

Heidegger on truth and subjectivity a nihilistic interpretation

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Abstract

Tijmen Lansdaal - Heidegger on truth and subjectivity: a nihilistic interpretation

This research offers an original interpretation of Heidegger's philosophy, which can be termed 'nihilistic' with reference to Heidegger's notion of nothingness and his reception of nihilism. The interpretation contributes to Heideggerian scholarship by clearing up two controversies surrounding the interpretation of his philosophy, relating to truth and subjectivity. On the proposed reading, these two topics are related. Truth concerns the 'disclosure' of human existence, or in other words, the self-manifestation of human existence. For Heidegger, the experience of angst is insightful for this sense of truth. On his account, angst is a 'fundamental mood' that makes apparent a kind of 'nothingness', which can also be described as the 'uncanniness' of human existence. Ultimately, the interpretation proposes that these notions refer to the ineffable opacity of human existence. It makes for a conception of truth that is dialetheic, and for this reason unconventional. Countering the dogma that truth must be in opposition to falsity and re-interpreting the idea of a contradiction, uncanniness presents a sense of truth that is conflictual and self-effacing. Whereas Heidegger sees this issue as foundational to the history of philosophy, the current paradigm for Heideggerian research explicitly denounces the importance of contemplating nothingness, and in that way misrepresents Heidegger's way of thinking. The correct interpretation must be nihilistic, even if this complicates the normative character of his thinking. It may not be bound by an explicit norm, but it nonetheless takes measure in reticence, being compelled to this by guilt over its own ineffability.

Introduction

0.1 Research Topic

Martin Heidegger's philosophy is generally considered unclear. Awareness of his philosophy is as prevalent as ever, perhaps more so than ever, and yet most who are aware find its contents obscure, frustrating, perhaps even hermetic. Ask the average philosophy enthusiast, philosophy undergrad and/or philosophy social media account, and they will not be able to say what makes Heidegger so uniquely important within the current philosophical landscape. His influence seems undeniable, specifically within the phenomenological tradition but also elsewhere, but what at first glance seems clearly uniquely Heideggerian to the average reader is his characteristic German nationalism, which notoriously is one of a few signs of Heidegger's crypto-nazism, and this does not seem particularly worthwhile to make place for in the philosophical canon. Given that Heidegger seems to have been largely uninterested in making his philosophy an accessible read for the general public, and given that he stressed that the German neologisms were essential to the expression of his philosophy, a broader reception of his ideas, especially for people who are not German, may become complicated. Admittedly, however, observations about the general reception of Heideggerian thought cannot be substantiated without some sort of rigorous ethnographic research into how Heidegger is perceived by sympathizers and their opposites, and such research is not only not being done, it also does not seem particularly fruitful to start doing, if the very subject of Heideggerian thought was of no interest of itself.

Moreover, the aforementioned inaccessibility may not be the best indicator of how clear Heidegger's philosophy should in principle be considered to be. Expertise, something the secondary literature hopes to provide, may provide for an access point to an otherwise impenetrable body of work. Heideggerian scholarship, if it does its job well, should show Heidegger's work to be comprehensible in principle, and offer the road map for the way in which it is. There have been substantial developments in this regard, with countless of commentaries being published over time, and a variety of paradigms being distinguishable in the Heideggerian tradition. Nonetheless, problems with clarity persist. Scholars may provide some insight, but from a place of authority, which has no interest in pointing out its own limitations and the remaining gaps in the interpretation of Heidegger's work, causing equally concerning disagreement with colleagues. There remains, as a consequence of the commitment to Heidegger's vocabulary or the pretension of having translated it without problem, little (textual) evidence for the many obscurities in Heidegger's bibliography, while these obscurities are glaringly obvious to even the most well-informed of readers. What remains is the possibility of demonstrating key points in the many disagreements between Heideggerian scholars, so as to at least show that some things have remained inscrutable despite the already written clarifications.

If one believes such an objective could successfully identify interpretive hurdles so as to deliver directives for complete elucidation, then one overlooks the possibility that obscurities will continue to plague the literature. Obscurities are insurmountable by a scholar's authority on the subject matter, because of the necessity of a structural opacity in Heidegger's thoughts. Impenetrable opacity is usually assumed by staunch critics, who do not see the worth of engaging in Heideggerian philosophy, but should, in contrast, be considered by proponents of his philosophy. It would be the greatest possible contribution to Heideggerian scholarship if it were clarified what should remain opaque in Heideggerian thinking, and what should nonetheless draw serious philosophical consideration. It may be

deemed paradoxical to want to salvage what is unique and worthwhile in Heidegger's thinking, as a way of being sympathetic to it, while simultaneously demonstrating its inherent obscurity, which could as well have served as a way of justifying or vindicating ignorance. The paradoxical approach is appropriate, however, to a philosophy that was initially conceived as a question (or as questioning). No matter how forceful, authoritative and pretentious this characteristic may have been presented, Heidegger's thinking has been introduced to the public as a radically open inquisition with no specific pretension of being transparent, and no natural point of closure. This ambition to practice philosophy as an open question stands in tension with commentary that wants to clarify what Heidegger brings to bear in already existing discussions, what Heidegger is an authority on, what in Heidegger's work is instructive to its readers, etc. In order for the prime question of philosophy to retain its question-worthiness, it cannot culminate in a discovery of the unassailable and evident, because this would not be its primary focus, if understood in a Heideggerian way.

Salvaging the worthwhile but obscure idea of Heideggerian thinking unfortunately cannot follow the customary route of attempting to conclude discussions concerning the notion of 'Being' as the central address of his philosophical question. Fixation on Heidegger's vocabulary 'of Being' seems requisite to any analysis of his philosophy, given his expressed contention that his way of thinking has restricted itself to one thought and one thought only¹. The ambition to translate this one thought, i.e. to find a language that can serve as equivalent to Heidegger's, functioning in the same manner, has proven itself very difficult. Precisely when a reader consolidates and chooses to accept a certain level of mystery with regard to Heidegger's vocabulary, that reader runs the risk of cultivating an already estranged familiarity with the subject matter, debasing genuine philosophical thought by depriving it of the opportunity to find its own way in language in favor of losing its way. It should be obvious that exploration of Heidegger's way of thinking must be fruitful in paving that path, because otherwise the ado about Heidegger comes to nothing. Fortunately, when declining to take the ambitious interpretive route of translating the one thought of Being, a reader may rest assured that Heidegger himself was optimistic about precursory work to the 'ultimate' philosophical project, judging by the ambitions of his magnum opus, *Sein und Zeit*, which is meant to be just that². A limited focus on certain aspects of the thinking 'of Being' is possible without compromising the ambition of developing an understanding of the same issue. Although the resulting exploration of the central topic of Heideggerian thinking may then be complicated by the looming issue of Being, it nonetheless may have value in being able to tell what steps its feet have taken along the way.

What aspects of his thinking would have made for the best precursor to the true subject matter of his work Heidegger himself points out in a characterization of *Sein und Zeit*'s core ambitions, 13 years after its publication.

"In der Abhandlung 'Sein und Zeit' ist der Versuch gemacht, auf dem Grunde der Frage nach der Wahrheit des Seins, nicht mehr nach der Wahrheit des Seienden, das Wesen des Menschen aus seinem Bezug zum Sein und nur aus diesem zu bestimmen, welches Wesen des Menschen dort in einem fest umgrenzten Sinne als *Da-Sein* bezeichnet wird.

[In the 'Being and Time' treatise, an attempt is made, on the basis of the question concerning the truth of Being (and no longer concerning the truth of entities), to

¹ Cf. GA13: 76.

² *Sein und Zeit* as a project is said to have the same precursory character (S&Z: 1).

determine the essence of human existence, which there had been described in the firmly delineated sense of 'Da-Sein', solely in its relation to Being.]”³

Furthermore, Heidegger remarks that ‘in spite of his work no understanding of the question posed by this project has awoken in any of his readers’⁴. The introduction of a newly defined denomination for human existence in itself as a way of presenting his ambitions is emblematic of the impenetrable prose that Heidegger writes, pointing again to the trouble with translating his entirely idiosyncratic discourse. It should be clear, however, even from this word play, that the goal of his initial project was to find the proper determination for the essence of human existence, and only to this purpose does the language of Being come into play. He approached this goal by way of the study of truth (and conceptions of it), making truth instrumental to the project. According to Heidegger, then, engagement with these two topics, human existence and truth, is the core motivation for his project⁵. For that reason, they can be considered most insightful for an introduction into his way of thinking. In other words, to clarify Heidegger’s philosophy, which takes place as a ‘belonging to Being’, it is necessary to explore his understanding of human existence in relation to the topic of truth. These two key themes have been the subject of discussion to this day, showing that Heidegger’s observation on the lack of understanding from his readers remains relevant. Heidegger’s conception of truth, in particular, has given rise to controversy in the literature. Criticisms of this conception, primarily instigated by Ernst Tugendhat, have led many to lose interest in Heidegger’s thoughts on the topic, despite his vested interest in it, developing his conception throughout most of his philosophical career⁶. Research into these two topics could inform discussions and ease controversies surrounding Heidegger’s philosophy, contributing meaningfully to scholarly understanding of it.

With regard to these topics, some of the more obscure accounts and remarks Heidegger provides have been largely unexplored, although they prove to be crucial to their interpretation. Initially it may seem like a loose and incomprehensible connection, but the absence of an understanding of Being, stated on the first page of *Sein und Zeit* and repeatedly recounted by Heidegger as the main problem of his work⁷, can clarify both accounts and how they relate. The problem is often presented as a semantic problem, referring to ignorance over the meaning of the word ‘Being’, but has much broader implications and should remain provocative even to a proficient Heideggerian. When Heidegger later claims to determine human existence in relation to a ‘belonging to Being’, one should not simply set aside the idea of a fundamental obscurity regarding the matter at hand, as if the initial inscrutability of the matter is of no consequence to the intended determination. Ultimately, it should become clear that Heidegger believes that human existence revolves around the obscurity of its own Being. In order to think in a Heideggerian spirit, and to understand how obscurity is a factor in both the truth and subjectivity of Heidegger’s ideas on ‘Dasein’, the depth of the question concerning human existence must be explored. For a reader of Heidegger’s work, this requires an actual meditation on human existence that does not immediately eliminate the possibility of self-questioning by way of an assumption of self-evidence. The initially apparent answer to the question of a human essence is absent, and this absence should be considered critical to Heidegger’s motivations.

³ GA6.2: 172.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Cf. Heidegger’s remarks on what was essential about *Sein und Zeit*’s programme, i.e. the question concerning Dasein in relation to the truth (GA66: 414).

⁶ The notion of truth appears in works from the beginning of his career up until the end of his life, with 1927-1943 being Heidegger’s most prolific period of research on the topic (cf. Sallis 1995: 71-72).

⁷ S&Z: 1.

In order to arrive at such a conclusion it must be observed that, for Heidegger, the question-worthiness of Dasein concerns simultaneously truth and subjectivity, and that for this reason these topics can serve as a way to circumvent the difficulties with an attempt at direct elucidation of his 'vocabulary of Being'.

Specifically, it is not the various senses of revelation that are already frequently discussed in the literature with regard to truth and subjectivity, but the notion of 'uncanniness' and the barely mentioned notion of nothingness that can clarify Heidegger's relevant accounts. Heidegger employs these notions to convey the sense of obscurity that comes into play when asking the question of human existence, and for that reason, to put into perspective all talk of revelation. Together, the relevant notions provide a different take on Heidegger's thinking as it has become familiar to a broader audience, which could be considered a 'nihilistic' perspective, in so far as it focuses specifically on obscure notions like 'nothingness', the paradoxical properties that these notions have, and the quietist implications they have for philosophical methodology. The nihilistic perspective delineates the kind of clarity that can possibly be achieved in reflecting philosophically on the nature of human existence, managing one's expectations over what could be 'elucidated' in the works of Martin Heidegger.

Coincidentally, these nihilistic terms could constitute an independent philosophical standpoint on truth and subjectivity, perhaps 'Heideggerian' only in the sense that it is merely inspired by Heidegger. This is true in virtue of the fact that these ideas could be considered by themselves, without further consideration for Heidegger's specific formulation. Ideally, an interpretation of Heidegger clearly defines its subject matter without borrowing its authority from Heidegger by relying on his words alone, and in this way makes possible independent consideration. It would be pretentious, however, to present the resulting Heideggerian perspective as an independent view. Its presentation has special merit in being able to elucidate Heidegger's notorious work, perhaps even resolving some scholarly controversy in relation to it. Assessment of independent merit relies at least initially on proper elaboration of the view in question. In this context, the conjoined presentation of Heidegger and a nihilistic view on truth and subjective is most natural, for numerous reasons, many of which are explored in the following. With references made to Heidegger, the proposed view is more clearly suggestive of a unique rather than generic nihilistic outlook, attracting a different, and hopefully more receptive audience. Heidegger's work would, additionally, remain the primary resource for any further development of the proposed view, even if that view were presented as an independent achievement. Given that there has been such a wide-ranging, systematic reception of his work, none of which has incorporated the peculiar nihilistic influences that shape Heidegger's way of thinking, insight into the terms most relevant to this influence is of prime importance to those that take interest in him.

By pivoting the literature to a focus on the necessarily obscure elements of Heidegger's work, it is able to provide more satisfactory explanations for the inimitable course of his philosophical explorations. That such a re-orientation also requires the scholarship to reconsider the existing paradigm for Heidegger interpretation, making it a rather sweeping move with regard to the discussion of Heidegger's work, comes as a consequence of the peculiar, nihilistic nature of these notions, which do not fit appropriately into the existing paradigm. Ultimately, it is the uncanniness of human existence that is the most important philosophical truth for Heidegger, and the elaboration of his understanding of this notion marks a formidable challenge that should be the primary concern of Heideggerian scholarship.

0.2 Methodology

Finding clarity in reading and attempting to understand the contents of Heidegger's work may seem like straightforward interpretative (or, colloquially, 'exegetical') work, to which a method would apply that upholds the appropriate rules and standards that would give rise to a thorough explication and fair assessment of a particular text. Such a method has, in the bigger context of academia, come to be called 'hermeneutic', after the Ancient Greek word for interpretation, ἑρμηνεύειν. Methodical elucidation of specifically Heidegger's philosophy is complicated however, because it is itself known as hermeneutical, meaning it involves a kind of ἑρμηνεύειν⁸, explains how to engage it, and how it should come about in general. As is well known, the history of hermeneutics has even been profoundly influenced by Heidegger's various commentaries on the notion of interpretation. As a result, the hermeneutic method cannot be expounded as a preliminary way of laying out the conceptual toolkit that will be employed for the purpose of achieving clarity in Heidegger's philosophy. Hermeneutics is inapplicable in this instance. Its problem is circular. The metaphysical ambition of conceiving a properly Heideggerian philosophy directly influences the workings of a framework for interpretation and its implicit conception of the process of understanding, and, conversely, choices in the execution of a certain kind of hermeneutics could imply some assessment of Heidegger's expressly 'hermeneutic' conception of philosophy. In other words, the instrumental approach to hermeneutics for the sake of a transparent methodology could result in possibly problematic assumptions about Heidegger's philosophy, which would be problematic in so far as they predetermine the outcome of a research into the proper way of practicing his way of thinking. The thought that a methodology can simply explain hermeneutic tools that would help in interpreting Heidegger's work should, in conclusion, be abandoned.

Worthy of mention in relation to this problem, given that it concerns one of the main topics of this research, is the notion of truth and its place in the hermeneutic method. A notion of truth is at play in a basic expectation for any elucidation of any philosopher's work, in the sense that one would expect it to present the contents of the work in question as it is. Such 'presenting as it is in or of itself' is a standard of truth for all interpretation, a standard that has become central to hermeneutic methodology. This is understandable, given that truth has always been central to methodology, with truth always being seen as the pinnacle achievement of doing philosophy. Although Heidegger acknowledges the relevance of the aforementioned 'as it is' standard for (more traditional kinds of) hermeneutics, he does not envision it to have a place in his own philosophy. Expounding the reasons why and exploring alternatives to such a standard is a way of directly addressing the contents of Heidegger's philosophy, and therefore cannot function as a preliminary concern.

There are a number of methodological remarks, however, that may provide some introductory insight into what one is to expect from an exploration of Heidegger's discourse. These remarks would prepare a reader for the unique Heideggerian understanding of philosophical thinking. Firstly, it should be obvious from *Sein und Zeit's* §7 that Heidegger's ideas on hermeneutics are rooted in phenomenological methodology. In short, Heidegger is committed to showing the way in which phenomena appear of themselves⁹. His account, therefore, primarily focuses on explicating experiential content, oftentimes making his work

⁸ Heidegger references the Ancient Greek, primarily uses the word 'understanding [Verstehen]' in its place, but occasionally will also use the word 'interpretation [Auslegung]' to explain what he means.

⁹ S&Z: 36-39.

more descriptive than it is argumentative. This puts into perspective the ‘hermeneutical’ aspects of his approach. Heidegger’s meditations on philosophy do not concern merely the interpretation of various forms of thought as they appear in writing, which is an impression a shallow reader might have. Heidegger does conceive of philosophy as a way of understanding, but for him the process of understanding is determined by the phenomenal content of experience. What is primarily at stake in Heidegger’s hermeneutics is not necessarily an idea or ideology, but experience. The phenomenological tradition, on this point, influences his work, and the basics of this overlap play a role in the following, which strongly emphasizes the importance of a specific experience for the explanation of Heidegger’s philosophy and in this sense retains the same phenomenological element.

Secondly, it is clear that Heidegger is not in favor of developing a discourse that would predetermine for its participants the essential characteristics of the phenomena at stake in that discourse. The ambition is not to develop concepts that can serve as fixed references or rigid designators, nor is an attempt made to provide a comprehensive account that purports to be fully accurate to its subject matter. Rather, Heidegger explicitly restricts his ambition to providing a ‘formal indication’ of the phenomenon he researches. He tries to avoid making assumptions about how something appears of itself, which could be, for instance, as an object available for inspection. The approach entails the use of language merely to furnish a sense of direction that allows for inquiry. Heidegger’s accounts are for that reason hortative, encouraging its readers to performatively engage in a subject matter, pointing to it so that others can determine its sense for themselves¹⁰. Research into Heidegger’s notion of truth, for instance, cannot present a definitive characterization of Heidegger’s sense of truth, as a final word on the matter that exhausts the need for further discussion. Positively speaking, an account of ‘the truth of Being’ is indicative of an issue that a reader must be able to participate in in their own way. In this way, the subject matter remains open to a reader irrespective of their particular outlook or presuppositions, making it more accessible rather than less.

In later work, Heidegger will further specify his style of explanation by designating it as a specific kind of ‘Erörterung [discussion]’. The notion refers to the way in which experiential content is indicated by his accounts. In his own words: “Erörtern meint hier zunächst: in den Ort weisen. Es heißt dann: den Ort beachten. [Here, first of all, ‘discussion’ means ‘to point to a site’. It then implies heeding this site.]”¹¹ In other words, Heidegger’s work aims itself at a particular space or context that informs its discourse, such that familiarity with it becomes essential to the interpretation of his work. This space permeates Heidegger’s text in such a way that every facet of its accounts refers back to it¹². His work is in that sense situated, not necessarily in the sense that the meaning of his texts are affected by a context or an adjacent situation, but in the sense that its meaning is rooted in its experiential foundation. This foundation, which can be considered a kind of ‘space’, provides the impetus for thought. In colloquial terms, it could be said that such a space designates ‘where Heidegger is coming from’, such that it becomes key to interpreting his texts.

From an outsider’s perspective, it may be considered dubious, vague Heideggerian jargon to uphold for a general, rigorous philosophical methodology. Heidegger’s claim, however, is that the issue at stake justifies this particular approach, and therefore description of the approach in the aforementioned terms. The subject matter, in other words, in Heidegger’s view, calls for a novel, unusual set of methodological concepts, such

¹⁰ Cf. Elpidorou & Freeman 2019: 192-194.

¹¹ GA12: 33.

¹² Cf. Heidegger’s explanation of the word ‘site [Ort]’, and how it ‘gathers’ everything (GA12: 33-34).

that an understanding of the subject matter becomes insightful with regard to why it must be approached in such a peculiar way. Ultimately, the most crucial subject matter at stake in Heideggerian discourse, from an introductory standpoint, proves to be the experience of angst. Angst is the 'site' of uncanniness, a mood that is to determine Heidegger's way of thinking, in such a way that independent familiarity with this experiential basis may help in imagining the scope of Heidegger's thought, and developing an understanding of the particular way that Heidegger himself develops his philosophical discourse. The content of the experience is said to be opaque in some sense, so that it should not give rise to an ordinary clarification of what is already clear to the person enduring it. Instead, the obscurity of the experience is reason for a formally indicative approach, such that its manner of appearance is not perverted by explanatory attempts that would absolve its obscurity. The emphasis on this experiential basis for thought, then, is a sign of the phenomenological character of Heidegger's manner of philosophical discussion. In order to assess the validity of Heidegger's approach, it would be suitable to the charitable spirit of philosophical interpretation to first consider its subject matter (i.e. angst) and the way that it could call for such an approach, before judging it outright on grounds of how it would suit as a general philosophical methodology.

0.3 Justification of source material

The nature of hermeneutic research is not the only thing, with regard to the intended explanatory project, that can be questioned. Which of Heidegger's works primarily are addressed by it is a separate issue. This issue is relevant, given that firstly Heidegger's works are diverse in terms of subjects, claims, and writing styles, and that secondly disagreements among Heidegger scholars are often reflected in the varying approaches to this diversity. For instance, a scholar might consider themselves an expert in 'early rather than late Heidegger', or a critic rather than a proponent of his thought. A clarification of a project in terms of its relation to Heidegger's bibliography, stating the for all intents and purposes most relevant works in it, clarifies the strengths and limits of that project. Similarly to the collected works of other philosophers, roughly three approaches can be distinguished to their interpretation: revisionist, developmentalist, and unitarian. The first approach, revisionist, would claim that over the course of his writing, the author in question, Heidegger, changed his ideas so as to rectify his earlier writings. The second, developmentalist approach would claim that the ideas stayed largely the same, but evolved significantly over time, such that there is a consistent logic behind the various guises his philosophy appears in. The third, unitarian approach would claim that the bibliography must be read as a whole that presents its readers with only one issue or coherent doctrine. Other potential alternative approaches to Heidegger's bibliography, such as cherry picking passages as inspiration for an independent Heideggerian view, or an interpretation that observes 'where Heidegger went wrong' (and perhaps even states some kind of error theory in relation to the alleged fault), are not considered here, because they give up on the ambition to faithfully reconstruct the whole of Heidegger's views as holding merit on their own terms.

The revisionist approach has gained traction in the scholarship because of Heidegger's talk of a 'turn [Kehre]' in his thinking. There has been substantial discussion of various changes in Heidegger's writings to determine their character and the extent to which they revise his conception of philosophy. To identify a turning point in Heidegger's philosophy might incidentally be appealing, because it makes it easier to distill specific ideas by not having to explain the relation of these ideas to certain other ideas or to the entirety of his ideas (which could for instance be a part of the aforementioned alternative

approaches). The problem with this approach, however, is that for Heidegger, the term, i.e. the *Kehre*, refers to an aspect of his thinking, in the sense that his thinking in some sense 'turns'. The 'turn' Heidegger speaks of in no way indicates of itself that his conception of philosophy was subjected to revision, but merely that he thought his kind of thinking involves a sense of turning¹³. That he nonetheless would introduce new elements to his philosophy, rejecting older ones, seems unlikely because he emphasized his thinking is restricted to one thought only¹⁴, which seems to imply at the very least a degree of consistency that does not allow for revision. (A change of heart would, after all, imply more than one thought, in so far as an earlier thought must be distinguished from its later thoughts for the latter to be considered a revision of the former.) Even where Heidegger is critical of his own thinking, it must be remembered that, according to him, he never put his early work behind him. Instead of rejecting it as a past venture, he felt like he was getting closer and closer to its core aim as he went on¹⁵.

Such an outlook does not really preclude the possibility that Heidegger significantly developed his singular thought. The aforementioned opinion might imply that he thought his thinking evolved into something better and better, for instance. Although he does admit there are various important changes in his thinking, he also explicitly rejects a developmentalist account, however. In Heidegger's own words:

"Auf diesem 'Weg' [von 'Sein und Zeit' zum 'Ereignis'], wenn das Stürzen und Steigen so heißen kann, wird immer die selbe Frage nach dem 'Sinn des Seyns' und nur sie gefragt. [...] Es gibt hier keine gradweise 'Entwicklung'. [...] Die 'Änderungen' sind so wesentlich, daß sie in ihrem Ausmaß nur bestimmt werden können, wenn jedesmal die *eine* Frage von ihrem Frageort aus durchgefragt wird.

[On this 'way' (from 'Being and Time' to 'The Event'), if the falling down and getting back up again can be called that, each time the same question concerning 'the meaning of Being' is asked, and only this question. There is no gradual 'development' here. The 'changes' are so essential that their scope can only be determined when in each case the one question is persistently posed from its own place of questioning.]"¹⁶

This passage shows that Heidegger considers his philosophy to address one issue only, justifying a unitarian approach to his philosophy. It does not deny that Heidegger explores variations of ways in which to pose its main question, or that developmentalist narratives constructed in relation to such variations have no foundation or purpose whatsoever. It merely states that such goals would be of secondary importance to the primary issue, and would have to be considered only in light of it. Heidegger's issue ultimately ties together the diverse contents of his books with a sense of consistency and coherency, and it is therefore of the utmost importance to start with an accurate interpretation of this 'place of questioning'.

These considerations may suggest that a unitarian approach is the only justifiable approach for an explanation of Heidegger's work. If there is one prime issue that Heidegger is attempting to address, and he stresses frequently when commenting on his own work that

¹³ Cf. Heidegger's explanation of how man turns itself, away from 'the danger of technology and its forgottenness of Being' (GA11: 118).

¹⁴ Cf. footnote 1, i.e. GA13: 76.

¹⁵ GA49: 26-27.

¹⁶ GA65: 84-85.

this is the case, then any attempt at interpretation must focus on this same issue. For various reasons, however, a unitarian approach remains complicated. As has been mentioned, Heidegger's various ways of stating his own philosophy create numerous hurdles for his readers. The difficulty with his rich vocabulary and its influence on his way of thinking has resulted in disagreement over how to adopt it. The problem is compounded by the sheer amount of source material that has been published at this stage, with many previously unpublished works more often complicating the given issues further than providing the means to explain matters comprehensively. In any unitarian approach, the scope of works that need to be accounted for and the diversity of their contents present a challenge that calls for a career of interpretation rather than for one severely limited project.

An interpreter may avoid much of the complications, however, by limiting their ambition to clarifying an essential aspect of Heidegger's thinking without suggesting that this aspect provides closure as to discussions surrounding his thinking. Heideggerian thought may be clarified without claiming that such clarification puts to an end all need for clarification. The relevant aspect would be essential, in the sense that it is not just a part of the discussion that can be disregarded when considering other aspects of his thinking. Rather, it is that piece of the jigsaw puzzle that will mark the difference between beginning to see 'the bigger picture' in what has been pieced together thus far and seeing mere fragments of that same picture. In other words, a general understanding of Heidegger's philosophy is dependent on the ability to discern one of its qualities, without implying the inverse. An account of the nihilistic character of Heidegger's thinking serves as an introductory fragment, which is conducive to a general understanding, but which ultimately cannot claim to be 'the one thought of Being' itself, or explain each of its manifestations.

Most importantly, the assumption of a significant sense of continuity in Heidegger's bibliography allows for cross-referencing. Naturally, this continuity cannot be merely assumed. It is a contention that becomes justified upon closer examination of the idea put forward, and how it ties into other perspectives on the same matter. Not only can an interpreter be taken to task for how a specific passage in Heidegger's works are addressed, but also how these relate to other works of his. It requires that any proposed account (of, for example, guilt) is frequently embedded in references to previously assumed-to-be-accurate accounts (of, in that case, Angst) to sustain a sense of cohesion to the proposed encompassing view (which would be the nihilistic perspective). References are, despite the contention of a continuity in all of Heidegger's works however, limited to the most relevant works. It is no coincidence that the topic of truth in this sense is the rug that ties the room together. As John Sallis has already pointed out, the trajectory of Heidegger's thought is largely determined by the question of truth¹⁷. The topic appears in works from the beginning of his career up until the end of his life, with 1927-1943 being his most prolific period of discussions on truth. Research into truth, therefore, should focus primarily on works from this prolific period, which spans what is sometimes referred to as the 'early' Heidegger and the 'middle' or 'being-historical [seynsgeschichtliche]' Heidegger.

The relevant works include what is generally considered his magnum opus, i.e. *Sein und Zeit*, and the previously unpublished manuscript that is sometimes considered his 'second magnum opus', i.e. *Beiträge zur Philosophie*, both of which feature important sections dedicated specifically to truth, and can therefore be expected to play a significant role. The secondary literature related to Heidegger's body of work has mostly concerned itself with *Sein und Zeit* and the issues that it raises, rather than works that come after, and for that reason that imbalance is reflected in the literature addressed here. The secondary

¹⁷ Sallis 1995: 71-72.

literature presented here is largely anglophone, for the sake of its clarity, rigor, openness to discussion by other authors, and accessibility to an audience with a greater variety in cultural backgrounds.

0.4 Dissertation structure and main conclusions

This dissertation is divided into three parts. These parts function only as generic directives for the chapters that they comprise of. Each part comprises of two chapters. The first part is intended to be an analysis of the most important problems that Heideggerian scholarship has faced over the years. The purpose of this part is to establish the need for research into the topic of this dissertation, thereby determining the questions that need answering in what follows. The analysis is based on a review of the literature, and it identifies in its contents those topics of Heidegger's thought that remain unclear even there, with some of these topics stirring controversy and disagreement among his readers. It additionally provides explanation of interpretations of the most basic elements of Heidegger's philosophy, pointing to their limitation. In doing so, it provides a foundation for some of the observations made with regard to the literature in this introduction. A second part analyzes Heidegger's work in order to arrive at an original account that can explain the questions raised in the first. The main claims of this dissertation are presented in this part, making it the part that is most illustrative of the proposed view on Heidegger's work. The purpose of a third part is to elaborate and clarify the account presented in the second, answering any remaining questions that have not been addressed there. The third part's merits are, therefore, largely based on its connection to the second part.

Each part comprises of two chapters, making six chapters total. These chapters determine the narrative of this dissertation, with each chapter presenting a logical step in the argumentation. The first chapter introduces the discussion surrounding Heidegger's conception of truth. It offers a detailed analysis of Heidegger's presentation of his conception in the context proper to it, and explains Tugendhat's charges against this conception, with references to relevant literature. It argues that Tugendhat's criticism remains relevant, and poses pressing questions to basic accounts of Heidegger's conception. These questions concern whether truth can be understood as the achievement of a project, how this achievement would relate to the existence of its opposite, i.e. falsity, and whether falsity is sufficiently addressed in Heidegger's conception of truth. In short, one could say this unclarity about the basic character of Heidegger's notion of truth concerns its normativity. Assuming that Heidegger's work might nonetheless contain answers to these questions, the chapter identifies what aspects of Heidegger's account should have been enlightening in relation to these topics, ultimately arriving at the ontological structure of Dasein. In other words, it shows that Heidegger's notion of self is central to his conception of truth, and that questions regarding the latter must be followed up by analysis of the former.

The second chapter, then, proceeds to explain the topic of subjectivity as it appears in Heidegger's work. It shows, like the first chapter did with regard to the topic of truth, that there is some controversy surrounding this topic. Although Heidegger is an anti-subjectivist, he nonetheless provides an account of selfhood. This account is largely clear. *Sein und Zeit's* account of Dasein's understanding presents his readers with a non-subjectivistic account of selfhood. However, it also introduces a notion of authenticity, which comes to determine much of the rest of the book, and this notion is puzzling in numerous ways. One important question with regard to this notion is its suggestion of a sense of normativity. The chapter suggests that clarifying these matters could be key to the discussion concerning truth.

The third chapter identifies the phenomenon that is crucial to answering the questions posed to Heidegger, which is angst. It clarifies the importance of moods to Heidegger's account of Dasein's selfhood, stressing its influence on Heidegger's philosophical methodology, and providing contextual support for the significance of this account. Because angst is the mood that opens Dasein up to its authenticity, Heidegger's account of this mood is, on close reading, most insightful for the topics of truth and subjectivity. The chapter explains the phenomenon as it appears in the literature, making the reader familiar with what is supposed to be insightful about it. Then, it raises an issue with the reception of this topic. The account of angst, as is clear from Heidegger's later retrospective comments on it, was supposed to introduce a unique notion of nothingness, but failed to be received in a significant manner by his readers. This issue remains of relevance.

For that reason, the fourth chapter analyzes the notion of nothingness as it appears in Heidegger's explanations of angst, and clarifies the significance of this notion for Heidegger's accounts of truth and subjectivity. The chapter directly addresses the topic of nothingness and distinguishes itself from existing literature on the topic of angst. For the sake of clarity, the chapter is subdivided into two halves. The first half presents a unique understanding of the notion of nothingness and addresses its implications for Heidegger's conception of selfhood, and the second addresses its implications for his conception of truth. It draws inspiration from, despite its flaws, dialetheist literature on Heidegger, which acknowledges the ineffability of nothingness. It is argued that Heidegger deliberately incorporates this 'dialetheist' element into his account. The implication for selfhood, or in other words the conclusion that the account of angst draws on subjectivity, is that Dasein is of itself opaque. The second half elaborates the dialetheist element, relating it to Heidegger's claim from *Sein und Zeit* that Dasein is in truth and untruth simultaneously on the one hand, and to more observations on the conflictual nature of truth in Heidegger's later work on the other. Importantly, it argues that Heidegger deliberately considers a sense of truth that does not conform to a basic assumption concerning truth's opposition to falsity, which is still present in Tugendhat's criticism of Heidegger's account, proving his misunderstanding of Heidegger's intentions.

The fifth chapter attempts to embed the insights from previous chapters into an encompassing view of Heideggerian philosophy. It features a polemic with the existing paradigm for Heideggerian thinking, which argues that Heidegger is a transcendentalist philosopher who is concerned with the meaning of things. The chapter shows how Heidegger views the history of philosophy as a way of doing metaphysics, and how the existing paradigm fits into this history. It argues that Heideggerian philosophy must instead become a kind of nihilism, which addresses nothingness in the same way that Heidegger does.

The sixth and last chapter, then, addresses the remaining question about Heidegger's view on the normativity of his view. Like existing accounts of this topic, it argues that Heidegger does understand his view to have a practical sense of normativity. This is evident from the way in which conscience calls out to Dasein, appealing to a way of being. Unlike these accounts, the chapter stresses the quietist aspects of this calling. Dasein is called to be reticent, since it remains guilty with reference to the constitution of its own being. This is normative, in the sense that in each case Dasein is delineated by the aporia of its own existence.

Chapter 1: the debate concerning Heidegger's conception of 'primordial truth'

1.1 Introduction: historical background

In §44 of his magnum opus *Sein und Zeit* Heidegger discusses truth by grounding a traditional conception of truth in his own, 'primordial' conception of truth. This new conception has been, as with plenty of Heidegger's other thoughts, subject to long-standing controversy. The main instigator of this controversy is Ernst Tugendhat, who has written a book (*Der Wahrheitsbegriff bei Husserl und Heidegger*) and an article (*Heideggers Idee von Wahrheit*) on the matter. This chapter argues that, and explains how, Tugendhat's critique presents standing issues to the conception of a 'primordial truth'.

Heidegger's ambition to establish an original conception of truth has notable historical background. Many of Heidegger's contemporaries tried something similar, and the accepted conception that they wanted to deviate from was always the same: the Aristotelian conception of truth. Although less focused precursory articulations may be found, Aristotle was the first to define truth (in Ancient Greek: ἀλήθεια), taking inspiration from Plato's *Sophist*¹. His formulation was found to be so striking and intuitively plausible that up to this day philosophers still find it to be explaining truth in a very basic sense. The complex but insightful definition secured perhaps the most long-standing approval among philosophers in any topic of philosophy. A 'new' conception of truth in this regard usually only elucidates how this formula works. The definition is stated as follows:

τὸ μὲν γὰρ λέγειν τὸ ὄν μὴ εἶναι ἢ μὴ ὄν εἶναι ψευδος, τὸ δὲ τὸ ὄν εἶναι καὶ τὸ μὴ ὄν μὴ εἶναι ἀληθές [To say of what is that it is not, or of what is not that it is, is false; but to say of what is that it is, and of what is not that it is not, is true]²

This sentence differentiates truth from falsity. Because of its complexity, it could be (and has been) interpreted in various ways. Here, only a few issues are flagged for consideration. Firstly, the meaning of this sentence is complicated when scrutinized carefully. There is, perhaps unsurprisingly, some vagueness in the meaning of 'being'. It could mean 'exists', 'is the case' or 'is so-and-so', for instance. Additionally, Aristotle's phrasing is odd in relation to particularly the predications 'true' and 'false'. Suppose one tries to give an exemplary restatement of Aristotle's definition of truth: 'To say of humans that they are animals is true.' Now, most certainly, 'that humans are animals is true' works as a meaningful sentence, and 'to say of humans that they are animals is to say something that is true' is also clear-cut, and one could correct Aristotle's phrasing to reflect this. Aristotle's formulation makes the act of saying true, emphasizing the human capacity for unclear reasons. The example Wolfgang Kühne provides to illustrate the confusion is: "if it is nice to meet you, then meeting you is nice, but can (the act of) saying such-and-such correctly be called true?"³ It is not so clear what is true about the predication of a predicate specifically if not the truth of the predicate⁴.

Secondly, the sentence has implications with regard to logical commitments. It could be taken, for instance, to reflect the Law of Non-Contradiction. Truth precludes the mixing up of being and non-being, and falsity is to do just that. Truth and falsity are, in this regard, each other's

¹ Plato 240 e 10 – 241 a 1.

² Aristotle 1933: book Γ, 1011b26-27.

³ Kühne 2003: 95.

⁴ Kühne 2003: 96-101.

opposites. It is assumed that one should not combine being with non-being, because any statement doing that would contradict 'what is' with it not being, or vice versa. Aristotle makes his commitment to the principle more explicit elsewhere when he says: "ἀδύνατον γὰρ ὄντινοῦν ταὐτὸν ὑπολαμβάνειν εἶναι καὶ μὴ εἶναι [for it is impossible for anyone to suppose that the same thing is and is not]"⁵. One simply cannot hold that something is *and* is not simultaneously, and therefore every proposition that implies this would be false by definition. Notably, any such opposition between truth and falsity is one of being and non-being in the way that they are said. It is, therefore, not an opposition between two things that are said, as if between two conflicting statements; it is directed at the simultaneity of being and non-being in one proposition. By ascribing this problematic status of mixing being and non-being to falsity, and assuming it is indeed problematic because it is contradictory, Aristotle has motivated truth over falsity for statements.

A more lucid statement of this theory of truth, intended merely as a reformulation of Aristotle's intuition, comes from Thomas of Aquinas in the 13th century: "veritas est adequatio rei et intellectus [truth is the agreement of thing and intellect]". Although this reformulation had precursors, it was his particular statement that would become most influential to the modern nomenclature of the Aristotelian view: 'the (classical) *correspondence* theory of truth', after the idea of 'adequatio' (translated as correspondence rather than the literal 'agreement')⁶. Here, Aquinas is more specific than Aristotle. In his formulation it becomes clearer that 'the intellect' is the thing that does the 'saying of', and that 'being' is any object from the real world, providing for a straightforward two-placed relation. The intellect has to correspond to a thing in the real world in order for truth to arise. In other words, a proposition achieves truth when a real object, as Künne puts it, "meets the condition signified" in the predicate that has it as its subject⁷.

It was only in the 19th century that philosophers began to question Aquinas' correspondence theory of truth. For example, one issue is that if something is true, and a relation holds between thought and reality, then it follows that one would never be able to *truly* identify the thought as true, given that this relation is not itself real. Any statement about truth values would have no reality to base its own truth on. Problems surrounding the definition of truth would culminate in numerous new conceptions of truth from 1900 and onwards. Logician and philosopher Gottlob Frege was influential in criticizing the Aristotelian view, and prompted a strong following in anglophone academia, where theories of truth then became more predominant than elsewhere. Phenomenology, a new field of philosophical research at the time, with its two main figures, Husserl as its trailblazer and Heidegger as Husserl's student, had a similar reaction to the classical theory. They found it necessary to disassociate themselves from it and instate a conception of truth of their own accord, in order to establish phenomenology as a rigid methodology. To Husserl, for instance, it would be important to distinguish his newfound outlook on scientific philosophy from his teacher Franz Brentano's. Brentano was one of the most influential figures to critique the classical view. The topic must have been wildly attractive to Heidegger, an avid student of Husserl and a huge admirer of ancient Greek philosophy. Perhaps overly convinced that the Greeks had a more accomplished conception of truth via their employment of the notion of ἀλήθεια than conceptions of truth he was familiar with, he sought to clarify this 'primordial' understanding of truth. Heidegger thus had acquired a unique choice of words to maintain an 'authentic' translation of the Greek conception of truth, but his intention to contrive a new conception of truth was far from state-of-the-art.

⁵ Aristotle 1933: book Γ, 1005b25.

⁶ For a reconstruction of Aquinas' formulation and its precursors: Künne 2003: 102-103. For a reconstruction of the classical correspondence theory of truth in its subsequent historical development: Wolenski 1995.

⁷ Cf. Künne 2003: 103.

1.2 A preliminary appreciation of Heidegger's opposition to a traditional conception of truth

One way to depict Heidegger's account of the correspondence theory of truth, the view he criticized, is as a 'propositional theory of truth'. As Mark Wrathall formulates its main thesis: "an assertion or proposition is true when it corresponds with a state of affairs."⁸ Here, 'assertion' and 'proposition' function as extensions of 'the intellect' and 'state of affairs' functions as the 'things' from the classical version of the theory, and both are meant as broad descriptors. Wrathall's formulation underlines the manner in which one is directed to the world according to the correspondence theory, i.e. in a propositional, assertive, theoretical or otherwise 'abstract' comportment or attitude. These kinds of intellectual activity, on a propositional account, are often assumed to have a kind of regularity described in terms of laws by logicians (laws such as the Law of Non-Contradiction, for instance). It is activity that affords propositional content of a logical form that has satisfaction conditions for the properties of truth and falsehood, satisfaction conditions that are epistemically available with varying levels of self-evidence. On the aforementioned interpretation of Heidegger's critique, he rejects the idea that this kind of intellectual activity can achieve the sense of truth that philosophy should be concerned with, or in other words, that this view of truth is worthy of philosophical consideration. Following Daniel Dahlstrom, Heidegger can be said to counter a 'logical prejudice'. Traditional views on truth rest on the assumption that "assertions and their kin are the site of truth, indeed, in the sense that they must be in place for there to be anything that might be termed the 'truth'."⁹ Heidegger, in other words, contends that we are looking for truth in the wrong place, when we designate intellectual activity with a logical, propositional structure as the bearers of truth.

For Heidegger, the achievement of a correspondence towards certain entities (regardless of whether this amounts to truth properly speaking) presupposes our antecedent and in principle non-propositional familiarity with them. He intends to discern the pre-theoretical domain that conditions such relations to the world, and this intention is reflected in his account of propositions. For him, any propositional attitude is inherently 'apophantic' (from the Greek notion of ἀπόφανσις, meaning showing)¹⁰. They engage with entities by pointing them out, by predicating over them and communicating them. When apophantic acts correspond (or not) to the way things are, they have already assumed an antecedent engagement with them, and therefore presuppose that these entities 'are there' to be engaged with. Such an access to entities is, then, prior to and independent from the logical validity that propositional acts can have, in the sense that they are an *enabling condition* for them. ἀπόφανσις, then, is in a non-exhaustive way "derivative" of the basic access to entities, because entities are always already manifest in a pre-given availability¹¹.

The basic pre-theoretical access to entities Heidegger thinks is more befitting of the designation 'truth', and he associates this with the Ancient Greek term ἀλήθεια. To find a formulation for truth that refers more clearly to his 'primordial sense of truth' rather than the classical sense of truth, he intended to translate this word 'authentically'. In the Heideggerian literature often the notions 'disclosedness [Erschlossenheit]' or 'unconcealment [Unverborgenheit]' are used. One of Tugendhat's critical remarks concerns ambiguities surrounding exactly this terminology. To avoid confusion, 'revealing' is here used to more or less cover the metaphorical sense of these terms as the 'coming into light from out of darkness' in non-Heideggerian terminology. The proper Heideggerian terms are used when ambiguities are expelled and nuances are noted.

⁸ Wrathall 2010: 12-13.

⁹ Dahlstrom 1994: xvi-xvii.

¹⁰ S&Z: 154-155.

¹¹ The exact same argument can also be found in GA29-30: 494.

It is valuable to note that, independently from the Tugendhat controversy, Heidegger's view seems to adopt a stance on truth that had already become controversial with the rise of early modernist philosophy. He seems to believe there is some 'veritas in rebus [truth in things]', like Aquinas did, according to which things and events can be true, a belief that was defended by Hegel but that did not attract any following in the anglophone world¹². For Heidegger, however, truth does not apply to just any entity or event (like a state or a work of art, which are the examples Hegel uses), but specifically refers to the human being, 'Dasein'. The revelation of entities, Heidegger suggests, is intimately related with the basic existence of the human being, and primordial truth refers to exactly this relation¹³. That it relates to a specific thing or event of course does not exempt it from the various questions that arise in relation to a non-propositional truth. Normally, a theory of truth identifies what makes a potential truth-bearer actually true (a truth-maker), or the conditions under which a potential truth-bearer would be actually true. Here, it is unclear how an enabling condition for propositional correspondence could itself be a truth-bearer that would be made true or could be true in virtue of certain conditions being in place. Additionally, therefore, it is unclear whether Heidegger is proposing a *theory* of truth at all. In conceiving a primordial sense of truth he could be simply attempting to grasp the truth rather than to state something about it.

'Revelation', Heidegger often suggests, is best understood spatialized, as a domain in which entities become intelligible, and in which consequently something like a propositional or otherwise theoretical attitude could possibly arise. This space he designates as 'the clearing [Lichtung]'¹⁴ (like an open space in a forest). Tugendhat's rejection of Heidegger's conception of truth is not meant to imply a rejection of this concept; he assumes the reality of the phenomenon, but subsequently questions whether it can rightly be called a phenomenon of truth¹⁵. Similarly, one may accept the argument Heidegger makes about a pre-propositional access to entities without endorsing his claim that this should be termed anything like truth. For the sake of clarity, in the following section an account is given that elaborates a basic Heideggerian understanding of 'the clearing', and its implied idea of a prelinguistic space of meaning. That account then offers the basis on which to further explore Tugendhat's criticism and Heidegger's philosophy in general.

1.3 The practical-existential human condition

A basic, initial explanation of Heidegger's view on revelation can be found in *Sein und Zeit's* §12 to §18. What is first and foremost revealed are 'things'. The most basic familiarity with the world one has is an everyday involvement with (for example) knives, forks or trams. In virtue of their basic practical character, these πράγματα ['things' – the word is linguistically related to πρᾶξις, i.e. praxis] are tools [Zeuge] with a specific purpose. Heidegger distinguishes between what is present-at-hand [Vorhanden], and what is ready-to-hand [Zuhanden]. An entity may now and then appear as a given object (as present-at-hand), but primarily it is understood in terms of its usage (as ready-to-hand). This distinction is not meant merely as an assumption of a privilege of the practical over the theoretical; through his account of things as ready-to-hand Heidegger aims to elucidate our basic engagement in the world on the basis of which something can appear as present-at-hand. Things are understood in terms of their 'in-order-to' [Um-zu], in terms of their function. Such utility is grasped in an immediate transparency ('circumspection [Umsicht]') unlike any sort of explicit theoretical apprehension. Only when a tool fails in its serviceability is Dasein conscious of its uninterrupted quality as a tool, and is it aware of determinate characteristics that should have made its use

¹² Künne 2003: 104-106.

¹³ Cf. S&Z: 226-227.

¹⁴ Wrathall 2010: 14.

¹⁵ Smith 2007: 162.

unproblematic¹⁶. Hubert Dreyfus and Sean Kelley elaborate by saying that things inherently ‘solicit’ or ‘afford’ activity, i.e. one is immediately drawn to an appropriate behavior that is called for by the thing¹⁷, rather than that the givenness of the object causes possibilities for independent reactive behavior. In short, a chair is a chair because it affords sitting, and not because one perceives it to have such-and-such qualities of ‘chairness’, which would prime one’s inner motivation to sit.

As Heidegger emphasizes, a thing’s function is always embedded in a context of use. Dasein’s circumspection consists in knowing how things work in general, which is especially evident in a tool’s failure. Dasein is not just struck by the sudden unserviceability of the tool, but also makes pertinent the orientation that made the tool’s functioning sensible. A hammer for instance is particularly useful in carpentry. In that sense, a tool is part of a web of meaning that makes the tool itself a ‘reference [Verweisung]’ to that context¹⁸. Dasein’s familiarity with a phone implies a complex of related things such as calls, texts, people that you might want to communicate with, etc. The frame of reference’s orientation is called involvement [Bewandtnis], i.e. a particular course of events that determines the coherence of these items. For example, putting on clothes is involved in the sense that it ensures a socially proper appearance. It is what one works towards [das Woraufhin]¹⁹ and makes the use of tools goal-directed. In addition to that orientation one can distinguish what one does this for, i.e. the involvement’s ‘for-the-sake-of-which’ [Worumwillen]. This is the significance [Bedeutsamkeit] of a particular involvement. For instance, one puts on some music for the sake of consolation²⁰.

For Heidegger, these notions explain what it means to be a worldly being, i.e. how Dasein is a *being-in-the-world*. Dasein’s existence is radically embedded into “the rich landscape of affordances in which skillful action unfolds”²¹. It’s a conception of ‘human cognition’ that contrasts well with a Cartesian conception, in which a *res cogitans* merely *relates to* a world. Because what it means to be Dasein is determined by its worldly context one can speak of a ‘practical’ human condition. This practical condition consists first and foremost in some particular significance, which makes possible an involvement, which in turn is the order in which tools come to appear as functional.

This condition, ‘the clearing’, is often explained with reference to the figure-ground distinction that is drawn in Gestalt psychology. Dasein’s significant involvement is the ‘background’ against which the πράγματα are the ‘figures’. The former is implicit, the latter explicit. This distinction was particularly helpful in Dreyfus’ criticisms of robotics on the basis of Heidegger’s work. At the time of his criticisms, AI programmers were confronted with a so-called ‘frame problem’. A robot may represent an object by determining it in terms of a function and in that sense be said to achieve cognition of that object (it identifies a figure). However, as soon as the world that it represents changes, the robot lacks the means of selecting relevant representations that one could assume had stayed the same. A human does have such means, in the sense that it can rely on a background consisting of social, cultural and historical knowledge that is relevant to this figure. A human can supply the robot with frames that solve the problem, but the point is that a human’s framework is the world itself as a means to engage with entities, a means that is neither programmed nor pre-given. What such a background amounts to is best described by Heidegger in his account of Dasein as concerned²².

¹⁶ S&Z: 68-82. Cf. Dreyfus 1991: 60-65.

¹⁷ Dreyfus & Kelly 2007: 52.

¹⁸ Polt 1998: 51-53.

¹⁹ S&Z: 84-86.

²⁰ S&Z: 87.

²¹ Rietveld & Kiverstein 2014: 346.

²² Dreyfus 2007: 1138-1140, Dreyfus 1992: 105-106. For an example of someone who uses the figure-ground distinction in exactly the same way: Wheeler 2005: 147.

Dasein itself, the human being, is then explained in terms of its world. In Dreyfus' words, the somewhat abstruse notion of 'understanding of Being' is in that case merely a *skillful coping* with its environment. Dasein is a 'special kind of entity' that is fully 'absorbed' in the world. In a breakdown-situation there may be a need for a more attentive involvement, which consists in varying degrees of deliberation in relation to this web of meaning, but no need for anything like an intentional relation that represents an object in order to analyze it²³. An athlete might figure as a paradigmatic example; she does not overthink her performance and merely relies on the skill she obtained by practice. An obstacle or injury might force her into becoming reflective of her situation, but that would only be deliberative in the sense that she tries to adjust her comportment appropriately. Dasein never actually detaches itself from involvement so as to make tools into objects independent from, and merely occurrent for Dasein.

William Blattner clarifies this account of Dasein by showing how it 'presses ahead into possible ways of Being'. Considering Dasein is understood primarily in its know-how, its exercise of skills, it should be described in terms of ability-characteristics rather than state-characteristics. For instance, a tall person does not have the tallness-feature, she has a 'tall' way to handle herself in relation to the world, with varying degrees of success²⁴. By exercising the ability to play a certain role within the world, for instance being a teacher, by projecting oneself onto such a possibility, one deploys a 'way to Be'. Of course one may have lots of potential pursuits in life, but being oneself requires acting out a select way of life²⁵. Tugendhat would likely call this Dasein's *Seinsvollzug* [exertion of Being]²⁶. It is an understanding of human existence that can be compared to Wittgenstein's flexible concept of a 'form of life'. We can discern "relatively stable and regular patterns of behavior", a "way of doing things", that can explain what it means to be a human being²⁷. In other words, it allows for an interpretation of Heidegger's account as a theory of 'fluid action'. Such theories focus on the human being in terms of its autonomy. To cite Wrathall's formulation of such a theory: "To be an autonomous self is to play an ineliminable role in the production of actions."²⁸ Dasein itself, in sum, could be considered an agent.

One should be wary, however, of over-emphasizing the practical character of Dasein's ability-characteristics. Thomas Sheehan rightly insists that the account of Dasein as Being-in-the-world has existential importance. Being human means to have a practical engagement with the world. Heidegger shows that with significance ('that-for-the-sake-of-which' Dasein is engaged) one has an antecedent disclosure of oneself as the enabling condition of the ready-to-hand, and this he calls understanding²⁹. The domain of Dasein's practical engagement is therefore a semantic field, a 'space of meaning', in which things are 'opened up' by relating it to human purposes. Heidegger's 'Sache Selbst', then, still is human intelligibility as the 'ineluctable condition of our essence'³⁰. 'The clearing' consists not just in an exploration of tool-guided practices, but primarily in the significance of involvement *for Dasein itself*. Dasein can utilize tools with their particular functionality in virtue of this fundamental 'grasp of Being'. Dasein's practical character is therefore simultaneously existential.

²³ Dreyfus 1991: 66-84.

²⁴ Blattner 1996: 100.

²⁵ Blattner 1996: 105-107.

²⁶ Tugendhat 1970: 299-300.

²⁷ Rietveld & Kiverstein 2014: 328-330. Cf. Crowell's use of the term (Crowell 2001A: 212)

²⁸ Wrathall 2015: 194. Note that on Wrathall's account the notion of autonomy does not provide a *sufficient* interpretation of Heidegger's conception of selfhood, considering Heidegger prioritizes authenticity (idem: 199-200).

²⁹ S&Z: 87.

³⁰ Sheehan 2001: 192-195.

1.4 Elucidating Tugendhat's critique

Tugendhat does not reject Heidegger's practical-existential account of human existence, and the foregoing must be considered relevant to exploring Tugendhat's own account. He does reject the idea that this phenomenon should be considered as having a sense of truth. Notably, he takes issue with Heidegger's vocabulary that is emblematic of his theory of truth, i.e. his various ways of equating truth with revealing. Heidegger, in Tugendhat's view, seems to overlook the importance of certain distinctions, and consequently employs the denominator 'truth' in a misguided way. Consider the following three sentences uttered in sequence in §44 of *Sein und Zeit*, in which Heidegger seems to derive his notion of truth from the traditional conception:

[1] "Die Aussage *ist wahr*, bedeutet: sie entdeckt das Seiende an ihm selbst." [To say that an assertion 'is true' signifies that it uncovers the entity as it is in itself.]

[2] "Sie sagt aus, sie zeigt auf, sie 'laßt sehen' (ἀπόφανσις) das Seiende in seiner Entdecktheit." [Such an assertion asserts, points out, 'lets' the entity 'be seen' (*apophansis*) in its uncoveredness.]

[3] "*Wahrsein (Wahrheit)* der Aussage muß verstanden werden als *entdeckend-sein*." [The Being-true of the assertion must be understood as Being-uncovering.]³¹

These sentences are meant to be roughly synonymous. They indicate that revelation lies at the basis of a traditional idea of truth. Tugendhat takes them to be exemplary for the way in which Heidegger dispenses with the criterion of an entity being shown *as it is in itself*, i.e. selfsameness [Selbigkeit]. The principle of revealing that Heidegger calls 'entdecken [uncover]' is supposed to capture the sense in which the assertion is true, but Heidegger seems not to think of the criterion of selfsameness as consequential to truth, and therefore leaves it out of consideration³². He moves from an assertion revealing a state of affairs just as it is in itself, to a revelation of the state of affairs tout court. The former sense of truth, signaled by the 'as it is in itself', Tugendhat calls 'specific' or 'narrow', and he takes exception to Heidegger's omission. If there is something about the selfsameness of traditional truth that is crucial rather than trivial, as Tugendhat thinks it is, then Heidegger's idea that selfsameness is superfluous is neglectful and gives Heidegger no right to ascribe truth to the primordial phenomenon.

Tugendhat's critique is not a reproach for an alleged rejection, by Heidegger, of selfsameness as relevant to truth. As Cristina Lafont has pointed out, many defenders of Heidegger's theory first argue that Tugendhat "dogmatically presupposes the notion of propositional truth as the only acceptable meaning of truth", and then argue that Tugendhat misunderstands or ignores the phenomenon of revelation as an enabling condition³³. This argumentative pattern is notably illegitimate, because it presents a straw man. Tugendhat is not so misguided that he would think Heidegger cannot accommodate for the standard view (he believes Heidegger successfully identifies its enabling condition), and showing how Heidegger grants the traditional criterion its relative, trivial applicability (as he does in sentence [1] for instance) does not suffice as an answer to Tugendhat. One may clarify (in ways not expounded here) why there are no ambiguities surrounding the notion of revelation in selfsameness, but the principle claim is that Heidegger, in misjudging the criterion, renounces the relevance of 'a critical potential' and therefore mistakes the primordial phenomenon for having a sense of truth³⁴. Tugendhat could in this regard be said to present his critique in a

³¹ S&Z: 218.

³² Tugendhat 1991: 251-254.

³³ Lafont 2000: 115-116.

³⁴ Cf. Smith's consideration of two problems that Tugendhat's critique poses to Heidegger (Smith 2007: 162-163). The first problem is that Heidegger seems to efface the specific sense of truth at the level of assertions.

somewhat infelicitous manner; rarely are his claims about the notion of revealing conducive to a clear-cut account of the decidedly 'critical' features of selfsameness. These critical features he finds missing in Heidegger's conception of primordial truth, and it is Tugendhat's aim to supplement it with such features, which makes them central to his critique of Heidegger's account. So what is the right interpretation of the 'specific sense of truth' in virtue of which one has the possibility of critique? What specific feature of traditional truth did Heidegger allegedly miss in such a way that his new conception is considered lacking?

William H. Smith has argued that to clarify the critical potential of Heidegger's truth theory, one must focus on the sense of normativity proper to the clearing³⁵. The traditional criterion has normativity, in the sense that selfsameness is a norm that one can attain to arrive at truth. The clearing in its usual explanation does not present anything like a norm. Given that the clearing is a space of meaning that renders entities intelligible, truth 'merely shows up'. Significance on the usual explanation is emergent, in the sense that it arises without being reducible to anything else. On this point, Smith seems to be on the right track. One can find the difference between the emergence of the clearing and the normativity of any conception of truth explicitly addressed by Tugendhat, and his statements can clarify the matter. He often explains his notion of 'critical potential' in terms of a 'truth-relation' or 'inquiry into truth'³⁶. It consists in a progressive, teleological striving towards a manner of givenness superior to its primary manner of givenness³⁷. This means that anything that is emergent is not of itself deserving of the label 'truth', but can attain the label in a specified way. Selfsameness provides for the possibility of an inquiry because the entity presented as it is in itself provides the τέλος [end/goal] for entities presented simpliciter. The problem Heidegger faces is that the notion of revealing treats truth as a self-manifestation in which truth is immediately obtained³⁸, allowing for no such project of truth. If Heidegger's space of meaning emerges in every single case of meaning, then it does not make sense to engage a project of truth, and consequently the truth of revelation can never be anything that one strives for actively.

1.5 Clarifying Tugendhat's point through a cursory look at relevant logical laws

Still, even the foregoing explanation could lead to misunderstandings of Tugendhat's critique. Christian Skirke makes an important point of clarification. He claims not only what Smith claimed, namely that the confusion over Tugendhat's 'specific sense of truth' has resulted in insufficiently satisfying replies to his critique, but also that this confusion is caused in part by overlooking substantial elaboration of the idea in other works by Tugendhat (which do not necessarily focus on Heidegger). On a broader account of Tugendhat's criticism, it becomes clear that Heidegger lacks an active concern with the opposition between true and false judgments. For instance, Tugendhat, in order to retain such an opposition, argues in his later work that openness to the possibility of falsehood allows for a basic existential orientation towards truthfulness. In light of such a consideration, Tugendhat's emphasis on the 'specific sense of truth' can also be seen as a demand for an active opposition to falsity³⁹. In response, Skirke makes the for present purposes crucial

One might counter this by clarifying the role that selfsameness plays, but this is to claim that Heidegger has the right conception of selfsameness. This is irrelevant to the second, more pressing point of critique, i.e. the issue at hand: Heidegger lacks an appeal to critical thinking when it comes to the primordial sense of discovery (the clearing).

³⁵ Smith 2007: 174.

³⁶ Cf. Tugendhat 1991: 255, 257, and Tugendhat 1970: 346.

³⁷ Cf. Tugendhat 1991: 256, and Tugendhat 1970: 339, 346.

³⁸ Cf. Tugendhat 1991: 258-259, and Tugendhat 1970: 335, 346.

³⁹ Skirke 2016: 4, 17.

remark: an opposition to falsity requires a (normative) commitment to the Law of Non-Contradiction, but no commitment to the Principle of Bivalence⁴⁰.

Tugendhat may not always be so clear to readers on this matter, since his work on Heidegger does not work out logical implications. These are relevant to the discussion, no matter what Tugendhat may think the implications are, and should be explored when talking about Heidegger's truth theory and its potential normativity. For the sake of clarification, it would be good to have a cursory look at some basic ideas from logic. Commitments to relevant logical laws in theories of truth can be rudimentarily schematized as follows:

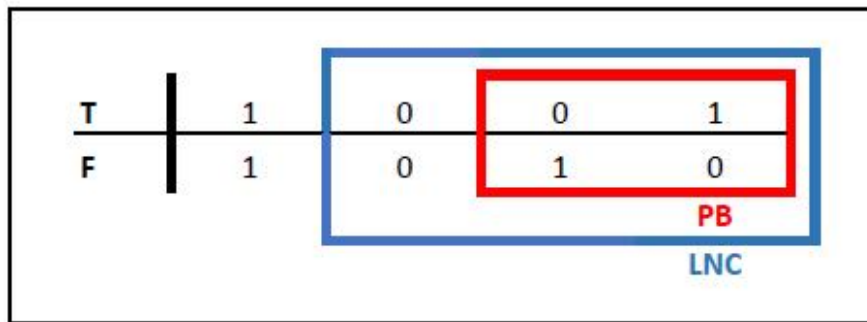


Figure 1. 'T' and 'F' stand for Truth and Falsity. The '1's and '0's stand for their truth values: something could respectively be both true and false, neither, false only, or true only. Framed are those cases that one would accept as being possible, if one would *accept* its respective logical principle. 'PB' stands for the Principle of Bivalence, 'LNC' for the Law of Non-Contradiction.

The most basic commitment one could have in truth theory is to say that something can be either true or false. It would be an endorsement of the validity of the Principle of Bivalence. In a correspondence theory for instance, one attains truth in a proposition by having it correspond to the way things really are, or otherwise there is no correspondence and the proposition is merely false. Bivalence entails two truth values and no more; something is either true or false. The endorsement of this principle precludes cases in which things would be neither true nor false, or both. For that reason, the principle itself is normative. It decides which logical possibilities are permissible and which ones are not.

A more 'liberal' theory of truth, which still endorses the validity of the Law of Non-Contradiction, restricts said exclusion. It would allow for the case in which there is neither truth nor falsity – just not the case in which something is both true and false, i.e. a contradiction. What kind of case would therefore be endorsed? Suppose someone would say of a centaur that it is a man. This would, at least at face value, only be half-true; a centaur is only half a man. It is also half-false; a centaur is also a horse. The sentence cannot in a normal sense be called true or false, but its ambiguity with regard to truth and falsity seems to be a pertinent and real feature of the given scenario. If one endorses the Principle of Bivalence, one would deny that this is a case of something being neither true nor false, and would have to explain why, upon further scrutiny, this sentence is actually either true or false. It could for instance be argued that the statement is simply false under the assumption that a centaur is just a centaur and neither a man nor a horse (which would be counter-intuitive given that it is part of the definition of a centaur to be both man and horse).

This example is irrelevant to the critical discussion. Relevant is Heidegger's peculiar (grounding) approach in his account of traditional truth. Figure 1 assumes one kind of truth, whereas Heidegger introduces a new sense of truth as the enabling condition for traditional truth. An

⁴⁰ Skirke 2016: 4.

enabling condition, when considered a phenomenon of truth, cannot be called true in the same way as the enabled predication of truth; otherwise these two conceptions of truth cannot really be distinguished in a way that demonstrates the grounding relation between them. An enabling condition would strictly speaking fall under the category of ‘neither true nor false’, because it is neither true nor false in the traditional sense of truth that it enables, despite it being called true in an exceptional way. Dahlstrom, in his work on Heidegger’s theory of truth, clarifies how this works. Dahlstrom takes Tugendhat’s requirement of normativity to imply the Principle of Bivalence, or conversely, he thinks Tugendhat charges Heidegger with forfeiting bivalence when Tugendhat states the ‘specific sense of truth’ is being omitted⁴¹. In response, he defends Heidegger by explaining how the principle still applies despite introducing a primordial sense of truth that does not accord with it. Here, Dahlstrom follows what was characterized by Lafont as the standard approach. “In order to establish the original character of truth as disclosedness,” he writes, “Heidegger must show how other conceptions of truth (perceptual truth, propositional truth) presuppose it such that this original truth co-constitutes the derivative truths and thereby discloses itself”⁴². In other words, primordial truth is the enabling of bivalent truth. And so, “the critical difference between truth and falsity, underlying bivalent assertions, remains in force”⁴³. The Principle of Bivalence is upheld. A later essay from Dahlstrom on the matter, ‘The Clearing and its Truth’, iterates his view in different wording (taking into account Heidegger’s later work on truth, and therefore dubbing traditional truth ‘truth as correctness [Richtigkeit]’)⁴⁴. “The measure of correctness (indeed, meaning itself) is first afforded by that clearing as the historical event of Being”. Moreover, “if we are genuinely to think Being historically, if the clearing is the ‘prevailing of Being’, [...] then there is an important and legitimate sense in which the happening of this event is neither correct nor incorrect.”⁴⁵ It shows that Dahlstrom thinks that primordial truth, as the enabling condition of traditional truth, cannot be considered true or false in the traditional sense. It is a good example of a ‘special case’ that defies the Principle of Bivalence, which *is* relevant because it attempts an explanation of Heidegger’s truth theory as fundamental to a traditional sense of truth.

Note however that the above Heideggerian account of primordial truth fails to alleviate Tugendhat’s worries. Dahlstrom equates Tugendhat’s ‘specific sense of truth’ with the idea of selfsameness that is central to traditional truth (an entity revealed ‘as it is in itself’)⁴⁶. This is a misunderstanding: the former is a feature that the latter has. The charge is not that Heidegger cannot account for and uphold the idea of selfsameness in relation to the primordial phenomenon, but that he overlooks a feature of this traditional idea, a feature that his primordial truth should have had, namely the normative opposition to falsity that is achieved through a truth-project. Dahlstrom ends up arguing for something that is uncontroversial in the debate, and leaves the main issue unaddressed⁴⁷.

As has been said, Tugendhat challenges Heidegger to explain how his theory retains the Law of Non-Contradiction. The ‘specific’ sense of truth reflects this principle, and not the Principle of Bivalence. In the foregoing, the ‘specific sense’ of truth has been explained as the kind of truth that allows for a truth-project, which allows one to achieve truth as a givenness superior to what is initially given. What does this superiority consist in, and why does it reflect the Law of Non-Contradiction? Skirke explains: “A true assertion about a given subject matter has critical force if

⁴¹ Dahlstrom 1994: 394-395.

⁴² Dahlstrom 1994: 406.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ This is Dahlstrom 2003. Dahlstrom also makes the same point when he designates truth as the prevalence that underlies all bivalence (Dahlstrom 2007: 71).

⁴⁵ Dahlstrom 2003: 10.

⁴⁶ Dahlstrom 1994: 395.

⁴⁷ This has also been argued by Skirke (Skirke 2016: 10-11).

false claims about the same subject matter can be contested as unjustified or infelicitous by making the assertion. This is not possible if the contradictory of the true assertion can also be maintained, along with the true assertion."⁴⁸ In other words, an occurrence of primordial truth should exclude any sense of additional falsity. What Heidegger needs to explain (according to Tugendhat) is how his sense of primordial truth 'opposes falsity'⁴⁹. Truth-projects aim to ensure that truth remains pure, untainted or uncontested by falsity, and achieving such a project amounts to disallowing the possibility of falsity. In such a way, a theory of truth that endorses the validity of the Law of Non-Contradiction excludes the possibility of truth being accompanied by falsity. The Law of Non-Contradiction, in its most basic formulation, prohibits the simultaneity of truth and falsity, i.e. a contradiction. Upholding solely this law restricts the exclusion of the Principle of Bivalence, which prohibits this case of simultaneity *and* the case in which neither happen.

1.6 Prospective source material for a response to Tugendhat: Heidegger's account of Dasein itself (the 'ontological' sense of revelation)

Tugendhat not only presents the focal point of his critique infelicitously by not elaborating his idea of a 'specific sense of truth' and being somewhat unclear about the logical commitments implied, he also makes an obvious mistake with regards to the notion of revealing, which has been used as a counterargument (by Dahlstrom for instance⁵⁰). Consider the following passage in the beginning of §44 part b). Tugendhat cites the underlined sentences in this passage (underlined by me) and takes it to merely confirm that the notion of 'revealing' corresponds to the antecedent account of Being-in-the-World⁵¹ (of which a brief overview has been given in section 1.2):

Durch die frühere Analyse der Weltlichkeit der Welt und des innerweltlichen Seienden wurde aber gezeigt: die Entdecktheit des innerweltlichen Seienden gründet in der Erschlossenheit der Welt. Erschlossenheit aber ist die Grundart des Daseins, gemäß der es sein Da ist. Erschlossenheit wird durch Befindlichkeit, Verstehen und Rede konstituiert und betrifft gleichursprünglich die Welt, das In-Sein und das Selbst. Die Struktur der Sorge als *Sichvorweg* – schon sein in einer Welt – als Sein bei innerweltlichem Seienden birgt in sich Erschlossenheit des Daseins. *Mit* und *durch* sie ist Entdecktheit, daher wird erst mit der Erschlossenheit des Daseins das ursprünglichste Phänomen der Wahrheit erreicht. Was früher hinsichtlich der existenzialen Konstitution des Da und bezüglich des alltäglichen Seins des Da aufgezeigt wurde, betraf nichts anderes als das ursprünglichste Phänomen der Wahrheit.

[Our earlier analysis of the worldliness of the world and of innerworldly entities has demonstrated, however, that the uncoveredness of innerworldly entities is grounded in the world's disclosure. But disclosure is that basic character of Dasein according to which it is its 'there'. Disclosure is constituted by moodiness, understanding and discourse, and pertains equiprimordially to the world, to being-in, to the self. The structure of care as being-ahead-of-oneself - already being in a world - as Being with innerworldly entities encapsulates in itself the disclosure of Dasein. With and through it is uncoveredness; hence only with the disclosure of Dasein is the most primordial phenomenon of truth attained. What has earlier been shown with regard to the existential constitution of the 'there' pertains to nothing other than the most primordial phenomenon of truth.]⁵²

⁴⁸ Skirke 2016: 4.

⁴⁹ Cf. Skirke 2016: 4. Although Rufus Duits did not explicitly address the logical implications of this question, he also takes the opposition of truth and falsity to be central to Tugendhat's critique (Duits 2007: 211).

⁵⁰ Dahlstrom 1994: 407.

⁵¹ Tugendhat 1970: 349.

⁵² S&Z: 220-221.

Note that Tugendhat neglects a substantial part of this passage. The grounding relation between uncoveredness [Entdecktheit] and disclosure [Erschlossenheit] makes clear why the two cannot be equated. Tugendhat reads Heidegger's section on truth as a transcendental argument that arrives at *one* enabling condition for traditional truth, i.e. revelation.

The problem with Tugendhat's reading is that Heidegger does think traditional truth (correspondence) is founded, but founded only in one sense of revealing, namely uncoveredness. In §44 part a), Heidegger makes an attempt to conceive of the traditional conception of truth (correspondence) in a non-relational way, i.e. to conceive of the truth of an entity in itself such that any distinction between the content of the judgment and the judgment itself is avoided. Heidegger is, in other words, against a reading of the classical view as proposing a two-place predicate for truth⁵³, because it does not explain the genuine phenomenon that would make possible such a view. The uncoveredness of entities is what, according to Heidegger, lies at the root of the traditional Aristotelian conception of truth, and should be kept in view when reviewing the Aristotelian definition. By referring that definition back to the phenomenon of uncoveredness, Heidegger intends to reduce it phenomenologically. Then, he proceeds to make an argument against conceiving of uncoveredness as the primary source for truth, i.e. as primordial. He describes it as being "arbitrary", in so far as the truth of uncoveredness presents Dasein's Being one-dimensionally as being-uncovering [entdeckend-sein]⁵⁴. It does not address Heidegger's larger concern with Dasein's Being as such; it only addresses ways of Being in terms of the innerworldly entities that Dasein is involved with, which seems founded in Being-in-the-World as such. As Heidegger puts it at the end of part a): "Das Wahrsein als Entdeckend-sein ist wiederum ontologisch nur möglich auf dem Grunde des In-der-Welt-Seins. [Being-true as being-uncovering is in turn ontologically possible only on the basis of Being-in-the-World.]"⁵⁵ The other sense of revelation Heidegger introduces as central to his truth theory, disclosure [Erschlossenheit], then, is supposed to address the sense of revelation appropriate to the clearing itself vis-à-vis the entities that may be uncovered in it.

In other words, uncoveredness and disclosure refer to respectively ontic and ontological senses of revelation. Making such a distinction in senses of revelation shows that Heidegger had a lot more in mind with these sentences than a simple confirmation of antecedent analyses of Being-in-the-World. For Heidegger to establish his 'primordial' sense of truth as the more fundamental phenomenon, it therefore does not suffice for him in §44 to make a transcendental argument that arrives at the sense of revelation that founds the possibility of a correspondence theory of truth. Its conclusion would merely support the notion of uncoveredness. Moreover, such an argument would come very close to repeating the same kind of argument Heidegger makes in §33, where he argues that assertions [Aussagen] are derived from the clearing's process of interpretation [Auslegung]. §44 part a) does not polemicize with the traditional correspondence theory and its notion of selfsameness simply on the basis of this point. Heidegger is not interested in the various ways in which entities are uncovered, or in other words in ontic senses of truth and falsity, and the way in which these senses come about. The conclusion Heidegger draws from part a) is that he needs to disambiguate two levels of revelation, an ambition most pronounced in his claim (from b)) that Dasein is true in a primary sense and entities only in a secondary sense⁵⁶, and that his account of the primary sense of truth needs to be elaborated.

⁵³ Like the propositional theory of truth.

⁵⁴ S&Z: 217-219. Note that Tugendhat has a different reconstruction of §44 part a): he thinks the problem with the correspondence theory of truth is not necessarily the fact that it is construed as a relation rather than a unitary phenomenon of uncovering-being, but that even a mere opinion could make the relation true. An opinion still corresponds to an entity; it does not present the entity 'as it is' (Tugendhat 1970: 331).

⁵⁵ S&Z: 219.

⁵⁶ S&Z: 220.

§44 part b) draws on relevant insight from the antecedent analyses in order to clarify what is relevant to 'disclosure' specifically, diverting Heidegger's attention within the section, moving on from part a) to b). This shift in his explanation of truth in terms of some sense of revelation is already prefigured in §18, where he explicitly reserves the notion of uncoveredness for a unique possible status of *that which is not Dasein*, a possibility enabled by the significance of the world, and starts using the verb 'to disclose [erschließen]' more consistently when referring to Dasein and its structural features of Being-in-the-World⁵⁷. Although it is not inaccurate to think Heidegger's argumentative strategy is transcendental, and his conclusion has to do with the sense of revelation that belongs to the clearing (the ontological sense), it could be potentially misleading to overlook the importance of the distinct ontic sense of revelation (as the enabling condition for selfsameness) in Heidegger's line of reasoning, and the standard presentation of Heidegger's argument⁵⁸ is in that sense flawed.

Ironically, Tugendhat's failure in interpretation leads him to conflate various senses of revelation. It leads him, for instance, to overlook that the difference between ἀπόφανσις and ἀληθεύειν⁵⁹ can be explained by making use of the notions of (respectively) uncovering and disclosure. ἀπόφανσις is an act of 'showing' that becomes an uncovering if the entity shown is represented as it is. ἀληθεύειν as an uncovering is contrasted with the disclosure of a manner of Being of Dasein (i.e. the 'ontological' level of revelation), of which ἀπόφανσις is a possibility. It seems that Tugendhat's conflation of distinctions made by Heidegger leads Tugendhat to fault Heidegger for a *lack* of distinctions. Charges of ambiguity in Heidegger's notion of revealing can therefore largely be ignored⁶⁰.

However, none of the problems with Tugendhat's reconstruction entail that Heidegger's theory should not be controversial, because Tugendhat's actual point of critique is not yet addressed. The question should be: does Heidegger allow for the most fundamental sense of normativity, i.e. an adherence to the Law of Non-Contradiction, in his conceptualization of this ontological level of truth? The controversy instigated by Tugendhat remains topical irrespective of whether Tugendhat disambiguates an ontological sense of revelation (disclosure) from an ontical (uncoveredness), and irrespective of whether Tugendhat is himself fully clear on what specific sense of normativity is entailed by his requirement of 'proper' normativity. What is promising about the foregoing criticism of Tugendhat's interpretation is the idea of an ontological sense of revelation, i.e. disclosure, which is not tied to an ontic sense of revelation but specifically relates to Dasein's own Being-in-the-World on a whole. When looking for an account of the appropriate notion of normativity, one should study Heidegger's complete account of Dasein itself in order to clarify specifically 'disclosure', which is the "Grundart des Daseins [basic character of Dasein]". In conclusion it must be said that, in the debate surrounding Heidegger's theory of truth, it does not suffice to contrast the traditional correspondence view of truth with a new, 'primordial' theory of truth that employs a technical sense of revelation (which would be in line with traditional metaphors of light and dark in talking about truth and untruth). Specifically one sense of revelation must be distinguished, which signifies Dasein's basic character of Being.

⁵⁷ S&Z: 85-86.

⁵⁸ As espoused by for instance Wrathall and Dahlstrom; cf. 1.2.

⁵⁹ Tugendhat 1970: 333.

⁶⁰ Rufus Duits is an example of a commentator who agrees (cf. Duits 2007: 211): the distinction between uncoveredness and disclosure alleviates Tugendhat's worry about ambiguity (and the allegation concerning a conflation of the notions of ἀπόφανσις and ἀληθεύειν).

1.7 A possibly normative sense of truth: self-transparency and authenticity

If the explanans in relation to the Tugendhat discussion has been fixed on revelatory aspects of Dasein's being, or in other words, if Heidegger's account stresses that his 'primordial' conception of truth primarily concerns the way in which Dasein comes to appear, then there is ample resource for explanations of various sense of revelation that relate to this topic. Heideggerian literature cannot be criticized for its lack of commentary on aspects of selfhood present in *Sein und Zeit's* account, and these commentaries may have normative implications. In that sense, successful responses to Tugendhat's criticisms may already exist. It is perfectly conceivable that there are Heideggerian accounts of human existence that allow for a sense of revelation relating to its foundations and that oppose that sense of revelation to a sense of falsity, whether they explicitly reply to Tugendhat or not. The goal, however, is not to find possible answers to Tugendhat's critique, but to find what could be Heidegger's answer. In order to find the means to assess this question, a more elaborate analysis and reconstruction of Heidegger's views on ontological features of Dasein is needed. Some of these features may involve completely uncontroversial structures of existence, such as 'Verstehen [Understanding]'. Nonetheless, how these ontological features provide for sense of revelation, and how this may involve a sense of normativity, presents a complex issue that requires explanation beyond surveys of Tugendhat's discussion and replies to it. The next chapter argues that there is an explanatory gap precisely with regard to Dasein's self and self-understanding, which arose independently of the Tugendhat controversy. That explanation clarifies some of the relevant ontological features, which ultimately inform the reply that Heidegger could have given, and which help assess other replies to Tugendhat. In other words, the claim that concludes this chapter is thus that in order to salvage Heidegger's proper standing on the discussion of his truth theory in *Sein und Zeit* it would be decisive to study his theory of selfhood and its normative aspects.

There is one more feature of Tugendhat's critique that is relevant, however. One of the themes of *Sein und Zeit* that is (to any informed reader) an obvious contender for possibly explaining what could be revelatory with regard to Dasein itself is authenticity. There is undoubtedly some normative implication suggested in Heidegger's exhortative attempt to make Dasein 'become who it already is'⁶¹. One could think of it as a phenomenological account of how Dasein can remain 'true to itself', implying a considered truth program. Notable, relevant concepts that figure centrally in the book are authenticity and inauthenticity. It is obvious that Heidegger in this regard favored in some sense Dasein's authentic understanding over its inauthentic understanding, and from this fact one could perhaps distill Heidegger's stance on an explicitly normative relation between truth and untruth, but how and why is a more complicated question relating exactly to issues concerning Dasein's selfhood. There, it is not clear (yet) why there would be any sense of disagreement on topics of selfhood, and therefore substantial import from discussions on selfhood to the topic of truth (perhaps the correlation is insubstantial and one gets the picture one expected from one topic based on one's stance on the other). Rather, there seems to be at least some common ground with regard to this normativity, in the sense that Heidegger seems to advocate some kind of self-transparency. Self-transparency is a term that captures the relation of truth to selfhood in typical Heideggerian phraseology, implying some sense of clarity. Common ground is exemplified by the agreement of Tugendhat and Smith on precisely this point. On Tugendhat's account, understanding (a basic ontological feature of Dasein itself) has an essential connection to revealing. Revelation, according to him, involves a tension between a 'self-opening [Sich-Öffnen]' and a 'self-closing [Sich-Verschließen]' of experience. These two poles of understanding correspond to Heidegger's basic ideas of truth as clarity and falsity as obscurity⁶², and capture a basic normative idea in relation to Dasein itself. The dynamic between self-opening and self-closing is normative, in a way that upholds

⁶¹ A notable example can be found at S&Z: 145.

⁶² Cf. S&Z: 33.

the Law of Non-Contradiction. One should strive for a self-transparency that bars self-concealment⁶³. On Smith's account, this is formulated as attaining self-transparency in authenticity, rather than inauthenticity's 'non-perceiving'⁶⁴. At first glance, without further consideration of potential problems of Heidegger's conception of selfhood, Tugendhat's challenge has an easily noticeable solution, captured *grosso modo* by this idea of authenticity as self-transparency.

Tugendhat himself did not consider this potential solution, because he has a serious worry with regard to ontological untruth. Tugendhat's notion of self-closing explicitly appreciates Heidegger's notion of *Verfallen* [falling], which would be the basic term for inauthentic Dasein, and proves Tugendhat already made some attempt to appraise issues concerning authenticity in his discussion of Heidegger's truth theory. In his corrective interpretation of Heidegger's account, Tugendhat claims that Dasein may be bound to the truth as that which emerges in the clearing, i.e. disclosure, but it nonetheless has the tendency to actively suppress and therefore conceal fundamental truths, i.e. to self-close. It does so in such a way that it can strive for an authentic self-understanding by aiming to relieve itself of this tendency to self-close constantly⁶⁵. This idea is echoed by later work from Tugendhat on intellectual virtue (*Retraktionen zur intellektuellen Redlichkeit*): intellectual virtue is "a dispositional opposition to complacency, to one's acquiescence in a favorable image of oneself"⁶⁶, where this particular kind of complacency could be considered a natural tendency to suppress and obfuscate ontological truth. In reinterpreting ontological untruth as a kind of complacency, Tugendhat gives a comprehensive account of the oppositional relation between truth and untruth that could account for Heidegger's ideas on inauthentic self-closing, therefore diminishing their use and avoiding having to account for problematic implications. On this point, Tugendhat believes to be clearer on the issue than Heidegger himself is⁶⁷. He feels forced to make suggestions as to how 'self-closing' takes place, because a tendency of Dasein to obfuscate itself simply seems incoherent with Heidegger's overall conception of truth as revealing. How could there be any kind of self-obfuscation if Dasein is revelation through-and-through? Although Tugendhat locates (the possibility for) normativity in Heidegger's account of self-understanding, as one should, he thinks Heidegger in principle cannot provide anything at the 'fundamental' level of truth that meets the requirement of an opposition of revelation and concealment, because disclosure unavoidably is a revelation and not a concealment. Inauthenticity as ontological untruth cannot be in opposition to truth in any substantial way, because it seems to be something that happens to the clearing, 'after the fact' of Dasein's emergent disclosure, and therefore one is not in need of any immediate project in relation to disclosure.

This consideration with regards to the possibility of untruth in Heidegger's account adds Tugendhat's final demand to Heideggerian conceptions of truth. Tugendhat not only wonders how Dasein can attain truth as a philosophical accomplishment, or how such a project then relates in an oppositional manner to falsity, as basic, logical assumptions relevant to any conception of truth. He also wonders how interpreters can explain Heidegger's account in such a way that there is a possibility for falsity, which plays a role on the same level as the truth he has in mind (be it ontological or some other kind). Even an explanation that construes authenticity and inauthenticity in opposition to each other as phenomena of truth and untruth, then that still needs to explain where inauthenticity comes from if Dasein is fundamentally a kind of revelation. Tugendhat, for that matter, predicts that no such account can be given that would remain true to Heidegger, given that Heidegger seems to make it impossible for himself to offer such an explanation. Heidegger's contention that Dasein just is revelatory in that sense is highly suggestive of incoherence with regard

⁶³ Cf. Tugendhat 1970: 309-310.

⁶⁴ Smith 2007: 175.

⁶⁵ Tugendhat 1970: 310-327.

⁶⁶ Skirke 2016: 16.

⁶⁷ Tugendhat 1970: 321.

to its stance on truth and falsity. On this point, Tugendhat might simply be wrong, however, because of his unnuanced reconstruction of the notion of revelation basic to Heidegger's account (i.e. disclosure). A closer look at ontological features of Dasein can present a more informed account of the dynamic between clarity and obscurity in relation to Dasein's self-understanding, which may differ from what Tugendhat believes it to be.

Chapter 2: the explanatory gap relating to Dasein's selfhood

2.1 Heidegger's anti-subjectivism

To any informed reader of *Sein und Zeit*, it may seem like an awkward ambition to study Heidegger's conception of 'Dasein itself', given that Heidegger famously endorses anti-subjectivism. Should we not avoid all language concerning a self altogether on the basis of Heidegger's explicit rejection of the existence of anything like a subject? Dreyfus argues that any idea of a subject beyond 'mindless' skilful coping is otiose¹. Skilful coping is the only concept one needs to account for the human being's existence. Mark Okrent argues a notion of subjectivity beyond agency can be dispensed with. According to the latter, Dasein does not self-consciously plan or think of what kind of personhood one is trying to accomplish. Dasein's existence must, therefore, be understood in terms of the activities it pursues and the entities that it takes care of in doing so². Conceptualizing the self is, on an account like this, to make a fundamental mistake in the reception of the Heideggerian conception of intentionality. With Heidegger's concept of Being-in-the-world there is no need for a conception of self in Heidegger's anti-subjectivist philosophy, one might conclude. However, despite Heidegger's rejection of anything like a subject, Heidegger is on the contrary still committed to accounting for selfhood, which is what 'subjectivity' purports to describe. Authors like Dreyfus and Okrent overlook an important aspect of Heidegger's research. François Raffoul has written an excellent, exhaustive treatise on the question of subjectivity in Heidegger's work, *Heidegger and the Subject*, making convincing arguments against an exaggerated reading of Heidegger's anti-subjectivism. The explanation offered here in this section is based on Raffoul's, summarizing for the most part. If there is any explanatory gap in the explanation of Heidegger's conception of selfhood, as this chapter aims to show, then the *via negativa* to it has, besides paving the way for a positive characterization of Heidegger's appraisal of the self, the additional advantage of steering further explorations of solutions to this gap away from the inauspicious.

Subjectivism, according to Heidegger, is the traditional philosophical affirmation of the primacy of a subject without any further inquiry into its proper Being, as exemplified by René Descartes' philosophy. Subjectivism is repudiated for its obstruction of fundamental ontology, the undertaking that notably demands Dasein's proper questioning in existential analysis. Heidegger's reception of subjectivism therefore cannot be taken as a merely negative destruction, but is a re-appropriation of subjectivism's subject matter. In other words, Heidegger's repudiation aims to disobstruct a proper access to the Being proper to Dasein, providing an appropriate entryway that avoids entrenchment in subjectivist conceptualization³. The Cartesian assumption of a primal subject, the main obstacle to be overcome, consists in a presupposition of the *sum* [I am] as *res* [thing], implying a conceptualization of Dasein with a contorted medieval notion of substance. A number of mischaracterizations are being ascribed to Dasein's Being through this conceptual mistake: 1. Dasein is self-sufficient, i.e. needs nothing other than itself in order to exist, 2. Dasein is occurrent, like a present-at-hand thing, and 3. Dasein has a constantly subsistent presence⁴. Dasein is in that sense treated as an 'ego', a thing among other things out there in the world, be it of a different kind ('cogitans [thinking]'). For Heidegger, denying (Cartesian) subjectivism amounts to claiming that, to state it in Raffoul's concise wording, "selfhood is neither egohood nor subjectivity"⁵. This anti-subjectivism is reflected most prominently in *Sein und Zeit* in §64's claim that the question of

¹ Dreyfus 1991: 74-75.

² Okrent 1988: 35-37.

³ Raffoul 1998: 1-10.

⁴ Raffoul 1998: 54-69.

⁵ Raffoul 1998: 25.

selfhood must be redirected from “the preliminary grasp [Vorhabe] of a persistently present-at-hand self-thing”, which “mistakes [versieht]” selfhood⁶.

Equally problematic approaches to selfhood would be existing, non-philosophical, positivistic, scientific approaches, like biology, psychology or anthropology. These research selfhood empirically, by assuming the reification of existence in various ways⁷, holding Cartesian assumptions about Dasein itself, such as those outlined above. Miguel de Bestegui formulates succinctly the Heideggerian intuition that these approaches are missing out on: “what constitutes the human being as such, its essence if you will, is itself nothing human.”⁸ There is nothing about the human being in whatever they happen to be that is exceptionally informative for the question of Being. Dasein’s Being does not consist in it being differentiated as a human from other species of living creatures, or things even. Heidegger’s cryptic attempt to construe Dasein in terms of its ability to question Being signals that he believes that being-human is an openness to the question of what it could mean to exist as a human⁹. Reliance on living hominids as given, concretized answers to the question does not offer any propensity for that openness, but seem to consistently obstruct it.

As obstacles to Heidegger’s mode of questioning however, these topics cannot simply be set aside in moving on to philosophy proper. As Raffoul puts it: “the deconstruction of subjectivity should be understood, not in a purely negative sense, but as a positive reappropriation of the essence of the subject.”¹⁰ Heidegger is addressing human existence as thematized by subjectivism, but simply not in a subjectivist way; he is, therefore, attempting to conceive selfhood in spite of his disavowal of Cartesian philosophy. The most explicit statement of this deconstructive reception of subjectivism can be found in his lecture course *Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie*:

“Wir sagen damit erneut, daß in der Betonung des Subjekts, wie sie seit Descartes in der Philosophie lebendig ist, sehr wohl ein echter Impetus philosophischen Fragens liegt, der nur verschärft, was die Antike schon suchte, daß aber andererseits ebenso notwendig ist, nicht einfach nur vom Subjekt auszugehen, sondern auch zu fragen, ob und wie das Sein des Subjekts als Ausgang der philosophischen Problematik bestimmt werden muß, und zwar so, daß die Orientierung an ihm nicht einseitig subjektivistisch ist. Die Philosophie muß vielleicht vom ‘Subjekt’ ausgehen und mit ihren letzten Fragen in das ‘Subjekt’ zurückgehen und darf gleichwohl nicht einseitig subjektivistisch ihre Fragen stellen. [We are thus repeating afresh that in the active stress put upon the subject in philosophy since Descartes there is no doubt a genuine impulse toward philosophical inquiry which only sharpens what the ancients already sought; on the other hand, it is equally necessary not to start simply from the subject alone but to ask whether and how the Being of the subject must be determined as an entrance into the problems of philosophy, and in fact in such a way that orientation toward it is not one-sidedly subjectivistic. Philosophy must perhaps start from the ‘subject’ and return to the ‘subject’ in its ultimate questions, and yet for all that it may not pose its questions in a one-sidedly subjectivistic manner.]”¹¹

Philosophy proper does not address anything other than what subjectivism has already made a neglectful attempt to address. Heidegger is just as much trying to address something essentially human as the subjectivist tradition is, but reclaims it in a way that bars the possibility for distortion.

⁶ S&Z: 321-323.

⁷ S&Z: 45-50.

⁸ De Bestegui 2003: 13.

⁹ Cf. Cykowski 2015: 27-28.

¹⁰ Raffoul 1998: 7.

¹¹ GA24: 220. Cited in Raffoul 1998: 5-6.

The proper subject matter of Heideggerian philosophy then, from a 'positive' perspective, is Dasein's Being-in-the-World in the way that it discloses itself, i.e. the clearing, the already familiar phenomenon of truth. It thematizes the way in which Dasein finds its place in the world by relating intentionally, in an 'open' way, to things in it. In De Bestegui's words: "man begins with the openness to the world or the Open as such. [...] Heidegger goes to great trouble to show how [...] the very question of [...] philosophy itself, revolves around the possibility for man of holding in view and of enacting that which man always and already is, in other words, his essence, understood as his ability to stand in the midst of things as in the midst of a unified world, and to find his abode therein."¹²

However, complications with regard to the normativity of the clearing arise specifically with regard to Heidegger's emphasis on the propriety of disclosure, which is to say the *proper* place of mankind. Heidegger is, oddly enough, not just looking for a conception of selfhood that would accommodate any kind of Being-in-the-world, but focuses specifically on what of Being-in-the-world relates to Dasein itself. Here, Heidegger employs the word 'authenticity'. To see the connection between the notion of authenticity and Dasein itself the German word 'eigentlichkeit' has to be kept in mind; its English translation ('authenticity') can be misleading. The word is etymologically related to the word for ownness ('das Eigene') and therefore denotes what originates in Dasein itself, i.e. what is 'of its own', rather than merely how Dasein can be 'genuine in character' as 'authenticity' could potentially suggest. The word suggests that it is not sufficient to characterize Dasein itself as Being-in-the-world, despite it clearly determining Dasein's existence on his account¹³. To investigate Heidegger's notion of authenticity means to review the notion of 'the clearing', and also Dasein's Being-in-the-world, with regard to what is 'of Dasein itself'. Nonetheless, worldly aspects of Dasein's existence, its appearance as a space of meaning called the clearing, are at all times assumed to be implicated in addressing Dasein itself in its authenticity. If Dasein is acknowledged to be in the world, certainly asking 'what of being in the world originates in Dasein itself' implicates the way in which it is in the world. How this works could be clarified after clarifying the notion of authenticity Heidegger is employing. In any case, its selfhood would have to parse the idea that, as Raffoul puts it, "human beings are characterized by 'propriety', the fact of being one's own."¹⁴ Dasein has the exemplary human capacity to 'own' its Being-in-the-World. In accounting for the idea of Dasein's authenticity, one would have to explain how.

In one of his later works, *Besinnung*, warns against one way in which subjectivist philosophy can establish the primacy of the human being, which has less to do with mischaracterization of Dasein itself and moreso with the world (which, as its structural feature, inadvertently also mischaracterizes Dasein). He labels it subjectivism's 'anthropomorphism'. The idea is roughly that one would make the world and everything in it into something human. As the 'flipside' of human existence, subjectivism assumes the world can be explained in terms of subjectivity, reduced to the human being (or its capacities) as its proper standard¹⁵. An inquiry into what could be properly human about worldliness is liable to subjectivism if it were to assume that the world can be explained in terms of this propriety. One can therefore presume that Heidegger's conceptualisation of authenticity is not intended to make the anthropomorphic assumption.

The intention is, in conclusion, to find a non-reductive account of what is specifically human in Being-in-the-World. Such an account would not necessarily provide for an account of all things worldly. It is a research into the being that is 'in' the world, on its own terms, assuming Dasein's 'Being-in' is indeed a structural moment of Being-in-the-world distinct from worldliness.

¹² De Bestegui 2003: 14.

¹³ S&Z: 13, 53-57.

¹⁴ Raffoul 1998: 30.

¹⁵ GA66: 159-160.

2.2 Self-transparency and the understanding of Being

There is wide-spread agreement that Heidegger has a phenomenological approach to the self. A distinctive feature of phenomenological research has always been to regard consciousness and the human being as fundamentally intentional, and Heidegger's wide-spread reception of this notion is one mark of the influence of the phenomenological tradition on his work. His intention in this matter has always been to restate its core insight in a distinct way¹⁶. Undoubtedly, there is some overlap here in research interests. To clarify this overlap, one could compare Heidegger's philosophy (as it has been construed in the foregoing) to a standard phenomenological conception of selfhood. An exemplary approach would be Dan Zahavi's: he gives a 'minimal' definition of selfhood, which claims that there is a sense of self-awareness at the most basic level of experience. More specifically, one has a self merely in virtue of having perspectival experience¹⁷. In other words, when it comes to the self, one has a basic access to it in conscious experience. It is unlike a Cartesian conception of selfhood, because it does not assume this self-relation is substantially different from the way in which things manifest themselves (and so does not validate a distinction between *res cogitans*, the subjective substance, and *res extensa*, the objective substance). Such a phenomenological account fits with the practical-existential interpretation of Heidegger's account of Being-in-the-World; in his terms a minimal definition could be formulated by saying that there is something like Dasein itself in virtue of the world manifesting itself.

Steven G. Crowell appends the phenomenological account with three descriptive features that can help explaining how intentionality is self-aware. First, self-awareness infallibly picks out the subject that it is. There is no error of misidentification in relation to who is experiencing. Second, the possession of identificatory knowledge is not necessary; self-identification is immediate, non-criterial and non-inferential. Third, the access is irreducible to a description of something, since no description could entail that one is that description¹⁸. Dasein's understanding cannot be made sense of in terms of a third-person perspective.

The merit of such phenomenological accounts can be best illustrated with a comparison to second-order accounts of self-awareness that focus on acts like reflection or introspection, a comparison Heidegger himself first made in *Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie*, the point of which he iterated in works like *Besinnung* and *Das Ding*. Raffoul gives a useful explanation. Heidegger is against an idealist picture of reflection, in which one can have a relation between the self to itself in virtue of "an ego-pole relating in a representational way to its objects and *reflecting itself* as that which accompanies such comportments", a kind of 'bending back [Rückwendung]' that can be characterized as formal or abstract. In other words, it is an ability to turn one's gaze from objects to oneself in an 'inspectio sui'. The problem with this view is that it formalizes an access to oneself that one has regardless of the alleged possibility of second-order intentional activity. The second-order account assumes, in other words, a pre-reflective, foundational self, without any further clarification. In Heidegger, this basic selfhood is described as a kind of refraction or mirroring from the way in which things manifest themselves¹⁹, echoing the minimal definition of selfhood. Heidegger's claim, as construed by Raffoul, is therefore similar to other phenomenologists, who would also aim to describe the basic, pre-reflective sense of self.

¹⁶ Cf. for example, GA20: 34-178 for an explicit study of the notion and GA26: 168 for explicit acknowledgement of the role this reception has played in his philosophical development.

¹⁷ Zahavi 2014: 28.

¹⁸ Crowell 2001B: 439.

¹⁹ Raffoul 1998: 182-195.

What explanation can be given for Heidegger's endorsement of the phenomenological approach? He argues practical-existential Being-in-the-world implies an 'understanding' of Being. Dasein is conceptualized in terms of its abilities, i.e. non-metaphysical possibility. In its concerned and skillful coping with the world, Dasein has some grasp of its Being. This is what Blattner formulated as 'pressing ahead into possibilities'; Dasein lives out a certain way of Being in its involvement. Dasein's 'activity' implies, as Heidegger notes, that it has 'sight [Sicht]' on itself (a sense of 'sight' not to be confused with the faculty of sight). Dasein, in letting its involvement have its course, in being fully engaged with the world, seizes upon its own existence as Being-in-the-world²⁰, putting itself on the line. In other words, it implies the basic sense of self-awareness ('self-knowledge', Heidegger calls it) from which the possibility of introspection or reflection is derived. Heidegger therefore explicitly characterizes Being-in-the-world as transparent [Durchsichtig], in virtue of this feature. This does not mean that tools enable human intelligibility, in the sense that things allow human beings to relate to themselves, it is the other way around ('self-relation' allows for the use of tools). Dasein's most basic sense of self is a trajectory for things to have their way as significant. This trajectory is what Heidegger means by 'letting-be-involved [Bewendenlassen]'; Dasein lets what it is working towards, its involvement [Bewandtnis], have its course, submitting itself to its assignment²¹. Heidegger emphasizes the philosophical importance of Dasein's understanding, saying it confirms an earlier assumption that an analysis of Dasein would be propaedeutic to a proper inquisitive relation to Being (which is the main claim of *Sein & Zeit*)²². It was assumed that Being in each case related to Dasein, i.e. that Dasein's existence was characterized by 'mineness' (*Jemeinigkeit*)²³. With the sight of understanding, it is explained how the issue of its own existence is in each case given to Dasein.

This notion of self-transparency illustrates Heidegger's endorsement of a pre-reflective sense notion of experience in which Dasein itself is 'mirrored' in its perceptual act. Anti-subjectivists might object that although this account is correct with regards to a perceptual act, Heidegger (and other phenomenologists) might be mistakenly assuming this process is in any substantial sense something human-like. Compare for instance Graham Harman's conjectures with regard to Heidegger's analysis of Being-in-the-World: the way things have their course and the way in which this network of relations is self-transparent does not necessarily require any human awareness and might never have any specifically human features. It might be the way in which objects relate and interact²⁴. In other words, transparent self-assignment need not be a feature of a human subject, but could be that of a non-human object. In response to such speculative conjectures, the intentional relation must be shown to entail the existence of something explicitly human-like. Dasein's Being-in-the-world must be shown to not only be pre-reflective and self-transparent, but it must also be shown to be self-presentational. The issue of understanding is, to be specific, not just straightforwardly given to Dasein, in such a way that Dasein must choose to follow trajectories of significance determined by something non-human in any case; its letting-be-involved is a specifically human way of existing. In order to show this self-presentational character of existence, it is necessary to explain how understanding is, on Heidegger's account, interpretive (a), and how Dasein is discursive on the basis of interpretive understanding (b).

²⁰ S&Z: 143-146.

²¹ Of course, this 'a priori' enabling of the implicit understanding of Being-in-the-world can never be isolated from the tools that it enables, as if it were a prior, self-enclosed existent (like the subject-pole on the subjectivist picture), because involvement depends on the tools in the way that they are involved (cf. Raffoul 1998: 203-206).

²² S&Z: 147.

²³ S&Z: 11-12, 41-43.

²⁴ Harman 2002: 34-35.

From a phenomenological perspective, these features of his account of self-awareness (a & b) in this case might sound peculiar to Heidegger's work, in such a way that they could potentially be shown to be unique to his work and have particular merit beyond its usefulness in demonstrating the self-presentational character of Being-in-the-World. After all, a phenomenologist may well assume that self-presentation was already implied, and that the intended purpose of the following account is somewhat uninteresting. For now, said features are merely utilized to demonstrate the self-presentational character of Being-in-the-world, because that suffices for the purpose of showing there to be something like a subject in Heidegger's account, in response to worries related to his anti-subjectivism.

- (a) Understanding has the possibility 'sich auszubilden [to develop itself]'. Dasein's possibilities can become explicit to a variety of degrees. This becomes evident when understanding is correctly understood as 'interpretive [Auslegung]'.

In Dasein's concerned practice it takes something *as* something. "The clearing", Sheehan writes, "is the wiggle room wherein and whereby I can take this thing in terms of one of its possible functions (this rock as a mallet for pounding in tent pegs) or in terms of one of its possible meanings ('This rock goes back to the Late Archean era.')"²⁵ Dasein is not a 'mindless agent', because it 'gets' what it does, rendering the world as accessible in a specific way, like knowing how to work the rock.

This 'as-structure' of interpretation takes place as a pre-emptive, anticipatory appropriation that decides how the world is to be handled. In Hans-Helmuth Gander's words: "something is first and foremost understood by me only when I prove to be guided in my seeing it as something by an antecedent understanding of the context of reference to which it belongs, a context which, as a totality of references, sets out that lifeworldly horizon in which I comport myself understandingly and interpretively to it."²⁶ The clearing is not a given horizon that determines functional relations by restricting them, it comes to be as a comportment of Dasein itself. Through the clearing, the transparent possibilities through which Dasein exists take up an explicit shape. For Dasein to 'develop itself' in understanding, means to take up shape in this way.

That shape is sense [Sinn]. In its interpretive involvement with the world for the sake of something, Dasein 'works it out' as meaningful. Sense in that way is not a property attached to things, but a structural feature of existence. The self-development of interpretive understanding results in sensibility. In conclusion, Dasein's own existence is constituted first and foremost by sense.

This account of self-developed significance of Being-in-the-world thus concerns meaning in two different ways. Significance [Bedeutsamkeit] is distinguished from sense [Sinn], even though both German words would usually translate to 'meaning' in English. Michael Steinmann clarifies by disambiguation: whereas significance designates the relational totality of the world that merely concerns the interconnectedness of things, sense designates the intelligibility of this totality, which predetermines and anticipates all possible significance that Dasein can attribute to things in the world, without which significance would be a mere collection of things (with instrumental purpose)²⁷. Distinctive about sense is that it is projective. Sense is not confined to how things are

²⁵ Sheehan 2016: 272.

²⁶ Gander 2017: 264.

²⁷ Steinmann 2011: 45-46. This disambiguation is stated for its own sake and is not meant as endorsement or assessment of Steinmann's argument in which it is used.

given to Dasein; it opens up Dasein into the world in various, original ways, which can also be called a 'transcendence towards the world'. Understanding in that sense orients Dasein in what it can be, and is therefore temporally futural, whereas significance is not²⁸. Significance is what Dasein is actively working towards in its particular involvement with tools, i.e. what it would mean to engage in a particular activity. Sense is Dasein's comportment that allows it to engage in that way. Sense is Dasein's self-having in the possession of abilities.

- (b) This sensibility, the explicitness of Dasein's possibilities to itself, is not tacit. It becomes articulated as discourse ('Rede'). On Heidegger's account, understanding expresses itself in discourse. Understanding 'comes to words'²⁹. In other words, understanding is discursive. Discursivity does not concern speech as it is uttered in words, i.e. assertions, but it concerns the formation of a language as a framework for utterances. For Heidegger, discursivity is constituted by Dasein's self-awareness. Having a language does not consist in the possession of utilizable references, which are a variety of ways to point out things that are available to Dasein, it means Dasein has a hold on its own sense in a way that is open to the world. Effectively, it is a kind of self-communication, because the articulation of self-awareness (sensibility) is given over to Dasein. That 'gift' is never just private; Dasein's comportment is always a public, meaningful indication, negotiated in contact with the world. In conclusion, this notion of discourse qualifies the notion of understanding: discursivity is the feature that makes sense explicitly accessible. Intentional engagements with the world are not merely perceptive acts that get translated into words; they are inherently communicative acts in virtue of their discursivity.

Being-in-the-world is, in conclusion, self-presentative because it on the one hand develops itself as sense, and on the other makes this sense public as discourse. It is the self-presentative character of the clearing that confirms that Dasein is something of its own in Being-in-the-World, a 'Being-in-as-such', without being anything like a self-enclosed ego-thing. Being-in-as-such is the development and subsequent articulation of sense in the involvement with the ready-to-hand, which is nothing like the existence of a present-at-hand, independent, self-sufficient innerworldly thing. In other words, here do we find a non-reductive account of the specifically human character of Being-in-the-world. This conclusion based on a reading of the notions of understanding and discourse confirms Raffoul's contention that Heidegger has a substantive conception of selfhood, which was based on ample textual evidence concerning related claims as stated by Heidegger himself³⁰.

It also justifies Heidegger's use of the verb 'disclosing [Erschließen]' from section 16 onwards³¹, long before it is presented as the crucial phenomenon of truth. It is supposed to designate how Dasein itself takes place³², and with the foregoing explanation one can conclude that it designates specifically how Dasein takes place within its Being-in-the-world as a discursive understanding of Being. That disclosedness refers to specifically the taking place of Dasein's existence as a discursive understanding makes sense from the perspective of *Sein und Zeit's* arrangement: chapter 5 of *Sein und Zeit* on being-in-as-such is focused on clarifying how Dasein is constituted 'in its disclosedness'³³. Additionally, this account justifies the distinction of the

²⁸ Steinmann 2011: 49-50.

²⁹ S&Z: 160-162.

³⁰ Cf. section 2.1.

³¹ S&Z: 75.

³² Cf. section 1.4.

³³ S&Z: 133.

philosophical-anthropological³⁴ concept of care [Sorge] from the notion of caring-for [besorgen]. Dasein's relation to itself (care) is prior to its concern with its involvement with tools, i.e. the innerworldly. First and foremost, Dasein is its own active project. Dasein is 'ahead' of its innerworldliness in 'being-alongside [Sein-bei]' tools. Dasein's self is not an issue given to Dasein as something to strive for and achieve at some point in time; Dasein always already comports itself to itself for the sake of its Being, 'concerned' with what it is becoming³⁵. This self-relational feature of Being-in-the-world is distinctive of human existence, and fundamental to any existential analytic. It is encapsulated by the oft iterated dictum 'Dasein is the being for whom its Being is at issue'.

These constitutive features of Being-in-the-World play a crucial role of Heidegger's insertion of hermeneutics into the phenomenological method. As commentator Ingo Farin explains, Heidegger's hermeneutical method "is not, *pace* Schleiermacher and the tradition, a second-order interpretation or general theory about the interpretation of pre-given texts, utterances, or expressions," but centers on Dasein and its self-clarification; "philosophical hermeneutics interprets and explicates the way Dasein understands or misunderstands itself". This change of interest for hermeneutics does not just result in a change in content, switching from the interpretation of texts to the interpretation of self-understandings. Heidegger primarily aims to critically interpret the way in which hermeneutics has implicitly understood Dasein itself in a particular way³⁶. Conceptions of the human being, Descartes' subjectivism as much as any human being's self-understanding, become relevant to the analysis of what Dasein is and can be. Laying these conceptions bare for Dasein such that it could appropriate it in its own way is a central endeavor in Heidegger's works. To make Dasein's own Being a foundational issue for Dasein and in this way account for Being-in-the-World in terms of its (circular) implications to understanding is distinctive of Heidegger's strand of phenomenological meditation on 'subjective' experience.

2.3 The norm of authenticity: a problematic appeal?

From the foregoing it is clear that Heidegger believes Being-in-the-world to be fundamentally self-transparent in virtue of its understanding. One might assume, on the basis of this, that Heidegger has sufficient material to uphold a plausible normative account. For instance, normativity could be accounted for by pointing to the fact that understanding, the discursive act of taking something *as* something, allows for conditions or rules governing Dasein's responsiveness to entities. This means that in interacting with for instance a pen, there is a standard that is being satisfied in dealing with it as a pen or not satisfied in dealing with it as something it is not³⁷. Such normativity can be read as a standard of selfsameness, and upholding it is what Heidegger has termed 'uncovering [entdecken]'. It should be clear that Heidegger is not particularly interested in that kind of normativity. He is interested in what can be said about Dasein's own disclosure as an understanding of Being. With regard to normativity on this point, it is not particularly clear that Heidegger actually has an account to offer. It should be obvious that Heidegger needs to explain more than he has in explaining Dasein's understanding, because even if the notion of authenticity would stand for the sense of normativity, Heidegger acknowledges that understanding could be either authentic or inauthentic³⁸, or in other words, that in principle the notion of understanding is by itself neutral with regard to the allegedly normative issue of authenticity. At least with this

³⁴ Cf. S&Z: 200, where Heidegger explains that the concept gives us an ontological basis for anthropological research, but does not address the fundamental aim of the existential analytic.

³⁵ S&Z: 191-193.

³⁶ Farin 2015: 112-113.

³⁷ Crowell 2007: 46-47.

³⁸ S&Z: 146.

recognition, Heidegger shows some awareness that he wants to introduce a normative notion into his account.

There is, however, a problem with the intuition that this might concern a notion of self-transparency, given the foregoing account of understanding. If understanding is fundamentally transparent with regards to itself (because through it it has 'sight' on itself), then the account of understanding precludes substantial notions of self-opening and self-closing on the basis of it, the kind that could explain ontological truth. If understanding is always transparent, then it remains unclear how Dasein's transparency could become obscured in any substantial way (echoing Tugendhat's point³⁹). As tentative substitutions for authenticity and inauthenticity, then, 'self-opening' and 'self-closing' do not quite work on the basis of the account of understanding. Moreover, to characterize the former as self-transparency, although initially an appealing solution⁴⁰, could be highly misleading given that *understanding* is self-transparent.

Heidegger's claim that understanding is not a sufficient condition for authenticity entails that the actual constitution of Dasein itself in the discursivity of sense is not at stake. This is surprising, because the call to become oneself seems to suggest it was. In Heidegger's very first formulation of the imperative of authenticity, it is claimed that Dasein must 'itself be that self' (and 'grasp' itself), or not (and 'neglect' it)⁴¹. At first glance, this basic formulation, which states that Dasein is not itself its self, is unhelpful. In so far as Dasein is always 'itself its self' to the extent that it is a self in virtue of its Being-in-the-world, nothing could have it not 'itself be its self' in the same manner. Even an inauthentic self is a self, which Heidegger explicitly acknowledges when coining the term 'they-self [Man-selbst]' for inauthentic Dasein's selfhood⁴². A relation of self-identity holds for it, i.e. Dasein is its self. The they-self is what it is, regardless of being 'not its own'. Inauthenticity is still an understanding that is self-aware and transparent, it is still determined by its mineness, guaranteeing the development of 'personal' sense. Despite suggesting that there is something possibly 'owned' about Dasein's existence, which is being disowned in inauthenticity, it is not clear what. Dasein is in each case a self and does not have to become one in any particular way.

Heidegger's suggestion that the self could be disowned or lost by Dasein, as if it would not be itself, could be read as an appeal to the possibility of a self-negation, which seems precluded. After all, the inauthentic, 'lost' self is 'in each case still mine', and appeal to a 'disowned' mineness could therefore be incoherent. It points to an unclarity in Heidegger's charge to inauthentic Dasein (which makes Heidegger's strategy of exposition convoluted); if the suggestion is that inauthentic existence is in contradiction with itself (it is not itself its self), then this charge needs to be substantiated, because it is not clear how. What is inauthentic Dasein missing in being its self without being itself its self? A study of Heidegger's explanation of 'the they [das Man]' will not make this tension about the ontology of being a self any less pertinent. Heidegger claims that the they, the indefinite neuter, is the way in which everyone is every other, but never itself. Inauthentic Dasein is governed by what everyone else also is but what no one is in an authentic sense. Dasein is 'disburdened' by relying on them in everything it is. Such description suggests Dasein does not have any independence (*Selbständigkeit*), is not self-reliant, but only through appealing to the lack of propriety in the same cryptic manner as before. Heidegger explicitly claims that the they is Dasein's own constitution⁴³, which makes it clear Dasein itself, as they-self, is this 'no one'. As an individual, a particular 'Being-in as such', Dasein could even be called independent and self-reliant to that extent. Not only does Dasein not have to attain selfhood, it also cannot be said to lack anything qua

³⁹ Cf. section 1.7.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ S&Z: 12.

⁴² S&Z: 129.

⁴³ S&Z: 126-129.

selfhood. The they-self is as much a self as authentic Dasein is. If Dasein's inauthenticity is read as 'not being itself' then Heidegger's account becomes incoherent ('in being itself the they-self is not itself'). It is not clear what 'being one's own' could mean beyond self-identity.

If self-transparency and self-identity are not at stake in authenticity, then a phenomenological account of self-awareness does not provide sufficient explanation for what Heidegger is trying to address with his considerations concerning subjectivity. For self-awareness, inauthentic existence could be sufficient. In its understanding of Being, Dasein always has an infallible, immediate grasp on what it is. The inauthentic self (they-self) is Dasein itself as itself too⁴⁴. Any association between the notion of Dasein's own and Dasein itself (as a 'being-in'), then, falls apart. The assumption that authenticity is a special Heideggerian term that would address the topic of phenomenological self-awareness is in this sense flawed⁴⁵. The counterintuitive conclusion is that the propriety of a human being, i.e. what is Dasein's 'own' in its Being-in-the-World, is nothing necessarily related to Dasein's concrete self as being-in. Despite this complication, the potential inauthenticity of a self-transparent understanding of Being is, from Heidegger's perspective, a pressing issue. There is something 'wrong' with Dasein's approach to itself, according to Heidegger, and it would be contradictory for a more standard phenomenological account of his work to hold that Dasein has an infallible immediacy to itself and that Dasein is possibly mistaken with respect to itself at the same time. In general, phenomenological accounts do not seem to be concerned with normativity at the ontological level, because subjectivity on their account is supposed to be an evident, inalterable feature of experience. Heidegger, on the other hand, has a normative concern with Dasein's own (the ontological). Any explanation of Heidegger's response to the subjectivist tradition, and his deconstruction of 'Dasein itself', i.e. the humanity of the human being, needs to clarify where this concern comes from, why it is of substantial interest, and not otiose after all.

2.4 Clues: Heidegger's ill-explained suggestions and subsequent discussion in secondary literature

Here, Heidegger's suggestive language can provide some clues as to the need for a standard of authenticity. Heidegger initially describes authenticity as a 'grasp [Ergreifen]' of 'Dasein itself'⁴⁶, suggesting an ideal of becoming 'truly itself'. This appeal is not pejorative. Becoming authentic is not a matter of becoming something other than Dasein's self, as if the inauthentic self is a defect thing that needs to be abandoned. Heidegger is explicit about authenticity merely modifying this 'positive' description of Dasein itself⁴⁷. Dasein only diverts, he claims, by taking its understanding up as a whole⁴⁸. Regardless of how it is done, and of whether we would be justified in speaking of a proper epistemic act, this modification is characterized as a possibility, and to be specific: its 'ownmost [eigensten]' possibility. In other words, Heidegger upholds some sort of distinction between possibilities that are 'ownmost' and possibilities that are presumably its own but not really owned. Some sense of being-able-to (to be authentic) is consequently different from the usual sense of 'being-able-to' (inauthentic involvement with the world), and consequently one self-transparency is distinguished from another. It is crucial that the former has a 'grasp' on itself, and the latter does not, despite the self being accessible to it in a transparent way.

Why single out 'ownmost' possibilities? Heidegger seems to suggest that it is because the possibility to be authentic is in some sense more closely related to Dasein's existence as possibility.

⁴⁴ Cf. S&Z: 115-116, where Heidegger explains that philosophy should not assume the formal givenness of 'the I', no matter how evident.

⁴⁵ Cf. Crowell 2001B.

⁴⁶ S&Z: 12.

⁴⁷ S&Z: 129-130.

⁴⁸ S&Z: 146.

Heidegger appeals to Dasein to 'plunge itself into significance' and in doing so 'exist as itself' instead of merely 'devoting itself to the world'⁴⁹. Significance, as one may recall, is what one is doing things for, for what sake, while one is working towards something (i.e. in being 'involved'). This provides Dasein with a sense of instrumental normativity: Dasein's practical identity is determined by a tool's function, i.e. its 'in-order-to'. Heidegger is suggesting that authentic Dasein does not just go about its day being involved, but dedicates itself entirely to what it would be doing anything for. Specifically in the structural moment of significance, Dasein's developing understanding (and so its most basic sense of existence) is implicit. Since, as has been argued before, goal-directed action ('involvement') arises only through understanding's letting-be-involved, it makes sense to say that worldly determination through the network of tools does not sufficiently explain how Dasein determines itself to act (in accordance with such goals) for the sake of something. Instrumental normativity does not suffice to explain Dasein's practical nature. There is something about the 'for-the-sake-of-which' that arises from Dasein's own nature, in other words: because Dasein is what it is in a way that is not entirely dependent on its complex of references. Things may determine what it is a human works towards and how, but not for the sake of what. This is, in an important way, up to itself. Heidegger is looking for what explains such self-reliance of significance. Designating certain possibilities as 'ownmost', then, serves the purpose of expanding on the insight of and of further analysing the existential structures of this self-reliance.

The challenge of accounting for such self-reliance, and in that way finding the means to explain normativity in relation to ontological features of Dasein, can be explained in various ways. In the first place, Heidegger needs to counter the impression that Dasein's being-in is structurally conditioned by the world, so that this sense of self-reliance may arise in spite of the necessary worldly character of being-in. Since Dasein is understood in terms of the possibilities offered up by the world, it is not clear how this 'ownmost' possibility must be understood, if not as a non-worldly (in that sense 'metaphysical') capacity. It seems like a straightforward solution to say that Dasein draws its independence from some kind of spontaneity, undetermined by its worldly existence, but this straightforward solution is too subjectivistic for Heidegger to endorse. That kind of spontaneity could blatantly contradict Heidegger's construal of Dasein as being-in-the-world if it arises from anything but the world, which therefore seems like the wrong resource to make use of for an explanation.

Two criticisms of Heidegger with regard to the possibility of normativity in Dasein's being-in-the-world can clarify the complications. Crowell surveys these criticisms, and they have been formulated by Robert Pippin and Ernst Tugendhat respectively⁵⁰. Pippin explains that the topic of normativity should naturally arise in any discussion of intentional practice. If Dasein is able to engage with, for instance, a pen as a pen, then Dasein would have to follow the rules that constitute the pen as a pen. In other words, there are satisfaction conditions under which one could say whether one was intentionally related to a pen as a pen, or as something else. In explaining such practical rule-following in terms of standard involvement, in which Dasein lets things have their course, one could argue that this sense of normativity could be characterized as a kind of conformism, especially if such 'satisfaction conditions' have been set by 'the they'. Heidegger, Pippin notes, does provide an account of how Dasein can act in conformity with norms *of its own accord*. Dasein can be, in that sense, responsive to appropriate courses of action. However, Pippin claims, Heidegger fails to see the distinction between acting in accord with norms and acting in light of them. According to Pippin, Heidegger's explanations concern solely the former and not the latter. What Heidegger is missing is how Dasein commits itself to appropriateness, how it consciously takes itself to be doing the appropriate things. Only if Dasein can assign itself a certain practical identity, and in that sense commit itself to practices in light of norms, he can be said to have a viable notion of normativity..

⁴⁹ Cf. S&Z: 146.

⁵⁰ Crowell 2007: 45-49.

Heidegger's notion of 'acting for its own sake' could not be said to involve acting on reasons, and therefore cannot shed light on anything related to a space of reasons.

The same point is underlined by Tugendhat's independent critique of Heidegger. There is, according to him, no concept or analysis related to anything like a depth dimension to Dasein's actions. Although Heidegger may in places argue for freedom and independence, there is nothing like the practice of deliberation or reasoning to be found. It would involve a consideration for what courses of action are, to put it broadly, 'better grounded' than others. Some process of justification should be involved. Tugendhat is therefore doubting whether Heidegger can have any sort of explanation for how Dasein comes to be oriented, or in other words, how it would come to be concerned with reasons for action at all.

When considering the way in which Heidegger introduces the notion of authenticity into the account of understanding, it becomes clear that he does not address such questions in a clear way. He introduces the idea of an authentic discursivity as a way of 'keeping silent'. Keeping silent on his account does not designate the cessation of speech, but it is the genuine articulation of Dasein's disclosure, which is to say it successfully communicates Dasein's self-understanding⁵¹. This latter point is not insightful, because it is clear that discourse articulates understanding, and it seems obvious that authentic discourse must articulate an authentic understanding. That this would be a type of silence is a peculiar characterization that could be interesting. Heidegger's usage of the word, however, is paradoxical; silence above all has something to say but is colloquially understood as not saying anything. He directly contradicts any colloquial understanding of the word. In so far as he is claiming that silent discourse is telling, he seems to take for granted what it is telling for. Whatever it may be, he does think silence 'cuts to the chase', putting an end to all chatter [Gerede]. Chatter designates one defining feature of inauthentic discourse, out of three. As inauthentic discourse, one can expect it to obfuscate authentic self-understanding in some way. Chatter, according to Heidegger, parrots the authority of an understanding in a reluctance to authentically appropriate it, but with the self-confidence that it has discovered something in what is said. Inauthentic discursivity is secondly marked by curiosity, in the sense that it is unable to tarry with an understanding. This restlessness distracts it from its authentic understanding. Thirdly, it is ambiguous, in the sense that from this sense of discourse it is unable to tell whether it has been primordially disclosed or not⁵². In all of these phenomena, Heidegger gives us few resources to tell what role the idea of an authentic understanding plays in silence, because he merely distinguishes inauthentic phenomena from it. For these reasons, readers of *Sein und Zeit* are left to speculate what Heidegger really means when he describes authentic discourse as silence. The concept is ill-defined. Moreover, it is not clear what the relation is between anything like self-assignment and silence, and Heidegger's account of silence therefore lacks an incentive.

From sparse commentary, then, any reader of *Sein und Zeit* interested in Heidegger's understanding of the self in every single one of its aspects is left to pick up scraps with regard to the notion of an authentic understanding, and how in it Dasein 'chooses' to 'become itself'. Attention in the sixth chapter of *Sein und Zeit*, the final chapter of its first division, seemingly diverts to the philosophical significance of the notion of care, a philosophical-anthropological concept that designates Dasein on a whole irrespective of its modes of authenticity and inauthenticity. Although Heidegger is hinting at a sense of self-determination in relation to the significance that various involvements can have, clarification is needed in order to alleviate the worry that his account of Being-in-the-world cannot accommodate for a power like it, and in order to explain its connection to his cryptic notion of 'silence'.

⁵¹ S&Z: 164-165.

⁵² S&Z: 167-175.

2.5 Conclusion: the explanatory gap

In the foregoing it has been argued that Heidegger, despite being an anti-subjectivist, reappropriates subjectivism's subject matter, which is to say: reconceives what it means to be a human being in a non-subjectivist way. More concretely, it is evident that Heidegger considers Being-in-the-world a distinctly human feature from his rendering of it as an 'understanding'. To designate Being-in-the-world as understanding means to conceive of human existence as self-presentative. Dasein is self-presentative, according to Heidegger, because in engaging with entities it develops a sense of its own activity, a sense that is discursive. Heidegger's philosophy, however, takes a critical turn on this point: despite providing for a clear, non-Cartesian account of Dasein via a construal of Dasein as understanding, Heidegger does not think an account on the basis of this would sufficiently grasp Dasein on a whole. Although Heidegger seems to acknowledge that Being-in-the-world may constitute a self-identity with a basic sense of self-awareness, he also claims that this sense of selfhood is 'inauthentic' for the most part, which is to say: Dasein in its everyday involvement fails to exist of its own accord, independent from the world and the they. The self that is normally constituted by Dasein is not truly itself.

On the one hand, this implies that a proper reconstruction of Heidegger's thoughts on what Dasein is depend on how the change from an inauthentic to an authentic understanding takes place, and up to this point no such account has been explicitly given. His account of human existence has not been sufficiently reconstructed despite having provided a reconstruction of how Dasein constitutes selfhood. The intricacy that Heidegger wants his readers to consider is how it can take up its own existence and bring about a self-imposed change, so that Dasein may be 'authentic'. From that perspective, Heidegger is not a just a descriptive philosopher: his description of Dasein's ownmost possibility is instructive, and is supposed to result in an understanding of how it places a normative demand compelling one to comply. In other words, his account is exhortative⁵³. He urges Dasein to have a 'life-changing' impact on itself. In part, this intent aligns with his hermeneutic strategy: laying bare what Dasein is and can be should lead to an active critical appropriation from Dasein itself, unfolding its own project of (self-)understanding⁵⁴. One can emphatically assume this critical turn on Dasein's normal understanding justifies critique of interpretation of a human being in terms of what a human being normally speaking is and consequently deny Dasein's humanity, as an anti-subjectivist could possibly do, but there is no implication of an appeal Dasein to become 'less its inauthentic self' in Heidegger's call to authenticity.

On the other hand, Heidegger's claims concerning Dasein's possibility to become authentic reinforce the idea that he has a special conception of human existence in mind. It confirms that Heideggerians cannot intend to faithfully reconstruct Heidegger's philosophy and ignore a notion like authenticity, and all the related topics of attaining freedom and independence, becoming what one already was, etc. Any research addressing the topics of human existence and the self as they appear in Heidegger's work is not 'too subjectivist', and can be expected to address said topics precisely to do right by Heidegger's intentions.

⁵³ Precisely because of the yet unexplored, cryptic status of the normativity of authenticity, one should hesitate to call his exhortative style of writing prescriptivist, when that means advocating a standard norm of behaviour that would be superior to other kinds of behaviour.

⁵⁴ Ultimately, this hermeneutic strategy is at the service of Heidegger's philosophical aim. The ownmost project that Dasein could engage in would be 'the question of Being'.

There are several reasons why one can conclude that there is, as Crowell has claimed⁵⁵, a gap in the standard reconstructions of Heidegger's work in relation to subjectivity (as it appears in *Sein und Zeit*).

- Heidegger does not seem to endorse without qualification the standard phenomenological account of the self that he purportedly holds, precisely because it could, according to him, potentially lack an 'authentic' component.
- It is unclear what Heidegger's concern with regard to normativity involves. Although authoritative readers of his work (like Pippin and Tugendhat) argue that there is too little of such concern, some clues point to the fact that Heidegger is more resourceful than they claim. Heidegger does seem to aim for an account of Dasein's self-reliance, although he never explicitly addresses how. It is an expert reader like Crowell who has to clarify this matter for him.
- Another detail that calls for more explanation is Heidegger's expressed description of Dasein's ownmost possibility as 'silent'. The connection to self-determination invites more explanation than Heidegger dedicates to it, because his account rejects a colloquial understanding without offering an informative alternative.

Some of these interpretive problems arrive naturally because of Heidegger's convoluted writing in these final chapters of the first division. Topics are introduced by Heidegger without the sufficient justification having been explicitly stated. He himself complicates the onset of the notion of authenticity, and specifically, what is insightful for authenticity's status as a peculiar, normative notion of self-relation. To this extent, Heidegger is to blame for the predicament Heideggerian scholarship finds itself in: the secondary literature, in reconstruction of Heidegger's work, lacks an explicitly, uniquely Heideggerian account of 'the subject', and needs to make up for it. Nonetheless, despite the explanatory gap, there is no lacuna in Heidegger's work. Explanation of these matters first and foremost addresses the source material that was already there in the first place. No matter how convoluted and/or complicated, one could in principle extract relevant insights. Crowell, for instance, provides a possible and viable explanation (that ultimately differs from the interpretation provided here). He attempts to show that the possibility of authenticity is attested to in the phenomenon of conscience, and he clarifies how. Here, the main contention is that Dasein's conscience is the origin of 'reason', "in the sense of an ability to act in light of norms"⁵⁶. In other words, a possible clarification of the explanatory gap could come from another account provided by Heidegger himself, which was previously misunderstood in its clarificatory function.

This controversy converges with the one concerning truth (reconstructed in the previous chapter). Both topics concern the way in which Dasein itself comes about. On the one hand, Dasein's own eventuation is a fact that Heidegger would designate the primary phenomenon of truth, and on the other, such 'disclosure' is, on Heidegger's account, not fully accounted for unless its ownmost ability to become an authentic, self-determining self is. The former topic becomes problematic in so far as it cannot provide for a feature of truth that the standard account does have, namely the opposition to untruth. The latter becomes problematic in so far as Heidegger seems to neither explain well what Dasein's ownmost ability is (a kind of 'silent' self-communication), nor provide for any reasons or motivation for it having necessarily this ability. In both cases, it is unclear why there is any special, normative role for Dasein itself in Heidegger's account of its existence as Being-in-the-world, and Heidegger's account therefore stands in need of clarification.

This chapter, then, has substantiated the idea that Heidegger is interested in normative ideas concerning the self, by elaborating his account of Dasein itself. If, despite the explanatory gap

⁵⁵ Crowell 2001B: 436, 438.

⁵⁶ Crowell 2001B: 444-448.

in relation to this topic, the topic can be clarified in a consistent and coherent way, then Heidegger potentially has a reply to at least one of Tugendhat's worries. Dasein would have a genuine prospect for a philosophical project if the authentic and inauthentic modes of existing can be distinguished. Of course the reply would then have to supplement the account with explanations as to the possibility of untruth and some potential opposition to it.

Ultimately, a solution to said controversies can be found within Heidegger's conception of uncanniness [unheimlichkeit], a particular feature of human existence. Heidegger initially addressed this feature as part of his account of the phenomenon of angst⁵⁷, at the end of the first division of *Sein und Zeit*. The foregoing account of a 'gap of subjectivity' has glossed over certain aspects of Dasein's existence, relevant to the 'fundamental mood' of angst and its inherent uncanniness, which are addressed in the next chapter. Some disagreements on topics from the end of the first division should affect the way in which the whole book is read. Judging from *Sein und Zeit*'s intended itinerary, the topics from the first division were supposed to lead in a natural manner to those of the second division. How this should have happened should have been clear from reading the apotheosis of division I, chapter 6. That chapter is, according to Heidegger, the summary of foregoing chapters⁵⁸, which would be able to explain Dasein itself on the basis of one kind of disclosure that simplifies matters by being 'the most far-reaching and primordial'⁵⁹. This allegedly primordial phenomenon, angst, should make it obvious that (as Heidegger puts it at the beginning of the second division) division I has primarily occupied itself with the inauthentic mode of Dasein⁶⁰. Angst therefore serves as an entryway into the discussions in division II. However, the exegetical problems stem from both chapter 5 and 6, and prove that the reception of the transition from one division to the next was not what Heidegger may have intended it to be. As McManus comments, the reception of *Sein und Zeit* has treated it as "half the book that it is". Division II, which focuses on authentic Dasein, is "where the useful Heidegger stops". According to McManus himself, the second division is puzzling and even seems contrary to crucial insights of division I⁶¹. Therefore, a reconception of this transition into the second division on the basis of a comprehensive, non-standard account, is much-needed. Such an account should not rely on what is presented as the apotheosis, namely Heidegger's formulation of a unique anti-sceptical argument at the end of chapter 6⁶², because that argument relies on the evidence of the existence of Being-in as such as incontestible, which is not sufficient for an explanation of the possibility of, function of, and need for authenticity. What is to be insightful for this, is the phenomenon of angst.

⁵⁷ The German word 'Angst' is translated as the loanword 'angst' rather than 'anxiety' to avoid any confusion with the psychological-physiological condition despite its obvious similarity (cf. Withy 2012: 196), and to stress the peculiarity of Heidegger's designated phenomenon.

⁵⁸ S&Z: 180.

⁵⁹ S&Z: 182.

⁶⁰ S&Z: 233.

⁶¹ McManus 2015A: 1, 6.

⁶² Cf. S&Z: 229.

Chapter 3: uncanniness as the proper human condition

3.1 Heidegger's methodology of moods and the awakening of philosophy

To see how seminal angst is to the topics of truth and subjectivity, and to clarify the notion of angst in its insightfulness, a basic account of what moods and fundamental moods are would be required, given that angst is one mood among many. The basic conceptual significance of moods as structural moments of existence is that moods 'bring' Dasein to its own disclosure, as Heidegger puts it in *Sein und Zeit*¹. The account he gives there is best compared to the account given of moods in *Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik*, given their proximity in time and content. There, the basic point is stated with more emphasis: moods are the primary way in which Dasein is present to itself². In other words, the ontological importance of moods is that they tell Dasein the status of its own existence in the world, or, more loosely speaking, they tell Dasein "how it's doing"³. Moods attest to *how* Dasein is *in* the world, or, as Matthew Ratcliffe puts it: moods are "the distinctively human way of having a world"⁴. There are three essential features of what a mood is that can clarify the way in which moods disclose Dasein itself to itself, features clarified in *Sein und Zeit*'s §29⁵.

1. 'Disposedness [Befindlichkeit]'. Moods confront Dasein with its thrownness [Geworfenheit], i.e. 'that it is'. To put it differently, in moods Dasein finds itself to have a particular kind of quiddity. 'That it is', in this or that way, means that Being-in-the-world is encumbering. Dasein's facticity is never a factum brutum, because moods confront Dasein with its quiddity⁶, making it a loaded self-consciousness.
2. World-disclosure. A mood is nothing like a psychological state that accompanies Being-in-the-world, in a second-order kind of reflection on it, but determines the *how* of Being-in-the-world as a whole. Only if Dasein has a peculiar way of disclosing a world, can there be a particular, self-standing world in which one is practically engaged. To quote Lauren Freeman: Dasein cannot be said to *have* moods, it is *in* moods with the entirety of its Being⁷.
3. 'Affectivity [Betroffenwerdens]'. Dasein's engagement in the world matters to it; its world-disclosure leaves it determinately affected. In Ratcliffe's words, Dasein is not impartial in its world, but it is a significant realm for it: "moods constitute the range of ways in which things are able to matter to us, a sense of the kinds of possibility that the world can offer up for us."⁸ For this reason, the German word Stimmung is often translated as attunement, because moods 'tune' [stimmen] Being-in-the-world, as if giving it a sense of direction.

¹ S&Z: 134.

² GA29/30: 101.

³ Cf. S&Z: 134.

⁴ Ratcliffe 2009: 157.

⁵ S&Z: 134-140.

⁶ Heidegger claims that disposedness is the ontological dimension of moods, which themselves, in the way that they appear, are ontic (S&Z: 134). Disposedness is therefore not just a feature of moods. It underlines that moods have a basic self-disclosive element to them that could go ignored. Moods implicate our way of Being as thrown, they address and tune Dasein, and for each mood one then could account for how, by analyzing a mood's specific disposition. Cf. Withy 2019: 156, 174.

⁷ Freeman 2014: 453.

⁸ Ratcliffe 2009: 158-159.

The point is significant for Dasein's subjectivity. Self-presentational aspects of Being-in-the-world do not leave Dasein unaffected, because in moods Dasein engages itself in a variety of ways. Moods as such however do not have the required philosophical weight in order to clarify authenticity, whereas angst does. Angst is in this sense 'special', and the best way to explicate how, is to see how he distinguished it from normal moods as a 'fundamental disposedness [Grundbefindlichkeit]'. What moods do not usually do, despite disposing Dasein to its Being-in-the-world, is engaging it *qua* Being-in-the-world. That Dasein is present to itself through moods does not entail Dasein being present to itself *as itself*. For this purpose, Heidegger devises the concept of a fundamental mood [Grundstimmung], to distinguish the moods that do. The distinction can therefore be stated as follows: whereas an ordinary mood articulates selfhood in the evocation of a particular object or situation, a fundamental mood disposes Dasein towards its own world-disclosure as such (in being situationally embedded). This methodological distinction can be illustrated with Heidegger's differentiation of angst from fear. Fear is an ordinary mood that is always directed at a worldly object or circumstance that is subject to changes that interfere with the mood itself. There is always some entity towards which Dasein is fearful⁹. Angst, on the other hand, is a concern with Dasein itself to which innerworldly determinants are irrelevant¹⁰. From a 'fundamental-ontological' standpoint, these two kinds of moods do not hold the same weight. The distinction in basic types of moods is consequential to the course of his phenomenological research. Heidegger is not merely identifying the various ways in which Dasein can be disposed. Such a phenomenology of moods would lead to a quasi-Greek contemplation on different aspects of one's disposition¹¹. For that approach having ordinary moods would suffice. However compelling such a phenomenology of moods may be, Heidegger sees the necessity of finding a mood that tells us more about Dasein's own nature as a 'moody' being. Such a philosophical investigation would result in a unique kind of disposition that engages Dasein in relation to itself as a Being-in-the-World that can be disposed in this or that matter. In other words, Heidegger looks for a mood in which Dasein becomes concerned with its own nature, and he claims to have found it in angst.

The significance of angst's insight becomes obvious in light of Heidegger's ambition to develop a conception of his philosophical method as specifically mood-driven, an ambition likely inspired by engagement with the work of then-prevalent Max Scheler¹². In *Sein und Zeit* this ambition is less clear than in *Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik*. In *Sein und Zeit*, it involves the claim that angst would be the philosophical attitude par excellence *because* it helps interrogate the Being of Dasein in an authentic way¹³. In other words, angst affects the way philosophy is to be done, and consequently reconfigures its (assumed) phenomenological approach¹⁴. Explanation of this reconfiguration is found in *Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik*. Angst does not affect the way philosophy is to be done by conforming to or facilitating a given conception of philosophy. For instance, suppose philosophy would be construed as a kind of self-investigation, and angst would be its ultimate finding, then a pre-existing (theoretical) interest makes angst relevant. Heidegger rather claims that (conversely) only in a fundamental mood the need for and possibility of philosophy is felt. It is the only proper attitude from which one can have such a conception¹⁵. In even stronger wording, moods can be said to determine whatever it is one would do in philosophizing¹⁶.

⁹ S&Z: 140-142.

¹⁰ S&Z: 186-187.

¹¹ Cf. Staehler 2007: 422-423.

¹² Heidegger acknowledges Scheler's special role in phenomenology's renewed philosophical appraisal of moods in S&Z: 139.

¹³ Cf. S&Z: 190.

¹⁴ Cf. Withy 2012: 195-196, 208-209.

¹⁵ GA29-30: 87.

¹⁶ GA29-30: 272.

The peculiarity of a mood-driven phenomenology is notable. An immediate concern with a philosophy of moods could be that moods provide for unreliable sources for investigation. In *Sein und Zeit*, the response to this worry relies on the aforementioned account of moods; Heidegger describes them as neither subjective nor objective, and therefore their importance cannot be downplayed as merely subjective¹⁷. In *Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik* his response is different, focusing on a different kind of peculiarity that could lead to structural misinterpretation. Moods, on this account, 'are' as much as they 'are not'. The worry seems to be that in them not being reliably 'there', but being 'there and not there', they violate the fundamental principle of all scientific investigation, namely the Principle of Non-Contradiction [Satz vom Widerspruch]. Anything that is 'there and not there', is a contradiction, and evidently no real sense can be made of contradictions. This worry Heidegger dismisses, despite conceding that moods are unreliable in their presence. The principle, he suggests, is irrelevant to the fact that moods are 'there and not there', because it assumes the wrong interpretation of this peculiarity. It conceives of the presence of moods as if they were present-at-hand things before consciousness, and then makes an attempt at conceiving them as present and absent at the same time, in the way that a simple object like a stone can be either present or absent – an obvious mischaracterization of the precarious way in which moods present itself. To Heidegger, the peculiarity of moods is not what makes them unfit, but precisely what makes them potent. 'Being' as much as they 'are not' makes moods exemplary for the way in which Dasein itself takes place, and for that reason, more conducive to the type of questioning that befits philosophy. Philosophy should not strive to ascertain moods, but to 'let them be' or arouse [wecken] them in their precariousness, for that would be most revealing (of Dasein itself)¹⁸. Heidegger's ambition to reconfigure phenomenological methodology is inspired by the way in which the peculiar precariousness of moods can engender philosophy.

3.2 Methodological context of angst in S&Z: inauthenticity & fundamental ontology

Although the foregoing section indicates the methodological importance of the notion of moods, in *Sein und Zeit* more broadly speaking the notion is embedded into overarching methodological aims, like finding the proper 'fundamental-ontological' approach and making accessible an 'authentic question', which complicates matters. In the following, the consistency between the aforementioned mood-driven method and these methodological aims is clarified. As previously stated, angst is a fundamental mood that confronts Dasein with the nature of its own existence. From this perspective, ordinary moods are unfit. The fundamental difference at play is phrased in terms of authenticity. Whereas ordinary moods figure in Dasein's everyday engagement with the world, a fundamental mood penetrates the everyday and confronts Dasein with its very own possibility of authenticity¹⁹. A clarification of this structural insufficiency is given by Katherine Withy. Her work on the phenomenon of angst is highly valuable for its clarification to all audiences, and in this section and the following an attempt is made to reconstruct her interpretation in tandem with Heidegger's account.

In Dasein's projective involvement in the world, in which it makes sense of ready-to-hand entities, is self-sustaining. Dasein is absorbed in its activity. The entities that Dasein is amidst of entice it to take part in the world without any sense of genuine self-directedness. Rather than having a pejorative meaning, Heidegger aims to portray this absorption as a positive possibility for Dasein²⁰. It merely signifies that Dasein is structurally 'entity-directed'²¹. Heidegger's approach to the entity-

¹⁷ S&Z: 136. Cf. Staehler 2007: 421-422.

¹⁸ GA29-30: 91-99.

¹⁹ S&Z: 188.

²⁰ Cf. S&Z 175-176.

²¹ Withy 2012: 197-198.

directedness of Being-in-the-world is to look for clues as to the enabling condition for this structural feature. A clue is found when he reinterprets absorption in its significance for Dasein itself (and the possibility of it becoming itself). Appealing to the idea that entities are not themselves the same as Dasein, paired with the idea that it is dependent on being directed to them, he therefore reconsiders absorption as a way of Dasein not being itself, turning a positive notion into a negative notion from the perspective of the possibility for Dasein to be itself, i.e. authenticity. To make this point he portrays it as 'falling' [Verfallen], Dasein's 'ontological motion' away from itself, ever arriving at a position that is beneath itself by going towards entities²². Tugendhat accounts for falling in a particularly clear manner when he likewise calls it a 'movement [Bewegtheit]' that obfuscates Dasein's proper self-understanding, i.e. an 'originary tendency to conceal [ursprüngliche Verdeckungstendenz]'²³. Falling could be considered a kind of 'concealment [Verborgenheit]', in so far as entity-directedness always implies a move away from Dasein itself, whose presence in the process becomes secluded. This concealment however should not be confused with 'occluding [verdecken]', the ontic notion of falsity, in which an entity is obscured by making it out to be something it is not (metaphorically 'placing something in the way' of something's proper appearance, having it fail the standard hermeneutic-phenomenological truth-standard)²⁴. In so far as Tugendhat uses the word occluding [verdecken] to describe concealing here, he is giving an infelicitous description of falling, despite aptly characterizing it as an ontological tendency. This lack of nuance in his formulation could be compared to that in his reception of 'revealing'.

This reconsideration of absorption as falling is what prompts further analysis. If Dasein is maintaining itself in moving away from itself, i.e. in the 'flight for itself', then its directedness still relates in some way to Dasein itself. This conclusion leads Heidegger to claim that precisely in turning-away from itself Dasein is enabled to have an ontological grasp of itself²⁵. This grasp would consist in turning the direction away from Dasein on its head. Heidegger aims to have Dasein confront its originary tendency head-on, and in that way find another mode of engagement with its entity-directedness. Instead of focusing on the 'whereto' of entity-directedness, Heidegger aims to think through the 'from whence' that is indicative of Dasein itself in its falling²⁶. For this purpose, Heidegger analyses angst.

In *Sein und Zeit*, the ambition to find a fundamental mood that would be telling for the kind of being Dasein is, then, converges with the ambition to find a way out of mere inauthenticity. He does so by investigating the origin for Dasein's entity-directedness. This investigation is consistent with his fundamental-ontological approach in the following way. In angst's modification of entity-directedness, it trades its everyday existence with entities for insight into its existential structure, which is to say that it trades a primarily ontic existence for something more ontological. Angst, then, is an opening unto the main directive of Heidegger's philosophy, i.e. Being. The idea implicit to this shift, which figures throughout the whole book and throughout Heidegger's oeuvre moreover, is the ontological difference. It is introduced into the course of *Sein und Zeit's* analysis when Heidegger claims that the 'Being of entities' is not itself an entity, and therefore must be demonstrated in a peculiar way that "differs essentially from the uncovering of entities [sich von der Entdeckung des Seienden wesentlich unterscheidet]"²⁷. As Withy explains the ontological difference, Dasein's ontological motion determines the interplay of Being and entities, it 'moves between them'²⁸. In angst Dasein can then be said to move *towards* Being, modifying its own tendency to move *away*

²² Withy 2012: 198-199.

²³ Tugendhat 1970: 314.

²⁴ S&Z: 33.

²⁵ S&Z: 184-185.

²⁶ S&Z: 184-185.

²⁷ S&Z: 6.

²⁸ Cf. Withy 2012: 200.

from Being towards entities. Dasein in both cases remains 'entity-related' (i.e. amidst them), but only in angst is a question concerning the Being of entities sustained that is not absorbed in mere entity-directedness. The methodological importance of angst can therefore hardly be overstated. With the angst-analysis Heidegger finds not only a turn from inauthenticity to authenticity, he also makes significant advancement of his required special approach to Being that he hinted at with the introduction of the ontological difference. It makes the angst-analysis pivotal in his attempt of reconstructing the so-called question of Being for the sake of doing philosophy.

Any modification of entity-directedness as such in the turn to authenticity, however, commits Heidegger to a specific kind of philosophical enterprise. He is invested in the question whether philosophy has to be metaphysical, and if so, in what way. This point can be inferred from the aforementioned discussion of falling in *Sein und Zeit*, but is pronounced in Heidegger's analysis of angst in the contemporaneous essay *Was ist Metaphysik?* In searching for the origin of entity-directedness Heidegger is looking for the way in which Dasein makes sense of entities *as such*, attempting to determine the standpoint relative to 'entities as a whole [das Seiende im Ganzen]' from which openness or intelligibility is understood. Angst is supposed to be a kind of suspension of everyday engagement with entities so as to relate to that engagement as such. Therefore, angst goes beyond mere entities. To this extent, one can speak of 'transcendence' in angst, a 'moving beyond entities'. Described in this way, Dasein's transcendence fits the etymology of the word 'meta-physics' (assuming the 'physical' is associated with entities here). In virtue of this sense of transcendence, Dasein is a metaphysical being through-and-through, in the sense that such a metaphysical motion just is Dasein's proper existence in angst²⁹.

The association of the concept of transcendence with angst in this essay, i.e. the presupposition for characterizing Dasein as a metaphysical being, however, is notably idiosyncratic. It is not founded in explicit reception of the historical development of either the concept of transcendence or the concept of metaphysics. When it comes to 'transcendence', the conceptual difference is obvious. The colloquial conception of transcendence refers precisely to that which stands outside, stretches beyond or stands over the world, like a realm of Ideas or a higher Being. On Heidegger's account, transcendence is exercised only through the fundamental mood of angst and is effectively reduced to a specific, concrete way of Being-in-the-World, which does not in any sense take actual leave of the world. This difference distinguishes Heidegger's view clearly from what he in *Sein und Zeit* termed the theological root of anthropological approaches to the human being, i.e. the definition of man as transcending earthly existence and ascending to God³⁰. When it comes to 'metaphysics', the suggested conceptual similarity is at least justifiable. No matter how diverging conceptions of metaphysics may in general be, it is understandable to consider its subject matter to comprise of all natural things at once, and not one thing in particular, and consider its effect to be equally 'universal', in the sense that its findings are relevant to all of its subject matter. Both concepts, then, are analyzed phenomenologically, through 'subjective, concrete experience'. The modification of entity-directedness is an attempt to conceive a novel metaphysical philosophy that is consistent with Heidegger's assumptions, assumptions that are incompatible with most metaphysical philosophies.

3.3 Heidegger's account of Angst: an insight into the uncanniness of human existence

As Withy has argued, there are four structural aspects to angst's ontological revelation: world-withdrawal (A), world-revelation (B), self-withdrawal (C), self-revelation (D). Although their particular designation is not important altogether, they do clarify the phenomenon as a whole, and

²⁹ GA9: 115, 122.

³⁰ S&Z: 48-49.

help distinguishing it from phenomena that angst bears resemblance to (like anxiety or depression, for instance).

- A. Methodologically speaking angst suspends the everyday, and it is this aspect of angst that could be termed a world-withdrawal. World-withdrawal takes place by entities spontaneously losing their importance altogether³¹. The ready-to-hand 'sinks away'; innerworldly entities lose their salience and do not solicit engagement³². Meaning subsides in the sense that what is in the world seems irrelevant and inconsequential. Things no longer entice Dasein. In this case the resemblance with depression makes for apt description, as Withy explains. The indifference [Gleichgültigkeit] of the world can be likened to the derealization experienced in depression. In derealization one knows what things are, but they do not figure in life as usual – "It's all just there and it's all strange somehow."³³ As a result of indifference, angst can be described as an existential "crisis of meaning" that "strikes with unusual force", in which life as a whole appears to be pointless because entities become problematic³⁴. The world as such has nothing more to offer in angst, an occurrence which cannot be ascribed to any of the entities in particular; angst is an utterly indeterminate mood that affects all entities, which is therefore metaphysical.
- B. Conversely, one could say that angst discloses the world. The way that the world was persists, but it becomes obtrusive. It is now just there, the world as world, as Dasein's ownmost possibility of being in it³⁵. One could even say that this is a realistic insight, in so far as the inability to be anything but in the world becomes apparent. "The world shows up with its structure on display", as Withy puts it, which is to say that angst is a global revelation "*that everything is connected and that things hang together in these kind of ways*"³⁶. Although existence becomes indifferent, Dasein nonetheless is inescapably confronted with the world that it is indifferent to, in the way that it used to simply 'work'. This brings us to the second metaphysical aspect of angst: Being-in-the-world not only becomes flat, it becomes bare in its presence.
- C. A third characteristic of angst is self-withdrawal: the ultimate for-the-sake-of-which that orders Dasein's involvement, i.e. the significance that motivated it, loses its pertinence. The world with which Dasein identified itself has become indifferent, and therefore Dasein's personal identity begins to falter. Withy likens this to depersonalization: "sufferers of depersonalization lose the sense of being a 'me' as opposed to just some 'one'. [...] Usually sufferers attempt to capture the experience of depersonalization using metaphors of automation and self-spectatorship; they feel like 'mechanisms, automatons, puppets – what they do seems not done by them, but happens automatically'"³⁷. In a way, Dasein seems to lose its grip on itself in angst. It does not, however, imply that Dasein loses its ability of self-determination. Angst neutralizes Dasein's inauthentic existence, which is its existence without any sense of self-determination, but a reliance on pre-given structures of its existence. Dasein dissociates itself from what it was in order to arrive at its own existence as it is and must be. Moreover, it collapses every third-personal approach to itself. The insufficiency of such an approach is apparent in descriptions of their own engagement as 'automatic' and their unfulfilled expectations to have a sense of self. The self-withdrawal

³¹ S&Z: 187.

³² Withy 2012: 203.

³³ Citation from Simeon and Abugel 2006: 81. Cited in Withy 2015: 55-58.

³⁴ Polt 1998: 77-78.

³⁵ S&Z: 187.

³⁶ Withy 2015: 59-62.

³⁷ Withy 2015: 62-65.

inherent to angst, its negative sense in respect to Dasein itself, consists in this forced dissociation from the inauthentic; no matter how much Dasein would still want to pursue being the same person in the same way, with the same amount of reliance, the option is precluded by angst.

D. The fourth, self-revelatory aspect of angst is described in a way that can be considered convoluted. The phenomenal quality of angst that is supposed to explain matters is 'uncanniness [unheimlichkeit]'. The account of uncanniness is, according to Withy, "ambiguous" and "confused"³⁸ – a cause for her writing a monograph to clarify the notion. For the sake of clarity, it is useful to track Heidegger's strategy of explanation in his account. A description of what it means to feel uncanniness (a) is shoehorned in between statements of methodological relevance concerning possibility, individuation and solipsism on the one hand³⁹ (b), and a contrast between uncanniness and the 'flight' and 'familiarity' of inauthenticity on the other⁴⁰ (c).

(a) The explanation of uncanniness is stated in one sentence: uncanniness is the expression of the "peculiar indeterminacy of that at which Dasein finds itself: the nothing and nowhere." This formulation harkens back to a description of angst more generally earlier in the same section, in which it is claimed that the 'nothing and nowhere' becomes manifest in angst. Here, this description comes with a caveat: it does not simply designate nothing, or in other words, it does designate something, because it is exceptionally descriptive of Dasein's disclosure as Being-in; it is the most "originary something"⁴¹. The formulation also foreshadows a formulation in the second division, which seems to ignore once again said caveat: in angst "befindet sich das Dasein vor dem Nichts" [Dasein comes face to face with nothingness]⁴². Uncanniness is apparently such a strong indeterminacy that it could be called nothing. Strictly speaking, however, it cannot be, because it still refers to something, i.e. uncanniness. Pure nothingness is in principle not incredibly descriptive of anything. The complication concerning this explanatory sentence is that the indeterminacy, itself a negative word because of its prefix, has to be interpreted positively (of its own) without provided means to do so. This formulation of uncanniness could signal that angst makes Dasein feel forsaken or bereft. It would elaborate the account of angst, but does not explain well how it would be self-revelatory. In turn, these feelings could themselves be interpreted in merely negative ways, compounding the complication (feeling forsaken or bereft could mean Dasein is lacking something determinate).

(b) Heidegger has two important ways in which to formulate the way in which uncanniness is self-revelatory.

He claims on the one hand that angst discloses Dasein as the 'solus ipse [only itself]'. It finds itself in so far as it finds nothing but its own Being-in-the-world. This sense of 'solipsism' should not be confused with a philosophical thesis as to the reality of the self vis-à-vis the unreality of anything external. Angst 'individuates'. It ontologically distinguishes Dasein from any other entity as the entity that it itself has to be ('mineness'). In Dasein's angst, what remains is pure 'Being-in' as a task that only falls upon Dasein itself, no matter how much Being-in is determined in its entity-directedness. Here, Heidegger's

³⁸ Withy 2012: 207-208.

³⁹ S&Z: 188, 190-191.

⁴⁰ S&Z: 188-189.

⁴¹ S&Z: 186-187.

⁴² S&Z: 266.

commentary on the matter relates to the methodological demand that angst as a fundamental mood should confront Dasein with its own nature. It cannot be said to make plausible that angst is self-revelatory, because it would be a cyclical, non-informative explanation: angst is self-revelatory because it confronts Dasein with itself. It lacks an explanation of *how* that works. Perhaps Heidegger is suggesting that a sense of solitude [Einsamkeit] may be inherent to angst, of which it would be unclear how that specifically distinguishes Dasein ontologically.

On the other hand, Heidegger describes the self-revelatory aspect of angst is to say that Dasein becomes 'free for' itself, providing for the opportunity of 'choosing itself', in which Dasein can become 'the possibility that it always already is'. Dasein shifts from the actuality of its existence, to regarding it as 'possibility', i.e. it modalizes its existence in angst. It once more pits Heidegger against metaphysical accounts of possibility, which distinguish the actual world, necessary in the way that it is, from non-actual, merely possible worlds (and in which modalization is a power of thought). In angst, Dasein is confronted with its abilities (the way in which worldhood is 'actual') indifferently as the obtrusive condition for its existence, rendered as the possibility for Dasein to determine itself with respect to these abilities. So, the actual and possible coincide in this instance of Being-in-the-world. Despite the perhaps informative expansion of a non-metaphysical account of possibility, here too the consideration relies heavily on an earlier stated methodological requirement. Angst is supposed to explain Dasein's ownmost possibility, and these considerations merely restate *that* angst reveals Dasein's ownmost possibility, not *how*.

- (c) The contrast between uncanniness and the 'flight' and 'familiarity' of inauthenticity is supposed to show that uncanniness is a feeling of 'being-not-at-home [nicht-zuhause-sein]⁴³. On the one hand, inauthentic Dasein finds comfort and familiarity in its Being-in-the-world, regularly disregarding itself so as to 'be at home' in the world. On the other hand, angst reveals Dasein's inauthenticity to be susceptible to collapse, a threat usually avoided through self-assurances. Considering the fact that this explanation revolves around the threat to inauthenticity, Heidegger is again giving an infelicitous depiction by stressing the suppressive, negative role of inauthenticity without any new information. As Withy rightly states, Heidegger seems to change topic and suggest that some concealments by inauthenticity are more aggravated than others, instead of explaining how concealment takes place⁴⁴. Moreover, to such an analysis of concealment the self-revelatory aspect of angst (that which is being concealed) would be basic. Heidegger seems to fail to explain what is self-revelatory about angst with this contrast, because the contrast can only be clear when the notion of uncanniness would already be clear in the way that it is supposed to function.

The aforementioned features are the components of Heidegger's phenomenological description of angst. It is important to note, however, that the self-revelatory aspect of angst, its uncanniness, is particularly relevant from a methodological standpoint. This aspect is the part of Heidegger's existential analytic that provides an initial alleyway into the problems concerning truth and subjectivity, whereas the other aspects are largely irrelevant (although informative of the phenomenon of angst). The uncanniness of angst is supposed to dispose Dasein in relation to its own

⁴³ Given that the German 'unheimlichkeit' in a more literal translation means 'unhomeliness', this 'nicht-zuhause-sein' is word play. The description therefore proceeds analytically, which in itself could be taken to be an uninformative strategy for explanation.

⁴⁴ Withy 2012: 204-208

nature, such that angst qualifies as the fundamental mood that Heidegger needs for his research⁴⁵. Heidegger's contention is, then, that uncanniness is a foundational feature of Dasein's own existence that can be gleaned from angst. Angst as a fundamental mood is described phenomenologically solely to clarify Dasein's structural uncanniness, to provide Heidegger with the first positive characterization of Dasein's originary self. One would misunderstand how angst is supposed to present findings that are structural to Dasein's existence, when one would doubt that angst could clarify existence as a whole, because as one occurrence in life, an episodic mood, it is merely a part of it. Heidegger claims that angst always already latently determines inauthentic existence⁴⁶. Angst is 'originary', because it does not disclose something occasional and related to particular conditions about Dasein itself as an ordinary mood does, but characterizes Dasein's manifestness to itself as such. This manifestness is characterized as uncanny. One could even argue that strictly speaking uncanniness is not just a latent feature of Dasein's existence, it coincides with it⁴⁷. Carman formulates Heidegger's contention succinctly: "we are at bottom existentially anxious"⁴⁸.

This point is significant when compared to another possible interpretation of angst, that of Pippin, who is notably attentive to determining the role angst plays for Dasein. Angst provides an 'experience of breakdown' in which nothingness "shows itself as having been at work"⁴⁹. A 'structure of significance' was underpinned by 'nothing', "operating and failing in utter contingency"⁵⁰. Angst, as the exposure of this implicit force, is therefore an event that "can happen to us, or not", and that "cannot be redeemed or reflectively grounded by philosophy"⁵¹. In this way, Pippin rightfully depicts angst as revealing an utterly indeterminable force. This force must be uncanniness. Heidegger's text, however, does not allow for ascription of this force to anything but Dasein's own existence. Pippin is unclear about where this radically contingent disruption of Dasein's everyday existence originates, and would be wrong to suggest that 'nothing' actually impinges on Dasein as if it were to originate in an indeterminable alterity. As a fundamental mood angst disposes Dasein to its own existence as such, in such a way that the event should rather be portrayed as a spontaneous, self-inflicted revelation of structural, necessary (and not contingent) importance to Dasein's existence.

The importance Heidegger attaches to the 'originary' insightfulness of angst becomes especially obvious when comparing the diverging phenomenological strategies of Heidegger and Husserl. On this point, Christos Hadjioannou has written a helpful paper. Both Heidegger and Husserl are working on a *prima philosophia* where the methodology attempts to determine the starting point for a human being's legitimate knowledge. Husserl's aim was to conceive of this starting point as the absolutely apodictic evidence of experience. Husserl, from this perspective, was a mentalist, in so far as he thought that apodictic evidence could be achieved through intuition only. On his account, all epistemic justifiers are mental. For Heidegger, this aim can be criticized by showing the analogous role that angst could play as the affective basis for (a kind of) evidence⁵². Angst is not a mental state, and it is not apodictic; it demonstrates Dasein as fundamentally unsettled and worldly. Heidegger in this way shifts the 'epistemic principle' of the phenomenological method from intuition to angst⁵³. The ultimate subjective foundation, as one might call it, on Husserl's view is found through apodictic experience, and on Heidegger's through angst.

⁴⁵ Cf. section 3.1.

⁴⁶ S&Z: 189.

⁴⁷ Withy 2015: 77-81.

⁴⁸ Carman 2015: 142.

⁴⁹ Pippin 2007: 206.

⁵⁰ Pippin 2007: 207.

⁵¹ Pippin 2007: 212.

⁵² Hadjioannou 2019: 73-81.

⁵³ Hadjioannou 2019: 93-96.

Given how central the notion of uncanniness apparently is to Heidegger's existential analytic, it is confusing to have it be accounted for in such a condensed and convoluted manner by Heidegger. It speaks to the famously 'rushed' character of the *Sein und Zeit* publication⁵⁴. Although the account should provide for a reasonable explanation of Heidegger's remaining ideas on 'subjectivity', it seems to fail to do so in a clear manner. In principle, however, Withy believes it should be clear enough what Heidegger is after. In the following section her account is recounted for the sake of clarification.

3.4 Withy on uncanniness & the opacity of making sense

According to Withy, the self that angst reveals is Dasein's activity as a sense-maker. "Angst reveals that this being is *mine to be* it. Sense-making is a *telos* to which I am bound and so to which I am committed. [...] Being a case of Dasein is a task that I am responsible for executing. But it is also a burden with which I am simply saddled: I cannot not take on being a case of Dasein. I must be a sense-maker; things must hang together meaningfully."⁵⁵ In other words, Dasein is an "ongoing exercise of making intelligible", an 'open space' in which entities can come to precedence as meaningful in a certain way ('the clearing')⁵⁶. This explanation highlights an aspect of world-revelation that Heidegger had not highlighted previously in his account of angst; the world as it meaningfully hangs together depends on Dasein's active efforts of constituting that meaningfulness. Dasein takes place in a certain way determined by the world, which, even in its indifferent 'sinking away' will not become 'in itself', a world detached from intentionality. Angst gives, on this account, transcendental insight into the subjective constitution of the way the world appears. Sense-making is Dasein's given essence, and the necessary starting point for existing⁵⁷.

This essential insight is uncanny, because although Dasein has a grasp on itself as grounding the meaningful, this grasp is nonetheless bounded in its insightfulness. This ground is and must remain obscure, is not identifiable, which is why Heidegger would designate uncanniness as 'indeterminacy'. Dasein cannot have any explanation for the fact that it is a sense-maker, and that the world makes sense to it in the way that it does. Sense-making is incomprehensible to itself. In that way, Dasein grasps its own groundlessness in angst⁵⁸. The resulting inexplicability, despite its opacity as a fundamental mood, is not a failure of his research, but its most positive finding. The incomprehensibility is concretized in angst, but otherwise ignored. To restate the point she is making: what makes sense (Dasein) is not meaningful in the same way that the sensible (entities) is, and on this account angst is the special access Dasein has to itself as sense-maker. Strictly speaking, this access cannot be the same kind of sense-making; Dasein simply finds no ground beneath its feet to make sense of. The access to sense-making is not as sensible as the things that are sensible in virtue of sense-making. The conclusion is that Dasein's manifestness to itself is structurally opaque, and this uncanny idea makes angst philosophically insightful. In Withy's words: "Philosophizing fails to achieve its own reflexive self-grasp; it always comes up against and stumbles on the question of human nature or the question of the being of the questioner. It seeks its own ground but always fails to understand itself. So in the experience of philosophizing we encounter our own self-opacity."⁵⁹ This conclusion she illustrates by appropriating a quotation from Heidegger himself: "being a case of Dasein is 'obscure and hidden as regards the *why* of it'"⁶⁰.

⁵⁴ Cf. GA14: 99.

⁵⁵ Withy 2015: 67-68.

⁵⁶ Withy 2015: 71.

⁵⁷ Withy 2015: 75-76.

⁵⁸ Withy 2015: 75-77.

⁵⁹ Withy 2015: 173.

⁶⁰ Withy 2015: 75-76. Cf. S&Z: 276.

In explaining the self-revelatory nature of uncanniness as the insight into Dasein's inexplicable sense-making, Withy is in agreement with Sheehan's work on Heidegger⁶¹. This agreement is discernable when comparing Withy's account of with Sheehan's. According to the latter, in angst Dasein sees "the absurdity, the utter groundlessness, of my engagement with meaning."⁶² Angst shows Dasein to be "homeless" in so far as in it Dasein stops fooling itself and realizes it is a stranger to itself⁶³. This takes place as follows: "In a flash of insight you realize that your world of meaning is based on nothing solid at all and has no final reason that can account for it. The thin wall that previously separated you from your groundless facticity collapses, and you have to face, for the first time, the absurdity of the burden you bear: the need to make sense of things, with no founding or final reason. [...] You encounter the absurd—not just this or that puzzle or problem or mystery to be solved, but the very real fact that making sense is ultimately an ungroundable, futile task into which you are thrown by the sheer fact of being human."⁶⁴ The main take-away for both these authors is that angst shows the inexplicable inevitability of sense-making. Angst is in that sense self-revelatory.

Under this assumption, angst then also explains how Dasein finds its own inauthenticity, i.e. is structurally entity-directed⁶⁵. Entity-directedness is enabled by the ability to be a space of intelligibility. Dasein must flee, because precisely in withholding its own originality can entities come to appear. Withy: "Dasein most comport towards entities (including itself) or discover them in their being because their being is not simply given but is given in the mode of withdrawal, given as uncanny. [...] In being taken from itself in this way (uncanniness), or in being subject to the withdrawal of Being (uncanniness), Dasein is given the possibility and necessity of comporting towards entities (falling)."⁶⁶ Precisely because Dasein has no meaningful way of comporting to itself is it dependent on comporting to given entities, modifying them to become given in fundamental (but usually inconspicuous) uncanniness.

Contextualized by Withy's and Sheehan's appeal to the notion of sense, the one sentence that was supposed to explain uncanniness is clarified. Angst is indeterminate, a kind of 'nothing and nowhere', because it shows the groundless necessity of Dasein's making sense of the world. Angst reveals about Dasein that it is fundamentally opaque to itself, which is the only way that it could be present to itself. As such, angst is self-revelatory because it is an insight in the inexplicable nature of Dasein's existence. Angst confronts Dasein with the opacity of its own existence.

3.5 Contextualizing Heidegger's account of angst with a review of Jaspers' influence

In addition to Max Scheler, Karl Jaspers exerted influence on Heidegger's peculiar mood-focused reception of phenomenological methodology. In reviewing this influence, it becomes clear what motivated Heidegger to take particular interest in angst as a profound ontological insight. In short, angst can be interpreted as, to borrow a concept from Jaspers, a limit-situation. In order to

⁶¹ Reference to Sheehan in this context is made by Withy herself (Withy 2015: 71), and the similarity of their interpretations is elaborated succinctly later in her book (Withy 2015: 232).

⁶² Sheehan 2015: 157.

⁶³ Sheehan 2015: 160.

⁶⁴ Sheehan 2015: 163.

⁶⁵ Cf. section 3.2.

⁶⁶ Withy 2015: 96.

show the merit of doing so, and to show that Heidegger's research interest here converges with that of Jaspers⁶⁷, reference is made to Stephan Käufer's paper on the topic of Jaspers' influence.

Jaspers' *Psychologie der Weltanschauungen* is a research into the nature of existence and selfhood of a human being. For Jaspers, it involves the conceptualization of personality. Personality is here defined as the shape of consciousness in a structured whole, in such a way that it forms dispositions that can be classified in 'spiritual types [Geistestypen]'. Consciousness taking shape in a structured whole, or in other words the establishment of a specific personality that can be typified, is considered a philosophical endeavour. Psychology subsequently studies and describes the spiritual types that result from this philosophical activity. Jaspers' work primarily handles the psychological task, drawing from a variety of philosophical, anthropological and psychiatric sources. His personal engagement with the philosophical task is for the most part merely a methodological issue, at least within the confinements of his bibliography. The typical establishment of personality can be seen as a reaction to experiences of contrariety or impossibility, which are termed limit-situations. In such experiences, a basic value or way of life is being challenged, loosening the grip its holder has on life. These experiences are unbearable, and cannot appear in full clarity, according to Jaspers. Strictly speaking, the experience is a conceptual contradiction. From it, only contradictory conceptual pairs arise, like life and death. In contrast, spiritual types are the relatively stable forms in which individuals come to grips with such a crisis. These forms are grouped in three kinds: first types that do not provide sufficient stability and that disable personality, secondly types that ignore or neutralize the conflict presented by the situation and that result in willful blindness towards the conditions of existing, and lastly types that draw strength from contrariness and that give it a resolute grip on life that 'believes no reason and obeys no reason'⁶⁸.

That Heidegger found this notion of a limit-situation especially promising is possibly explained by an observation Heidegger himself makes in his critique of Jaspers' work: the concept is an amalgamation of Kant's attempt at addressing antinomies of reason and Kierkegaard's ideas on faith and existential commitment⁶⁹. These two philosophers Heidegger held in high regard, and Kierkegaard was influential on Heidegger's account of angst specifically, in so far as Heidegger believed that Kierkegaard had done interesting descriptive, but ultimately too psychologically oriented work on the phenomenon⁷⁰. In his critique of Jaspers' work, he emphasizes that although Jaspers' methodological considerations mischaracterize the matter at hand, they do genuinely intend the right phenomenon, namely the 'I am [Ich bin]' or the 'being of the self [Sein des Selbst]'. A 'surrogate intuition and concept' gets in the way of the 'authentic [eigentliches]' phenomenon. It is in interpreting limit-situations as conceptual contradictions that something essential to existence is lost. Jaspers' consequent methodology (adopting a hold with a contrary conceptual pair at its disposal) has problematic implications, which Heidegger attempts to spell out in three ways. Firstly, he articulates a basic anti-Cartesian, phenomenological worry: one's 'hold on life' is a part of lived experience. Adopting a hold on life cannot consist in establishing a purely intellectual ('spiritual'), attitude that stands over lived experience and remains external to lived experience. Secondly, lived experience is always a first-personal, temporally extended process of self-understanding, in the sense that it includes (or 'is concerned with') its own history⁷¹. This kind of self-having Jaspers' does not account for and seems basic to any subsequent development of personality as a 'grip on life'.

⁶⁷ This convergence is restricted to the research interests of Jaspers' *Psychologie der Weltanschauungen*, and Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit*.

⁶⁸ Käufer 2015: 96-99.

⁶⁹ GA9: 27.

⁷⁰ S&Z: 190.

⁷¹ Cf. section 2.2.

Finally, Jaspers treats life as a whole as a thing-object. This 'objectivating preconception' treats it as a present-at-hand entity, which it is not⁷². Jaspers' approach, in conclusion, needs revision.

For Heidegger, Jaspers' methodological considerations, despite their misapprehension, significantly determine the demands to be placed on any attempt at revision. This is because of a basic principle of Heidegger's hermeneutic outlook on philosophy; conceptualizing Dasein's existence is only to be done in a manner appropriate to Dasein's own self-understanding, as one of Dasein's genuine possibilities in existence. As Käufer puts this point: "Self-construal (or self-interpretation [Selbstausslegung]) partly makes up Dasein, and if we wish to articulate the being of Dasein in explicit concepts, then we need to do so in the manner of construal that is proper to existing itself." Because Dasein is 'the being for whom its being is at issue', its ontological considerations on 'how to be' are essential to its very existence⁷³. From this perspective, Jaspers' mischaracterizations of the limit-situation in terms of a conceptual contradiction have to be taken into account as a possibility proper to Dasein in its study of its own existence. This is not to say that one should look for the conditions of possibility for mischaracterization of Dasein's limit-situations, but specifically for the conditions of possibility for mischaracterization *as conceptual contradictions*. In other words, revision of Jaspers' conception of philosophical method would demand an analysis of how life can entail feelings of contrariety and impossibility, an unbearable destruction of one's normal life, and a difficulty in making sense of the experience itself in a so-called limit-situation.

This substantial methodological interest can alleviate the worry that Heidegger would have merely religious, specifically Christian-theological inspirations to draw on for his phenomenological study of angst. Three important conclusions can be drawn from Heidegger's engagement with Jaspers' work:

1. Jaspers is likely to be an inspiration for Heidegger's choice to address the phenomenon of angst specifically. Their approaches both analyze eminent [ausgezeichnet]⁷⁴ occurrences of existence in order to arrive at an understanding of the nature of human existence. Life is brought to its limit in a particular predicament, as if it were to come up against a brick wall, so that the possibilities of existing are shown to be delineated by necessity.
2. Angst is a fundamental mood in which such a delineation takes place in an exemplary way. It has all the characteristics of Jaspers' notion of a limit-situation. Angst is a feeling of contrariety, in so far as it reveals a fundamental uncanniness in Being-in-the-world. Where Being-in-the-world is characterized by familiarity with and structural relief from self-relation in dependence on the world, in angst Dasein realizes an unsettling tension between its ownmost existence and that of the world. Additionally, angst is a feeling of impossibility and unbearability, in so far as Dasein's everyday existence and self-identity is undermined, without any alternative to resort to. Finally, angst bears features of structural obscurity, in so far as it lays bare the uncanniness of Dasein's opacity to itself. For these reasons, angst can be interpreted as a limit-situation. Because angst does not necessarily have to be understood in the way that Jaspers understands limit-situations, an analysis of this phenomenon is likely to provide for a good case-study that could reroute Jaspers' approach.
3. The conceptualization of such a limit-condition as angst in terms of contradictions is beside the point. Heidegger explicitly opposes the idea that a phenomenon with as

⁷² Käufer 2015: 100-101.

⁷³ Käufer 2015: 101-102.

⁷⁴ Cf. S&Z: 184 & 188 for Heidegger's use of this term in relation to angst.

much inherent contrariety and obscurity as angst must be interpreted as a contradiction. A contradiction (if it exists at all) is a logical object that has two opposing properties at the same time. Heidegger, in analyzing a limit-situation like angst on its own terms, seems to be making a transcendental argument, in which he analyses the phenomenon in which the enabling condition for the idea of a contradiction becomes apparent. In other words, Dasein's uncanniness is the pre-propositional basis that makes logical oppositions possible. For angst, its potential violation of the Law of Non-Contradiction is pertinent only to propositional abstractions from the phenomenon. Upon closer consideration, the idea of a contradiction cannot itself inform a study of angst⁷⁵. This conclusion seems consistent with Heidegger's commitment to giving a pre-propositional account of Dasein.

3.6 Nothingness: a challenge to Withy's account?

From the foregoing, it should be concluded that angst as the insight into uncanniness is the key to the explanatory gap concerning subjectivity in Heidegger's work. The issue must be clarified with reference to Heidegger's phenomenology of moods, considering he believes these to be Dasein's primary access to itself. Being-in as such is always already disposed in Being-in-the-World, and there are fundamental moods that dispose Dasein towards its own Being as such. These fundamental moods are authentic in virtue of this, which is to say that in them Dasein has self-awareness. Angst is such a fundamental mood. In angst, Dasein has a grasp of itself that is infallible, where no identificatory knowledge is necessary, and where the access is irreducible to third-person perspectives. As is clear to Withy, this grasp, in which Being-in-the-World as such becomes uncanny, is fundamental to Heidegger's whole project. *Sein und Zeit's* introduction into a fundamental ontological questioning can be explained in terms of a proper initiation into the issue of angst. That only such an exceptional occurrence can provide a proper sense of self-awareness is unsurprising in light of Jaspers' attempt at determining the human being in its limit-experiences and its consequent influence on Heidegger's work. By reaching its proper limit in angst, Dasein 'delineates' itself for itself.

Withy's explanation of uncanniness, however, does not tell the full story. In the following chapter, an alternative reading of the notion of uncanniness is attempted, to confront two challenges that Withy's account faces but does not consider necessary to address. On the one hand, it is unclear that an account can be given of uncanniness that does not append Heidegger's account with an explanation of how it shows Dasein to be a sense-maker. The notion of sense (*Sinn*) does not figure in Heidegger's account, and Heidegger did not intend for it to have the role in angst that Withy ascribes to it. On the other hand, Withy is dismissive of the importance of one particular notion employed in Heidegger's description of uncanniness, namely nothingness. Nothingness is a technical term that is crucial to a good understanding of uncanniness.

The latter point can be elaborated in a way that points to the source for further consideration of the same point. On a possible reading of Heidegger's deliberate use of the word 'nothing [Nichts]', Withy is structurally undermining the possibility of understanding uncanniness in terms of this notion. If angst reveals 'nothing', then this suggests, cryptically (and perhaps against

⁷⁵ This same reasoning is applicable to moods as a whole in their peculiarity of being 'there and not there' (cf. section 3.1). To think that moods are contradictory and to think that they therefore do not allow for rigid research into their peculiar presence, is to misunderstand the way they are to be brought about and interrogated. Angst is, moreover, exemplary in general for moods and their complicated presence. This is because where moods are generally situational, angst is in virtue of its uncanniness indeterminate of any particular kind of Being-in-the-world.

Heidegger's intentions), that this self-revelation does not consist in anything at all, not even the inevitability of sense-making, which is a suggestion that undermines even the possibility of clarification. Nothing is, after all, obviously nothing. It suggests that angst cannot reveal anything. For Withy, Heidegger's caveat (consisting in admitting that 'nothing and nowhere' should not be interpreted as not designating anything) justifies a dismissal of a special interpretation of 'nothing'. In her own words: "There is nothing special about the 'not' or the negative here; Heidegger could just as well have made his point with 'is'."⁷⁶ Against this claim, it could be said that the suggestion that angst reveals absolutely nothing calls for serious consideration, and subsequently consideration for its nothingness could lead to insights instrumental to a good understanding of Heidegger's fundamental ontological considerations concerning Being.

Disinterest in the notion of nothingness, similar to the disinterest expressed in Withy's remark, would be met with scathing criticism from ('later') Heidegger, as evidenced by his unpublished work on nihilism (from 1946-1948). There, he clearly associates *Sein und Zeit's* account of angst (§40) with an account of the notion of nothingness, giving rise to the following commentary:

"Nur Torheit und Mißwollen, Oberflächlichkeit des Lesens und Hörens oder auch gutmütiges Unvermögen zu denken, kann meinen und die Meinung verbreiten, die Besinnung auf das Nichts betreibe die Absicht, das Nichts in der Bedeutung (im Sinn) des schlechthin Nichtigen als den letzten Sinn der Welt zu verkünden. Vielleicht kommen aber eines Tages doch einige Nachdenkliche hinter den einfachen Gedanken, daß es wohl, um das Nichts aus seinem Grunde zu überwinden, und nicht um bloße Ansichten zu widerlegen, nötig sein möchte, zuvor über das Nichts sich einige Gedanken zu machen. [Only with foolishness and unwillingness, superficiality in reading and listening, or good-natured inability to think, can one be of the opinion or spread the opinion that the meditation on nothingness aims to proclaim the merely negative as the ultimate meaning of the world. Perhaps someday someone thoughtful will catch up to the thought that in order to surpass nothingness from its own ground, and not merely to reject views on the matter, it would be necessary to have some thoughts on nothingness beforehand.]"⁷⁷

Here, Heidegger can be considered to be disingenuous to his readers: given his sparse use of the notion of nothingness in *Sein und Zeit*, once even paired with a caveat denying its usefulness, it would be reasonable to overlook its importance. Nonetheless, it should be clear that, for Heidegger, the account of angst should give (and should have given) rise to considerations concerning specifically the notion of nothingness.

Rather than turning to his later work for elaborations of Heidegger's notion of nothingness, it would instead be better to start with a study of his roughly contemporaneous essay *Was Ist Metaphysik?* (1929), where he employs the concept with particular emphasis. Such an emphasis is epitomized by the infamous sentence "Das Nichts selbst nichtet [the nothing itself nothings]"⁷⁸, generally considered the hallmark of Heidegger's obscure philosophy⁷⁹. In that essay, the main claims are explored via an analysis of angst, in which 'nothing' is the main characterization of what angst reveals⁸⁰. For this added emphasis to the notion, the essay makes for a good source for a plausible reading of the special role nothingness may play in Heidegger's account of uncanniness, despite Withy's dismissal of any such role.

⁷⁶ Withy 2015: 83.

⁷⁷ GA67: 266.

⁷⁸ GA9: 114.

⁷⁹ Carnap famously described it as metaphysical nonsense (Carnap 1931: 229).

⁸⁰ GA9: 112.

The essay's relevance to *Sein und Zeit's* analysis of angst, and the resemblance of aims between works, could however be questioned. If its account of angst is different at all, *Was ist Metaphysik* may be significantly different from *Sein und Zeit's* account, such that it should not be compared to *Sein und Zeit*. The essay might even be a change for the worse despite Heidegger's own intentions and understanding of the matter. A number of reasons should dissuade one from making this argument in favor of a significant difference. First of all, the essay's account of angst is considerably similar to *Sein und Zeit's* account. (a) The essay presents the same methodology of moods in a hardly different way, (b) both metaphysical characteristics of angst (world-withdrawal and world-revelation) return in this account in the exact same manner, (c) Heidegger recycles the idea of everyday entity-directedness that suppresses angst (inauthenticity), and (d) uncanniness is designated an important characteristic of angst, which subsequently leads to conclusions concerning the origin of Dasein's selfhood (authenticity)⁸¹. These characteristics correspond to Withy's enumeration of defining characteristics of angst⁸², and she therefore also does not question the usefulness of *Was Ist Metaphysik* as a resource for questions concerning Heidegger's ideas on uncanniness⁸³. Secondly, the difference concerning the notion of nothingness is a way of highlighting a notion that was already present at a crucial point in *Sein und Zeit's* account; there, it was used with the intention of clarifying the self-revelatory aspect of angst, i.e. uncanniness. The difference in emphasis is therefore more likely to be an elaboration or reiteration of his intended use rather than a new element to Heidegger's thinking. Another difference between the two sources can, thirdly, be found in a more pronounced account of the possibility of philosophical questioning, which in *Sein und Zeit* is an issue that spans the whole book. *Sein und Zeit's* account of angst therefore needs no such account of the possibility of philosophy, and it makes sense for *Was ist Metaphysik* to cut some corners on this point in comparison to *Sein und Zeit*. In conclusion, it is not clear where any significant difference may or may not have arisen (be it intentional or unintentional) between the two accounts of angst. He seems to have been satisfied with his account, not intending to change it much in the essay. Assuming that there is continuity between his thoughts on angst and his later philosophy, it would, moreover, be dubious to say that Heidegger made a significant development that would change his views on this point, since in later works he would only refer to both accounts incidentally, and not necessarily to one more favorably than the other. It seems more likely that the account had little potential for any kind of further development and became obsolete in comparison to new ways of unpacking its philosophical pertinence. The references in later work, like the quote from the 1946-1948 unpublished manuscript on nihilism, show that Heidegger believed these accounts to be of lasting value with regard to specifically its notion of nothingness.

An alternative reading of the notion of uncanniness could additionally clarify uncanniness' relation to truth in such a way that Tugendhat's challenges can be met. Uncanniness undoubtedly relates to the phenomenon of truth because, as Heidegger says, angst's eminence resides in its "existential selfsameness of the disclosing with the disclosed"⁸⁴. The importance of this passing statement by Heidegger must not be overlooked, and confirms that Heidegger's account of angst must be discussed in relation to the truth-discussion surrounding *Sein und Zeit*. Further clarification of the relation between uncanniness and truth specifically is welcome, considering the tension between a notion of disclosure and its explanation as pure opacity. Without any sort of clarification, this tension could cause an *ignotum per ignotius* fallacy, given that immersion in opacity seems to be the opposite of a disclosive experience. Withy's account of uncanniness does address the topic of truth (in doing so she mainly explains consistency on Heidegger's account between the two

⁸¹ For the analysis of moods cf. GA9: 110-111. For world-withdrawal cf. GA9: 111-112. For world-disclosure cf. GA9: 113-114. For inauthenticity cf. GA9: 117-118. For uncanniness cf. GA9: 111-112. For the nature of Dasein GA9: 115.

⁸² Cf. section 3.3.

⁸³ Withy 2015: 80-101.

⁸⁴ S&Z: 188.

phenomena), but her stance on the Tugendhat discussion is not addressed. Although she does account for uncanniness as an event of Being that Heidegger designates truth, with structural moments of revelation and withdrawal implied, there is no account of how Heidegger is justified in designating this a truth-phenomenon in virtue of a basic commitment to the Law of Non-Contradiction in the shape of an opposition to untruth (assuming Withy would argue he would be justified). Additional explanation could assess whether she and Heidegger are right in using the term 'truth' here, or would be better off using another word for this fundamental phenomenon of human existence.

Chapter 4: A dialethic understanding of human existence

(4.1 On the dialetheist reception of Heidegger's account of angst)

4.1.1 Violation of the Law: the dialethic case for the 'contradictoriness' of angst

Withy's account of angst could be considered the 'standard' account of angst, in so far as it is consistent with Sheehan's popular interpretive framework. The view developed here deviates from Withy's, specifically with regard to the descriptor for uncanniness, i.e. nothingness, and its consequences for Heidegger's conception of truth. It must be established as an original alternative to Withy's account. To this end, the following sections adhere to this strategy: 1. Another alternative, an account given of angst by dialetheist authors like Graham Priest and Filippo Casati, is introduced. For this, it must be established that the view presents an interesting account of relevant source material. With the same material at hand, the dialetheist account takes seriously a topic that Withy does not take seriously, i.e. nothingness, entailing its own validity as an alternative to Withy's. Because the proposed view also addresses this topic, the dialetheist view (externally) corroborates the validity of it as an alternative. (4.1.1 & 4.1.2) 2. Some of the problematic aspects of the dialetheist view are noted in order to temper the suggestion that it would be a sufficiently accurate account of angst by itself. It clarifies what the proposed view does not intend to imply, given that it must be markedly different from the dialetheist interpretation. (4.1.3) 3. A crucial feature is extracted from the dialetheist view, and appropriated by the proposed view. This feature is ineffability. The assumption of ineffability as a feature of the uncanniness of angst is inherent to a comparable appreciation of the notion of nothingness, which both the dialetheist and the proposed view have (but not the standard view). In virtue of nothingness supposedly being the central descriptor of uncanniness, ineffability (its feature) becomes instrumental to the interpretation of the notion of uncanniness (as the defining feature of angst). Moreover, the feature then enables a response to existing explanatory gaps, where the standard view does not. (4.1.4 & 4.1.5) In that way, the following (4.1) aims to establish a reading of uncanniness as primarily to be understood via Heidegger's notion of nothingness, or in other words, to portray the experience of angst as an experience of Dasein's ineffable opacity.

In order to take the first step, a choice with regard to source material for a dialetheist account of Heidegger's philosophy must be made. Dialetheism is a distinct philosophical tradition that claims that 'dialetheias' exist. A dialetheia is any true statement that entails something is and is not the case at the same time (i.e. stating that $\alpha \wedge \neg\alpha$)¹. In other words, dialetheism endorses the existence of contradictions. Reception of Heidegger's work within dialetheist research, certainly not its main research objective, is part of an effort to bring a "towering figure in the history of continental philosophy" "into productive engagement with analytical philosophy"² (which is to say: specifically with dialetheist metaphysics). It shows an overlap between Heidegger and the dialetheic analytical philosophers by pointing out where the former endorses the existence of contradictions, just like the latter have done. The following survey of dialetheism focuses on Casati's views as the main proponent of a dialethic understanding of Heidegger's work. Specifically, it focuses on how Casati invites readers to understand Heidegger's account of nothingness as entailing dialetheism. The survey in this way narrows down significantly the dialetheist reception of his work, as many have commented on how Heidegger's fundamental ontological statements on Being already entail dialetheist logic. In a similar vein, Casati claims that dialetheism can be inferred from two main

¹ Priest 2006: 3-6.

² Cf. Casati & Wheeler 2016: 486.

assumptions Heidegger seems to make: 'the Being of beings' and the 'ontological difference'³. With regard to the restriction of its scope, this survey simply assumes that the dialetheist approach to Heidegger is largely the same with regard to both Being and nothingness, considering the fact that the dialetheists believe these are identical on Heidegger's account⁴. Additionally, the survey assumes that the alternative to this approach to the dialetheist reception, i.e. a survey that includes reception of the more general fundamental-ontological considerations, would not be (as) conducive to an original understanding of the notion of uncanniness. It strictly examines the interpretation of Heidegger's notion of nothingness, demonstrating the usefulness of philosophical consideration for this notion.

The key to the dialetheist interpretation can be found in Casati's reading of *Was Ist Metaphysik*, where it gets elaborated. Priest often echoes the interpretation and its citations. *Was Ist Metaphysik* opens with a discussion of science as a unique venture of mankind, which in researching 'entities as they are' and nothing but that dispenses with any research into nothingness [Nichts]. Science holds itself to the standard of researching nothing that is not there, i.e. anything that is definitely there. In distinguishing itself in this way, it invariably designates nothingness as something that is just not there⁵. Heidegger's response consists in conceiving of a method that could research nothingness where science could not: a philosophy that proceeds via the fundamental mood of angst. Ultimately, this attempt is not just a topical employment of philosophy to address a question otherwise addressed in a dissatisfactory way, but is another occasion for Heidegger to attempt to conceive of philosophy in a way that is true to its metaphysical roots. The analysis of angst is central to him, because it leads to conclusions about what Dasein is, in a manner similar to how *Sein und Zeit's* existential analytic is supposed to lead to such conclusions. Here, the main conclusion is that Dasein is the 'placeholder of nothingness'⁶. In order to arrive at this conclusion, Heidegger starts dissecting the problem of nothingness right after its introduction in relation to science. On first glance, he observes, it seems that the question deprives itself of its own substance. In positing nothingness as its subject matter it still designates nothingness as this or that. The attempt makes it into an entity, which is the opposite [Gegenteil] of what it is supposed to be, resulting in it becoming nonsense [widersinnig]. In other words, there is a contradiction at play that violates the Law of Non-Contradiction [Satz vom Widerspruch]. With this law of thought logic dictates that contradictions are impermissible, to be avoided and simply impossible to think. Logic, however, also assumes that negation [Verneinung] (i.e. the logical operation \neg) is an act of thought

³ Casati 2017: 14. Casati's main argument for dialetheism in Heidegger's more general description of his own philosophy (as the question of Being) can be summed up as follows. 'The Being of beings', according to Casati, indicates that which makes entities as entities. The assumption of 'the ontological difference' is the stipulation of something (Being) that would not be an entity itself. In such a way Heidegger avoids the infinite regress implied by invoking something as an explanation for why anything is anything (Casati 2017: 18-22). However, a serious contradiction remains: in speaking of Being, Being is nonetheless reified. In addressing Being, 'the question of Being' therefore asks about something that Being is not. Being, therefore, is and is not an entity. In other words, as soon as the claim is made that one cannot refer to Being, one does in fact refer to it as that which cannot be referred to. Heidegger takes on the self-referential (and therefore problematic) project of "making sense of what makes sense" (Casati 2017: 29-31). This argument is consonant with Graham Priest's construal of the matter as a denotational paradox (cf. Priest 2015a: 9-10). However, Priest believed that this dialetheia was there despite Heidegger's intentions, and had the impression that Heidegger never challenged the Law of Non-Contradiction (Priest 2001: 249). Priest therefore would not have claimed that Heidegger endorsed dialetheism, although he should have, and for that reason Casati can be considered the main proponent of Heidegger's commitment to dialetheism. Casati believes that Heidegger here did imply but not yet endorse a dialetheic approach, although in later work he would explicitly make the endorsement (Casati 2017: 36).

⁴ Casati 2017: 15, 88.

⁵ GA9: 103-107.

⁶ GA9: 111 & 118.

that *is* permissible and certainly possible. Some sense of ‘nothingness’, in other words, seems to be employed. The first clue as to an approach to the problem of nothingness is the acknowledgement that there must be some source for the use of negation if logic is to be consistent at all, and that the thought of its source (‘nothingness [Nichts]’ rather than ‘not [Nicht]’) is a possibility that is unique relative to thoughts permissible by logical laws⁷. That is where the ‘metaphysics of angst’ come in.

Given this framing of the problem, it is not surprising that certain dialetheist philosophers take Heidegger to be defending the existence of a dialetheia, i.e. a contradictory object, with his notion of nothingness. Heidegger admits the relevance of the notion of a contradiction when he says that talking about nothing deprives itself of its own object⁸. Casati determines the topic of Heidegger’s argument accordingly as bearing on the foundational functioning of this contradictory object. Casati reads the argument as follows: “Nothingness makes entities be because an entity is (and can only be) in virtue of the fact that it is not nothing. In other words, an entity is something and not nothing because it stands out against nothingness. From this point of view, the necessary condition to have entities is to have nothingness too because, if there were no nothingness, entities could not stand against it. If there was no nothing, there could be no entities either.”⁹ The dialetheic reading, then, claims that Heidegger means to account for the way in which nothingness makes entities be. Nothingness is the ground for entities as entities¹⁰. Certainly, Casati is correctly reading Heidegger’s considerations as hinging on the grounding of entities by nothingness in entities ‘standing against’ nothing. Heidegger talks about how in angst nothingness opens up Dasein to entities as such, i.e. ‘that they are – and not nothing’. Nothingness enables entities as such. Nothingness is “not a counterconcept to entities, but belongs originally to their essential being”¹¹. In this dialetheist interpretation of the notion of nothingness, there are three striking themes that are important to consider: its use of the notion itself (a), the idea of an ultimate ground (b), and a specifically fundamental-ontological orientation that can be embedded in a larger philosophical tradition, i.e. metaphysics (c).

- a) Casati provides for a positive appreciation of the term ‘nothingness’, which one might strike as unusual. Dialetheists like Casati distinguish between a more common, everyday use of the word and a more philosophical way to use the word, in order to clarify the peculiarity. In everyday use, the word ‘nothing’ is used as a quantifier; for instance, when someone states there is “nothing in the fridge”, then no amount of ready-to-hand entities can be found there. In such a scenario, one is using the word merely to negate. A basic, philosophical way to use the word (something largely peculiar to dialetheists, who would believe it makes sense to do so) is to read it instead as a noun-phrase. Nothingness is ‘something’ in its own right¹². Heidegger echoes this consideration: according to him, nothingness is not just ‘no thing’, i.e. the negation of an entity. It is nothing of itself. In angst nothingness ‘nothings’¹³.
- b) Describing the uncanny experience of angst in terms of the explication of a grounding relation might seem like a somewhat formal approach to it, but the description is apt from the perspective of angst’s ‘groundlessness’, i.e. the feeling that one hits an ultimate inexplicability,

⁷ GA9: 107-108.

⁸ Reference is made to this passage from *Was Ist Metaphysik* (previous footnote) in Casati 2017: 91, Priest 2014a: 207, Priest 2014b: 151.

⁹ Casati 2017: 90.

¹⁰ In the same way that Being is, for Being and nothingness are identical on this account.

¹¹ GA9: 114-115. Priest also cites these passages in Priest 2014a: 180 & 208, “Das Nichts ist weder [...] zum Wesen selbst”, and “In der hellen Nacht [...] Seiende al sein solches.”

¹² Casati 2017: 88. Cf. Priest 2014a: 55-56.

¹³ GA9: 114.

where existence becomes baseless in such a way that existence could not feel otherwise¹⁴. Moods, as Heidegger explained, are ‘without why’¹⁵, and angst makes this inexplicability especially explicit. Paradoxically, the uncanniness of angst is considered a ground despite angst intuitively reading as an experience of groundlessness, because although one reaches in angst an inexplicability, this inexplicability *is* telling for what Dasein must face in its existential analysis. Heidegger considers such an ultimate explication fundamental rather than trivial, because, inspired by Jaspers, he approaches angst as a limit-situation that delineates human existence, giving humans a sense of what it means for them to be. ‘Nothingness’, i.e. the uncanniness of human existence or ‘the revelation of angst’, is in this way considered a constitutive feature of human existence. Despite the peculiarity of such a grounding approach, dialetheists like Casati see particular merit in addressing this grounding function of nothingness, because the issue can be formalized in a non-traditional¹⁶ way without any serious problems for logical validity (for instance: Casati himself develops an inconsistent grounding theory called ‘parafoundationalism’ on the basis of this understanding of nothingness¹⁷). Any proof for the possibility of such formalization is not particularly relevant here. Moreover, an accurate representation of all of Heidegger’s considerations on (‘abyssal’) grounding within this framework would be beyond the scope of this research.

- c) The question concerning nothingness perhaps might seem a dubious research subject from the standpoint of phenomenological methodology. Phenomenology often confines itself to evident experiences, and nothingness, at least intuitively, may be considered as being not evident at all in virtue of its opacity. Heidegger is, however, also embedding his phenomenological research within the context of a broader tradition, i.e. metaphysics. He does so by addressing one of metaphysics’s classical topics: the relation of what is to what is not, i.e. being and nothingness. This topic one could designate the ‘fundamental-ontological’ question of metaphysics, if one is willing to concede some foundational role to the notion of being that is at stake. The dialetheist reconstruction of Heidegger’s account stresses the pertinence of such a stance on the tradition. One sign of Heidegger’s engagement of this metaphysical research focus is his insistence on the claim that in angst ‘entities as a whole’ are at stake. In other words, for Dasein, everything that exists is on the line, as much as nothing is, in angst¹⁸. Another sign is his insistence on scrutinizing the notion of transcendence. The grounding of entities in nothingness designates the idea of ‘transcending towards the world’ that is central to entity-directedness as such (the explanandum in Heidegger’s account of angst, as claimed by Withy¹⁹). A better understanding of this concept could, according to Heidegger, provide for a clarification of metaphysics, if interpreted in tandem with the etymological root of its label, ‘meta’-physics. (He makes this claim under the assumption that ‘transcendence’ and the ‘meta-’ of metaphysics have a mutually informative meaning.) The notion of transcendence is traditionally associated with the difference between something and nothing, and is in that respect obviously relevant to the Leibnizian question of why there is something rather than nothing, which Heidegger acknowledges at the end of the essay as the fundamental question of metaphysics²⁰.

¹⁴ Sheehan calls it ‘groundless’ for instance (Sheehan 2015: 157).

¹⁵ S&Z: 134.

¹⁶ Which is to say, in a way that conflicts with traditional assumptions in logic, like the Law of Non-Contradiction.

¹⁷ Casati 2017: 98-138.

¹⁸ Priest explains the way in which notions of ‘everything’ and ‘nothing’ are comparable, for any dialetheist approach to the metaphysical question of being and non-being: these notions are ambiguous, in so far as they can be bounded and unbounded. ‘Everything’ refers usually, as a quantifier, to a restricted set of things, a particular totality determined by the context of utterance. It also can refer, however, as a noun, to the set of absolutely all things (Priest 2014a: 54-55). The same was said to be true of nothingness.

¹⁹ Cf. 3.2.

²⁰ GA9: 122.

Notably, the way in which Heidegger connects the question of nothingness to the Leibnizian question recurs in later work, namely in *Einführung in die Metaphysik* (originally from 1935). It underlines the importance of this interest in the metaphysical topic of being and nothingness for him. The *Einführung* opens with the same Leibnizian question, endorses its absolute priority for philosophy, and elaborates its ramifications as a means to setting guidelines for the remainder of the book's content.

The preceding three points dialetheists regard as evidence of Heidegger's dialetheism, in so far as he shares the project of addressing something contradictory (i.e. nothingness) as a means to do foundational metaphysics. The *Einführung* is relevant, because in the eyes of the dialetheists it provides for further textual evidence that Heidegger may be a kindred spirit. In that book, Heidegger notes firstly that the Leibnizian question is posed metaphysically, meaning: the question is posed with regard to entities as such ("Why is there something?"), and then proceeds to wonder why the question additionally addresses nothingness ("...rather than nothing?"). The addition appears redundant, he says, in so far as it does not add anything to the inquiry into the ground of entities that came before it. Moreover, the addition is dangerous in so far as it offends the rules of logic and stimulates nihilism. Notably, the first fault is stated as the way in which nothingness is approached as if it were something in speaking about it – leading to a contradiction. Ultimately, Heidegger states that both these faults hold inquiry into nothingness up to standards that may seem rigid but that are alien to it. Philosophy can be compared to literature and poetry in how it says nothing (in an 'unusual' way), and the additional part of the metaphysical question can be regarded as a way to not take entities as such for granted in addressing them. It leaves open possibilities that properly belong to them²¹. Later in the book, Heidegger draws an explicit comparison between Being and nothingness. He notes that on the one hand Being seems utterly indeterminate, since it is decidedly different from any entity whatsoever, and on the other hand Being seems determinate, since one assumes its difference from nothingness (for instance, in wondering whether a window *is or is not* closed). Noticing and endorsing the reality of this evident contradiction, Heidegger believes to have found a way to conceive the word 'Being' as peculiarly meaningless, incomparable to anything else (but nothingness)²². In conclusion, although Heidegger never makes the claim that he believes contradictions really exist, he does strongly suggest he believes such a claim (with regard to the real conceptual tensions involved in usage of the word 'Being'). The continuity between these passages and the ones from *Was Ist Metaphysik* suggest moreover that this was not an incidental assent to dialetheism. All previously cited passages in this section are therefore highlighted by dialetheists as proof of Heidegger's dialetheism. At the very least, these passages show that Heidegger is invested in the classical, metaphysical topic of nothingness for the sake of his conception of philosophy, and is willing to explore non-traditional implications of the topic even to the point of apparent contradiction. The agreement between Heidegger and the dialetheists resides in precisely this shared willingness, in comparison to the traditional metaphysical approaches to this topic. To that extent, an affinity with dialetheist research has been demonstrated. Heidegger is interested in the way the Law of Non-Contradiction functions in relation to the notion of nothingness, and he is not interested in a traditional restriction of philosophical activity to that which conforms to its confinements, abandoning the notion.

4.1.2 Discussion: the potential implications of various mentions of the Law of Non-Contradiction

There seems to be, however, a tension in Heidegger's approach when comparing this investment in a dialetheic topic to his reception of Jaspers. In response to Jaspers, Heidegger objects

²¹ GA40: 17-22.

²² GA40: 58-60.

to conceptualizing a limit-situation in terms of a contradiction, and concludes that a study of contradictions cannot inform the study of a limit-situation (like angst and its revelation of nothingness). From that perspective, it might be concluded that the Law of Non-Contradiction is simply irrelevant to the foundation of entities in nothingness. Dismissing the principle seems to be a matter of indifference for Heidegger, not of active opposition.

This tension complicates a straightforward dialetheic reception of Heidegger's thinking, which claims that Heidegger considers nothingness something that violates the Law of Non-Contradiction. Nothingness 'violates' the law when there is a conflict between its 'contradictoriness' and the impermissibility of contradictions according to the law (the law's successful application). Most certainly, as the passages from *Was ist Metaphysik* show, it is true that Heidegger acknowledges on the one hand the relevance of the law, and on the other the suggestion of a violation of it. However, Heidegger does not clearly endorse the idea that his notion of nothingness is actually a contradiction in violation with the Law of Non-Contradiction. He merely thinks his mention of nothingness could be suggestive. In other words, he merely notes a relevant possibility for interpretation, and divests by turning his attention elsewhere (to angst as a fundamental mood). It is possible that the Law of Non-Contradiction, and the interpretation of nothingness as a contradiction, simply do not apply. It is, after all, completely consistent for Heidegger to show keen awareness of how the principle could apply to his subject matter, and for him to freely invite interpretation of the subject matter as contradictory, while simultaneously noting the redundancy of such interpretation and suggesting unproblematic eschewal of the principle. In that case, the observation that Heidegger's approach does not comply with the law becomes inessential, because the logical law is, technically speaking, irrelevant in so far as any attempt at application does not tell us anything about the 'content' or 'function' of the notion of nothingness. As a consequence, one could conclude that Heidegger is merely clarifying the redundancy of the Law of Non-Contradiction whenever his language may suggest otherwise.

The assumption of the law's non-applicability can be confirmed by a closer look at a passage from Heidegger's 1957 Freiburg Lecture *Grundsätze des Denkens*. There, it is obvious that there is no actual interaction between the core content of his philosophy and the Law of Non-Contradiction, on the basis of which one could confirm or disconfirm a violation of it. Heidegger opens these lectures with some considerations in relation to the three classical, formal 'principles of thought': the Law of Identity, the Law of Non-Contradiction, and the Law of the Excluded Middle. These are acknowledged to be self-evident. In making the attempt to think these laws through, one seemingly enters into a paradox: one cannot thematize these laws in thinking, because they are the laws proper to thinking. One has already assumed them in commencing the activity, and any thinking that thematizes these laws would therefore overstep its bounds. This appearance of paradox dissolves, Heidegger claims, when one considers how these laws have actually been thematized in the history of philosophy. Dialectical thinkers, like Fichte, Schelling and Hegel for example, have all given the matter due consideration²³. Particularly Hegel is an interesting figure, because he showed that firstly these laws really do apply to thought, and that secondly thinking also really contradicts itself wherever it proffers itself as being right. Thinking is, as the second point states, allowed a restricted violation. In other words, in typical Hegelian fashion, Hegel endorses the possibility of thought to do what it forbids itself to do, because in this case negativity is that which spurs on thought's actual 'movement' and prompts thought to be in real conflict with itself. Out of all the dialecticians, it is Hegel and contemporary poet-philosophers Novalis and Hölderlin that seek to "annihilate the principle of non-contradiction in order to save it as a law pertaining to the reality of the real", as their 'highest task'²⁴.

²³ GA79: 81-83.

²⁴ GA79: 86-88.

Casati cites the former part of this quote, about the annihilation of the principle, (and not the latter, notably 'dialectical' part, about its salvation,) to show that Heidegger "took seriously" the task²⁵. With this citation Casati misrepresents Heidegger's statement: it should be clear that Heidegger ascribed this endeavor to the dialecticians, and that Heidegger is after a way of thinking that is distinct from theirs²⁶. Heidegger's conclusion does not support Casati's claim either. The conclusion Heidegger draws about the formal laws of thought is that they are in no way illuminating, which is to say they are not at all self-evident. Instead they must be acknowledged to be obscure, which could be conducive to thinking proper, where thinking proper consists in 'acknowledging the unsettling unavoidability of a darkness in which humanity always already resides'²⁷. Here, the envisaged philosophical acknowledgement of 'darkness' is clearly no dialectical activity, where the Law of Non-Contradiction is deliberately violated in a way that at the same time relegates its applicability to another context. The point of this conclusion seems to be, contra Casati, that these principles of thought do not govern his conception of thinking at all. It remains unclear, then, why 'the darkness in which humanity resides' would leave anything substantial like a law to engage with in this kind of thinking, and why this thinking's acknowledgement is not simply indifferent to the Law of Non-Contradiction.

The lack of an interaction between Heidegger's thinking and the logical application of the Law of Non-Contradiction seems to spell trouble for the validity of any dialetheist interpretation of Heidegger. Repeated reference to the law, like the references in *Was ist Metaphysik, Einführung in die Metaphysik*, or *Grundsätze des Denkens*, seem to have the aforementioned purpose of warning a reader of the potential misapplication of the law. Heidegger's consistency on this point is notable, however. The frequent mentions could be considered didactically considerate, but, at the same time, would then be dispensable in terms of their contribution to Heidegger's notion of nothingness, and unprompted. There is reason to believe that, on the contrary, the mention of the Law of Non-Contradiction is indispensable, and that it is meant as an elaboration. That the law does not apply to the matter at hand does not entail that there's no descriptive qualities of nothingness to be gleaned from such a mention. Upon closer consideration, one can see his remarks are entirely functional, and not at all dispensable.

This nuance is apparent from one such mention in the earlier discussed²⁸ work *Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik*. There, he makes it abundantly clear that any objection to his subject matter via an appeal to the Law of Non-Contradiction is "not relevant to philosophy at all". It "has nothing to say" and is "empty and non-binding"²⁹. To this extent, Heidegger seems to brush off the relevance of the law. Although this could be taken to be a dialetheist move, in so far as he does not aim to uphold the law, it could also be taken to be undialetheic, in so far as the subject matter he is talking about has nothing to do with logical laws. In the latter case, any suggestion of dialetheism would be entirely unproductive. Additionally, however, he notes that anyone who makes such an objection has become aware of a domain of thought that is ultimate, extreme, uncertain and perilous. He affirms that precisely in this domain true philosophy can be found, when the awareness of the domain becomes a readiness for it³⁰ (and the objections cease). In virtue of such readiness can a philosopher begin to explore the nature of moods, and the extent to which they 'are there and not there', which is what Heidegger does further on in that work. An awareness of the domain 'beyond the law', in conclusion, prefigures a conception of Dasein, as Heidegger contends in the rest of that book. In that sense, Heidegger is not dismissive at all. The contrast with a view that upholds the law he deems

²⁵ Casati 2019: 1021.

²⁶ He ultimately makes an appeal to 'recognizing another thinking as foreign' (GA79: 95-96).

²⁷ GA79: 92-94.

²⁸ Cf. 3.1.

²⁹ GA29-30: 26-29.

³⁰ Ibid.

fruitful, because his view and the contrastive view share awareness of the same domain. In other words, Heidegger's subject matter is in a domain, which the imagined logician's response shows awareness of. One could also imagine this logician to be a dialetheist, who is sympathetic to a disregard for the Law of Non-Contradiction, and who would be inclined to characterize the domain as contradictory. In that case, the point of Heidegger's rhetorical device does not change: the suggestive invocation of the redundancy of the Law of Non-Contradiction indicates that he shares awareness of a research subject with the logician, and that he intends to investigate it.

To reformulate the point, Heidegger deliberately invites a dialetheic interpretation of his statements (be it sympathetic or unsympathetic to the aim of upholding the Law of Non-Contradiction), because such an interpretation would be aware of features of his conception of philosophy that could otherwise be overlooked. In principle, then, there should be an affinity of Heidegger's work with dialetheism. Without having elaborated the features that would make the content matter of Heidegger's thinking violate the Law of Non-Contradiction, one can conclude that examining philosophically the domain that would be excluded by that law should be informative of Heidegger's thinking. This of course does not entail that Heidegger shares the same project as the mentioned dialetheists, despite sharing the same domain for that practice. In so far as Heidegger conceptualizes the same subject matter in a unique way his dialetheist approach should be considered special. In a comparison, it becomes clear that the merit of the ordinary dialetheist account lies in its accentuation of the most 'perilous' feature of Heidegger's approach. The ordinary account does so by focusing on interpreting Heidegger's notion of nothingness and the inherent contrariety of that notion. The similarity is a shared 'research object'. Heidegger and the ordinary dialetheists are dissimilar, however, in so far his philosophy is not the assertion of the existence of some dialetheic object(s), as is clear from the foregoing. What remains to be done, in terms of a dialetheist reception of Heidegger's dialetheist affinities, is to elaborate the special feature(s) of his philosophy that would be decidedly dialetheist despite this difference.

If it is true that Heidegger has a dialetheist affinity, then one should be able to find a statement that better encapsulates this affinity. One such statement, uncited by dialetheist interpreters, can be found in the 1939 unpublished manuscript *Geschichte des Seyns*, section 11. Here, his philosophy of Being Heidegger describes as 'Wi(e)der-spruch [Contra-/re-diction]', and claims that "der Wider-spruch ist geschichtlich [the contra-diction is historical]"³¹. This section can be considered a noteworthy, positive appropriation of language that is highly similar to dialetheist claims about the reality of contradictions. Although Heidegger, in characteristic fashion, seems to be exploring vocabulary rather than making claims or endorsements, it is clear that he is developing a project that is conceptually akin to the dialetheists. The difference seems to be that where the ordinary dialetheists take for granted the notion of a contradiction, Heidegger seems willing to explore other conceptual tools to address similar issues³². By reconceptualizing the basic idea of a contradiction, something that he had already explicitly considered occasioned by limit conditions in response to Jasper's conceptualization of these as contradictions, Heidegger develops a unique dialetheist project of his own.

In comparison to the foregoing exploration of the dialetheist reception of Heidegger's philosophy, Withy's dismissive gesture towards Heidegger's notion of nothingness seems inappropriate. There are sufficient grounds to hold that there may be a dialetheist-inspired explanation to the notion of uncanniness, which dedicates serious philosophical consideration to 'nothingness'. Heidegger designates uncanniness' central descriptor, nothingness, as the source of

³¹ GA69: 13-15.

³² An exploration of the themes discussed in this particular section of *Geschichte des Seyns* is something that can be done elsewhere. Here the section functions as proof that there is a definite positive appraisal of a dialetheist sentiment in Heidegger's work.

all negations, as a noun referring to absolutely nothing, as a grounding force for entities, and finally, as the conceptual resource to think through the metaphysical nature of the practice of philosophy. Additionally, these characterizations of nothingness lead him to consistently acknowledge the possibility of interpreting his philosophy as defying the Law of Non-Contradiction, while denying the law's applicability. The merit of his acknowledgement lies in highlighting the peculiar nature of the matter at hand, which one may expect to defy the law, but only at the cost of being unduly presumptive. The peculiar nature of the matter at hand demands a special kind of philosophy, which addresses the topic of nothingness. It implies a dialetheic philosophy, but not necessarily in virtue of an assumption of nothingness as a contradiction specifically.

Nothingness is, contra Withy's dismissive appreciation, a topic in Heidegger's work that invites independent, substantial philosophical analysis that could change the way Dasein is understood in its ownmost foundational activity, qualifying the concept of uncanniness that is central to Withy's work³³. *Was Ist Metaphysik* is, in this regard, the main resource that confirms the idea that an understanding of nothingness is central and indispensable to Heidegger's philosophy. *Was Ist Metaphysik*'s focus on nothingness corresponds neatly with Heidegger's later comment on angst in *Sein und Zeit* from the unpublished work about nihilism³⁴, and it stresses the same point by claiming that only the revelation of nothingness can let "the full strangeness of entities come over us"³⁵. This strangeness, that entities 'stand out' in virtue of nothingness, is the issue of how nothingness grounds entities. Only this issue is, according to Heidegger, conducive to 'the inquirer questioning herself'³⁶. Consideration of the dialetheist reception of Heidegger's work provides a clue as to how nothingness is in this sense the foothold of philosophy, despite its paradoxical nature. Given that Sheehan's paradigm for interpreting Heidegger deeply resonates with Withy's main claims about what uncanniness is, further dialetheism-inspired interpretation of Heidegger's notion of nothingness could have implications for the larger context of Heidegger scholarship.

4.1.3 Review of problematic aspects of the ordinary dialetheic view

There is a feature of 'the strangeness that is nothingness' that substantiates the affinity that in principle should exist between a normal dialetheist approach and Heidegger's philosophy: ineffability. The dialetheist literature, in so far as it emphasizes this feature, corroborates reading Heidegger's notion of uncanniness with a particular emphasis on nothingness. One could however argue that the dialetheist account fails to convincingly corroborate the proposed view, if the dialetheist understanding of Heidegger's notion is simply off the mark. The understanding would be off the mark when it does not understand anything concerning Heidegger's notion, but simply intuits the right thing wrongly. The dialetheist account could be accused of making this mistake simpliciter, because, as the foregoing has shown, it misrepresents nothingness as a contradiction without qualification. An error theory of how the dialetheists came to wrongly interpret Heidegger's notion of nothingness in this way ensures the validity of their account as source material for the extrication of a core insight. Such an error theory would additionally clear the examination of the dialetheist account from any suggestion that the dialetheist account would be the correct interpretation (making the proposed view a derivative or an unqualified appropriation), or that the dialetheist account would be an incorrect interpretation (making the ordinary dialetheist account a

³³ The point is not to portray an ordinary meaning-oriented interpretation of uncanniness as upholding in some way the Law of Non-Contradiction, such that it would be conflicting with the account here. In this chapter, it is merely claimed that further investigation of nothingness and of the relevance of dialetheism is informative in its own right.

³⁴ Cf. 3.6.

³⁵ GA9: 121.

³⁶ Ibid.

questionable frame of reference for the proposed view). For that reason, in the following, a number of exegetical problems with the dialetheist account are summed up and explained in terms of their deviation from assumptions crucial to the Heideggerian view, so as to make the error understandable. Essentially, such a clarification delineates the context in which the shared focus on ineffability could be insightful, before any attempt at a standalone explanation of this feature.

Dialetheists are philosophers of logic. The intention of a dialetheist account is to show that Heidegger endorses dialetheism, by referring to where he does so and explaining how, making Heidegger's explanation of nothingness a case in point³⁷ (and inadvertently making the context of that explanation irrelevant to the argumentation). Dialetheist literature, when focused on exegesis for the sake of accurate portrayal of the history of philosophy and defiance of traditional strands of logic in it, testifies to various ways in which dialetheism is endorsed. The commitment to a philosophy of logic is, however, problematic from the orthodox Heideggerian point of view. If Dahlstrom is right, Heidegger's phenomenological research expressly counters 'logical prejudice'³⁸. A dialetheist is prejudiced, and in conflict with Heidegger's thinking, when rendering nothingness as a contradiction while abstracting logically from the experience of angst itself. A contradiction, after all, is a propositional object that is defined by having opposite properties. A dialetheia is defined as the conjunction of a statement with its negation, which, logically speaking, is rendered in the same way ($\alpha \wedge \neg\alpha$). Although engaging in non-classical reasoning, the dialetheist engages in standard reasoning nonetheless, reading Heidegger's account as making *claims and statements about* nothingness. The strategy of analyzing Heidegger's expressions as assertions is consistent with a (Fregean) conception of language according to which all linguistic acts posit an object that they refer to. Such assertoric rendering, however, is proof of logical prejudice. It leaves open the possibility of an exploration of the pre-theoretical and pre-propositional (i.e. non-assertoric) aspects of experience. These aspects are typically what phenomenology investigates as the subjective foundation of objective experience. For Heidegger's version of phenomenology, it is clear that whatever nothingness can be rendered as, interpreted as, formalized as, etc., is determined by how it actually takes place in experience. The experience of nothingness is a singular event that can be understood differently, namely on its own 'experiential' terms, from how it subsequently should be represented or formalized. Logical implications, for instance that the experience can be rendered as a contradiction, are, if they are of any concern to him, of a subordinate importance. The dialetheist's prejudice, in conclusion, consistently diverts the research focus away from nothingness as it presents itself to its formalization. In this way, the dialetheist diverges from Heideggerian orthodoxy.

As a consequence of rendering the experience of nothingness in logically prejudiced terms, the dialetheist ascribes to Heidegger a number of assumptions he does not make. Firstly, this is done when making the case for a contradictory interpretation of the phenomenon (i.e. nothingness). Take for instance the following description from Casati³⁹:

“Since nothingness is not an entity and since every time we refer to something we refer to an entity, it should be impossible to refer to nothingness. However, we do refer to nothingness in saying that, for instance, nothingness is not an entity. Moreover, since nothingness is not an entity and since every time we refer to something we refer to an entity, as soon as we claim that nothingness is not an entity, we turn nothingness into what nothingness is not. [...] Nothingness is not an entity (because it is characterized as

³⁷ Casati 2017: 12-15.

³⁸ Cf. 1.2.

³⁹ A similar example could be taken from Priest 2014a: 208. An analogous example that refers to Being can be found at Priest 2015a: 4.

such) and it is an entity (because we refer to nothingness and whatever we refer to is an entity)."⁴⁰

This is a valid inference that concludes that nothingness is contradictory (from the standpoint of entities). Obviously, Heidegger in some sense must endorse its first premise, which states that nothingness is not an entity (despite it being the nothingness of those entities, i.e. not being a negation of the entities in question). Nowhere does he, however, in any way endorse the second premise, which states that nothingness is an entity. It is only assumed that Heidegger (deliberately or not) endorses it through implication of the 'claims' he makes when explicitly saying the first. By reading Heidegger's words in terms of their assertoric content, the interpretation forcefully ascribes to him a theoretical commitment about nothingness being an entity, precisely when he states it is not. Only on this forceful reading does the conclusion (that Heidegger is stating a *dialetheia*) become plausible. Despite the reasoning being valid, it makes the wrong assumption. The conclusion about nothingness is supposed to be a case in point of Heidegger's endorsement of *dialetheism*, but it ignores the revelatory aspect of this experience (*angst*) in favor of aspects of statements made about this revelation⁴¹.

Secondly, an assumption is wrongly ascribed to Heidegger, when emphasizing the 'objective' content of the experience of nothingness. 'Nothingness' itself is framed in terms of a special kind of object (which is to say: a contradictory object). This employment of the notion of 'object' is meant to be innocuous in terms of assumptions. Take for instance Casati's explanation of Heidegger's theory of intentionality. He takes Heidegger to view mental activity as intentional. On his account, that would imply that every mental act must have objective content⁴². Nothingness, or the 'contradictory' content of the experience of *angst*, is considered a 'special case' of intentional activity, because it does and does not accord to this fundamental feature of mental activity⁴³. Consequently, this special account of intentionality is best understood within a Meinongian framework. Not only does Alexius Meinong have a similar theory of intentionality⁴⁴, its framework can also accommodate for objects that are inconsistent in the aforementioned sense. In turn, to this Meinongian framework Heidegger's notion of nothingness would be an exceptional but interesting limit-case⁴⁵. In other words, this Meinongian account of *angst* construes it as the intuition of an inconsistent entity (an entity which is not an entity, i.e. nothingness).

Such a Meinongian account diverges from Heidegger's aims in a basic way. It should be abundantly clear that, contrary to how Casati construes matters, Heidegger rejects any approach to Being-in-the-World that renders it as a mental act with a specific 'content', because it would misstate the 'subjectivity' of intentionality and its inherent self-relatedness⁴⁶. Specifically, to present intentionality as an intuition of objects, is to misconstrue the 'subjective' character of such intentionality, which he prefers to construe as 'Being-in-the-World'. If the experience of nothingness, i.e. *angst*, is (on Casati's account) construed as an intentional act presenting a special object,

⁴⁰ Casati 2017: 91. Other similar examples can be found in Casati 2017: 68-72, 86, 88-89.

⁴¹ The same strategy applies to Being: Being is not an entity, but according to logic, that makes it an entity after all (cf. Casati 2017: 14, 27-28). Heidegger has never said that Being is an entity despite not being an entity.

⁴² Casati 2017: 25.

⁴³ In other words, the Meinongian framework reinforces the plausibility of reading a contradiction in Heidegger's notion of nothingness. The implied reasoning is formulated as a conditional: 'if Heidegger believes that all intentional attitudes have an objective content, and *Dasein* can be intentionally directed to nothingness, then nothingness must have objective content as well'. Both premises assume Heidegger holds an account of intentionality as stated, and the conclusion is acceptable on the 'Meinongian' basis of an assumption of the possibility of inconsistent objective content.

⁴⁴ Casati 2017: 54, 67-68.

⁴⁵ Casati 2017: 82-86.

⁴⁶ Most obviously in GA24: 223-231.

nothingness, then this construal obscures the specifically subjective character of the experience. In that sense, the dialetheist account, by focusing on this special 'object', structurally undercuts an understanding of Heidegger's considerations. In comparison to Withy's account of angst, which does explicitly try to account for the 'subjectivity' of angst, Casati's account of intentionality seems to omit an explanation of a feature of subjective experience that angst is supposed to be clarifying, namely self-awareness. Withy understandably describes uncanniness as a self-awareness that is opaque to itself⁴⁷. Although opacity and the notion of nothingness are easy to associate with each other, little of Casati's account of intentionality (and of nothingness more specifically) could explain what makes angst a kind of self-awareness, as it seems to rather be a kind of object-awareness.

Both of these assumptions have a decidedly non-phenomenological character. Nothingness, on the ordinary dialetheist account, is claimed to be a logical object. This claim cannot account for the influence of the classical construal of the phenomenological programme on the aims of Heidegger's account of nothingness, because it abstracts from the subjective character of the experience that is meant to be revelatory. The account explicitly assumes that angst is insightful for Being-in-the-World's fundamental uncanniness (and 'nothingness' is supposed to clarify what it means for Being-in-the-World to be uncanny), i.e. for the very nature of the entity that Dasein is. Angst, in other words, functions as a phenomenological insight in the nature of the subject, as phenomenological research is typically supposed to be. The dialetheist dispenses with the importance of this influence, because dialetheists have no phenomenological commitments. Heidegger's 'pessimism', according to which angst and uncanniness are of an eminent concern for (dialetheist) philosophy, is 'certainly not endorsed', as Priest puts it⁴⁸. The peculiarity of Heideggerian research is swept under the rug, because he is presented as merely one endorser of the dialetheist program among many, needing no further specification. This dismissal is an error, however, because the interest in angst in its peculiarly subjective character explains the kind of philosophy he envisions, which subsequently determines the 'function' of nothingness. The function of nothingness is supposed to reveal something about how Dasein can understand itself authentically.

It makes the dialetheist reconstruction selective: dialetheists miss out on the context that is requisite to a correct reconstruction of Heidegger's account, making it entirely unhelpful in achieving the same aim of determining the nature of subjectivity. In the ordinary dialetheist account, Heidegger's notion of nothingness merely reveals something about the history of logical assumptions in philosophy. From that perspective, Heidegger's notion of nothingness must indeed remain 'a strange beast': it suggests a dialetheic reading, but cannot confirm an assumption of the existence of a contradictory object (which would be basic to any ordinary dialetheic account). Instead, this logical prejudice leads to an oversight of the way in which humans undergo feelings of existential angst. In this way, despite having correctly identified Heidegger's concern with nothingness as being crucial for him, their approach nonetheless diverges from Heidegger's phenomenological approach⁴⁹. If the dialetheist reception had intended to make a significant

⁴⁷ Cf. 3.4.

⁴⁸ Priest 2014a: 56. Elsewhere he claims "one does not have to share Heidegger's gothic pessimism" (Priest 2014b: 151).

⁴⁹ It is notable that instead of being wedded to a phenomenological programme, the ordinary dialetheist account seems wedded to a decidedly metaphysical programme (cf. Casati's admissions of metaphysical assumptions in for instance Casati 2017: 14, 36, which he admits in Casati 2017: 92 to lead to a metaphysical understanding of the notion of nothingness). The premises made, concerning language and intentionality, seem not to be rooted in 'actual' metaphysics in Heidegger's peculiar sense, i.e. in the reality of angst. Again, these premises are not necessarily wrong, but they are not conducive to an understanding of the matter at hand.

contribution to orthodox Heideggerian scholarship, it would have had to engage the context in which the notion of nothingness appears, but it did not.

4.1.4 The radical interpretation of nothingness

In order to substantiate the dialetheic character of Heidegger's notion of nothingness without suggesting anything strictly contradictory, one needs to turn the attention to a passage from *Was ist Metaphysik* that describes a phenomenological quality of angst, which has not been analysed in a systematic way by the literature. The passage is about as curt as *Sein und Zeit* is about uncanniness: "Die Angst verschlägt uns das Wort. Weil das Seiende im Ganzen entgleitet und so gerade das Nichts andrängt, schweigt im Angesicht seiner jedes 'Ist'-sagen. [Angst robs us of speech. Because entities as a whole slip away, so that precisely nothingness urges, all 'is'-saying falls silent in the face of it.]"⁵⁰ In other words, Dasein is bereft of words in confrontation with itself, lacking the language for its own opacity. With this, Heidegger does not intend to imply that we cannot speak about the significance of this limit experience of our own Being-in-the-World, or that we would not be able to find words that refer to it, or that human beings become speechless before some kind of apparition of nothingness. The point is that in angst, all predication ('is'-saying) loses its significance for Dasein itself. It becomes futile to say of Dasein's existence that it is this or that. Considered in itself, the way in which Dasein presents itself in angst, i.e. the 'discourse' of Dasein in angst, is mute. This profound opacity of the experience of angst sets it apart from ordinary experiences, where it's 'self-having' is substantive and 'transparent'. Angst, or in other words, the way "the abyss of nothingness attunes humans [der Abgrund des Nichts den Menschen stimmt]" is, in conclusion, a fundamental ontological dumbfounding: Being-in-the-World turns opaque with regard to itself. The impossibility of a non-futile descriptor for the experience is what makes nothingness the only fitting descriptor for it, given that it captures well the idea that there is not something to be said, but nonetheless that there is a self-understanding.

Although this passage plays a relatively marginal role in the essay, its importance for Heidegger's account is underlined by the essay's 1943 postscript. Here, although his focus is mostly on *Was ist Metaphysik's* relation to metaphysics, he depicts angst as an "essential site of speechlessness [Wesenstätte der Sprachlosigkeit]". He also claims that in such speechlessness the saying of thinkers originates⁵¹, showing consistency with the idea (central to *Was ist Metaphysik*) that angst's revelation of nothingness would be conducive to philosophy proper. With these claims, Heidegger is affirming the paradox of a mute experience articulating itself. Angst is paradoxical, because it is an experiential place without 'speech [Spruch]' that can be conveyed in 'saying [Sagen]'. It refers to the same paradox of a self-presentation that is utterly opaque, i.e. the 'keeping silent [schweigen]' in angst. Heidegger emphasizes this phenomenological paradox, in order to clarify what it is that should prompt philosophical pondering. In *Sein und Zeit*, the paradoxical quality of angst is for the most part only implicit in or invoked by the notion of nothingness, although he does explicitly describe angst as an 'insignificance [Unbedeutsamkeit]', and does think the one ('ontically') correct thing to say of angst is that 'it was actually nothing [es eigentlich nichts war]'⁵².

A plausible colloquial way of affirming the original paradoxicality of angst, and of describing the phenomenological feature described in the above, would be to say that angst is ineffable. The dialetheist account arrives at this conclusion without referencing these particular passages. The dialetheist consider it a given that a contradictory object would be in itself ineffable, and therefore

⁵⁰ GA9: 112.

⁵¹ GA9: 311-312. Note that the saying of thinkers heeds a 'silent voice', which is the voice of Being and which becomes apparent in angst (cf. GA9: 306).

⁵² S&Z: 187.

consider it obvious to think of nothingness, the main revelatory aspect of angst, as ineffable. According to the dialetheists, Heidegger's thinking is ineffable, because the very aim of what he intends to say is contradictory: he can and cannot say Being, and he similarly can and cannot say nothingness⁵³.

This assimilation of the experience of angst and the feature of ineffability deserves careful scrutiny, because of its intuitive connection to the paradox of Dasein's unique sense of opaque discursivity in angst. Given that nothingness cannot be said to be a contradictory object, and this is an important premises to the argument, the dialetheist claim of ineffability is initially questionable. However, the claim must be understood within the framework of a dialetheist history of philosophy, which was described in the foregoing. Although the aim of historical reconstructions is to point out the existing contradictions in instances of philosophical reasoning, the purpose of doing so can be different. Invoking a contradiction's ineffability does not have to be incidental to this practice, and in some instances of dialetheist philosophy it most clearly is not. Most notably, for Graham Priest, the demonstration of real contradiction indicates the ineffability that lies at the basis of the contradiction in question, making the ineffability available in a way that it otherwise cannot be. In other words, a contradiction is not simply pointed out as proof for the claim that contradictions exist, but invoked as means of access to an ineffability instantiated by the contradiction. Specifically in Priest's words, a contradiction is the locus where thought engages a limit that cannot be crossed, which nonetheless is crossed⁵⁴. This crossing is something one can participate in when thinking in contradictions, making dialetheism into a kind of performance. From that perspective, dialetheist philosophy is sensitive to the phenomenological quality of the way in which a contradiction takes place, and is invested first and foremost in making accessible such a quality, prioritizing this purpose of the method over its instantiation. The dialetheist might even concede that rendering the ineffable as contradictions is a rather paradoxical task to which one cannot commit oneself without simultaneously not committing to it. The significance of the dialetheist performance is simply impossible to articulate independently of the demonstration itself, in virtue of the ineffability of the demonstrated. In other words, the dialetheist performance is meant to be indicative for the ineffable. If this is the case, then a dialetheist like Priest might be flexible towards adopting assumptions that function in a similar way, which do not boil down to the assumption of the existence of a real contradiction.

In order to show that a dialetheist like Priest is indeed open to consider dialetheist a philosophical program that indicates the ineffable, without explicitly expressing the claim of the existence of a real contradiction, note his reception of ancient Buddhist philosophy. Priest intends to show the validity of Buddhist reasoning, and specifically of the *catuskoti*, i.e. the 'four corners' principle. This principle has been extracted from a dialogue between the historical Buddha (Siddhārtha Gautama) and his interlocutor, where the latter asks the former a set of exactly four questions about his philosophical view. He asks him to confirm his view, disconfirm it, both confirm and disconfirm it, or disconfirm either. These four possible answers (the 'kotis': yes, no, both, neither) are supposed to be exhaustive of the Buddha's options for responding. The Buddha's response to his interlocutor is puzzling (and seems consistent with other writings from the Buddha): he seems to reject all four possibilities with the intent of showing they have a false presupposition. This is called the 'four-cornered negation', also often referred to with the word 'catuskoti'. The problem is that this seems to undermine rather than clarify his original philosophical standpoint, because it cannot be made sense of in terms of the possible kotis. Priest, however, defends the Buddha's strategy: the Buddha's response consists in expressing the ineffability of the matter at hand. This 'fifth' option can be rendered as a contradiction, which has its own unproblematic formal

⁵³ Priest 2014a: 208, Priest 2015a: 1, Casati 2017: 33.

⁵⁴ Priest 1995: 3-4.

logic under dialetheist assumptions, and would be the only possible response in light of ineffability⁵⁵. Priest, in other words, holds Buddha's words to be true in a particular way, despite the Buddha not claiming to express a contradiction or addressing the contradictory nature of his practice as a dialetheist would do. Formally, the matter may be rendered as a contradiction, but this does not preclude that the matter itself does not express itself in that way. The Buddha's claims concern 'ultimate reality', which instantiates itself as ultimate reality regardless of how it can subsequently be formalized.

The purpose of a dialetheist project, in that sense, can be considered similar to the purpose of Heidegger's attempt at saying what one cannot speak about, i.e. expressing the paradox of the experience of angst. In order to see the similarity, one needs to look beyond a colloquial definition of ineffability as the impossibility of being uttered. Neither Heidegger nor Priest believes that the ineffability cannot be expressed in any way. Both express the ineffable in different ways: for Heidegger, angst is the proper expression, and for Priest, contradictions are. Both intend to indicate that the prime subject matter of philosophy cannot be addressed within an ordinary metaphysical framework that would speak and think about it, a framework that would imply some possibility for predication. The subject matter is ineffable, and therefore must remain inaccessible to metaphysical conceptualization⁵⁶. This feature of their conceptions of philosophy makes them stand out within the history of philosophy in a similar way. This agreement between Heidegger and Priest is similar to the agreement between ancient Buddhist philosophy and Priest, in so far as one can speak of agreement between profoundly different philosophical practices. All of these philosophies take the ultimate starting point of philosophy to be something that cannot be captured through ordinary discursive practice. In so far as dialetheists intended to highlight this feature of Heidegger's notion of nothingness, their reading corroborates the reading presented here, which claims that this feature is central to an understanding of the uncanniness of angst.

Any reader of Heidegger's work on nothingness should be open to the idea that Heidegger encounters a substantial aporia in trying to account for the notion, which is what the dialetheist reading prepares the reader for. The aporia compels Heidegger to make an attempt at understanding it in fitting terms (if there are any at all). This development of an understanding, like any understanding that Heidegger commits his attention to, is explored phenomenologically. Pondering the nature of nothingness, he considers the same kind of experiential qualities a dialetheist would appeal their readers to consider. Consequently, it makes sense for Heidegger to neither endorse contradictions nor frame the issue of nothingness in terms of contradictoriness, while still leaving suggestions of contrariety all over his phenomenological description: it would be unjustified to conclude the subject matter definitively is a contradictory object. With his consideration for the reality of nothingness, Heidegger provides a phenomenological basis for contradictory discourse. He explores phenomenologically, which is to say in terms of subjective experience, how the possibility of a real contradiction would be constituted. For that reason, one could term Heidegger's strategy a phenomenological reduction of the very notion of a contradiction (in its typical guise of transcendental argumentation). The Law of Non-Contradiction is neither endorsed nor rejected, but phenomenologically appraised from the standpoint of angst and its revelation of nothingness.

This radical understanding of nothingness as ineffable is distinct from Withy's interpretation of uncanniness as the ineluctable, inexplicable, necessary fact of sense-making. Withy is right to draw attention to the way in which Heidegger's account of uncanniness centers around the opacity of Dasein's existence. The very foundational activity that Dasein engages in is indeed ineluctable, and angst serves as a kind of self-understanding that is insightful for this fundamental opacity. These

⁵⁵ Priest 2015b: 517-525.

⁵⁶ Casati 2017: 33.

are ideas that no dialetheist has had any regard for. The idea that Dasein's angst makes Dasein speechless before its own existence, however, contradicts the idea that Dasein is fundamentally a sense-maker. Withy overlooks how Heidegger explicitly addresses the meaningfulness of angst in the account via a paradoxical notion of sayable speechlessness. To make up for this oversight, she attempts to justify the insertion of a notion of sense from the context into the account. That is, however, misleading: Heidegger seems to say that in angst Dasein is bereft of meaning altogether, so that Dasein does not make any sense for itself, not just that its sense-making is shown to be in itself ineluctable or inexplicable. The process of understanding reaches a dead end in angst. Here, the two interpretations of uncanniness come apart, because for Withy the notion of nothingness makes no important difference. The qualified dialetheist interpretation of uncanniness explores what the ramifications of Heidegger's notion of nothingness comes down to, i.e. a pervasive opacity, whereas Withy's interpretation settles for a claim about the nature of Dasein's sense-making, ascribing the property of opacity to sense-making specifically. The question concerning nothingness as the foundation for any entity is independent from the question of how sense is produced. Heidegger's account pertains to the former: he does not claim that in angst Dasein is opaque qua sense-making, but that Dasein is opaque simpliciter. The ineffability of nothingness must be considered in order to reconstruct Heidegger's thoughts on uncanniness, and on Withy's account it is not. This is not to say that Withy's account is flat-out wrong. Rather, the foregoing intends merely to distinguish the radical interpretation of nothingness from an account like Withy's, with sufficient reference to the source material to be considered a viable alternative interpretation. It also does not intend to suggest that nothingness is not meaningful, and that use of the notion of meaning in relation to angst must be entirely avoided. In terms of meaning, the experience of angst is complicated in its utterable speechlessness, and in adopting the notion of sense-making Withy's account of angst lacks nuance with regard to this issue.

This radical interpretation incidentally provides for an opportunity to review certain obscure elements in Heidegger's philosophy. If Heidegger was already considering a radical interpretation of uncanniness in *Sein und Zeit*, then one is offered the means of clarifying his rather curt account of the notion of silence, which seemed ambiguous at first. When referring to silence as an authentic discursivity, he is referring to the uncanniness of Dasein, and the speechlessness Dasein undergoes before itself. The silence of uncanny experience Dasein undergoes independently from whether it does or does not stop talking. Additionally, the phenomenological feature of speechlessness resonates with Heidegger's overall conception of philosophy. Heidegger's considerations with regard to the ineffability of nothingness are not part of a mere topical application of the phenomenological method, but becomes its focal point: his practice of philosophy is a reduction to silence, or in other words, a reduction to the speechlessness before Dasein's own opacity⁵⁷. Heidegger himself

⁵⁷ The dialetheist account of uncanniness provides for a 'positive' appraisal of Heidegger's notion of silence. On the basis of such an account one can dispute Adam Knowles' claim that in the context of *Sein und Zeit* only 'negative' appraisals of this notion could be given. On Knowles' account, silence is "primarily a negative concept set up in opposition to the chatter of what Heidegger famously called idle talk" (Knowles 2019: 71). In other words, silence is only defined in terms of what it is not, namely a regular conception of discourse. This makes the appraisal of 'silence' in *Sein und Zeit* negative. Knowles is dismissive of Heidegger's account of silence, because he concludes it cannot be substantiated in any other way. Therefore, he states, "when Heidegger poses the question of what is to be said in silence, he answers with nothingness. Yet the ontological valence of this nothingness still remains oppositional" (Knowles 2019: 72. Cf. Knowles 2019: 74-76). Knowles is wrong to claim that the valence of nothingness is mere opposition, because 'Heidegger's answer', nothingness (and additionally the context in which it appears), is not primarily a withdrawal from das Man, but Dasein's characteristic ineffable, paradoxical self-awareness that becomes apparent in angst. For Knowles, silence is indistinguishable in its expression from any language that perverts itself through vulgarization, overlooking the fact that it should be distinguished through its dialetheic quality. Incidentally, this rejection of Knowles' claim is not intended to disprove Heidegger's affinities with fascism and National Socialism. Granted, the affinities are there, but may not be necessarily inherent to Heidegger's notion of silence per se.

designates his philosophy in a different way. In later work, he proposed that if his philosophy should be designated in any kind of way, it would have to be as sigetic. This signals that philosophy is incepted at the moment of falling silent [Erschweigung]. Notably, he stresses that philosophy's sigetic logic is the essence of what is traditionally called logic⁵⁸. This underlines that throughout his work, which includes his account of angst, he had hoped to devise a unique philosophy of silence. Although it is a highly unpopular nomenclature in the field of philosophy, it seems intuitive to say that Heidegger endorses a sense of quietism. However, there are many senses in which one can use this term, and in order to be able to justifiably use the term one would need it to be, as Stelios Virvidakis would put it, "properly elucidated in the relevant context, if it is not to remain an obscure, vague and elusive concept"⁵⁹. For that reason, it might be interesting to further investigate Heidegger's unique understanding of quietism. It would be the same thing as conceiving of his philosophy as systematically sigetic⁶⁰.

4.1.5 Conclusive account of uncanniness and its importance for conceptualizing the self

Reading nothingness, the notion intended as a descriptor of uncanniness, as ineffable entails a conclusive understanding of the notion of uncanniness. In turn, this makes a difference for the interpretation of Heidegger's account of fundamentally uncanny Dasein. The conclusion is that Dasein itself is ineffable. In the first place, this conclusion bases itself on Withy's claim that angst is a fundamental insight into the opacity of Dasein. Additionally, it draws on dialetheic literature on nothingness, which claims that this opacity cannot be further explained or talked about. Dasein's uncanniness is dumbfounding. There is nothing one can say about the feeling of being 'not-at-home' in the world, there is no meaningful content to the experience, but such a feeling does come to express itself in angst. It shows Dasein that its condition is opacity with regard to itself. Emphasizing 'nothingness' as being insightful for Dasein's own nature highlights a fundamental obscurity as an unusual, paradoxical possibility. Dasein is in that sense delineated by the nothingness of its angst. In *Was Ist Metaphysik's* wording, Dasein is the 'placeholder of nothingness'⁶¹. The conclusion can be concretized by summarizing Heidegger's account of angst, presupposing the proposed dialetheist interpretation of it.

⁵⁸ GA65: 78-80.

⁵⁹ Virvidakis 2008: 167.

⁶⁰ On the one hand, some commonalities between this sigeticism and other quietist philosophies can be identified on the basis of Virvidakis' account. These are: critique of traditional notions of philosophy like correspondence, inspiration from the ancient Greeks, and irrealism about assertoric discourse (Virvidakis 2008: 158-150). On the other, some commonalities may have to be elaborated through engagement with existing literature. Brett W. Davis has given an overview of discussions surrounding the extent to which Heidegger was a quietist philosopher (cf. Davis 2007: 63, 322-323). There are three important reasons why the literature he discusses is not engaged here: (a) there is no space here to draw up the quietist implications of such an account, (b) the discussion lacks consideration of the potential differences in kinds of quietism and affords no definitions of quietism for contrast, and (c) the notion of the will that seems to play a role here complicates the question as to the extent to which Heidegger is a quietist, but has no obvious relation to the notion of nothingness at first glance. Davis' overview cites and endorses as conclusive a claim by Mark Basil Tanzer, namely that many critics are wrong to have "written off Heidegger's later thought as a mere 'turnaround' from [...] a willful [sic] decisionism to will-less quietism" and wrong to have in that way underestimated the continuity in Heidegger's work. The proposed interpretation of Heidegger as proposing a sigetic, dialetheic philosophy provides further support for this idea. There is not only a 'balance' between different (more or less quietist) aspects of Heidegger's thinking, like Tanzer claims. The substantial interest in quietism was always already there, and provides an important clue to a sense of consistency in Heidegger's philosophy.

⁶¹ GA9: 118.

Angst is the revelation of Dasein itself as uncanny. In this experience, Dasein's ordinary way of existing stops making sense. It is dumbstruck by its ontological difference from all entities, be it a tool or any practice in which these tools appear. No entities determine Dasein's own existence. Dasein itself is at all times being irreversibly occluded by the entities in the way that they appear. Self-effacement is necessarily inherent to Being-in-the-world. This does not imply the self is suppressed by entities, only for it to appear occasionally. Dasein's existence is ordinarily in perpetual conflict with anything that it is not. Angst is the occasion where Dasein retrieves this original understanding of itself as this insuperable struggle with everything. It is an unsettling awareness of the inexplicable opacity of existence's nature. In direct confrontation with itself, Dasein feels a sense of contrariety. It is pushed into a paradox: Dasein exists, but this entails nothing. Angst makes the absence of something proper to existence felt, as the only way in which existence itself can become pertinent of its own accord.

From this perspective, one could draw some implications for Heidegger's conception of self. There is some sense of selfhood there, but to the extent that this selfhood is 'nothing' there is no self there. If one would want to categorize such a view on human existence, or embed it in contemporary discussion about the nature of selfhood, then its resemblance to 'no-self' theories of self must be noted. This category was as such recently contrived by Thomas Metzinger. It is a conception of selfhood that claims that there is no self, which typically involves an ontological anti-realism, an epistemic anti-realism, a methodological anti-realism, and a semantic anti-realism, all with regard to the self. Respectively, this means that a no-self theorist would deny that the self is anything like a self-subsistent entity (like a substance), deny that there can be a substantive form of self-knowledge, deny that scientific methods would require any conception of self, and deny that linguistic expressions concerning the self refer to a specific part of reality⁶². Heidegger is in the right position to similarly deny such realist assumptions, although the methodological anti-realism could only be endorsed with a specific qualification. Although a conception of self is not a requisite to the method of science, a conception of self is a requisite part of the practice of philosophy, which is Dasein's 'method' (if one can call it that) of attaining 'authenticity' (in Heidegger's words).

In this qualification of the way in which the self-that-is-not-a-self may nevertheless play a fundamental 'methodological' role for human existence, Heidegger's considerations are comparable to Buddhist theories of self, which are also considered no-self theories of self. Despite having a wide range of different traditions within Buddhist thought, they are mostly consistent on some central tenets and can be characterized accordingly. Buddhists uphold 'four noble truths': 1. there is suffering in the world, 2. there is a cause for such suffering, 3. cessation of this suffering is possible, and 4. there is a path to this cessation⁶³. Buddhist thinking identifies many causes for suffering in relation to the second truth, but usually one cause is stressed as being assumed in or central to all these causes, and this one cause is related to thoughts about the self. The cause is the thought that there is such a thing as a self. In response to this cause, the Buddhist holds the principle of 'anātman (or alternatively, annatā) [non-self]', which states plainly that there is no self. More specifically, as Miri Albahari puts it, the principle states that the self is a deep-seated illusion that consists in holding the self to be an 'ontologically unique' entity that consciously apprehends the world⁶⁴. Focusing on the harmful impact of such a belief rather than on the content of the belief, Mark Siderits argues that the harm caused is due to consciousness being affective, producing feelings that incline one to appropriate them as possessions, a process that assumes a 'me' that undergoes these feelings⁶⁵. By appropriating feelings one can suffer from them needlessly. Therefore, "the truth of non-self [...] is

⁶² Metzinger 2011: 280-286.

⁶³ Siderits 2007: 18.

⁶⁴ Albahari 2006: 2.

⁶⁵ Siderits 2007: 23.

said to be key to understanding suffering's genesis and dissolution."⁶⁶ Preventing harm by fostering the truth of the non-self is then a way to attain enlightenment (nirvāṇa), allowing for a 'methodical' importance to the anti-realism with regard to the self (like in Heidegger's version of a no-self theory). In the Mahayana tradition, the non-self is connected to a concept of 'emptiness (śūnyatā)'. Whereas early Buddhism merely claims that the world is empty of self, the Mahayana tradition claims that this belief is rooted in an experience of emptiness, which is telling with regard to the nature of the world. The tradition elaborates a belief about the self as a substantial, 'ultimate' truth concerning reality⁶⁷. One could compare this experience of emptiness to angst, because (in Heidegger's specific terminology) angst discloses Being-in-the-World as such by revealing nothingness. The comparison would assume that 'emptiness' and 'nothingness' designate a similarly ineffable, ultimate truth⁶⁸.

This categorization of Heidegger's conception of self comes with a caveat. He does not intend to present a philosophical-anthropological account of the human self that would determine it to be such-and-such in each case. For him, selfhood is first and foremost a performance that is intimately connected to the practice of what is called philosophy and/or questioning, a practice that would make Dasein authentically itself rather than inauthentically. He therefore takes it as his objective to arouse the mood that would enable Dasein to make philosophy in the specific Heideggerian sense its active project. On the basis of the foregoing account, one can conclude that Heidegger believes the fundamental mood in question itself cannot be articulated in any way. The specific philosophical approach of finding selfhood involves confronting a 'dead end'. The 'ultimate, evidential ground' of Dasein's existence is an experiential 'rock bottom', which allows for no further articulation.

Reflecting on the foregoing account, one might believe that this presentation of matters has inadvertently created a tension with Heidegger's own project: by stressing the importance of uncanniness for selfhood, uncanniness might have overshadowed the way in which Heidegger conceptualized selfhood in the context of *Sein und Zeit*. There, the projected philosophical approach is a kind of 'resoluteness [Entschlossenheit]', one which merely requires a 'readiness' for angst and not the actual occurrence of it⁶⁹, and one might consider the book's account of resoluteness key to developing this notion of selfhood. For the sake of clarity, some comments could be made about the intent of the foregoing. It has not claimed to present a comprehensive account of Heideggerian authenticity, but has claimed that angst is insightful for whatever it could be. It has then accounted for this insight in a way that addresses some of the questions one may have in relation to Heidegger's qualified subjectivism. Particularly, the foregoing intended to clarify the type of self-awareness Heidegger proposes, and on this point the findings are paradoxical. Additionally, angst is, in any case, what disables inauthenticity. A correct understanding of it is a prerequisite for any correct account of the notion of resoluteness. The foregoing has attempted to demonstrate the role that Heidegger's notion of nothingness plays in angst, and has claimed that the non-dialetheist Heideggerian literature has ignored this role. This is in line with Heidegger's own retrospective perception of the reception of his account (in *Metaphysik und Nihilismus*): central to *Sein und Zeit* is the repetition of the question of Being, and the human's nihilism in its fallenness to entities. This nihilism, he claims, is a kind of a negligence towards the experience of nothingness, through which 'the voice of Being [Stimme des Seyns]' announces itself as 'refusal [Verweigerung]'⁷⁰. The foregoing account of uncanniness assumes that the fundamental mood [Stimmung] of angst is such an

⁶⁶ Siderits 2007: 26.

⁶⁷ Choong 1995: 85-86.

⁶⁸ There are, however, also differences. For instance, in the Buddhist tradition, the state of emptiness is a cessation of suffering. Heidegger does not analyze angst in these terms. Secondly, the state of emptiness is intended to nullify an illusion of selfhood. On Heidegger's account, 'inauthentic' selfhood is not an illusion.

⁶⁹ S&Z: 296.

⁷⁰ GA67: 264-267.

announcement of Being, and that 'refusal' captures the sense of fundamental speechlessness of Dasein in which its proper Being announces itself. Another tension that might prove a challenge arises, when one must 'hear the voice of Being' in an experience that is fundamentally without signitive content, but this tension is merely endemic to Heidegger's conception of sigeticism. In lieu of following *Sein und Zeit's* itinerary by the letter, this research focuses on the concept of nothingness and its pertinence for truth, enabling a different route through Heidegger's oeuvre. These notions have many methodological implications, which are explored on their own 'sigetic' terms for the sake of leaving open the possibility of an integral methodology of Heidegger's philosophy. In other words, an attempt is made to see how precisely, as Withy put it, the analysis of angst prefigures Heidegger's larger body of work⁷¹. With the radical interpretation of uncanniness one might assume that this prefiguration was more than just that, and reconstruct a sense of continuity between his works, in particular in relation to sigeticism.

A critic may argue that the account given here is forceful, because it draws conclusions with wide-ranging implications on a small number of very brief statements in *Sein und Zeit*, on the basis of references to other works (most importantly: *Was ist Metaphysik*). Some artificiality in interpretation is to be expected, given that an attempt is made at stressing and elaborating something in *Sein und Zeit* that Heidegger did not, or in other words, something that was always already there but ill-explained by Heidegger and misunderstood to this day by his readers (despite Heidegger's attempts at clarification). Interpretation of the sixth chapter of *Sein und Zeit* is complicated, because the number of topics that Heidegger intended to account for in very little space has convoluted it. A 'brief summary of the foregoing' is complicated by further aims, namely (1) to introduce the possibility of authenticity in accounting for the phenomenon of angst, (2) to make plausible that this authenticity can be and used to be understood anthropologically as 'Care', (3) to reject traditional philosophical problems of reality, (4) to introduce a new conception of truth in contradistinction to a traditional conception (where the former moreover grounds the latter), and (5) to make a surprisingly straightforward anti-sceptical argument. Separate books could be written on all such matters, and Heidegger would revise and review all these topics substantially in later work, making it harder on all readers to make it through to the second division of the book in any productive manner. Given that the chapter particularly emphasizes the account of truth, and that this account has been mired in interpretive issues, an apposite reference point is needed in order to clarify his conception of truth and see some of its coherence with the various other topics.

In order to show that a radical interpretation of uncanniness based on the ineffability of nothingness is the much-needed reference point, the connection between this radical interpretation and the context of *Sein und Zeit* must be clarified. The radical interpretation, which is in a special way dialetheist, has the most clear explanatory power in connection to Heidegger's statement that "Dasein ist gleichursprünglich in der Wahrheit und Unwahrheit [Dasein is equiprimordially in truth and untruth]"⁷². This formula invokes the traditional definition of a contradiction as the simultaneity of truth and falsity, and signals Heidegger's dialethic interest with regard to truth. The formula is often ignored in accounts of Heidegger's conception of truth, and the following not only presents a novel reading of it, it also substantiates a connection which is not often made in the literature, namely the connection between angst and truth. The pertinence of angst to truth must be addressed in order to get any clarity on the various exegetical issues in relation to *Sein und Zeit's* sixth chapter.

⁷¹ Withy 2012: 207.

⁷² S&Z: 223.

(4.2 Re-examination of Heidegger's account of truth)

4.2.1 Countering 'the dogma'

In the discussion of Heidegger's truth conception as instigated by Tugendhat's critique a theory that would endorse dialetheism would be controversial. For Tugendhat, the way that truth opposes falsity is central to the traditional theory of truth, and losing out on this aspect entails an unacceptable lack of critical potential to Heidegger's 'primordial' theory⁷³. Skirke notices the possibility that Heidegger holds a theory that does not oppose truth to untruth, but thinks it is unlikely that he actually held it⁷⁴. For that reason, an account of what this possibility entails is crucial. Neither Priest nor Casati have engaged this debate⁷⁵, nor have angst and nothingness been considered relevant topics for it, although each one of these sources suggest that Heidegger might have actually had a dialethic response to the discussion. The following clarifies in what way Heidegger's (qualified) dialetheism should be considered the earmark of his conception of truth, demonstrating the relevance of his account of angst in the process, and how this presents a truth-project that both satisfyingly answers Tugendhat's challenge and is a worthwhile task in its own right. With each of these aims, an appeal is made to Heidegger's relevant claim about Dasein, namely that it is 'in truth and untruth simultaneously'. The truth is, as the label 'di-aletheism' states, always twofold.

From this dialethic perspective, the opposition of truth and falsity is a dogma that must be rejected. Heidegger formulates this dogma succinctly when addressing the lack of questioning of the notion of untruth (in the context of fundamental considerations necessary for conceiving a notion of truth) in his *Vom Wesen der Wahrheit* lectures on Plato: "Das Fragen, besser – das Nicht-fragen nach dem Wesen der Unwahrheit steht unter einem selbstverständlichen Dogma: die Unwahrheit sei leicht zu begreifen, wenn man nur wisse, was *Wahrheit* sei; man brauche diese dan nur in der Verneinung zu denken. [The questioning, or better, the non-questioning concerning the essence of untruth is subject to a self-evident dogma. Untruth is easy to understand if one only knows truth: one just has to think its negation.]"⁷⁶ In other words, untruth is simply what truth is not, and can therefore be deduced from whatever truth is. Untruth is the opposite of truth. This is a fundamental assumption about truth, a dogma, of which Tugendhat is a proponent. Heidegger's rejection of it has gone unnoticed in subsequent discussion of his thoughts on truth. A reader of his work might have incidentally picked up on anti-traditional elements of the account of angst, but no connection has been drawn to truth. As a consequence of this negligence, many of the reconstructions of Heidegger's conception can be outright dismissed for their inaccuracy in retaining the dogma. Any response to Tugendhat should address the dogma, and it speaks to the value of Tugendhat's criticism that it can highlight this crucial feature of Heidegger's conception of truth. In other words, the appeal to an allegedly required adherence to the Law of Non-Contradiction is conducive to a correct understanding of Heidegger's conception of truth, because it lays bare how Heidegger intends to address an issue that firstly circumvents this law altogether, and that secondly can be considered a sense of truth in its own right.

⁷³ Cf. 1.5 and Skirke 2016: 4-5.

⁷⁴ Cf. Skirke 2016: 21-22.

⁷⁵ And neither has John Sallis, who also seems to hold some dialethic interpretation of Heidegger's conception of truth. He argues on the basis of a vast number of sources for the idea of a 'double truth', which does not prioritize essence over non-essence, and which allegedly Heidegger also held (Sallis 1995: 100). Because of the complexity of this account, which is not restricted to any one work by Heidegger, a complete reconstruction of it for the sake of demonstrating the amount of agreement would be beyond the scope of this exposition.

⁷⁶ GA34: 128.

How truth and untruth intertwine is an important explanandum for any account of Heidegger's conception of truth, because of his consistency on this point throughout his many works. Usually, however, the topic is not explicitly thematized within the Tugendhat discussion. Much of the discussion revolves around Heidegger's notion of truth, primarily in the context of *Sein und Zeit* (which is what Tugendhat also focuses on for the most part), and truth's relation to untruth is left implicitly addressed, or untruth is simply extrapolated from whatever conception of truth Heidegger is said to have. Among the many questions one could raise with regard to Heidegger's remarks on untruth, the tension that seems most obviously inherent to the account is pointed out by Tugendhat: any fundamental sense of appearance cannot accommodate a non-derivative sense of concealment⁷⁷. This would presumably be self-evidently so, on the basis of appearance and concealment being mutually exclusive terms. If, as his rejection of the dogma seems to suggest, they are not mutually exclusive, then Heidegger has a basic, intuitive question to address that he does not address in *Sein und Zeit*: how can something be fundamentally clear and at the same time still be in some sense obscure. In that regard, use of the term 'disclosure', without addressing its relation to (or in stronger wording: its interaction with) concealment, misleadingly presents matters as more comprehensive than they actually are. The usage of a metaphorical term like disclosure could motivate the assumption of a contrast between light and dark, which in turn would suggest that fundamental truth is uncomplicated in its relation to untruth. Despite this defect of use of the term, even in these passages Heidegger aims to address the problem of truth and untruth's coincidence, as is clear from his claim that Dasein is in them simultaneously.

When one considers Heidegger's attempt at explanation, things do not necessarily become much clearer. In three short paragraphs of §44b, Heidegger has made reference to the connection of truth and untruth, but the explanation is complicated by three considerations one could have. He makes three statements. Firstly, at that the basis of the distinction between uncoveredness [Entdecktheit] and hiddenness [Verborgenheit] lies a basic appearance [Schein] that allows one to secure the uncoveredness of this appearance 'against' the possibility of its hiddenness. Secondly, that the privative prefix of the word ἀλήθεια (ἀ-) highlights an important feature, namely that truth is always a 'robbery' of concealment (λήθη). Thirdly, that Parmenides was already aware of the matter when he described truth as two paths, claiming that Dasein must know both paths, actively discern the way of truth and choose to follow it⁷⁸. These three things are meant to highlight the connections between Heidegger's understanding of the truth and the Ancient Greek understanding. Here lies the first complication with these statements: Heidegger does not expand on his reception of the Greeks, despite it potentially raising numerous questions. Parmenides' work is mired in interpretive complications, and Heidegger's statement on the ability to discern truth from untruth is no better: it includes a reference to philologist Karl Reinhardt's account, accompanied by a comment from Heidegger that states Reinhardt was not sufficiently clear on the matter. In other words, a reader is left without an explanation of *how* one would be able to discern truth from untruth.

The second complication is related to the statement on the privative prefix in particular. Since its significance is presented in a merely rhetorical question ('is it not some sort of sign that ...?'), one is left to speculate what he thinks is the suggested relation. It is clear that truth must be prioritized in some sense. What about untruth? Like Wrathall, one could suppose that concealment is simply set aside by truth, which could imply a negative relation of truth to falsity. On his account, ontological truth draws entities into a space of intelligibility, where they are what they are, without which entities are simply out of one's possibility of comprehension, creating a distinction between what is and is not meaningful⁷⁹. The statement on the privative prefix suggests the dogmatic

⁷⁷ Cf. 1.7.

⁷⁸ S&Z: 222-223.

⁷⁹ Wrathall 2010: 1-2.

understanding of the relation of truth to untruth, which opposes the untrue to the true, creating a tension within Heidegger's works. On the basis of the lectures on Plato, a reader might even assume this statement is not meant to be explanatory at all. Before identifying the dogma in that work, Heidegger refers to the same matter, in largely the same way, but as a mere curiosity that serves as an introduction to the actual topic of the lectures, i.e. the 'fundamental experience' of truth⁸⁰. The conclusion could be that the privation is flagged merely to point out Ancient Greek philosophy as an important resource for further exploration of the theme.

The third and most important complication consists in the fact that in these statements Heidegger does not clearly distinguish disclosure from uncoveredness, making it plausible that he was merely talking about uncoveredness, i.e. the ontic level of truth and not the ontological, given how consistently he uses that term. The point could merely be that both truth and falsity in the ontic sense take place within the same ontological domain⁸¹. This lack of a distinction should give the reader pause, because it is largely uninformative of any possible sense of untruth inherent to the ontological domain. 'Dasein in truth and untruth' is a claim that is not explained by appealing to the possibility of (ontic) truth and falsity, because the statement concerns the ontological structure of Dasein. It is therefore subject to the kind of counterargument Tugendhat makes: this conception of truth cannot be properly said to concern truth, if it does not address the (oppositional) relation between truth and untruth. In conclusion, what Heidegger says about the relation in §44b must be clarified in other ways. The goal would be to make Heidegger consistent on his principled stance on the translation of truth as ἀλήθεια, which is to say: to present a reading of *Sein und Zeit* that allows for a conception of ontological truth that is in each case accompanied by a sense of untruth.

4.2.2 A closer look at the conceptual means at hand in *Sein und Zeit*: a pursuit of more than untruth

In order to reconstruct and clarify the simultaneity of truth and untruth in a way that is consistent with both the conceptual resources of *Sein und Zeit* and the hints of dialetheism, one can review the matter using some of Tugendhat's suggestions as a guideline⁸². To sum up the problems one would be running into, according to Tugendhat, when conceding that truth *is not* in opposition to falsity, one needs to consider three things. Firstly, one would need to be able to attain truth as a project Dasein can undertake. Truth needs to be something to secure, not something that Dasein always already has as an emergent property of its existence. Secondly, a truth-project, even if it were not to exclude all senses of falsity altogether, should be distinguishable from a project of falsity. One can envision a serious problem to occur if it is in no way normative. If, for instance, one takes on the project of being a liar, and Dasein is able to disclose itself authentically in lying, then one might have conceptualized a truth-project that is decidedly unphilosophical, and encourages relativism towards its lying truths. The project needs to motivate a pursuit of truth, and not present its occurrences as matters with no consequence. Thirdly, given the complexity highlighted by Tugendhat relating to the possibility of obscurity in fundamental clarity, one would need the nature of truth to

⁸⁰ GA34: 10-11.

⁸¹ Much in the same way as Dahlstrom construes the matter (cf. 1.5).

⁸² An obvious alternative would be to follow Heidegger's outline of this last chapter of the first division. This would not be wise, given that Heidegger seems to focus first and foremost on the discovery of a new conception of truth, as if relaying a report on some interesting exegetical findings, rather than elaborating the intricacies of how truth takes place. The three most prominent aims of the chapter are determining disclosure anthropologically as Care (unraveling the proper denomination that it had in forgotten times) (§41 and §42), putting controversies concerning the philosophical concept of reality in the perspective of his notion of disclosure (or in other words: Care) (§43), and making an anti-sceptical argument on the basis of disclosure as a ground (§44C). None of these aims anticipate clarificatory questions one might have with regard to the notion of disclosure, and in particular is not helpful to the clarification of the connection he has drawn in passing to uncanniness.

explain the possibility of falsity, if it is to function as fundamental (or, in other words, as a transcendental condition)⁸³. Each of these concerns can be considered desiderata that Heidegger needs to in principle have some satisfying solution to in order for his conception of truth to have any validity as a project. When Heidegger's claim that truth and untruth are simultaneous is clarified in this manner, it should provide more reason to call Heidegger's conception of truth dialetheic, in the sense that a sense of two-foldness of truth explains the 'di-' in 'dialetheism'.

1. The foregoing has addressed the first desideratum in an important way. In the first chapter, it was shown that in order to address the complications surrounding the ontological notion of truth the account of Dasein itself needed to be addressed. In the third chapter, it was shown that Dasein attains an authentic understanding of itself (or conversely reneges its inauthentic understanding of itself) when in angst it is confronted with its own inexplicability. Angst, as a distinct way for Dasein to understand itself, therefore must have explanatory power for what truth is. Its insightfulness is phrased by Heidegger in terms of truth as the "existential selfsameness of the disclosing [Erschliessens] with the disclosed [Erschlossenen]"⁸⁴. In other words, in angst disclosure is presented in no other way than what it is. Heidegger does not feel it is necessary to comment on angst in the context of §44 to stress this point, because he assumes he has already covered the topic to a satisfying extent (despite this quote being the only sentence to draw a connection). Angst shows disclosure to be fundamentally uncanny: relation to any entity whatsoever is fundamentally opaque and inexplicable. It makes angst instrumental to a 'project' of truth: angst salvages the truth of existence from ordinary existence⁸⁵. This is not to say that with reference to angst one has explained what the project of truth is, but merely that angst is what would give access to it. Given that angst is a distinct way for Dasein to be, there is in principle the possibility of a distinct truth-project. This distinct way for Dasein to be is determined by nothingness (i.e. the way in which angst appears), and the foregoing has outlined a possible interpretation of this technical term and is expanded upon in the rest of this dissertation.
2. With regard to angst, one might argue, in line with Tugendhat's worry, that uncanniness is an emergent feature of human existence, so that truth is 'always already there'. Even Heidegger has said that Dasein is always in some sense in angst, also when this fact is 'disguised [verstellt]'⁸⁶, indicating that the uncanniness of existence is more important to his argument than angst as a moment of insight. This apparent evidence for truth's emergence does not justify the claim, however, that truth does not allow for a truth-project. It is not the case that truth, the uncanniness of existence, is already apparent in each case. This is because angst is an occasion that takes place in contradistinction to the ordinary kinds of self-understanding, and secures or salvages the truth in a way that the ordinary kinds do not. In angst, Dasein is in an important sense 'in truth' (despite also still being 'in untruth'), which ordinarily it is not in. To substantiate an explanation of how this distinct truth instantiates itself means to specify the way in which truth relates to some sense of untruth, addressing the second desideratum.

⁸³ Cf. 1.7.

⁸⁴ S&Z: 188. Also referenced in 3.6.

⁸⁵ Here, the notion of 'project' must be read in a decidedly Heideggerian way. Whereas it usually has connotations of some sense of praxis, where purposeful action is undertaken with specific goals, angst is hard to think of as being particularly active. In the Heideggerian sense, projects are ways of being that project Dasein in terms of its possibility, and in that sense shape Dasein's self-consciousness. From that perspective, there is a 'project' in angst like in any other way of being, because angst projects for Dasein the possibility of being itself.

⁸⁶ GA9: 116.

First, it must be explained that truth cannot exclude the reality of untruth, which is to explain how truth *cannot* instantiate itself vis-à-vis untruth (as a negative way of specifying their relation). Much of the explanation of disclosure in §44B before the statement about Dasein in truth and untruth focuses on the peculiar relation between Dasein's primordial truth as disclosure and the uncoveredness of entities⁸⁷. This conceptual distinction between an ontological and an ontical level of truth provides a good clue as to the relation between truth and untruth. The uncoveredness of entities (ontical truth as a structural phenomenon) is untrue from an ontological standpoint, in so far as it occludes disclosure. To put it in Withy's wording, Dasein's successful entity-directedness covers over its own Being. Although the notion of uncoveredness provides for a fundamental understanding of ontic truth, it is also a means to understanding ontological untruth when the appearance of the entities as such is understood as an occlusion of Dasein's own existence⁸⁸. The 'untrue' precedence of entities over Dasein is uncanny, because it precludes the possibility of Dasein's fundamental way of being, disclosure, appearing as it would be on its own. Dasein's own existence, in its disclosing, cannot become apparent to itself in any other way than as occluded by the world's entities in their uncoveredness, as already 'fallen'. It makes it impossible for truth to be anything but simultaneously untrue: Dasein does not and cannot circumvent the precedence of the world's entities, even when Dasein comes to confronts its 'proper' truth in angst. The world cannot be set aside to reveal something other, cannot be disavowed or negated, and so the 'nothingness' of disclosure, remains covered over even when Dasein becomes aware of the nature of its existence in that world. Being-in-the-world thus remains a self-evident site of appearing things, whether within it Dasein realizes its own sense of truth and penetrates into the opacity of appearances, or simply remains oblivious to it.

From this negative characterization, one can infer an assumed response to Tugendhat's second desideratum. If Dasein cannot set aside the uncoveredness of things that Being-in-the-World necessarily implies, then one must concede that truth indeed cannot exclude (the possibility of) untruth in the way that the truth of any regular sentence can exclude its opposite. Truth and untruth cannot contradict, and in that sense the dogma of opposition is not upheld in Heidegger's account of ontological truth. For that reason, this account can be considered 'dialetheic'. There can only be a 'modification' from one 'mode' of Being to another⁸⁹, which, though leaving untruth as it is, puts untruth in a 'different perspective', which is to say: in the perspective of truth. For instance, angst discloses the world as it is, but in the perspective of its uncanniness. This would not distinguish truth from untruth in a substantial way, but it would distinguish a state that is both 'in truth and untruth' from a state which is merely untrue. In that way, there is a distinction of truth from untruth, rather than an opposition.

Aside from discerning and understanding both truth and untruth, one must, on Heidegger's reading of Parmenides' 'two ways', also 'decide' in favor of truth⁹⁰. There is then, on Heidegger's account, reason to pursue truth despite its perpetual coincidence with untruth. Positively speaking, truth instantiates itself as angst, which is to say: as an uncanny feeling of

⁸⁷ This happens after having determined being-uncovering [entdeckend-sein] to be the object of the traditional conception of truth in §44A, after making the claim that therefore uncoveredness [Entdecktheit] grounds in disclosure [Erschlossenheit], and after summarizing three ways in which to understand truth (as disclosure as such, as thrownness, and as projection) (S&Z: 219-223). Cf. 1.6 for a discussion of the former two topics, and 2.2 for discussion related to the third.

⁸⁸ Tugendhat, under the false assumption that Heidegger was addressing merely one sense of revelation when talking about truth, thought Heidegger's idea of falsity was incoherent, because everything that is false must appear in some fundamental sense in the same sense that true things must. This thought is wrong, because it is the way in which things appear that leads to the occlusion of something (i.e. Dasein itself).

⁸⁹ S&Z: 130.

⁹⁰ S&Z: 222-223.

'not-at-home-ness'. Obviously, truth in this instance concerns the eventuation of nothingness, and not a substantive 'instantiation'. Truth does not establish something that is 'more than' untruth, or unveil something that lies behind it all. (Additionally, as Heidegger puts it, the discovery of Dasein's 'ownmost possibility' is also not a matter of finding new things, i.e. tools, from out of the dark⁹¹.) It is merely the revelation of a fundamental mood, a felt tension of Being-in-the-world that Dasein usually does not have. Given that this mood is inherently opaque, it presents itself first and foremost as an unprompted complication of one's ordinary involvement in the world for the sake of itself. Angst 'breaks down inauthenticity', making a sense of 'nothingness' pervade Being-in-the-world, in the sense that the world is shown to be inhospitable to an authentic existence. It explicates what otherwise remains implicit about Dasein's existence: that it is always radically opaque, and that entities on their own can merely cover over its authentic existence, to the extent that it lets them. In so far as Dasein confronts itself and acknowledges the paradoxical role of the authentic nature of its existence, in so far as Dasein understands itself as an uncanny being, the fundamental mood is a moment of ontological truth, which is to say, of definitive self-awareness. The contrast between the merely untrue state and the true-untrue state, then, is also a contrast between an uncomplicated existence that is out of whack with itself, and a problematic state, angst, in which Dasein gets a hold on what its existence is really like. Heidegger, in considering truth as a pursuit, appeals to the intrinsic worth of sustaining a meditation on angst's insightfulness with regard to Dasein's own existence. This pursuit has some 'critical force', in the sense that the truth of uncanniness allocates the significance of inauthentic existence as a whole. Dasein's inauthentic self, Being-in-the-world in its factuality, is 'put in its place' by truth, in that it shows that entities structurally occlude Dasein itself.

This project cannot be taken up if Dasein's Being-in-the-world is not taken seriously in its problematicity. This is something Heidegger himself tried to underline in commentary on *Sein und Zeit*, from *Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik*. He claimed *Sein und Zeit* attempted to present Being-in-the-world as a fundamental problem, rather than attempting to merely reconstruct it as it appears⁹². Admittedly, in focusing on the availability of the authentic self through its self-disclosure (and using that as the basis for a transcendental argument), Heidegger himself obscures this point. Being-in-the-world is understood to be problematic when one understands its uncanniness. When one understands the uncanniness of Dasein, one sees the tension between the uncoveredness of Being-in-the-world and its self-disclosure. This is because angst shows that on the one hand, Dasein is in the world among things, perpetually determined by appearance, and on the other, Dasein is of itself occluded. In other terms, one could say that authentic Dasein undergoes a tension between the recognition of one's own opacity as a human being and the reality of being anything at all. This formulation brings out more clearly the connection to the traditional metaphysical contrast between something and nothing. With an account of Dasein's problematicity as conclusive to the first part of Heidegger's existential analytic, it is additionally easier to understand why he, in the second part, is interested in the phenomenon of Being-towards-death as illuminating for the 'wholeness [Ganzheit]' of Dasein's existence⁹³. The problem of wholeness arises because of the metaphysical tension that ruptures Dasein's existence. The tension is not resolved, but analysed on its own terms. It is illuminated with reference not to the addition of two parts⁹⁴, but to a phenomenon in which the tension comes to the fore in an especially explicit way. As what is colloquially understood to be the human relation between life and death, a human being's way to deal with its mortality could be telling for the tension between being anything and being nothing at all.

⁹¹ S&Z: 222.

⁹² GA29-30: 261-264.

⁹³ S&Z: 232-233.

⁹⁴ Cf. Heidegger's remarks on summation on S&Z: 243-244.

3. Ontological falsity consists in the precedence entities take over Dasein's own Being-in-the-world. The enabling condition of this precedence concerns Dasein's own being: Dasein of itself enables the way in which it comes to be occluded. One might, in line with transcendental-phenomenological terminology, interpret this to mean that Dasein's 'background' practices enable the 'figure' an entity appears as⁹⁵. Dasein's disclosive activity is, on this account, the enabling condition for the uncoveredness of entities, by opening up a space of meaningfulness in which entities could possibly be uncovered as they are. This constant and latent activity is self-effacing; it does not and cannot appear in the same way that uncovered entities are, but it takes place simultaneously with entities. Despite disclosure taking place as a kind of background, it would be inaccurate to interpret it as a background practice of some particular sort. World-building could for instance be associated with the valuations, conventions and traditions that lead entities to appear as skilfully appropriable in various ways. It is unclear why such practices are in any way self-effacing or 'uncanny' (or in other words, why they present the space of meaning that is opened up as problematic), and why these would be essential to Dasein's own being (or in other words, why these practices could not be straightforwardly inauthentic). Especially when taking into account *Was ist Metaphysik's* account of uncanniness it becomes clear that the way in which Dasein's own disclosure enables the appearance of entities as they are differs from the usual transcendental-phenomenological procedure. Heidegger explicitly emphasizes the role that nothingness plays. He explicitly reformulates disclosure's enabling of the selfsameness of entities as the fact that nothingness makes it possible for entities to be as they are 'and not anything else'. The explanandum is therefore a unique enabling condition that involves a sense of negativity, to which the constitution of entities themselves is irrelevant. It is not a matter of what entities are composed of or what structures makes them what they are; it is a matter of the fact that they are without the inverse being true.

It is important, then, to emphasize that in drawing attention to the foundational activity Heidegger means to address and investigate Dasein's original self-effacement. Dasein opens up a world by being nothing of itself, such that the world and everything in it can appear in selfsameness. With regard to Tugendhat's worry that out of Dasein's disclosure no ontological falsity could arise, one could suggest that the fact that this disclosure is radically insubstantial enables the occlusion of it by what is readily available (Being-in-the-world as it presents itself). Ontological truth allows for ontological falsity by accommodating the possibility of anything taking precedence over it. Incidentally, this might lead one to wonder where this leaves the function of Heidegger's seemingly transcendental argument, if its demonstration of an ontological truth does not aim to merely draw attention to a 'space of meaning'. One can conclude that the argument cannot function as a deduction of constitutive acts. Rather, it is carried out like a positive reduction *ad absurdum*: Dasein is referred back to the primordial issue of being anything at all, to the point of the experiential opacity and insurmountability of this issue.

In short, Tugendhat's three challenges are met as follows: 1. Truth is something Dasein can pursue, and not something it has always already achieved in each circumstance, because truth is a distinct way for Dasein to be, and angst is what opens Dasein up to it. 2. Truth is indeed not something that excludes its opposite, because Dasein's existence remains determined by what it factually is. However, there is a distinction between on the one hand an existence that is merely inauthentic and untrue, which is not in accord with its own Being, and on the other an existence that does achieve authenticity while still being determined by what it factually is, by acquiring an understanding of its own Being in angst's revelation of the world as uncanny, resulting in truth and

⁹⁵ Cf. 1.3.

untruth. 3. Ontological falsity is made possible by truth, because truth is self-effacing in such a way that it allows for the occlusion of it by ordinary Being-in-the-world.

These three points are derived from Heidegger's sparse remarks on the simultaneity of truth and untruth that explain in what way Heidegger could have responded to Tugendhat, given that his account does not uphold the Law of Non-Contradiction in the same way Tugendhat does. Here, the reconstruction of Heidegger's assumed response has been limited to an appropriation of the conceptual resources that primarily *Sein und Zeit* provides. There are, however, more resources available that clarify what Heidegger's conception of dialethic truth could consist in. A look at other resources could circumvent some of the complications of the book in question.

4.2.3 Truth as πόλεμος

With his claim in *Sein und Zeit* about existential selfsameness Heidegger draws a connection between uncanniness and truth. That connection he more clearly draws in *Einführung in die Metaphysik*, in a study of the connections between the philosophy and poetry of the Ancient Greeks. There, he simply equates the two: "das Geschehen der Unverborgenheit [...] ist nichts anderes als das Geschehnis der Unheimlichkeit [the event of unconcealedness is nothing other than the event of uncanniness]"⁹⁶. The explanation of the point is short, and very similar to his explanations in *Sein und Zeit* or *Was ist Metaphysik*, providing for no new information: the whole of entities [das Seiende im Ganzen], which for a human being is 'das Heimische [the homely]', can only be disclosed as it is by letting the strangeness [Befremdlichkeit] of it turn it into the uncanny. He also, in other parts of the book, comments on how the world takes place solely as 'πόλεμος', i.e. a Heraclitean notion that he translates as 'Kampf [battle]' here⁹⁷. The ontological truth, which comes to appear as the uncanny, allows things to appear only through battle. It is only in this ontological truth that man's Being can become apparent, and so only this battle clarifies human existence⁹⁸. First and foremost, this is a conflict of Being and entities, which is to say that the ontological difference is at stake in Heidegger's notion of the uncanny truth. A human being combats entities in order to come into its Being, as he puts it⁹⁹. These passages highlight an intuitive aspect of angst that one might have gleaned from the descriptions in previous works: in angst, Dasein struggles to engage the things around it. Heidegger in this way underlines that the experience necessarily involves a felt contrariety, specifically in its involvement with things on a whole.

The references to πόλεμος as a qualification of a primordial notion of truth recur in Heidegger's *Parmenides*. Here, the qualification makes a substantive, insightful point about truth. Firstly, the account makes reference to the 'privative' understanding of the fundamental notion of truth: unconcealment [Unverborgenheit] is 'wrested' from concealment [Verborgenheit]. The account that follows aims to elucidate this relation of 'Streit [conflict]'. To this purpose, Heidegger argues that truth should not be understood as 'jenseits alles Streites [beyond all conflict]'¹⁰⁰, which is to say he believes truth not to be incontestable. One would assume truth to be incontestable in the sense that nothing can be said against it. Truth would be able to stand on its own. Such an assumption would however be an assumption of the aforementioned dogma of opposition. In other words, it would claim that the 'conflict' is a conflict of a self-sufficient truth that would actively

⁹⁶ GA40: 127.

⁹⁷ GA40: 47-48.

⁹⁸ GA40: 107.

⁹⁹ GA40: 110. This recalls the conclusion of *Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie*, where the practice of ontological method is called 'a battle with things' that is supposed to clarify the 'structures' of Being (GA24: 466-467).

¹⁰⁰ GA54: 25-26.

exclude falsity from itself. In this passage, Heidegger rejects precisely the idea that truth stands in any sort of oppositional relation [‘gegensätzlichen’ Beziehungen] to something like falsity, which would be a straightforward relation of negation. Unconcealment is in itself a conflict, he claims, and takes place in the same domain as concealment¹⁰¹. Put differently, the idea is that truth never elucidates that which was initially obscure, in a kind of negation of this state. Instead, the unconcealing takes place at the same time as concealment. Truth, in that sense, is always co-determined by falsity. In its interaction with concealing unconcealment is a dynamic process, which is never self-sufficient in such a way that its concealing is eradicated, or its unconcealing is complete. Truth remains in each instance contentious. Wrathall’s suggestion that truth sets aside falsity, therefore, misses its mark. Concealment at all times is engaged by unconcealment, and must be considered principal in determining what truth is. After all, the domain of concealment is where truth takes place, according to Heidegger¹⁰². The untruth of the occurrence of concealment, as an ontological sense of falsity, is not excluded from truth, but affects the truth of unconcealment, resulting in an ever ‘contested’ truth. Truth, as conflictual, remains open to its own non-being. It is always ‘at odds’.

The *Parmenides* (from 1942/43), in this context, picks up an important thread from the earlier referenced book on Plato’s conception of truth (from 1931/32), and from references to that same subject matter in the *Einführung* (1935). Primarily, this thread concerns his views on the history of ancient philosophy. In the Plato book, he honed in on Greek conceptions of truth and how ingrained in them the dogma was, and tried to make a point about the fundamental experience of truth. With regard to Plato, Heidegger convincingly shows that Plato was primarily concerned with the contrast between truth and falsity in terms of an opposition between ἀλήθεια and τὸ ψεῦδος [the false]. Notably, the relevant word for falsity, τὸ ψεῦδος, is not etymologically related to ἀλήθεια in the way λήθη is¹⁰³. ‘Ψεῦδος’ is, in Heidegger’s translation, a kind of ‘Verdrehung [twisting/distorting]’, in the sense that ‘a state of affairs comes to hide itself in the way it is presented’¹⁰⁴. In other words, the means of presenting a state of affairs misrepresents the way it really is, implicating some sense of disagreement with the relevant standard for selfsameness. In the *Einführung*, it is especially clear that Heidegger believes that Plato contrasts ἀλήθεια and τὸ ψεῦδος primarily with the intention to distinguish truth and mere appearance, reframing the sense of conflict that belongs to truth from a unconcealment-concealment dynamic to a reality-appearance dynamic¹⁰⁵. Plato in this way presents his conception of truth without consideration for the original sense of conflict that he may well have been aware of, and shifts attention to what now could be considered the dogma of truth. By analyzing how the introduction of this dogma was reliant on a contingent matter, namely Plato’s concern with the differences between reality and appearance, Heidegger undermines the self-evidence of the necessity of this dogma of truth.

This ‘genealogy’ in particular focuses on what could possibly be obfuscated by the introduction of Plato’s program. One concern Heidegger himself raises is that Plato’s frame could compel readers to think of truth in terms of that-which-cannot-be-untrue, where untruth refers to τὸ ψεῦδος, or, in other words, to think that truth becomes something that cannot be twisted or

¹⁰¹ GA54: 26-27.

¹⁰² For this reason, Heidegger over the course of his career changes his vocabulary from unconcealment to ‘Entbergen [deshelting]’ (it was disclosure in *Sein und Zeit* primarily but would be dubbed unconcealment shortly after), to reflect that concealment plays a role in unconcealment (cf. GA34: 73). Perhaps he worried that the negative prefix un- (for his previous choice: ‘Un-verborgenheit [un-concealment]’) was not appreciative enough of the positively indicative role of the Greek negative prefix ἀ-.

¹⁰³ Cf. GA54: 30.

¹⁰⁴ GA34: 135-136. (He translates the word in a similar way in the *Einführung* - GA40: 146.)

¹⁰⁵ GA40: 78-83.

distorted in any way (something ‘ἄ-ψευδές’)¹⁰⁶. In that hypothetical scenario, one would envision truth to be fundamentally uncontentious when considered on its own terms. In order to see why truth is not uncontentious, one needs an understanding of the other notion that contrasts with ἀλήθεια, which *is* etymologically related to it: λήθη. This word simply does not have the connotations of twisting or distorting that τὸ ψεῦδος has. The problem with thinking of truth as ἄ-ψευδές is, in other words, that it can cause confusion with regard to the sense of conflict that is most relevant for truth¹⁰⁷. In the Plato book, Heidegger intends to prove, through a reconstruction of Plato’s work on the matter, that such confusion indeed can arise, and that research into the relation from truth to untruth is complicated by the contrast between ἀλήθεια and τὸ ψεῦδος¹⁰⁸. The *Theaetetus* is referenced specifically as an example of an ambiguous treatise on these matters, justifying investigation into the nature of untruth as a means of investigating truth¹⁰⁹. The suggestion is that the contrast obfuscates how the phenomenon of fundamental truth is also determined by an(other) experience of concealment, λήθη, and therefore by another sense of conflict that has little to do with a potential for the mistaken representation or ‘mere’ appearance of τὸ ψεῦδος. This topic, λήθη as the notion that is particularly influential on an original sense of conflict related to ἀλήθεια, Heidegger addresses elsewhere, because it is perhaps better approached independently from Plato’s concerns with τὸ ψεῦδος.

4.2.4 The meaning of λήθη

Λήθη Heidegger translates as ‘Verborgenheit [concealment/hiddenness]’. He expresses a preference for this translation over ‘Vergessenheit [forgottenness]’, arguing that although in certain contexts it can mean forgottenness, in others (like in some lines in Homer, which Heidegger likes to use as examples) it cannot refer to anything but concealment, and the former usage can be understood in terms of the latter¹¹⁰. In the relevant accounts, Heidegger is clear that this notion refers to something that, like what happens in forgetting, is obscure in its hiddenness. Heidegger frequently employs ‘Verborgenheit’ as a technical term of sorts in his later philosophy, even where he does not mention the intellectual history of the term λήθη. Notably, he does not believe that the word λήθη is used for falsity. He believes originally τὸ ψεῦδος was consistently used for that purpose¹¹¹. Therefore, he tends to reserve the term ‘concealment’ primarily for the former and not the latter. Generally, Heidegger’s usage of ‘concealment’ is considered as vague as his later philosophy is considered to be. For this reason, Wrathall and Withy have tried to write helpful clarifications attempting to disambiguate various senses of hiddenness that Heidegger could be accounting for, with Withy claiming that neither Heidegger nor his interpreters have done much to clarify matters¹¹². The following analyzes Withy’s survey of various kind of concealment, only to conclude that her interpretation is inaccurate with regard to the notion of λήθη, making the terminological distinctions she intends to introduce for the sake of clarification rather unhelpful.

Withy believes Heidegger to speak ‘nonsense’, because according to her he conflates a ‘λήθη’ kind of concealment with a ‘κρύπτεσθαι’ kind of concealment¹¹³. The latter designation Withy derives from a sentence attributed to Heraclitus (fragment 123), which Heidegger also frequently references (indeed, apparently without distinguishing it from λήθη): “Φύσις κρύπτεσθαι φιλεῖ

¹⁰⁶ GA40: 146-147.

¹⁰⁷ GA34: 92-93, GA34: 136-137.

¹⁰⁸ GA34: 131-147.

¹⁰⁹ GA34: 129-130.

¹¹⁰ GA54: 33-36, 40-42. Cf. GA34: 139-142.

¹¹¹ GA54: 30.

¹¹² Withy 2017: 1.

¹¹³ Withy 2017: 11.

[Nature loves to conceal itself].” On Withy’s account, λήθη should primarily be understood in contrast to the meaningful context of the world. “The claim is that λήθη does not let this happen at all; it ‘prevents every disclosure’ of entities. In this λήθη, the understanding of Being is not operative. There is no disclosure; the world does not world. ‘Everything disappears’ in this darkness.”¹¹⁴ In other words, λήθη is interpreted as a context of meaninglessness. Withy draws a comparison to Heidegger’s account of the ‘world-poor’ animal: animals do not really experience entities in the way humans do, and are captivated by entities rather than consciously engaged in a certain world. Humans are never really in this condition¹¹⁵. Since human beings are sense-makers, the context of meaninglessness is irrelevant to Dasein’s existence. Perhaps one could also draw a comparison to ‘the unmeaningful [das Unsinnige]’, the Heideggerian term that refers to things that are not like Dasein, and for that reason stand outside of Dasein’s field of intelligibility. Entities that are unmeaningful are in virtue of this status merely absurd¹¹⁶. Entities are ‘there’, but outside the intelligibility of a world, and so they do not become meaningful. On Withy’s account, they are concealed, in a ‘λήθη’ kind of way. This context takes place prior to the world, as that which the world’s unconcealment ‘arises out of’¹¹⁷.

The ‘κρύπτεσθαι’ kind of concealment takes place at what Withy and Wrathall identify as a separate level of truth, i.e. the clearing. In contrast to the world, which, as an enabling condition, comprises of standards that make entities into the meaningful things that they are, ‘the clearing’ designates the constitution of this world. Here, at this level, unconcealing and concealing intersect, because only one set of standards for meaningfulness is enabled, and this set is delineated by the standards that do not come into play¹¹⁸. κρύπτεσθαι, then, names “concealings that are simultaneous, because operationally necessary for, unconcealing.”¹¹⁹ This concealment can be directed at itself, and at its ‘other’: it could conceal its own process of unconcealing, and it could conceal the meaningful world as Dasein engages in it. Withy, with regard to the second option, gives the example of tools ‘getting out of the way’ in their employment, a process that is only ‘unveiled’ in ‘phenomenological seeing’¹²⁰.

Reflecting on this account, it should become clear that Withy thinks of concealments in terms of a contingent obscuring of matters that in the case of truth should be cleared up. Truth proper, as the dogma prescribes, is of itself mere clarity, but in a way that allows for the possibility of it getting obscured. Concealments, if they happen, can happen simultaneously with that which is in principle unconcealed, and such a case would be a ‘κρύπτεσθαι’ kind of concealment. Concealment is not necessarily concomitant with unconcealment, because phenomenological vision proper can always elucidate it. The unconcealment of the true is in that sense insurmountable, even when it is obscured. On this point, she willingly diverges from Heidegger’s account. Heidegger’s idea that a self-concealing is inherent to truth’s unconcealing she considers to be an unmotivated assumption about the nature of meaning. In her view, he needs to clarify why there would be such a self-concealment of what is essentially an unconcealing or worlding, as a matter of necessity¹²¹. From the standpoint of a rigid hermeneutic, which takes up the task of interpreting Heidegger, one can wonder, contra Withy, whether it suffices to point out equivocation in order to motivate a cessation of the interpretation. One needs to be able to explain what the nature is of the “nonsense” Heidegger speaks, if the goal is to provide a satisfying reconstruction of the matter of Heidegger’s

¹¹⁴ Withy 2017: 5-6.

¹¹⁵ Withy 2017: 6 & GA29-30: chapters 3-5 of the third part, specifically pages 389-396.

¹¹⁶ S&Z: 152.

¹¹⁷ Withy 2017: 12.

¹¹⁸ Withy 2017: 8.

¹¹⁹ Withy 2017: 11.

¹²⁰ Withy 2017: 13-14.

¹²¹ Withy 2017: 15.

thinking. Withy's account is of course 'amicus Heidegger, sed magis amica veritas [friendly to Heidegger, but more friendly to the truth]', and aims to explain various types of concealment rather than Heidegger's account of concealment. Being charitable to Heidegger here, there may still be some merit to an attempt to understand Heidegger's account of concealment, on risk of it being 'nonsense'.

With that aim in sight, the λήθη-κρύπτεσθαι distinction fails to be helpful, despite the consistent and clear distinctions between various kinds of concealments that it provides for. Particularly, Withy's account of λήθη shows some discrepancies in comparison to Heidegger's. For clarity on this point, an interpreter needs a closer look at some of the source material. Withy cites the following quote from the Parmenides to make plausible her interpretation of λήθη as a field of meaninglessness:

"Denken wir jedoch beides [λήθη und φύσις] griechisch, dan wird klar, daß die λήθη als wesenhaftes Entziehen und Verbergen nirgends und nie etwas aufgehen läßt und also sich gegen das Hervorkommen, d.h. die φύσις, wendet. Das Feld der λήθη verwehrt jede Entbergung von Seiendem und also Geheurem. Die λήθη läßt an ihrem Wesensort, der sie selbst ist, alles verschwinden. [Were we to think both of these in a Greek way, then it becomes clear that λήθη as essential withdrawing and concealing never lets anything emerge, and hence turns itself against all coming-forth, i.e. against φύσις. The field of λήθη prevents every disclosure of entities, and so of the usual. Λήθη lets everything disappear at the essential place that it itself is.]"¹²²

Some statements shortly after these give some important context to this quote:

"Der Ort bleibt leer - an ihm ist überhaupt nichts Geheures. Aber die Leere ist hier das Bleibende und Anwesende. Das Nichtige der Leere ist das Nichts des Entzugs. Die Leere der Ortes ist der Blick, der in ihn hereinblickt und 'erfüllt'. Der Ort der λήθη ist dasjenige Wo, an dem das Un-geheure in einer eigentümlichen Ausschließlichkeit west. [The place remains empty - there is at all that is ordinary about it. But this emptiness is that which remains and which is present. The nothingness of this emptiness is the nothing of the withdrawal. The emptiness of λήθη is the look that looks into it and 'fills' it. The place of λήθη is that 'where' in which the unusual dwells in an authentic exclusivity.]"¹²³

The conclusion should be that despite the disappearance of things in darkness, this darkness does provide for a robust presence, in so far as it provides for a particularly extraordinary insight into its emptiness. Given that Heidegger frequently refers to this concept as an authentic Greek understanding, one that an interpreter needs to take seriously as an experience of philosophical importance, the conclusion should not be that λήθη is inaccessible to human sense-making. Its 'nothingness' is not a way to say that it means nothing to humans, but to specify the way in which it makes sense to humans.

This point clarifies Heidegger's claim that λήθη is better understood as concealment than as forgottenness. Λήθη is like forgottenness, in the sense that both concealment and forgottenness concern an obscurity that cannot be overcome. In forgottenness, the obscurity involves something that hides in this obscurity. The absence of the thing does not arise as something absent, because it is hidden in its absence. The notion of concealment, in contrast, does not necessarily imply anything that hides itself in this obscurity, and the obscurity is apparent as an obscurity. Concealment, in that

¹²² GA54: 176.

¹²³ Ibid.

sense, is simply opacity. It allows a 'look in', into its darkness, without giving the impression that something specific is hidden in it that would otherwise be seen.

Withy, with her claim that we are never under any conditions in λήθη, does not aim to suggest human beings have no experiential access to the idea. She believes angst provides this access, as a kind of 'liminal' awareness. In angst, nothingness shows up as an "abyss or un-ground", an "other to all intelligibility", which Dasein as a sense-maker "destroys" in its attempt to make it intelligible¹²⁴. Angst, on her account, is a paradoxical attempt at making sense of the unsensical: in its confrontation with an 'other', it finds something that turns against its nature, and therefore is left to itself. Here, it engages the limit of its own being, because its being is meaning, and here Dasein encounters its other. The assumption of such an 'other' to intelligibility, as a means of making sense of the occurrence of λήθη, however, is unfounded. It interprets the occurrence of λήθη in terms of the entities that do not appear in it, i.e. in negative terms, and not on its own terms. Heidegger himself sees this as a problem that is endemic to Ancient Greek philosophy, in so far as the Greeks understood Being as presence, and could only see λήθη as contrasting with entities as such. Concealment, framed in this manner, therefore no longer could 'unfold' as a 'fundamental experience'¹²⁵. In other words, λήθη no longer appeared in its own right, but always in terms of a negation of the normal presence of entities. Angst, in the same way, is not an experience of the absent: it is not an awareness of the non-present entities that otherwise would arise, in the way that world-impooverished animals would engage with entities, or in the way that the un-meaningful takes place. It is not a phenomenon of forgottenness, it is 'mere' obscurity, with no implication of the absence of something.

In a short analysis of Pindar's work (in the *Parmenides*), Heidegger finds an important clue that confirms that concealment does not imply the absence of anything: concealment is like a 'signless cloud'. Concealment is an appearance without a sign of anything. It, in Heidegger's words, "does not show itself", but concealment "keeps its own darkness hidden"¹²⁶. Because concealment is an obscurity that keeps itself hidden, one cannot determine it as the absence of anything. It is itself absent as a darkening. This crucial aspect is underlined by Heidegger's 'definition' of λήθη, and is captured by the notion of 'Entzug [withdrawal]':

"Die λήθη, die Vergessung, ist jene Verbergung, die das Vergangene, Gegenwärtige und das Zukünftige in das Weg einer selbst abwesenden Abwesenheit hinausfallen läßt und damit den Menschen selbst in die Verborgene gegenüber diesem Entzug wegstellt, so zwar, daß diese Verbergung ihrerseits im ganzen nicht zum Erscheinen kommt. Die λήθη verbirgt, indem sie entzieht. Sie entzieht, indem sie, sich selbst vorenthaltend, das Unverborgene und dessen Entbergung in das Weg einer verhüllten Abwesenheit wegfallen läßt.

[λήθη, oblivion, is the concealment that lets past, present and future fall in the (a)way of an absent absence, and with that it sets men themselves away in concealedness opposite to this withdrawal, to such an extent, that this concealment in turn does not appear at all. λήθη conceals to the extent it withdraws. It withdraws to the extent that, withholding

¹²⁴ Withy 2017: 7.

¹²⁵ GA34: 142-143. Note that Heidegger is in two minds about designating the occurrence of λήθη as an 'Erfahrung [experience]', given how loaded that term can be, and given that, when 'tearing away' a human being, it is more like an objective affect (GA34: 140-141). He nonetheless names it a 'Gründerfahrung [fundamental experience]'.

¹²⁶ GA54: 120-121.

itself, it lets the unconcealed and its desheltering fall away onto the (a)way of a veiled absence.]”¹²⁷

In other words, concealment only occurs as a darkness that happens to the unconcealed while simultaneously concealing itself. From the standpoint of the unconcealed, ‘nothing’ happens to it: something happens to it, which conceals its own being, and in doing so withdraws itself from what it affects. The concealment never arises as a concealment, it remains hidden despite making itself felt. In this regard, the occurrence of concealment contains a self-concealing aspect that can be compared to Withy’s idea of a ‘κρύπτεσθαί’ kind of concealment, and that is inherent to the λήθη-phenomenon. For Heidegger (but not for Withy), this concealment that withdraws itself is the subject matter when accounting for the notion of λήθη.

This aspect of withdrawal can also be explained as a kind of ‘counterturning’. In an earlier section, Heidegger looks at how the notion appears in Hesiod’s *Theogony* (under the guise of a god-figure of the same name). There, he argues that the experience of a withdrawal is not the experience of something ‘falling away’, but that this ‘away’ “turns, in its away, against what is present, and in the uncanny way of bypassing it”¹²⁸. Concealment is a recalcitrant phenomenon, in the sense that its appearance resists itself. It appears, but only as something that withdraws from appearance. The content of the experience peters itself out, providing for nothing substantial to interpret save this unique, paradoxical dynamic.

As Heidegger emphasizes, this aspect of concealment exemplifies the nature of what he previously designated as the conflictual¹²⁹. In other words, λήθη, in its complicated concealing, gives insight into the nature of the relation between truth and untruth, instead of, as one might assume (given that it is a phenomenon of darkness), merely the nature of untruth. The ‘ontological falsity’ of the phenomenon of concealment, in so far as it conceals itself, allows for the unconcealed to be delineated in its being. The occurrence of a contestation that withdraws itself, the establishment of an other that is no other, enables the appearance of the true as merely what it appears as and only that. The unconcealed is ‘uncontested’, save for its relation to nothingness. This is revealing about the nature of Heidegger’s assumption of a ‘necessary darkness’ inherent to truth. The idea is not that when ontological falsity takes place the unconcealed must be ‘full of darkness’, as if the unconcealed must be blotted out by some dark ontological alterity. The unconcealed cannot be obscured in this way, although it could get concealed in a non-fundamental, antecedent manner, like the concealment that Withy talks about. Rather, the idea is that the unconcealed is what it is in virtue of the self-withdrawal of darkness, with the two occurring simultaneously in each case.

This logic of concealment is consistent with the logic of angst from the account in *Sein und Zeit*. In angst, the darkness that veils the world is not a darkness that precludes the world from appearing as it is. It affords a darkening that withdraws itself, but that resonates with mankind. This phenomenon is uncanny precisely because it does not arise as the world normally does, and upsets the entirety of the world as it is for human beings. It arises the way a logical contradiction does, as a self-defeating phenomenon, recalcitrant to interpretation. Additionally, the logic of concealment entails the same kind of philosophy as angst does: sigeticism. The only way in which the phenomenon comes to appear is as a ‘silent’ discursivity. And this, Heidegger believes, is apparent from the history of philosophy. Not because the Ancient Greek philosophers wrote treatises on the subject. They did not, nor did they write anything of the sorts on ἀλήθεια. They were silent on the issue, not through any coincidence, but because they understood the need for this silence, as Heidegger claims. It is other Ancient Greek figures, like Homer, Hesiod, Pindar and Thucydides, that

¹²⁷ GA54: 123.

¹²⁸ GA54: 107.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

have inspired an understanding of λήθη among their contemporaries, with scant, ‘poetic’ reminders of its significance¹³⁰. To sum up the conclusions drawn in the above, these reminders state that λήθη is an experienced darkness that comes over everything, but that nonetheless withdraws itself from sight, turning itself away. Rather than standing outside of the context of meaningfulness, it is enmeshed in it, as a radically insubstantive way to allow entities to appear as they are.

4.2.5 Conclusion: rethinking truth by way of uncanniness

Angst, as an ineffable occurrence of opacity, is not just consequential for human existence. Given that the appearance of Dasein is itself truth, angst is a phenomenon that can clarify the (Heideggerian) notion of truth. A closer look at the connections the early Heidegger makes with regard to these topics shows that it would be wrong to believe, like Casati does, that only in his later philosophy he realized he needed to endorse the idea of a dialetheia in order to do philosophy¹³¹. The dialethic elements of Heidegger’s philosophy were already there, in the ‘earlier’ phase. Although in *Sein und Zeit* Heidegger lacked a focused exploration of the topic, he already made a crucial connection between the authentic being of Dasein on the one hand, and uncanniness and the other. In the event of angst, Dasein arises as truth only *in spite of* its inauthenticity, which remains a real component of its existence. Its authentic existence therefore only comes to appear as effaced, making Being-in-the-world an insurmountable problem for Dasein. The dialethic properties of this sense of truth are underlined by later Heidegger, in elaborations of his key, Ancient Greek inspirations for this account. Despite Plato’s philosophy obscuring the primordial relation of truth to untruth, there are nonetheless two important notions to be found in earlier sources (some of which are arguably not philosophical): πόλεμος (conflict) and λήθη (concealment). True Dasein, according to Heidegger, is not an incontestable fact, but a site of conflict. For that reason, it remains engaged with what it is not, struggling to sustain its own existence amidst entities as a whole. This site of conflict comes to appear as a ‘signless cloud’: it does not allow anything to arise but the emptiness of its own being. It takes place as a darkening that withdraws from the unconcealed, keeping itself hidden. The unconcealed is ἄ - λήθεια, because it is made possible through the self-withdrawal of the opaque, i.e. the way concealment turns against itself.

In ‘Das Ende der Philosophie und die Aufgabe des Denkens’ (1964), Heidegger reflects, in light of the history of philosophy, on what task remains for a thinker, and settles on the thinking of ἀλήθεια (if this is a possibility at all). This underlines the importance of Heidegger’s thoughts on the matter for his philosophical method of ‘thinking’. More importantly, however, the essay has played a particular role in the assessment of Heidegger’s conception of truth. Numerous commentators have drawn from this essay the conclusion that Heidegger retracted the most important of his contentions with regard to truth, and that, given the problems with his initial account and Heidegger’s later retractions, there is not much sense to defending the account. After all, Heidegger himself must have seen the flaws in his account, and used this essay as an implicit response to some of his critics. Usually observations like this one are made with reference to Cristina Lafont’s construal of the matter (in *Heidegger, Language and World-Disclosure*). On her account, Heidegger makes two highly relevant retractions.

The second is an acknowledgement that ἀλήθεια was never understood in any other way than the traditional way, not even by the Greeks¹³². This is likely a concession made at least under the influence from criticisms by Heidegger’s student, philologist Paul Friedländer, who convincingly

¹³⁰ GA54: 108 & GA54: 129.

¹³¹ Casati 2017: 33.

¹³² GA14: 87.

demonstrated this flaw in historical reconstruction with reference to the source material¹³³. Any suggestion that the meaning of ἀλήθεια shifted away from an original understanding as ‘unconcealment’, specifically in Plato’s work, cannot hold. For Lafont, this point is important, because it makes plausible that Heidegger is unduly neglectful of questions surrounding the traditional notion of truth, and that Heidegger’s account of a more primordial or fundamental conception of truth “through the use of dubious theses about the history of metaphysics” lacks a “fundamentum in re [foundation in the thing]”¹³⁴. This criticism of course leaves open the question of whether one should understand ἀλήθεια as ‘unconcealment’ (and in connection to the notion of λήθη), and, additionally, whether there is any merit to Heidegger’s account of truth independently from the suggested historical reconstruction (and independently of a comparison to the merit of other accounts of truth).

In relation to this, the first admission might be a more damning retraction. Heidegger says that ἀλήθεια as unconcealment is “not yet” truth, that any question regarding ἀλήθεια as unconcealment is not the question of truth, and that it could be misleading to call ἀλήθεια truth¹³⁵. In isolation, these statements read as a disavowal of the connection between Heidegger’s idea of ‘the truth of Being’, which he remained occupied with in this late essay, from his ideas surrounding the interpretation of the notion of ἀλήθεια. This is sometimes considered a response to Tugendhat, where he admits the faults in his conception of truth. In reality, Heidegger is explaining the complications surrounding the interpretation of this notion, and specifically surrounding his own attempt at translating it as ‘unconcealment’. Consider the following explanation that follow his two admissions, in the same essay:

Erfahren und gedacht wird nur, was die ἀλήθεια als Lichtung gewährt, nicht was sie als solche ist. Dies bleibt verborgen. Geschieht es aus Zufall? Oder geschieht es, weil das Sichverbergen, die Verborgenheit, die λήθη zur ἀ-λήθεια gehört, nicht als eine bloße Zugabe, nicht so wie der Schatten zum Licht, sondern als das Herz der ἀλήθεια? Und waltet in diesem Sichverbergen der Lichtung der Anwesenheit sogar noch ein Bergen und Verwahren, aus dem erst Unverborgenheit gewährt werden und so Anwesendes in seiner Anwesenheit erscheinen kann?

[What is experienced and thought is only what ἀλήθεια as clearing makes true, not what it is as such. This remains concealed. Does this happen by chance? [...] Or does it happen because self-concealment, concealment, λήθη belongs to ἀ-λήθεια, not just as an addition, not like shadow belongs to light, but rather as the heart of ἀλήθεια? And does not even a sheltering and safekeeping [Verwahren] prevail in this self-concealment of the clearing of presence from which unconcealment can be granted to begin with, and thus what is present can appear in its presence? If this were so, then the opening would not be the mere clearing of presence, but the clearing of presence concealing itself, the clearing of a self-concealing sheltering.]¹³⁶

Here, Heidegger explains how truth itself of necessity must remain concealed, while that which is made true is readily available for thought. Whatever is present is present only as present in light of a self-concealment of the clearing, i.e. of a self-concealment of the site in which the present comes to arise. In other words, unconcealment is itself enabled (by a sense of concealment), and the notion of truth should not refer to unconcealment simpliciter, but to the process of constituting unconcealment, if one can call it that. Unconcealment does really refer to the site of truth, but in

¹³³ Friedländer 1973: 221-229. That Heidegger was well aware of Friedländer’s criticisms and attempted to engage them is evident from GA9: 443.

¹³⁴ Lafont 2000: 173.

¹³⁵ GA14: 86.

¹³⁶ GA14: 88.

order to distinguish the truth from what is merely 'made true' [gewährt], one needs some understanding of the notion of λήθη as a (self-)concealment. Self-concealment is a distinctive feature of truth. Truth is only 'present' in virtue of some insight into this phenomenon.

The attempt at translating ἀλήθεια as un-concealment in principle retains reference to the notion of concealment that Heidegger wants his readers to appreciate. Although this translation is not in line with what the Ancient Greek philosophers explicitly interpreted their own linguistic heritage to be, the translation, with its emphasis on the negative prefix, does preserve the possibility of seeing the possibility of a connection with the notion of λήθη. Heidegger speculated on what could be fundamental to an understanding of ἀλήθεια, in light of the development of the dogma of opposition in tandem with their employment of the notion. It is no coincidence that Heidegger frequently changed his vocabulary, ranging from the translation of ἀλήθεια as disclosedness [Erschlossenheit] in combination with sparse highlights of the negative prefix, to translation of ἀλήθεια as un-concealment, to ever more explicit reconsiderations of concealment as instrumental to an understanding of truth. Ultimately, he had the conflictual nature of truth in mind, a truth always mixed in with untruth, rather than a truth opposed to untruth. With simply an appreciation of ἀλήθεια as unconcealment, or worse: with a consideration of ἀλήθεια in terms of the unconcealed, one lacks this nuance. In this essay, he therefore did not retract his account of truth by distinguishing it from 'ἀλήθεια as unconcealment', he did not dissociate his thinking of Being from his earlier account of truth, but rather attempted to clarify his account by correcting a common interpretation of it: truth is the enabling of unconcealment through self-concealment, and not just the site in which unconcealed comes to arise (without further qualification). When a 'primordial' understanding of ἀλήθεια (rather than a traditional one) is conflated with the notion of unconcealment, one misses out on Heidegger's notion of truth, because one needs an appreciation of the self-concealment of truth in order to see how unconcealment is constituted.

This crucial point made in the 'Das Ende der Philosophie und die Aufgabe des Denkens' essay mirrors the general point made here, in this chapter. A sufficient understanding of Heidegger's conception of truth requires an understanding of what, under the influence of a dogma that Heidegger rejects, one would normally assume to be its counterpart. When Heidegger appeals to the notion of λήθη and concealment in connection to truth, he urges his reader to reflect on the relation between truth and untruth, and how they are usually assumed to be opposites. On this point, he argues that the most fundamental sense of truth lets unconcealment and concealment collide, or in other words, that the most fundamental sense of truth is conflictual. This is because that which appears as the truth in each case withdraws itself. This 'formal' Heideggerian idea of truth becomes more concrete in connection to the focal point of Heidegger's existential analysis in *Sein und Zeit*. In this analysis, Dasein's own existence provides for the most fundamental sense of truth. However, Dasein's only possible encounter with its own Being, its only possible sense of authentic self-awareness, takes place in angst. Here, Dasein is unable to sustain a self-identification with its worldly involvement, realizes that its own Being is structurally obfuscated by the appearance of the world, and only in this realization has some grasp on itself. This insight is self-undermining, in so far as it presents nothingness itself. In presenting nothingness, it is an ineffable phenomenon, because it withdraws itself in presenting itself. In that way, it is a good example of the logic of conflictual truth¹³⁷.

This account of truth is dialethic, in so far as its focal aim is to think through the logic of what technically could be construed as mere contradiction. The subject matter of Heidegger's philosophy in an important sense lies beyond the constraints of the Law of Non-Contradiction. This is

¹³⁷ In another way, it is not a good example: the vocabulary of revelation can obfuscate the significance of the notion of ἀλήθεια. This is something Heidegger acknowledged in retrospect (GA66: 109). Note that this is consistent with the point made in the 1964 essay on the end of philosophy.

not to say that the experiential content of angst *should* be construed as a formal object with these properties. In principle, the experience is pre-propositional and lies outside of the domain of logical objects or operations. Angst, however, can be considered as explicitly containing elements that are normally associated with contradictions. For instance, it consistently withdraws itself in its appearance and involves a struggle between being and non-being. For Heidegger, these 'dialetheic properties' are features of the most fundamental sense of truth. As a consequence, he thinks of his way of thinking as 'sigeticism', but there is no reason to believe that this framework would disagree with a dialetheic philosophy that is open to radically rethinking the foundations of logic in terms of the silent, as Heidegger does.

Chapter 5: Heidegger's metaphilosophical views

5.1 Tensions in the foregoing account with Heidegger's notion of metaphysics

Up to this point, the proposed interpretation of Heidegger's work has been based on a close reading of his account of truth and angst. The justification rests on the dialethic notion of nothingness in particular. This chapter makes an attempt to expand the scope of this interpretation, embedding the ideas from the foregoing in Heidegger's more general ideas about his way of thinking, or in other words, in Heidegger's metaphilosophical views. After all, a reader may wonder how this account relates to a more general understanding of Heidegger's philosophy and to what is already known about that. The foregoing account overtly incorporates elements of metaphysical thinking, and Heidegger is often said to be critical of this, which could lead to questions with regard to this topic. For that reason, an explanation of Heidegger's metaphilosophical views could clarify how the notion of nothingness relates to them and alleviate potential worries. Ultimately, it should become clear to interpreters that the notion of nothingness is central to Heidegger's way of thinking, to the point where his philosophy can be described as a kind of nihilism. This point is, however, not well represented in contemporary Heideggerian scholarship. The explanation of the importance of nothingness for Heidegger's conception of philosophy, therefore, is in part a polemic with the literature, clarifying those aspects of Heidegger's philosophy that are not accurately portrayed within the current paradigm of Heideggerian research. Given the complexity of Heidegger's metaphilosophical views, the argument for a nihilistic interpretation, and against a transcendental(-phenomenological) interpretation, starts with an explanation of Heidegger's observations on metaphysics. The explanation clarifies how the 'truth of metaphysical philosophy' relates to the notion of nothingness.

For the purpose of introducing the topic of metaphysics, the remainder of this section identifies two peculiarities in the foregoing reconstruction of Heidegger's work. There are tensions with the way in which Heidegger is read in current Heideggerian scholarship, and tensions with Heidegger's self-interpretation. Both tensions revolve around the notion of 'metaphysics' in Heideggerian discourse. On the one hand, the current paradigm for Heidegger interpretation, if one is inclined in going by Sheehan's account of it, is concerned (in a secondary, negative way) with the way metaphysical considerations affect philosophical thinking proper, and on the other, Heidegger himself is concerned with the way metaphysical considerations figure in his own thinking. In the foregoing, by introduction of a dialethic framework of interpretation, a specific metaphysical topic, i.e. the status of any substantial conception of nothingness, is made the crux of Heidegger's thought, with little further qualification. Given that Sheehan judges Heideggerian scholarship to be in a dire state, the dialetheist project could aggravate this state, if it misjudged the central role of the notion of nothingness.

Sheehan, to be more precise about what he thinks, has assessed Heideggerian discourse as having 'hit a wall' in its classical guise¹, which has led to a sizable group of contemporary scholars (named 'Right Heideggerians') who insist on jargon that has lost its credibility and that misses out on distinctions that can be made in light of Heidegger's work. The classical paradigm may have proven to insufficiently sustain sound readership of Heidegger's work, but nonetheless Sheehan recognizes his indebtedness to it, and acknowledges several of its claims. Classical readership hinges on the

¹ This classical paradigm can technically be considered the second paradigm of Heideggerian scholarship (cf. Sheehan 2001: 183-184). The first is no longer as relevant.

conviction that Heidegger's thinking significantly shifted from accounts of Dasein to accounts of Being. This has enabled a 'Right Heideggerianism', which, through readings that are crucially inspired by the later works, hypostasizes the notion of Being into some mysterious force, a secret that reveals itself to Dasein as much as it conceals itself². Sheehan shares the ambition of Right Heideggerians' attempts to 'get Heidegger right', but thinks that its focus on the cryptic notion of Being has turned Heidegger's work into a 'ridiculous metaphysical caricature' of itself, leading him to advocate a farewell to this approach to Being³. In this sense, a 'metaphysical' interpretation of Heidegger's work could be problematic. Sheehan himself introduces a new paradigm that claims to 'make sense of Heidegger', in order to mend the poor state Heidegger's work has been left in, i.e. to counter the problem of Right Heideggerianism. This paradigm primarily focuses on meaningfulness, or in other words: intelligibility, in general, and the clearing as its source, which are two fundamental phenomenological concepts that encompass Heidegger's whole body of work, and which dispense with ideas concerning a significant turn in his thinking and concerning an emphasis on the notion of Being⁴. It anchors the core concern of Heidegger's work in contradistinction to interpretations that have a clouded fixation on the notion of Being. Proper Heidegger studies are distinguished from the improper on the basis of this paradigm's set criterion.

As Sheehan argues, Heideggerian discourse that hypostasizes Being is metaphysical and no longer properly phenomenological. Phenomenological philosophy, on this account, makes explicit what the former leaves implicit: the presence of things. It does so by formally indicating the source of such presence⁵. In more distinctly transcendental phenomenological wording: Heidegger is on this account concerned with how the sensible is constituted by the human being, as a kind of research into the correlation between subject and object⁶. Metaphysics only implicitly engages with the presence of things, and therefore overlooks the source of meaningfulness, i.e. the clearing. More concretely such implicit engagement treats objects as emergent, and therefore restricts its 'phenomenology' to a cryptic revelation of Being: it would inquire not the merely emergent, but the riddle of their emergence, which effectively relegates one's immediate correlation with actual things as of secondary concern and thereby 'thins' its analysis⁷. In Sheehan's appraisal of Heidegger's philosophy, *die Sache Selbst* is the constitution of meaning. The constitution of meaning is the kind of dynamic 'movement into position' that allows one to have the world function properly. In technical terms, Dasein's existence is a 'becoming for the sake of Being', in which Dasein moves itself towards the fulfillment of presence. Dasein's becoming is a foundational movement that constitutes presence. The example Sheehan gives is of a person studying for a doctorate, whose life is meaningful in virtue of the merely relatively absent desideratum of attaining the doctorate; it bestows its proleptic presence in the form of the student's Being (a graduate student). Dasein's constitution of meaning in this scenario, i.e. its process of becoming (a graduate student), is meaningfully present in virtue of its telos, despite this telos being absent⁸. The future moment of having a doctorate is the perfectly present source of meaningfulness that Heidegger's phenomenology attends to such that it can understand Dasein as a graduate student. In this way, the method makes explicit meaning. This Heideggerian approach differs from an approach that fixates itself on Being, since it cannot explicate meaning in the same way. The topic of meaning is the

² Sheehan 2017: 1-4.

³ Sheehan 2001: 184-185, 189.

⁴ Sheehan 2014: 250-252.

⁵ Sheehan 2015: xii.

⁶ Sheehan 2017: 5. In other words, Sheehan commits himself to correlationism, a view that has become a topic for discussion in contemporary philosophy after Quentin Meillassoux argued against it in his *After Finitude: on the Necessity of Contingency*, employing the following definition of the idea: "By 'correlation' we mean the diea according to which we only ever have access to the correlation between thinking and Being, and never to either term considered apart from the other." (Meillassoux 2008: 5)

⁷ Sheehan 2017:6.

⁸ Sheehan 2005: 202-207.

pons asinorum of the two relevant understandings of Heidegger's philosophy: for the sake of practicing Heideggerian thinking, one either starts attending to how meaning is actually constituted (ultimately for the sake of Being), or one gets entangled in the hypostasization of 'Big Being' and hits the same wall as the other Heideggerians⁹.

The reason the proposed nihilist interpretation does not accord to Sheehan's paradigm is *not* that it disconnects Heidegger's philosophy of Being from a meaningful conception of Dasein. It does not claim, as Capobianco does, that the "turn to the matter of Being was more immediately prompted by the prevailing tendency in the modern tradition of the philosophy of consciousness to relate everything back to the logos of the human being"¹⁰. A Heideggerian philosophy of Being that in any way circumvents the 'logos of the human being' is misguided, because to approach the matter of Heideggerian thinking from the standpoint of Dasein is the only possible standpoint to approach it from. To approach it from Dasein's standpoint would not be a matter of being a good Cartesian, but it would be a matter of appreciating what is, according to Heidegger, worthy of thought in Descartes' philosophy. In thinking proper, there is no 'language' of Being, associated with nature, that would be more primordial or more sigetic than human existence in its own meaningfulness, as Capobianco suggests¹¹. The claim that humans have the possibility of a 'homologein', defined by Capobianco as a 'correspondence to' the 'primordial logein'¹², is suggestive of the wrong kind of conception of truth. Truth is what constrains meaningful human existence by being the place where any sort of relation takes place. Although this gives truth a sense of essential primacy in determining the existence of mankind and its history, this essential primacy does not imply that truth is in principle independent from human existence, allowing for a human being to relate to the truth. Rather, it suggests that truth itself in an important sense takes place in (and even as) human existence¹³. Truth, in other words, is the essential history of human existence, and relating to truth is only a matter of a human being relating to itself in its being.

The suggested dialetheist reading of Heidegger's conception of truth, for that reason, centers Dasein's meaningful existence as an uncanny being. It does not hypostasize matters in a formal analysis of Dasein's status, but describes concrete, meaningful experience of Dasein's own existence when accounting for the ineffable opacity of confronting oneself in angst. This identification of a structural feature of Dasein's existence within the confines of Dasein's experience makes the interpretation recognizably phenomenological. There are clear tensions between the existing transcendental-phenomenological paradigm and this dialetheist interpretation, however, because the latter introduces what could be considered metaphysical elements in its account of angst. Firstly, to portray angst as an 'experience of nothingness' complicates an understanding of the meaningfulness of this experience, given that 'nothingness' is inherently paradoxical, whereas no ordinary meaningful experience has this singular feature. It is natural to assume that nothingness is not meaningful in virtue of its nothingness. Given that entities are meaningful, it is also unclear how they are constituted as meaningful by nothingness. Nothingness 'nothings', and it is hard to see how nothingness would play any sort of constitutive role for entities, regardless of what Heidegger says. He does make an argument for it playing this role, when he claims (in *Was ist Metaphysik*) that for entities to be what they are and not what they are not, a sense of nothingness (which is provided for be angst) needs to be in place. However, although the account of how angst and its designation as 'an experience of nothingness' may be phenomenologically sound, it is not immediately clear how this specific argument is founded in phenomenological experience as well. In other words, it is not immediately clear how the insight into the opacity of human existence in angst provides evidence for

⁹ Sheehan 2001: 189-190.

¹⁰ Capobianco 2014: 4.

¹¹ Capobianco 2014: 90-91.

¹² Capobianco 2014: 93.

¹³ Cf. GA34: 75.

the way in which entities come to appear as they are. It only explains how one would have access to the notion of nothingness that is assumed in the argument. Therefore, the character of the argument is not clearly phenomenological, but rather 'logical', and could be considered metaphysical precisely in making an argument concerning a singular sense of 'nothingness'. Especially when one is *not* convinced by the Heideggerian account of nothingness as presented here, this appeal to nothingness is about as cryptic and obscurantist as Sheehan considers the Right Heideggerians to be.

One might nuance the critical force of this first point from the outset by pointing to Heidegger's ambition to recast the phenomenological method as a fundamental-ontological, sigetic method of his own¹⁴. Some tension in terms of the phenomenological purpose of his method, particularly in its confrontation with the notion of nothingness, may be expected as a result, which is not to say that the matter of nothingness does not stand in need of clarification in terms of its functioning within a philosophical apparatus of 'thinking'. To be more specific, however, one might also expect some tension with the notion of meaningfulness that is often invoked in traditional phenomenological accounts of Heidegger's work. It is true that he is concerned with the meaning of Being (which, to be clear, he equates with the truth of Being¹⁵) in lieu of a concern with 'just' Being. This concern with the meaning of Being does not itself imply a concern with meaning. In his *Parmenides*, Heidegger explains by making a distinction between 'the true [das Wahre]' and 'truth [Wahrheit]': entities as a whole reside in meaningfulness, making up the true. His search for the essence of truth is not an investigation into that which is true (entities), but that which 'lets them be true'. In this way, he cautions against the identification of his research with a philosophy of meaning, emphasizing a certain essentialist influence on his thinking in relation to the meaningful¹⁶. This essentialism does not consist in the denial of meaning to entities, but in a search for something essential about them, which he assumes to be their 'truth'. For Heidegger, a preoccupation with truth is primary to any preoccupation with meaningful entities or meaningfulness, and must be prioritized.

The second tension concerns Heidegger's self-perception. Whereas *Was ist Metaphysik* intends to positively receive the tradition of metaphysical philosophy, it is obvious that in later work he explicitly turns against metaphysics, and specifically also the metaphysical tendencies in his own work. Famously, in his *Brief über den Humanismus*, he admitted to having held back the final part of his magnum opus *Sein und Zeit* for this reason: the language of metaphysics failed him in his attempt to practice an authentic thinking of (the truth of) Being¹⁷. This could suggest that an elaborate look at Heidegger's considerations on nothingness and truth might not be as consistent throughout his body of work as is being suggested here. Heidegger might have suggested the pertinence of these concepts with metaphysical considerations in mind, considerations he perhaps abandoned, reframing said pertinence. In other words, the complicated self-reception of Heidegger's thinking might complicate or diminish the validity of an account based on a particular, metaphysical phase of his thinking, from the perspective of non-metaphysical, or at least less metaphysical, (and perhaps even more phenomenological,) account. Due to no fault of its merits as a reconstruction of Heidegger's thought in one particular phase of his professional career, more contextualisation might be needed for a good assessment of the account in question on Heidegger's own terms.

¹⁴ This intention, and Heidegger's complicated stance on the original Husserlian guise of phenomenology, is stated around that time most explicitly in correspondence (cf. Carman 2003: 57-59), but the intention can also be considered implicit when he presents immanent critiques of phenomenology in GA20 §8-13 and GA24 as a whole, for instance.

¹⁵ GA9: 337.

¹⁶ GA54: 83.

¹⁷ GA9: 327-328, 336-337.

5.2 What is Metaphysics?

The initially unpublished manuscript *Beiträge zur Philosophie* is an important document of Heidegger's self-perception, and is often considered programmatic for many of his 'middle', so-called 'being-historical' works. It was written to take stock of his contributions to philosophy up to that point, with numerous reflections on the significance of what was even then regarded as his magnum opus, *Sein und Zeit*. In his own words, his 'contribution' never was some advancement of philosophical progress, but consisted in an attempt at paving the way of a new kind of thinking, an attempt that he is still in the process of making¹⁸. There is a deep continuity between both works, in so far as this thinking has to take the shape of a question of Being¹⁹ (as a way to positively receive the philosophical tradition of wondering 'who we are' despite its complications²⁰). Despite this continuity, Heidegger now attempts to clarify in his conception of thinking its relation to the already existing history of thought, which he does not consider himself to belong to unequivocally. For this purpose of conceiving what a fundamental-ontological philosophy should 'do', he now, in contrast to *Sein und Zeit*, explicitly differentiates two strands of thinking that pose a question of Being in different ways, a 'first beginning' and an 'other beginning'. It is an acknowledgement that there was fundamental-ontological thinking before Heidegger's own attempt, and that his novel version must relate to its predecessor²¹. Heidegger is well aware that this complicates any novel conceptualization of philosophy. It is important that, despite his attempt to explain two types of thinking, these types are not separate activities. Rather, they remain interrelated in the way that they occur. Daniela Vallega-Neu provides for an apt characterization of the complexity: the activity of thinking "finds itself caught up and determined by Being's historicity"²². In other words, thought becomes ambiguous the moment it unfolds as a relation between what it is in the moment of its unfolding and what has been in each case it has unfolded. Thought properly construed relates what it is to what it has been. For that reason, any proposed novel conception of philosophical activity must be historically embedded, and Heidegger's introduction of a 'first beginning' is merely a way for him to remain true to the ambition of reconceiving philosophy as embedded. In the *Beiträge zur Philosophie* he takes the opportunity to pursue this task more explicitly than he did earlier on in his career.

Heidegger clarifies the interrelation of the first and other beginnings through a distinction in their approach to the same fundamental-ontological matter. In this context, he presents the difference in conception of Being through a distinction between a guiding question [Leitfrage] of Being and a grounding question [Grundfrage] of Being, corresponding to the first and other beginnings respectively²³. The guiding question is a question that concerns the Being of entities. In short, it wonders what kind of Being-ness constitutes entities. In other words, it assumes entities have a shared foundation, a kind of 'being-ness', that all entities have. This assumption remains implicit in its meditation on the nature of Being: that it constitutes entities. The grounding question answers the guiding question, in so far as it interrogates this assumption as a possibility. The grounding question gets its name from this interrogation of Being as a foundation, and attempts to make explicit what this foundation is of itself²⁴. To simplify matters for current purposes: the point is that Heidegger believes his kind of question of Being to be a more fundamental question to pose

¹⁸ GA65: 4.

¹⁹ GA65: 10-11.

²⁰ GA65: 48-54.

²¹ GA65: 4-6.

²² Vallega-Neu 2003: 31.

²³ GA65: 6.

²⁴ GA65: 75-77.

than the other kind, because his kind interrogates a base assumption of the other. His foundational question is not, as one might think, a question superimposed on the initial question (as if ‘coming from a different perspective’), because it is precisely the interrogation of the foundations of the initial question that leads to a new question that differs from the starting point of the initial question. Such a process of studying the initial question of philosophy Heidegger calls ‘transitioning into a new beginning’²⁵. Whereas the question of the first beginning in this sense can be responded to, the same does not apply to the grounding question: the grounding question has no answer. It must remain a question in its exploration of the aforementioned base assumption. Heidegger’s aim is merely to facilitate one’s ability to pose this question (and to restore the ‘question-worthiness’ [Frag-würdigkeit] of such a question)²⁶. In other words, the nature of the grounding question is open, and his posing of it is meant to be evocative. To sum up, Heidegger thinks the first beginning of philosophy entails a certain kind of foundational response, which consists in the task of posing an open question. This open question addresses the ground for the possibility of further philosophical pursuits that would determine this ground in a particular way unlike the open question. On the uptake, because of their determinacy, the grounded fundamental-ontological approach(es) can be analyzed with regard to how they are founded, and to gain insight into what the open question is supposed to address. The following provides for a rudimentary account of some relevant elements.

The guiding question Heidegger associates with Aristotle’s question ‘τί τὸ ὄν; [what is being?]²⁷, or in other words, with the Aristotelian study of ‘ὄν ἢ ὄν [being qua being]’²⁸. Here, Heidegger translates ‘ὄν’ as the substantivation of being (which usually translates to ‘entity’ in English). The question looks for something that is common to all entities, a kind of ‘being-ness’ [Seiendheit], that would make up the Being of entities²⁹. The guiding question, in other words, asks what makes entities entities, and in that sense it concerns the ‘truth of entities’³⁰. It asks a question of Being in terms of entities, taking entities as the point of departure for a search for true Being. As Heidegger puts it: it believes Being is to be found through entities³¹. In such a turn from entities to Being, this kind of philosophy is conceived as transcendence [Übersteigerung], by ‘going beyond just entities’ towards a feature that these entities all share. As one might predict, Heidegger identifies this first fundamental-ontological question with the notion of metaphysics³². “Die Geschichte des ersten Anfangs ist die Geschichte der Metaphysik [the history of the first beginning is the history of metaphysics]”³³. The guiding question is ‘μετά τα φυσικά [meta-ta-physika]’: it goes beyond the entities. The similarity of this question to *Was ist Metaphysik*’s main concern, and the resulting implicitly stated ambition to depart from his earlier embrace of the metaphysical tradition of philosophy, is striking³⁴. Although Heidegger consistently underlines certain aspects of his earlier works that according to him still resonate in his later works, he clearly does modify certain aspects of key elements of his philosophy, and he only sparsely acknowledges the aspects of his earlier work that stand in contradiction to his later work. This leaves open the task of reconstructing which

²⁵ GA65: 171.

²⁶ GA65: 75.

²⁷ GA65: 38.

²⁸ GA65: 75.

²⁹ GA65: 75-76.

³⁰ GA65: 179. Cf. GA3: 222-223.

³¹ GA65: 170.

³² Heidegger finds ‘metaphysics’ an apt title of the Aristotelian project despite this title never having been adopted by Aristotle himself. Famously, the works were compiled by someone else and are known by this title only because in terms of ordering they came ‘after the *Physics*’ (Ross 1924: vol. 1, xxxii).

³³ GA65: 175.

³⁴ Cf. 3.2.

aspects of his earlier work would be deficient in particular, which comes secondary to the analysis of metaphysics and its faults.

The truth about entities consists in their availability. What marks 'the Being of entities', according to the metaphysical account as reconstructed by Heidegger, is a sense of 'presence [Anwesenheit]' of Being³⁵. All entities are what they are in virtue of their being-ness, and their being-ness is presence in the sense of an immediacy of their 'being there' as they are. In other words, Being is a principle of the independent occurrence of entities: Being is the guarantor of the tautological truth that each entity is what it is. This notion of presence is, historically speaking, derived, according to Heidegger, from the notion of φύσις. Φύσις translates to 'nature' usually, but Heidegger prefers to translate it to 'emergence [Aufgehen]'³⁶. On this account of Being, entities on a whole are in a continual process of becoming, of self-generation, or in other words, of 'arising' into the clarity of their own being. Φύσις is the a priori³⁷ principle of presence on the basis of which entities are what they are. 'What is' is determined by what appears³⁸, i.e. what takes part in this process of becoming present. As a consequence of the determination of Being as present in this way, throughout the history of philosophy entities become construed as objects [Gegenstände]³⁹, which is to say that in accordance with their presence entities are designated a potential presence to something other than themselves. Although the first beginning of philosophy, metaphysics, concerns a conception of Being, it is therefore that entities take precedence [Vorrang] (over their Being) in this conception⁴⁰. It is entities that are apparent in an accessible presence, not Being itself. Being functions merely as the assumed enabling condition for these entities.

The possibility of thinking (and of asking the fundamental-ontological question) becomes an anticipation of presence as such⁴¹. Thinking is the mode of access one has to Being as being-ness when entities have taken precedence, a mode of access which transcends one's regular access to entities. Thinking is the abstract foundational activity governed by the principle of Being. It consists in the process of positing entities, as enabled by the presence of Being-ness. This process Heidegger calls 'Vor-stellung [representation]', which here means a kind of 'putting in front' (of Being)⁴². In other words, philosophy in its first beginning is, according to Heidegger, an activity of representation that transcends entities as they are for the sake of Being, enabling a precedence of entities over Being. The most important point is that metaphysics, for Heidegger, is representationalist. Such a practice of philosophy explains the initial idealistic tendencies of the expressed self-perception of Ancient Greek philosophers (and its elaboration in the work of later philosophers, primarily early modernists and the German Idealists, which Heidegger considers central to the development of metaphysics). On Heidegger's account of Plato, thinking is a kind of catching sight of true Being called 'ἰδέα [idea]': entities are seen in the way that they appear (in accordance with their generic property of being-ness)⁴³. The idea of entities being actively seen in their presence lays the conceptual foundation for the idea of the I or ego, and later developments of it as a process that is self-aware and that has a certain degree of certitude⁴⁴. In sum, metaphysics develops into a kind of

³⁵ GA65: 30-31.

³⁶ GA65: 195.

³⁷ Cf. GA65: 174.

³⁸ GA65: 191.

³⁹ GA65: 185.

⁴⁰ Cf. GA65: 174.

⁴¹ GA65: 198.

⁴² GA65: 196-197. Cf. GA65: 93.

⁴³ GA65: 172, 202, 208-210.

⁴⁴ GA65: 202, 212, 214-216.

subjectivism: its conception of Being as presence lays the foundation for a self-conception as a kind of mental activity governed by this presence. The notion of 'subject', which etymologically reduces to 'the underlying' (via the Ancient Greek notion ὑποκείμενον [underlying] and the Latin 'subiectum [underlying]'), is, according to Heidegger, derived from these conceptual groundworks, because here Being as the foundation of entities is put into effect by individualized mental activity. As he explains in the *Die Zeit des Weltbildes* essay: "Der Mensch wird zur Bezugsmittelpunkt des Seienden als solchen [Man becomes the center of relation to entities as such]"⁴⁵, and for that reason is 'the underlying' (governed by Being) in comparison to the precedence of entities (that are)⁴⁶.

Concepts that are in the aforementioned way central to the self-perception of Ancient Greek Philosophy, such as τὸ ὄν, φύσις, ἰδέα, and ὑποκείμενον, for Heidegger serve as an axis for the assessment of the true meaning of metaphysics. In particular, Heidegger interrogates the foundational role of the concept of 'Being' (conveyed through words like ὄν or εἶναι), and how the other terms designate 'Being' to be a kind of presence. He does this by questioning how the notion arose as a base assumption, which is to say, he wonders what must have been the case in order for Being to warrant this kind of designation. This 'grounding question' in relation to the starting point of philosophy is a way of inquiring into Being on its own terms, such that the Ancient Greek terms are clarified with reference to what they purport to describe. In Heidegger's own words, this would amount to "a leap into the truth of Being itself"⁴⁷. The grounding question's 'leap', in short, is intended to highlight something about Being that is not provided for in this conception of Being itself, but that might prove foundational. This allegedly foundational point also concerns what Heidegger would call 'truth', or more specifically 'the truth of Being'. On this point, setting aside Heidegger's belief that his question to the metaphysical tradition concerns 'the truth of Being', it is important to mind the way in which Heidegger describes this 'plot hole' in metaphysics, or in other words, to mind Heidegger's account of this negative property of the metaphysical approach. This is important, because apparently he believes the metaphysical approach to warrant the grounding question of its own accord. Originally, as one might glean from the first pages of *Sein und Zeit*, he conceptualizes the negative property as 'Seinsvergessenheit [forgottenness of Being]'. In other words, it is a preoccupation with things, with 'the truth of entities', which take precedence over what is essential to them (i.e. Being). Metaphysics is that strand of philosophical thinking that does not live up to Heidegger's ambitions of asking a question of Being, because in its preoccupation with the presence of entities it disregards the nature of the basis for their presence.

On the basis of this reconstruction of Heidegger's account of metaphysical philosophy one can begin to understand the force of Sheehan's critique of 'metaphysical' strands of Heideggerian thinking. He takes the relevant Heideggerians to 'hypostasize' matters. This term Heidegger does not frequent in critiquing metaphysics. Nonetheless, such a fault would be pertinent, because he too (like Sheehan), in a sense, takes metaphysical thinkers to make abstract what should be concrete. Whereas the truth of Being itself should be immediate to one's existence, it is covered over by metaphysical interpretations, which would conceive of Being as functional in an intellectual, subjective process of 'mind' in relation to objects. By accounting for 'relation to Being' in a way that lends itself to idealistic tendencies, or to philosophical jargon like 'transcendence', one 'mystifies' the subject matter by complicating the primal truth of Being, justifying the need for properly Heideggerian clarification.

⁴⁵ GA5: 88.

⁴⁶ Key points of this account of metaphysics can also be found in GA67: 87-88.

⁴⁷ GA65: 76.

5.3 The overcoming of Metaphysics: what needs to become of metaphysics

It would be intuitive to think that Heidegger opposes metaphysics with his own philosophical project, given that Heidegger accuses a metaphysical preoccupation (with what is present and takes precedence) of lacking access to its own foundation. His contention that metaphysics cannot ask the question of Being⁴⁸ is at least suggestive of the need for an abandonment of metaphysics in the attempt to ask such a question. This intuitive assumption is reflected in Heideggerian literature: when an interpretation is designated as metaphysical (like in Sheehan's assessment of the discourse), this designation is meant to imply that the interpretation at hand insufficiently understands Heidegger's non-metaphysical project. This intuition is apposite, in so far as Heidegger does conceptualize his own manner of thinking as an overcoming [Überwinden] of metaphysics. As Heidegger describes his own approach: 'Für das übergängliche Denken handelt es sich um eine Überwindung der Metaphysik aus ihrem Grunde. Die Metaphysik ist zu Ende. [Transitional thinking concerns an overcoming of metaphysics from out of its own foundation. Metaphysics is at its end.]'⁴⁹ Additionally: "Jetzt ist und wird alles anders. Die Metaphysik ist unmöglich geworden. [Everything is and will be different now. Metaphysics has become impossible.]"⁵⁰ One would accordingly be correct to assume metaphysical thinking can no longer be practiced, not even in a Heideggerian appropriation, according to Heidegger. The practice of metaphysics is simply fundamentally problematic. However, the intuition needs some nuance, because in any elaboration of these themes Heidegger will hold that "Metaphysik sich nicht wie eine Ansicht abtun läßt [metaphysics will not let itself be brushed aside like a point of view]"⁵¹. He does not, in other words, intend to reject metaphysics altogether. The assumption that the practice of metaphysics is impossible does support further claims that reacting to metaphysics is also impossible (because reacting to something which cannot take place is impossible)⁵², but surprisingly it, in Heidegger's own view, does not lead to a dismissal of metaphysics⁵³.

The intended approach to metaphysics, and whatever remains of the use of the notion of 'overcoming' upon reflection, is the subject of his unpublished manuscript *Metaphysik und Nihilismus* (1946-1948)⁵⁴. The discussion is complex, but a cursory look can nuance said intuition. On this account, Heidegger makes it clear that the overcoming of metaphysics is proper to the occurrence of the truth of Being⁵⁵. Only this occurrence can expose the neglect of metaphysics, in so far as 'Being' is essential to the practice of metaphysics as a specific fundamental-ontological question, and the truth of Being would be revealing to metaphysics. Despite how essential Being is to metaphysics, it nonetheless neglects Being in a certain way, and the truth of Being is the only thing that could lay bare this fault in metaphysics. This approach sounds like an immanent critique, which would hold the practice to a standard (i.e. Being) that is endemic to the practice itself, but despite the notion of Being functioning as proper to metaphysics, Heidegger acknowledges that metaphysics itself does not hold the means to living up to its understanding of the notion. Metaphysics itself already contains the means that could dissolve it, and he intends to exploit this Achilles' heel. In this context, 'the end of metaphysics' also takes on a different meaning. 'The end' does not refer to the cessation of metaphysics: it perdures even when it has 'come to its end'. On

⁴⁸ This is something he implies often (for instance in the contention that metaphysics does not concern the truth of Being itself), but he also says this explicitly, for instance, in *Brief über den 'Humanismus'* (GA9: 322).

⁴⁹ Edited citation from GA65: 172-173.

⁵⁰ GA65: 183.

⁵¹ GA7: 69.

⁵² GA65: 173.

⁵³ In part, one might assume Heidegger has developed his stance on metaphysics throughout his career, given that he is more explicitly neither appropriating nor rejecting metaphysics in later work.

⁵⁴ GA67: 3.

⁵⁵ GA67: 8.

the contrary, in each case metaphysics is ‘accomplished [Vollendet]’ in so far as it prolongs itself, despite never confronting its own deficiency concerning the truth of Being. Metaphysics exists in a state of ‘inoccurring [Unwesen]’, which is to say it fails to live up to its own essence even in protracting its existence⁵⁶. In a quasi-teleological sense, the iterated accomplishment of metaphysical thinking lacks a sense of ‘fullness’. Metaphysics cannot mend its own inoccurrence, and so it cannot itself bring about its own teleological fulfillment. Thinking proper has to overcome this state of metaphysical inoccurrence by way of a reconsideration of its foundational element, Being. Heidegger formulates this process as an ‘insertion [einbringen]’ of an essence [Wesen] into the inoccurrence [Unwesen] of metaphysics, thereby ending the ‘dominance [Herrschaft]’ of the latter over the former⁵⁷. In less essentialist wording, this process of amendment involves the interchanging of the prevailing notion of Being for the truth of Being, which is achieved in the other sense of thinking. Here, the relation of ‘dominance’ between the inessential and the essential approaches to Being implies that the prevalence of metaphysics obscures the truth of Being, which is an unsurprising implication given that Heidegger construed metaphysics as a preoccupation with entities in their precedence over (the truth of) Being.

To recapitulate, Heidegger’s ambition to ‘end’ metaphysics is constrained, because he believes its prolongation cannot be stopped. Instead, his ambition is to expose its fundamental problematicity, by elucidating something essential about Being in the occurrence of metaphysics, which remains obscure in metaphysical thinking itself. This implies there is a connection between the ‘floundering’ of metaphysics and his own approach, rather than a straightforward opposition. In virtue of this connection, Heidegger can consistently hold that thinking’s ‘overcoming of metaphysics’ can only take place “in der Besinnung auf die Metaphysik in ihrem wesensgeschichtlichen Grund [in meditation on metaphysics in its essential-historical foundation]”⁵⁸. The elucidation of Being in Heidegger’s approach is supposed to clarify the problem(s) inherent to the way metaphysical thinking continues to take place. As a consequence, his approach can, to that extent, be considered a reflection on metaphysics, rather than a rejection.

This reflection, in Heidegger’s own words, even goes so far as to becoming, in a qualified sense, a ‘repetition [Wiederholung]’ of the initial question of metaphysics. By this, he does not intend to imply that he wants to replicate metaphysics, so as to iterate the same question. Rather, he wants a ‘re-take [Wieder-holung]’ that makes the initial question more ‘question-worthy [fragwürdig]’⁵⁹. In other words, he wants to reassess the initial question that the metaphysical tradition posed, hearing in it something that remains worthy of questioning despite the significant developments that this question has undergone. Conversely, with various concepts such as τὸ ὄν, φύσις, ἰδέα, etc. being the first steps that metaphysics took in dealing with this question, Heidegger worries that the practice of metaphysics has developed into something self-explanatory to such an extent that it now proceeds with an unbridled sense of security⁶⁰. By rephrasing the metaphysical question in such a way that it does not lend itself to the same developments, Heidegger wants to restore the poignancy of a question of Being. In that sense, the repetition of the question makes it “ganz anders [completely different]”⁶¹. In order for Heidegger to resuscitate the question of Being, he has to account for the ‘foundations’ for the Greeks having posed the question in the first place, i.e. the conditions that led them to need to pose the question in the way that they did, which will

⁵⁶ GA67: 41.

⁵⁷ GA67: 41-42.

⁵⁸ GA67: 85.

⁵⁹ GA67: 130. Note that to an extent this involves commentary on Heidegger’s own statements in the opening of *Sein und Zeit*, where he clearly implies resuscitating the question of Being as Plato posed it (S&Z: 1).

⁶⁰ Cf. GA65: 198-204. This development of metaphysics takes place specifically in German Idealism.

⁶¹ GA65: 73.

motivate an attempt to pose it in a new way⁶². The question-worthy root of metaphysical thinking (of Being as being-ness) is the essential domain of truth that the Ancients' employment of the notion of Being refers to, without them having explicitly thematized, mentioned, or questioned this root⁶³. What remains question-worthy about metaphysical thinking in that sense is an 'inner truth', and rehearsing this truth in the ending of metaphysics results in (what elsewhere he calls) the "Überlieferung der Metaphysik in ihre Wahrheit [handing-down of metaphysics in its truth]"⁶⁴. Given that Heidegger attempts a 'repetition' in the aforementioned sense of receiving the truth of metaphysics, he seems much less concerned with problematizing metaphysics than he seems with accounting for its most essential element, which makes him an inheritor of the metaphysical tradition. Of course, it does not make him into an adherent of the metaphysical tradition: he remains committed to exposing its problems. In summary, Heidegger's approach is to become an 'ultimate inheritor' of metaphysics: once the inner truth of metaphysics is accounted for in his own approach, the problematicity of metaphysical questions, and subsequently of the prolongation of its way of thinking, would be exposed.

A recurring theme in this approach to metaphysics is the identification of an "ungegründeter Grund der Metaphysik [unfounded foundation of metaphysics]"⁶⁵. Notable in relation to this point is that Heidegger attempts to provide a clarification of a foundation without wanting to commit to a justification for that which is founded on this foundation. This distinguishes him from an ordinary transcendental approach, which would commit to such a justification. This peculiar approach presents the 'logical basis' for the practice of metaphysics in such a way that a) it enables the possibility of thinking Being in another way, b) without deterring the opportunity for metaphysics to arise as a 'logical consequence', while c) clarifying the way in which metaphysics has obscured, and will continue to obscure, the possibility of this other possibility for thinking⁶⁶. The account of the foundation for metaphysics, in so far as it professes an independent way of thinking, is performative: it is a 'grounding' rather than a theory of ground⁶⁷.

Not only does Heidegger envision this process of being handed down a foundation for metaphysics as a historical event, he also specifies the domain in which this event takes place. The envisioned change in the metaphysical epoch comes about as a human way of being: "Mit der Gründung des Daseins ist alles Verhältnis zum Seienden verwandelt, und die Wahrheit des Seyns ist zuvor erfahren. [In the grounding of Dasein all relation to Being is transformed, and the truth of Being is first experienced.]"⁶⁸ Specifically, the grounding takes place in Dasein's experience⁶⁹. Clarification of the foundation of metaphysics involves provoking a certain kind of experience for Dasein to have. In that sense, the 'unfolding of the proper question of Being', is a revelatory 'opening up' of Dasein that it is partial to⁷⁰. The grounding process, in other words, is embodied in Dasein. Dasein itself becomes the 'construction' of a foundation for metaphysics⁷¹. It is in that sense that Heidegger considers his own approach, in his own words, as a decision between 'wanting to

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ GA67: 135.

⁶⁴ GA7: 77.

⁶⁵ GA67: 82.

⁶⁶ Comparisons of this approach to other methods that confront the history of philosophy, such as genealogy or deconstruction, are beyond the scope of this research.

⁶⁷ This observation corresponds to Heidegger's presentation of his way of thinking as "die Gründung [the grounding]", i.e. as an active laying of a foundation, elaborated in the fifth chapter of the *Beiträge* (same title).

⁶⁸ GA65: 322.

⁶⁹ Cf. GA65: 309. Note that Heidegger is weary of the possible metaphysical interpretations of a notion like 'experience', interpretations that he criticizes elaborately in GA65: 131-135 (and in connection to science on GA65: 159-166).

⁷⁰ GA65: 304.

⁷¹ Cf. GA65: 318.

remain a subject' or 'grounding existence' (in favour of the latter)⁷²: Dasein itself must change for the intended overcoming of metaphysics to take place. Unsurprisingly perhaps, here Heidegger's ideas on authenticity [eigentlichkeit] become relevant, because he believes the process of becoming a foundation for the truth of Being in 'grounding' is a way for Dasein to come into its own. On this point, Heidegger's intended usage of the term 'Ereignis [event]' is relevant: when he makes reference to 'the event of Being', the notion of 'event' signals the relevance of human existence, rather than suggesting an interpretation as 'historical happening', which does not necessarily involve a sense of humanity. The connotation of 'Er-eignen' is supposed to contain a sense of 'eigen [own]', such that the event always involves a 'coming into one's essence'⁷³. This is why sometimes the term is translated with the neologism 'enowning'. One could even go so far as to translate it as 'appropriation', because Heidegger clearly intends to show that this coming into one's essence is a way to be shaped by Being, in such a way that he can even in an exaggerated way speak of Dasein becoming "Eigentum des Seyns [property of Being]"⁷⁴. The point is that in grounding Being allows mankind to become proper, and that the grounding is not a foundation of Dasein's own making despite it taking place 'in' Dasein⁷⁵.

In conclusion, Heidegger stands within the metaphysical tradition of philosophy, not outside of it. He can be considered an 'ultimate' inheritor of this tradition. He 'overcomes' the tradition in so far as he exposes its problems and exposes a real problem in relation to its foundations. The foundational problem otherwise remains implicit in its proceedings, causing the possibility of metaphysics perpetuating its own inoccurrence. The 'end' of metaphysics is achieved in so far as what was question-worthy in its outlook is retained with its own peculiar character, separate from the problematic practice that it gave rise to. It is Dasein's experience that provides for the requisite foundational clarification, putting metaphysics into the perspective of the initial question that forced Dasein into metaphysical territory.

Given that Heidegger's approach to metaphysics identifies a core problem in its reality for Dasein, and in that sense still inherits the tradition despite its independence as a practice of thinking, any interpretation of Heidegger that does not recognize the connection between metaphysics and this 'other' way of thinking is lacking qua interpretation. Furthermore, it would be wrong to designate interpretations of Heidegger as 'too metaphysical' when they present an inaccurate (or otherwise insufficiently Heideggerian) account. For any Heidegger interpretation to attain the necessary level of credence it will need to clarify how metaphysics is founded in the account given. Additionally, to critique any metaphysical approach in a Heideggerian way would be to identify in that account what is question-worthy, and not to dismiss the account as insufficiently accurate because it is unable to expunge its own metaphysical elements. Heidegger's own approach shares in this inability too, given that, in trying to find an ultimate reception of the foundation for metaphysics, it remains preoccupied with the truth of metaphysics.

⁷² GA65: 90.

⁷³ Cf. Kisiel 1993: 494-495. Note that Heidegger's proposed etymology is complicated by the fact that 'ereignen' derives from '(er)öugen' in Mittelhochdeutsch and '(ir)ougen' in Althochdeutsch, which is to say that the root is 'Augen [eyes]' rather than 'eigen', suggesting a sense of 'coming into sight' rather than 'coming into one's own'.

⁷⁴ GA65: 263, 311, 319-320. Cf. Sheehan 2014: 266-270.

⁷⁵ As a consequence of this point, one will find that in this phase of Heidegger's career 1. he believes *Sein und Zeit* was on the right track in describing Dasein as 'thrown projection' (cf., for instance, GA65: 304, 327-328, GA66: 327, 330, GA67: 129-130, 134), and that 2. definitions of Dasein's 'selfhood' are cryptic formulations of 'standing in the event of Being' (with varying amounts of word play) (cf., for instance, GA65: 298, 318, 319-320, 322, 324, GA66: 138, 148, 325).

5.4 The essence of nihilism and an elaboration of the problem of metaphysics: nothingness

Heidegger's ambition to conceive of his philosophy as embedded is not just a matter of receiving the Ancient Greek body of thought as foundational to the metaphysical tradition. It is also a matter of confronting a topic that his contemporaries were concerned with in their philosophical practice, i.e. nihilism. For Heidegger, an assessment of his own time could only be undertaken through a study of Nietzsche's thinking and his notion of nihilism, with the intent of demonstrating that here one stands at the pinnacle of metaphysical thinking⁷⁶. In other words, Heidegger identifies the tradition of metaphysics (indeed, the whole western tradition of thinking) with nihilism⁷⁷, and considers nihilism as a stage of metaphysics in which its nihilistic character becomes explicit⁷⁸. In other words, Heidegger finds in the thought of his own time (specifically Nietzschean concerns with nihilism) an exceptional opportunity to learn to understand the ungrounded ground of metaphysics. An elaboration of the contemporary problem of nihilism gives way to a confrontation with the primary focus of Heidegger's reception of the implicit truth of metaphysics.

Key are his two formulations of the essence of nihilism in the 'Das Wesen des Nihilismus' essay, the first one could call an 'inauthentic' definition, and the second an 'authentic': 1. "Nihilismus bedeutet: mit dem Seienden ist es nichts [Nihilism means: entities - it's nothing]"⁷⁹, 2. "Das wesende des Nihilismus ist das Ausbleiben des Seins als solchen. [The essencing of nihilism is the non-appearing of Being as such]"⁸⁰. Both in an equally legitimate way point to concerns that Heidegger has with regard to the topic.

The first definition is ambiguous. Semantically it designates a state of triviality with regard to entities, but for Heidegger, this has two important senses, both of which can be affirmed as part of his intended observation on the state of metaphysics. On the one hand, the state of triviality could refer to what Heidegger would consider a fundamental-ontological 'non-questioning', or in other words, to the lack of critical consideration for questions concerning Being or 'the Being of entities', which is Heidegger's crucial concern. In the metaphysical tradition of philosophy Being itself does not appear as noteworthy⁸¹. Metaphysical thinking is nihilist, then, because it does not concern itself with fundamental ontology. This Heideggerian trope should be familiar. Metaphysics assumes entities to be what they are, whatever Being may be. Being is in principle that which makes entities what they are, but in its concern with entities, it does not determine Being as a concern for it, or merely acknowledges it as a concern that transcends the entities in their reality⁸². It is the entities that are 'there' for metaphysics, and it need not engage this fundamental-ontological status in any other way than with the certainty of their Being. At his most assertive, Heidegger will, like he did in the 'Zur Seinsfrage' essay (originally a letter to Ernst Jünger), determine this nihilistic cover-up of the Being of entities to amount to a 'forgottenness of Being'⁸³. He will contrast this with his own method of thinking, which, in the context of this specific essay, amounts to a contemplation of nothingness like the one proposed in *Was Ist Metaphysik?* so as to address metaphysical triviality⁸⁴. In the

⁷⁶ GA67: 177.

⁷⁷ GA67: 210-211.

⁷⁸ Given that Heidegger disagrees with Nietzsche on the assessment of nihilism one can, for the sake of brevity, account for Heidegger's thoughts in isolation from Nietzsche's.

⁷⁹ GA67: 177.

⁸⁰ GA67: 243.

⁸¹ Cf. GA67: 234.

⁸² Cf. GA67: 212-216.

⁸³ GA9: 414-415, 422.

⁸⁴ GA9: 418-421. The same point is made with regard to the reception of *Sein und Zeit* in commentary from the unpublished manuscript on nihilism (GA67: 266, cited in 3.6).

context of the manuscript on nihilism, he appeals to a deconstruction of the precedence of entities⁸⁵, which relates to the representationalist functioning of metaphysics as discussed.

On the other hand, the triviality refers to an issue with the ontological difference. Heidegger portrays metaphysics as an unjustified employment of a distinction between entities and their Being⁸⁶. The point is not that the distinction is advocated or in any way argued for by metaphysics, rather, it is considered instrumental to metaphysics. The distinction is central to the proceedings of metaphysics, whether metaphysics is aware of it or not. The ontological difference itself complicates any conception of Being. The manuscript on nihilism and metaphysics identifies the difficulty of approaching Being, so to speak, “vom Seienden her [from the perspective of entities]”⁸⁷. Moreover, elsewhere, Heidegger claims it is metaphysical to approach Being as the Being ‘of’ entities⁸⁸. Any such attempt is metaphysical, because it assumes entities in researching their Being. Given that Being is the Being of entities, the approach assumes what it is intended to address. Not only would this approach be self-referential, it would already have predetermined what it was to refer to in its reference to ‘entities’. For this reason, Heidegger explicitly opposes the idea that entities provide any sort of approximation of the essence of Being⁸⁹, and emphasizes that only Being truly is, while entities presuppose Being⁹⁰. The same thought is reflected in what Heidegger designated the most succinct formulation of his own way of thinking: “Being is, entities are not.”⁹¹ In other words, he is not only being dismissive of the metaphysical concern with entities, he is also rejecting any approach to Being from the standpoint of entities, which has implications for how he is to address the same matter of thinking. Although a concern with Being and a concern with the Being of entities share the same fundamental-ontological subject matter, they are different approaches, because Being is in an important sense absent from entities. This absence is not addressed when one simply assumes Beings to be the negation of entities, given that it also assumes entities in the same way, and results in the wrong conception of nothingness⁹². The first definition, then, on the one hand ‘negatively’ refers to the disregard for fundamental-ontological issues, but on the other hand ‘positively’ to the significance of the ontological difference for an attempt to address these issues. The point is that the absence of Being must be addressed in its own terms.

The notion of a sense of triviality to entities is controversial among Heideggerians, because an approach that was researching Being explicitly as the Being of entities Heidegger clearly pursued in his magnum opus, and in various other works he wrote around the same time. Many commentators find Heidegger’s approach to have merit precisely in its proximity to the basic nature of entities, and would, like Sheehan, be suspicious of a Heideggerian approach that would prioritize Being over entities in their account of Heidegger’s thinking. Being, after all, is clearly not intended to transcend entities. The conception of Being as transcendent is the consequence of a metaphysical, uncritical assumption of the ontological difference. It is a crucial point in Heidegger’s own self-reception, however, that he believes his own work to be subject to the nihilism implied in any (metaphysical) approach that uncritically assumes the ontological difference. Any approach that can elucidate the nihilistic aspect of Heidegger’s own early philosophy, and criticize Heideggerians for upholding precisely this aspect of his early thinking, does not necessarily imply an adoption of the (metaphysical) ‘transcendent’ conception of Being. In other words, to say that Heidegger believes himself to be too concerned with ‘the Being of entities’ rather than ‘Being’, is not to say that ‘Being’

⁸⁵ GA67: 30.

⁸⁶ GA67: 7, 67.

⁸⁷ GA67: 10.

⁸⁸ GA66: 46.

⁸⁹ GA67: 16.

⁹⁰ GA67: 76.

⁹¹ GA66: 89-92.

⁹² GA65: 246.

does not involve 'entities' whatsoever, but that conversely, entities do not involve Being, and that any approach to Being will have to incorporate this point in a manner more clearly than Heidegger himself did at an early stage in his career.

In part, then, the first definition (and perhaps with it Heidegger's growing consideration in his work for the very topic of nihilism) points to a considerable, though perhaps not essential, change in his thinking. He has become critical of the availability of entities as a conceptualisation of the most fundamental appearance of Being, whereas initially he himself had referred to Being as the Being of entities. The adoption of 'the ontological difference' as a technical concept had become instrumental to the development of his own way of thinking (and an elaboration of the project of *Sein und Zeit*), which is evident from the way he treats the issue in a notable fashion in the 'Vom Wesen des Grundes' essay and his book on Kant, both of which he believes to be problematic in hindsight⁹³. There is a sense of consistency to early and later Heidegger on consideration for the topic of the ontological difference, however, in so far as he has always emphasized both the need for thinking Being itself, and the significance of the ontological difference could have for this purpose (although he may have differed in opinion on how it would be significant). There is a radicalization, nonetheless, in so far as Heidegger seems to believe he himself had not taken the ontological difference into account in a satisfying manner.

The second definition points to a positive, 'essential' characteristic of nihilism, which is part of Heidegger's attempt to receive the question-worthy truth of metaphysics, and to see the issues raised by the first definition in a different light. Heidegger does not fault metaphysics for its forgottenness, but sees it as a consequence of a real, nihilistic problem. In his words, one finds an 'echo [Anklang]' of the history of true Being in forgottenness⁹⁴. The real issue that he concerns himself with is 'the abandonment of Being [Seinsverlassenheit]', which forgottenness is a radicalization of⁹⁵. The notion of an 'abandonment of Being' recognizes the historical necessity of an absence of Being. This notion is unlike the notion of forgottenness in the sense that forgottenness suggests that the absence can be resolved in an act of remembrance, in which Being re-appears so as to eliminate forgottenness. Heidegger stresses that the absence of Being belongs to its occurrence, and takes place of its own accord⁹⁶. Being conceals itself amidst entities in its occurrence, and this self-concealing aspect of Being's occurrence is what Heidegger intends to 'positively' appreciate⁹⁷. The awareness of forgottenness as a consequence of the necessity of Being's absence, in that sense, is instrumental to understanding the retreat of Being (and how this event determines Dasein's existence)⁹⁸. In short, the second definition states that Being refuses to appear of its own accord, it takes place merely as self-effacing. This is what the essential truth of nihilism consists in: Being takes place in such a way that it must remain absent. This essential truth is not usually addressed, but forgotten, and therefore presents the point of distinction between authentic and inauthentic nihilism.

For Heidegger, both the insignificance of entities for Being (the significance of the ontological difference) and the non-appearance of Being point to the same theme. Both imply an issue with nothingness⁹⁹. On the one hand, although Being is supposed to be 'of entities' in the sense that Being and entities comprise of the same issue for thought and that an understanding of Being makes for an 'authentic' relation to entities, this 'relation' is complicated by the difference between

⁹³ Cf. GA67: 63-64, 68, 74, but also GA65: 322 and GA66: 94.

⁹⁴ GA65: 114.

⁹⁵ Cf. GA66: 190-191.

⁹⁶ GA65: 115-116.

⁹⁷ GA65: 111-112.

⁹⁸ GA66: 219-220.

⁹⁹ Cf. GA9: 123.

Being and entities. Being is not an entity, is in no way determined by entities, and therefore implies some sense of negativity with regard to entities. On the other hand, Being is not a privation from entities. Interpreting Being as the ultimate negation of entities is not directly conducive to an understanding of the self-effacement of Being, which is the ‘positive’ characteristic of its occurrence among entities¹⁰⁰. To contemplate this occurrence implies nothingness, in so far as the subject of contemplation withdraws itself from the act. These two senses of nothingness are addressed in the same instance of thought, i.e. in the thinking of Being. To ponder the nature of nothingness, then, is instrumental to the fundamental-ontological project, as Heidegger frequently emphasizes. His approach distinguishes itself from metaphysics in particular with regard to its perception of nothingness. Heidegger emphasizes that for him nothingness is ‘not just nothing’¹⁰¹, which is in line with the dialethic appreciation of the notion of nothingness. Rather, nothingness is the “veil of Being”¹⁰². Nothingness is the subject matter that allows thinking to address Being, and for that reason Heidegger identifies them with each other¹⁰³.

Nothingness, however, is not just a ‘formal’ issue that arises as a consequence of the nature of Being and its difference from entities. There is another way of explaining what metaphysics is unable to address in its inauthentic nihilism. Nothingness obviously takes place as angst, and this is reflected in Heidegger’s claims on metaphysics: he believes that metaphysics does not experience its ‘(horrific) unsettlement [Entsetzung]’ amidst entities¹⁰⁴, and it falls upon his thinking to do so¹⁰⁵. It is decisive for Heidegger to be taken aback by angst so as to inherit the truth of metaphysics and its nihilism. The point of Heidegger’s reception of the state of philosophy is to advance the possibility of experiencing angst, as a fundamental mood that provides for a grasp on the nature of Being. One can see why angst could not be experienced by metaphysics, for it involves the ineffable basis of existence, something that would be ‘just nothing’ from the standpoint of metaphysics. Conversely it also means that Heidegger’s account does not put forward anything but a mood in which thinking may take place. This peculiarity is reflected in Heidegger’s frequent appeals to listening to the ‘voice [Stimme]’ of Being with the help of moods [Stimmung]. The moods in question are determined [bestimmt] by Being, and in that sense break free from the nihilism of metaphysics, in which Being becomes nothing more than trivial¹⁰⁶. To emphasize the ineffability of the corresponding moods, Heidegger sometimes refers to the ‘voice’ as a silence of Being¹⁰⁷. This silence can resonate in various ways, with various characteristics coming into play that Heidegger will cite in his diagnoses of the state of philosophy, such as (for instance) needlessness [Notlosigkeit] and desolation [Verwüstung]¹⁰⁸.

5.5 Implications for Sheehan’s approach to nihilism

In light of the foregoing, Sheehan’s account of Heidegger’s response to nihilism has a noticeable defect. Sheehan is right to say that Heidegger “was convinced not only that the essence of nihilism lay beyond naive hopes for a remedy but even that attempts at any kind of political and social action were feckless”¹⁰⁹. Heidegger endorses the reality of the threat of nihilism, one could say,

¹⁰⁰ GA65: 178-179, 246, GA66: 294-295.

¹⁰¹ GA65: 267.

¹⁰² GA9: 312.

¹⁰³ Cf. GA5: 112-113, GA65: 266.

¹⁰⁴ GA67: 114.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. GA9: 305-312.

¹⁰⁶ GA67: 85. Cf. GA67: 8, 18-19.

¹⁰⁷ GA67: 7, 85, 117, 254-255.

¹⁰⁸ Respectively, GA67: 30 and GA67: 147, 250-251.

¹⁰⁹ Sheehan 1990: 34 / Sheehan 1998: 284.

in so far as he acknowledges that the forgottenness of Being is grounded by the truth of the abandonment of Being. Being is necessarily absent from human existence, which entails nihilism cannot simply be remedied. The conclusion (with regard to nihilism) that Sheehan draws from this, is that one is forced to 'economize λήθη' and to 'carry out the endless tasks' that come with nihilism's technology. Rather than pondering the 'what' of the essence of nihilism, one is called up to concern oneself with the 'how'. On Sheehan's account, this means to affirm the infinite possibilities for appropriation of the world, reshaping nature into something human, and to in this way accept the mystery in nihilism's functioning¹¹⁰. It should be clear that, contra Sheehan, the mobilization of nihilism (as an implication of its reality) is uncalled for. Nihilism cannot be embraced in such a way that its disregard for Being simply runs its course. Nihilism needs to be experienced in a different key: the purpose of the reception of nihilism is to enable Dasein to become unsettled by nothingness in angst. In angst, Dasein can 'hear the silence of Being', which is to say it allows for an understanding of the ineffability of existence. This 'constructive' aspect of Heidegger's account is not present in Sheehan's account.

Sheehan's interpretation, as is typical for the transcendental-phenomenological paradigm, reconstructs what human existence is actually like. It reduces human existence to the field of intelligibility, i.e. to the meaning that things have in their permanent accessibility to human beings¹¹¹. The point of such an account is to show that the fate of nihilism is decided 'not in libraries, texts, or conferences' but 'in the boardrooms, the hills and the streets'¹¹². With such an aim, Sheehan noticeably attempts to remain 'true to life', by abstaining from the 'metaphysical' abstractions from actual, concrete human existence. Heidegger, in contrast, does not want his philosophy to find its merit in propagating some kind of 'proximity to life', for to do this would not be the same as posing the question of Being¹¹³. Assuming that existence consists in a certain way of living, and to make philosophy into something that lays bare this already apparent life, denies philosophy the ability to research what existence is like.

Sheehan's appeal to the concrete meaning of life can be likened to a 'petitio principii'. This notion usually translates to 'begging the question', or in other words, it refers to the logical fallacy in which one assumes an unproven premise so as to make an argument for a conclusion that needs to be proven. In Heidegger's mind, which Sheehan refers to in an explicit endorsement of this notion¹¹⁴, however, it refers to "das Auslangen nach dem gründendend Grunde [the reaching out to the foundational ground]"¹¹⁵. In Sheehan's words, it's the active presupposition of an unknowable foundation without any attempt to 'get behind it'. This unknowable foundation of course refers to the inexplicable, human creation of a space of intelligibility. Sheehan is appealing to his readers to understand this foundation in a non-metaphysical sense, without the help of some intellectual activity, assuming it would consist in the life in the 'boardrooms, hills, and streets'. Heidegger is less positive that the petitio principii would be the right strategy for philosophical practice. In his view, such an approach is the essence of metaphysics. The aim of the petere principium is "das ausdrückliche Übernehmen der schon waltenden Wirklichkeit des Wirklichen [the emphatic reception of the already legitimate reality of the real]", in such a way that the Being of the real is never questioned¹¹⁶. In other words, it aims to represent the real in acknowledgement of its reality, without confronting the basis for any assumption of reality, i.e. the availability of Being (which is

¹¹⁰ Sheehan 1990: 53-54 / Sheehan 1998: 313-315 / Sheehan 2002: 294-297.

¹¹¹ Sheehan 1990: 42 / Sheehan 1998: 296, 301-302 / Sheehan 2002: 285-287.

¹¹² Sheehan 1990: 54 / Sheehan 1998: 315 / Sheehan 2002: 297. These statements are clearly inspired by the materialist response to Feuerbach (cf. Sheehan 1998: 312 / Sheehan 2002: 294).

¹¹³ GA67: 133. Cf. GA67: 114.

¹¹⁴ Sheehan 2014: 271.

¹¹⁵ GA9: 244.

¹¹⁶ GA67: 29.

only available in its withdrawal). The availability of Being is assumed to amount to reality. In that sense, the *petitio principii*, even in this Heideggerian formulation, is nihilistic in the inauthentic sense, which makes Sheehan's endorsement of the *petitio principii* a sign of the metaphysical character of his philosophy.

Moreover, in Sheehan's account of the intelligibility of the real, it becomes explicit that for him, things ultimately have a function and purpose that allow them to 'run their course'. This corresponds neatly to Heidegger's observations on how in metaphysics, there is a coherence in how entities both make up reality [Wirklichkeit] and are simply what 'works' [das Wirkliche]¹¹⁷. In other words, Sheehan's account is metaphysical, because it assumes that human existence is embedded in a reality that already 'works'. Perhaps 'its ways' are mysterious, but, Sheehan believes, one does not need to contemplate this mystery with abstract, 'metaphysical' activities, because one can let oneself be 'empowered by nihilism' and proceed to exist as one should, in accordance with a basic assumption of reality.

Sheehan's account, in this way, provides a concrete example of a metaphysical attempt at a philosophical repetition, which is unable to express the question-worthiness of what it aims to represent. Methodologically speaking, it aims to provide an account of Being as it is, without questioning its Being. Contra Sheehan, it could be said that the event of Being, in all its 'mysteriousness', puts human existence into question, in such a way that Dasein becomes unsettled from its ordinary existence, and thrown back unto itself. In order to understand Heidegger's main concern, one needs to positively receive the 'nihilistic' nature of this event, i.e. the 'abandonment of Being', and this reception takes place through the fundamental mood of angst. Without angst, human existence remains 'negatively' nihilistic in its inability to confront its own inexplicability to itself. Sheehan's disregard for the notion of nothingness on its own stems from his assumption that any attempt to address λήθη, attempts such as the aforementioned Right Heideggerianism, would present Being as dehistoricized and practically unintelligible¹¹⁸. Angst, however, does neither of those things. Angst is the occurrence of the true essence of human existence, which is not at all unfamiliar in the history of mankind.

One may, like Sheehan, be reluctant to endorse the vocabulary of an appearance that withdraws itself, and one may do so by endorsing a rather one-dimensional interpretation of its appearance-inappearance dichotomy, to pursue Heideggerian methodology in a particular way. The ambiguity of said dichotomy, however, is central to Heidegger's ambitions to revise the core phenomenological program. One may be surprised to hear that even in his 1973 Zähringen seminar, Heidegger remained committed to a phenomenological program. He imagined it, however, as a 'Phänomenologie des Unscheinbaren [phenomenology of the inapparent]'. This provides a clear counterpoint to Sheehan's phenomenological interpretation. As Jason W. Alvis notes, this phenomenology is in particular tailored to address the fundamental dichotomy of appearance and inappearance. It "furnishes intelligible what may not be significant, but that we are still somehow involved with"¹¹⁹. That even in *Sein und Zeit* there are hints of this revised phenomenology was noted by Jean-François Courtine, and the connection is confirmed by the account of angst in particular. Like Courtine, one may assume that the importance of the inapparent must have an impact on the way Heidegger's philosophy in toto is viewed¹²⁰. Heidegger, when he does phenomenology, is concerned with the way the quintessentially inapparent takes place, or in

¹¹⁷ GA66: 289-290. This coherence finds its genealogical root in Aristotle's ideas, according to Heidegger.

¹¹⁸ Sheehan 2001: 290-291 (cf. Sheehan 1998: 305). Sheehan also believes the (post-)ethical status of nothingness is unclear, and that no obligations can be founded on its basis. The normative status of nothingness is discussed in chapter 6.

¹¹⁹ Alvis 2018: 212.

¹²⁰ The third possible interpretation of Heidegger's Phänomenologie des Unscheinbaren (Alvis 2018: 230-232).

Courtine's words, with how 'the secret of Being is preserved'¹²¹. To imagine the phenomenological aspects of Heidegger's way of thinking without preserving this fundamentally ambiguous element of 'the inapparent' would amount to abandoning Heidegger's philosophical ambitions altogether.

5.6 The notion of φύσις and the problem with the transcendental interpretation of Heidegger's account of man

Sheehan's endorsement of an explicitly metaphysical method, the *petitio principii*, is not an incidental mistake. The transcendentalist character of the current paradigm of Heideggerian scholarship consistently undermines the possibility of authentically confronting nihilism, be it through explicit discouragement, or implicit suggestions of its limited importance. Despite its many affinities with Kantian philosophy, Heidegger's work on the notion of Being cannot be accounted for with the help of transcendentalist vocabulary, and the employment of this vocabulary leads to a problematic endorsement of subjectivist philosophy.

The transcendental vocabulary is evidently relevant to Sheehan's claim that Being is presence to man¹²². The truth of Being, on his account, is the enabling condition for the intelligibility of things¹²³. The main claim of Sheehan's propagation of a transcendental-phenomenological paradigm is that Being is "the origin of sense/meaning"¹²⁴. In other words, Being is the transcendental condition for the possibility of the meaningfulness of entities. Entities as such are meaningful, and Being constitutes its meaningfulness. This transcendentalist explanation of Being asserts that Being is the Being of entities, and that entities are, broadly speaking, the natural outcome of Being. This understanding of Being, which Sheehan determines to be a kind of Beingness, can be associated with the notion of φύσις: according to Sheehan, this notion designates the "intrinsic showing up of entities to human knowing and acting"¹²⁵. On this account, Being is a kind of emergence, a process which gives rise to entities. It is the transcendental process that allows entities to be what they are. Likewise, it should be clear that Withy is an example of a Heidegger scholar who provides a similar transcendentalist account, when she claims Dasein is a sense-maker, or in other words, is defined in terms of the necessity of uncovering entities. "Being is that by virtue of which entities are, and are as they are, rather than not." And, "the presence of entities is always the meaningful presence of entities". As a consequence, Heidegger "wants to understand how being or meaning works and what makes it possible."¹²⁶ Here too, it is affirmed that Being is φύσις¹²⁷.

It is clear, however, that despite Heidegger's appeals to think through the foundation of metaphysics with the help of the foundational concepts of metaphysics, the notion of φύσις remains the conceptual vehicle of the traditional, inessential conception of Being. These statements on the nature of Being correspond to the presuppositions of the first, metaphysical beginning of philosophy, which understands entities to have an emergent presence¹²⁸. The transcendentalist endorsement of a metaphysical understanding of Heidegger's thinking is therefore not a coincidence. It assumes that the metaphysical notion of 'Beingness', i.e. the process of becoming¹²⁹ which sustains the presence of entities, accurately describes Being, and can be translated to the transcendentalist vocabulary of

¹²¹ Courtine 1993: 249.

¹²² Sheehan 2014: 61.

¹²³ Sheehan 2014: 75-76.

¹²⁴ Sheehan 2016: 277.

¹²⁵ Sheehan 2014: 36.

¹²⁶ Withy 2015b: 312.

¹²⁷ Withy 2015b: title.

¹²⁸ GA65: 189-190, 195. Cf. GA66: 371, 378-379.

¹²⁹ Cf. GA65: 193.

‘the constitution of the meaningfulness of entities’. The transcendentalist interpretation, in short, adopts metaphysical thinking in a way that Heidegger is trying to avoid. Heidegger shows interest in the notion of φύσις, not because he endorses its metaphysical implications, but because it contains reference to Being and explicitly thematizes how it reveals itself. In other words, the word refers to the ‘evidential’ character of Being. Heidegger admits his reception is rather equivocal¹³⁰. On the one hand, he is invested in the notion in so far as it contains reference to Being as ‘apparent [Offenkundig]’¹³¹. Being is that which shows itself of its own accord¹³². On the other, he is only invested in this notion in so far as it hints at the way in which the self-effacement of Being is taken up by the metaphysical tradition. The notion of φύσις he studies particularly in conjunction with Heraclite’s statements about φύσις hiding itself¹³³. This aspect of Being, which was ‘apparent’ to the Ancient Greek philosophers, take Heidegger’s considerations beyond the boundaries of the metaphysical framework of Being as the presence of entities (i.e. ‘being-ness’). His appreciation of the notion of φύσις is explorative, which is obvious from the question he asks with regard to the question-worthiness of the notion: “how are we to understand the mystery of this understanding of Being, if it is not just meant to refer to ‘nature’, in its various guises, such as the object of the study of physics, the landscape, or meaningfulness?”¹³⁴

Although in his earlier work he may have endorsed to an extent the metaphysical conception of Being, he in his later work explicitly argues against a transcendentalist understanding of Being, and stresses the non-metaphysical significance of his metaphysical attempts at thinking Being in his earlier work. On this point, it should be clear that Heidegger’s nihilistic consideration is that ‘entities are not, only Being is’. The way entities come about and take place cannot provide for an elaboration of the question of Being. His arguments against transcendentalist vocabulary can be viewed as an elaboration of this point. Metaphysics, he claims, has always assumed entities to ‘naturally’ come from Being, whatever Being may be. It has assumed the presence of entities and posits the question of Being as explanatory in the sense of the enabling [Ermöglichung] of entities¹³⁵. For that reason, the metaphysical (‘guiding’) question of Being devolves from a ‘what-question’, i.e. a question concerning the nature of the entities that are already apparent to it, to a ‘why-question’: in order to understand the nature of entities, it researches Being as the enabling conditions for the presence of entities¹³⁶. The language of ‘possibility’ signifies an anticipation of ‘the coming of entities’, and in that way reinforces ideas of reality¹³⁷. The principle problem with the transcendentalist vocabulary is that it assumes that Being must be what explains the presence of entities. The presence of entities becomes self-explanatory, because metaphysics has already determined entities to be caused by their Being, so that they may be assumed to be what they are. For this reason, the understanding of Being as ‘enabling’ becomes problematic: it is the ungrounded assumption of presence without an understanding of the way in which Being becomes available.

A second problem can be identified with the assertion of the a priori, i.e. the antecedence of Being as an enabling condition. Although Heidegger is interested in the ‘priority’ of Being (which relates to the evidential character of Being), he denies that Being would be either an antecedent or a consequent in any kind of way, since this simply reinforces the precedence that entities take over Being¹³⁸. From this metaphysical standpoint, it is primarily entities that take place, and their Being is

¹³⁰ GA66: 370.

¹³¹ Cf. GA10: 103.

¹³² GA10: 108 and, given the link between φύσις and φαίνεσθαι, S&Z: 28-30.

¹³³ GA7: 277-279, GA9: 300-301, GA10: 103-104, GA40: 121-122.

¹³⁴ GA65: 190.

¹³⁵ GA67: 90-91.

¹³⁶ GA66: 267-273.

¹³⁷ GA67: 24, 86.

¹³⁸ GA65: 222-223.

ascribed a different temporality. The assertion of the a priori becomes a way of asserting something in relation to the reality of entities, and on Heidegger's historical account, this always results in the affirmation of the psychical¹³⁹. In other words, the employment of the transcendentalist notion of 'the a priori' leads to the assertion of subjectivity, in the broad sense of the underlying with respect to entities. This underlying thing is assumed to provide sufficient grounds for the presence of entities, given the evidential character of Being. Being as a ground becomes a regularity of the enabling of entities¹⁴⁰, and this process attains its own character in contrast to entities, which allows for the conceptualization of the human being as the subject, or in other words, that which embodies this constitutive process. The notion of 'a priori' becomes explanatory for subjectivity in the specific sense of the human being as the ground for entities, which Heidegger explicitly denies Dasein to be¹⁴¹. In this way, the transcendentalist framework reinforces the subjectivist tradition, which Heidegger does not believe to provide the required account of human existence.

The transcendentalist account does, in typical Heideggerian fashion, acknowledge that the main subject of its claims, Dasein's constitution of meaningfulness, and therefore φύσις, is in itself inexplicable. As Sheehan puts it: "it remains hidden while disclosing things as meaningful."¹⁴² The mystery refers to "the unknowability of the why and wherefore"¹⁴³, or in other words, the obscurity of the grounds for the presence of entities. Entities are meaningful, but the source for this meaningfulness is itself incomprehensible. On Withy's account, Heidegger deliberately, in response to the question of what makes sense of the 'self-withholding' of Being¹⁴⁴, omits an account of the withdrawal of meaning¹⁴⁵. Obviously, an explanation of the inexplicable is impossible. In this way, the transcendentalist interpretation incorporates an element of 'mystery' in accordance with Heidegger's own account. The interpretation specifies that the enabling condition for the meaning of entities is self-effacing. It may well acknowledge that such an inexplicable process, in terms of its content, would not conform to the Law of Non-Contradiction. The significance of this mystery, however, is put into perspective by what one could call its 'productivity'. The mystery is supposed to function as the enabling condition for the meaning of entities, it is supposed to function as constitutive for meaning. Sheehan calls this 'the gift of Being', with reference to some of Heidegger's statements. The idea is that Being 'gifts' meaningfulness, provides it, irrespective of how it does this, which remains an obscure affair¹⁴⁶. In other words, this transcendentalist perspective primarily affirms that φύσις, a process of the emergence of Being as entities, is completely spontaneous as a foundational event. It arises of itself, evidently, without prior occasion or instigation. Explanation for its emergence is therefore unnecessary, or takes the shape of a special clarification that merely affirms it as such.

This is a misunderstanding of Heidegger's claims about the gift of Being. According to Heidegger, "das Nichts ist das erste und höchste Geschenk des Seyns [nothingness is the first and highest gift of Being]"¹⁴⁷. What Being 'provides for' is nothingness specifically. On Heidegger's account, "das Seyn west als nichthaft [Being essentially occurs as of the nothing-kind]"¹⁴⁸, which corresponds to the determination of self-effacement as its essential characteristic. Being appears only in the guise of nothingness, making nothingness the veil of Being. Consequently, to address

¹³⁹ GA67: 87.

¹⁴⁰ GA10: 107-109.

¹⁴¹ GA66: 321.

¹⁴² Sheehan 2015: 226.

¹⁴³ Sheehan 2015: 228.

¹⁴⁴ Withy 2015b: 311-312.

¹⁴⁵ Withy 2015b: 324.

¹⁴⁶ Sheehan 2014: 272. Cf. Sheehan 1998: 296-297.

¹⁴⁷ GA66: 295.

¹⁴⁸ GA65: 267. Cf. GA9: 360.

nihilism means to acknowledge that Being intrinsically has determined itself not to be anything¹⁴⁹. Without justification, this ‘mystery’ of Being is framed by the transcendentalist account as the inexplicability of the appearance of meaning. Sheehan explicitly denies the gift of Being provides for nothing, because he wants to show that despite the inexplicability of the constitutive process its providence is evident. Withy likens this to a sailor at sea: the human being remains at the surface, while it cannot see into the depths¹⁵⁰. In other words, the human being is faced with the meaning of entities, but never with its Being, which is concealed. The metaphor distinguishes the surface from the deep, so as to reinforce the ontological difference and the constitutive function of Being with regard to entities. The implication that Dasein never sees what is concealed, never understands the mystery, is an inaccurate representation of Heidegger’s account. Heidegger elaborates the task of thinking: it means to experience nothingness, i.e. the unsettling, and to appreciate this as a gift¹⁵¹. It involves an essential knowledge [Wissen], in so far as it remains permeated by the truth of Being¹⁵², and it involves the thought of nothingness, in so far as it thinks Being¹⁵³. The purpose of Heidegger’s thinking is to experience nothingness, and in that way to receive Being in its givenness. Although the transcendentalist interpretation acknowledges a sense of mystery, it does so only to assert the evidential givenness of the meaning of entities. It obfuscates the possibility of research into the mystery of Being, because it denies that that can be addressed in a meaningful way.

Despite the many flaws of the transcendentalist vocabulary, it must be conceded that there is an affinity between it and Heideggerian thinking, in so far as the event of Being is supposed to be the foundation for human existence. Being is indeed a grounding process that is embodied in Dasein, and it is characterized by a sense of evidential emergence¹⁵⁴. The openness of this foundation, and therefore the nature of human existence, is consistently misinterpreted by the transcendentalist interpretation, in so far as it frames it as the space in which entities arise as meaningful. The foundation, nothingness, even where it is received by Heideggerian scholars of this paradigm, is not taken seriously as nothingness, but only as the foundation for entities, which are, from Heidegger’s perspective, inconsequential to nothingness. To redirect Heideggerian scholarship to the gift of Being as nothingness does not mean to deny that there would be a foundation for entities, or to deny that entities are meaningful. It means to state that the *petitio principii* for such a foundation is unlike the thinking that takes the mystery of Being as its starting point, despite its ‘assumption’ perhaps being similarly ‘unfounded’. To address the mystery of Being means to become unsettled by the thought of nothingness, and to contemplate its implications for the essence of human existence. This contemplation concerns “das Erste: daß der Mensch sich selbst ein unaussetzendes Geheimnis sei [the primary: that human existence is for itself an interminable mystery]”¹⁵⁵, or in other words, that human existence is ineffable. It cannot be determined to be constitutive of the meaning of entities, because it cannot be determined to be anything. Its existence as a self does not consist in some sense of self-identity, but consists in a belonging to Being¹⁵⁶. Being ‘determines’ Dasein to exist in angst. Even in *Sein und Zeit*, the point of its existential analysis was never primarily to clarify the nature of Dasein and its relation to entities as a kind of transcendental account: its philosophical practice developed a specific project. The project took the shape of a question with regard to Dasein’s own existence, which would let the silence of Being resonate within itself¹⁵⁷. *Sein und Zeit*’s

¹⁴⁹ Cf. GA67: 219-221, 227-228.

¹⁵⁰ Withy 2015b: 325.

¹⁵¹ GA65: 267.

¹⁵² Cf. GA66: 120-121.

¹⁵³ Cf. GA9: 360.

¹⁵⁴ Φύσις, the emergence of Being, makes up the essence of humanity, in other words (cf. GA34: 115).

¹⁵⁵ GA66: 55.

¹⁵⁶ GA65: 319-320.

¹⁵⁷ GA66: 325-329.

question concerning 'who we are' in that sense depends on the 'hiddenness' inherent to its relation to Being¹⁵⁸.

5.7 The traditional conception of truth and the identification of Heidegger's issue with Being

The transcendentalist interpretation of Heidegger becomes inaccurate, because it adopts metaphysical thinking in an uncritical way, leaving unquestioned the availability of Being. The idea of 'entities' comes to determine the way in which its philosophy takes place. In an important sense entities as such are 'paradigmatic' for the practice of metaphysics. Entities as such provide for the possibility of a specific kind of philosophical practice, and this makes them normative, or in other words, they entail a standard that philosophy is compelled to adhere to. Most clearly, this can be gleaned from the Aristotelean conception of truth, which consistently remains the subject of Heidegger's criticisms throughout the different phases of his career. The point of consistency concerns the propositional conception of truth, which states that truth is a property of statements, which a statement attains when it corresponds to reality. In *Sein und Zeit*, he highlighted the normative notion of 'selfsameness': in this sense of truth entities are 'uncovered' to be what they are. In the 1930 essay *Vom Wesen der Wahrheit* he proposed to review the general idea under the heading of one concept: 'Richtigkeit [accuracy]', which stresses the way this sense of truth consists in a 'Sichrichten [self-aiming]', presupposes an underlying thing which freely leads this aim ('subjectivity')¹⁵⁹. Here too, this underlying thing refers to the 'letting be of entities'¹⁶⁰. In other words, entities are constituted in a way that enables the possibility of them being represented in the same way. This notion of accuracy has various implications that elaborate the idea of selfsameness, and that can clarify the sense of normativity inherent to metaphysics. Metaphysics presents the possibility of standardization, in so far as it believes that the sameness of entities as such is the self-explanatory outcome of Being, which allows for adherence to Being in a homogeneous way. The idea of 'entities' is this standardization of Being, which confines Being to ultimately constitute this and that, when in truth Being withdraws itself of its own accord, so as to not be anything at all. This standardization of Being is relevant for the identification of the central issue of Heidegger's philosophy.

In a characteristic historical analysis from his *Parmenides*, Heidegger explains how the Ancient Greek, metaphysical idea of the presence of entities is received by the Romans, in a way that highlights the notion of accuracy and the breadth of its implications. For the Greeks, the presence of entities is something that provides an 'aim'. Entities 'come to' human existence as a kind of appointment: they become a point of reference that allows humans to accord with them in a way that might be ὀρθός [straight/(up)right], i.e. straight to the point¹⁶¹. This 'self-aiming' is instrumental to the Aristotelean idea of truth, in which 'correspondence' is constituted, or what Aristotle calls a ὁμοίωσις [similitude]' between a human being and entities, because entities are the point of reference that humans 'aim at'. The Romans interpret this 'self-aiming' as a kind of 'self-adjustment [Sich-einrichten]'. Truth becomes the way in which Dasein organizes itself in accordance to entities, comporting itself to them, stressing the way that human existence comes about in its relation to entities. It underlines the ability [Vermögen] to comport oneself in relation to entities, which themselves remain aright, standing, and secure in one's doing so. What one possibly achieves in such comportment is a kind of 'rectitudo [right-ness]'¹⁶². The notion becomes the earmark for the Roman interpretation of Aristotelean truth.

¹⁵⁸ GA66: 148.

¹⁵⁹ GA9: 179-187.

¹⁶⁰ GA9: 188-189.

¹⁶¹ GA54: 122.

¹⁶² GA54: 73-75.

This notion, however, has significantly different connotations from the Greek sense of truth, and specifically has practical implications. The presence of entities, and the opportunity of self-adjustment that it provides, become a way of the human being asserting itself. It provides the opportunity to act, for the human being to 'deploy' itself amid entities. In a basic way, the notion of *rectitudo* becomes the foundation for the possibility of power(s), and moreover, of commanding a situation¹⁶³. In short, the Roman conception introduces the idea of human organisation in relation to the given. In this understanding, metaphysics unfolds itself as explicitly technological. Being is conceptualized as a becoming that constitutes entities, and *Dasein* has the power to bring itself about in this constitution. It asserts the 'make-ability' [*Machbarkeit*] of existence, in the sense that its making [*Machen*] of entities becomes the originary power [*Macht*] of human existence¹⁶⁴. Heidegger even refers to the possibilities of re-organisation and reconstruction of entities through the arrangement of 'images of meaning', which arises as a consequence of such technological make-ability¹⁶⁵. *Dasein* has the power of Being, and this power unfolds in a variety of ways in all of its actions. This power is granted by (what Heidegger in his essay on the essence of technology termed) the 'standing reserve' of Being: a human being can securely count on entities to be what they are, so that they allow for enframing [*Gestell*], i.e. an ordering or stock taking of entities that produces itself in the sense of 'setting [*Stellen*]'¹⁶⁶. Technology, in other words, asserts an understanding of human activity on the basis of the availability of entities.

The traditional, metaphysical sense of truth creates a paradigm, in the sense that its assertion of a standard of Being (i.e. entities) enables the possibility of powers in accordance with it. The availability of entities provides for a kind of direction, since it shapes directives, and this is what Heidegger calls '*Richtigkeit*'. It is crucial to such direction, that its entities remain what they are, or in other words, stay the same. In metaphysics, Being becomes 'standard', then, both in the sense of an established uniformity, since entities are assumed to be available in their presence, and in the sense of a basis for measurement, since entities provide the criterion for the self-assertion of human existence. The transcendental paradigm of Heideggerian scholarship is metaphysical also in the sense that it perpetuates this standardization of Being.

The problem of an accurate reconstruction of Heidegger's intended way of thinking is not just specific to the transcendental paradigm, however. Any assertion of a paradigm of the correct interpretation of Heideggerian thinking employs the idea of *Richtigkeit*, and therefore embraces the traditional sense of truth in its account of Heideggerian philosophy. It would do so, to the extent that the correct identification of the subject matter of Heidegger's thinking would standardize Being in the same way that metaphysics would. For instance, one could endorse a sense of normativity to Being by appealing to the need for *Dasein*'s '*Entsprechung* [correspondence/accordance]' to Being. Its emphasis on 'the Word' that corresponds to Being, which is certainly what Heidegger emphasized¹⁶⁷, could suggest that one must endorse a 'correspondence' theory of truth, in the sense that what one says 'of' Being must be in accordance with it. Such a suggestion would standardize Being, because it assumes that Being has a sense of self-identity, to the extent that Being would be what it is of itself. This assumption would be metaphysical: entities are the Being that simply is what it is, and has this sense of 'selfsameness'. The identification of the subject matter of Heidegger's

¹⁶³ GA54: 58-60. Subsequently, this reinforces on the one hand fascination with 'the imperial', i.e. the establishment of dominance, because command allows for rule, and on the other Christian dogma, because the notion of '*rectitudo*' becomes exemplary for the way in which belief should come about (GA54: 75-76).

¹⁶⁴ GA66: 21-22.

¹⁶⁵ GA66: 174-176.

¹⁶⁶ GA7: 17-22.

¹⁶⁷ Cf. GA54: 169. Another instance of the importance of *Entsprechung* for Heidegger's thinking can be found in GA11: 118.

thinking, be it via the selfsameness of entities or of Being, is a problematic way of approaching what is being thought. This is because the 'nature' of Being does not provide for such a normative availability, or in other words, that the truth of Being is not what metaphysics assumes it to be.

There is something question-worthy, however, about the traditional idea of truth, and this is highlighted in Heidegger's contemplation on the notion of 'the Same [das Selbe]', which distinguishes it from the 'selfsameness' of the traditional idea of truth. Heidegger distinguishes the 'equivalence [Gleichheit]' of identity in the formal sense of 'Sein = Sein' from the Ancient Greek (in particular Parmenides') understanding of sameness [τὸ αὐτό]¹⁶⁸. Heidegger's thinking addresses something it has not determined the identity of, in the same way he believes the Greeks have done, because he does not believe Being has a determinate identity. Being has a self-occluding nature, which means in its appearance turns against itself in withdrawal. This nature gives it the characteristic of differentiability [Verschiedenheit]¹⁶⁹, because it differs itself in this way. In taking place, it withholds its own appearance, which Heidegger refers to as a historical 'ἐποχή [suspension]'¹⁷⁰ and thinks of as the basis for every assumption of an ontological difference [Unterschied], i.e. the 'distinction' of Being. Instances of thinking 'belong together' in so far as there Being takes place as self-withdrawing, and for Heidegger, this is enough to constitute the intended sense of sameness¹⁷¹. One could term the self-occlusion of Being as the 'regressive' aspect of the issue of Being. The issue of Being is always the same, not when it can be determined to be identical to itself or to have a variety of identical instances or iterations, but when the problem retreats into itself, withholding itself, as a kind of 'differing'. Such a regression does not constitute an identity, but its occurrence remains a self-contained event.

The event of Being contains a sense of truth, in so far as it grounds and determines human existence. It cannot be said to make a human being or grant human existence a sense of identity, but it does enable the project that is proper to existence, i.e. thinking. Heidegger sometimes calls philosophy a kind of error [Irre], not in the sense of a mistake, but in the Latin sense of 'errare', meaning to wander or roam. Human existence, in its 'belonging to Being', does not correspond to Being in such a way that it can be judged by a standard of Richtigkeit (which would be a concern for metaphysical thinking). Instead, it must remain ambivalent with regard to 'the advent' of its Being. 'Technically' speaking, human belonging enables the arising of Being, i.e. φύσις. This is the 'success' of human existence: that it may sustain itself on the basis of Being. However, a human being may only sustain itself, technically speaking, when its Being withholds itself. Existence for any human being remains a regressive issue, in the sense that its mystery turns and twists by receding further into itself. It 'fails' in the sense that it is refused the closure of a given identity and must remain an impenetrable mystery. The truth of Being, for a human, means to succeed and fail at the same time in these ways. The understanding of human existence in terms of its ineffability, a kind of 'authentic nihilism', has its merit in being ambivalent in the same way: it clarifies human existence in relation to Being, only by pointing to the necessity of the obscurity of its belonging to Being. The human thinking of Being, in that sense, remains a history of error, wandering in the course of its existence¹⁷². The ambivalence cannot be straightened out by some power of man in relation to itself, because its true self does not become available to it in a way that would empower it to do so. Its existence, instead, regresses into a self-contained selfhood, which cannot sustain a determinable self-identity.

¹⁶⁸ GA11: 33-36, 48-49. More straightforward denials that 'das Gleiche' and 'das Selbe' are the same can be found in GA5: 332-333 and GA9: 363.

¹⁶⁹ GA7: 196-197.

¹⁷⁰ GA9: 337-338.

¹⁷¹ GA7: 196-197. Cf. GA11: 36-38.

¹⁷² GA9: 196-198. Cf. GA5: 337-338.

5.8 Summary: the idea of a Heideggerian paradigm

When reviewing how well the idea of nothingness accords with Heidegger's reception of philosophy as a method on a whole, it can be shown to accord with it in a satisfying manner, which could be surprising from the perspective of the current paradigm in Heideggerian scholarship. At stake in this discussion, is the coherence between the 'central ideas' of Heideggerian thought, and the position of those ideas within the history of philosophical thinking as a whole. Heidegger over time comes to believe that the history of thinking can be characterized as metaphysical, which is problematic in the sense that this history does not comprehend its own essential foundation. The existing paradigm has established itself partly as a criticism of 'Heideggerian' philosophers for practicing metaphysical thinking in the problematic way. Heidegger's response to metaphysics, is not to disavow it entirely, but to be the ultimate inheritor of metaphysics. This consists in making an attempt to find the fundamental truth of philosophy, which metaphysics is supposed to address (but fails to), and to thereby restore the fundamental question-worthiness of metaphysics. In short, it consists in posing the question of Being, rather than assuming the presence of entities in their Being.

Although it has correctly identified metaphysics as a problem, the existing paradigm has nonetheless become constricted by a metaphysical influence, in a confusion of what is problematic about metaphysics. Problematic about metaphysics is its 'nihilism': its forgetting of what is most question-worthy about its history. Not only does this nihilism consist in a preoccupation with entities in their precedence over Being, it also consists in the general triviality of metaphysical accounts of Being, which fail to convey the question-worthiness of its subject matter, and the insignificance of entities for the relevant question. 'Positively' speaking however, this forgetting is founded in the nihilistic truth of the 'abandonment' of Being. Being cannot be 'restored' so as to reject nihilism, but nihilism needs to be appreciated in teasing out a fundamental aspect of Being, namely its self-refusal. This positive appraisal of nihilism should clarify a human being's belonging to the event of Being's self-refusal, which, in other words, refers to the ineffability of existence as a whole. Sheehan, the main proponent of the current paradigm of Heideggerian philosophy, has misconstrued this positive appraisal of nihilism in his proposal for an economisation of nihilism. Sheehan's idea of 'authentic nihilism' as a return to the ordinary lives of human beings becomes a *petitio principii* in its assumption of the availability of entities and the human reality they are a part of. This adoption of metaphysical thinking is reflected in the paradigm's self-understanding as 'transcendental'. Being is construed as the origin of sense, which makes possible the existence of the human as a space in which the meaningfulness of entities is constituted. Although the paradigm acknowledges this origin of sense to be of its own accord obscure, it denies that this obscurity makes a meaningful difference to the practice of philosophy as the practice of human meaning-bestowal. The outcome is the same: the providence of meaning. What is supposed to be, on Heidegger's account, the central question of the appraisal of nihilism, i.e. the issue of nothingness, is denied an independence from questions concerning the meaning of entities, despite it being clear that nothingness is not an entity, and that only metaphysics concerns itself with an account of the truth of entities by way of the availability of Being.

Heidegger's work calls for a more elaborate appraisal of the notion of nothingness, which does not deny the possibility of experiencing nothingness on its own terms, but which accounts for the experiential characteristics and implications of this 'gift of Being'. The reception of nihilism primarily consists in an understanding of its fundamental mood, i.e. the angst that unsettles human beings. When Heideggerian scholars refer to the mystery of Being, they should be understanding it in terms of this apparition of nothingness, which lays bare the ineffability of human existence. It does not present some mysterious experience of Being *to* human beings on occasion, it presents the mystery *of* human existence. Human existence is an open, indeterminate issue, which does not translate to a subject-thing, and the meaning of which is not provided for. The issue does not allow

for standardization, in such a way that it can be represented in a 'properly Heideggerian' body of work. Heideggerian thinking remains sigetic: in order to address the mystery of human existence, it must retain its nothingness through a self-contained regression, which Heidegger terms a belonging to the self-withdrawing of Being. This course of thinking cannot be straightforwardly defined in metaphysical thinking, because the thinking of Being cannot sustain its self-identity and construct itself as an identifiable given entity. Its existence remains a history of error, because in its reach for Being, it must necessarily come up short and remain ambivalent in its demonstration of the truth.

Chapter 6: The measure of existence

6.1 Introduction

Normativity arises as an issue in the interpretation of Heidegger's works, for a variety of reasons. Firstly, there is a general lack of clarity with the way in which Heidegger deals with normativity. He does not obviously address it appropriately and conspicuously, when many of the topics he does address imply some commitment to its relevance. This unclarity leads some to speculate whether Heidegger has sufficiently addressed normativity, and motivates numerous Heideggerians to speak on the matter. Crowell's survey of this debate, for instance, has shown that the main issues with regard to Heidegger's account concern the way in which norms arise in Dasein's basic sense of intentionality. Specifically, it is unclear how Dasein, in being practically involved with the world, adheres to any norms of its own accord, in such a way that justification of its actions, or at least some sense of 'appropriateness' to the practices it is engaged in, becomes possible¹.

Secondly, this lack of clarity extends to the discussion of truth. Truth is an example of a topic that Heidegger addresses, implying some sense of normativity, without clarifying the implication. What is lacking in Heidegger's work, at least from Tugendhat's perspective, is a clear explanation of how truth (supposedly a sense of self-transparency) can be an achievement for Dasein, and how this achievement would relate to what is traditionally considered its opposite, i.e. falsity². The issue with the normative implications of the account of truth become even more pressing upon closer inspection. Heidegger concedes that truth does not exclude its opposite, since the revelation of Dasein's self-appearance accompanies a sense of a necessary self-effacement, a dynamic captured in Heidegger's conceptualization of Dasein's existence as uncanny, or in other words, as nothingness³. With this conceptualization, Heidegger gives up on the possibility to construe the normativity of truth in a traditional manner.

A third, and also related point concerns Heidegger's metaphysical views. His concern with nihilism and philosophical existence as primarily dependent on the notion of nothingness explicitly disavows standardization. The recurrence of the issue of existence is a historically self-contained 'error' that does not result in a determinate sense of identity for a human being involved in it. On Heidegger's account, it is only metaphysical philosophy, and not his way of thinking, that concerns itself with standards of identity, and with the way in which humans both constitute them and are constrained by them⁴. The possibility of a Heideggerian account of normativity becomes questionable when the notion of 'erring' has no clear normative implication and when his idea of philosophy provides no standard in the sense of some relation of identity. The possible implications of such 'nihilism' might be problematic in a variety of ways, and a reader might even associate such implications with more generic, intuitive concerns about endorsements of nihilism. One example of such an association would be the idea that if there is no standard for philosophy, and that if even contradictions are allowed to exist, then it suggests 'anything goes', in the sense that anything could be an implication of the issue Heidegger is trying to address.

¹ Cf. 2.4.

² Cf. 1.4-1.5.

³ Cf. 4.2.1-4.2.2.

⁴ Cf. 5.7.

To alleviate such worries, it must be clarified that and how Heidegger's idea of philosophy includes a sense of normativity, albeit in an unusual way. Such clarification should come about with a number of specific aims. In the first place, a closer look at secondary literature may establish that a reader does not need to speculate on the normative implications of claims Heidegger makes about topics such as truth, but that a closer look at his work does reveal a unique, perhaps somewhat inconspicuous or understated approach to the issue. Crowell has argued convincingly that Heidegger does indeed address the topic of normativity, and that his account of conscience (also in *Sein und Zeit*) provides for some answers with regard to the 'explanatory gap'. There is a sense in which Dasein commits itself to norms, which is something Heidegger's account of authenticity clarifies, by elaborating the functioning of Dasein's conscience.

A summary of key points of Crowell's interpretation subsequently makes it possible not only to identify the account that represents Heidegger's perspective on the issue, but also to discuss the way in which the secondary literature has deviated from Heidegger's actual beliefs on this point. In that sense, a discussion of Crowell's work only serves as a basis for further discussion, with reference to the appropriate passages in Heidegger's work. Ultimately, it is significant that Heidegger thinks of Dasein's conscience as 'guilty' in character. This feature is easily misunderstood. It must be made clear that the guilty character of conscience marks a nihilistic feature of his account, bringing his understanding of conscience in line with his account of truth and uncanniness. A consequence of this misunderstanding is a misconstrual of Heidegger's notion of normativity, despite its compelling identification of the parts of Heidegger's work most relevant to scholarly discussion. The aim, then, would be to show there is consistency in the various accounts presented in *Sein und Zeit*, and also in their nihilistic features.

To address the terms in which Heidegger himself wants to explore these issues would make for another aim. In *Sein und Zeit*, the account of conscience has notable implications for what Heidegger believes constitutes reason. His approach to the nature of rationality is peculiar, and the expression of similar views in other works of his demonstrate his intention to transform (rather than reject) more traditional views on the topic. A clarification of his views on normativity, then, must also include consideration for this goal. Aside from this focus on the concept of rationality, there are a number of other terms that Heidegger considers relevant. An understanding of the proposed view of normativity can be expanded by identifying and tentatively interpreting some of these terms, most notably the notion of a decision and that of blueness, even if only to find some indications of the means for further pursuit of the kind of thinking that Heidegger envisions.

6.2 Crowell on Heideggerian normativity

The purpose of Crowell's account is primarily to 'fill a gap' with regard to how Heidegger's account of 'subjectivity' (i.e. Dasein) is read. In other words, he offers exegetical evidence with an appropriate amount of independent clarification. His concern is the explanation of an explicitly normative dimension of Dasein. To this purpose, he primarily interprets passages from *Sein und Zeit* on the notion of authenticity, which is the term that is most obviously suggestive of normativity, with some reference to works like the 'Vom Wesen des Grundes' essay. The core argument for a Heideggerian sense of normativity turns on explaining authenticity as a kind of responsibility, and clarifying how this sense of responsibility contains a clear normative dimension. The exegetical foundation for this argument is drawn from Heidegger's account of conscience, which is a part of Heidegger's

explanation of the possibility of authenticity. This introduction of the notion of conscience and its implications into the discussion of Heidegger's views on normativity (or possible lack thereof) is appropriate, which becomes obvious on inspection. For this reason, Crowell's approach to the debate is justified by the exegetical evidence he provides. However, some of his views on authenticity, and consequently his views on normativity, despite these being distinguished by Heideggerian influence, misinterpret Heidegger, and misrepresent Heidegger's own views on the matter. Before addressing the way in which Crowell deviates from the source material, however, his interpretation must be presented on its own terms.

Crowell's argument is made against the background of other, related discussions about normativity. He believes that the kind of normativity relevant to Heidegger's account is practical. 'Practical normativity' is a topic of discussion that gained traction in philosophy through Kant. In other words, Crowell believes the Kantian concept of practical normativity is helpful in understanding Heidegger's account. Crowell follows Korsgaard's interpretation of this Kantian discussion: practical normativity is the human ability to act on principles chosen of one's own accord, or in other words, the possibility of being autonomous. Autonomy is something quintessentially human on this Kantian account, and in this respect is similar to what authenticity is supposed to be. On the Kantian account, any normal human being has at least a minimal sense of reflective self-awareness that allows it to act autonomously. For the sake of clarification, Kantians contrast this autonomy with the capacities of other kinds of animals. Whereas other animals act on instinct, i.e. their actions follow directly from the availability of incentives, humans distance themselves from occasions for action, and are able to choose what motivates their actions. In this way, what it means to be a human being coheres with the constitution of reason⁵. In sum, a discussion of practical normativity, i.e. the type of normativity most relevant to Heidegger's views, concerns the way in which actions come about, for humans, in a reasonable way. Crowell considers this point significant even in a broader Heideggerian context, where talk of an event or occurrence of Being does not always clearly address a normative dimension that specifically concerns human beings⁶.

The assumption of the autonomy of human beings implies a specific approach to human being. Humans are considered in terms of their identity, for this is what is sustained by way of practical autonomy. Meaning, the conscious commitment to certain principles for actions constitutes a conception of what human existence should be like⁷. A human is regarded in light of the worldly possibilities it chooses to act out. For instance, it chooses to become a knight or a writer. In such courses of action, one commits oneself to a certain identity by doing what such a role would require, making the identity normative. For example, in order to be a knight one takes up the sword, and in order to be a writer one takes up a pen. The identity derives its meaning from the way in which 'involvement' takes its course. As Crowell puts this process: "what I do will exemplify what I take that meaning to be"⁸. On this view, Heidegger's philosophy is fundamentally not just about meaning-creation in the sense that it explains how things become meaningful for a human being, but also in the sense that humans themselves constitute a practical identity by means of this meaningfulness. Meaningful identities and their normative force become distinctive for what human existence comes to be viewed as. As Haugeland formulates this crucial point about practical identity in Heidegger's account: "we are what we do"⁹.

⁵ Crowell 2013: 243-247. Cf. Crowell 2007B: 315, 319-320.

⁶ Cf. Crowell 2008: 263.

⁷ Crowell 2013: 243.

⁸ Crowell 2015: 226.

⁹ Haugeland 2000: 58.

The point of the account, however, is not to claim simply that goal-directed actions entail some practical identity, but that this identity is something that comes about through choice. As Crowell puts it: "practice involves not merely orientation toward a goal but also commitment to oneself as being for-the-sake-of some practical identity"¹⁰. Heidegger does not just explain what we do, but how we come to do it (in a possibly 'reasonable' way). In other words, he aims to explain purposeful decision-making. Decision-making is the way in which a human being acts out its autonomy, such that it produces actions on the basis of principle. Decision-making takes place regardless of whether this way of performing one's autonomy comes about deliberately or not, which is to say the binding of principles does not necessarily take place in active introspection about one's actions, and does not necessarily become part of one's system of beliefs¹¹. It merely states that a decision is made when Dasein commits itself to a practical identity and its concomitant norms, i.e. when it makes certain norms binding for itself. In doing this, Dasein chooses its principles, or in other words, what it 'acts on', so that it may identify itself in a certain manner¹². In that sense, a 'claim' is made on humans by the principles that govern their actions. Decision-making is, from this perspective, a kind of self-determination. Dasein secures for itself a kind of selfhood through a commitment to the norms expressed in its actions, a kind of selfhood that allows it to be identified as practically engaged in that manner. Normativity is at play in this process of practical self-constitution, because Dasein only becomes itself by way of letting itself be claimed by something. Importantly, this sense of practical normativity offers a solution to the explanatory gap: Dasein's originary selfhood, i.e. authenticity, is explained as a kind of self-determination or autonomy, which is a particularly helpful in explaining what Heidegger means when he says that authenticity is a way of 'choosing itself'¹³.

Importantly, this sense of practical normativity originates in Dasein itself, and does not come from an external source. Dasein's autonomy is not explained with reference only to the practices Dasein is engaged in. As an agent Dasein is not simply governed by the norms inherent to a practice, such that Dasein would be absolved from responsibility for its own embeddedness. The explanation of the norms inherent to a practice does not sufficiently explain the grounding process Dasein goes through for the sake of its own existence. Dasein's actions cannot be understood in terms of a third-person perspective, from the perspective of the socially embedded practices it is engaged in. As Crowell puts it, Dasein does not act 'in accordance with' norms, it acts 'in light of' them¹⁴. Its commitments are ways of willingly binding itself. Dasein may be embedded in a situation or practice, but this does not become accessible for Dasein as a mere given. In each case, a practice presents itself as "a potentially justifying reason that I must avow or reject"¹⁵. Crowell argues that possibilities are not just given occasions to act upon, because possibilities are "taken up into the normative space of reasons" by laying their claim on Dasein¹⁶. Therefore, for Dasein to let itself be bound by norms, it must of itself commit to a conception of what it ought to be. It makes a choice for a specific course of action by determining what should call to action, as a human being that must commit itself so as to determine the meaning of that action. To

¹⁰ Crowell 2013: 277.

¹¹ On this point, Crowell disagrees with Korsgaard arguing that there is an equivocation in accounting for decision-making as a higher-order act of reflection (Crowell 2013: 246-248, 254-256. Cf. Crowell 2007B: 320-327).

¹² Crowell 2007B: 320.

¹³ Cf. S&Z: 42.

¹⁴ Crowell 2013: 206-207.

¹⁵ Crowell 2008: 267-268.

¹⁶ Crowell 2013: 208.

clarify matters with an example: Dasein can commit itself to being a teacher. In becoming a certain kind of teacher, it puts on display its conception of what a teacher would need to be like in this world, by acting on what seems right for that role. The teacher in question cannot rely on the identity of other teachers to constitute its identity for it. Rather, they would choose what grounds for action matters to them, and in that sense would make existential commitments that would be self-fashioning. For the teacher, making such commitments is a way of being reasonable, in the sense of feeling bound to what should be done as a human being in that capacity.

Implicit in this Heideggerian sense of practical normativity, where Dasein lets itself be claimed by various grounds for its practically engaged existence, is a kind of theory of rationality. Implicit in the idea of self-determination that looks at these specific grounds is an understanding of what constitutes a 'reason'. Heidegger, in this context, likes to use the word 'ground [Grund]', and perhaps for this reason this theory of rationality should be dubbed a 'grounding theory'. The claim principles make on the existence of Dasein takes place in a process of grounding existence, or, in other words, human existence receives its foundation in the aforementioned process of self-determination. On Crowell's account, then, Heidegger is said to have a 'constitutivist' account of agency: agency comes about through an autonomous process of justification by constitutive reasons. Heidegger explains how this process of justification must take place, and in doing so offers a meta-ethical rather than ethical perspective on normativity. The grounding theory merely explains how certain principles for action become 'at issue' for an agent, how an agent is motivated to take up a certain course of action. This commitment founds the agent's identity in question. This founding is normatively relevant, in so far as it provides the means for accountability and self-transparency. An agent, in a process of binding itself to norms, and supposing principles as the basis of its actions, makes its agency social and communicable. Dasein provides itself to means to justify its actions via references to such norms or principles. The transparency of Dasein's practical identity allows it to be answerable to anyone who would challenge the justness of their actions, even if this means that the principles upheld could make the agent culpable for a potential injustice.

The grounding theory's normative relevance is limited, however, in the sense that it cannot distinguish right from wrong. It cannot state what kind of constitution would be good, because this concerns a sense of normativity that is not addressed in this account. It cannot argue that Dasein makes the right choice as opposed to the wrong choice, or that Dasein's account of what it means to be a certain kind of human would be 'good' or 'bad' from an ethical perspective. The ambition of this constitutivist account is merely to provide a foundation for such evaluative discourse. It makes a case for the kind of reasons that can be considered normatively relevant, by pointing out the way in which Dasein binds itself to norms, which would then function as an ultimate foundation of its own humanity. Such binding obliges Dasein to be a specific sort of human, offering itself up as an account of what it means to exist as such. The theory does not provide the means to evaluate these reasons as good or bad qua justification. It remains an open question how the reasons offered can be validated in ethical terms¹⁷.

In conclusion, Crowell clarifies the normative dimension of *Sein und Zeit's* account of human existence. He explains that authenticity can be understood as a way of taking responsibility. Specifically, Dasein makes existential commitments by binding itself to norms,

¹⁷ Cf. Crowell 2013: 300-303.

functioning as the principles that lie at the basis of its actions. Authenticity in this way makes Dasein bears responsibility for itself, in the sense of providing itself with the means to participate in a social practice of reason-giving. Dasein becomes answerable for whatever principles it commits itself to. These existential commitments constitute for Dasein its practical identity, wherein the normative force of these kind of commitments lie: they oblige Dasein to make itself into a certain kind of person. Such an account of authenticity as responsibility may not directly address more standard ethical accounts of what counts as a good person, who offers good reasons for their actions, but it is nonetheless normative in the practical sense. Perhaps because the account does not meet what could be an expectation from the reader on this point, and for this reason could create confusion with regard to the normative dimension of the notion of authenticity. For this reason, it might be helpful to insist on Heidegger's usage of the word 'ground' rather than 'justification'. The insistence could possibly make it clearer that the ambition of such an account is to state what constitutes morally relevant reasons, and not to state how to evaluate reasons or to determine how practices of reason-giving must take place. With these considerations about the possibility of authenticity as responsibility in mind, it becomes easier to distinguish an expressly Heideggerian sense of normativity. It should be clear that this Heideggerian account of normativity can count on the approval of other Heideggerian scholars, given how common the interpretation of authenticity as a kind of responsibility is (and despite their differences with regard to other matters)¹⁸. A closer look at the passages from *Sein und Zeit* that serve as the primary source of inspiration for this understanding helps evaluate it in terms of its accuracy in interpretation.

6.3 *Sein und Zeit*'s notion of conscience

Crowell's account of authenticity as responsibility is largely based on chapter two of the second division of *Sein und Zeit*, which addresses Dasein's conscience [Gewissen]¹⁹. Heidegger's chapter supports a sense of practical normativity, although it leaves some room to question any interpretation that supposes this sense of normativity concerns the aforementioned kind of responsibility. What is abundantly clear from the material, in any case, is that Heidegger believes that the possibility of a conscience is what explains Dasein's possibility of becoming authenticity. In other words, Dasein's 'Selbstsein [being its self]' is clarified in a closer look at its conscience²⁰. This claim is distinct from angst's relation to selfhood, in the following way: whereas Dasein's angst is supposed to reveal to it its possibility of being authentic, conscience explains what the reality of this authentic possibility consists in. In this way, the account of conscience expands Heidegger's account of selfhood, with some implied claims about the normative dimension of this topic. On close reading, the account suggests a sense of practical normativity specifically, and therefore is justifiably referenced by Crowell in relation to the literature.

The most important component of Heidegger's phenomenological analysis of the phenomenon is that conscience takes place as a 'call'. As he puts it: "der Gewissensruf hat den Charakter des Anrufs des Daseins auf sein eigenstes Selbstseinkönnen [the call to conscience has the character of an appeal unto Dasein to become its ownmost possibility of

¹⁸ For example, Smith suggested such an interpretation of authenticity would be the key to answering Tugendhat's questions surrounding Heidegger's notion of truth (and its implicit normativity) (Smith 2007: 175-177). Other examples would be Blattner (Blattner 2015: 130), Haugeland (Haugeland 2000: 62-63), Kukla (Kukla 2002: 4-6), McManus (McManus 2015A: 5).

¹⁹ S&Z: 267-301.

²⁰ Cf. S&Z: 267-268.

being itself]"²¹. Dasein's conscience, in other words, calls Dasein out to become itself. It is only through this appeal that Dasein has the opportunity to attain a sense of selfhood that also originates in itself, or in other words, the opportunity to become authentic. Authenticity, then, is a matter of finding its calling, or following up on its self-imposed vocation. This is an intuitively normative appeal, in so far as it distinguishes regular senses of selfhood from a primordial sense, and finds a 'standard' for Dasein to adhere to. That the appeal is presented as a kind of voice can initially strike as odd, but Heidegger clarifies that it is not a voice in the colloquial sense of an actual exclamation that addresses itself to Dasein. Dasein is not 'hearing voices' in a psychopathological way, and it does not need its vocal chords, or an explicit proposition in mind, in order to hear itself call out. At this point, it should be clear that this 'voice' is more like a feeling, given the affective dimension of Dasein's existence. The way Dasein primarily presents itself to itself is by way of moods, and one could say that moods speak to Dasein in a way that makes it possible for Dasein to become aware of itself in a normatively loaded way, or in other words, to hear its conscience calling²². In short, it is equally correct to say that Dasein is compelled to become authentic as it is to say that Dasein hears a voice that appeals to authenticity.

This description of conscience as a call corresponds to Crowell's interpretation in three basic ways. These three themes should be essential to any Heideggerian account of practical normativity, and they are to Crowell's. Firstly, authenticity is a way for Dasein to listen to itself. In it, Dasein is conscientiousness in the sense of being aware of its own normative dimension. On Crowell's account, Dasein listens to itself when deciding what should count as a reason for action. Dasein calls out to itself by causing itself to be drawn to certain principles for action rather than others. It presents itself with the basis for action, which functions as a 'reason', and in doing so Dasein motivates itself to make existential commitments. Dasein 'listens in' on its conscience by actively shaping its own normative identity in following up the appeal with decisions. The kind of responsibility Crowell talks about, i.e. the way in which a human being becomes accountable to others for its own actions by way of principles, takes place only by way of this initial appeal, making the notion of a conscience central to his account.

Secondly, the account of Dasein's conscience introduces into the existential analytic a sense of rationality. This becomes most clear when Heidegger stresses that Dasein, in virtue of its conscience, has a "Freiheit zum Grunde [freedom to ground]"²³. Dasein's liberty consists precisely in its ability to create for itself its own foundation. This ability is normative in the practical sense, because in doing so Dasein shapes itself into its quintessentially human character. In other words, the call of conscience concerns a sense of spontaneity with regard to the foundation of Dasein's existence, in so far as this foundation originates in Dasein itself. Dasein calls itself out to be something, laying the foundation for a specific way of being, and binding itself to this possibility. Conscience in this way enables a kind of sovereignty, in the sense that Dasein itself is what lays claim to or holds power over Dasein. The Kantian account highlights this by explaining the 'freedom to ground' as the self-initiated constitution of a practical identity. Dasein compels itself to action, spontaneously providing itself with reasons for certain courses of action, rather than letting itself be governed by external forces.

Lastly, Heidegger stresses that this process is not deliberate, which is a feature that is reflected in Crowell's interpretation. Dasein's conscience implies no deliberation, in the

²¹ S&Z: 269.

²² Cf. S&Z: 270-271.

²³ GA9: 174-175.

sense that it does not constitute sufficient possibility for a conscious choice, or is in any way determined by Dasein's own will. Instead, "Der Ruf kommt aus mir und doch über mir [The call comes from me and yet over me]"²⁴. Although the call of conscience originates from Dasein, such that normativity arises from within Dasein, this normativity is nonetheless received and not begotten. This point Crowell explains elaborately, because he uses it to argue against more strictly Kantian accounts on precisely this point, i.e. that one's moral conscience does not need specifically deliberate action from Dasein for it to be existentially binding²⁵. In his explanation, Crowell is inspired by Heidegger's turn of phrase "das Grundsein übernehmen [taking over being-a-ground]"²⁶. Heeding the call of one's conscience is a way to 'take over grounds' in the sense of making oneself receptive to reason. Crowell explains this as follows: "to take over being-a-ground, then – that is, to possibilize what grounds me – is to transform the claims of nature or society (what 'one' simply does) into first-person terms, into my reasons for doing what I do. [...] My natural impulses are not within my power, but it is I who make them normative for me, reasons for what I do."²⁷ In short summary of Crowell's explanation, the ability to 'take over grounds' refers to the possibility for a transformation of the natural into the normative. Natural grounds are, on this account, historically and socially embedded possibilities, which allow for the possibility of a commitment to them. Such a commitment turns what is merely an inclination into what is a "justifying reason" for what I do "that I must avow or reject"²⁸. These natural grounds can lay claim to Dasein, and Dasein constitutes a morally relevant sense of selfhood, a practical self, in heeding these claims. Grounds do not originate in Dasein, in the sense that that which is normative does not arise in Dasein but 'comes over' it as a 'natural impulse', despite how the normative valence of these grounds 'come from' Dasein, in such a way that the claim that these natural impulses may have over Dasein is self-imposed.

Despite the proximity of Crowell's interpretation to Heidegger's account, there are some components of Heidegger's account that are not as accurately represented in Crowell's interpretation. A contrast with Raffoul's interpretation can clarify some aspects of Heidegger's account that have not been highlighted by Crowell's interpretation, and opens up the possibility of questioning the appropriateness of presenting authenticity as a kind of responsibility without further qualification. Raffoul distinguishes Heideggerian's notion of responsibility from a 'classical', also 'subjectivist' interpretation of responsibility. Heidegger's notion of responsibility, as Raffoul claims, specifically understands responsibility as responsivity, playing with the semantic proximity of 'Verantwortung [responsibility]' to 'Antwort [response/answer]'²⁹. Heidegger connects the notion of 'Entsprechung [accordance/correspondence]' to responsibility: being conscientious means to hear a call and to answer this call accordingly. With this reference to 'answerability', Heidegger emphasizes familiar aspects of authenticity: authenticity is responsible in the sense that it listens in on what it really is of itself, but with the specific added connotation of normative spontaneity. Dasein's responsibility is of course not only self-conscious, but conscious specifically of its own binding voice of reason, which Heidegger terms the call of conscience.

In the classical, subjectivist view, which Raffoul contrasts with Heidegger's notion of responsibility as responsivity, responsibility is instead understood as accountability. The view conceives of a subject who becomes a "ground of imputation", as Raffoul explains. "It is

²⁴ S&Z: 275.

²⁵ Cf. note 11 of this chapter.

²⁶ S&Z: 284.

²⁷ Crowell 2013: 209.

²⁸ Crowell 2008: 267.

²⁹ Raffoul 2015: 85.

about owning one's actions and owning oneself, as well as establishing an area of mastery and control for a willful and powerful subject: to be responsible in this context designates the capacity by a sovereign subject to appropriate itself entirely in an ideal of self-legislation and transparency."³⁰ This traditional account of responsibility, in other words, emphasizes that Dasein can make the foundation of its actions transparent to itself, in a way that constitutes for Dasein a sense of authority that is open to be addressed and challenged by others. Crowell's interpretation of the Heideggerian sense of responsibility is suggestive of being traditional in this sense, because it would emphasize Dasein's accountability to others in securing transparency and sovereignty over the foundation for its actions. When Crowell talks about normativity, he addresses Dasein's ability to transform natural sources of normativity into an authority by mastering natural impulses, as a way of making existential choices. With this ability Dasein appropriates the call of its own conscience so as to become a sovereign subject that is answerable to others.

This subject, then, is a ground of imputation, specifically in the sense that its responsibility is obliged to others. The voice from within, according to Crowell, constitutes obligations towards beings that are not Dasein. This claim is most explicit when Crowell states that the intended normative force originates in "the relations between human beings", such that we have Levinasian obligations to recognize 'the Other' as a pre-condition to all other obligations³¹. This stands in sharp contrast with what Heidegger claims. He denies that Dasein is responsible in the sense of "Schulden haben [having debts]" or is imputable in the sense of possibly causing a "Verletzung einer 'sittlichen Forderung' [breach of 'moral demand']". Such instances of moral requirement he interprets as the circumstance in which Dasein is the cause for some 'Mangel [deficiency]' in another human being. Such a "vulgar" notion needs clarification, because although it presents an inaccurate portrayal of Dasein's normative character, it may provide clues to a more accurate picture. A clarification needs to address the 'negativity' of responsibility: Heidegger admits that Dasein's conscience necessarily incorporates a deficiency in some sense, but nonetheless does not want to ascribe any sort of lack to Dasein in the way that this traditional interpretation of responsibility does³². The 'prevention of deficiencies' on the traditional account does not clarify what a moral deficiency would consist in, and Heidegger wants to explain something on this point. Explicitly, however, he does not want to suggest that there could be something missing in Dasein's 'moral identity', because he does believe it to be self-sufficient despite being characterized by deficiency. This means that Heidegger does not give an account of what it means to have a 'good conscience'. Instead, he merely appeals to a "Bereitschaft für das Angerufenwerden [willingness to be called]". Such a conscientious willingness is a "handeln in sich [action in itself]", i.e. self-contained, and cannot be regarded as particularly good in relation to others: it is "gewissenlos [without conscience]", Heidegger says, to the extent that it cannot avoid deficiency in its being with others³³. If this is true, then it is misleading to present Heidegger's notion of responsibility as a way of recognizing others and bearing obligations to them.

One important implication of Heidegger's considerations is that Dasein's normative character is not embedded. Its 'normative force' is not derived from natural impulses that have social relevance, but first and foremost comes from Dasein itself. Dasein's guilt is concerned with Dasein itself. "So bedarf es denn keiner Zuflucht zu nichtdaseinsmäßige Mächten, zumal der Rückgang auf sie die Unheimlichkeit des Rufes so wenig aufklärt, daß er

³⁰ Raffoul 2015: 83-84.

³¹ Crowell 2008: 276.

³² S&Z: 281-283.

³³ S&Z: 288.

sie vielmehr vernichtet [So, resorting to powers beyond that of Dasein is not required, especially because doing so obscures rather than clarifies the uncanniness of the call]³⁴. The origin of Dasein's normativity, despite it 'coming over' Dasein as if not of its own making, must ultimately be found in Dasein itself. The question with regard to any normative 'pull' that would be specific to conscience is how it calls Dasein to become authentic, such that one can wonder of any impulse or demand how it serves Dasein's authenticity. An appeal to any moral demand that does not arise within Dasein's own normative character obfuscates the answer to such a question as posed by Dasein's conscience. To appoint the force of conscience's voice to anything not directly related to the structure of Dasein's own existence precludes hearing properly the call made by conscience.

Raffoul's account, in conclusion, shows that there are several tensions between Crowell's and Heidegger's account of practical normativity. For the purpose of demonstrating that Heidegger has an account of normativity, Crowell rightly points to Dasein's conscience, which is the fundamental way in which norms spontaneously arise, so that Dasein may be rational and have sovereignty over itself without any requirement of deliberation. In explaining how this, Crowell may not have distinguished his views clearly enough from 'traditional' normative concerns. A reader may wonder, in agreement with Crowell's view, what humans owe to one another, and draw the conclusion that a reasonable basis for certain courses of action is required in order to enable imputation. This is something that Heidegger did not argue for, because his explanation of the call of conscience focuses merely on the way in which Dasein becomes responsive. This results in a rather minimal claim with regard to the origin of normativity: a call comes from Dasein over Dasein. In order for Heidegger's account to provide a substantial explanation of normativity, he needs to clarify the character of this call and the possibility of some sort of answer, such that there is some semblance between that and the dynamic of the emergence of and adherence to norms. For Heidegger's account to clearly explain a fundamental normative force in responsivity, more needs to be said about the call of conscience. To this end, Heidegger himself suggests that feelings of moral deficiency are relevant, and proceeds to elaborate, in a way that sets him apart from traditional considerations on this point. Crowell does not clearly address this specific point in the way that Heidegger does. Heidegger believes conscience to be characterized by its 'negative' or deficient character, and the notion that Heidegger uses in this context is 'guilt [Schuld]'. On his account, hearing the call of conscience is primarily a way of experiencing one's own guilt³⁵. The feeling of guilt, for Heidegger, explains how Dasein can feel a self-initiated normative pull beyond its own control, and an account of it can clarify the kind of normative character Dasein has.

6.4 Wrathall on guilt

To reiterate: guilt is typically interpreted as a feeling of moral deficiency that gives rise to demands or obligations. Guilt is a natural way for Dasein to feel the normative weight of a certain need. On this point, Heidegger wants to avoid the vocabulary of deficiency, since it implies that something needs to be realized which is not already. Rather, he speaks of the essential nullity of Dasein's existence: "Dasein ist als solches schuldig [Dasein is as such guilty]", such that it is "in ihrem Wesen durch durch von Nichtigkeit durchsetzt [in its essence permeated through and through by nullity]"³⁶. In other words, the 'negative' character of Dasein's capacity for reason is an essential characteristic of the normativity

³⁴ S&Z: 278.

³⁵ S&Z: 280-289.

³⁶ S&Z: 285.

inherent to its existence. Dasein is in each case guilty, and this existential fact is supposed to clarify how Dasein's normative constitution through the 'call of conscience' comes about, or to put it differently, what Dasein calls itself to be.

In the literature, there are two ways to characterize the 'nullity' of Dasein's normative character. Both ways could be considered suited to the existing paradigm. The first way is (for current purposes) uninteresting, whereas the second is the more important characterization, which could be instrumental to the intended clarification of Dasein's conscience. These two ways need to be explained in order to subsequently be criticized, so as to make possible a distinct, nihilistic understanding of the topic. Wrathall's account of guilt can be considered exemplary, containing both kinds of explanation. Criticism on this point results in an emphasis on the importance of the 'guilty' character of conscience to a proper understanding of Dasein's normative character. This emphasis can be considered the earmark of a nihilistic interpretation, whereas the explanation of guilt functions as ancillary to the existing accounts. The point is hard to overstate, given that the 'negative' character of conscience is crucial to Heidegger's account of authenticity, and that this nullity is not often clearly a part of explanations of authenticity.

In the first kind of explanation, guilt is introduced into the discussion, because authenticity and conscientiousness are explained as the choice for a certain way of life, which excludes the reality of other possible ways of living. As Wrathall puts it, "in taking up an identity and in determining who I am, I necessarily nullify at the same time other possibilities in terms of which I could interpret myself."³⁷ For example, in committing to becoming a doctor I make it impossible for myself to become an astronaut. This explanation is clearly reflected in the following passage:

"Das Dasein ist sein Grund existierend, das heißt so, daß es sich aus Möglichkeiten versteht und dergestalt sich verstehend das geworfene Seiende ist. Darin liegt aber: seinkönnend steht es je in der einen oder der andere Möglichkeit, ständig ist es eine andere *nicht* und hat sich ihrer im existenziellen Entwurf begeben. Der Entwurf ist nicht nur als je geworfener durch die Nichtigkeit des Grundseins bestimmt, aber *als Entwurf* selbst wesentlich *nichtig*. Diese Bestimmung meint wiederum keineswegs die ontische Eigenschaft des 'erfolglos' oder 'unwertig', aber ein existenziales Konstitutivum der Seinsstruktur des Entwerfens. Die gemeinte Nichtigkeit gehört zum Freisein des Daseins für seine existenziellen Möglichkeiten. Die Freiheit *ist* aber nur in der Wahl der einen, das heißt im Tragen des Nichtgewählthabens und Nichtaushwählenkönnens der anderen.

[In existing Dasein is its foundation, in such a manner, that it understands itself in terms of possibilities and as so understanding itself is the thrown entity. This implies, however, that as being-possible it always stands in one possibility or another, not being another possibility that it has waived in its existential projection. Not only is the projection, as the always thrown, determined by the nullity of being-a-ground, but *as projection* it is also itself essentially *null*. This determination in no way refers to the ontic property of being 'unsuccessful' or 'worthless', but to an existential constitution of the structure of the being of projection. The intended nullity belongs to Dasein's freedom for its existential possibilities. This freedom consists, however, only in choosing one possibility, meaning in bearing the not-having-chosen and not-having-been-able-to-choose another possibility.]"³⁸

³⁷ Wrathall 2015: 204.

³⁸ S&Z: 285.

In other words, the nullification of certain possibilities is a necessary structure of Dasein's freedom to be its own possibility. Crowell remarks that such a choice establishes a basic normative hierarchy of possibilities, in which one choice is made as being better than other possibilities³⁹, stressing what one again could view as traditional aspect of Dasein's normative character, namely its moral authority. With regard to such a choice, however, Heidegger clearly stresses in this citation that the intended sense of 'nullity' does not refer to this negation of possibilities, but to a base freedom, which is also null in an 'essential' sense (although not null in the sense of being unsuccessful or worthless). The negation of choices, in other words, is an instance of nullity that must be viewed in the perspective of the more fundamental, 'existential', nullity of Dasein's projection unto possibilities. Dasein's fundamental way of constituting itself through self-interpretation is after all characterized by nullity, regardless of the possibilities it negates as a consequence of projecting itself in a particular way, and this is what must be explained. With his focus on this more fundamental sense of nullity, Heidegger proceeds to question "the ontological sense of nullity" and to investigate the "origin of nothingness" as a way of introducing a more extensive account of his notion of guilt⁴⁰.

Therefore, guilt becomes relevant in a second, more important way. In this context, Wrathall draws the connection between thrownness and negativity, in order to clarify the more fundamental sense of nullity. Thrownness refers, on his account, to the inescapable situatedness of Dasein. Dasein is in a particular world, given over to it, lacking the power to change this. Thrownness plays a normative role, in the sense that Dasein's normative characteristics, such as its traits, dispositions, and preferences, are also given in a way that it has no control over, leaving Dasein "initially disposed". The 'negativity' in this sense of disposedness lies in the fact that Dasein cannot find a definitive justification for its normative character, because thrownness does not allow for any. In Wrathall's own words:

My disposedness is not for me a reason to be who I am. I am the reason that I am who I am, insofar as I am disposed. And because I never have power over this reason from the ground up, I can't really justify the reason that I am. Any justification I could offer would be rooted in my initial sense of what is good and bad, right or wrong, meaningful or irrelevant, and so on, but that initial disposedness isn't justified. It just is. For instance, I cannot offer, nor do I have, any ultimate explanation why I am the sort of person who found myself drawn to the academic life rather than to being a prosecuting attorney. I can point to certain preferences; I can trace out a few formative influences. But, in the end, I lack reasons sufficient to explain this because I was already disposed for the world before I was in a position to offer an account, or to reason about why I should be this person rather than that. I lack a justification for the reason that I am, and thus I ultimately lack a justification for who I am – for my existence.⁴¹

Guilt, on this account, affects Dasein by showing it how ultimately the normative character of its existence is baseless. There is no ultimate foundation to the various ways in which Dasein is disposed. One could argue that such initial disposedness is already a feature of any of Dasein's moods, in so far as they are affective [befindlich]⁴². Dasein is in moods with all of its existence, and therefore always disposed in some way towards some possibility rather

³⁹ Crowell 2013: 222.

⁴⁰ S&Z: 285-286.

⁴¹ Wrathall 2015: 204-205.

⁴² Cf. 3.1.

than another, and the various moods it can be in tell it how it is disposed and towards what⁴³. For Wrathall, guilt is a kind of self-consciousness, which is negative in the sense that this lack of justification becomes explicit for Dasein, which makes it an exceptional kind of self-consciousness for Dasein.

One may wonder where on this account some sense of authority comes in. It would not fit Heidegger's account to assert that Dasein has no sense of sovereignty whatsoever in the constitution of its normative character, which could be an unwelcome implication of the assertion of an initial disposedness. Wrathall clarifies what to expect in terms of authority: "existential guilt is [...] the condition under which I become an ineliminable part of any explanation for what I do".

"Once I accept my ineliminable and unjustifiable role in the production of my actions, and stop trying to find in the shared social norms and standards of behavior, reasons or justifications for existence, I can be who I am more consistently and steadily and coherently. That is, I will be able to commit more fully to being the individual I am – which means that I can develop and adapt my dispositions so that they allow me to pursue my practical identity (the possibilities into which I project)."⁴⁴

In other words, when Dasein understands its own guilt and accepts its own lack of justification in being initially disposed, it becomes authentic by allowing for a steadfast commitment to a certain practical identity that it is disposed to. It constitutes a normative character in spite of its lack of justification for the actions it is engaged in. The choice Dasein has here is of accepting the means for constituting a practical identity it is offered. With an experience of guilt this is done authentically, in so far as Dasein understands that in decision-making it interjects itself and (in Wrathall's words) 'makes itself the reason for who it becomes', whereas a lack in such experience can make decision-making unstable or volatile, since Dasein relies on the normativity that it is delivered over to and in doing so fails to constitute a character that is distinctly its own. Dasein either constitutes an identity based on its initial disposedness, or it simply fails to constitute an identity, and herein lies Dasein's spontaneity.

This account clarifies Heidegger's notion of guilt by drawing a connection between guilt and thrownness, but it does not explain what needs to be explained. An initial disposedness does not ascribe to Dasein a normativity that has Dasein itself as its source. How an appeal is made to Dasein is not explained, but it is rather explained how Dasein can constitute an identity that is not dependent on the 'baseless' way in which the call of conscience comes about. The notion of conscience that this explanation concerns is, for that reason, different from Heidegger's. The preferences and inclinations that Dasein commits itself to cannot be authentic, given that what calls out to it is not clearly its own voice already calling out to it. It undercuts the possibility of talking about 'reason' in the specific Heideggerian sense of founding one's own normative existence. Instead of explaining the foundations of existence, the account claims Dasein needs no justification, but needs to commit despite a lack of justifications. The call of conscience should give rise to reason, but guilt as an initial disposedness neither explains what Dasein owes to itself nor how Dasein is compelled to be itself. When Wrathall explains that Dasein attains authority in constituting a practical identity with a guilty conscience, he does not address why Dasein would need to constitute itself in such a manner, and inadvertently presents conscience as either good or

⁴³ Cf. S&Z: 144

⁴⁴ Wrathall 2015: 206.

bad, in the sense of being 'stable' or 'unstable'. One could understandably feel guilty in an awareness of the baselessness of existence, but an account of such guilt does not clarify the 'guilty' appeal conscience is making to Dasein. What Wrathall should explain is how Dasein becomes disposed, founding a sense of normativity, not whether such disposedness can have reasons or causes that can be explained. Another look at the notion of guilt, and its connection to thrownness, is therefore required.

6.5 The nihilist interpretation of guilt

To reiterate, guilt is a feature of conscience that clarifies how Dasein calls out to itself. Calling out to itself is how Dasein becomes responsive to itself and constitutes its authenticity. This voice is 'reasonable', not in the traditional sense of presenting an intellectual faculty that Dasein can employ, but in a more practical sense, which is yet to be clarified. For the moment, it should be clear that this 'rationality' marks something distinctly human, governing Dasein's existence as a human being. Guilt specifically concerns the 'null' character of this voice of rationality. This nullity is not to be confused with the negativity of disabling some possibilities for the sake of choosing others and in this way establishing a normative hierarchy between Dasein's possibilities. Rather, it involves a feeling of deficiency, which is not to be confused with the feeling of moral deficiency that can be experienced when not fulfilling ethical duties, or in other words, when not doing what should be done for others. In order to explain the relevant feeling of deficiency, Wrathall points to a lack of fundamental reasons or ultimate justification for the ways in which Dasein is involved in the world, which could also be called Dasein's 'initial disposedness'. It connects the question of a guilty conscience to the topic of Dasein's thrownness, but it does not explain so well how Dasein comes to be disposed or what exactly it would be disposed to, even claiming that perhaps it cannot be explained (although it must be recognized that Dasein is disposed in a particular manner). This is why Wrathall's account does not clarify the normative issue of conscience. It does not mean, however, that the connection between guilt and thrownness cannot be insightful in principle, and Raffoul's account shows how it actually is.

Thrownness is a feature of how Dasein appears to itself in moods. It shows to Dasein 'that it is' without leaving it unaffected⁴⁵. Heidegger, in relation to thrownness and how it leaves Dasein disposed, explicitly remarks "warum, *weiß* man nicht. [why, one does not know.]"⁴⁶ Dasein is disposed to itself in a particular manner by the mood it is in, and this encumbering self-awareness is in a way inexplicable. Guilt is obviously also a mood, making thrownness and its sense of inexplicability relevant to its interpretation. Wrathall's reference to thrownness is not particularly helpful, however, because thrownness is a feature appropriate to moods in general, and not specifically to guilt, which is why it cannot explain the special role guilt is supposed to have in Heidegger's account. That thrownness concerns a kind of 'baselessness' is nonetheless to an extent correct, and this is confirmed by Raffoul's interpretation. He explains thrownness as an 'impassable cognitive limit', which presents an 'irreducible obscurity'. It is "a dimension in our being that resists appropriation". For this reason, Dasein's affectivity, in so far as it presents an initial disposedness, becomes a limit for its self-understanding. Raffoul, from that perspective, calls thrownness 'aporetic' and 'impassable'⁴⁷. Moods are, in conclusion, 'baseless' in so far as they confront Dasein with its own limits, presenting it with an inappropriable part of itself.

⁴⁵ Cf. 3.1.

⁴⁶ S&Z: 134.

⁴⁷ Raffoul 2015: 86-87.

Raffoul elaborates this account of thrownness by pointing to Heidegger's metaphors surrounding the weight of existence. Thrownness makes Dasein's existence cumbersome: Dasein has to carry itself along while existing, burdening itself with itself. Heideggerian responsivity is, then, a way of shouldering the burden [Last] of Dasein's own existence⁴⁸. Existence is a weight that Dasein bears in moods. To avoid confusion, it must be clarified that this way of talking about the cumbersome nature of thrownness implies that it thinks that existence has an inherent weight that moods 'correspond to', or that existence pre-determines which moods are appropriate to its weight and which are not. Moods simultaneously 'produce' weight and bear it, and such weight is not a measurement that it can or cannot accord with. The logic of encumbering, in that sense is entirely self-referential: Dasein itself in each case has determined how much of a burden it is to itself. Various moods clarify in various ways the burden Dasein is to bear.

This is dissimilar from Wrathall's account. Talk of 'disposedness' bypasses the issue of the weight of thrownness, because a focus on how cumbersome existence is for itself does not easily translate to Dasein's inclinations and preferences with regard to certain possibilities. One would have to assume the authenticity of such inclinations and preferences, i.e. that Dasein's motivations matter to the constitution of Dasein itself, such that some would allow Dasein to exist in a more or less cumbersome way. This assumption is made, because there is an expectation that Heidegger is to offer a constitutivist account, which is to clarify the foundations or motivations for particular actions. Heidegger does not intend to give such an account in his explanation of guilt. At stake is a different kind of question concerning rationality. Authenticity does indeed involve Dasein's possibility to exist as itself, but Heidegger does not mean to imply in stating this that Dasein needs to engage in specific types of involvement that suit it, such that the question of rationality concerns the way in which Dasein possibilizes actions that accord with its conscience. The question of rationality concerns rather how Dasein compels itself to exist as itself. This is still a matter of practical rationality, and a matter of how Dasein lays the foundation of its own existence, but simply not in the sense of motivating itself to particular, possible ways of being involved in the world. The practicality refers to the way in which affects constrain human existence instead. A guilty conscience plays an eminent role in this question of rationality, since it provides insight into the 'result' of this 'rational process' of self-appellation. Conscience does not move Dasein to various types of agency, but merely moves it to shoulder the burden of existence. This conclusion, arrived at through a comparison between Wrathall's and Raffoul's accounts of thrownness in relation to guilt, clarifies the purpose of the account of guilt, which is to explain the call of conscience and its confrontation with an inappropriable limit of Dasein's existence.

This developed understanding of the purpose of the account could be helpful in understanding guilt, or in other words, the 'deficient' character of Dasein's conscience. Its call is not an ethical feeling of deficiency in relation to other human beings, but rather the deficiency relates to Dasein in relation to itself. Moods in general present Dasein with an encumbering, inappropriable dimension of its own existence, and if guilt is a feeling of deficiency, then it makes sense for it to be felt in relation to this dimension. Dasein feels it has a burden to bear, and the voice it hears relates to this burden, or in other words, to its own cumbersome nature. The weight of existence presses on Dasein when its conscience calls on it. This voice of conscience is Dasein calling out to itself to be itself in the mode of deficiency, and in that sense it is a voice of guilt. The nihilistic interpretation of Heidegger's

⁴⁸ Raffoul 2015: 88-90. Note that Heidegger clearly connects shouldering of the burden of existence to a 'belonging to Being', which shows the connection in terms of a normative character between affects and the less straightforwardly insightful talk of 'the event of Being'.

account of normativity is partly based on this hint in Heidegger's account of Dasein's guilty conscience.

The nihilistic character of the account of guilt becomes particularly clear in two separate remarks from Heidegger that are supposed to clarify the call of conscience, and these two remarks can help clarify the significance of a feeling of deficiency from Dasein to Dasein itself.

“Was ruft das Gewissen dem Angerufenen zu? Streng genommen - nichts. Der Ruf sagt nichts aus, gibt keine Auskunft über Weltereignisse, hat nichts zu erzählen. [...] Der Ruf entbehrt jeglicher Verlautbarung. Er bringt sich gar nicht erst zu Worten - und bleibt gleichwohl nichts weniger als dunkel und unbestimmt. *Das Gewissen redet einzig und ständig im Modus des Schweigens*. So verliert es nichts an Vernehmlichkeit, sondern zwingt das an- und aufgerufene Dasein in die Verschwiegenheit seiner selbst.

[What does conscience call to the summoned? Strictly speaking - nothing. The call does not say anything, provides no information on worldly events, has nothing to tell. The call lacks all utterance. It does not come to words, and it remains nothing less than dark and indeterminate. *Conscience speaks solely and constantly in the mode of silence*. In this way it does not lose out on perceptibility, but forces the Dasein that is summoned and called upon into its own reticence.]⁴⁹

“Der Ruf berichtet keine Begebenheiten, er ruft auch ohne jede Verlautbarung. Der Ruf redet im unheimlichen Modus des *Schweigens*. Und dergestalt nur darum, weil der Ruf der Angerufenen nicht in das öffentliche Gerede des Man hinein-, sondern aus diesem *zurückruft in die Verschwiegenheit des existenten Seinkönnens*.

[The call reports no facts, it calls also without any utterance. The call speaks in the uncanny mode of *silence*. And it does this only because the call *calls* the summoned *back*, not to the public chatter of the they, but to the *reticence of its existential possibility for Being*.]⁵⁰

Both passages underline the quietist character of the call of conscience. Conscience does not call Dasein to anything in particular, but is fundamentally silent, and in being silent appeals to reticence. These passages grant insight into the feeling of deficiency that is central to conscience and that makes conscience 'guilty'. The call is entirely indeterminate, and this is what Dasein feels guilty over. The self that the call compels Dasein to be is a reticent self. Conscience, in appealing to Dasein in this manner, breaks open the normality of involved existence. From the perspective of its ordinary existence this feels deficient. In that way, Heidegger's warning that Dasein's null character must not be interpreted as 'unsuccessful or worthless' is insightful. Dasein's guilty self-awareness is genuinely suggestive of a sense of failure or futility with regard to its own existence. For Dasein, the confrontation with itself entails no obligation to meet and no course of action to pursue. Dasein's own existence is not actionable for it. The call of conscience is not an inexplicable disposedness towards certain possibilities that Dasein has, but rather it is inexplicable simpliciter. The silence of the voice gives conscience its nihilistic character: there is nothing for Dasein to be. Its normative self-awareness is empty, bringing Dasein to an aporia.

⁴⁹ S&Z: 273.

⁵⁰ S&Z: 277.

Such an appeal to a reticent way of Being differs from the more voluntaristic idea of commitment that is central to Crowell's interpretation of Heidegger's sense of normativity. Reticence does not lend itself well to the constitution of a discernable identity that could become relevant to a practice of reason-giving. To affirm such a 'nihilist' view in response to existing interpretations of Heidegger's idea of normativity is not a way of sceptically refuting the need for reasons that could support actions, and the need for a constitution of meaningful activity. The purpose is to highlight a particular affectivity that is foundational to Dasein's own existence, namely the guilt of its conscience. From the nihilist perspective as elaborated here, a lack of 'identity' in its ownmost way of being seems logical, given the errant character of Dasein's existence. Its recurrence, or its 'sameness' in Heidegger's terms, does not constitute a relation of identity, but rather a self-contained, differential problem⁵¹. One could say this errancy is represented in the guilt of Dasein's conscience. Heidegger's account does not offer a standard account of 'practical normativity', given that reticence is an atypical, rather self-involved 'practice', which also does not present Dasein with a clear norm to conform to. It does present Dasein with its ownmost possibility, a way of Being that is proper to it, which constrains what Dasein can 'do', and in that sense remains normative in the practical sense. The question of normativity, as posed in relation to the exegetical issues surrounding Heidegger's text, concerns the way in which Dasein is compelled to be its true self, or how conscience calls to Dasein, and the answer is that it is moved to reticence by its own existence. Reticence allows for a sense of autonomy, to the extent that it is the domain where Dasein finds the limit it has set for itself and where Dasein has a hold on itself. It is in this feeling of 'deficiency' that it has an appropriate sense of self-sufficiency.

6.6 The relevance of angst and impact on the interpretation of *Sein und Zeit*

The foregoing conclusions on the quietist character of Dasein's conscience can be confirmed and elaborated by drawing the connection to the topic of angst, underlining the nihilist elements in Heidegger's thinking. There is an obvious connection between guilt and angst, because Heidegger explicitly characterizes the call of conscience as uncanny (in the aforementioned passages), which is the essential feature of Dasein's existence that becomes apparent in angst. From the radical interpretation of angst's uncanniness, this characterization is understandable. A description of the call as an uncanny silence makes it clear that angst and the call of conscience both share the property of ineffability. Both affects play an aporetic role for Dasein, confronting it with the riddling question of its existence. Dasein is thrown into the problem of existence, and in both affects this problem becomes apparent as inexplicable and inappropriable. Angst confronts Dasein with the opacity of its self-appearance, and this opacity attains normative weight in guilt. There, the nullity of uncanny existence becomes cumbersome, compelling Dasein to reticence as a way of being. This connection between angst and conscience creates a sense of continuity in Heidegger's existential analytic, to the extent that Heidegger's account of authenticity introduces a phenomenon of nothingness that is subsequently clarified in its significance.

This connection between angst and the call of conscience sheds a light on Heidegger's 'formal' determination of guilt as "Grundsein einer Nichtigkeit [being-a-ground for nullity]"⁵². From Heidegger's perspective, Dasein is its own constitution of nothingness, which is to say that its guilty conscience moves itself to become uncanny. Heidegger's account of 'grounding' in *Sein und Zeit* explicates how Dasein founds its own existence, and in this way confronts a special sense of 'rationality' of Dasein's existence. This rationality

⁵¹ Cf. 5.7.

⁵² S&Z: 283.

concerns, as his account shows, how the weight of existence comes about, or in other words, how Dasein is constituted as a fundamentally moody, null being. This 'grounding' does not concern something like a justification for actions, a disposition towards possible ways of engaging the world, or an abstract causal power. The process merely lays the foundation for Dasein's existence, and does not necessarily constitute anything substantial as a result. Dasein is a ground, but not a ground *for* something. It constitute itself, but only as fundamentally silent. This sense of grounding is unique, because it noticeably concerns the rationality of nothingness, which usually is not considered rational. Heidegger's ambition in *Sein und Zeit* is to understand a 'sigetic' logic, which should be evaluated on its own terms.

This nihilist perspective differs significantly from the literature related to Heidegger's account of authenticity. In part, much of the relevant literature attempts to address the normative questions with explicit reference to angst, but fails to appreciate more nihilist features of Heidegger's account. McManus' account of the discussion concerning a Heideggerian sense of responsibility is in this respect telling. Commentators like Dreyfus, Tugendhat, Philipse, Friedman, Thomson, Blattner, and others are concerned with angst' lack of normative viability as a basis for existential choices or commitments, because angst, rather than providing reasons, seems to provide nothing but 'universal meaninglessness'. This concern McManus calls the 'Motivational Problem'. There seems to be a conflict between Dasein's ability to produce meaningful action and the paralysis that angst begets. Generally, the literature's response to the problem is either to argue against Heidegger's account, or to argue for Heidegger's account against the pertinence of the motivational problem. McManus exemplifies the latter: he argues there must be a way (distinct from that of other authors) to 'pass through' angst, so as to avoid its paralysis⁵³. Angst is considered problematic for Dasein's self-constitution as reasonable, for it does not seem to provide the dispositional basis for motivated activity. Similarly, Crowell contrasts the roles that angst and guilt play: whereas angst shows a "global incapacity vis-à-vis the normativity of all laws and oughts", guilt provides Dasein with the opposite, i.e. the capacity to feel beholden to norms, highlighting some of them as Dasein's own. For Crowell, angst is the moment where the means of self-constitution slip away from Dasein⁵⁴. The expectation is that authenticity will reconnect Dasein to the world with all of its practical norms, transforming the neutral status of these norms to an owned status, because angst is interpreted as a disconnect from normativity. Angst becomes paralyzing in the sense that it cannot provide reasons for any action whatsoever.

This understanding of angst distorts the findings of Heidegger's existential analytic. In contrast, it should be clear that angst provides the means for becoming authentic, and that guilt spells out what that authenticity would consist in. These moods do not contrast with each other, because both are different structural moments of authenticity, sharing features of authenticity. Both moods involve ineffability, which is essential to what Dasein itself is, or in other words, essential to its authenticity. In the literature, angst is appraised as a failure. Angst is considered 'paralyzing', because it fails to provide reasons for courses of action, disconnecting it from the norms inherent to practices it might be involved in or in relation to in another way. Certainly it is true that angst is inappropriable, but the role the account plays in relation to authenticity is misunderstood. Angst is misunderstood in the literature, not only on its own terms, but also with regard to its relation to the guilt of Dasein's conscience and Heidegger's account of normativity. Whereas in the literature angst is appraised as a failure, it should instead be appraised as instrumental to an understanding of Dasein's normative character. The 'Motivational Problem' is not to be avoided, but

⁵³ McManus 2015B: 163-167.

⁵⁴ Crowell 2013: 204-206.

reconceptualized as a 'solution' to the discussions concerning authenticity. Angst 'successfully' opens Dasein up to the foundational question of its existence, which it experiences authentically through the guilt-ridden call of conscience. The account of authenticity with its inherent guilt has nothing to 'make up for' in relation to the 'problem' of Dasein's angst, because Dasein's angst sets the stage for its guilt, even despite its 'paralyzing' qualities.

The foregoing has clarified how this happens. The question of normativity concerns Dasein's self-constitution, because this topic involves the limits and constraints for Dasein's possibilities for an originary way of being itself. It is a domain of being where Dasein is in some sense self-sufficient. This domain is reticence. Dasein is compelled to reticence by the guilt of conscience, which makes felt the silence of its own being. This silence is the aforementioned ineffability, which is a feature that angst and guilt share. Angst shows the inexplicable opacity of Dasein's existence, and guilt confronts Dasein with the normative implication for its possible ways of being. This normative implication is aporetic. Guilt is felt in the face of the uncanniness of existence, compelling it to reticence. Dasein feels the weight of its null existence, and becomes responsive to it. Heidegger's account of guilt, then, merely elaborates the quietist features of authenticity that were already implicit in the account of angst. If a reader of Heidegger's work were to understand this connection between angst and guilt, they would not construe Heidegger's account of angst as presenting a problem that Dasein would need a solution for, as if there exists a schism between the end of the first division of the book and the beginning of the second. Rather, they would see the account of angst as the proper introduction to Dasein's possibility for authenticity, which already gives a rudimentary understanding of an essential feature of the guilty voice of conscience.

6.7 Elaboration of the account in various later works

Setting aside discussions about the interpretation of *Sein und Zeit*, nihilistic elements of Heidegger's discussions related to normativity can be found throughout his later work. These discussions can show that there is a continuity in Heidegger's thinking on this point, but also help clarify the account. To an extent, the discussions can be considered elaborations of Heidegger's earlier account, which rely less on presenting the genesis of Heideggerian thinking as specific moods that Dasein undergoes. A sketch of the most relevant conclusions of these discussions can serve as directive for further exploration of Heidegger's thinking on the matter of truth. Here, three specific discussions are introduced with this purpose. Firstly, a closer look at Heidegger's account of a foundational decision in the *Beiträge* might clarify Dasein's self-grounding in terms of its errant practice (6.7.1). Secondly, a discussion of Heidegger's exploration of the nature of reasoning in *Der Satz vom Grund* elaborates the logic inherent to the grounding theory, giving insight to the kind of reasoning Heidegger is interested in (6.7.2). Lastly, Heidegger's reception of Hölderlin's poetic statement on the possibility of normativity might be considered an example of 'later Heidegger' approaching the same manner explicitly, providing new means to think through normativity (6.7.3). All three accounts can be said to present innovative features of a nihilistic account that elaborate the idea of Heideggerian thinking as involving reticence.

6.7.1 Reticence and the decision

In the foregoing, reticence was explained as the way in which Dasein attains a grasp on his own limits and attains some sense of sovereignty. In *Sein und Zeit*, reticence is a characterization of Dasein's authenticity, which Heidegger also designates as resolute [Entschlossen]. They make for the voluntaristic elements of the book, which are put into perspective by Heidegger's emphasis on reticence, and hence by the possible nihilist interpretation of this theme. The theme is also put into perspective by Heidegger's retrospective on this theme in the *Beiträge*, where he remarks that the reception of these passages in *Sein und Zeit* have been wrongheaded. He argues against readers who have interpreted authenticity as the making of a choice, which is what he designates one of many '(moral-)existential misunderstandings'⁵⁵. Such a misunderstanding, according to him, distorts what Heidegger calls a decision [Entscheidung], which is a notion that is central to the *Beiträge*. There, he claims that the decision Dasein makes must be understood as 'a leap into the realm of Being', which distinguishes itself from metaphysical thinking, where there is no questioning of the truth of Being⁵⁶. The leap is a way to involve oneself into another beginning for philosophy, which does not consider humans as subjects, but transforms them into a foundation, or in other words, into a ground⁵⁷. Some of Heidegger's statements on this point may be hard to interpret. One difficulty is that these claims can easily be misinterpreted as being just another choice, *for* the thinking of (the truth of) Being and *against* the history of metaphysical philosophy.

It is clear from both *Sein und Zeit*'s account of authenticity and the *Beiträge*'s account of decision, however, that Heidegger intends to provide an alternative account of some kind of decision-making process, which differs from a traditional account that would view this as Dasein contemplating for the sake of making choices between alternatives for action. An example of such a traditional account could be Crowell's interpretation, which interprets authenticity as a moral commitment that constitutes Dasein's practical identity, where Dasein picks out what will be its reasons for action. One feature of such a traditional account is the assumption of some sense of separation on the side of Dasein. In order for Dasein to make autonomous decisions, it must attain an appropriate distance with regard to the situation it finds itself in. It cannot be determined by anything but itself to make the decisions that it makes, because otherwise it does not attain the same status of rationality. This morally relevant sense of distance enables Dasein's authority, in the sense that not being determined by its circumstances is what allows for Dasein to navigate itself with regard to various ways of engaging its circumstances. Heidegger's account of 'the decision' could be said to address the same topic, i.e. the kind of distance that is relevant to decision-making.

The finer details of Heidegger's account of the decision show how he does so. As he puts it, the practice of philosophy, in its decision-making, involves the truth of Being, not as a moral command or knowledge of what Being must essentially be, but as a question⁵⁸. In other words, its 'moral contemplation' remains an open question that has no answer, similar to the guilt of authentic Dasein (from the context of *Sein und Zeit*). When Heidegger says that a question is more fitting to the refusal [Verweigerung] of Being⁵⁹, he means to say that the basis on which the decision is made withdraws itself in the process, and in that sense

⁵⁵ GA65: 87-88.

⁵⁶ GA65: 88, 188.

⁵⁷ GA65: 89-90.

⁵⁸ GA65: 94-95.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

points out the moral relevance of fundamental opacity. Moral contemplation must remain an open question, because the only available foundation is self-effacing. Unlike in the instances where an existential commitment is made so as to constitute a normative identity, Dasein, in the decision of Being, has no authority to base such a commitment on, and must settle on a self-effacing foundation for its own existence. The 'morally relevant distance' Dasein creates in this instance of decision, does not allow for a sense of authority, but rather constitutes a self-determined departure in 'light' of the refusal Dasein faces with regard to the question of its own existence. In other words, Dasein's commitment to a self-effacing foundation creates a kind of separation.

This is similar to reticence, where Dasein is beholden to silence. Silence does not necessarily mean ceasing to speak, but involves a mode of self-presentation that cannot communicate a meaningful identity or particular commitment. Authentic Dasein attains a sense of distance to its factual existence that grants it no authority that would allow it to make choices. This is why Dasein's self-questioning is a decision, and not a choice. The decision is what sets Dasein apart. It is what makes Dasein come into its own without reifying it as some kind of subject or identity. Both of Heidegger's accounts, on this point, portray his view of philosophical questioning as a way for Dasein to recede into its true selfhood. Its self-identity transforms to a silence, like the nothingness that makes itself felt in existential guilt. Heidegger himself calls his way of thinking a 'Schritt-zurück [step back]'⁶⁰, and this is typical for his views. Authentic Dasein commences this step back. It underlines the idea that the question that Dasein poses to itself is a kind of moral departure, in so far as Dasein gives up on the authority to choose courses of action and recedes into reticence.

6.7.2 Abyssal reasoning

The foregoing shows that Heidegger has a unique view on rationality, which supposes that it comes to nothing but nonetheless must be engaged in by Dasein. In Heidegger's *Der Satz vom Grund*, he takes an elaborate look at what reason is, and this could be viewed as continuous with his early work in a way that helps clarify Heidegger's references to grounding. In the conclusion of this book, he presents Being as a foundation in the sense of 'Ab-grund [abyss]'⁶¹. Heidegger's wordplay is hard to translate to English, because the root of this noun is 'Grund [ground/reason]', which is not reflected in the English 'abyss'. He intends to explain reason as that which founds entities but which of itself has no foundation, and makes use of the prefix 'ab-' [off-] because it reflects this paradoxical footing of reason⁶². In this way, he arrives at an account of reason as 'abyssal'. It is a nomenclature that suits Heidegger's account of null rationality. The unusual formulation, however, resembles an argumentation that could be more familiar. In order for reason to be a proper foundation, it must be a foundation that needs no further foundation in order to avoid an infinite regress in reasoning. One could term this the 'finality' of reason, and Heidegger's unusual terminology seems to make sense of this finality in a particular way. Like the word 'aporia' implies, reasoning, in its abyssal guise, comes to a halt, reaching its final form.

This sense of finality to reason was already implicit in *Sein und Zeit's* account of thrownness and the kind of foundation it provides. There, he explained that Dasein is left

⁶⁰ GA9: 343, GA11: 58-61, 78.

⁶¹ Cf. GA10: 166.

⁶² GA10: 76-77.

without an answer as to why it feels the way it does⁶³. Moods are the limit of what can be considered reasonable about Dasein's existence, and in that sense functions as the natural end of reasoning. That this status of its rationality is not intended to suggest that it is not rational at all can be inferred from the way in which this status re-appears in Heidegger's account of authenticity, and its guilty call of conscience. Inexplicability is a feature of Heidegger's account of Dasein's 'normative' character. This feature figures centrally in *Satz vom Grund's* account of grounds. He explains abyssal reasoning as being 'ohne warum [without why]'. Heidegger explores the topic of a reason 'without why' by way of an example of reasoning, namely by way of Angelus Silesius' poem *Der Cherubinische Wandersmann*. One particular phrase is most relevant as an example of reasoning 'without why': "Die Ros ist ohn warum; sie blühet, weil sie blühet. [The rose is without why; it blooms because it blooms.]"

This line of poetry is an example of an 'abyssal' foundation because it denies that there is a cause or condition for the blooming of the rose, while positing that its blooming provides reason for itself⁶⁴. For the rose, reason has a circular function. Blooming is what makes the rose bloom. The blooming 'offers' a foundation, but of itself has none. This particular way of reasoning can be likened to the way a child responds to a parent holding it accountable, asking it the reason for its behavior: "Because." The unqualified appeal to 'because' lacks reasons in the sense that it does not provide reasons as to why the child behaved the way it did. It only provides reason in the acknowledgement of its behavior. The child did what it did because it did what it did. The expression of the 'because' is the end of reasoning with regard to the relevant behavior. This does not imply that the child has abandoned the sphere of reasoning. It has provided a circular justification as a final effort in reasoning. Similarly, abyssal reasoning involves the confrontation with a foundation that offers itself up without any other cause than its own being. The circularity of such a final reason is apparent in Heidegger's claim with regard to human beings: "Das Ungesagte des Spruches - und darauf komt alles an - sagt vielmehr, daß der Mensch im verborgensten Grunde seines Wesen erst dann wahrhaft ist, wenn er auf seine Weise so ist wie die Rose - ohne Warum. [The unsaid of this phrase - and everything depends on this - moreso says that Man, in the most obscured grounds of its essence, first truly is when, in its own way, it is like the rose - without why.]" In other words, man faces the same lack of reasons the rose does, and nonetheless must offer itself the ground of its existence in the same way the rose does. Here, reasoning takes on a circular form. Humans must be what they are because they are what they are.

The account Heidegger gives of rationality, then, is peculiar, in two important ways. Firstly, all talk of 'grounds' does not refer to reasons and practices of reason-giving. Even Silesius' line is not intended to be an example of reasoning in the sense that it makes a logical argument. The line is intended to give an example of a kind of internal logic, which Heidegger thinks is exemplary for human existence. Here, the circularity of this logic relates to the way in which human existence relates to itself. Secondly, this 'grounding' is not a self-justification of Dasein. There are no reasons to be given for Dasein's existence. Its rational status is circular and tautological, as exemplified by the idea that humans are because they are, without why. Positively speaking, Dasein presents a case of ultimate rationality. It lays a foundation for itself that is inappropriable for other purposes. In that sense, human existence is the abyss of reasons.

⁶³ Cf. note 46, or in other words, S&Z: 134.

⁶⁴ GA10: 35-58.

6.7.3 The poetic presentation of the Heideggerian understanding of normativity

In the “...*dichterisch wohnt der Mensch...*” essay, Heidegger analyzes Hölderlin’s poem *In lieblicher Bläue* in order to conceive of a notion of measure that befits human existence. The account addresses normativity by conceiving of human existence in its proper element as ‘taking measure’. In Heidegger’s words: “Das Vermessen der Dimension ist das Element, worin das menschliche Wohnen seine Gewähr hat, aus der es währt. [The taking-measure of the dimension is the element, in which human dwelling has its ‘guarantee’, out of which it ‘lasts’.]”⁶⁵ Human existence does not constitute a norm that humans can live up to, it is measured. Neither does it refer to anything quantitative⁶⁶. ‘Measure’ does not refer to a measurement, but to Dasein’s ‘normative’ character. ‘Taking measure’ refers to a kind of self-imposition, such as when a person shows restraint, or chooses to follow a moral imperative as a way of self-legislating. Here, it does not imply that Dasein wilfully sets for itself a limit on what it does, but it does imply that Dasein’s existence is delineated. This is normative in a cryptic way, because it cannot be said to be normative in the straightforward sense of presenting norms for Dasein’s existence. In the analysis, Heidegger aims to explain this measure by way of the poem, which states what human existence is measured by. This strategy may be questioned in terms of how apposite it is to even the topic of taking measure, but nonetheless it metaphorically presents the matter of human normativity in a certain light that can be recounted and commented on. The poetic statements give both a negative and a positive characterization of how human existence is measured.

The negative characterization stems from the following phrase: “Giebt es auf Erden ein Maaß? Es giebt keines.”⁶⁷ This phrase designates that measure is not derived from the earth. The place that determines Dasein’s Being-in-the-world, Earth, does not allow for measure. Dasein’s Being-in-the-world, in having a particular involvement, could well present a norm that allows one to determine the extent to which Dasein engaged itself in a practice, and therefore one might expect Dasein’s dwelling place to provide it with measure in that sense, but Heidegger denies this by iterating Hölderlin’s phrase. Measure does not originate in Dasein’s dwelling place. Dasein’s various forms of worldly existence do not constitute the right kind of normative character, and the absence of measure on earth therefore serves as a negative metaphor for Dasein’s normativity, which remains indeterminate from the standpoint of normal existence.

The positive characterization stems from Hölderlin’s claim that the heavens [Himmel] are Dasein’s measure. Heidegger comments on the reasons for this: “Der Dichter ruft in den Anblicken des Himmels Jenes, was im Sichenthüllen gerade das Sichverbergende erscheinen läßt und zwar *als* das Sichverbergende. [The poet appeals in the sight of the heavens to that which in self-disclosing directly lets appear the self-concealing, and indeed *as* the self-concealing.]”⁶⁸ In other words, the sky is the metaphorical presentation of the self-concealing as self-concealing. The measure appropriate to Dasein withdraws itself when it effects itself, and only in that way can retain its essential characteristic in the way that it shows itself. Dasein’s normative character, in that sense, is qualitatively obscure, and Heidegger’s frequent portrayals of the event of Being as self-concealing already signals a normative implication. On this point, there is a clear connection between Dasein’s normative status and its existence on a whole, which suggests that both are to be interpreted as

⁶⁵ GA7: 199.

⁶⁶ Cf. GA7: 203.

⁶⁷ Cf. GA7: 205.

⁶⁸ GA7: 204.

ineffable. The notion of measure is therefore not 'positive' as a contrast with the absence of measures on earth, in such a way that measure would come from elsewhere, but 'positive' in the sense that it does affirm there are ways of attesting to the absence of measure, which do not preclude the existence of measure. Dasein's measure is self-concealment, or in other words, opacity.

The sky can function as a metaphor for the obscurity at stake, because as Heidegger says: "Der Glanz seiner Höhe ist in sich das Dunkle seiner alles bergenden Weite. Das Blau der lieblichen Bläue des Himmels ist die Farbe der Tiefe. [The radiance of its height is in itself the darkness of its all-sheltering breadth. The blue of the lovely blueness of the heavens is the colour of depth.]"⁶⁹ The blue sky has a depth dimension that shelters darkness in its radiant appearance, and in that way represents the idea of a measure that makes apparent the self-concealing of measure as it conceals itself. The theme of blueness Heidegger apparently found particularly apt, because in the *Die Sprache im Gedicht* essay (about a poem by Georg Trakl) he elaborates the theme and designates blueness as "die ins Dunkel geborgene Helle [the brightness sheltered by darkness]"⁷⁰. Blueness, for Heidegger, refers to the enlightening quality of darkness, which is particularly apparent in the blueness of the heavens. It can be considered a defining feature of Dasein's normative character. It is blue, in the sense that of itself Dasein is measured only by the obscurity of its existence, which is the only thing that is revealing for Dasein with regard to what it must be.

This point is clearly connected to Heidegger's conception of truth, in so far as it finds a poetic way to address the revealing qualities of the self-refusal of Dasein's being. It is continuous with the nihilist interpretation of Heidegger's account of normativity, as related to the *Sein und Zeit* discussion, despite the account not explicitly taking up reticence as a theme. The continuity concerns the implication of a step back in the opacity of human existence. Dasein, when in its proper element, takes measure. This measure-taking delineates human existence in its opacity. Like reticence, this measure-taking is a way of existing proper to Dasein that draws its character from its self-withdrawal. The essay elaborates the account, in so far as it finds in the poem an example of reticence.

6.8 Summary

In the foregoing, it becomes clear how Heidegger addresses the subject of normativity. It is clear that a Heideggerian sense of normativity must be found in his ideas on decisions. In making an authentic decision, Dasein finds a way to exist reasonably. It attains a sense of autonomy amid its involvement with the world, and becomes conscientious, in the sense of remaining answerable to itself, or in other words, becomes 'responsible'. Heidegger's account is proof that he does not believe that there are no ways to decide over Dasein's Being-in-the-world, such that all normativity would be absent and it would be a matter of indifference in what way Dasein exists. The discussion of this notion of responsibility in Heidegger's work, however, needs further investigation into the notion of 'guilt', which shapes the character of the conscience that is assumed to be responsible.

In the literature, it is said that Heidegger is talking about the constitution of actions. Autonomous choices for certain courses of action are Dasein's means to create for itself a particular practical identity. It reflectively commits to having a specific existential character,

⁶⁹ GA7: 205.

⁷⁰ GA12: 40.

binding it to norms, so that it may be answerable to others. In short, Dasein's normativity consists in the norms that are associated with the constitution of a practical identity.

This 'agentic' interpretation is inaccurate, because it cannot explain how Dasein obliges itself to follow these norms so as to become authentic. It explains by way of the notion of guilt, which, on this interpretation, refers to an initial, unjustifiable disposedness that Dasein would have to certain norms rather than others. Properly Heideggerian guilt, however, is a silent call and indeterminate, and cannot ground actions. It does not constitute a distinct identity, but simply bears itself in nothingness. It does not produce reasonable actions, but rather constitutes a foundation for existence that neither justifies nor is justified. Neither does the account imply some kind of moral skepticism. Rather, guilt shows that Dasein's authentic normative character of itself is radically open, such that Dasein's existence always remains due. Dasein hears its conscience task it with a problem that it cannot solve, presenting Dasein with the aporia of its own existence. This task of being its self entails the guilt of fulfilling an indeterminate purpose. In this way, Dasein is called to be reticent with regard to itself.

In later work, this idea of a 'normatively loaded' existence is elaborated. The *Beiträge* is continuous with Heidegger's account of guilt in *Sein und Zeit*, because it shows that making a choice is not at all decisive. Choices are not ultimately foundational, because Dasein does not of itself have the moral authority to produce them. The *Beiträge* elaborates the account, in the sense that it explains that an authentic decision is made only by receding into existence itself, so as to go a self-imposed distance. *Der Satz vom Grund* is continuous with Heidegger's account of guilt in *Sein und Zeit*, because it shows that reasoning is 'abyssal'. Reasoning is 'without why' and yet provides an ultimate foundation. *Der Satz vom Grund* elaborates the account, in the sense that it shows this foundation not only to have finality, but also to be circular. It founds Dasein's existence as it already is. Heidegger's comments on Hölderlin's poem are continuous with Heidegger's guilt in *Sein und Zeit*, because Dasein's Being-in-the-world remains indeterminate with regard to normativity. They elaborate the account, in so far as they claim that measure can be attained only through the self-refusal of reticence.

Conclusion

7.1 Uncanny existence as characterisation of Heideggerian subjectivity

The discussion surrounding Heidegger's unconventional notion of truth, instigated by Tugendhat, should focus on the ontological notion of truth, i.e. disclosure [Erschlossenheit]. This means, first of all, that the notion should not refer to the discovery of entities, i.e. uncoveredness [Entdecktheit], even when an understanding of uncoveredness could be instrumental to a Heideggerian account of a foundation for the correspondence theory of truth. When speaking of Heidegger's notion of truth, it would be misleading to refer to a non-specific, broadly 'ontological' sense of revelation, and to not nuance this by way of an explanation of the distinct notion that he has in mind, i.e. disclosure.

The explanation would have to show that disclosure, secondly, refers to Dasein's self-revelation. In other words, Heidegger's notion of truth centers specifically the way in which subjectivity, if one may call it that, comes about (with some sense of reflexivity). On this point, there is a basic understanding of how Heidegger wants to account for this, although there remain some crucial obscurities in the account. On the one hand, it is clear that Dasein's existence is conditioned by its involvement in the world, practically engaged with entities. In doing so, Dasein understands itself in a pre-reflective way. This self-understanding is expressed in various ways as the way Dasein 'is-in' the world, of which moods are a basic shape for Dasein to take on. It shows that Dasein comports itself to the world and is of itself disposed to the world in various ways.

There exists an explanatory gap, however, with regard to what is uniquely Dasein-like about Being-in-the-world. It is clear that Heidegger believes that Dasein cannot be anything like a subject, which mistakenly leads some to believe Heidegger is not interested in accounts of Dasein's self. Heidegger's ambition is, as Raffoul has argued, to reconstrue the idea of human existence in a non-subjective way. It is not clear, however, how exactly Heidegger wants to address Dasein itself. The introduction of the quasi-normative vocabulary of 'authentic' and 'inauthentic' raises more questions than it answers. What is the foregoing account lacking that an authentic presentation of Dasein would provide? Why does Heidegger introduce normative terms to talk about Dasein itself? Why does Heidegger himself designate authenticity as a kind of reticence or silence?

On this point, the role that moods play in Heidegger's philosophy can enlighten matters. Moods, according to Heidegger, attest to the distinctly human way of being in the world. They tell Dasein how it is in the world, by telling Dasein that it itself is in the world, by telling it what the world as a whole is like for it, and by telling it how that matters to it. Moods allow for the possibility that Dasein becomes absorbed in the world, such that it does not know how to feel about its own existence. Some moods, however, which in virtue of this Heidegger calls 'fundamental', do dispose Dasein towards itself. They tell Dasein how to feel about itself, and in that sense provide Dasein with a self-understanding.

One particular fundamental mood, angst, is crucial in attaining such an essential self-understanding, i.e. an understanding that disposes Dasein towards itself as it is of itself. Angst is not the usual self-awareness, which settles into the world by getting involved, but it is a special kind of self-awareness, which unsettles Dasein in a confrontation with its own existence. This unsettling feeling is defining for Dasein, in the sense that angst 'delineates' its own existence for it, in the sense that in angst Dasein approaches the limits of its own

existence. Angst makes apparent, in other words, what is and is not possible for Dasein. Angst shows the need for Dasein's existence as itself, as an insuperable struggle to be who it is. Methodologically speaking, Heidegger thus attempts to address Dasein's existence in a suitable way predetermined by the character of angst.

Angst primarily consists in an obscurity with regards to Dasein itself, which Heidegger terms 'the uncanny'. Angst makes apparent to Dasein the obscurity of its own existence, introducing it properly to the uncanny question of its existence. In the literature, it is suggested that on this point Heidegger claims that Dasein existence as a whole, in creating a meaningful life, is of itself obscure, such that the creation of meaning is something that Dasein does without it being clear on how it does this. What this meaning-oriented view is missing in Heidegger's account is the sense of silence that is inherent to the kind of self-awareness that angst is, which affects the way in which philosophy is done. Heidegger does not aim to phenomenologically reconstruct whatever is meaningfully present in Dasein's Being-in-the-world. When Heidegger speaks of reconstructing an understanding of the meaning of Being, this does not aim to reconstruct the meaning of the way in which things appear so as to learn to understand what human existence is like. Dasein cannot be determined to be what it is, since Dasein's existence is not meaningful through what appears in the context of existence. Instead, Heidegger aims to present the uncanniness of existence, even regardless of whether existence is meaningful in various, potentially obscure ways.

This presentation of Dasein's uncanny existence depends on the quality of uncanniness in all of its opacity. Heidegger himself explains angst and its uncanniness in conjunction with the notion of nothingness, as a notion that exemplifies the obscurity that existence is said to have. Although the dialetheist reception of Heidegger's work misses out on important methodological context of nothingness, ignoring both the notions of angst and its defining feature uncanniness (and therefore missing out on the idea that in angst Dasein attains a special kind of self-awareness), it has noticed something crucial about the way in which Heidegger uses the notion of nothingness. The dialetheists have correctly pointed out that the notion of nothingness is ineffable. In other words, Dasein's confrontation with its own existence presents it with a pure obscurity, because Dasein's existence is fundamentally ineffable. The confrontation cannot be determined to be anything, meaning that there cannot be any meaningful predication over it, leaving Dasein without insightful descriptors for it. In virtue of having noticed the feature of ineffability, the dialetheist reception of Heidegger's notion of nothingness deserves serious attention from the more orthodox Heideggerian interpreters, since this feature is crucial in understanding uncanniness. Because uncanniness is ineffable, the way in which angst introduces Dasein to the essential character of its existence is by pointing it to an ultimate 'logical' aporia, the status of which cannot be understood in terms of traditional logical laws, but which nonetheless is 'understandable' from a dialetheic point of view.

It is in virtue of the ineffability of Dasein's existence that, as a consequence, Heidegger initially thinks of authentic Dasein as a way of being reticent, or in other words requiring a kind of silence. For him, it does not have anything to do with not saying anything, but is a mode of existing that is telling for the uncanniness of Dasein's existence. Silence is the 'logic' of Dasein's existence. In his later observations on the history of philosophy, he not only labels this philosophical approach of his a kind of 'sigeticism', but also further elaborates by determining it to be a history of self-withdrawal and errancy. 'Self-withdrawal' refers to the way in which Dasein existence is dependent on withdrawal rather than on appearance. In so far as the event is an appearance, it is only an appearance of nothing. 'Errancy' describes the way in which the sigetic logic of existence subsists. Dasein finds a way

of existing that brings to the fore its essential character as opaque, and in doing so brings itself to the 'clarity' of a grasp on oneself, while nonetheless remaining a mystery to itself in its self-withdrawal. In Dasein's reticence, it 'fails' to constitute a stable self-identity, but nonetheless 'successfully' finds its uncanny way of existing. 'Existential selfsameness' is in this way distinguished from a more general sense of 'selfsameness' or self-identity. Of its own accord Dasein has no identity, but is errant, or in other words 'roams', in the sense that in existing Dasein recedes into the self-contained problem of its existence, withdrawing itself in being.

The issue of describing Heideggerian subjectivity is, in conclusion, not a matter of determining or describing its essential features. The matter is indicated as an open issue, and must be undergone in its self-withdrawal so as to be understood as such. This self-withdrawal takes place in angst, where the issue of existence presents itself in its uncanny opacity. It is by letting philosophy be determined by this fundamental mood that Heidegger is able to uphold an errant version of a subjectivistic philosophy, which, in the hold of angst, aims to remain silent with regard to the nature of subjectivity, rather than explanatory.

7.2 'Dialetheic' truth: the revelation of a foundational aporia

This issue of existence concerns truth in important ways that may be surprising given its deviation from the ordinary propositional theories of truth (the correspondence theory being the most prominent version of it). Heidegger does not propose a propositional theory of truth, because he is interested in the pre-propositional existence of Dasein as it is of itself, which functions as a prior condition for any production of propositions. For Tugendhat, who acknowledges the value of such an account, the problem is that designating this phenomenon as another sense of truth, essentially changing the topic of the discussion of truth, has to be motivated. Additionally, it needs to be motivated in such a way that it upholds at least one feature of the original sense of truth that Tugendhat deems essential to it, i.e. the Law of Non-Contradiction in the specific way that it is generally upheld in theories of truth. The proper Heideggerian reply to such challenges is to explain Heidegger's reasons for considering Dasein's self-understanding as an alternative sense of truth, and to clarify why this matter requires an understanding of truth that is conflictual, such that it does not comply by the aforementioned logical standard.

One feature of Dasein's existence that clarifies the connection between 'subjectivity' and truth, is the uncanniness of angst. This phenomenon is revelatory, and revelation seems to be essential to any phenomenon of truth. Truth ordinarily presents things as they are, and uncanniness does this, i.e. account for a sense of 'existential selfsameness', for Dasein, in so far that this is possible. In angst, Dasein is confronted with itself in an authentic way, which is what makes it revelatory, and hence Heidegger speaks of 'disclosure'. Angst is the eminent occurrence in Being-in-the-world where Dasein attains a grasp on the limit of its possibilities, delineating Dasein's self for itself and unsettling it from its usual way of Being-in-the-world. Although it does not present Dasein as having a particular self-identity, it nonetheless reveals Dasein's selfhood for what it is, i.e. uncanny. This appearance of Dasein to itself on its own accord, in contrast, can become distorted by Being-in-the-world and all of the appearances that are normally a part of it. Regular Being-in-the-world does so by constituting the presence of self-identity, i.e. of the logical regularity of things being the way they are, which becomes an assumed feature of ordinary senses of truth. Heidegger opposes the self-evidence of such a logical assumption so as to not confuse the achievement of authenticity, the coming into one's own, with the self-evidence of simply being what one is.

The revelation consists in the uncanny sense of Being-in-the-world as such, with all of the unique 'logical' implications of its nothingness.

Because Dasein's ordinary way of Being-in-the-world distorts the appearance of truth, Heidegger's philosophy becomes a pursuit to retrieve it in its original guise. This process of unveiling, however, is complicated by the 'impure' character of its truth. The moment of truth is not straightforwardly insightful, because uncanniness is of itself opaque and becomes revelatory only in virtue of opacity, unlike the regularity of identity for things. This is why, in later development of his considerations on truth Heidegger moves away from the notion of 'disclosure [Entschlossenheit]', and emphasizes the self-occluding aspects of truth (for instance with the notions of concealment [Verborgenheit] and refusal [Verweigerung]). The revelatory qualities of the experience of truth, in other words, is put in the perspective of its opacity, which complicates the vocabulary of revelation. Before this development of his theory of truth, however, Heidegger assumed that an explanation of complications surrounding the disclosive phenomenon would suffice, of which the claim that truth and its opposite coincide was supposed to be the most obvious statement. Effectively, however, his attempt at revolutionizing truth depended on drawing connections with, among others, the concept of authenticity, which at that point in *Sein und Zeit* was entirely unclear, and had no clear connection to the phenomenon of truth. The complicated relation between clarity and obscurity, however, becomes clearer with a developed understanding of the uncanniness of Dasein's existence: 'seeing the truth' is no longer a successful clarification of Dasein's existence that would be obscure otherwise, but an understanding of the complication of existence as being obscure of itself. Clarity is attained by a recognition of the necessity of opacity, and not by the disavowal of opacity. In this way, 'inauthenticity' is also not set aside by 'authenticity': there is no possible way out of obscure existence, not even when the obscurity itself is covered over by the clarity of Dasein's regular involvement in the world. The concealment is a recalcitrant self-foundation, in the sense that it turns on itself, withdrawing its own obscurity so as to make possible the relative clarity of anything else.

It becomes Heidegger's ambition to address this truth dynamic in a fitting way, because normal description, analysis, or clarification will not do. He finds inspiration in Ancient Greek philosophy and its allegedly crucial consideration for 'λήθη', but admits that their approach has been flawed, in the sense that its conceptualization as something present to them gave rise to a reception characterized by metaphysical thinking rather than to an understanding of the same issue. In later work, he favors poetic language for the fulfillment of his ambitions, focusing on the notion of 'blueness'. 'Blueness' retains reference to the revelatory quality of obscurity, and in this way retains reference to his discussions of truth. More helpful, however, is Heidegger's earlier work and its focus on the notion of nothingness (the appearance of which is certainly not confined to this section of his work). The notion becomes instrumental, because it refers to a sense of self-effacing obscurity and in this way presents the aforementioned matter in an intuitive manner. Heidegger recognizes that, despite the central role that he gives it in his pursuit, nothingness is considered unsuitable for philosophical analysis, given its reputation as being contradictory in terms of its propositional rendering. It prompts a discussion by Heidegger that has not attracted careful consideration from Heidegger scholars, aside from from dialetheist readers, who share Heidegger's enthusiasm for the peculiar status of said notion, and who have crucially pointed out its ineffability. What makes Heidegger's thinking similar to dialetheism is not necessarily that it intentionally incorporates a contradiction into his philosophical discourse, or that it disregards the relevance and stringency of the Law of Non-Contradiction, although in both regards one could make the case that he does. What makes Heidegger's

thinking similar to dialetheism is its consideration for the ineffable, which complicates the practice of philosophy.

Although it is hard to summarize all ways in which Heidegger explores the potential of philosophy, it can at least be associated with a number of programmatic, contrarian ambitions for the conceptualization of the quasi-dialethic truth it sets out to achieve. Heidegger makes the observation that the opposition of truth and falsity (or 'untruth') has become a dogma that does not hold for the most fundamental sense of truth. Truth, for Heidegger, does not preclude the existence of its opposite, but rather includes it. This means that truth is not a self-sufficient, incontestable event, but that it only comes about as a self-contained conflict. Truth in each case remains at odds with itself, constituting its own non-being, which Heidegger denominates the 'withdrawal [Entzug]' of truth. As such, it cannot constitute a relation of identity, or to put it differently, 'selfsameness'. Normally things can be said to be what they are, but this does not hold for truth. There is no standard by which truth accords to its own being, such that Dasein can with certainty be determined to be itself. Truth is a recurrent issue, meaning it stays the same in virtue of its retreat into itself, keeping itself to itself. The presence of its obscurity also does not entail self-evidence, meaning its presence is not a matter of complete clarity that has rescinded darkness. Truth is only revelatory in virtue of its self-effacement.

Such programmatic Heideggerian observations on the nature of truth serve the purpose of exploring the peculiar features of existence as a foundational phenomenon. On this point, Heidegger's observations stem from interpretations of the connection of the original Ancient Greek conceptualization of truth as ἀλήθεια to its etymological root λήθη. In his interpretations, Heidegger finds both the metaphysical hurdles to an authentic understanding of the original issue and the inspiration for its reconceptualization. Whether on this point Heidegger's account should be considered compelling, depends on an assessment of said observations, for which consideration of the aforementioned features of fundamental truth is instrumental. Heideggerian scholarship so far has overlooked the importance of many of Heidegger's discussions of truth, and has primarily limited its appraisal to a review of one particular section of *Sein und Zeit*, conveniently ignoring the challenge of explaining the coincidence of truth and untruth. This challenge may be considered dialethic, because it challenges Heidegger's readers to reconsider presuppositions about truth, influenced by standard laws of logic, that together have shaped a dogma about truth. An understanding of this challenge may or may not put an end to (possibly dismissive) discussion of Heidegger's account of truth, but it does result in a more authentic understanding of his philosophy. The 'clarity' attained in such an understanding may not provide the certainty of a clearly defined subject, but it does open up the issue of human existence by way of the opaque feeling of uncanniness. It is this confrontation with obscurity that should mark the interpretation of Heidegger's work, and the primary means to re-imagine philosophy's central commitment to truth.

7.3 Normativity

Questions surrounding Heidegger's account of normativity arise for several reasons. Firstly, it proves to be key to the controversy regarding his account of truth. To Tugendhat, to put the matter in his terms, it is unclear what kind of project of truth Heidegger is proposing, given that normally speaking truth is what philosophical activity strives for. Heidegger does not clearly address such a question, and does not explicitly account for some kind of standard of truth that one could accord to. Commitment to some standard in this

regard would constrain what could possibly be considered true. For instance, commitment to the Law of Non-Contradiction, in the context of theories of truth, refers to the exclusion of truth's opposite as a candidate for truth. If Heidegger disposes of even the most minimal commitment with regard to such constraints, it becomes questionable what kind of standard he could uphold.

A second consideration follows from the first: the nature of truth is relevant for the conceptualization of the practice of philosophy, and lack of clarity with regard to truth's role in philosophy could give rise to a lack of clarity with regard to the nature of philosophy. A clarification of the normativity inherent to truth could, accordingly, clarify the character, purpose and limits of philosophical practice. For instance, transcendental philosophy, a strand of philosophical thought that is undeniably influential to Heideggerian philosophy, is clear on this point. The practice of philosophy is envisioned to be a kind of self-reflection that uncovers both the rationality that is binding for human existence and the way that this rationality functions for the human being in question. Heidegger's work is, on first glance, influenced by this tradition, but it is largely unclear in what way, given that he seems to focus his discussion on trying to dissociate himself from this tradition.

Thirdly, Heidegger has instigated some of the interpretive confusion himself by introducing a seemingly normative notion, i.e. authenticity, which has been subject to much scrutiny with regard to its normative status. Heidegger frequently appeals to the necessity for Dasein to be itself, and restrict itself to a mode of existence that is entirely its own, but, although the basic character of such an existence (guilty, resolute, etc.) seems to be explained, it is unclear why it is precisely this mode of existence is required. Furthermore, it is unclear why this mode of existence is the only possible 'originary' mode of being, or in other words, how this norm came to arise from the nature of Dasein's Being-in-the-world. Answering this question has some additional merit in clarifying further Heidegger's account of Dasein as a human subject, if one is allowed to call it that.

One expectation for any sort of normative content to his account Heidegger cannot live up to: his account does not provide a standard that existence can be in accordance with. Dasein's existence does not have itself available such that it is at Dasein's disposal, for the purpose of making it self-adjusted to an aim. Accordance to any standard, in that sense, is foundational to a metaphysical way of thinking about Dasein's truth. As a consequence, Heidegger's account (including its appeal to become authentic) does not constitute a moral theory that can prescribe moral rules, for instance. He does not argue that Dasein must constitute the moral authority that makes it accountable to others, and in that sense does not have in mind the traditional sense of responsibility. Neither does he attempt to explain the constitution of a practical identity. Dasein's existence cannot be explained with appeal to some relation of identity, because it can only be understood as erratically staying the same as a self-contained, regressing problem of existence. Existence is not standardized in such a way that it becomes an ordinate practice. This makes it misleading to speak of normativity, since it cannot be shown to involve specific norms, and might raise questions on the appropriate way to characterize Heidegger's account of 'becoming authentic', if this is not an identifiable goal that can be achieved.

In this regard, Heidegger's phenomenological account in *Sein und Zeit* is insightful. The account offers a description of the kind of experience that is exemplary for the sense of normativity that is involved in his approach, despite any suggestions by other readers of a lack thereof. The key to clarity on this point is the interpretation of Heidegger's account of a guilty conscience. Firstly, the notion of conscience spells out that authentic existence

involves answering one's own call, to put it in Heidegger's terms. Authenticity, rather than referring to a moral kind of responsibility, more so refers to a kind of responsivity. For Dasein, being conscientious means being responsive to itself, and specifically to the affective basis that disposes itself to itself in various ways. In other words, according to Heidegger, Dasein itself is its own source of 'normativity', which should become clear in its conscientious self-awareness. To avoid phrasing this sense of responsivity as a kind of accordance, it can better be designated as a way of bearing existence.

The attunement by the affective basis of conscience has a uniquely 'rational' status that Heidegger explores in his account. Heidegger believes it allows for a foundational approach, which is to say that he believes Dasein can become 'grounded' through such attunement. Following his account in *Sein und Zeit*, it seems a specific kind of guilt is the best experience for some indication of what it means for Dasein to be rooted in its own being. Guilt specifies the sense of normativity that conscientiousness is supposed to provide. Guilt arises when Dasein becomes conscious of the obscurity of its own grounds. It puts on display a 'negative' character of Dasein's conscience, or in other words, the 'null' character of Dasein's foundations. Dasein's rationality is unable to provide reasons for its actions, because conscience does not tell it anything. A guilty conscience is responsive to the silence of Dasein's call to itself, making Dasein reticent. Heidegger's notion of guilt is what ties the idea of uncanny existence to the idea of conscience, referring to the impossibility of determining what Dasein should be. Dasein, when conscientious, is confronted with a foundational aporia that has a logic of its own called 'sigeticism'. Grounding is not a process of justifying existence (be it as such or the way that one exists in particular), since no justification could be given. Grounding is a matter of owning up to the 'abyssal' character of existence in guilt. A guilty conscience bears the weight of existence, embracing the impenetrable opacity of its inexplicability, rather than attempting to constitute a particular way of life. It recognizes the necessity of selfhood remaining due, without why, and without this necessity taking the form of a debt to be paid.

Such authenticity is not a choice. It is not an act of the will, and it is not an authoritative constitution or disclosure of (reasons to take on) a particular practical identity. The change in existence that is guilt takes place as a decision, which imposes distantiation on Dasein. In the decision, Dasein 'takes measure', limiting its own existence and delineating itself in a unique way. This way for the aporetic foundation to bind Dasein is a notable normative element, and can be considered a way of incorporating a sense of normativity without norms of existence. Dasein is forced into the depths of its own obscurity, which knows no bounds and does not result in any substantial sense of selfhood. Such an affect is not a failure of existence to 'motivate itself'. Rather, it succeeds to move Dasein by way of its own being, reflecting the nature of existence without becoming an explicit reflection on one's own being. In his later work, Heidegger will compare this sense of clarity of a guilty conscience with the blueness of the heavens, as it is described in Hölderlin's poem. Like the sky, Dasein's existence is impenetrable by vision but provides clarity nonetheless. In the self-withdrawal of the issue of obscurity Dasein finds the measure appropriate to its own being. Opacity sets the boundary for what Dasein is allowed to be, such that Dasein, as 'the placeholder of nothingness', cannot be interpreted to be anything whatsoever, which a lack of norms for existence may suggest to Heidegger's readers.

7.4 Nihilism

Clarity on the aforementioned points of discussion in Heidegger's work (subjectivity, truth and normativity) are consequential to any interpretation of his conception of philosophical activity. Heidegger's metaphilosophy is determined by his understanding of the history of philosophy, and how themes such as the foregoing were a part of philosophy, but have been obfuscated by the devolvement of thinking into metaphysical philosophy. Initially, according to Heidegger's retelling, the Ancient Greek philosophers introduced the notion of truth to the discourse without explanation, because its significance was already conveyed in the poetry of their time. The Ancient Greeks supposedly knew of the ineffable issue at stake in philosophy, which at the time was signified by the notion of λήθη, to which the revelatory force of ἀλήθεια was supposed to relate. In other words, the issue was the revelatory quality of the most fundamental sense of obscurity. The Ancient Greek 'sigetic' approach of staying silent about the main issue of their work was to be characteristic for its praxis, but became obfuscated by misunderstandings, and by various appropriations of other, well-elaborated philosophical concepts. Heidegger considers himself the ultimate inheritor of philosophy by unveiling the original source of philosophical thinking, without setting aside the complications of reticence that make possible its obfuscation. For human beings, there is still access to the original issue by way of the experience of angst and its uncanniness, since it makes apparent the opacity of self-concealment. Similarly, this affective basis for thinking can be retraced within the history of philosophy.

Effectively, the approach comes down to a confrontation with the notion of nothingness. The event of self-concealment is known as nothingness, and is considered by metaphysical philosophy at large to be a concept that should be avoided on every occasion, given that it is contradictory. In its ineffability, however, it is instrumental, and remains at issue in discussions concerning the foundations of philosophical activity. Therefore, philosophy can be appraised for its 'nihilism', i.e. for its handling of the notion of the nihil, i.e. nothingness. Another way to designate this way of doing philosophy would be 'quietism', in so far as the confrontation with nothingness must take into account its ineffability. Metaphysics is characterized by inauthentic nihilism, given that it forgets what is most question-worthy in its own history of thought, leading to an unbounded mobilization of human existence, and specifically of Dasein's self-adjusted empowerment in enframing its world. Such nihilism must be combated by a more primordial reception of nothingness. An authentic thinking must confront nothingness, so as to arrive at a fundamental question about the existence of humanity and its self-concealment. Such a confrontation takes place in the uncanny mood of angst, which makes itself felt in Dasein, in such a way that it can only be conscientious with a sense of guilt over its own being. In the literature, not often such an emphasis on the nihilistic character of Heidegger's philosophy is placed, despite it being central to his conception of philosophy, from *Sein und Zeit's* attempt at finding an authentic way for Dasein to deal with the forgottenness of Being to Dasein's grounding in the abyssal event of self-concealment in later work. To portray Heideggerian philosophy as nihilistic, however, is appropriate to his ambition to develop an understanding of the ineffable foundation of human existence, an ambition that is easily disregarded for the sake of some other, less cumbersome aspect of Heidegger's thinking.

This emphasis on the nihilistic aspects of Heideggerian philosophy should dispel obscurities surrounding his work, and clear the confusions they leave his readers in. Heidegger's nihilistic ambition explains his conception of subjectivity, firstly, because sigeticism is the only meaningful approach to the ineffable nature of human existence. It explains his conception of truth, secondly, because the aporia of self-concealment, unlike

the accessibility of the emergent, is what is most revelatory. It explains his conception of normativity, thirdly, because the only possible sense of normativity to be found is in the measure provided in being moved by the obscurity of one's own being. In this way, a nihilistic interpretation achieves a sense of clarity by way of the explanatory power of the notion of nothingness, which is on the one hand consistent in so far as it remains the same, self-contained issue, and on the other hand remains simple in so far as the ineffability of the issue requires no pretension of complexity or sophistication. Even those who would be entirely inimical to the account of Heidegger's work given here, or those who simply use the word 'nihilism' in a more loose, pejorative way, could perhaps find the nihilistic labeling of this interpretation acceptable, given its various 'negative' aspects. Heidegger, according to this interpretation, does not, for instance, oppose truth to falsity (effectively relegating the relevance of the Law of Non-Contradiction for conceptions of truth), and neither does he present a substantial theory of what selfhood would consist in, nor acknowledge the relevance and stringency of mundane normativity for human existence. Additionally, its emphasis on an ineffable notion like nothingness seems to willingly embrace quietism, obscurantism, or both, which are unpopular views often criticized for a variety of different reasons. The nihilistic interpretation of Heidegger provides novel reasons to reconsider such views.

From the perspective of the view's suggestions of obscurantism, it becomes obvious that the clarity obtained through the lens of nihilism must necessarily have its limits. Although it can clarify Heidegger's philosophy, it cannot take away the difficulty that might be associated with its main issue. The clarity attained is a clarity on the depths of the aporia of human existence. On this point, the obscurity of nothingness persists, and remains an insurmountable struggle, despite the cultivation of a clear understanding of the issue. A self-understanding results merely in errancy: Dasein retreats into itself, keeping the issue of its existence contained in itself, and wandering through its own Being. This aporetic dimension of existence is reflected in the nature of a nihilistic interpretation of Heidegger's work. While the interpretation has the pretension of providing a correct representation of his work, it nonetheless cannot circumvent the metaphysical character of such an endeavour. Paradoxically, it cannot indicate the main issue of Heideggerian philosophy without simultaneously giving up on any norms for a proper identification, which is a requirement that is appropriate to the status of the nothingness that is at issue. Nonetheless, such a 'failure' is meaningful as a way of attempting to address the same issue as Heidegger. The interpretation does not have the pretension of making the struggle of existence in any way easier, since it cannot lay claim to the right way of existing or of even thinking about human existence. It is merely one manner of formally indicating a fundamental truth.

The aporetic character of the nihilist view, despite the finality of its outlook, should not have as a consequence the cessation of all Heideggerian thinking. As Heidegger said, silence, and therefore the sigetic approach, should not be equated to putting an end to all language. Rather, it points to the directive of finding a way to speak of nothingness. On this point, perhaps academic philosophy seems an unlikely home for such thinking, given academia's largely argumentative predisposition. Heideggerian philosophy proper cannot provide reasons in a scholarly manner, so as to persuade its readers of what it conveys, given that its reasoning is abyssal, and cannot participate in philosophical discussion in the usual manner. The only kind of reasoning it can adopt consists in laying out the foundations of an ultimate truth, acknowledging the inevitable nature of human existence. For this, it needs a sense of reticence. Since a Heideggerian cannot simply be satisfied with representations of or references to such an experience, it needs to find other, non-metaphysical means of expressing angst. For this, the literature will need to explore the

poietic possibilities of language, which Heidegger has pointed his readers to. Heidegger himself finds such means in the German poems of Hölderlin, and such a 'poietic turn' in Heideggerian thinking seems understandable from the standpoint of an interpretation that recognizes the ineffable character of its main issue. Heideggerian nihilism should follow suit, regardless of what standards academic philosophy uphold, if it is to remain what it should be.

Regardless of what Heideggerian interpretation does, however, the struggle it intends to address will not and cannot become anything else than it already is. The truth is that human existence has no choice but to take part in the same struggle, which is all that Heidegger intended to convey in the first place. If philosophy does not see the philosophical legitimacy of this struggle, then its truths lack actual foundation, a foundation humans nonetheless carve out in virtue of their perpetual uncanniness.

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