as the History of Being” (Die Metaphysik als Geschichte des Seins) from 1941, which is included in the second volume of Nietzsche, in a section entitled “The Transformation of Truth into Certitude” (Der Wandel der Wahrheit zur Gewißheit, N II, pp. 421-429). To the essence of this certitude or certainty, Heidegger writes, belongs that it always invokes itself as its own security. Through this analysis Heidegger clearly distances himself from every attempt to understand and define truth solely in terms of an actual verificational practice, for which the experience of certitude marks the ideal fulfillment.

73 The proximity to the model of understanding activated in the analysis of historicity in SZ is also illustrated in the lectures from 1935, which were later published as Introduction to Metaphysics. This text, which would have deserved a longer analysis in the present context, is an exalted appeal for a thoroughly historicized mode of thinking and questioning. Metaphysics and philosophy are here declared not to be scientific disciplines precisely because their questioning is historical. See GA 40, p. 47: “Metaphysik und Philosophie sind überhaupt keine Wissenschaft und können es auch nicht dadurch werden, daß ihr Fragen im Grunde ein geschichtliches ist.” Furthermore, history as “happening” is here defined as a futurally determined taking over from the past (Geschichte als Geschehen ist das aus der Zukunft bestimmte, das Gewesene übernehmende Hindurchhandeln und Hindurchleiden durch die Gegenwart, pp. 47-48).

74 GA 65, p. 5: “Das übergängliche Denken leistet den gründenden Entwurf der Wahrheit des Seyns als geschichtliche Besinnung.” The question of being, which in SZ is formulated as that of the meaning of being, is here also explicitly said to be that of its truth. In the works of the thirties the traditional fundamental philosophical concepts, notably being, truth, essence, and meaning, undergo a transformation after which they are hardly distinguishable. In Beiträge this is illustrated frequently. Eventually they all point back to one multifaceted origin: the Ereignis.
described as *the* preparatory question, through which philosophy must pass, in order to release new possibilities of thinking. Da-sein (which is here hyphenated) signifies the opening in which man stands, and in virtue of which he has access to a world. But just as in the previous works, and unlike *SZ*, this opening, or disclosure, is not the ultimate answer to the philosophical question of truth. Rather, the task is precisely to grasp this openness as itself an event. It is an openness to which man is always already exposed, as a thrownness, which can only be taken over as such. What is taken over is not a specific projection but the possibility of projecting as such: in other words, a thrownness. The strange logic of this situation is described as follows:

The essential projection of the there is the unprotected endurance of the thrownness of oneself as this first arises in the throwing.\(^{75}\)

In other words: it is a question of assuming a loss that has already taken place, of repeating the loss as itself a destiny.\(^{76}\) This is the form in which the essence of truth is revealed, as opening and event to which Dasein is bound. Dasein is bound to this opening so as not to be able to understand it except in the mode of an endurance and a need. To think it, is to enter into a domain where thinking no longer really thinks but rather acts in such a way so as to make room in thought for that which has always already claimed it. This is also to think truth from the perspective of the *Ereignis*, as the thought of the giving of being as an exposure to being. Consequently, when Heidegger in *Beiträge* explicitly raises the question that *SZ* left behind, namely, whether truth is grounded in Da-sein, or whether, on the contrary, it is the ground of

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\(^{75}\) *Ibid.*, p. 328: “Der wesentliche Entwurf des Da aber ist der ungeschützte Austrag der im Wurf erst aufkommenden Geworfenheit seiner selbst” (Heidegger italicizes the whole sentence). The general account of truth is stated quite clearly on pp. 327-328, at the outset of a long discussion of truth. We should not fail to acknowledge the existential implications inherent in this claim; it speaks of a sense of truth which arises from the individualized position of the thinker or the poet, who has permitted him- or herself to move beyond the given framework of conventional discourse. It is the mode which Heidegger ascribes to Nietzsche as his basic experience, “the enraptured exposure in the unknown” (*entrückte Hinausstehen in das Unbekannte*, GA 65, p. 363).

\(^{76}\) In these formulations, if not before, it becomes clear to what extent Heidegger’s “historical” understanding of being could also be said to constitute a “tragic” understanding of being. This brief remark opens up an array of questions, which I can only regret not having been able to address in the present context. The time of the essay on the work of art is also the time when Heidegger turns explicitly to Greek tragedy as a historical founding of truth, notably in his reading of Sophokles’s *Antigone* in *Einführung in die Metaphysik*. In approaching the question of tragedy as a philosophical task, Heidegger is treading on well-worn paths of his philosophical predecessors, not only of Nietzsche and Hölderlin, but also of Hegel and Schelling.
Da-sein, he replies: The question can be decided only when truth is understood from the Ereignis.77

7. Concluding remarks; the time of truth
Heidegger brings the philosophical problem of truth to a point where philosophy can only reflect on its own exposure to the event of truth, as a disclosure into which it is drawn while also projecting it. In his attempts to uncover ever receding levels of meaning of this disclosure, Heidegger repeats the scheme of historical understanding, a scheme that rules over the event of meaning itself, and thus over the event of being and of truth. In this sense, one could say that the logic of the hermeneutic situation, as this was developed in the earliest writings, continues to rule over the articulation of truth. Just as in the case of the hermeneutic situation, philosophy can neither discover nor establish a criterion for this happening of truth. It can only provide a reflection on truth as the manifestation of a binding directive. It should therefore come as no surprise when Heidegger, in the same passage from Beiträge to which I have already referred twice, returns again to the issue of “historicism” in the context of a discussion on the essence of truth. Truth is historical, but not in the sense of something confined to a limited region in space and time, since such a quantitative limitation of a generality is precisely what characterizes historicism. What Heidegger is searching for, here and elsewhere, is something else: an articulation of the finitude of the generality itself, which should transcend the division of eternity and finitude. This too is the aspiration of the thought of Ereignis.

In Chapter One, it was discussed how Heidegger’s historicization and hermeneutization of philosophy was partly motivated by the attempt to transcend the static dichotomy of history and systematics. This concern could also be stated as a question of the temporality of philosophical truth. As a systematic pursuit for truth, philosophy, like mathematics, is supposedly directed toward the eternal. If its truths were located in time, they would be relative and have limited applicability. While Heidegger, through the historicization and hermeneutization of thought, undermines this “eternal” guise of truth, he still discards all attempts to reduce philosophical thinking to the mere expression of a time, to a

77 Ibid., p. 341.
Weltanschauung, with its relative claims. There is a sense of universality to which the philosophical enterprise can aspire, but it can not rely on the dichotomy of the eternal and the temporal. It requires a further temporal dimension, a middle. This temporal dimension is the Augenblick, or as he will eventually say; the Ereignis. The Ereignis is the time of philosophical truth. Just as Kierkegaard, Heidegger aspires to transcend the distinction between the temporal and the eternal, but not in order to circumscribe the time of grace, but to indicate the time of philosophical truth and understanding. The moment as Ereignis is the incalculable time of the opening wherein being is disclosed to a finite existence, an existence that is located neither outside, nor inside the temporal passage, but in a position that it can designate only indicatively, through an act of renunciation of its own conceptual resources.

In the essay on Hegel, from which the motto of the present chapter was taken, Heidegger says that when we consider the “enigma of Ἀλήθεια,” as that which hovers over the beginning of Greek philosophy and over its continuation, then the thinking of the Greeks appears to us as a “not yet.” However, he continues, this should not be taken to mean that it is something that does not satisfy us from our modern standpoint. Instead, it is something in respect to which we find ourselves lacking, in other words, as something which remains to be thought. The final chapter follows Heidegger yet another step into this “historicized” philosophical territory, where the quest for origins manifests itself in a heightened sense of loss and indebtedness with regard to what is to be thought, but also in a recognition of a need to respond, if ultimately only in a certain mode of silence.

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78 GA 9, p. 444.
Chapter Seven

THE OTHER BEGINNING

Dann muß das Denken am Rätsel des Seins dichten.
M. Heidegger, "Der Spruch des Anaximander"  

(1) Heidegger’s other beginnings, (2) “Beiträge” and the search for a new philosophical discourse, (3) The role of historicity in “Beiträge,” (4) Witnessing the ultimate historicization of the philosophical task, (5) Hegel and Heidegger on philosophical beginnings, (6) Hölderlin and the silent voice of belonging (7) Concluding remarks

1. Heidegger’s other beginnings

The study began with a question of beginnings. When it now approaches its end, the same question is raised again: how does philosophical thinking, once it becomes aware of its own historicity, respond to the demand that it should provide an origin and a true beginning? The answer offered by Heidegger in his second major work—that it can do so only as an “other beginning,” as an andere Anfang—brings out again the logic of the predicament around which the interpretation has circled in the preceding chapters. Through the idea of philosophy as an other beginning, or rather, as a preparation for such a beginning, Heidegger responds to the conditions revealed by his own analyses. It is an attempt—or so at least I will argue—to secure access to a philosophical origin through a radical recognition of the non-originality of thought itself. Its manifest characteristic is an

1 "Then thinking must poetize on the enigma of being."
2 The English translation of “andere” is somewhat problematic. In most cases the natural translation would be “other,” but “andere” also means “the second,” in the sense of the one following upon the first. In Heidegger’s expression we should listen for both of these semantic levels, i.e., for a second beginning following upon the first, one which is at the same time a fundamentally other beginning. Even after the publication of Beiträge much of the relevant material for a discussion of the specific theme of the beginning—the first, as well as the other—in Heidegger is still not available. There are three works from the years 1941-1944 listed in the plan for the Gesamtausgabe, which address the problem of “the beginning.”
intensified reflection on the historical nature of the philosophical pursuit along now familiar lines; but more important, it is characterized by an attempt to develop an entirely new form of thinking and writing, evoked by the very experience of the predicament thus described. The thought of the other beginning is developed farthest in *Beiträge*, a text to which I have already referred on several occasions, and to which the present chapter is primarily devoted. On the basis of an interpretation of this particular work, the various strands of the study will be gathered in a few general conclusions concerning the fate of Heidegger's thinking, as well as Heidegger's thinking as a fate in itself.

When addressing the problem of *beginnings* in Heidegger's writings around the time of *Beiträge*, one should be aware of the different ways in which he uses this concept. Most obvious, perhaps, is his intensified preoccupation during this period with an actual interpretative return to the beginning of philosophical thought. In a lecture from 1943, Heidegger explicitly argues for the need for such a return. Here he speaks of the "beginning" (*anfänglichen*) thinkers, who are said to be three: Anaximander, Parmenides, and Heraclitus. Together they constitute a beginning in itself, which it is the task of present and future thinking to confront, and to which Heidegger consequently devotes a number of lectures and works. Here, however, I will not dwell on

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3 GA 55, p. 4. The first work in this vein dates back as early as 1932, when Heidegger gives a lecture series on "The beginning of Western philosophy (Anaximander and Parmenides)," a text that has not yet been published (listed as GA 35). From 1932 we also have the remarkable personal statement in a letter to E. Blochmann, to whom Heidegger wrote: "The stronger I get in my own work, the more certain I become everytime of being forced back to the great beginning of the Greeks. And I often doubt, if it is not more important to abandon all my own attempts and to contribute to it that this world becomes not just an inheritance, but that it stands again before our eyes in its disturbing greatness and as a model. And then I realize that it is not possible without my own work, just as the latter is not possible without this dialogue with the great ones" (Je stärker ich in die eigene Arbeit komme, um so sicherer werde ich jedesmal in den großen Anfang bei den Griechen zurückgezogen. Und oft schwanke ich, ob es nicht wesentlicher ist, alle eigenen Versuche zu lassen u. nur dafür zu wirken, daß diese Welt uns nicht zur bloßen Übernahme aber in ihrer aufrührenden Größe u. Vorbildlichkeit wieder vor Auge stehe. Und dann merke ich wieder, daß es gerade ohne die eigene Arbeit nicht geht sowenig wie diese ohne jene Zwiesprache mit den Großen, HBB, pp. 55-56).

4 In passing we can also note the resemblance between the introductory remarks to the quoted text and Husserl’s famous Vienna lecture eight years earlier on the relation between philosophy and Western civilization. Both texts state that philosophy only exists in the West; both identify philosophy as the foundation of the history of the West; and both declare that the problem of the beginning is not the problem of an actual historical beginning—of which we can have no certain knowledge—but of a reflection
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this encounter with a “real” beginning; in other words, I will not address Heidegger’s actual interpretative labors to retrieve the sense of the remaining fragments of these past thinkers. Just as in the case of the early material on Aristotle, my principal interest concerns a level where this return is itself thematized, and consequently where the beginning and the encounter with the beginning become a theme of philosophical reflection in their own right. In Heidegger’s thinking from this time, philosophy is not only recommended to return to its origins, but is conceived as manifesting itself only in the medium of such an encounter with the beginning, where it understands itself as an other beginning in relation to a first.

In this program we witness the apex of the peculiar historicization of the philosophical enterprise toward which Heidegger has been moving. Here philosophy exists only as a momentary self-explication of a historical belonging, which it can never master but nonetheless project as such. At the same time—and this is perfectly in tune with the ambiguity of Heidegger’s message as seen throughout the study—it is a philosophy that presents itself as the exemplary struggle for the origin in explicit opposition to the historical consciousness of modernity. In another lecture, dating back to the same time, he says sarcastically: “either man is prepared for the always original, or he knows better,” and this know-better is said to be a product of the historical consciousness and historical science. In other words, the common preoccupation with the historical has deprived man of a sense for the original beginning, to which only a radicalized historicization can open the way. This is the familiar logic, only now brought to its most extreme consequences.

At the outset of the study, Hegel and Hölderlin were mentioned as paradigmatic points of reference for Heidegger’s peculiar historization of the experience of the origin as something to which we still belong, and which therefore also constitutes a task for the future. For Husserl’s lecture, “Die Krisis des europäischen Menschentums und die Philosophie,” see Husserliana vol VI, pp. 314-348. It is one of the many puzzling features of Heidegger’s relation to Husserl that he never publicly commented on these later writings, of which he obviously must have been aware. For an attempt to reconstruct such a Heideggerian response to Husserl’s Krisis, see S.-O. Wallenstein, “The Structure of the History of Being” (1992), esp. pp. 96-100.

^ For an analysis of these interpretative labors, see M. Zarader, Heidegger et les paroles de l’origine (1986).

5 GA 51, p. 6: “Der Mensch ist entweder für das stets Ursprüngliche bereit, oder aber er weiß es besser.”
cization of philosophy. In the present chapter I return briefly to these predecessors, as two poles in respect to which the historicization of thinking articulates itself, and in relation to which the appropriate form of discourse for the thinking of beginnings is presented.

2. "Beiträge" and the search for a new philosophical discourse
Until its release in 1989, Beiträge had only been accessible to a select group of scholars. The fact that it was not published at the time of its composition was perhaps partly due to its critique of the ideology of the time. But Heidegger apparently also doubted the value of the book as an independent work. When the plans were laid out for the publication of the collected works, he decided that Beiträge should not be released until all the lectures from the Marburger and Freiburger period had been published. Apparently he felt that it required a background understanding of the work leading up to its composition, work which was mostly carried out within the context of his ongoing academic lecturing. When one reads Beiträge today, this precaution seems warranted. It is hard to discern the steps leading from the architectonically structured fundamental ontology of SZ to the manifestly non-systematic and apocalyptic argumentation of Beiträge if one is not familiar with the lectures on Hölderlin and Nietzsche, as well as the various works on the notion of truth during the thirties. But even the acquaintance with these developments does not automatically lead to a clear appreciation of the book. One of the many problems concerns its style. Unlike the lectures and essays from this time, Beiträge consists mostly of shorter passages (sometimes only a few lines long) under seven general and metaphorically distinguished headings (plus a long postscript), in a language shifting from poetic diction to abrupt notes, seemingly jotted down in passing. Some of its stylistic peculiarities may be due to the fact that it was never finally prepared for publication by Heidegger himself, but on a more important level they are inextricably tied to the extraordinary pretensions of this work.

Beiträge is the first work where Heidegger expresses the desire to develop an entirely new form of philosophical discourse, to which he would later refer in the "Letter on Humanism." The remarkable

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7 For an interesting discussion of Beiträge as a politico-philosophical document, see A. Schwan, "Heideggers 'Beiträge zur Philosophie' und die Politik" (1989).
8 In a footnote to the first publication of the "Letter on Humanism" (written in
 ambition of the book is stated in the opening section, where Heidegger explicitly distances himself from the ideal of a discursive argument:

Furthermore, here the thinking saying of philosophy in the other beginning must be attempted, as if in preparation. In this saying nothing is described, explained, declared or taught: here the saying does not stand over against what is to be said; instead it is this itself as the essencing of being. The implications of this attempt will be discussed in what follows; for the moment, the quotation serves to illustrate the difficulties facing a reader of *Beiträge*. It does not want to be read as that which its title suggests, that is, as a “contribution” to philosophy as we know it. It not only argues for the need to step beyond the boundaries of “scientific” thinking, but even claims to constitute that very step in itself. What is said here does not stand in opposition to its object, rather it brings it about in the very act of saying, thinking, or writing.

In the course of the analysis, I hope to demonstrate how these pretensions and their stylistic manifestations are closely tied to the overall structure and argument of the work. It is only by taking them seriously that one can begin to understand this strange book. The word “strange” seems appropriate in this context, for no interpretation and appropriation of what Heidegger is trying to do here will succeed unless—at least initially—it acknowledges the extraordinary nature of the position from which it is performed. 1949) Heidegger remarks that the thoughts in this letter have their origin in a path begun in 1936 (i.e., the year when he started to work on *Beiträge*), namely, an attempt to “say the truth of being simply,” and furthermore, to do so “in the moment.”

GA 9, p. 313: “Das hier gesagte ist nicht erst zur Zeit der Niederschrift ausgedacht, sondern beruht auf dem Gang eines Weges, der 1936 begonnen wurde, im ‘Augenblick’ eines Versuches, die Wahrheit des Seins einfach zu sagen.”

Most commentaries readily acknowledge the extreme difficulties of the book. Even though it is too early to speak of a reception of *Beiträge*, readers of Heidegger have begun to assess it, and in the coming years much new material will no doubt appear. The first phase of evaluations of *Beiträge* had to address the assessment of Pöggeler (one of the few scholars who had access to the manuscript) that this was the “main work” from Heidegger’s later period: Pöggeler (1963/83), p. 145, Pöggeler (1982), p. 481, Pöggeler (1988), p. 42. Few people, it seems, are prepared to affirm
read *Beiträge* as a dated work, more so perhaps than most of Heidegger’s other writings. It is a work of its time, to be sure. But in order to understand it, one must at least recognize its claim to articulate and thus transgress the very foundation on which the Greek philosophical heritage rests, by initiating that “other beginning” in respect to which Greek philosophy is the first. Indeed, Heidegger even explicitly disavows the idea of a “work” in any traditional sense, in favor of a self-abandoning “path of thinking.”\(^{11}\) Just as in *SZ*, the overriding question concerns being as such, but the approach in *Beiträge* is very different. There is no longer a guiding argument of fundamental ontology, and thus no hope for a clear and systematic approach to the question of being. In the introductory paragraph to the section entitled “Being,” Heidegger writes: “Here lie the blocks of a stone quarry, in which original rock is quarried,” which is then followed by a list of basic concepts, such as thinking, history, and being.\(^{12}\) The fundamental themes and questions of philosophy can no longer be organized in one particular systematic fashion; instead the task of the thinker is to struggle to free them from their silent ground. There is not one privileged approach; various formulations and combinations are available to the thinker in this territory. *Beiträge* is characterized by an extraordinary repetitiveness. Its few basic themes are covered over and over again, with very slight, sometimes imperceptible changes. Thus its structure marks an intentional break with the entire notion of a systematically developing argument. Indeed,

\(^{11}\) *GA* 65, p. 3: “Aber selbst der geglückte Versuch muß gemäß dem Grundereignis dessen, was zu erdenken ist, jedem falschen Anspruch auf ein ‘Werk’ bisherigen Stils fernbleiben.... Nicht mehr handelt es sich darum, ‘über’ etwas zu handeln und ein Gegenständliches darzustellen, sondern dem Er-eignis übereignet zu werden....” Consequently the book is organized not in distinct chapters or thematic sections, but in a number of generally defined stations, whose titles suggest a stepwise passage: “Vorblick,” “Der Anklang,” “Das Zuspiel,” “Der Sprung,” “Die Gründung,” “Die Zu-künftigen,” “Der letzte Gott,” and finally the unfinished section entitled “Das Seyn” (intended as a complement to the “Vorblick,” but inserted as the last section by the editor). The stations are obviously intended by Heidegger to constitute a passage in themselves, along which the indicated path of thinking is to be accomplished.

Beiträge is Heidegger’s most systematic attempt to think in the wake of the collapse of the very idea of systematic philosophy, as propounded and prepared by himself.

3. The role of historicity in Beiträge

In an essay on historicity in Heidegger’s later writings, Otto Pöggeler argues that there exists a close connection between the theme of historicity in the early work and the concept of Ereignis in the later, and that the transformation from one to the other is an important aspect of the overall change in Heidegger’s thought. However, in the period that begins with Beiträge, Heidegger is also said to move away from the theme of historicity and the historical nature of truth, as the notions of Ereignis and Lichtung come to the fore. Pöggeler reads this transition as an attempt on Heidegger’s part to leave behind the philosophically compromised term of “history” altogether. Thus, he concludes, it is only with the notions of Zeitspielraum and Ereignis that all connections to a possible historicism are finally excluded. His account provides a valuable picture of the emergence of new themes in the later writings, but it still leaves much to be said.

It is perhaps justifiable, as Pöggeler does, to describe temporality and historicity in SZ as designating a “transcendental domain,” from within which beings receive their determination. On the other hand, if the initial ambition was to develop a transcendental argument, then it remains puzzling why Heidegger should have called this domain “historical” in the first place, thus running the risk of having his position misunderstood as a form of historicism. Pöggeler suggests that Heidegger abandoned the talk of “historicity” for precisely this latter reason. But his interpretation then fails to convey not just the rationale behind the “historicized” conception of the transcendental in the early writings, but also how these early concerns could be said to necessitate the move toward the thoroughly “historicized” thinking developed in

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13 “‘Historicity’ in Heidegger’s Late Work” (1973). Pöggeler puts quotation marks around “historicity,” so as to mark its inappropriateness as a designation for the later thinking. He interprets the early use of historicity as a designation of a “transcendental domain” within which beings obtains its definitions, a domain where both temporality and historicity serve the same purpose of thinking being from the point of view of time. When this attempt failed (since SZ was never finished), Heidegger turned to the theme of the truth of being, experienced as history and as a non-necessitated Ereignis.
Beiträge, and its conception of thinking in the other beginning. Heidegger does not “abandon” the theme of historicity because of its connection to historicism and relativism; from the beginning his affirmation of the historicity of life and of philosophy itself is seen as a remedy against historicism. Furthermore, from the beginning the historical mode of understanding serves as a counter move against an objectifying understanding of life, as well as of meaning and of truth. In this regard, Heidegger never abandons the territory of the questions opened up by his early polemic, least of all in Beiträge. This work is his most radical attempt to bring about a “historical” mode of philosophical thinking and discourse, while preserving the uniqueness of philosophy as a knowledge of origins.

There are obviously aspects of Beiträge that appear to imply that the historicity of thought might play a less decisive role than in SZ. In the earlier work, historicity is analyzed as an existentiale of Dasein, and thus as ultimately rooted in its temporality. Dasein’s temporality remains the ultimate horizon from within which the question of the meaning of being can be addressed, whereas in Beiträge the entire notion of a propaedeutic existential analytic is abandoned. Furthermore, since truth here is no longer analyzed as an existentiale, but rather as a more original structure from out of which even Dasein itself must be understood, it would be natural to assume that temporality, as well as the supposedly derivative historicity, should play a less important role. Indeed, Heidegger himself states in Beiträge that the question of being could not be fully developed as long as time remained the “projectory domain” (Entwurfsbereich) for being. In the same section he also declares:

Therefore it was necessary on the decisive point to overcome the crisis of the question of being as this had been raised hitherto, and first of all to avoid an objectification of being, first through the withholding of the “temporal” exposition of being and then through the attempt to make the truth of being “visible” independently...\footnote{GA 65, p. 451: “Daher galt es, an der entscheidenden Stelle die Krisis der notwendig so zunächst angelegten Seinsfrage zu überwinden und vor allem eine Vergegenständlichung des Seyns zu vermeiden, einmal durch das Zurückhalten der ‘temporalen’ Auslegung des Seyns und zugleich durch den Versuch, die Wahrheit des Seyns unabhängig davon ‘sichtbar’ zu machen...”}

While this passage seems to support the expectation that temporality—and consequently historicity—should occupy a less important part in Beiträge, the same page in the book also speaks against such an
interpretation. There we are told that what is needed in order to address the question of being is “a more original insertion into history” (eine ursprünglichere Einfügung in die Geschichte), a process in which thinking will become “evermore historical” (immer geschichtlicher). These formulations are in fact indications of a basic orientation of the work, in which questions concerning the historicity of thinking and the relation between philosophy and history are not avoided or set aside, but instead emphasized more than ever. It is in a certain relation to history that the new mode of thinking presented here distinguishes itself.

In Beiträge “the historical” primarily defines not the theme or the method of thinking, but the mode in which thinking relates to what is to be thought, to being as well as to truth. To use a term from the earlier writings: it designates a Vollzugsweise, a mode of having or making sense. The key word here is “belonging,” Zugehörigkeit. In the other beginning, thinking understands itself as belonging to being in a sense which metaphysical thinking was supposedly unable to see. The affirmation of this belonging reverberates throughout the book, often in connection with discussions concerning history and historicity. The sentence quoted above is immediately followed by the remark: “historical’ here means: belonging to the essencing of being....” And in another passage: “To become historical means: to emerge from the essence of being and therefore to continue to belong to it....” The

15 This orientation is in fact clearly expressed in the first section, where Heidegger writes (in a passage that was also quoted in the preceding chapter): “The transitory thinking accomplishes the founding projection of the truth of being as historical reflection” (Das über gängliche Denken leistet den gründenden Entwurf der Wahrheit des Seyns als geschichtliche Besinnung, GA 65, p. 5). And further on: “History is thereby not the object or domain of an investigation, but that which first awakens and effects the thinking questioning as the locus of its decisions” (Die Geschichte ist dabei nicht der Gegenstand und Bezirk einer Betrachtung, sondern jenes, was das denkerische Fragen erst erweckt und er wirkt als die Stätte seiner Entscheidungen).

16 In a section entitled simply “Philosophy” it is stated: “The present and future essential phrasing of the concept of philosophy (and thus of the predetermination of the conceptuality of its concept and of all its concepts) is the historical [geschichtliche] (not the historical [historische])” (Die jetzt und künftig wesentliche Fassung des Begriffes der Philosophie [und damit auch die Vorbestimmung der Begrifflichkeit ihres Begriffes und aller ihrer Begriffe] ist die geschichtliche [nicht eine historische], GA 65, p. 421). And throughout the book we are told that we are witnessing a passage from one phase of philosophy to another, from metaphysics to “historical thinking” (geschichtliches Denken).

17 GA 65, p. 421: “Geschichtlich’ meint hier: zugehörig der Wesung des Seyns selbst....”

18 Ibid., p. 456: “Geschichtlich werden heißt: aus dem Wesen des Seyns entspringen und deshalb ihm zugehörig bleiben....”
examples could be multiplied. This belonging does not primarily designate a fact about the relation between two entities, thinking and being. Rather it marks a recognition of a debt or an exposure, an experienced lack, that constitutes the relation as such. In thinking, man recognizes himself as appropriated by being, but this recognition also implies an active appropriation on the part of thought. This double bind is characteristic of the particular belonging that Heidegger is struggling to convey. There is a constant play between activity and passivity, of being claimed and claiming. In a passage which again mentions the historical nature of thinking, he writes:

The thinking in the other beginning is in a way originally historical: a submissive possessing of the showing forth of being.¹⁹ This “submissive possessing” exemplifies the ambiguous logic of the relation, a logic which we have encountered in various configurations in previous chapters. It is the logic of a thought that claims to possess its own essence in the affirmation of a certain non-possession, and that furthermore brings this about in the form of a repetition of a loss, as the only way of having access to an origin.

In Beiträge, this logic is articulated within the scheme of the first and the other beginning. Everything that happens in and comes out of this work is explicitly inscribed within these two poles. In the opening paragraph, Heidegger declares that his account will move along a path which is cleared in passing over to the other beginning. Further on, he explains that the other beginning is named this way not because of its complete otherness with respect to earlier philosophy, but because of its relation to the unique first beginning. The other beginning is defined by its relation to a first beginning, and the book itself defines its task in relation to the tension and passage between the two. Its project is made possible by the relation to a historical beginning, which it simultaneously strives to articulate and to surpass in the course of a repetition. It remains tied to precisely that from which it seeks to depart, and the departure can only have the form of a more profound insertion into this dependency.²⁰ It is only by bringing out the hidden

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 11: “Das Denken im anderen Anfang ist in einer einzigen Weise ursprünglich geschichtlich: die sich fügende Verfügung über die Wesung des Seyns.”

²⁰ In a lecture series given during the same time Heidegger writes: “The greatness of creating is measured by the extent to which it is able to follow the innermost hidden law of the beginning and to bring its path to an end” (Die Größe des Schaffens benift sich damach, wie weit es vermag, dem innersten verborgenen Gesetz des Anfang zu folgen und dessen Bahn zum Ende zu bringen, GA 45, p. 36-37). This lecture series
law or binding validity of a beginning and pursuing it to its end that thinking can cross over into the future of an other beginning; it is only by subjecting itself to a first beginning that it can become a beginning in itself, an other beginning. This is the idea behind the belonging which characterizes historical reflection: to recognize oneself as located within the stretch of a past and a future, in the course of bringing about the passage from one to the other.

In SZ, “repetition” (Wiederholung) is the name for the movement that constitutes Dasein’s historicity as “destiny,” enacted in and through the moment of authentic temporalization. It is an event in which the identity of Dasein is preserved and yet transformed, since in this repetition the past possibility of the other is projected as a future for oneself. What is the relation between this idea and the scheme of a first and other beginning in Beiträge? On a manifest level, the connection is hard to trace, since Beiträge makes no thematic use of the term “repetition.” Still, it does appear in one short section, entitled “The beginning and the beginning thinking,” a section devoted precisely to the dialectic of the first and other beginning:

The beginning is self-founding and anticipating; self-founding in the foundation which is grounded through it, anticipating as grounding and therefore impossible to overtake. Since every beginning is impossible to overtake, it must for this reason always be repeated, and through the confrontation it must be posited in the unicity of its beginningness and thus of its unsurpassable anticipation. This confrontation is original when it is itself a beginning, but then necessarily as an other beginning.²¹

In its general structure, this passage repeats the logic of repetition that rules over the hermeneutic situation, and of Dasein’s historicity as presented in SZ; an origin is manifested in the repetition of an origin which the repetition can never fully master, but which it can nevertheless retrieve in anticipation. Furthermore, it is only by assuming the confrontation with the origin—in the form of an

from the winter semester 1937/38, entitled “Grundfragen der Philosophie,” is the best companion when reading Beiträge. In its themes and attitudes it is very close to the latter work, not least in its strong emphasis on the proper mode of “historical” thinking.

interpretative struggle—that originality can be established and secured in the present.

Nevertheless, there are important differences with respect to the earlier model that should not be neglected. Most notable, perhaps, is the transformation of the idea of how a projection of Dasein's finitude can somehow secure the repetition from being inauthentic, that is, the whole idea of how authentic temporality somehow "grounds" its historicity. The central concern of human finitude has not disappeared from the scheme, but it has been refigured. Finitude is now primarily manifested in the recognition of the unsurpassability of the origin itself. It is only by recognizing its finitude vis-à-vis the repeated origin that the repeating can be original. In this respect, *Beiträge* could perhaps be said to mark a return to the early articulation of the unsurpassability of the situatedness of thought, over and against the "transcendental" theory of authentic temporality in *SZ*.

As already declared, the precise content of the first beginning is of lesser importance here. My principal interest concerns how the argument itself is organized in terms of a dialectic of origins. This first beginning is not something simply to be surpassed by the other, but its necessary and inexhaustible point of departure. The first beginning is needed in order to accomplish the other beginning. The opening of thought is possible only under the condition that this first beginning can be articulated, felt, and experienced in its own validity and necessity. Yet the first beginning is never immediately seen or experienced. Until it is repeated in the proper mode, it remains concealed under an apparently self-evident practice of thinking and doing. Only by being repeated does it become a first beginning, thus enabling us to envisage the other beginning. Only in the future-oriented repetition does the first beginning become a first beginning for the first time: "The ancient, i.e., that which nothing younger can ever surpass in essentiality, is revealed only to the historical confrontation and reflection."^22^ Repetition in this sense is certainly not just a matter of retrieving a hidden origin; the agonistic element in this encounter is clearly acknowledged. In a Nietzschean turn of phrase, Heidegger also speaks

^22^ *GA* 65, p. 434: "Das Alte, d.h. jenes, das kein Jüngeres je an Wesentlichkeit übertreffen kann, offenbart sich nur der geschichtlichen Auseinandersetzung und Besinnung." For a good discussion of this logic—according to which we release the first through the other, in order to retrieve our present—as itself a new conception of philosophical reason, see H. Boeder "Das Verschiedene im 'anderen Anfang'" (1976).
of the repetition as a challenge that requires strength and courage: "To
the genuine passage belongs both the courage for the ancient and the
freedom for the new."23 This logic, which here rules over the question
of being, also recalls the predicament of historicity in SZ, as a need to
prevail in a space of an antagonistic repetition, where a possible present
origin is constantly threatened by the past origin, in the wake of which
it risks losing itself altogether. That this is also the logic of
"destruction" is explicitly recognized in Beiträge:

...the beginning in the totally other and the loyalty to the history
[Geschichte] of the first beginning, which surpasses all previous
historical [historische] activity...that is all so foreign to the customs of
history [Historie] and systematics that it does not even strike them that
such things could be required (is not this precisely what the
"phenomenological destruction" wants?).24

In this passage we can hear the echo of the concerns expressed in the
earliest Freiburg lectures; here philosophical thinking is again staged on
the confrontation line between a systematics and a history, which both
must be transcended through an immersion into a history of another
potency, a history defined by our belonging to it as to an unsurpassable,
and thus ultimately enigmatic, origin.25 The scene constitutes a global
hermeneutical situation, according to which the present can only have
access to itself and to its possible future through a radicalized confron-

23 GA 65, p. 434: "In dem echten Übergang gehört zumal der Mut zum Alten
und die Freiheit zum Neuen." The implicit presence of Nietzsche in these remarks are
strengthened by the fact that Heidegger also adds that this "ancient" (Alte) should not
be confused with the "antiquarian" (Antiquarische), which of course reflects the
terminology of the second Untimely Meditation.

24 Ibid., p. 468: "das Anfangen im ganz Anderen und die alles bisherige
historische Beischaffen wesentlich übertreffende Treue zur Geschichte des ersten
Anfang...das ist für die Gewohnheit der Historie und der Systematik so befreundlich,
daß sie sich gar nicht einfallen lassen, Solches könnte gefordert sein. (Was anderes
aber will die 'phänomenologische Destruktion'?)." To be more faithful to the past than
any historical investigation, and yet be committed to the entirely other beginning; this is
the violent and (conservative) revolutionary logic of the strategy outlined in Beiträge.

In the lectures from the same time the "revolutionary" aspect of this practice is made
explicit: "The original and authentic relation to the beginning is therefore the
revolutionary one, which liberates the hidden law of the beginning through the
upheaveal of the ordinary" (Der ursprüngliche und echte Bezug zum Anfang ist
deshalb das Revolutionäre, das durch die Umwälzung des Gewöhnlichen das
verborgene Gesetz des Anfanges wieder ins Freie bringt, GA 45, p. 37).

25 Here we may also recall the remarkable concluding postscript to Heidegger's
Nietzsche, "Recollection in Metaphysics" (Die Erinnerung in die Metaphysik,
composed in 1941), a short text that describes the proper mode of the thinking of being
precisely in terms of the difference between a purely historical (historisches) approach
and the approach of the thought of history (Geschichte) as beginning and event, over
which the present can never preside, NII, pp. 481-490.
tation with that which always already holds sway in it and over it. Beyond every concrete elaboration of the content of the history to which we belong, this mode of understanding marks the limit of Heidegger’s version of Ursprungsphilosophie.

4. Witnessing the ultimate historicization of the philosophical task
In the predicament of thinking thus outlined, the other beginning is not just the formal experience of an unsurpassable first beginning. More important, it is the experience of how being itself can occur as event, Ereignis. What occurs is not just a new truth of being, but truth itself as Ereignis. This conceptual leap is crucial for the understanding of what occurs in Beiträge, whose hermeneutics or methodology is inextricably linked to the question of being as such. As stated repeatedly, the idea of a new form of “historical” reflection is not conceived here as an instrumental step toward the determination of being as truth and Ereignis; instead, only in and through this mode of thinking will the truth of being appear as the very event of that truth. Only through a reflection on its own production, reception, and transmission of truth, will philosophy grasp the truth of that which precedes it: the truth of being as Ereignis. Here, thinking is the “thinking of that which happens as the event itself.”26 In SZ, it was stated that “we always already move within an understanding of being.”27 In Beiträge this insight is brought to a further conclusion: the historical nature of thought is no longer just a recognition of a debt to being in the form of tradition, but a new definition of the domain and goal of thinking. It is not only thinking that is historical, but truth itself, or rather its essence (as its mode of appearing).28

Truth itself is historical and so is its happening as Ereignis. From here, however, Beiträge takes yet another step, when it declares that being itself must ultimately be conceived as “historical”:

The event is the original history itself, whereby it could be indicated that here the essence of being is understood “historically.”29

26 GA 65, p. 108: “...Er-denken dessen, was sich ereignet als das Ereignis selbst...”
27 SZ, p. 5: “...wir bewegen uns immer schon in einem Seinsverständnis.”
28 A paragraph entitled “The essence of truth” states that to this essence belongs “that it is historical” (Ihm eignet zuinnerst, daß es geschichtlich ist, GA 65, p. 345).
29 GA 65, p. 32: “Das Er-eignis ist die ursprüngliche Geschichte selbst, womit
In SZ, Heidegger declared that the question of being is characterized by historicity, but only in a mediated way with reference to the historicity of the questioning being, i.e., Dasein. In Beiträge, guided by its abysmal attempt to “say being” as itself a manifestation of being, historicity appears as a characteristic of being as such. Here being brings about its own manifestations and attributes, which in historical reflection are revealed as possibilities and as decisions once taken. From the perspective of the other beginning, that is, in the exemplary critical encounter with this first beginning, it becomes clear, Heidegger writes, 

...that this decisional character belongs to being itself and that it indicates

the persistent unicity and most original historicity of being itself.30

Thus, at this point, being itself emerges in the strangely anthropomorphic guise of decision and historical unicity, not as the specific voices of philosophical forerunners or possibilities of Dasein “having-been,” but as itself an origin which man encounters in a hermeneutic, dialogical situation. Within the scope of SZ, such a statement would have been impossible. It would have made no sense to ascribe historicity to being itself, since this was an exclusive attribute of that finite being, Dasein, who investigates being. But here this is not only made possible, it even follows from the radical insertion of the whole philosophical endeavor into the pattern of historical repetition as the only mode of thinking and signifying the non-objectifiable event of disclosure. At this stage the concept of “the historical” propagates its signifying force over the entire project: philosophy is historical, Dasein is historical, truth is historical, Ereignis is historical, and so, finally, is being.31 In Beiträge we witness a culmination of this mode of understanding, whereby the recognition of the non-appropriability of origins emerges as the deepest characteristic of original thinking.

angedeutet sein könnte, daß hier überhaupt das Wesen des Seyns ‘geschichtlich’ begriffen wird.” A common conception of the Ereignis, expressed, for instance, by J. Staumbaugh, in the essay “Time and Dialectics in Hegel and Heidegger” (1974), understands it as something extra-historical, as located outside history. This is true in the sense that Ereignis does not designate anything that belongs to a specific point within a conventional temporal-historical framework. Still, this does not permit us to say that it belongs outside history, for history defines the way Ereignis is thought. On the level where this concept operates, there is no longer any clear inside/outside history, since “history” in a qualified sense here constitutes an encompassing domain of comprehensibility.

30 GA 65, p. 460: “...daß dieser Entscheidungscharakter gar zur Wesung des Seyns gehört und den Wink gibt auf die jeweilige Einzigkeit und ursprünglichste Geschichtlichkeit des Seyns selbst.” Cf. the similar statement from Der Satz vom Grund, quoted in Chapter Five, p. 206.

31 For further instances of this characterization, see GA 65, pp. 44, 234, 421.
5. Hegel and Heidegger on philosophical beginnings

The first book of Hegel's *Logic* begins with the question: "With what should the beginning of science be accomplished?" To this question Hegel promptly responds that the beginning can be neither immediate, nor mediated. The beginning of science—in the sense of philosophical knowledge—can only be the speculative beginning of thought. His own solution is therefore to posit the beginning as an abstract immediacy in the form of "pure being" (*das reine Sein*), out of which the cycle of the entire *Logic* is then developed. In the lecture "The Onto-Theological Conception of Metaphysics" from 1957, Heidegger comments on this opening question. He concludes that Hegel can only think the beginning in terms of the completed result of thought, the circular movement itself that turns back to itself after a completed mediation. From one perspective, it seems as if Heidegger's appeal for an other beginning in the form of a futural projection of a non-accessible original beginning is in fact a repetition of the Hegelian movement of dialectics. To Heidegger, however, this is certainly not the case; on the contrary, it is precisely through his conception of the beginning that he struggles to distance himself from the framework of Hegelianism.

The 1957 lecture is probably Heidegger's most explicit commentary on his relation to this powerful precursor, from whom he claims to distance himself on three specific points. The last of the three enumerated points concerns the mode of their respective philosophical "conversation" (*Gespräch*) with history. To Hegel—Heidegger says—this conversation has the character of an *Aufhebung*, which brings about a foundation in the present through a mediated understanding of the past. For us, however, Heidegger continues, "the character of the conversation with the history of thought is no longer the *Aufhebung*,

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32 *Wissenschaft der Logik*, p. 65: "Womit muß der Anfang der Wissenschaft gemacht werden?"

33 "Die Onto-Theologische Verfassung der Metaphysik," in *IuD*, pp. 31-67. This lecture was extracted from a series of seminars on Hegel's *Logic* from the previous year. The remarks on the passage from *Logic* are found on pp. 43f.

34 There are certainly other texts in which Heidegger challenges Hegel, but here he goes about this task in a more systematic fashion. The three points that he addresses to Hegel and to himself are the following: 1) what is the matter (*Sache*) of thought? 2) what is the norm (*Maßgabe*) for the conversation with the history of thought? 3) what is the character of this conversation? Through his responses to these questions, he then defines their philosophical differences (*IuD*, pp. 36f.).
but the step backwards.” I will leave aside here the other points on which Heidegger—certainly not altogether justly—claims to differ from Hegel, in order to concentrate on the sense and significance of this specific divergence. What does Heidegger mean by this step backwards? Obviously he does not advocate a simple and unspecified return to history and tradition (which would be just another version of historicism). The “backwards” does not signify that which is simply located in the past; instead “the direction in which the step backwards leads us is revealed only through the enactment of the step.” The logic is familiar: the return is to a past but as a future.

To what extent does this really differ from Hegel? In the latter’s scheme, thinking similarly makes use of its history: it retrieves itself and its own destiny through previous historical configurations, and finally brings about its own completion through the incorporation of these previous stages. First of all, Heidegger states, the Aufhebung leads into a domain of absolute truth as the certainty of the completed self-knowledge of the spirit. The step backwards, on the other hand, points toward a domain hitherto unexplored, from which the essence of truth can be thought. Thus it is not just a recollection on a higher level of that which has been thought before, but it is also a step out and away from it. The step discloses not the movement of thinking toward its completion, but the hidden region out of which thinking first arose, its source (Quelle). Unlike Hegel, Heidegger does not conceive this source


36 A valuable discussion of the sense of beginnings and origins in Hegel and Heidegger is provided by D. Schmidt, in The Ubiquity of the Finite (1988), esp. Chapter 3, pp. 96-124. Schmidt argues that Heidegger’s assessment of Hegel does not do full justice to the deep affinities between the two on this matter. Both in Hegel and in Heidegger, the reflection on the beginning determines the possible continuation of that beginning, and both agree in the conception of the circularity of the beginning. Schmidt summarizes his discussion: “Both Hegel and Heidegger characterize the logic of beginning in largely the same way, yet Hegel asserts that it is possible for thought, from this beginning, to assemble itself absolutely, while Heidegger asserts that the beginning, in being the movement of origination, always dislocates the very possibility of any final gathering of itself into wholeness” (p. 122). It is the nature of this “dislocation,” of a certain essential disappropriation, that remains an indeterminate difference between them. Schmidt also suggests that this difference could be articulated in terms of Heidegger’s idea of the other beginning (p. 111).

37 IuD, p. 42: “Das Wohin freilich, dahin der Schritt zurück uns lenkt, entfaltet und zeigt sich erst durch den Vollzug des Schrittes.”
as something that was once there, and that was eventually surpassed; on the contrary, it is that which remained unquestioned (Unbefragte) all along. This unquestioned source is here articulated by Heidegger as the “difference between being and beings.” The original difference marks the opening of metaphysics as we know it, through its manifestations in the consecutive configurations of being.

From this brief account it may be tempting to conclude that whereas Hegel thinks the history of thought from the point of view of its culmination in absolute knowledge, Heidegger thinks it from the point of view of its unthought origin. In other words: a simple reversal of priorities, which could nonetheless lead to similar results. But the true difficulty, and thus the defining difference between them, lies in the mode in which they think of originality as such. For Hegel, the question of the beginning is ultimately trivial: the beginning is being (Sein), as the most simple, abstract, and indeterminate x. What is significant is what follows upon this initial premise once the recollective and speculative apparatus is turned on. For Heidegger, the source of the beginning is inexhaustible; it permits no recollection of itself on a higher plane. The beginning can only be grasped through a repetition of something that was never present as such, but that nonetheless hovers over every specific determination of being: the difference between being and beings. To this origin, thinking always already belongs, as it stands and operates in its opening.

The repetition performed in the step backwards constitutes a recognition of a belonging. It cannot repeat the beginning as the same, since the latter cannot be available to thought in its self-sameness, for such a movement presupposes that thinking could step outside the domain over which this origin rules. This is why the present beginning of thought must take on the form of an other beginning: the first beginning has always already begun and cannot be begun again. Still, it can be

38 “Differenz zwischen dem Sein und dem Seienden.” For this and the above formulations, see IuD, pp. 39-40.

39 For a similar expression of this logic, cf. “Die Erinnerung in die Metaphysik,” where Heidegger writes of how that which belongs to the beginning approaches historical man in advance, N II, p. 481: “Das Anfängliche ereignet sich allem Kommenden voraus und kommt deshalb, obzwar verhüllt, als das reine Kommen auf den geschichtlichen Menschen zu.” Also in the lectures on Hölderlin’s Hymns from 1934 it is stated at the outset: “The beginning, the origin, comes forth only in the happening, and it is fully there only at its end” (Der Anfang, der Ursprung, kommt dagegen im Geschehen allererst zum Vorschein und ist voll da erst an seinem Ende, GA 39, p. 3).
grasped as a first beginning, precisely by being repeated in an other beginning that brings out its significance for the very first time.

In the 1957 text on Hegel, Heidegger does not speak explicitly of the step backwards as an other beginning, but the logic of the movement remains the same. Most important, they both describe a movement whose principal purpose is to reveal a belonging to an already prevailing condition. Just like the other beginning, the step backwards discloses belonging as such. It makes sense, in the literal sense of bringing about an orientation, only as a recognition of a debt that can never be repaid or mastered. In the thought of the other beginning, as well as in the step backwards, thinking recognizes its belonging not in the sense of a homecoming, as in Hegelian logic, but in the sense of an original exposure to homelessness. Thinking operates in the medium of a thrownness, which it can recover in repetition, not as something it once had, nor for that matter as something it will eventually possess, but only as the exposure to a prevailing predicament of non-possession, in relation to which it is always delayed.

What does this signify? Does it even signify? These kinds of questions can hardly be settled in any definitive manner. Heidegger's very formulation of the situation constitutes a peculiar mode of signifying in itself, and it knows itself as such. Philosophical thinking here indicates a predicament which is grasped only through certain signifying manoeuvres; more precisely, it manifests its indebtedness in the very enactment of a semantic limit.

6. Hölderlin and the silent voice of belonging
Hegel provides a first articulation of the “historical” predicament of speculative philosophical thinking, as having access neither to a stable foundation, nor to a stable criterion of truth. A thinking that wishes to respond philosophically to this situation or “situatedness” can only have the form of a reflection on its own enactment of meaning as a continuous dialectic of self and other. Thus Hegel formulates what could be called a principle of a primordial belonging and indebtedness of thinking with regard to what it thinks, which in Heidegger’s writings is made into a dominant theme in itself. While Heidegger raises this belonging to another level by presenting it as the encompassing and ultimately ineffable condition of original thinking, he also deepens its
significance through a move which is not prefigured in Hegel, but which he will develop in his dialogue with the language of poetry in general, and with Hölderlin in particular. This move opens up another, latent, layer of meaning in the German Zugehörigkeit, as not only a belonging to, but also a “hearing” or “listening” to. Thinking in the other beginning belongs to that which is to be thought not just in the sense of an indebtedness to a philosophically inexhaustible origin, but also in virtue of being claimed and called upon—as by an address—to listen and to respond. This is the other aspect of historicity as articulated by Heidegger.

The image is often repeated throughout the later writings: man is one who is spoken to, who stands under a demand. In the lecture “The Principle of Reason,” from 1956, we read that we, the mortal beings, are the ones that “stand in the address of being.”41 To stand in this address is to be one who listens, who is given over to listening, to that original listening of which it is said in the text on Heraclitus a few years earlier that it is more fundamental than any actual physical capacity.42 In Beiträge the connection between hearing and belonging is quite explicit. In one of its most exalted passages, on the “turning in the event” (Kehre im Ereignis), Heidegger writes of how the preparation for an exposure to the truth of being gathers “that which hears and that which belongs” (das Hörige und Zugehörige) for the sign of the approaching event. In order for the turning to take place, the event “must use Dasein” for its own needs by placing it under a “calling,” and the turning can then appear in the space delineated by this calling and a hearing, between the Zuruf and the Zugehör. This, however, requires an initial “need,” as a “hearing-belonging” (zugehörig) to the calling of the sign.43 In this final adjectival form of the word, its two senses collapse entirely into one another. To belong is to hear and to be reached by a calling. It is to stand in the disclosure of a strange voice that comes from no one in particular, and yet from everywhere.

In Chapter Three, the structure of such a play of voices was

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40 As pointed out in Chapter Two (Section 5), this connection between hearing and belonging was first articulated in SZ and in the 1925 lectures on logic.

41 SvG, p. 209: “...im Zuspruch des Seins.”


explored as a certain dialectic of historical existence. Here I want to raise the question: what does the recognition of this predicament imply in terms of the mode, as well as the form, of Heidegger’s thinking and writing? How is this hearing-belonging articulated, in other words, how can it make room in its own discourse for the experience of which it wants to speak? Heidegger tries to answer this question on several occasions. One of these attempts is found in a lecture on Hölderlin from 1951: “The complying speech in which man authentically hears the address of language, is the saying that speaks in the element of poetry.” This seems to imply that it is only in the form of “poetic” saying that thinking can truly respond to the calling under which man is said to stand. But very little is said thereby, at least until we specify how such a saying is supposed to operate. Speaking of the poem “In lovely blueness…,” Heidegger says of Hölderlin that the poet is not one who describes the phenomena of nature, in this case the heavens, instead he calls forth “that which in the self-disclosure permits the self-concealing to appear and precisely: as the self-concealing.” The formulation echoes the remark from Beiträge quoted above, about how in the discourse of philosophy in the other beginning “nothing is described, explained, or declared,” since the “saying does not stand over against what is to be said.”

Should we conclude from this that in Heidegger’s writings, at least from Beiträge onward, philosophy as we know it—and as an explicit response to its historicity—ultimately resigns in favor of poetry, or rather in favor of a certain poeticizing of its own discourse? The question is not easily answered. The encounter, or rather the possibility of an encounter, between philosophy and poetry, is an urgent matter in the later writings, especially in the lectures on Hölderlin. Against the

44 “…Dichterisch wohnet der Mensch…,” in VA, pp. 181-198, p. 184: “Das Ent sprechen aber, worin der Mensch eigentlich auf den Zuspruch der Sprache hört, ist jenes Sagen, das im Element des Dichtens spricht.” For a good discussion of how poetic language is seen as a response to the demand of thinking in the other beginning, see W. Marx, “The World in Another Beginning: Poetic Dwelling and the Role of the Poet” (1972). Cf. also my “Heidegger läser Hölderlin,” Ruin (1990), which is an introduction to Heidegger’s encounter with Hölderlin as an encounter between philosophy and poetry.

45 VA, p. 194: “Der Dichter ruft in den Anblicken des Himmels Jenes, was im Sichenthüllen gerade das Sichverbergende erscheinen läßt und zwar: als das Sichverbergende” (Heidegger’s italics).

46 In 1944/45 Heidegger gives a lecture series entitled simply “Introduction to philosophy: Thought and Poetry” (Einleitung in die Philosophie - Denken und Dichten, GA 50).
rash conclusion that philosophy gives way to poetry, one can read the remark included in the *Introduction to Metaphysics*, which says that even though philosophy ranks only with poetry (as opposed to science), philosophy and poetry are “still not the same.” This idea of a privileged affinity between philosophy and poetry is often repeated, so for example, in the preface to the first published volume of interpretations of Hölderlin, where the philosophical interpretation presents itself as a “thinking conversation.” But precisely because they share rank, this threshold is also constantly crossed. Thus, in another lecture on Hölderlin we read: “it is only possible to turn to poetry in a poetizing way as a thinking confrontation with the *disclosure of being* that is brought forth in this poetry.” Here the poet addresses the thinker, who can only respond by raising the privileged question of philosophy, or rather by letting the encounter take place on the territory of the supreme philosophical concern: the question of being. The examples of how Heidegger tries to articulate the relation between the two domains could be multiplied. What happens on the scene of this encounter, as articulated and as enacted by Heidegger? Does philosophy become poetry, or does poetry become philosophy, or should we in fact look for a third category, perhaps the “thinking,” of which the “Letter on Humanism” declares that it belongs to a future that has left metaphysics behind, in favor of a “simple saying”? It is not possible to say with certainty. Still we can ask how this discourse thematizes its own mode of signifying.

About the latter question *Beiträge* also has something to say. Of the thinking in the other beginning it tells us that it is “*sigetic*, in its most explicit reflection it guards its silence.” As the voice of conscience in

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47 *GA* 40, p. 28: “*In derselben Ordnung ist die Philosophie und ihr Denken nur mit der Dichtung. Aber Dichtung und Denken sind wiederum nicht das gleiche.*”

48 *GA* 4, p. 7: “*... denkende Gespräch.*”

49 *GA* 39, p. 6: “*Die dichterische Zuwendung zu seiner (Hölderlins) Dichtung ist nur möglich als *denkerische* Auseinandersetzung mit der in dieser Dichtung errungenen *Offenbarung des Seyns.*”

50 *GA* 9, p. 365: “*...einfache Sagen.*”

51 *GA* 65, p. 58: “*Das anfängliche Denken ist:...in sich sigetisch, in der ausdrücklichsten Besinnung gerade erschweigend.*” In a text on Nietzsche composed during the same time we read: “The most elevated thinking consists herein, that what is properly to be said is not simply silenced in the saying, but said in such a way that it is named in the non-saying: the saying of thinking is a keeping silent” (Das höchste *denkerische Sagen besteht darin, im Sagen das eigentlich zu Sagenende nicht einfach zu verschweigen, sondern es so zu sagen, daß es im Nichtsagen genannt wird: das *Sagen des Denkens ist ein Erschweigen*, *NI*, p. 471).
SZ, this thinking is said to communicate in the form of a signifying silence.52 A few sections further on in Beiträge, this silencing is even described as the “logic” of philosophy, to the extent that philosophy raises the fundamental question from out of the other beginning. This logic seeks (to say) the truth of being, the truth of its appearing, as the “signifying-resonating concealment (the secret) of the event (the hesitant refusal).”53 In these formulations on the brink, if not of linguistic madness, then at least of possible signification, something quite significant happens. What happens is the attempt to bring about in language the “historical” predicament of thinking as the hearing-belonging to being, not as a theory of this predicament, but as the enactment of its own being through speech. The present study has followed a series of attempts to grasp the nature of that which does not lend itself to an objectifying description, since it is that from which every objectification arises. History is the scene on which this task is staged by Heidegger, for history is the element of projection and thrownness, of giving and withdrawal. No common understanding of history or historical existence can exhaust the sense of this predicament, the ultimate enactment of which is this peculiar mode of discourse on the verge of silence.

In an essay on Heidegger and the history of philosophy, Gadamer summarizes his work as a wrestling with the force of tradition, which eventually brought him to an almost “agonizing want of speech...that led this linguistically powerful thinker toward utter enigmatization.”54 Throughout its different stations, the interpretation has repeatedly come across this tendency toward ineffability, toward different forms of signifying silence, toward secrets and enigmas. Much could be said, no doubt, and certainly not always flattering, about Heidegger as a keeper of silences.55 I have confined myself, however, to a certain aspect of

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52 See the discussion of conscience in Chapter Three, Section 3.
54 Gadamer (1983), p. 139: “...qualvollen Sprachnot...die diesen sprachgewaltigen Denker bis in die äußerste Verrätselung trieb.”
55 For a thoughtful commentary on the significance of silence in the context of Heidegger’s philosophy of language at large, see Bernasconi (1985), esp. pp. 54-57, pp. 91-95. See also the study by S. L. Bindeman, Heidegger and Wittgenstein: The Poetics of Silence (1981), which brings together most of Heidegger’s thoughts on silence in the works published up until 1979.
this delicate terrain. From this perspective Heidegger’s silence marks a philosophical destiny in itself, a destiny that he pursues to its most radical conclusions. It is the destiny of a thought which has set itself the task of breaking the spell of the theoretical attitude and its static construction of subject and object, by seeking a non-objectifying discourse on the event of objectification, as an event of meaning, of truth, and ultimately of being. It is the destiny of a thought for which this task was inextricably connected to the transcending of the dichotomy of a historical and a systematic mode of thought through an ever deeper insertion into an original historical belonging.

In the Remarks to Jaspers, discussed toward the end of Chapter One, Heidegger suggested that philosophical thinking constitutes a “properly enacted detour-understanding.” Much has happened in the meantime, but somehow the echo of this declaration still resounds through the strange logic of the thinking in the other beginning envisioned by Heidegger. Philosophical thinking is not just the arduous detour toward that which has claimed its attention and aroused its questions; it is also the thinking of precisely this nature of its own pursuit, of itself as a detour. Only by properly thinking and signifying the detour-ness of itself can original thinking prevail.

7. Concluding remarks

In one of Heidegger’s very last texts, a brief poetic-philosophical meditation entitled “The Lack of Sacred Names” from 1974, he speaks of a particular form of “understanding” at which poetry can help thinking arrive. This understanding does not aim to make something intelligible, but to expose the one who understands to an “original need,” namely, the forgetfulness of being. The question of being—of its meaning, its essence, and its truth—remains the ultimate horizon of Heidegger’s philosophical quest. Has the interpretation, in choosing to trace the role and development of historicity, done justice to this basic “truth” of his work? The guiding presupposition here has been that we cannot even begin to understand the kind of ontological exploration which Heidegger develops unless we understand how he himself envisaged the conditions of philosophical thinking. Furthermore, we

cannot grasp the sense of the “content” of his descriptions unless we see how this content is related to, and determined by, a certain mode of philosophical understanding. Original ontological understanding is inextricably tied to a recognition of the condition of belonging in which thinking itself stands with respect to what is to be thought, and ultimately to its ability to give expression in language to this belonging.

This characterization of Heidegger’s work applies to the description of the hermeneutic situation in the earliest interpretations, and to the fundamental ontology of SZ, as well as to the thinking in the other beginning explored in Beiträge. Likewise, it applies to the late fragment just quoted. The understanding toward which poetry can lead the way, and which thinking can perhaps accomplish, is only possible as a recognition of the situation in which thinking stands in relation to what is to be thought: namely, in the position of a certain need. To recognize this need is not just to note some lack or deficiency. As Heidegger points out, the forgetfulness of being is “the word for the destiny of the clearing of being.” This clearing, in which every subsequent configuration of being is situated, cannot be thought as such, except as an original withdrawal within which thinking always already stands. Thinking belongs to an original withdrawal, not in the sense of an inclusion, but as an indebtedness which is also a demand, and it is only understood as such when heard and responded to. To articulate the truth of this situation is not to encompass its being by means of a description, but to make way in language for that which only shows itself in withdrawal. In this logic of the question of being, the form and the content are no longer separable.

From this perspective, we can detect certain argumentative patterns that regulate Heidegger’s philosophical discourse regardless of the specific problem under scrutiny. More specifically, there emerges a pattern of an irredeemable delaying of sense-fulfillment. The ultimate signifier signifies in the perfect tense, indicating that which has always already taken place; it refers to that which cannot be properly designated but can only be “had” in the mode of an indication. It is an evasive operation, whose evasiveness simultaneously conveys what it

57 Ibid., p. 234: “In Wahrheit ist das Wort der Name des Geschick der Lichtung des Seins...”

58 Of poetic language Heidegger writes in the same text (p. 234): “Dichten—meint hier: sich sagen lassen den reinen Anruf des Anwesen des Entzuges und des Vorenthaltes.”
discloses, namely, the enigmatic origin to which every signifying act is indebted. Heidegger's writings can be read as a series of such inscriptions of delays and distances, through which thinking recovers itself—its own conditions—in ever new constellations. It “recovers” its own origin in the form of a repeated staging of a projection of that which can never be projected as itself, but only as an other, through which the self is released as a new and yet ancient possibility. In this strange repetition the logic of ordinary temporality collapses in a fusion of past and future, in the moment or event of meaning itself.

Heidegger's writings could be read as devoted to the release of this moment, as also a release of philosophical thinking. His path of thinking could therefore also be said to trace, in an exemplary fashion, the fate of a philosophy of origins, an Ursprungspathos, back to the enigma from out of which Hegel once saw it arise, when he interpreted the Egyptian works of art as “the objective enigma itself.” When Oedipus as the first Greek solved the enigma of the Egyptian sphinx he also, according to Hegel, initiated the quest for self-awareness and thus of philosophy. When Heidegger solves the enigma of he who could perhaps be described as the last among the Greeks—Zarathustra—he does it only to restore this enigma to itself.

How are we, as readers of Heidegger, supposed to respond to the enigmas, riddles, and secrets with which his later work abounds? In a remark, added to the lecture “Who is Nietzsche's Zarathustra?” from 1953, Heidegger concludes that Nietzsche himself knew that his deepest thought (the eternal recurrence) was an enigma, and that we should not think that we can solve it. That it cannot be solved does not imply, however, that we should leave it at that. Heidegger presents two ways of “avoiding” the confrontation with this enigmatic thought. One is to see it simply as a form of mysticism that has nothing to do with thinking. The other is to argue that what it says is really nothing new, that the cyclic conception of history is as old as Western thinking. These attitudes—behind which we should perhaps detect a refigured “naturalism” and “historicism,” as the two unphilosophical attitudes which original thinking at the outset was called to combat—both prevent us from confronting that which this most abysmal thought

60 VA, p. 121: “Nietzsche selbst wußte, das sein ‘abgründlichster Gedanke’ ein Rätsel bleibt. Um so weniger dürfen wir meinen, das Rätsel lösen zu können.”
“conceals.” Eventually, Heidegger concludes, it is something which Nietzsche himself, was unable to express.

Heidegger’s remarks apply to himself as well. He, too, as a thinker of enigmas and riddles, was often accused of mysticism, no less than of repeating historical predecessors. In view of this, these words could also be read as a declaration in favor of a continued questioning and thinking, which does not simply pause before enigmas in awe or mistrust but prevails in the questioning stance before that which remains to be thought, including Heidegger’s own work.
In the introduction, Heidegger’s preoccupation with the problem of historicity was described as “meta-methodological,” in the sense that this problem marks a unique point of condensation in his thinking, where it stops to reflect on its own possibilities as well as on its proper modes and obligations. Similarly, the orientation of the study could be said to have been meta-methodological in the sense that it has investigated the theme of historicity in Heidegger’s writings as a certain recurring pattern of conceptualization and of understanding. A guiding question has been: what kind of understanding is implied and called for in Heidegger’s peculiar “historicization” of the philosophical endeavour? What does it mean for philosophy, that thinking, truth, and being are said to be historical (in the sense of geschichtlich, as this is eventually strictly opposed to what is historisch)? It is clear from the beginning that this is a fundamentally self-reflexive concern; the “historical” account of human existence in the earliest lectures is both a philosophical account of what this particular being is, and a directive for how philosophy should approach it. As such it concerns the question of access, of how the subject has access to itself, and of how philosophy has access to its own most fundamental concerns. The “historical” in Heidegger’s writings belongs to this “hermeneutic” domain in a broad sense of the word. When Heidegger is speaking of the historical he is signaling an essential detour-ness of understanding. In recognizing its historicity, understanding admits its displacement vis-à-vis its own foundations, although in the service of a deepened knowledge of itself. This knowledge does not hold out the promise of a completed home-coming; rather, it implies that the highest form of philosophical understanding is tied to the recognition of a certain non-mastery of its own means and its own foundations.

Heidegger’s views on the historical nature of the philosophical enterprise obviously undergo changes, changes which have often been pointed out in the literature. This is especially clear if one focuses on the particular idea of the historicity of Dasein, as developed in Sein und Zeit. This idea is hardly even mentioned in the later writings,
which, on the contrary, are increasingly preoccupied with the historical nature of truth and of being. In the attempt to bring out the underlying movement of Heidegger's thinking, I have nevertheless tried to read the earliest accounts of historical life in the light of the "historical thinking" put forth in Beiträge zur Philosophie, and vice versa. From this perspective, it is possible to see how the "hermeneutics of facticity" elaborated during the early twenties contains the seed of the radical transformation of the ideal of an Ursprungsphilosophen manifested in the works posterior to the so-called "turning" during the early thirties, and most clearly in Beiträge. The emphasis on questions of access and givenness is decisive for this view. The "hermeneutic situation" could be read as the blueprint for how it is articulated. In this situation we become aware that we obtain knowledge only on the condition that we recognize ourselves as always standing in a fore-understanding. What is "historical" in Heidegger's terminology—and this could perhaps be read as a tentative definition, or rather characterization, of how this description functions in his writings—is that to which we are always already indebted, drawn into, and claimed by. Life is that to which the theoretical (philosophical) account of meaning and understanding always belongs; similarly, being and language is that to which thinking always belongs when it tries to approach these phenomena in a theoretical attitude.

This "belonging" has an ethical or practical dimension which is seldom articulated as such, but which determines the course of Heidegger's thinking. To be historical is to stand under the influence and force of the past, a force to which the individual being can succumb passively, or which it can learn to master in a free adoption of inherited possibilities. The authentic form of historical existence is articulated as a dialogical movement of address and response, which also underlies the idea of the philosophical Auseinandersetzung. It is only through such a struggle with an ultimately unsurpassable origin that man can maintain a level of self-determination on the arena of historical existence. In regard to this model it is possible to trace a shift in Heidegger's thinking, from a more personalized address and encounter, to the increasingly impersonal address of language and of being as such. Yet, these two levels are never entirely separated.

The connection between a theoretical and a practical aspect of Heidegger's historical conception of thinking applies immediately to the
problem of historicism (in the sense of historical relativism). As noted repeatedly, Heidegger remains explicitly preoccupied with this problem at least up until the time of *Beiträge*. When he refuses to accept the convenient dichotomy between philosophy as *Weltanschauung* or systematics, while insisting on the ideal of philosophy as a first science of being, he propels his own thinking into a new territory where convenient labels no longer apply. One point here has been that this territory is more Nietzschean than Heidegger and some of his readers are usually prepared to admit. The idea of historicity is tied to a sense of risk and struggle, and thus to an appeal for attentiveness and action. It implies an image of reason as confined to an intersubjective domain characterized both by conflict and by an original address, to which man must learn to respond from within his present situation.

From this perspective it may be tempting to say that Heidegger responds to the problem of historical relativism through an “activist” conception of philosophical thinking. This could perhaps be said to apply to the notion of a “kairiological” critic in the early lectures, as well as the ideal of authentic historicity as a “repetition for one’s situation in a momentaneous way,” to quote *SZ*. But it does not apply to the increasingly “passive” conception of philosophical understanding in the later writings, with their insistence that thinking inserts itself even deeper into history, as the history of being itself. While not denying this change, I have tried to show that the tension between an “activist” and a “defeatist” attitude can be traced from early on, and that they are both contained in the conception of a “situated” knowing towards which Heidegger is working. It is with respect to this conception that he seeks to overcome the given dichotomy of the temporal and the atemporal, the absolute and the contingent, which underlie the very formulation of the problem of historicism. This attempt is centered in the temporality of the *Augenblick* and in what has here been interpreted as its philosophical sequel: *Ereignis*.

Throughout these reflections on historical being and historical understanding, the question of truth marks a constant point of reference. We cannot understand what Heidegger means when he describes life as “historizing” and “temporalizing” if we do not recognize that this peculiar movement is also an event of truth, or a “making true,” in the sense of his critical elaboration of the Aristotelian ἀληθεύειν. The question of the locality as well as the essence of truth
marks an indissoluble parallel track to the reflections on the historical nature of existence, of thinking, and of being. This also accounts for the quasi-transcendental position of historicity in Heidegger’s thinking. The very thought of historicity marks an attempt to move beyond the dichotomy of the relative and the absolute, as well as the eternal and the temporal. When truth itself is eventually described as “historical,” Heidegger’s purpose is not to propound a relativistic notion of truth, but to capture the mode of being of the original “opening” within which every single truth can eventually be discovered and articulated. It is part of the “historical” nature of this opening that our thinking and speaking about it always already belongs to it. To think the essence of truth in this sense is to think a simultaneous presence and withdrawal.

In SZ, the theory of Dasein’s historicity is based on an account of its temporality. Heidegger’s attempt to break free from what he conceives as the constraints of SZ partly goes by way of radicalizing its “historical” orientation, distancing himself from the idea of authentic temporality as an original domain of meaning-projection. If “the historical” in the early lectures serves the purpose of distinguishing human being from other modes of being, it serves explicitly in the later writings to move beyond the distinction itself, to that middle-ground, from out of which both subject and object can be understood as modifications. This “enigmatic origin” does not serve the purpose of founding either being or knowing. It is conceived by Heidegger precisely as a domain of “truth,” understood as opening and disclosure, and eventually as “event.” The purpose, however, is not to relativize “truth,” but to determine the mode of being of truth as such, as a non-objectifyable “happening” by which the knowing subject is appropriated. It is not something which the subject can master; on the contrary, this “happening” or “historizing” can only be understood from the perspective of a certain abandonment and non-appropriation on the part of the thinker. In Heidegger’s own assessment, these later developments—which have here been analyzed as culminating in Beiträge—mark a step beyond the confines of traditional metaphysics.

The present discussion focused on the mode of description and understanding activated in these attempts, and ultimately on the logic of a first and an other beginning as the post-Hegelian dialectic in which Heidegger’s radicalized historical thinking ultimately finds itself. When being itself is eventually articulated in terms of a “destiny,” this
philosophical step could be said to mark a fate in itself, namely, the fate of classical ontology in the era of historical consciousness, where the ultimate level of explicable is indissociable from the thought of historical mediation and encounter.

The question of the historical in Heidegger is intimately linked with a sense of ineffability. When he begins to speak of the historicity of life he is searching for new ways of speaking of meaning and truth beyond the subject-object dichotomy. The "historicization" of these domains is inseparable from the attempt to secure a mode of access to them which does not presuppose the dichotomy, but from which it can be thought. To the very application of the concept of "the historical" belongs an awareness that on this territory philosophical language is already stretching its means beyond where it signifies in a conventional manner. In speaking about the historicity of Dasein in _SZ_, Heidegger admits that he is approaching an essentially elusive domain. Conventional metaphors, such as "circle" and "movement", are here explicitly recognized as metaphors. In the "historical" conception of truth and _Ereignis_, this short-circuiting of the signifying power of language is emphasized even further. In the attempt to address this aspect of the problem, I have been guided by the idea that Heidegger's own recurrent references to the limits of discursive language should be seen as an integral part of the problem of historicity itself, as the problem of how to designate the being of the access to being. Over the course of his development, Heidegger becomes increasingly aware of the extent to which this is a linguistic problem, a problem of how language can bring its own signifying and disclosing ability to articulation. At this point the question of a possible dialogue between philosophical and poetic discourse is opened up as a task of thinking in its other beginning.
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b) Works by Heidegger not available in the Gesamtausgabe, listed chronologically:

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JuD Identität und Differenz (Pfullingen: Neske, 1957),
ŚvG Der Satz vom Grund (Pfullingen: Neske, 1957),
N Nietzsche (Pfullingen: Neske, 1961),
ŚdD Zur Sache des Denkens (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1969),
BZ Der Begriff der Zeit (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1989),
HBB Martin Heidegger-Elisabeth Blochmann, Briefwechsel 1918-1969 (Marbach: Deutsche Literaturarchiv, 1989)

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